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Contents

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Introduction

{ΣΩ.} τί δέ; οὐ ταύτης φῂς τῆς σοφίας ἐπιθυμεῖν ᾗ πάντων ἂν τῶν πολιτῶν ἄρχοις; τοῦτο δὲ ποιῶν ἄλλο τι ἢ τύραννος ἂν εἴης;
{ΘΕ.} εὐξαίμην μὲν ἂν οἶμαι ἔγωγε τύραννος γενέσθαι, μάλιστα μὲν πάντων ἀνθρώπων, εἰ δὲ μή, ὡς πλείστων· καὶ σύ γ' ἂν οἶμαι καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι πάντες ἄνθρωποι—ἔτι δέ γε ἴσως μᾶλλον θεὸς γενέσθαι.

Socrates: What? Do you deny that you desire that wisdom whereby you could rule all the citizens? By doing this would you be anything other than a tyrant?
Theages: I would *pray*, I think, that I become a tyrant, especially over all human beings, but if not all, then as many as possible. And so would you, I think, and all other human beings—and yet more perhaps to become a god. (Plato, *Theages*, 126a)[1]

Aristophanes's *Birds* displays the virtuosity and audacity of a master of the comic stage. The emotionally arousing use of "new music" in the hoopoe aria, the kaleidoscopically brilliant *parodos* of the bird chorus, the repetitions and reworking of themes exhibited in two separate sets of interloper scenes and three different divine visitations, combined with the sheer scope of the play are a tour de force of Old Comic artistry.[2] Furthermore, Aristophanes employs a plot structure that constantly undermines the audience's expectations. As in detective fiction, where an author leaves clues that serve only to lead the reader on the wrong track, so too in *Birds* Aristophanes leads on our generic expectations of the plot only to leave us behind as the hero takes control.[3] The two Athenians, we at first believe, seek a "quiet" human *polis*, no, an apolitical bird life, no, a powerful bird *polis*, no, they seek to make the birds gods, until it finally emerges that the ultimate goal is that *one* of the Athenians will himself become the highest of the gods. Within this plot structure, as Gelzer has highlighted, Aristophanes "plays around with the

form and content of the *parodos*, *agon*, and *parabasis*, and finally with the conventional structure of the 'second part' of the comedy," and he concludes:

> For the poet to be able to sport with its conventional elements, not only must the forms of the plays have become somewhat traditional, but the public too must be completely familiar with them . . . . Precisely in the period of Aristophanes' writing from which the *Birds* is the first extant play, this game with traditional forms, which are then made to produce unexpected effects, is particularly striking.[4]

The question that necessarily arises, however, is to what degree this playfulness is experimentation and artistry for its own sake and to what degree it arises from the thematic contingencies of the play that Aristophanes has formulated.

Birds is a play difficult to get a secure handle on. As Sommerstein remarks, "*Birds* differs from all the other fifth-century plays of Aristophanes that survive in having no strong and obvious connection with a topical question of public interest . . . taking the play as a whole, satire is kept firmly subordinate to fantasy."[5] This conclusion may, in part, be explained by the fact that in the spring of 414 BC the general populace of Athenians were in a state of high optimism. Their empire remained secure and thriving; any resistance to their power in the Aegean, as, for example, the Melians attempted, was easily quashed and without retribution from Sparta. They had sent off an enormous force to Sicily, and all were confident of success, or at the very least, no disappointment (Thuc. 6.24.3). Although Alcibiades had been recalled to Athens on charges of impiety, the expedition was still supported by the Athenian people (Thuc. 6.93.4) and in Sicily plans were being made to attack Syracuse that spring under the generals Lamachus and Nicias (Thuc. 6.71.2). Both Aristophanes in *Birds* (363) and Phrynichus in his *Monotropos* (K-A 23) produced in the same year, praise Nicias for his tactical abilities (perhaps in the recent victory over the Syracusans) (Thuc. 6.63–71). Thus the broad optimism that some have detected in the fantasy of *Birds* mirrors this Athenian mood.[6]

On the other hand, some see in the fantastic bird *polis* created by the clever Athenian, Peisetaerus, a criticism of Athenian imperialist policy.[7] Arrowsmith, who provides the most compelling and nuanced interpretation along these lines, regards Peisetaerus's titanic project as a depiction of the "fantasy politics of eros" so evident in Athenian imperial *polypragmosynē* (restless meddling). Thus, the hero's relations with the birds are "not a set of topical allusions to the Sicilian expedition, but the whole process by which the fantastic imperial city of Athens had developed from a traditional Greek *polis* . . . into the monstrous, tyrant-city of Hellas."[8] For Bowie, Cloudcuckooland

is a place even more monstrous and *polypragmōn* than Athens' tyranny. Thus Aristophanes's message to the audience is that "the uncomfortable truth is that . . . to avoid domination by those more eagerly engaged in *pragmata*, the Athenians must shoulder the burdens and themselves remain *polypragmones*."[9] This approach has something to recommend itself. Peisetaerus's character is precisely like the Corinthians' assessment of the Athenians and their *polypragmosunē* in Thucydides: "it is in their nature neither to have peace themselves nor to let the rest of humanity have it" (1.70.9). But is Athenian imperialism and self-aggrandizement really at the core of the play?

Aristophanes toys with this theme as is suggested, for example, by the mention of the *phoroi* (levies or tribute) that the birds could impose upon the gods (191)—a clear allusion to Athens' own imposition of tribute upon her subject allied states. This idea of tax-collection, however, is one of those threads that are brought up only to be dropped. It is briefly invoked to win over the former tyrant Tereus, but is never even alluded to in the remainder of the play. Peisetaerus certainly does not use expansionism and the lure of wealth to win the birds over. Rather, he argues that the birds have been wronged by the gods and thus have lost their *timai* (prerogatives) as rulers of the universe. The birds act out of a sense of justice, not a desire for naked power or *pleonexia* (insatiable greed). The bird *polis* does not end up, as Peisetaerus had told Tereus, "ruling human beings like locusts" (185), nor does it destroy the Olympians and their position over human beings. By the end, the Olympians and the birds conclude a *diallagē* (reconciliation) in which all creatures retain their old positions, except that, of course, Peisetaerus becomes the new Zeus. The birds regain their scepter and their birdish share of divinity, but the Olympians are no less gods, and they will now have the birds as allies to prove this fact to human beings. It is Peisetaerus himself who is the big winner and, while he remains a *polypragmōn*, his rule will be marked by the particularly non-imperial and quietist virtues of *sōphrosunē* (prudent restraint) and *eunomia* (obedience to law) (1540). So, yes, Peisetaerus does possess a particularly Athenian spirit and the cleverness to back it up, but he is a comic creation more complex than a dark mirror of Athenian political and imperial ambition and *pleonexia*.

David Konstan deals with the complexities and contradictions apparent in the ideological construction of the fantastic city of the birds by identifying four different utopian strands that are wound through the play. He usefully labels these the anomian, the antinomian, the eunomian, and the megalonomian. Each of these strands, he argues, mirrors contradictory ideological positions in Athens itself, and thus "the inconsistency of [Peisetaerus's] characterization is a product of the complex ideological construction of the birds' domain . . . a place both social and presocial, harmonious and divided, benign and aggressive."[10] This approach and categorization well lays bare

the complexity of the play and provides a way through the optimist/pessimist divide. His conclusion, however, smooths over the actual action of the play. Peisetaerus himself nowhere appears determined by the contradictory utopian desires in the play. It is Peisetaerus himself, the master of persuasion, who manipulates the different utopian and ideological strands when confronted with different obstacles on his path. Thus, the construction of Cloudcuckooland is not a comic mirror of Athens, but rather a mirror of the will of a certain type of Athenian and, from what we can gather from what survives of Aristophanes, a type that Aristophanes had not previously brought onto the stage as his "hero."

One of the real problems in assessing the characterization of Peisetaerus is that he almost never speaks on his own behalf, and so we never get a clear statement of his goal. His companion, Euelpides, early in the play tells the audience that they seek a quiet (*apragmōn*) place away from the litigiousness of Athens (36–48) and where they can avoid paying debts.[11] In the course of the play, however, it becomes manifest that for Peisetaerus these are paltry goals. Peisetaerus comes up with the plan for the birds to wall off the gods and to reclaim bird sovereignty, but he nowhere expresses or explains his own ambitions. Clearly we sense much of his determination early on, but there is no statement by which we can assess his real motivations. In *Acharnians*, by contrast, Dicaeopolis forms his private peace out of clearly articulated anger at the influential and bellicose politicians of the time; and Trygaeus flies to heaven and is angry at Zeus because of the perpetuation of the war. But what is the cause of Peisetaerus's rebellion? Unlike these earlier heroes, his rebellion is absolute. He takes on every aspect of life that might restrain human nature and desire, whether social, political, or metaphysical, and becomes its master.[12] He is not content, like Dicaeopolis or Trygaeus, to return to earth and farm to enjoy peace and festivities.

Might we then assert that *Birds* is essentially a comic flight of fancy that expresses the most perfect form of comic liberation?[13] As I would argue, Aristophanes goes out of his way to make such an interpretation highly problematic precisely because Peisetaerus is no Dicaeopolis or Trygaeus or Euelpides, or even a Strepsiades and Philocleon. There is no evidence that he is a rustic farmer nor a father and head of a household. In the finale there is none of the licentious exuberance typical of an Aristophanic hero manifested in ribald humor, excessive eating, drinking, and sex. Indeed, the only time that we get even a glimpse into Peisetaerus's motives is when he is asked by Tereus what sort of *polis* he would like to inhabit, and there he is revealed to be one of the upper class, pederastic elite who hangs around the palaistra (which is also one of Socrates's haunts; *Clouds* 179, *Charmides* 153a) looking for boys (137–142). Finally, what appears to be most problematic is the fact that Peisetaerus comes to light as one who possesses overtly "sophistic"

skills and cleverness. The character more typical of an Aristophanic hero, Euelpides, leaves Cloudcuckooland not long after its creation and never returns.

In *Birds*, as I will argue, Aristophanes turns the table on the audience; he creates a play whose protagonist is one of the traditional, generic targets of the Old Comic poets: the upper class, sophist-trained, intellectual. Like me, Hubbard sees the interplay with sophistic thought as central to the play. He briefly compares Peisetaerus's project to the constitutional theories of Hippodamus of Miletus, the urban planner of Thurii, as well as to sophistic theories concerning anthropology and ethnography, and to the rhetorical techniques of the sophists. In the end this project turns out to be "a hypercivilized, overstructured totalitarian state, a dystopian nightmare of grandiose proportions . . . an expression of popular outrage against those social elites held responsible for the sacrileges [of 415], showing the consequences of their theoretical paradigm for an ideal city put into action."[14] Henderson, on the other hand, takes a more moderate line. He takes Peisetaerus to be one of "the intellectual and social elite" whose political ambitions had become frustrated under the democracy. Peisetaerus's arguments "are thoroughly sophistic," but he "brings utopia (back) to the world for all to enjoy;" there is nothing at all sinister in what he achieves. In fact, as Henderson argues, the play actually reassures the audience that the *demos* has nothing to fear from the power of such people as Alcibiades and other members of the elite whom the "demagogues" had accused of impiety and aiming at tyranny or oligarchic rule.[15] Henderson is right to question the highly pessimistic reading that Hubbard has put forth. *Birds* does challenge the audience to think about the questions that the sophists have brought to Athens, but Peisetaerus is no ascetic egghead like the Socrates of *Clouds*, nor yet the brazenly hedonistic and immoral Weaker Logos. He achieves his goal to the satisfaction of almost everyone. Nevertheless, Henderson's alternative is in itself too clear-cut and relies too much on allegory: the gods' rule is the rule of the Athenian empire under the radical democracy; the bird chorus is the Athenian demos or the allies under the empire. Nor does Henderson adequately deal with the assumption of Hubbard that the overtly sophistic character of Peisetaerus would have troubled the audience: sophists and their students ought to be mocked on stage, not become the new Zeus.[16] Surely the popular hostility felt against the sophist-inspired, elite impieties of 415, which led to many executions and confiscation of property,[17] though not a prominent theme in the play, does show the contemporary public's attitude to this portion of the population.

Critical to the interpretation of *Birds*, therefore, is our understanding of the characterization of Peisetaerus. Like Strepsiades, he is a wily old man; but he is no country bumpkin. Like the Pheidippides of the end of *Clouds*, he is urbane and has mastered sophistic rhetoric, but he is no spring chicken.

As Tereus so succinctly puts it, he is old, but he has new or novel ideas (πρέσβυς / καινὸς γνώμην 255–6).[18] Therefore, in order to get a proper grip on this new hybrid, we must seek out Aristophanes's attitude to sophistic thought and methodology, what he perceives the goals of the sophists to be, and what effect their growing influence has produced in Athenian society. Clearly, Aristophanes was not the only comic playwright to incorporate the sophists into his plays. But is Aristophanes typical in the uses to which he puts them?

OLD COMEDY AND THE SOPHISTS

At least as early as Aristophanes's first play, *Daitales* (427 BC), we know that sophists had been one of the satirical targets of Old Comedy. It is impossible to know the details of that play, but we can ascertain at least a part of the plot. An aged and conventional father has two sons, one of whom is dedicated to the new kind of learning in rhetoric and cleverness. He returns to his father having learned such things as the Weaker Logos of *Clouds* professes: *kottabos* (a drinking game, K-A 231), drinking, and general licentiousness (K-A 225). He has learned no Homer or Alcaeus and Anacreon (K-A 233, 235), but clever speech learned from the *rhetores* (skilled public speakers), so that he now sounds like an Alcibiades or Thrasymachus (K-A 205). In the *parabasis* of *Clouds* (529), Aristophanes refers to these two sons as the *katapugōn* (buggered) and the *sōphrōn* (self-restrained). Unfortunately, we know little more about the plot and its outcome. Because this was Aristophanes's first play and one which the Athenians enjoyed and which enhanced the literary reputation of the playwright (cf. *Clouds* 528–533), at this time only in his late teens or early twenties, we can surmise, at the very least, that the new forms of education and the growing influence of the sophists upon the young men of Athens were issues crucial in Aristophanes's mind and perhaps that Aristophanes was himself the first to bring such issues to the comic stage.[19]

In any case, the late 420s in particular was a time in which the comedians confronted the sophists as material rich for their plays. When Aristophanes, in *Clouds*, returned to the themes of his first play at the Dionysia of 423 he vied against, amongst others, Ameipsias' *Connus,* a play whose topics include education and "intellectuals." In subsequent years and including similar topics we have Eupolis's *Aiges* (422),[20] *Kolakes* (421), and *Autolycus* (420). We might surmise that the concurrence of theme in these plays was a by-product of a conspicuous presence of sophists in Athens[21] or the competitive nature of old comics wishing to top Aristophanes or, most likely, a mixture of both. But let us take a closer look at these plays, or more accurately, the meager remains of these plays, with the acknowledged disclaimer that any reconstruction is purely speculative.

The only evidence for the appearance of "intellectuals" in Ameipsias' *Connus* comes from Athenaeus, 218c:

> ἐν οὖν τούτῳ τῷ δράματι [*Kolakes*] Εὔπολις τὸν Πρωταγόραν ὡς ἐπιδημο ῦντα εἰσάγει, Ἀμειψίας δ' ἐν τῷ Κόννῳ δύο πρότερον ἔτεσιν διδαχθέντι οὐ καταριθμεῖ αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ τῶν φροντιστῶν χορῷ. δῆλον οὖν ὡς μεταξὺ τούτων τῶν χρόνων παραγέγονεν.
>
> So in this play [*Kolakes*] Eupolis brings on Protagoras as someone visiting town, but Ameipsias in his *Connus,* produced two years earlier, does not number him in his chorus of *phrontistai*. So clearly [Protagoras] arrived between these times.

This passage provides as many questions as answers. What does Athenaeus mean by *phrontistai*, and why ought Protagoras be mentioned amongst them if he were in Athens? The other fragments of the play point to a sacrifice and so most likely a priest (K-A 7) appears on stage. There is also a reference to one of Aristophanes's favored pest-interlopers, the oracle-monger (K-A 10). The eponymous Connus was a cithara player and teacher (Plato, *Euthydemus* 272c, 295d, *Menexenus* 235e) and is depicted by Aristophanes in 424, *Knights* (534), as a washed up, former victor in music who, as thirsty as he is (i.e., habitually drunk), can no longer get invited to any symposia.[22] In *Wasps* (and scholia 675) he is (if the Connus here is the musician) proverbial for stupidity.[23] So is Connus also a *phrontistēs*? If, as Carey argues, *phrontistai* refer to a broad variety of so-called "experts," including bad poets, musicians, crooked priests, oracles-mongers, and so on, why would Athenaeus expect Protagoras specifically to be mentioned among them? The answer might be, as Carey observes, that other individual sophists were named among the chorus.[24] Another fragment of Ameipsias, usually attributed to *Connus,*[25] runs (K-A 9):

> Ἀμειψίας δ' ἐν τρίβωνι παράγων αὐτὸν φησὶν οὕτως·
> Σώκρατες ἀνδρῶν βέλτιστ' ὀλίγων, πολλῶν δὲ ματαιόταθ', ἥκεις
> καὶ σὺ πρὸς ἡμᾶς. καρτερικός γ' εἶ. πόθεν ἄν σοι χλαῖνα γένοιτο;
> ….
> τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν τῶν σκυτοτόμων κατ' ἐπήρειαν γεγένηται.
> ….
> οὗτος μέντοι πεινῶν οὕτως οὐπώποτ' ἔτλη κολακεῦσαι.
>
> And Ameipsias bringing [Socrates] on stage in threadbare clothes says:
> "Socrates best among few men, but highly foolish among many, even you have come to us. You are hardy. But where might you get a cloak?
> ….
> This bad state [i.e., bare-footedness] arose as an insult to the cobblers.
> ….

> Nevertheless this chap, although he is so poor, has never had the heart to be a sponger."

As in *Clouds*, Socrates is differentiated from the other "*phrontistai*." He is hardy or enduring (καρτερικός), but at the same time has never had to endure (ἔτλη) stooping to sponge for a meal. But this chosen poverty and starvation means that, though he may be the best of few (i.e., the expert "*phrontistai"* and their followers),[26] in comparison to most people, (i.e., non-*phronistai*), he is highly foolish. But it is impossible to know to what degree (or whether) Socrates played a part in *Connus*; though it is clear 1) that he is unlike the other *phrontistai* in not being a sponger and 2) that he is mocked for his poverty.

When we turn to Eupolis's *Kolakes* (*Spongers*), we again have certain "experts" mentioned, including Protagoras (K-A 157, 158), the tragic poet, Melanthius (K-A 178), and Chairephon (K-A 180). These and others were the eponymous spongers (*kolakes*) who were leeching off the son of Hipponicus, Callias—notorious for his profligate living and whose recently dead father's wealth he was rapidly squandering. The actual occupation of the *kolax*, however, as outlined in an epirrheme from a parabasis (K-A 172), bears no resemblance (even in analogy) to the activity of sophists, but rather appears to be a precursor to what will later be called the parasite. The *kolax* is "refined" (κομψός) and "charming" (χαρίεις) and uses these qualities to get a meal from a rich simpleton. Therefore, as in *Connus*, while at least one actual sophist is mentioned we have no evidence that there was on stage, as in *Clouds*, a depiction of the pursuits for which the sophists are renowned—teaching rhetoric, science, and applying rational critiques to conventional ideas. In K-A 158,[27] Protagoras's pseudo-knowledge of medicine is shown to be a means by which he might keep his control over a drunk Callias and, we might gather, provide himself with an abundance of wine. At K-A 157 we have:

> ἔνδον μέν ἐστι Πρωταγόρας ὁ Τήιος.
> ὃς ἀλαζονεύεται μὲν ἁλιτήριος
> περὶ τῶν μετεώρων, τὰ δὲ χαμᾶθεν ἐσθίει.[28]
>
> Inside is Protagoras the Teian. The accursed phony
> who fakes his way through "the things above,"
> but eats "the things from the earth."

Here, Protagoras, like the Socrates of *Clouds*, concerns himself with a scientific understanding of celestial phenomena, but unlike the poverty-stricken Socrates from *Connus*, uses it to get himself well-fed.[29] In both passages, Protagoras's intellectual pursuits are aimed at personal gain, not at any deeper

questioning (or corrupting) of civic values. Therefore we may conclude, with Carey, that "the contemporary thinker is presented as a social rather than an intellectual phenomenon. Protagoras's expertise appears to be a means of exploitation rather than a subject of interest in itself or a disturbing trend."[30]

Concerning what survives of the other comic playwrights we are in an even more hazy and precarious position, but judging from the simple computation of the number of times sophists are named in the fragments, Carey has speculated that "unless our surviving fragments are unrepresentative of Old Comedy as a whole, the genre did not pay much attention to some of the most outstanding intellectual figures of the day"[31] such as Prodicus, Hippias, Thrasymachus, and Gorgias. Such figures, however, do crop up not only in Aristophanes's *Clouds*, but also in *Wasps* (Gorgias, 421), *Birds* (Gorgias, 1696–1705; Prodicus, 692), *Daitales* (Thrasymachus, fr. 198) and *Tagenistae* (Prodicus, K-A 506). As Carey continues, "indeed, of all the late fifth-century comic dramatists Aristophanes appears to have been the one most interested in the sophists as individuals," thus "it may be that this interest in the sophists was a feature that distinguished Aristophanes from his fellow comic playwrights."[32] In *Clouds* itself, Aristophanes, in line with Ameipsias and Eupolis, lists among his cloud-nourished *sophistai* or experts: pseudo-diviners, medical theorists, idlers, and dithyrambic poets (331–4). But he conspicuously narrows down the scope of his play to one of what he calls the οἱ νῦν μετεωροσοφίσταιˊ—"contemporary *meteōra* (celestial) experts"—among whom Prodicus and Socrates are especially picked out. Furthermore, while Aristophanes may parody Socrates's inquiries in the natural sciences, this parody is not a random gathering of ideas and phrases, but as Vander Waerdt has noted, a consistent parody of the scientific ideas of Diogenes of Apollonia, who may well have been Socrates's teacher in these matters.[33] Thus, judging from the fragments we have, Aristophanes aims his satiric sight with a tighter focus and knows his targets and their intellectual background.

The period in which *Clouds, Connus*, and, *Kolakes* were written (the mid to late 420s) was also a remarkable time, if we can believe a torrent of recent work, for an intense "war between the poets," in which each of the big three of Old Comedy—Cratinus, Eupolis, and Aristophanes—staked out for themselves a comic position and persona in competitive contrast to one other.[34] As regards the rivalry between Aristophanes and Cratinus, Biles has brought to light the degree to which Cratinus in *Pytine* defends his personally crafted persona from the attack of Aristophanes in *Knights*; that is, he defends his stance as an old-fashioned lyric poet (such as Archilochus), inspired by the power of Dionysus,[35] which Aristophanes had mocked by portraying Cratinus literally as an old, doddering drunk. On Cratinus's take on the sophists, we really only have the scholia to *Clouds* 96: "previously Cratinus in *Panoptai* mocked Hippon the philosopher" for saying that the sky was like an oven

cover. But Cratinus's compound εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων (K-A 307), (euripidaristophanizing) used as a synonym for ὑπολεπτολόγος (shrewdly subtle with words) and γνωμιδιώκτης (hunter of wit) implies a competitive ridicule directed at Aristophanes for his overly clever and modern works.[36]

Eupolis, the poet of Aristophanes's own generation, is a rival harder to define. It appears that there was some form of collaboration between the two, as well as accusations (at least, by their comic personae) of plagiarism and the stealing of comic motifs, and that they both used as the core of their comedies what was most up-to-date in politics and culture.[37] While their most evident rivalry is concerned with their shared motif of "demagogue" comedy, what is most pertinent to my discussion is the play of 420, *Autolycus*. For this play, as with all the fragmentary plays, we cannot make many definite assertions. From Athenaeus (216 c-d) we can deduce that the play was produced in 420 and that in it the victory of Autolycus was mocked. The celebration of this victory also supplied the setting for Xenophon's *Symposium*, where it is revealed that Autolycus' victory was in the pancration at the Panathenaic games presumably of 422. In Xenophon, Autolycus, the son of Lycon, is described as renowned for his beauty and as an *erōmenos* with very many suitors, most notably the wastrel, Callias (of Eupolis *Kolakes* fame). Storey, followed by Bakola, has outlined some reasonable, though not definitive, hypotheses concerning the plot:[38] Eupolis himself figures in the play as a potential slave/tutor for the beautiful Autolycus. Aristophanes also appears in the play, but as a rival for the position as "educator" of Autolycus. This open or at least, playful, hostility between the two arose because of Aristophanes's mockery of Eupolis in the parabasis of *Wasps* and *Peace* for using his status as a successful comedian to pick up attractive, young men around the *palaestrae*.[39] Such hypotheses ultimately makes sense of the following lines (K-A 60), most likely from an *agon*. Speaker A: "But you, oh wretch, you passed your impious life with your newer/novel[40] forms (καινότερας ἰδέας)." Speaker B: "How so, you who have already licked clean the rims of many plates?"[41] It is difficult to understand how exactly speaker B's response to A works. Though if we assume that speaker A is Eupolis, and B is Aristophanes, this may be another accusation of plagiarism.[42] Obviously the context would make it clearer; but the more important first line underscores what would appear to be a comic argument that would make sense to the audience: that Aristophanes prides himself on his newness or novelty to a degree that is, with comic exaggeration, "impious."

In the revised *parabasis* speech of *Clouds*, it is precisely (547) the "the new/novel forms/ideas" (καινὰς ἰδέας) which he "devises expertly" (σοφίζομαι) that he prides himself on.[43] Thus I think that Bakola is right to assert that Aristophanes establishes his dramatic persona as the "reformer" who claims to be "novel, exciting and sophistic(ated)."[44] But if the critique and boast of

Aristophanes is his newness, how do we account for Aristophanes's overt conservatism as regards Socrates and his ilk in *Clouds*? Bakola argues that these two elements of Aristophanes's persona are an "inherent contradiction," but a part of Aristophanes's appropriation of the archaic lyric persona of the poet as "new reformer" whose stance is one of a lone crusader taking on social injustices (such as Solon or Theognis).[45] On the other hand, I would argue that Aristophanes does not consider his position to be inherently contradictory. Rather as has become evident in the previous discussion, Aristophanes as a young insider, perceives the threat to the traditions of the city that sophists pose and knows that this threat can only be dealt with on its terms, that is, through sophistication (*dexiotēs*) and novelty (*kainotēs*). For Aristophanes in *Clouds*, the sophists and, in particular, Socrates are not just a public nuisance (as they are in the other comedians), but a real and new threat that deserved from the comic writer a clever (*Clouds* 522) and new type of comedy (546). But what did Aristophanes consider that threat to be?

As is abundantly clear from my conclusions so far, the threat that Aristophanes perceives is not novelty and cleverness itself. As we have just seen, Aristophanes boasts of both of these elements and embraces Eupolis's and Cratinus's jibes against him—to this degree he becomes allied with Socrates and the new education. He tells us in the revised *parabasis* speech of *Clouds* that he had hoped that he himself would be regarded as *sophos* (wise or clever) when he first produced *Clouds*, because he thought that the audience was *dexios* (sophisticated). Nevertheless, he is writing this second version for those of the audience that he considers *sophos* and *dexios* (520–527, 535).[46] But Aristophanes's cleverness or *sophia* is clearly not Socratic, or to put it in Eupolis's term, it is not impious. I concur with Hubbard who concludes, "Aristophanes differs from Socrates in that there is a moral dimension to his *sophia*; his comedy is not only *sophos*, but also *sōphron*"[47] a point which Aristophanes twice emphasizes in the parabasis of *Clouds* (529, 537). From what we can gather from *Clouds*,[48] therefore, the problems of science and rationalism, the new and the clever, as Aristophanes sees it, arise when they impinge upon and undermine the good ordering of the *polis* and its citizens.[49] Socrates not only floats in the *meteōra* and studies the causes of celestial things, but he returns to earth and teaches this to anyone, even the country bumpkin, Strepsiades, and uses meteorological knowledge to prove to him that Zeus does not exist. Likewise, Socrates gladly attempts to teach Strepsiades and later his son the art of rhetoric, but he never questions Strepsiades's clearly immoral motives for doing so. Socrates is not immoral but amoral. He is an eccentric scientist and philosopher who has no idea what civic and political life entails. He is an *aēr*-head.

At the same time, Socrates is no Weaker Logos, who appears to represent a broad and exaggerated cross-section of sophistic immorality and hedonism.[50]

Socrates does not wish to "indulge his nature" in the vulgar sense of drinking, eating, and committing adultery. Socrates is, as the chorus itself makes clear, different from most sophists: he "struts around the streets and gives sideways glances and, unshod, endures many ills."[51] He is poor and has to steal to provide some little sustenance for his students (175–189). Unlike the depiction of sophists in other old comedies, Socrates nowhere in the play demands any pay.[52] Nor, as we have seen, does he win over his students by flattery. Indeed, he makes his students strip naked before entering (498) and educates them in enduring hardships (439–442, 694–745).[53] The students and Socrates live together and form a kind of *oikos* of pale souls. His students are devoted to him for his genius, not because he might teach them how to win in the law courts. When Pheidippides emerges from the think tank, he finds greater pleasure in showing off his knowledge and rhetorical abilities and in abusing his father than in relieving his father of his debts (1399–1405). Pheidippides does not hesitate to beat his father, but, as he says, "I would not wrong my teachers" (1467). Thus Socrates appears even more dangerous than other sophists whose students turn to politics or the law courts. He is not out for money or any other thing that the Weaker Logos desires. Rather, he seeks in *physiologia* (and, as a preliminary, the rhetorical art) what the nature of things is. By making the young men turn to *physiologia* (inquiries in natural science) and philosophy, he himself takes that position and gains that allegiance that sons formerly had with their fathers.[54]

Nevertheless both Socrates and the Weaker Logos do share a fundamental methodology: the art that Plato calls *antilogikē* (arguing contraries). Kerferd rightly pronounces this method to be "perhaps the most characteristic feature of the thought of the whole sophistic period."[55] Seneca (*Ep.* 88.43) tells us that Protagoras (most famous for this method with his lost work, *Antilogiai*) "avows that one is able to take either side on any question and debate it with equal success." Therefore, as we see from the debate of *logoi* in *Clouds*, conventionally held positions, such as that the side of the just or the *sōphrōn* or the law-abiding is the stronger, could be contradicted. In the play, Aristophanes criticizes the antilogical method on the grounds that it is entirely destructive without being constructive, or at least, without being ethically constructive.[56] As it is humorously imagined in *Clouds*, Zeus is denied, and in his place are only things of insubstantial nothingness, Whirling or Void or *Aer*. The Weaker Logos, in turn, undermines every aspect of conventional education and virtue, including *sōphrosunē* (restraint) and *aidōs* (respectful reverence), and in its place sets what he calls the "necessities of nature" which turn out to be mere corporeal hedonism.[57]

Aristophanes's critique is brought most clearly on stage in the finale. Pheidippides, having been trained by Socrates, returns home only to beat up his father and then to claim to be able to justify this act. He overthrows his

father's position by pointing to the subjective character of "good will" and "the just" (1410–19), by arguing that laws are relative (1421–26), and finally by appealing to the natural dispositions of animals: chickens fight against their fathers and they differ from us only in not writing laws (1427–29). The education of the young in intellectual skepticism and antilogy is not a mere nuisance for both *polis* and *oikos*, but may be destructive of it. The image of father-beating is but the most shocking, comic version of this possibility and comes to represent the undermining of all that holds authority by virtue of its conventional status and age. It represents the defeat of *nomos* at the hands of *physis*.

At the same time, however, both the Stronger Logos and Strepsiades are shown to be buffoons and incapable of defending traditional virtue on its own terms. *Clouds* itself, as we have learned from the *parabasis* to the revision of the play, represents the cleverness and newness that is necessary to take on the challenge imposed by the intellectual iconoclasts. On the comic stage, civic virtue, traditional education, and their resulting virtues, *sōphrosunē* and *aidos*, can be saved by the violence of Strepsiades and the help of the gods; but in reality the city needs to be able to examine and justify its traditional ways and so to provide a rational defense against the deconstruction of the sophists.[58] The traditional virtues need the *sophia* of the sophists combined with the *sōphrosunē* of men such as Aristophanes.

PEISETAERUS—PERSUADER OF HIS COMPANIONS

In the previous section I have, largely for the sake of convenience, referred to Peisetaerus's method as "sophistic." This term is highly problematic not only because of the pejorative sense it has acquired from at least Plato onward, but also because the sophists were not a homogenous group with defined doctrines, principles, and methods.[59] As we learn from Strepsiades, their big appeal to most people was their claim to teach anyone the ability to speak successfully in public, the art of rhetoric. But the actual output of writings we know to have been published by the "sophists," unfortunately in most cases known only from their titles, covers a vast area of expertise. As Kerferd concludes, however, "the most marked single characteristic of the movement as a whole . . . must be the sustained attempt to apply reason to achieve an understanding of both rational and irrational processes."[60]

As will soon be evident, it is the very differences and contradictions in ideas about, for example, human society, human nature, and justice that were debated in intellectual circles that Peisetaerus will exploit. He is not allied with any one, but uses different contemporary ideas to his own benefit, depending upon his addressee and his purpose. I would like here to outline,

however, two broad, intertwined and, in Aristophanes's eyes, characteristically sophistic methods which can be traced throughout the play: father-beating and the exploitation of tensions and contradictions inherent in the contemporary *nomos/physis* debate.

In *Clouds*, father-beating came to light as the comic representation par excellence of the destructive element of sophistic thought: the undermining of those values based upon traditional authority through the rhetoric of antilogy. In place of traditional values are set "the necessities of *physis,*" whether they are the desire to get away with injustice and adultery, or to act in accordance with the ways of chickens. *Physis* is left in an undefined state, an ethical vacuum that can be filled as the speaker sees fit. Because the very attempt to define human *physis* is itself plastic and intangible, it was able to be exploited by the sophists.[61] In his *Sophistici Elenchi* (173a 7–18), Aristotle tells us that to argue *kata physin* ("in accordance with nature") was the most common *topos* by which "all the earlier" sophists were able to bring their disputants to a paradox; because, as he argues, "to the earlier [sophists] what was according to nature was truth, and what was according to law was mere common opinion."

As I have earlier discussed, Konstan usefully approached *Birds* by broadly relating four different strands of utopian aspirations found in the play to different conceptions of society's interaction with *nomoi*: antinomia, anomia, megalonomia, and eunomia. Equally useful, I would argue, is the relation of the different utopian horizons delineated in *Birds* to different conceptions of *physis* employed in the play and exploited in its various senses. Each of the different utopias' relation to *nomoi* is based upon a fundamental difference in the understanding of *physis*. Furthermore, Konstan's *eunomia* does not appear in the play until after Peisetaerus has actually succeeded in founding his *polis* and has persuaded human beings to worship birds as gods. Thus Peisetaerus initially persuades (or in the case of the gods, threatens) the rest of the universe to accept bird divinity not by arguing that it is right by law, but rather by arguing that bird divinity and the bird *polis* is, in one way or another, more "natural." Therefore let us reform and expand Konstan's categorization to reveal how each involves a redefinition of *physis*.

1. Antinomia: this is the upside down world in which *nomoi* are inverted, but it is also a world that is clearly connected with the idea of a golden age, before human beings had to labor constantly to survive and where all their needs are provided spontaneously. In the traditional account of the golden age, as found in Hesiod,[62] we human beings of the iron age have declined from this happier state under Cronos. Zeus in anger concealed sustenance from men (Hesiod, *WD* 42); but originally both the gods and human beings were born from the same source (*WD* 108). This is the utopian ideal

whereby Peisetaerus (as well as the chorus of birds) wins over Euelpides and people like him. Human beings are promised a return to an earlier and more natural state. In the original state of nature human beings had the easy life. This is most humorously summed up in the remarks of Euelpides where he acknowledges that Athens is "by nature" great and happy, but there are just too many laws and too much hard work or *polypragmosune* (35–45). Euelpides desires a "natural" Athens defined as a "quiet" and golden-age Athens. Because needs are met and there is no scarcity, human *physis* (as a kind of noble savage) needs no *nomoi*.

2. Anomia—this state is best defined by the bird chorus itself. It is the pleasant (*hēdus*) life of the birds which, by the absence of law, stands in opposition to life in Athens. In Athens there are standards of what is *aischron* (shameful) and what is *kalon* (noble) because actions are "ruled by *nomos*" (753–56). It is, therefore, closely allied with the doctrine put forth in the papyrus fragments of Antiphon where those things that are set down to be advantages by laws are in fact "chains on nature" (Pendrick, 44 iv 1–5) and thus are causes of pain, whereas actions in accordance with nature are pleasant. Thus, as he argues, while it is the law to treat bad parents well, such behavior is actually painful and hostile to nature (44 v 4–17). But the anomian, natural bird state that Peisetaerus exploits goes beyond Antiphon (or at least what we have of Antiphon) in that it advocates a positive natural justice outside of the laws. One may beat one's father, not because of ambition or vengeance, but because this is the natural and just order of things; the young are naturally stronger than the old, and so the old will naturally have a lower place in the pecking order. A young bird can beat his father, but then gladly go on to look after him in his old age (1349–1357). Thus in the agon, the birds can quickly reject and lament the ways of their fathers and hand themselves and their nestlings over to Peisetaerus (539–47), but their agreement is based on Peisetaerus's argument that he will return them to the oldest and, therefore, most natural order (466–538; 690–703). Thus to this degree, bird anomianism also points to a pre-Socratic and "naturalistic" idea of justice—the natural order of the universe unconcerned with and abstracted from human morality.[63] *Physis* is therefore equal to a natural and just state which needs no laws outside of the laws of nature.
3. Megalonomia—this is the ideal best defined by Plato's Callicles (*Gorgias* 492a): "he lives rightly who allows his desires to be as great as possible and doesn't restrain them, and who, when these are as great as possible, is able to serve them by reason of his courage and intelligence, and to satisfy every desire as it arises." One could quote more from Callicles, but it is essentially a restatement of the Weaker Logos' argument to "indulge one's nature" and to scorn *sōphrosynē*. It is like bird anomianism to the

degree that its end is pleasure and the stronger by nature rule the weaker, but in the megalonomian framework, the natural order is one of a constant desire for more than one needs—*pleonexia*. It does not seek freedom from artificial restraints per se, but the freedom to constantly sate greater and greater desires. It wants to trample on and abuse the laws as protectors of the weak. This conception of *physis* is, therefore, appealing to the non-Euelpidean types, such as the metamorphosed tyrant, Tereus, sycophants, and others; and can also be used threateningly against the gods to justify bird-rule.

4. Eunomia—Though different in kind, each of these previous three strands essentially advocates setting the demands of physis over obedience to the laws of the city. Eunomia, on the other hand, is the state in which there is obedience to laws, and if anyone happens to breaks these laws, they are immediately and justly punished. From Lycurgus and Solon onward this was the state most envied by Greek poleis. As we have seen, when the sophists began questioning the origin and mutability of *nomos* in light of its opposition to *physis*, the inherent justice of laws became more problematic. Nevertheless *nomos* did have its proponents among the sophists (as well as the poets) as the necessary precondition for a civilized society. *Nomos* marks us off from our formerly bestials selves.[64] In the "Great Speech" of Protagoras, in Plato's dialogue of that name, Protagoras illustrates this progress in the form of a myth. The original and natural state of man is shown to be inadequate to deal with a hostile world. Even with the discovery of language and *technae* (teachable crafts and skills), the gifts of Prometheus (one of Peisetaerus's later allies in *Birds* and essential to the interpretation of the play), human beings could not survive because they continued to commit acts of injustice and to kill each other (322b). Therefore Zeus has to send down the political virtues (justice and *aidōs* (shame)) as a necessary addition to human nature. Unlike the *physis* of animals, human *physis*, therefore, becomes something that has to be checked for the sake of the political community and human survival.

These are the four strands of *physis* (conceptions of human nature) that run through the play and serve as the positive offering of Peisetaerus to various creatures in the cosmos. Each utopian possibility is offered to different individuals or groups. But each is ultimately a tool in the hands of the master of sophistic persuasion, Peisetaerus.[65] Nevertheless, in order to succeed in his persuasion Peisetaerus must, like the Weaker Logos, discredit the old ways by whatever rhetorical means he has. This, as we have learned from *Clouds*, is best achieved by "father-beating," whether literally, figuratively, or as often for Aristophanes, a conflation of both. Like Gaia in Hesiod's *Theogony*,

Peisetaerus urges on the younger generation in each cosmic realm to appropriate their father's position.[66]

In each of the three realms—birds, human beings, and gods—Peisetaerus takes his aim at the sons. He wins over the birds by arguing that their fathers deprived them of their divine sovereignty (539–47); the chorus of birds, trained by Peisetaerus, thereafter offer human beings a place without laws where father-beating is *kalos* (758–9). It is no surprise then that only young men attempt to enter Cloudcuckooland and that the first to reach the birdy gates is the *patraloias* or father-beater. The father-beater is told, in an apparent contradiction of the *parabasis*, not to beat his father, instead, Peisetaerus on his own authority decks him out like an orphan bird (1361) and sends him off to do duty at the edges of the empire, thereby ridding himself of the father-beating spirit in the youth, and at the same time protecting his realm. In a final twist, Peisetaerus persuades Heracles that, in accordance with the law (*kata nomous* 1650), a father has no legal obligation to a bastard son. So the bastard son, no longer having any legal obligation to his natural father, turns his fist upward, toward Zeus in the heavens with, as Peisetaerus says, "assault and battery in his eyes" (1671) and votes to turn *Basileia*—sovereignty of the universe—over to him.

In a comic world of birds, akin to that which Pheidippides hypothetically conjured in his argument in *Clouds* (1427–9), this repeated motif of "father-beating" must lead us again to see this manifestly, if comically rendered, sophistic method of operation.[67] With one hand Peisetaerus wipes away the fathers and the *nomoi*, with another he gives the sons all that their natures desire. In the end, however, Peisetaerus, the consummate "father-beater" becomes the new Zeus and figurative "father of gods and men." Thus *Birds* provides a continuation and deepening of Aristophanes's critique of the sophists as well as of traditional Athenian education found in *Clouds*. Peisetaerus, the hero of *Birds*, improves upon and corrects the methodology of Socrates in the *Clouds*. Where Socrates undermines the fathers, Peisetaerus in the end wins them over together with their sons; where Socrates challenges traditional *nomoi*, Peisetaerus finally rewrites and reestablishes them as his own for his own ends. The two broad and sophistic methodologies that I have identified in the play provide the armature upon which Aristophanes structures his play. Different utopian horizons are brought to light only to be discarded or refocused as each argument proves persuasive and the ambitious design of the hero grows ever greater. It makes sense, therefore, that I treat the play in a largely linear fashion, analyze the unfolding of the play as it occurs, and follow in detail how Peisetaerus achieves each of his acts of persuasion. In a play of such length, with so many repetitions and reformulations, it turns out that no scene is unnecessary.

SOME ASSUMPTIONS

It is fitting for anyone writing on Aristophanes to outline their allegiance as regards the question of the seriousness of Aristophanean comedy: were issues concerning politics, war, culture, and education for the most part merely the ingredients at hand with which the comic poet could concoct and display his craft and win renown as a popular, prize-winning laugh maker, albeit a witty and skilled one, or did Aristophanes believe and wish that his work might be a serious part of the volatile, questioning, and ever-evolving political, intellectual, and cultural milieu of late fifth-century Athens? And if the latter is true, where did Aristophanes's own loyalties lie? While it is very difficult to gauge Aristophanes's politics precisely,[68] as I hope is clear from my introduction, I believe that he did wish to be taken seriously by his audience and his readers. At the same time, however, I do not believe that Aristophanes was what the popular press might now call a "political animal;" that is, a hard-lined ideologue whose intention was to seek concrete changes to Athenian policy and institutions. After all, *Acharnians* or *Lysistrata* did not change the citizens' minds about the war, nor *Knights* about Cleon, nor *Wasps* about the law courts, for example. But then again, Aristophanes's comedy is not meant to cure society, but to lay it out and perform vivisection upon it so as to reveal its nature—under much Dionysian anesthetic, of course. His plays explore more broadly, from a comic perspective (a perspective that one feels Aristophanes thought was vastly under-appreciated), the relationship, tension, and corruption of those things that impinge upon man and his freedom (or his nature)—war, politics, the city, laws, elders, education, tradition (or *nomos* generally), and the gods—but which define the human as a political being.[69] Each play is highly contemporary and topical and so illustrative of the issues of late fifth-century Athens,[70] but, like Thucydides, Aristophanes uses the events of his times as a vehicle to explore τὸ ἀνθρωπινόν, the human predicament. Aristophanes's comedies are political in the broadest sense of being about the individual and the polis.[71]

A second element that arises in regard to the question of Aristophanes's seriousness is his dedication to the craft of poetry, and comic poetry in particular,[72] and its place in Greek society as a preeminent source of wisdom. For example, the initial pages of Silk's final chapter of *Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy* appear to prepare the reader for an estimate of the wisdom of Aristophanes's comedies as serious literature*:* "Aristophanes lays claim to sophistication, to originality, above all to seriousness . . . . The servant of the comic Muse lays claim to *sophia*, as poets in Greece traditionally had. He speaks for, or to, the community—and not only the immediate community, but the community of listeners, watchers,

or readers in the future—as poets had spoken since Homer." But for Silk, Aristophanes's seriousness and *sophia* lie in his challenging the limits and expectations of comedy, in his aesthetics, artistry, *pathos*, and his rivalry with tragedy.[73] While all of this is valuable and thought-provoking, it does not really address what one would traditionally think of as wisdom[74] as it applies to Homer and the lyric and tragic poets. That is, for example, the establishing and questioning of ethical values, of exemplary and dishonorable character traits, of right relations with the gods, of man in the cosmos, man and the *polis*, and so on.[75]

Nevertheless, I think that Silk is correct in asserting that Aristophanes is a serious *writer*.[76] His focus is not only upon the immediate audience in the theaters of Dionysus, but also upon that audience that will discuss his plays outside of the theater and finally those contemporary and future *readers* who will pick up and probe his work.[77] In the parabasis of *Clouds*—a written, revised script which appears in some respects to be unperformable[78]—the poet states "if you enjoy me and my inventions, you will be thought by other ages to be intelligent." Like all poets, Aristophanes is also writing for posterity. As Silk points out, "Aristophanes himself preferred to write the book and leave the producing/directing to someone else."[79] And Lowe, and later Nieddu, have shown that Aristophanes himself must have used and collected the written texts of other poets, especially Euripides.[80] I do not mean to imply that Aristophanes is writing primarily to be read or that trying to envision the visual performance of the play and the audience's reaction is not fruitful and necessary for our understanding of his plays, but that Aristophanes is writing *also* to be read—on the assumption that his readers do know the visual *mise en scène* and conventions of the comic stage.[81] As Ford has argued, a reading audience only slowly grew during the fifth century, so that even in 404, Dionysus can be mocked for the pretentiousness of his reading Euripides in *Frogs*.[82] Nevertheless, it is clear from the breadth of Aristophanes's own allusions—from Homer, Hesiod, the lyric poets, tragedy as well as philosophy—that his own library was exceptional for his time.[83]

In short I undertake interpreting Aristophanes on the assumption that he was a part of the intellectually engaged and educated elite youth of the 420s, that he was *au courant* with the cutting edge of politics, literature, and philosophy and incorporated it into his work, and that he wanted to be a part of the heritage of Greek poets; that he wrote both to win the prize and to be appreciated by his own and future generations; that his literary subjects were not only contemporary, but lasting and permanent. There is no other way to support any of these assertions but by undertaking close readings of his plays with an attitude that assumes such aspirations of the poet. I offer one here.

NOTES

1. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. The rendering of puns, paratragic elements and so forth in comedy is a tricky business. In some instances I have borrowed these, consciously or not, especially from Sommerstein (1987) and Henderson (2000).

2. As regards meter, Parker (1997, 297) remarks, "The repeated use of certain rhythms with structural and thematic functions, which is so common a feature of Aristophanes's plays, is absent here. On the contrary, the chief metrical characteristic of [*Birds*] is diversity: every major type of metre found in Attic drama is represented, with, in addition, some rarities."

3. To be sure in most of the prologues of his plays, especially, *Knights, Wasps, Peace, Frogs*, Aristophanes does set up a kind of riddle for the audience as to what the overall plot of the play will look like, but this does not remain as sustained as it does in *Birds*.

4. Gelzer (1996, 214). Cf. Newiger (1970, 281–2) "Nun, auch sie repitieren in erstaunlichem Maße Formen und Elemente früherer Stücke, und dies mit großer Kunst, und verhullen damit, daß sie in vielem anders und moderner sind als die Komödien des Archidamischen Krieges . . . Ich bin doch überzeugt, daß die >Vögel< auch unter mehreren Stücken näher vergleichenbaren Charakters durch Umfang, Chorbehandlung und poetische Schönheit hervorstechen würden, weil sie mehr auf einer Vollendung im Gebrauch schon häufig angewandter Elemente als auf einer Eroberung neuer Formen und Darstellungsmittel beruhen."

5. Sommerstein (1987, 1–2). But compare Ruffell's 2011 book on the *ideological* function of fantasy—which he terms "anti-realism" and "the impossible"—in Old Comedy and its evolving exploitation in *Birds*. For a more succinct account of his argument see Ruffell (2014, 212): "Nephelokokkygia is then a world of paradoxes: like Athens but also suffering from Athens, human and nonhuman, anti-imperialist and imperialist. This paradox goes to the heart of comic utopias, being both aspirational and satirical."

6. Rogers (1906, xii) considered that "Athens was at the height of her power and prosperity" and that "no shadow of the coming catastrophe dimmed the brightness of the outlook;" also Croiset (1909), reprint (1973, 126–31); Handel (1963, 317–20); Newiger (1970, 259); Dover (1972, 145–6); Sommerstein (1987, 4–5), with some reservations; Dunbar, 5–6; MacDowell (1995, 227–8), Major (2013, 123–32). Slater (1997), on the other hand, believes that Aristophanes's happy and fantastic creation here is a consolation to the Athenians for the price they have had to pay for the war and its effect upon Athenian society and democracy. Cf. also, Murray (1933, 146): *Birds* is an "escape from the worry and sordidness of life"; also Koch 1965.

7. Some have gone overboard in trying to find allegorical correlations between *Birds* and contemporary figures concerned with the Athenian empire and in particular the Sicilian expedition, beginning with Süvern (1835); more recently see Katz (1976) and to a lesser degree Henderson (1997), Ambler (2012). Vickers (1989) on the other hand argues that Peisetaerus is Alcibiades in Sparta (=bird-land) convincing the Spartans to take on the Athenians (=Olympians). Sidwell (2009, 247) argues that

Peisetaerus=Critias, and that the "play's attack, then, is focused upon individuals . . . some of whom had been implicated in the Mutilation of the Herms." None of these interpretations has any solid base and they have found few supporters. Against these allegorical interpretations see, for example, the arguments of MacDowell (1995, 222–3). That there is some thematic connection, though not directly allegorical, with the Sicilian expedition and Athenian imperialism is maintained, for example, by Turato (1971–72, 115–8); Solomos (1974, 178–9); Newiger (1983); Romer (1994, 1997); Major (2013, 123–32). For Peisetaerus as a negative character who represents the moral and political degeneration in Athenian society, cf. Nicev (1989); Bowie (1993, 168–72); Hubbard (1997); Anderson and Dix (2006). This is not to deny that Aristophanes had such figures as Alcibiades and Critias in mind when he broadly conceived of the character of Peisetaerus.

8. Arrowsmith (1973, 140). Thus (142–3) the city of birds represents at first "an Athens untempted by Eros . . . still at one with the world around it. . . . Then, under the blandishments of political suasion, the Birds become estranged from apragmosune and hesychia; they are tempted by a dream of Eros. And at this point we can glimpse, in something like historical perspective, the way in which the island allies of post-Persian Athens surrender their collective strength into the hands of the persuasive tyrant-city and deliver themselves up to the Great Design of Pisthetairos." Later Arrowsmith makes his reading more general to encompass a more metaphysical concept of a destructive and political eros of which Athenian *polypragmosunē* is representative. Arrowsmith thereupon makes Peisetaerus a kind of everyman in his revolt against the human condition. This final step goes too far. Euelpides, a more typical Aristophanic hero, does not like Peisetaerus's revolt. See also Perkell (1993, 3) who argues that "the primary target of Aristophanes's satire here is not so much Athens as human nature."

9. Bowie (1993, 176).

10. Konstan (1997, 16–7).

11. Note that in the prologue I use the line allocations of Coulon (1928). See Appendix 1 for my reasons.

12. See the interpretation of Nelson (2016, 230–40), esp. 236: "The *Birds* is about the inherent insanity, and even the self-defeating insanity, of human ambition, but it is also a glorification of the drive and ingenuity such an ambition produces."

13. As, for example, Halliwell (1997, 13): "*Birds* is, we might conclude, the extreme, the paradigmatic case of the Aristophanic comic imagination as the realm of an 'airy nothing': it acts out a gigantic, compound metaphor for the mind's capacity to take flight from reality into fantasy, yet does so in order to realize urges which remain, in the final analysis, all too human, all too (back) down to earth." Cf. also Amati (2010) who argues that Peisetaerus creates a "pre-civic" tyranny that allows the hero the space to "redesign the cosmos to his liking" and where he can do whatever he pleases.

14. Hubbard (1997, 27).

15. Henderson (1997, 135–48).

16. Dunbar (1997, 63) following Heberlein (1980), recognizes the sophistic influences in Peisetaerus's arguments but argues that Peisetaerus displays sophistic

techniques "only in expounding his Grand plan in prologue and agon," and these are used chiefly for humor. He merely needs the best and most absurdly funny arguments he can muster for the agon. I will offer a broader assessment of Peisetaerus's sophistic technique. Sidwell (2009, 236–52) also argues that the play "has an intellectual theme tied to the Socratic group." Rothwell (2007) suggests that the play is a parody of "anthropological" accounts of the rise of human civilization (such as found in Protagoras, Democritus, and Thucydides, for example). I agree that this is part of the play's focus (and discuss it more in my Conclusion). All in all, however, Rothwell (2007, 181) appears to side with those who see the play as a kind of wish fulfillment but with a sophistic, contemporary twist—the creation of the new city merely fulfills the "life of newlyweds" that is hoped for at the beginning of the play but in an urban, political environment; (179): "Aristophanes affirms that progress is possible: if brute animals, creatures of nature, can coalesce into a community, then (in the world of this comedy) there is hope for human beings as well."

17. For the makeup of those charged with impiety, whether for the sacrilege of the mysteries or the mutilations of the Herms, see Ostwald (1986, Appendix C) who attempts to identify 64 of the named defendants (though there were at least 300 charged for the mysteries alone (Andocides 1.37) and concludes that almost all were young men aged 25–35, elite, and connected with sophistic circles. That is, roughly those who, on the comic stage, were educated in Socrates's *phrontisterion*.

18. Cf. *Clouds* 510–517. The chorus wishes Strepsiades luck in his new educations because "though advanced into the depths of old age, he is dipping his nature into new (*neōteroi*) affairs and pursues *sophia*." In *Clouds*, this turns out to have disastrous results. In *Birds* on the other hand this combination is successful.

19. In the parabasis of *Clouds,* Aristophanes recounts the difficulty of his "giving birth" to *Daitales* because of his extreme youth (530). Halliwell (1980, 42–3) appears to me to be correct in arguing that the "certain men" (528) who spoke well of the play were older men of some standing and literary knowledge who brought the play to the *archon* in order to vouch for its high merits and thus to secure the play a chorus. If this were the case, we might well believe that its outstanding character was, in part, due to its innovation in theme. The only Old Comedy, for which we have evidence, that may have used themes concerning the sophists and that may have been prior to *Daitales* is the *Panoptai* of Cratinus. The scholia to Aristophanes *Clouds* 96 tell us that "Cratinus in *Panoptai* mocked Hippon the philosopher" for saying that the sky was like an oven cover. But it cannot be ascertained to what degree this theme played a part in the comedy nor is the dating at all secure. Storey (2011, vol. 1, 341) remarks, "simply put, we can say very little for certain about either date or theme." Bakola (2010) doesn't discuss the play. On this parabasis in *Clouds* see also Biles (2011, 167–210).

20. Storey (2003, 67–73) would like to have this play precede *Clouds* (i.e., in 424). In any case it precedes the death of Hipponicus in 421 so it could be as early as 429, Eupolis's first production. About this play all we can say is that there is a teacher (probably equivalent to an elementary school teacher) called Prodamus, who teaches both music and writing. There is also, as in *Clouds*, a scene that involved the attempted education of an old man from the country.

21. We know that Gorgias had visited Athens in 427 as an ambassador for Leontini and Plato's *Protagoras* portrays a time (whose dramatic date cannot be definitively pinned down, but whose sophistic milieu is likely in part based upon a period of influx of sophists around and after the Peace of Nicias (see Walsh 1984; Wolfsdorf 1997) of excitement for the youth of Athens when Protagoras, Prodicus, and Hippias were all present.

22. Though one has to wonder whether Connus was in fact known for his dipsomania, or whether Aristophanes is just playing on his name Κοννός / κόνις; that is, the proverbially "thirsty dust," διψία κόνις (cf. Soph. *Ant.* 246–7, 429), especially given that the comparison is directed at Cratinus.

23. Sommerstein (1983, ad loc. 675) believes it is the musician. MacDowell (1971, ad loc. 675) sees no reason for equating the Connus of *Wasps* with this musician. Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc. 675) believe that the scholiast's suggestion is plausible.

24. Carey (2000, 420–3).

25. The attribution is based upon the fact that Athenaeus states, as above, that there was in *Connus* a chorus of *phrontistai*; therefore *Connus* is as good a play as any to attribute this fragment to. But the verb παράγω implies more than being in the chorus. The fact that Plato will later (*Euthydemus, Menex.)* say that Socrates took up the lyre in his old age, learning it from Connus, doesn't add much to this attribution—given that both *Euthydemus'* and *Menexenus'* dramatic dates are for the last decade of the fifth century. Though Storey (2011, Vol. 1, 69) adds that Socrates's exploits at Delium in 424 may have brought him to the attention of the public especially as a man of endurance, in 415 *Birds* will mention that "everyone" has become Socratized (i.e., hungry, dirty etc. 1282), thus pointing to a time when Socrates may have been as much in the public eye as 423, and Ameipsias' *Comastai* was produced in the same festival as *Birds*. Thus it also is a candidate for this passage. But, I agree that *Connus* is much more likely.

26. On the "intellectuals" calling themselves the few in comparison to the rest (the undeserved arrogance of which Ameipsias is playing with here) see among very many other examples for example Heraclitus D-K B104 τίς γὰρ αὐτῶν νόος ἢ φρήν; δήμων ἀοιδοῖσι πείθονται καὶ διδασκάλωι χρείωνται ὁμίλωι οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι "οἱ πολλοὶ κακοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἀγαθοί," employing an old maxim for a new intellectual setting; and Plato: Agathon in *Symposium* (194b), τὸν Ἀγάθωνα φάναι, οὐ δήπου με οὕτω θεάτρου μεστὸν ἡγῇ ὥστε καὶ ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι νοῦν ἔχοντι ὀλίγοι ἔμφρονες πολλῶν ἀφρόνων φοβερώτεροι; and Socrates ironically praising the twins Euthydemus and Dionysidorus, *Euthydemus* 303c-d. Storey (2011, 71) takes the joke to be merely numerical—Socrates is best only if there are a few present; as does Carey (2000, 420). Olson (2007, 237) calls this "a riddling phrase," but appears to endorse the interpretation given here, citing Fritzsche.

27. πίνειν γὰρ αὐτὸν Πρωταγόρας ἐκέλευ,' ἵνα / πρὸ τοῦ κυνὸς τὸν πνεύμον' ἔκπλυτον φορῇ. "For Protagoras ordered him to keep drinking so that he might have his lungs thoroughly washed out before the dog-star rises." Cf. Carey (2000, 422).

28. Achilles Tatius *Introduction to Aratus* Phaen. 1.3 attributes to Aristophanes the unassigned relative clause: ὃς τἀφανῆ μεριμνᾷ, τὰ δὲ χαμᾶθεν ἐσθίει; "who ponders the things unseen, but eats the things of the earth."

29. In an unassigned passage of Eupolis (K-A 386), the joke against Socrates is an inversion of this against Protagoras. While "the beggar" Socrates has cogitated (πεφρόντικεν) about everything else he has *not* concerned himself with where he will be able to get something to eat.

30. Carey (2000, 425).

31. Carey (2000, 430). But then again, earlier Carey had suggested that sophists were probably named in *Connus*'s chorus.

32. Carey (2000, 431). But to re-iterate, as Carey does throughout his essay, it is impossible to know for sure whether, for example, Eupolis was more interested in real sophistic issues than the fragments reveal. Compare the statement of [Dionysius of Halicarnassus] *Ars Rhet.* 8.11: Ἡ δέ γε κωμῳδία ὅτι πολιτεύεται ἐν τοῖς δράμασι καὶ φιλοσοφεῖ, ἡ τῶν περὶ τὸν Κρατῖνον καὶ Ἀριστοφάνην καὶ Εὔπολιν, τί δεῖ καὶ λέγειν; ἡ γάρ τοι κωμῳδία αὐτὴ τὸ γελοῖον προστησαμένη φιλοσοφεῖ. "Why need one even mention that the comedy around the time of Cratinus, Aristophanes, and Eupolis engages with politics in its plays as well as with philosophy. For comedy herself, having put forward what is funny as a screen (or an excuse?), philosophizes." On the other hand there must be a good reason why Plato singled out Aristophanes and/or his works for such prominent parts in *Apology, Symposium*, and the community of women in *Republic.*

33. Vander Waerdt (1994, 66–75). Mayhew (2011, 169) Socrates's "elementary" or initiatory lessons to Strepsiades in *grammatikē* were likely based upon Prodicean theory." See also Papageorgiou (2004) for the sophistic sources of the *agon* of *logoi* in the play. Plato does not conceal Socrates's admiration for Prodicus in these matters, nor that for Damon, Socrates's teacher in *mousikē.* While Aristophanes does reveal to us the preparatory lessons that Socrates gives Strepsiades in *mousikē* and *grammatikē*, we have to infer the "advanced" lessons he gives to Pheidippides from the comic portrayal of the newly educated son's subsequent actions. As Socrates's example in Plato's *Republic* makes clear, you have to shoo off the old father (Cephalus) before you can really educate the youth and subject conventional justice to the Socratic *elenchus*.

34. By the time we reach the production of *Birds*, however, this battle of personas appears largely to have disappeared. As Bakola (2008, 3–4) notes, "But the extant plays and fragments suggest that having reached its climax in the 420s, the active involvement of the authorial persona had progressively less appeal with audiences thereafter and hence appeared more sporadically and in a far more oblique manner. Apart from indicating audience tastes, the evidence also suggests that while in the 420s the comic poets' readiness for competitive poetics through persona was strong, later the dynamics between them were such that this poetic strategy gradually faded out."

35. Biles (2002), further reinforced by Bakola (2008, 11–5); (2010, 13–80) esp. on Cratinus's persona as the "Dionysiac poet."

36. On this fragment I agree most with O'Sullivan (2006, 163) who writes that εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων "refers to the tension between [Aristophanes's] façade of conservatism and his profound debt to the new intellectual movements of the second half of the fifth century BC in Athens." Bakola (2010, 24–25) argues that this parabatic passage is part of Cratinus's defense of his persona as an old-fashioned, Aeschylean, and muse-inspired poet, against that of the new sophisticated and *technical* poets,

Aristophanes and Euripides. See also Sidwell (1995, 62–3); Biles (2011, 7–8 and 124–7).

37. See especially Storey (2003, 278–303); Kyriakidi (2007); Bakola (2008, 20–26); Sidwell (1993, 1994, 1995); Sommerstein (1992); Halliwell (1989).

38. His reasoning is as follows: In a third century AD rhetorical treatise attributed to Apsines, the author describes a situation in which Eupolis is convicted of *xenia* and sold as a slave to Lycon, who then entrusts his son to him. Storey reasonably assumes that this is a description of a comic plot and that it works, like Cratinus's *Pytine*, by having the author become a character in his own play; that is, as a slave-tutor to Autolycus. Given the rivalry among the poets, it may also be conjectured that, like Cratinus's in *Pytine*, this self-portrait in *Autolycus* arose in response to comic utterances in another poet's play, here the allusions in Aristophanes *Wasps* and *Peace* to some unnamed other poets' habit of using their victories to pick up boys in wrestling schools. The scholia (*Wasps* 1025c, *Peace* 763bc) tell us that the unnamed poet is Eupolis. Thus, in *Autolycus* Eupolis becomes the tutor of the most famous and beautiful *eromenos* in Athens. How the plot then panned out we cannot say, but the scholia to Plato *Apology* (19c) tells us that in this play Aristophanes is mocked for his use of the large statue of Peace in *Peace* and the scholia to *Wasps* (1025b) remarks that Eupolis accused Aristophanes of being arrogant and making a display of himself to the boys in the wrestling schools (apparently throwing back his own charges upon Aristophanes). Therefore it is not unreasonable to assume, with Storey—who uses as further evidence a story from Aelian (*NA* 10.41) of Eupolis's quarrel with a "young fellow slave" (ὁμόδουλος αὐτῷ νεανίας) over his filching of plays—that Aristophanes himself played the part of a slave competing with Eupolis for the role of "tutor" of the beautiful Autolycus. See also n. 41 below.

39. Bakola (2008) takes Storey's reconstruction for granted and further argues that Eupolis employed in his plays the persona of "poet-teacher" (like Hesiod, Solon etc.), a figure which Aristophanes had distorted into a predatory pederast of the wrestling grounds posing as a teacher.

40. On the term καινός and its semantic range connected in particular with new τέχναι, especially in Attic usage, see D'Anjour (2011). Also Wright (2012, 70–102).

41. The sources for this quote, which are largely concerned with the word in speaker B's line ἄμβων, mistake the author of the lines and attribute *Autolycus* to Aristophanes. This mistake makes more sense if the character who speaks the words in the play is Aristophanes.

42. Storey (2003, 88).

43. Cf. also *Wasps* 1044.

44. Bakola (2008, 10). As Sommerstein (1992, 22) notes, "With one doubtful exception, no evidence survives of any passage in which an Old Comic dramatist other than Aristophanes claimed credit for the intellectual sophistication of his comedies."

45. Bakola (2008, 10).

46. *Sophos* and *dexios* are used of Socrates or the inhabitants of the *phrontisterion* in numerous passages (94, 148,205, 331, 412, 418, 428, 489, 491, 757, 764, 773, 841, 852, 895, 898, 925, 956, 1024, 1057, 1111, 1202, 1207, 1309). In *Clouds*, therefore, these adjectives become marked as connoting the "sophistic" qualities of the

inhabitants of the *phrontisterion*. For further arguments that Aristophanes deliberately parallels and contrast his and Socrates's *sophia* in the parabasis, cf. Hubbard (1991, 94–106); Vander Waerdt (1994, 75–79); Nussbaum (1980).

47. Hubbard (1991, 95); cf also Vander Waerdt (1994, 77); Biles (2011, 208–9).

48. For a fuller interpretation of Clouds see Ch. 7 below.

49. Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (trans. Haldane 1995, 1.427): "Aristophanes regarded the Socratic philosophy from the negative side, maintaining that through the cultivation of reflecting consciousness, the idea of law had been shaken, and we cannot question this conception."

50. See Papageorgiou (2004).

51. *Clouds* 362–3. In Plato's *Symposium* (221b), Alcibiades adapts this line from Aristophanes because it so well describes the real Socrates. That the Socrates of *Clouds* is a parody of Socrates himself and not of some conglomerate of sophistic thinkers, as Dover (1968, xxxii–lvii) so influentially argued, though this argument could previously also be found, for example, in Grote (1862, 6:136–38); Starkie (1911, xxx–xxxvii), has by now been well established. The case was well made by Kierkegärd (1841) and Taylor (1911), and I hope now has regained the ascendancy. See Havelock (1972, 1–18); Nussbaum (1980, 71–4); Kleve (1983); Edmunds (1985); Tomin (1987); Hubbard (1991, 88–112); Mignanego (1992, 71–101); Vander Waerdt (1994, 44–86); Andic (2002); Erbse (2002); Papageorgiou (2004); Moore (2015). Konstan (2011) lays out both sides of the argument. Nevertheless, Dover (1968, liii) is astute in revealing what Aristophanes suggests is the basic problem of the sophist: "he undermines the loyalty on which the city's continued existence depends, and he casts a shadow over the ordinary pleasures of life by the unspoken implication that there may be other, secret pleasures accessible to him alone."

52. Strepsiades in his ignorance takes Socrates to be a regular sophist and assumes that Socrates will demand a fee (98). Socrates himself does not ask for a fee and when Strepsiades does offer Socrates something (1146–7), we only know that it is something in the masculine gender. The scholia suggest that it is a sack of flour; Dover (1968) ad loc. 1146 would like it to be something like a decrepit he-goat, a dog, or old cloak. I myself would like it to be a hen—thus joking that Strepsiades is still bungling the gender lesson given by Socrates. In any case, whatever paltry thing it may be, Socrates does not complain. If he did charge fees, it would be strange to see him go so dirty and hungry, unlike the other sophists.

53. On the connection of this image of "stripping naked" with the Socratic injunction to "know thyself" see Moore (2015).

54. For Loscalzo (2010, 224) Socrates's teaching is not in itself the problem, but the fact that he provides a distraction from the more necessary duties of the polis: "it is precisely through his investigations of the world of animals, the stars and of physis that [Socrates] distracts the attention of the Athenians and his interlocutors from social and political problems." This may be so, but is really only part of the problem.

55. Kerferd (1981, 85); cf. also his conclusions at 34. The antilogical method was not confined to such things as *Dissoi Logoi* ("opposing arguments") as exemplified in the Stronger and Weaker Logos, but includes among other things Socratic *elenchus*, which as Kerferd rightly argues, is a method which ought not to be attributed to

Socrates alone among the sophists. Though if the depictions of Plato and Xenophon are historical, he would have been publicly known to be an avid employer of the technique. In Plato's *Sophist* 232b, the Eleatic Stranger says that the one clear thing that can be attributed to the sophist is that he is "*antilogikos.*"

56. Cf. Plato, *Republic* 539b2–7 on the education of the young in antilogies: "For I think that it has not escaped you that the young, when they first taste arguments, always misuse them as in a game, always using them for the sake of antilogy; and imitating refuters (ἐξελέγχοντες), they themselves refute (ἐλέγχουσι) others. Like puppies they delight in dragging and tearing with arguments whoever is around . . . and whenever they themselves refute many and are refuted by many, they soon and excessively fall into a state of believing nothing which they formerly did. As a result of this they themselves and philosophy as a whole is discredited in the eyes of other men."

57. Cf. Revermann (2006, 224): "Socratism and the ideology encapsulated by Weaker Argument radically undermine traditional values without offering viable alternatives to them."

58. For further argument along these lines see Chapter 7.

59. For a summary of the history of the term and its modern interpretation see Schiappa (2003, 3–12).

60. Kerferd (1981, 174).

61. Kerferd (1981, 180) argues that "the appeal from nomos to physis was in one of its aspects intended to be destructive of Nomos in the sense of traditionally accepted norms of behavior. But it was probably never meant to be merely destructive. Its real objective was to substitute a more satisfying and satisfactory set of norms in place of those that were no longer fully acceptable . . . their replacement where necessary, but only where necessary, and replacement by something that would be intellectually satisfying." Both the *Birds* and the *Clouds*, however, point to Aristophanes's critique of such an interpretation. If *nomoi* themselves are subjected to sophistic "destruction," on what grounds can even the new "intellectually satisfying" *nomoi* that arise out of this process gain the authority that, for example, Strepsiades requires when Strepsiades is not as clever as his son? We might recall Thucydides's Spartan King, Archidamas, who boasts that "we are men of good counsel" precisely because their education is "not clever enough to despise the *nomoi*" (1.84.3).

62. Hesiod is an important intertext for a great part of the antinomian and golden-age elements in *Birds,* which I will discuss throughout. Cf. Hofmann (1975); Zanini-Quirini (1997); Bowie (1993); Romer (1997); Stamatopoulou (2017).

63. Cf. Irwin (1989, 41): "The naturalists' tendencies towards monotheism result from their basic determinist principles. They believe the universe is a world order; it displays laws and regularities . . . the order, law and justice of the universe manifest a single intelligence. Divine law and cosmic justice keep the sun in its place." On Aristophanes's engagement with the pre-Socratics and particularly Parmenides and Empedocles see Clements (2004).

64. For human society conceived of as progress from a more primitive, and less pleasant state, reaching its pinnacle in the advent of political society and laws see, for example, Sophocles *Antigone* 332–75; Isocrates *Nicocles* 6–7; Anonymus Iamblichi

DK 26–9 and for many other examples see Kahn (1979); Guthrie (1971, 60–83); Kerferd (1981, 139–62), and my conclusion.

65. The mastery of Peisetaerus is also reflected in the dramaturgy of the play. As Dobrov (1997, 111–5), Slater (2002, 137–9), and Compton-Engle (2015, 135, 140) point out, Peisetaerus assumes the position of a dramatic *didaskalos* as he directs the action of the play. For Compton-Engle, who focuses on the play's costumes (129–43), Peisetaerus's mastery of the birds' beaks, donning of the bird costume, and then his role as distributor of costumes (cloaks and then wings) reveals his dominance over both humans and birds. With his final acquisition of Zeus's scepter and then bridegroom's robe, his supremacy now visually spans across all three realms; "Peisetaerus's ability to manipulate costumes emerges in tandem with his verbal prowess."

66. As Stamatopoulou (2017, 192–221) has recently asserted, arguing against Hofmann (1976), Zannini Quirini (1987), and the second *hypothesis* to the play, who concentrate on the play as a comic reworking of the Gigantomachy or Titanomachy, "it is the Succession Myth that provides the fundamental template for the plot of *Birds*" (197).

67. Cf. B. Strauss (1993, 157): "The beating of father by son is a wicked symbol of the revolutionary potential of sophistic education."

68. For a review of the different sides in this debate see Olson (2010). The questions that must arise when one considers Aristophanes's own politics are very difficult to answer. Is what is apparently advocated or mocked in comedies about political matters: the poet's opinion (de Ste Croix 1972; Ober 1998)? purely for comedy's sake (Heath 1987)? an intelligent distillation of popular opinion (Henderson 1990)? or did he voice popular opinion (and not necessarily his own) to win the prize (Sommerstein 1998)? was mockery the essential duty of the comic poet at the festivals of Dionysus (Goldhill 1990)? or ought we to recognize a multifaceted combination of each of these things depending on the particular play (Carey 1994)? The only way we can get to anything like Aristophanes's position is to read and envision each play carefully and, finally, with a view to how it fits together as a whole. Thus I most agree, in principle, with Carey's position.

69. See now Nelson (2016) who has thoughtfully explored the importance of the Aristophanic or comic perspective by comparisons and parallels with tragedy.

70. Cf. Ruffell (2014, 206): "Old Comedy seems in its own way to have been at the forefront of public speculation, going beyond and perhaps leading the radical edge of Greek ideas."

71. Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (trans. Haldane 1995, 1.427–8), "It is seen that, on the one hand, Socrates was treated quite unjustly; but then we must recognize the merit of Aristophanes, who in his *Clouds*, was perfectly right. This poet, who exposed Socrates to scorn in the most laughable and bitter way, was thus no ordinary joker and shallow wag who mocked what is highest and best, and sacrificed wit with a view to making the Athenians laugh. For everything has, to him, a much deeper basis, and in all his jokes there lies a depth of seriousness. He did not wish merely to mock; and moreover what was worthy of honour would be perfectly bald and flat. It is a pitiful wit which has not substance, and does not rest on contradictions lying in the matter itself. But Aristophanes was no bad jester. It is, generally speaking,

not possible to joke in an external way about what does not contain matter for joking or irony in itself. For what is really comic is to show a man or a thing as they disclose themselves in their extent; and if the thing is not itself its contradiction, the comic element is superficial and groundless."

72. Gomme (1938) appears to be the first to undertake this line of argument in the modern era.

73. As Silk (2000, 349) claims "The great satire is a means, not an end. If Aristophanes writes here as a public servant, it is as servant of the Muses. This does not mean that Aristophanic comedy loses its claims to be serious. It does mean that the seriousness it ultimately aspires to . . . is not the kind generally ascribed, or denied, to it."

74. I recognize that *sophia* does also have the sense of " technical skill or expertise," but that is not the sense in which I mean it here, nor does Silk when he states that Aristophanes "speaks for, or to, the community." Because Silk eschews any intentionalist reading of the plays, it is unlikely and undesirable that any Aristophanic wisdom along these lines be sought.

75. This is not to say that others have not treated Aristophanes with the kind of seriousness he deserves, but only to assert that it is quite rare. For another attempt to justify a philosophically nuanced reading of Aristophanes, see the introduction to Clements' 2014 book on *Thesmophoriazusae*.

76. Silk (2000, 4–6). More recently, in a similar vein, Wright (2012) in *The Comedian as Critic*, has likewise offered a picture of the Old Comic playwrights different from that conventionally held. They write, he argues, for an elite niche of educated citizens, they write ironically and are hyper-literary, they care little for prizes or popular esteem, and write for a reading audience as much as, or more than, for the theater. The comic poets (16–17) "can be seen" to be "reducing problematic concepts to absurdity, exposing clichés, questioning or implicitly rejecting prevalent theories, criticizing lazy or conventional thinking, or just stimulating the audience to think more deeply about critical matters in general." After this introductory sentence, one again senses or hopes that comedy's wisdom will get its due. But, again, seriousness is confined to that of the poet as comic artist or technician. Everything the comic poets produce is ironic and therefore, although they raise important issues, "it is hard to discern whether they are saying anything serious about these issues. On balance, it seems more likely that we are dealing with a running series of jokes about serious intentions" (20).

77. A more typical position appears to be that of McDowell (1995, 223): "For the Athenian audience the first sight of a play was the only sight." Cp., on the other hand, Revermann (2006, 74): "Greek performance culture, then, is a reperformance culture . . . its author as well as its audience seriously and naturally reckoned with a reperformance at another place and festival."

78. Dover (1968, xcii–xciii). Though against this see Russo (1994, 105); Revermann (2006, 326–32); Biles (2011, 167–210).

79. Silk (2000, 5). Compare the jokes made by Ameipsias K-A 27, Aristonymus K-A 3, Sannyrion K-A 5 that Aristophanes was "born on the fourth" because he was always "working for others" or, for Ameipsias, "free from trouble" (*akopos*).

80. Lowe (1993); Nieddu (2004).

81. Cf. Rosen (1997, 411): "Aristophanes' attitude towards his poetry is bifurcated. As a playwright, and sometime director and producer he was certainly aiming to compose successful works of theater within the specific context of the Dionysian festivals; and it is probably safe to say that Aristophanes privileged the performative potential of his plays over a strictly literary one. We have seen, however, that Aristophanes also must have been driven by a parallel concern to 'get the play right,' by inscribing the performed event in a medium that would be able to engage not just one audience at only one moment in time, but any audience that could lay hands on the fixed work, the text."

82. Ford (2002, 153). But then again at *Frogs* 1114 the chorus suggests that everyone in the audience will have a book by which he can "understand the sophisticated things (*dexia*)" that Aeschylus and Euripides will say. Though this is clearly comic exaggeration, there must at least have been some in the audience who did have regular access to such books outside of the theater. See also Ford (2003, 30–33) who mentions a choral song of old veterans in Euripides' *Erechtheus* (Kannicht fr. 369). These men long for peace, putting up weapons, and getting reading for symposia in which they can "unfold the tablets' [*deltoi*] voice, which wise men make resound." On dating this play to 422 see Ford (2003, 31n56). Revermann (2006, 16) argues that the increasing number of re-performances of dramatic works "necessitated the broader circulation of a higher number of texts in the late fifth and throughout the fourth century."

83. Lowe (1993).

Chapter 1

Euelpides and Peisetaerus

THE PROLOGUE—EUELPIDES AND EUELPIDEAN UTOPIAS

Hypothesis II of the *Birds* tells us that a few months prior to its performance in 414, Aristophanes put on the *Amphiaraus* at the Lenaean festival. In this play, as far as can be gathered, Aristophanes depicted an old man who, with his wife, went to the temple of Amphiaraus in order to be cured or rejuvenated.[1] Although the particulars of the plot cannot be further elucidated, it is clear that Aristophanes, in this play at least, continued with the kind of plot and characterization which marked many of his earlier extant plays. An old man seeks a cure to his ills by implausible or fantastic means, and in the process reaches some kind of rejuvenation. It is tempting, with Gilbert Murray, to take the parabatic lines (K-A 30: οἶδα μὲν ἀρχαῖόν τι δρῶν, κοὐχὶ λέληθ' ἐμαυτόν, "I know that I am doing something old, and I don't deceive myself") as referring to Aristophanes's own awareness that this theme is becoming somewhat trite for him.[2]

Nevertheless, two months or so later in his production of *Birds*, Aristophanes again brings onto the comic stage his apparently favored type of lead character. Two old men come before the audience wandering hopelessly across the stage and complaining of their lost and miserable state. The scene, unlike any of his earlier extant productions, is set far from Athens. It is an unspecified wilderness, woody and rocky (20). There would also have been visible to the audience a single entrance to the hoopoe's nest or thicket (*lochmē*, 202, 207, 224, 265), hidden and surrounded by leaves (92) and rocks (94). The scene is thus set in untouched nature, like the ἄβροτος ἐρημία (uninhabited wasteland) of *Prometheus Bound* (2). The audience soon perceives, however, the familiar characteristics of an Aristophanic

hero. One of the old men, Euelpides, who takes the primary role of explication in the prologue,[3] tells us that they are Athenian citizens fed up with the busyness and litigiousness of Athens and are therefore in search of a quiet place. As in the prologue of his earlier plays, *Acharnians*, *Clouds,* and *Peace*, we quickly learn that the old man, distressed by some aspect of contemporary Athenian society, has decided to take matters into his own hands. Later we learn from Euelpides, in conversation with the hoopoe, that their condition is characterized, in particular, by a desire to avoid paying the debts they owe (114–16):

> ὅτι πρῶτα μὲν ἦσθ' ἄνθρωπος ὥσπερ νώ ποτε,
> κἀργύριον ὠφείλησας ὥσπερ νώ ποτε,
> κοὐκ ἀποδιδοὺς ἔχαιρες ὥσπερ νώ ποτε·[4]
>
> we wish to talk to you] because firstly you were once
> a human being as we are, and you once owed money,
> as we do, and you once enjoyed not repaying it, as we do.

The nature of his debts is not specified; rather, being in debt is described as a peculiarly and universally human trait.

In comparison to his earlier plays, Aristophanes depicts in only very brief and broad strokes the problem that motivates the heroes of the play. Furthermore, after the prologue of the play, neither the litigiousness of the Athenians nor the characters' debt is dealt with in any sustained or important way. Later in the play certain interlopers will try to enter Cloudcuckooland, but none of them has any bearing on the issue of the encroachment of the law courts on Athenian citizens' lives. We will see certain maleficent individuals connected in some way with the law courts, such as the sycophant, the decree seller, and the imperial inspector, but these represent elements of Athenian imperial *polypragmosunē*, that is, as it relates to the allied *poleis* and their citizens, not to Athenian citizens; and the messenger that reports the effects of "bird mania" in Athens indicates that the Athenians are as litigious as ever.

Nevertheless, in the prologue, Aristophanes does set up, in a very general and generic way a typical Aristophanic hero. Of Aristophanes's earlier heroes, Euelpides and the problem that he outlines most closely resembles that of Strepsiades at the beginning of the *Clouds*. Both are clearly men of the countryside and, unlike Dicaeopolis and Trygaeus, both are not too smart. Euelpides is, as he tells Tereus, an "avoider of the Heliastic court" (109), a type of Athenian that one could only find in the countryside (111). Both wish to avoid payment of debts rather than facing up to the real issue of paying them or being forced to pay them in suits brought against them in

the law courts of Athens. In important respects, however, Euelpides differs from Strepsiades.

In the *Clouds* Strepsiades is a man with a specific problem. He is an old rustic who, to his detriment, married a rich and nobly born woman of the city. His beloved son, following the ways of his wife's family, has taken up with the horsy set. Strepsiades himself would prefer to live the rustic life enjoying the pleasures of a farmer. As it is, however, he spends his nights trying to work out ways to pay off his debts. He is bound to his family, his *oikos*, and seeks in every way to preserve it. Unfortunately, the means he discovers to overcome his debts, the cleverness of the Weaker Logos, will ultimately lead to the undermining of the *oikos*. His son, schooled in such thought, will attempt to prove the justice of beating Strepsiades, his father, as well as his own mother. Though foolish and lacking in foresight, Strepsiades is ultimately a sympathetic character; a man who, in his desperation, chooses the wrong path for his situation, and finally repents of his folly. Nevertheless, his authority as father by the end lies in tatters. It is only through violence and ingrained tradition (exemplified by the auxiliary role of Hermes in the finale), that the semblance of his *oikos* remains intact—but without the respect (*aidos)* of his son (1467–75).

In *Acharnians*, after first attempting to use political means to regain his former contented, rustic life, Dicaeopolis turns his back on the contemporary Athenian *polis* and gains a treaty not only for himself, but also for his children and his wife (130–132; 241–79). In *Birds*, two Athenians go a step further and turn their backs on both their city *and* their *oikos*. They are, as Euelpides tell us, men of proper Athenian heritage, as opposed to Execestides (11) or Sacas (31). They belong to both *phyle* and *genos* (33); that is not only to the more recent Cleisthenic tribes, but also to one of the more ancient aristocratic groups of families.[5] They choose to give up these privileges and their accompanying responsibilities in order to find a quieter place. Euelpides appears, therefore, to be no Strepsiades or Dicaeopolis. His aim, as far as we can gather at this early stage, is to find a place to satisfy only his personal, individual well-being, not that of his family.

Euelpides explicitly tells us that it is not the greatness of Athens that he hates, but the fact that the Athenians are always busy in the law courts.

ἀνεπτόμεσθ' ἐκ τῆς πατρίδος ἀμφοῖν τοῖν ποδοῖν,
αὐτὴν μὲν οὐ μισοῦντ' ἐκείνην τὴν πόλιν
τὸ μὴ οὐ μεγάλην φύσει εἶναι κεὐδαίμονα
καὶ πᾶσι κοινὴν ἐναποτεῖσαι χρήματα.
οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὖν τέττιγες ἕνα μῆν' ἢ δύο
ἐπὶ τῶν κραδῶν ᾄδουσ', Ἀθηναῖοι δ' ἀεὶ
ἐπὶ τῶν δικῶν ᾄδουσι πάντα τὸν βίον.

> We have flown from our fatherland on both feet, not because we hate that city for being great and successful by nature, and free for all to pay fines in. For even cicadas sing on their fig branches for a month or two, but the Athenians sing their whole life through on law suits. (35–41)

Euelpides does not begrudge Athens its natural (φύσει) greatness and success, nor the fact that Athens is common to all to enjoy. But, as the *para prosdokian* joke of line 38 makes clear, this combination necessarily results in constant litigation. Euelpides wants to eat his cake and have it too. He wants to find a *polis* with the wealth and success of Athens, but without its attendant problems—a quiet Athens. His ideal is a *polis* that can become and remain μεγάλη καὶ εὐδαίμων (great and successful) simply by nature (φύσει) and without effort.[6]

This paradox in Euelpides's conception of his goal becomes clearer in his discussions with Tereus. Euelpides characterizes his ideal city as a place which is "well-fleeced (εὔερον), like a woolly cloak and soft to lie back in" (122). As Dunbar (1994, ad loc. 122) notes, following the interpretation of the scholia, the noun upon which εὔερος is based, εὐερία, at this time could be used as a synonym for τρυφή or luxury. Euelpides's ideal city is comprised not merely of the simple comforts of a rustic. Therefore, Tereus's natural response to this is the surprised question (123)[7] as to whether Euelpides seeks a city which is greater (μείζω) than Athens, that is, wealthier and more able to provide the luxurious kind of life that he seeks. Euelpides, however, is not willing to concede to Tereus this necessary connection between greatness and luxury. It is not a greater city he seeks, but one which is more conducive to his way of life (124). Thinking that the problem must, therefore, be ideological and not connected with economic success, Tereus asks whether Euelpides would like to live in an aristocracy. This, however, is also not attractive to Euelpides (125–26). Euelpides appears to be happy with Athens both in its economic and political situation. Clearly Aristophanes is comically emphasizing that Euelpides has not thought through his position; he is confused and we watch on as his position evolves and unfolds, and as the humorous possibilities of the inconsistencies between his desires and what he has chosen to do become apparent.

Understandably unable to guess the type of city Euelpides seeks, Tereus asks him what sort of city he would most happily inhabit (127–134). It is a city, as befits Euelpides, without any real *pragmata* (troubles). The greatest *pragmata* would consist in one of his friends (τις τῶν φιλῶν) coming to his house early in the morning and inviting him and his children to a wedding feast. The relationship between him and his friends would be one of mutual fun in good times, but they would not summon him in their hour of need (134). As with his relationship to the *polis* where Euelpides seeks the luxury

of Athens, but is unwilling to deal with the *pragmata*, so too in his dealing with friends, he seeks only the rewards of friendship, not the attendant duties and concerns. In all of these cases, however, Euelpides seems to have missed the fundamental aspect of his decision to have come to Tereus. He has left behind the *pragmata* of the *polis*, Athens, but also all that this entails—his *oikos* and his *philoi* (friends and family), and these two elements are the very things that make up his ideal city.

It is in this context that we get Peisetairos' first extended speech in the play (137–142). Peisetairos desires a city where some father (τις πατήρ), who we learn later is a hereditary friend of the family (πατρικὸς φίλος), considers that Peisetairos has wronged him because he has not made sexual advances upon his beautiful young son. Peisetairos, as opposed to Euelpides, seeks a complete inversion of the prevailing relationships in regard to the *oikos* as currently exists in Athens. In his ideal *polis*, the father becomes an anti-father, a pander for active pederasts, instead of, as we learn in the *Symposium* (183c), the man who zealously guards and rebukes his son in regard to an *erastes*. For Peisetaerus, the natural ties within a family and here, in particular, between father and son, are an impediment to his desires. Thus, even at this early stage, we see a hint of the radical nature of Peisetaerus. His character, as shown by the description of his ideal city, points to one who has not left Athens out of a desire for luxury and ease, but who seeks a place of a different nature altogether, where his desires, unable to be met in Athens, may be fulfilled. He does not seek a quiet Athens, per se, but an anti-Athens, and, indeed, an anti-*oikos*.

When Euelpides has realized that places both as far as the Red Sea and within mainland Greece can be reached by Athenian *pragmata*, he asks Tereus what the life among birds is like. It is characterized first by being without wallets and therefore money. This appeals very much to Euelpides because, as his pun on κιβδηλία implies, with the issuance of money comes counterfeit and falsehood, and, as we recall from his earlier discussion, the problems of debt. Like Dicaeopolis (*Ach.* 33–36), Euelpides would prefer to live without having to buy things and in a place where the land would produce all things for him. This latter aspect is, in fact, as Tereus tells him, the case with the birds. They feed in gardens on white sesame, myrtle berries, poppies and water-mint. To this Euelpides again reacts with great approval; it is, as he says, the life of newlyweds. Commentators note that this remark points to a range of meanings. First it obviously expresses the joy Euelpides feels at the spontaneity of the growth of foods for birds. It, therefore, denotes a life of continual and carefree bliss. But, on another level, Euelpides is reacting to the types of fruits and seed mentioned. They are all connected with festivals and in particular, Euelpides's favorite festival, a wedding.[8] Additionally, as Henderson suggests, the names of several of these plants were used

of female genitalia.[9] Thus the life of newlyweds also suggests that Euelpides sees in the life of the birds a life of festive, conjugal, and also sexual pleasure. It tallies with the kind of life he seeks: free of debt and litigation, luxurious and festive, and fundamentally *oikos*-based. It is pre-political.

Thus Euelpides, who appeared to have a vision that looked beyond the *oikos*, and thus beyond that of Dicaeopolis or Trygaeus, is revealed to be fundamentally, though unconsciously, akin to them. Life with the birds satisfies his deepest instincts. He rejects the *polis* and its *pragmata* and stumbles upon a place where the *oikos* is primary. What initially began as a flight from Athens ends in an escape from the *polis* in toto. This progression was hinted at from the beginning in Euelpides's own paradoxical conception of his problem. He believed that a city could be *by nature* great and successful, that there could exist a *quiet* Athens[10] which would provide him with all good things, but not involve him in any *pragmata*. Thus, though Euelpides does have a kinship with previous Aristophanic heroes, his situation is obviously more open-ended and fantastic. He flees the *pragmata* of Athens, but not to an idealized pre-war Athens, as Dicaeopolis had,[11] but rather to an Arcadian, natural utopia far from Athens.

Much work has been done on utopian elements in Old Comedy. In particular, Farioli has usefully collected and analyzed the fragments of Old Comedy exhibiting utopian elements.[12] She divides utopias into two broad types: the land of Cockaigne (il paese di Cuccagna) and the upside-down world (il mondo alla rovescia). At the same time she makes clear that these elements are not mutually exclusive and that the goal of the author may be not only to parody the "real," but also to parody utopias and utopian goals.[13] The land of Cockaigne is characterized in particular by the "automatic" or spontaneous abundance of food and drink and, therefore, the absence of labor and slaves. As a result of this abundance come peace, quiet, and all other good things.[14] These lands are located in diverse temporal or local "other" places. For example, the *Ploutoi*[15] of Cratinus and the *Amphictyons* of Telecleides refer to a past happiness; the *Miners* of Pherecrates and the *Tagenistae* of Aristophanes refer to an idealized underworld; and the *Persians* of Pherecrates and the *Thuriopersians* of Metagenes refer to far-off existing places. The upside-down world, on the other hand, is characterized by inversion in one or more respects. There may be, for example, dissolution of hierarchies, the overturning of predominant values or categories of thought, and authority may be given to those usually precluded from it such as women, animals, or slaves.

If we return to the first 161 lines of the *Birds* we can see that Aristophanes is systematically playing with a number of these comic utopian conventions.[16] The two Athenians at the outset seek Tereus, not in order to become birds as he did, but to ask him if he has seen an already existing quiet, yet luxurious

place. There is no mention of becoming birds or founding a city with the birds until all existing options are found wanting. Their original objective is simply an escape from Athens to a quiet, luxurious place. At this point the audience may expect a play such as the *Persians* of Pherecrates in which the protagonists of the play decide to leave their army to join the barbarians in their sumptuous banquets;[17] indeed Tereus's suggestions of a *eudaimōn* polis beside the Red Sea (144–5) raises this very possibility for an instant. The play includes the traditional golden age motif of the automatism of abundances of food—in this case, the *automatoi* rivers of broth (K-A 137.3). Although such "automatism" was not explicitly mentioned by Euelpides, he is, as was noted above, looking for a city in which success, luxury, and all good things should arise spontaneously without toil or corresponding duties, and his subsequent delight at the description of bird life is in part motivated by the free abundance of food. Thus Aristophanes tantalizingly offers these generically Old Comic, utopian patterns only to undercut the audience's expectations.

For when Euelpides asks what the life with the birds is like, the expectations of the audience are jolted. Tereus becomes, not merely an adviser, but an example for Euelpides—metamorphosis is a possible comic way to escape *pragmata* and the *polis* altogether. Thus, for an instant, Aristophanes leads the audience to believe that the plot will resemble that of a "mondo alla rovescia" play such as the *Agrioi* of Pherecrates. This play, whose plot is briefly outlined by Plato in the *Protagoras* (327c-d), depicts a flight from the city to an *anomian*, other place, inhabited by pre-legal and pre-political savages. In the Platonic dialogue, Protagoras suggests to Socrates that the most unjust man who was brought up in a system of laws will be more just than a savage who has no education, legal system, and laws. He uses as his example the "savages like those which the poet Pherecrates produced at the Lenaia." He goes on to say "truly, if you were to have been among such men, as those misanthropes were among in that chorus, you would gladly come upon Eurybatus and Phryondas."[18] This play evidently shows anomian life in a bad light, and in the remaining fragments there is none of the automatism found in the "Cockaigne" utopias. We do, however, see in the "misanthropes" of the play a desire to leave modern Athens behind, and a longing for ancient Athens (K-A 10):

> οὐ γὰρ ἦν τότ' οὔτε Μάνης οὔτε Σηκὶς οὐδενὶ
> δοῦλος, ἀλλ' αὐτὰς ἔδει μοχθεῖν ἅπαντ' ἐν οἰκίᾳ·
> εἶτα πρὸς τούτοισιν ἤλουν ὄρθριαι τὰ σιτία,
> ὥστε τὴν κώμην ὑπηχεῖν θιγγανουσῶν τὰς μύλας.
>
> For at that time no one had a Manes or a Sekis for a slave,
> but the women had to do everything in the house.

> Then in addition to this they ground up the meal early in the morning so that the village re-echoed with the women working at the grindstones.

It was a time, as Herodotus describes ancient Athens (6.137.3), when there were no slaves and women did all the work, and when there was not a *polis* but *komai* (villages).[19] According to Aristotle, the *kome* is the community which first arose out of several *oikoi* (*Politics* 1252b 16), and it precedes the existence of the *polis*. The protagonists of this play aim at a pre-political system, though the expectations of the heroes and the reality of "savage" life actually turn out to be different. Nevertheless, as Farioli asserts, the *Agrioi* provides very clear precedents for the plot of the *Birds*.[20] This is true to the degree that it follows what turns out to be the Euelpidean dream of a pre-political utopia, but it cannot be ascertained whether the protagonists of the *Agrioi* went on to "civilize" the chorus and set up a *polis* of savages as Peisetaerus will set up his bird *polis*.[21] I would prefer to argue that Aristophanes is in fact playing with the utopian conventions set up in plays such as the *Agrioi*. If the movement of the play follows that constructed here, the *Agrioi* points to the ultimate superiority of life in an admittedly imperfect and corrupt polis by comically showing the flight of discontented contemporary Athenians to an uncivilized, pre-political and, ultimately, worse way of life. The play would, therefore, satirize utopia itself.[22]

As he has come to light thus far, Euelpides appears to be like these Pherecratean characters, and the audience, aware of the inherent contradiction in Euelpides's sought after city, may expect just such a play. But Aristophanes has other plans. Peisetaerus will soon outline a proposal to create a powerful imperial bird *polis*; he will make the birds political. He may become winged, but he himself will not take on other birdish characteristics. To what degree this Peisetarean utopia is an innovation on Aristophanes's part is difficult to ascertain. Hubbard, following Mumford's distinction between "utopias of escape" and "utopias of reconstruction," notes that, of Aristophanes's comedies, only *Birds* and *Ecclesiazusae* are "utopias of reconstruction" in that "they are the only plays in which we see the polis as such reinvented in accordance with a theoretical paradigm."[23] The *Theria* (*Wild Animals*) of Crates may have provided some precedent. In this play, as in the *Birds*, animals have gained, for some unknown reason, a position of power among men and instruct men to reorganize human life in accordance with a vegetarian and comically pseudo-Empedoclean/Pythagorean way of life.[24] As is evident from the four remaining fragments, however, human life under beast rule would result in the traditional "Cockaigne" utopia, namely the spontaneity of food (K-A 14) and a life without toil (K-A 14, 15, 16). Therefore, the society that arises for the protagonists of the play is, apparently, not essentially changed

but only made more comfortable. In the *Birds,* unlike any other Old Comedy of which we know, the protagonist actually achieves animal metamorphosis and manipulates the nature of this animal to create something new and powerful. Peisetaerus's vision for himself looks forward to the open-ended possibilities of theo-anthrop-ornithic rule, not back to a golden age Euelpidean fantasy. This is not to say that these "Euelpidean" elements do not enter into the later parts of the play. Peisetaerus is well aware of the power of Cockaigne utopias and the (ab)uses to which a persuasive individual can put them.

In sum, unlike any of Aristophanes earlier extant plays, *two* Athenian citizens are from the first present on stage. The question must be raised as to why Aristophanes does this. If he had merely wanted to have a *bomolochos* (vulgar-tongued side-kick) for his hero, he could, as in *Frogs*, have introduced a Xanthias-like slave. I have argued that Euelpides is present as an Athenian citizen precisely because he acts as a foil to a very different and new type of hero and subsequent utopian plot. At first the pair appears to represent an identifiable Aristophanean type as Euelpides speaks throughout the prologue on behalf of both of them, so as to give the appearance that the two Athenians are of one mind and one purpose. Like Dicaeopolis or Trygaeus, our Athenian wants peace and quiet away from the busyness of the *polis*, and a type of utopian happiness that accompanies the *oikos*-based life of the countryside—wedding feasts at one's friends' and, generally, a life of newlyweds. Yet in order to achieve this goal, Euelpides paradoxically flees both the city and his *oikos*. Euelpides, as it seems, has not completely thought through the consequences of his action. This lack of foresight, however, appears to be a recurrent theme in other utopian plays of Old Comedy, and Aristophanes manipulates these conventions in the early part of the play. Other comic playwrights and, in particular, Pherecrates in the *Agrioi*, had used the theme of escape from the city to a land of Cockaigne or an upside-down, *anomian* world before the *Birds* to criticize Athens, but also indirectly to re-affirm the *polis* and thus ultimately to show the folly and lack of foresight of those who had sought to leave it.[25] Aristophanes, however, has different plans. Euelpides will, indeed, be shown to have acted hastily in leaving behind the city, but it will not be because of his skewed utopian vision, but because of the manipulation of these utopian visions by his Athenian comrade, Peisetaerus.

PART II—PEISETAERUS

By line 161 of *Birds* Aristophanes has set up and pointed to what would be a viable and likely plot for the rest of the play. Bird life, as described by Tereus, offers exactly what Euelpides has sought; it is the ultimate source of *apragmosunē*. The audience might now expect our heroes to seek to become birds

as Tereus had, to confront and win over the birds in an *agon* with the bird chorus convincing it of their desire for the *apragmosunē* of bird life. Thereafter the audience may have expected the *parabasis*, interloper scenes, and a finale in which our heroes enjoy the accompanying pleasures of a peaceful existence among the *anomian* birds. As we have seen, the audience may have expected certain elements, as in the *Agrioi,* which would ironically explore the ultimate unfeasibility of life outside of the *polis*. Instead, Aristophanes turns the tables on the play and on us. Within a few hundred lines it is not our Athenians, but bird life which is metamorphosed—it becomes political, it seeks power and, indeed, the ultimate power over gods and men.

This reversal is orchestrated by that Athenian who, in the prologue, had spoken only in conversation with Euelpides or when asked a direct question by the hoopoe or his slave.[26] While Euelpides is explaining the situation to the audience using the first person plural, Peisetaerus is intently following his bird about the stage (12, 22, 49). At lines 12 and 22 he, in fact, indicates that he is moving in the opposite direction to Euelpides. Peisetaerus remains detached from Euelpides's explanations to the audience and questionings of Tereus and his servant until he comes upon his "great idea."[27] For the attentive spectator or reader, the very contradictions and lack of logic behind many of Euelpides's explained reasons for their difficult journey might suggest that, although Euelpides uses the first person plural or sometimes the dual in his discussions, he might not actually speak on behalf of both of them.

To be sure, both Athenians humorously share with one another the common burdens and fears of their journey—the arduousness of their walk (3–12), the apparent contradictions in their birds' directions (1–2, 19–26), the fear they feel on seeing misshapen birds (85–91). At the same time, Aristophanes already hints at certain differences between the two characters. Peisetaerus has purchased the more expensive, three obol hooded crow (*coronē* 18); he takes the lead in ordering Euelpides to knock on Tereus's door (54–59); and in an exchange with Euelpides shows an inkling of his casuistry as he covers his cowardice by asserting that he did not let go of his bird, but that it was the bird that flew away (86–91).[28]

I have already noted above the important differences between Euelpides's and Peisetaerus's hoped for city as described to Tereus. Euelpides's is one of families and parties, and in short, the life of newlyweds. He longs for those things that earlier Aristophanic heroes usually obtain at the end of his comedies—food, festivity, and heterosexual pleasures. In stark contrast, Peisetaerus's ideal city presents the urban, active pederast and the life around the gymnasium. In the course of the play, we rarely, if at all, see in Peisetaerus the customary sexual appetites, corporeal desires, and rejuvenated carousing of Aristophanes's earlier heroes. Peisetaerus does threaten to rape Iris (1253–56); but this scene hardly illustrates his sexual desire. Rather, it

provides Peisetaerus a means to demonstrate his power and superiority over the gods. Like the detailed sexual threats thrown about by the Sausage Seller and Paphlagon in *Knights*, so too here sex is being used not to illustrate sexual desire, but power.[29] He has turned the table on the gods. He has the power, if he had the inclination, to do what the gods used to do to mortal women such as Semele or Alcmene or Alope (cf. 559). Indeed, his ironic or mocking erotic interest in Iris is indicated in his parting words to her. He tells her to leave and "set alight [with desire] one of the younger men" (καταιθαλώσεις τῶν νεωτέρων τινά 1261). That is, he insults her by implying that she is not to his taste and that she could not "set him alight" even if she tried.[30] We might also note that the verb that Peisetaerus uses in his threat to rape Iris is διαμηρίζειν (to penetrate the thighs), used earlier in the play by the bird chorus to describe the sexual accomplishment of a successful pederast.[31] Dover argues that διαμηρίζειν was almost certainly "the original, specific word" for intercrural sex between erastes and eromenos. He bases this conclusion on an inscription on the bottom of a sixth-century Attic vase with pederastic iconography, ἀπόδος διαμήριον (grant me or pay me back a "between the thighs"). From the evidence of *Birds* (the verb is only found in classical literature in this play) and its application to both the (female) nightingale (669) and Iris (1254), Dover argues that the verb could be used for "vaginal copulation from the front" because Peisetaerus threatens to first raise Iris' legs; but the use of this verb is, rather, part of the joke: Peisetaerus (and only Peisetaerus, from what we can gather from extant literature) is using a pederastic term for heterosexual sex.[32]

Furthermore, as Henderson has noted, a "striking difference" between Peisetaerus's triumphant final scene and those of Dicaeopolis, Demos, or Trygaeus is its lack of obscene and erotic elements.[33] Peisetaerus's triumph is not one of revelry and the free and uninhibited expression of physical desires. His finale is not a lusty cavorting with *hetaerae* (as is the case with Dicaeopolis, Demos, and Philocleon), nor a goddess of fecundity like Opora in *Peace*. He marries *Basileia*, a goddess who represents his attainment of absolute power and for whom he displays no sexual desire. I do not mean to imply here that Peisetaerus is portrayed as a homosexual. Rather, that, aside from his clearly stated pederastic desires early in the play, his "erotic" ambitions are directed, not at women, but at power. Nevertheless his early statements of pederastic interests do mark him out as unusual for an Aristophanic hero and point to his elite status.[34]

At line 644 of *Birds*, Aristophanes finally reveals the names of the two Athenians. By this stage the early indications of the differences between the two characters have become increasingly distinct, and their names directly bear out these differences.[35] The character who initially revealed the purpose of their flight from Athens and whose eagerness for the quiet bird life was soon undermined by his companion's ambitions is humorously given

the name Euelpides—"son of optimist." His companion is likewise suitably named Peisetaerus,[36] "persuader of comrades." Indeed, the entire plot of the *Birds* consists of a series of "persuasions" undertaken and completed by Peisetaerus: first of Tereus, then of the birds who subsequently relay Peisetaerus's teaching to human beings, and finally of the gods. This is not to deny that Peisetaerus knows how to use physical force or the threat thereof when needed against enemies and interlopers, and finally, dissident birds. Nevertheless, his chief weapon is persuasion and, in particular, that kind of persuasion associated with the teachings of the sophists.[37] He uses sophistic etymologizing to persuade Tereus to colonize the *polos* of the birds as a *polis* (179–86);[38] in convincing the birds of their former godhead he uses the sophistic techniques of *epideixis* (483) and *tekmēria* (482);[39] like a Gorgianic orator he sees that words can shatter the soul (465–6);[40] he questions the existing order of things by looking to the origins of the cosmos (e.g., 468–70) and civilization (e.g., 481–510), as Prodicus[41] and other sophists had, whether by ethnography (e.g., 484–5, 504–6), Aesopic fables (e.g., 471–75), or observations of nature (e.g., 488–92). In short, like the "Weaker Logos" or Pheidippides in *Clouds*, Peisetaerus can argue equally from *physis* (e.g., 477–78) or from *mythoi* (e.g., 508–10) and *nomoi* (e.g., 500–1, 518–20, 1353–7, 1656–66) as his argument requires.

This characterization is further underscored by the various epithets given Peisetaerus by Tereus to convince the chorus to listen to him. Taken as a whole, these epithets again associate Peisetaerus with the sophists and the new education and, in particular, with Socrates and his allies in the *Clouds*. In his exhortation to the birds to come to council, Tereus announces Peisetaerus as a sharp old man who is "new/novel in his thought" (καινὸς γνώμην) and an "undertaker of new/novel deeds" (καινῶν ἔργων ἐγχειρητής, 255–58). In the *Clouds*, the weaker argument boasts that he will defeat the stronger by "devising new/novel thoughts" (καινὰς γνώμας 896; cf. also 943, 1032); likewise Socrates offers to give Strepsiades the "new/novel siege engines" of rhetorical education (μηχανάς καινάς 479–80; cf. 1397, 1399, 1423). When the chorus finally assembles, Tereus introduces Peisetaerus as a "subtle calculator" (λεπτὼ λογιστὰ 317).[42] As Dover points out, λεπτός is first attested as meaning "shrewd," "intellectually refined," or "subtle" in Euripides' *Medea.*[43] Outside of the current passage, Aristophanes uses λεπτός and its cognates and compounds with this intellectual nuance solely in the context of passages with or describing Socrates or Euripides. For example, in *Clouds* Socrates is called by the chorus their "priest of most subtle words" (λεπτοτάτων λήρων ἱερεῦ, 359)[44] and in the *Frogs* the chorus exhorts Euripides to speak things "subtle and clever" (λεπτόν τι καὶ σοφὸν, 1108).[45] In his final praise of Peisetaerus's abilities before he begins his proof, Tereus calls him πυκνότατον κίναδος, σόφισμα, κύρμα, τρῖμμα, παιπάλημ' ὅλον ("a most shrewd fox,

all cleverness, a go-getter, an old pro, the finest flour of subtlety," 429–30). Again, comparison with the *Clouds* is very revealing. Socrates tells Strepsiades that by being initiated into his school, λέγειν γενήσει τρῖμμα, κρόταλον, παιπάλη ("at speaking you will become an old pro, a rattler, the finest flour of subtlety," 260). Later Strepsiades seeks to become, among other things, a fox (κίναδος)[46] via learning rhetoric (448). On the other hand, however, it is clear that Peisetaerus differs fundamentally in his nature from Socrates and his students. Peisetaerus is no pale *psyche* of a man who finds pleasure in measuring a gnat's leap, nor in meteorology. He has certainly learned much from the *Logoi* that dwell with Socrates; but he has left the *phrontisterion* behind. He wants to put *logos* into *ergon*.

To summarize, Peisetaerus first appears before the audience, together with his companion, decked out in the familiar comic masks of old men. These masks would create certain generic expectations about their characterization. As we have seen, however, these expectations are fulfilled in the person of Euelpides only to be quickly undermined by a new kind of old man, Peisetaerus. The early prominence (and swift diminishment) given to Euelpides in the prologue lays the groundwork for and creates a pointed contrast with the introduction of a more unconventional and experimental kind of character whose aspirations run to pederasty and power, and whose means of attaining them are sophistic rhetoric and the subversion not only of established social conventions, but also those of the *oikos*.

NOTES

1. Cf. Murray (1933, 138–9); Vicaire (1979, 42); Alvoni (1995, 101); Henderson (2007, 119–29).

2. Murray (1933, 139): "Perhaps he was apologizing for this old stage motive of Rejuvenation which he had used several times before."

3. I follow the "traditional" line allocation of Coulon (1928) in the prologue; thereafter I follow Dunbar (1995) unless otherwise noted. For a justification and discussion of this allocation see Appendix I and Nesselrath (1996).

4. Unless indicated otherwise, for *Birds* I use the Greek text of Dunbar (1995).

5. Dunbar (1995) ad loc. 33.

6. φύσει is here used in the sense LSJ [III] opposite to τέχνη. Cf. Plato *Protagoras* 323c where φύσει is equivalent to ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου.

7. See Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 123): "ἔπειτα often begins . . . a question expressing surprise, here caused by the Athenians' dissatisfaction with their own city's rich resources."

8. For particulars see the commentaries of Sommerstein (1987, ad loc. 161); Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 159–60).

9. Henderson (1991, 134–6) and the commentaries in n. 7.

10. Thucydides's Alcibiades (6.18.6) had told the Athenian assembly the summer before this production that the surest way to destroy a not quiet city was to be quiet (*apragmon*) and that "the city, like everything else, if it stays quiet, will wear itself out and its skill in all things would grow old, but that if it takes on the struggle on each occasion it would gain experience and be more used to defending itself not in word but in deed" (καὶ τὴν πόλιν, ἐὰν μὲν ἡσυχάζῃ, τρίψεσθαί τε αὐτὴν περὶ αὑτὴν ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλο τι, καὶ πάντων τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐγγηράσεσθαι, ἀγωνιζομένην δὲ αἰεὶ προσλήψεσθαί τε τὴν ἐμπειρίαν καὶ τὸ ἀμύνεσθαι οὐ λόγῳ ἀλλ' ἔργῳ μᾶλλον ξύνηθες ἕξειν).

11. See Zimmerman (1991, 70–75, 95).

12. Farioli (2001). See also chapters by Ceccarelli and Ruffell in *Rivals of Aristophanes* 2000, Storey (2010, 211–3); Ruffell (2014, 206–221).

13. Farioli (2001, 13–14).

14. Farioli (2001, 9–10).

15. The *Ploutoi* of the title refers to the Titans who were called Ploutoi when Kronos was king (K-A Fr. 171.9–14).

16. As Hubbard (1997, 25) asserts, "*Birds* and *Ecclesiazusae* are plays that manipulate the audience's expectations by starting out with conventional 'Arcadian' premises." In *Birds*, as I argue, this manipulation is more complex than Hubbard suggests and is not restricted to the prologue.

17. Farioli (2001, 107).

18. Eurybatus and Phrynondas were infamous traitors and cheats; cf. Aeshines 3.137.

19. See Farioli (2001, 180), Ceccarelli (2000, 458).

20. Farioli (2001, 185). See also Turato (1979); Storey (2011, ii 421); Ceccarelli (2000, 458) asserts that the *Savages* is "as far as we know, the first comedy to bring on to the stage an attempt to escape from the city and to find an alternative to it."

21. Farioli (2001, 185 n. 133) correctly argues against Long's (1978) belief that the protagonists did civilize the savages. Long bases his argument on a very ambiguous and short passage in Themistius (*Or.* 26, 323c).

22. Farioli (2001, 185); Ceccarelli (2000, 458); Ruffell (2000, 494); Conti-Bizarro (1990–3).

23. Hubbard (1997, 24–25).

24. Farioli (2001, 68ff.), Ruffell (2000, 481–82).

25. Ceccarelli (2000, 463): "In comedy, life in the days before the polis, whether it is envisaged as the Land of Cockaigne or as the world of animals or savages, is not presented nostalgically, as a state of affairs to which it would be good to return. On the contrary, the comic poets seem to have parodied the theme of primitive life. . . . This accords with the affirmative and stabilizing function of comedy"; Farioli (2001, 185): "Il fatto che l'idealizzazione del primitivo risulti sconfitta non implica però che la polis reale sia ritenuta perfetta, ma al contrario un'ambivalenza di fondo percorre questi drammi: la città è corrotta in maniera irrimediabile, ma al di fuori di essa non c'è speranza, perchè la polis come istituzione rimane l'unico contenitore possibile e pensabile della vita in comunità. In questo senso la rappresentazione dell'altro, nella commedia come nell'etnografia, assume anche una funzione 'rassicurante,' quella di rimarcare la superiorità dei Greci e di rafforzane l'identità in opposizione al diverso, a tutto ciò che sta fuori dalla polis, giocando

sui comuni pregiudizi culturali contro i barbari;" also Ruffell (2000, 495); Conti-Bizarro (1987); Turato (1979); Long (1978).

26. On two occasions Peisetaerus does make independent exclamations outside of his conversation with his companion. At line 61 Peisetaerus exclaims because of the fearful appearance of the servant bird and later (85) shouts abuse as the servant leaves.

27. Cf. Whitman (1964, 170): "Up to the point where Peithetairus gets his great idea, Euelpides does more of the talking; he has his eye more firmly on the object than does the visionary Peithetairus. . . . Peithetairus during this scene is the aloof, brooding mastermind whose thoughts have not yet come to fullness." Russo (1994, 149) "whenever Euelpides expounds the purpose of the voyage, Peisetairos is either at a distance from him or absorbed in something else: cf. 12–22, 27–49, 114–22."

28. One might think here of the discussion, related in Plutarch *Pericles* 36, between Protagoras and Pericles concerning the real responsibility or cause in an accidental death by javelin: the thrower or javelin or the official of the games.

29. Compare the use of sexual threats also in Eupolis's *Poleis*, for which see Rosen (1998, 173); Storey (2003, 217–21); Florence (2014, 372).

30. Cf. Dunbar (1995 ad loc. 1260–61) and Sommerstein (1987 ad loc. 1261).

31. The verb is also used at 669 by one of the two Athenians to describe what they would like to do to the nightingale (*auletēs*) when she appears on stage. The line allocation here is impossible to determine, but I would argue, following Coulon, that this line belongs to Peisetaerus, given his earlier statements about pederasty and his later use of the verb with Iris; with Euelpides thereafter chiming in that he would like to kiss her and so on.

32. Dover (1978, 100–9). In the earlier passage with the nightingale it is notable that just prior to Peisetaerus's assertion of his desire to "penetrate her thighs," he (according to Coulon's line allocation) had remarked that she looked so "tender" (ἁπαλός) and "white" (λευκός) terms which are often used of women, but also of effeminate young men (e.g., Agathon at *Thesmophoriazusae* 191–2 and see Austin and Olson (2004, ad loc. 191) for further examples). As in the Iris scene, Peisetaerus uses the pederastic term for a female object of desire, though here perhaps one that looks more like a beautiful young boy. διαμηρίζειν is found, as Sextus Empiricus (3.245) tells us, in Zeno the stoic: οἷον γοῦν ὁ αἱρεσιάρχης αὐτῶν Ζήνων ἐν ταῖς διατριβαῖς φησι περὶ παίδων ἀγωγῆς ἄλλα τε ὅμοια καὶ τάδε "διαμηρίζειν μηδὲν μᾶλλον μηδὲ ἧσσον παιδικὰ ἢ μὴ παιδικά, μηδὲ θήλεα ἢ ἄρρενα· οὐ γὰρ διαφέρει ἐν παιδικοῖς ἢ μὴ παιδικοῖς, οὐδὲ θηλείαις ἢ ἄρρεσιν, ἀλλὰ ταὐτὰ πρέπει τε καὶ πρέποντά ἐστιν." "And so, for example, Zeno, the head of their sect, in his treatises, says other similar things regarding the rearing of children, and in particular the following: "Have (intercrural) sex no more and no less with a paidika than with a non-paidika, nor with a female than with a male; it makes no difference whether with paidika or non-paidika, male or female, but the same thing befits and is befitting." As is clear from the passage, διαμηρίζειν' s normal usage is with male paidika, Zeno's own unconventional opinion being that the objects of pederastic sex are too socially restricted. Sextus goes on to show that Zeno approved of incest, cannibalism, and other taboos that provide restrictions on natural appetites. Cf. also Diogenes Laertius 7.172., Hecato's anecdote about Cleanthes' banter with a beautiful, young male student, whom he mocks for having διαμηρισμοί (thigh penetrations).

33. Henderson (1991, 208).

34. Dover (1977, 137) and Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 137–42) argue that the portrayal of Peisetaerus's desire for a young boy would be regarded neutrally by the audience and as perfectly consistent with the desires of the average Athenian citizen. Against this view see Hubbard (1998) and Appendix 2.

35. Cf. Heberlein (1980, 139 n. 79): "Wie bei Dikaiopolis in den *Acharnern* (406) hat auch hier die Preisgabe der Namen 'Peisetairos' und 'Euelpides' nach dem Agon die Function einer zusammenfassenden Interpretation ihrer Rolle."

36. That this is most likely the correct form, see Dunbar (1995, 128–29). The manuscripts consistently give the form Peisthetairus ("persuaded by his comrades"), "a linguistically impossible form" because "no Greek name is formed from the passive stem of a verb." The other suggested form, Pisthetairos ("trustworthy comrade"), does not suit his "total dramatic role." That Aristophanes did, in fact, write Peisetaerus is suggested by the Triballian god's addressing Peisetaerus as Baisatreu (1615). See Kanavou (2011, 105–7, 109–10) for a succinct discussion of the problem.

37. See in particular Heberlein (1980, 136–40); Hubbard (1997, 28–29); Henderson (1997, 140); Dunbar (1995, 11–2).

38. See Heberlein (1980, 136); Kakridis (1982, ad loc. 182).

39. See Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 482, and 11–12); Hubbard (1997, 28 and n. 30); Heberlein (1980, 137).

40. See Heberlein (1980, 137 and n. 68); and cf. Gorgias, *Helen* 9.

41. It is against Prodicus that the bird chorus in the *parabasis* (692) directs its own *theogony*. Prodicus, like the bird chorus, had challenged the fundamental basis of the Olympian gods. He saw the origins of religion in the benefits that nature gave to man, as Sextus Empiricus summarized (*Math.* 9.18): "Prodicus of Keos says that the ancients believed that the sun and moon and rivers and streams and, in short, all that is beneficial to our life were gods because of the benefit men derived from them."

42. Although Tereus uses the dual here it is clear that he is referring particularly to Peisetaerus. Tereus has to explain the presence of two human beings, not only one, so that the use of the dual is necessary here to win the birds over. Before the birds are actually present, he uses the singular (255), and after the "battle" between the chorus and the two Athenians is over, the dual soon disappears altogether (see especially line 415).

43. Dover (1968, ad loc. 153).

44. For Socrates see also *Clouds* 153, 741, 1404.

45. For Euripides see also *Frogs* 876, 956, 1111, and *Acharnians* 445. Cf. also Cratinus (K-A 307) who defines a refined spectator as, ὑπολεπτολόγος, γνωμιδιώκτης, εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων.

46. κίναδος is used in Aristophanes only in these two passages. The scholia to Theocritus 5.25 and Demosthenes 18.42 tell us that it is Sicilian for fox. It is never used in Attic literally, but only as a metaphor for a cunning man (e.g., *Ajax* 103 of Odysseus; Andocides *Mysteries* 99).

Chapter 2

Persuading Tereus

In terms of the trajectory of the play as a whole the place of Tereus—the metamorphosed Hoopoe of the tragic stage—is crucial.[1] His crimes of the tragic stage—the brutal rape and glossotomy of his sister-in-law, Philomela—appear to be all but forgotten.[2] He apparently lives with his wife in their *lochme* (thicket), has become an accepted part of the bird community, and has even taught them to speak. As he himself points out, being a bird brings with it both the self-sufficiency of a life without wallets and, via their song, a harmonious relationship with the gods (214–22). So how is it that he will be persuaded to disturb this contented and pleasant life? In short, I argue that Peisetaerus is able to target in him that one quintessentially human force that was not completely eradicated by metamorphosis—*eros*.[3] In Sophocles's tragedy, Tereus's literal *eros* for Philomela results in her rape and bloody mutilation and, thereby, the tragic and gruesome death of his son. In the comedy *Birds*, Tereus's *eros* in its metaphorical form—as an overwhelming desire to acquire what one lacks and believes to be καλόν (tasty food, pleasure, money, power)—is manipulated so as to play a crucial role in Peisetaerus's own erotic/political aspirations.[4] Elsewhere, in Aristophanes's earlier plays, *eros* and its cognate verb were likewise used metaphorically to describe the hero's ambitions—Dicaeopolis's *eros* for peace (*Ach.* 22–23); Strepsiades's for not paying debts (*Cl.* 1303–4); and Philocleon's for trials (*Wasps* 89).[5] In *Birds*, Tereus, the former tragic hero, is made to conform his *eros* to the comic stage and to subordinate it to the comic hero. The bird-man who first came on stage after a meal of berries, a nap, and in a dappled body suit,[6] soon re-emerges from his nest fully armed (434–35) to persuade the assembly of birds to listen to Peisetaerus—though with the false assumption that Peisetaerus will offer the birds the chance to "rule men like locusts and destroy the gods with a Melian famine" for the hefty cash (191) and power (163) it will bring. I do not mean

to say that the tragic figure (the sadistic rapist and tyrant) is de-metamorphosed before our eyes on stage, but what materializes is a comic and avian (and even, democratic, though imperialistic) version of that character; one who retains enough of his human past to relish Peisetaerus's vision of power.

We learn very early in the play that the initial and explicit goal of the two Athenians is to find Tereus, the hoopoe (15). The reason they wish to find him, set out clearly by Euelpides (47–8, 120–2), is to inquire whether in his travels as a bird he has seen any *apragmon* place which they could inhabit. Therefore, at this early stage, Tereus is sought *not* as an example to follow in metamorphosis, but for his knowledge of what he has seen as both a human and a bird (119). As has been noted, the very name Tereus (in folk etymology derived from τηρέω, "I watch"), the hoopoe (ἔποψ, punning on the word ἐποπτής, "he who watches over"), serves well to highlight this initial goal, and Aristophanes does not fail to exploit it.[7] The Tereus that our Athenians find turns out to be specifically Tereus from the Athenian stage, from Sophocles's play performed perhaps around fifteen years earlier.[8] Thus, like the Tereus of tragedy, he does not speak a barbarian dialect but good Attic.[9]

Of the Sophoclean play there remain extant fifty-seven lines as well as what appears to be a hypothesis preserved in the Oxyrynchus papyri (42.3013).[10] From these sources it is possible to delineate in broad terms the action of the play. Of the various reconstructions of the play, I find most convincing those that treat with caution the later versions of Accius and Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* Thus the following outline of the play is most indebted to Burnett and Sommerstein/Fitzpatrick.[11] Tereus, the king of Thrace had married Procne, the daughter of Pandion, ruler of Athens, and by her had had a son, Itys. In order to console Procne's loneliness in Thrace, Tereus had traveled to Athens to bring back her sister, Philomela. On his return journey, however, Tereus conceived a desire for Philomela, raped her and cut out her tongue so that she might not be able to tell others what had happened. Tereus returns to Thrace and reports that Philomela is dead. It is with this background that the play would have begun. Procne laments her lot in Thrace and the death of her sister. Philomela, however, contrives to inform Procne of Tereus's deed by weaving the story in words upon a robe. Upon realizing the truth, Procne and Philomela in revenge undertake to kill Itys and to serve up his cooked remains to Tereus. After Tereus has eaten the boy and realized what the women have done, he pursues them. At this point, a god intervenes and tells the audience that he has changed Procne into a nightingale, Philomela into a swallow, and Tereus into a hoopoe.

Even from this broad outline, it is clear that Sophocles, in his adaptation of this myth onto the tragic stage, was not afraid to bring out its most disturbing and horrific elements. Procne, like Euripides' Medea, by willingly and knowingly killing her own son, represents "the most frightening creature

a man could imagine."[12] Nevertheless, Sophocles is able to offset the horror of her actions by creating a Tereus whose barbarity, impiety, lust, and ferocity "drew the women," as Pausanias notes (1.5.4), "into the necessity of retaliation (δίκης)."[13] As the Oxyrrhynchus hypothesis makes clear, Tereus's rape and mutilation of Philomela is not only an act of unrestrained *eros* and violence, but also a breaking of the oath and trust which Pandion, the girls' father, had received from him.[14] In this light the death and serving up of the son to the father becomes gruesomely appropriate to a man whose actions have polluted the house of Pandion.[15] The Athenian women's action becomes one of revenge "to restore the honor of her paternal house, in retaliation against a husband who had broken faith with her father," and, furthermore against a barbarian and thus performed "only in the service of right Hellenic ways."[16] In Sophocles's play Tereus becomes the example par excellence of the barbaric king or tyrant.[17] Such a conclusion can be further drawn from the emphases and innovations evident in the play. In traditional mythology Tereus was not Thracian but either Megarian (Pausanias 1.41.8) or from Phocian Daulis (Thucydides 2.29.3, Strabo 9.423).[18] Sophocles's choice of setting thus gives the playwright many opportunities to press home the Greek-barbarian antithesis. Furthermore, though the cutting of the rape victim's tongue is perhaps traditional,[19] Sophocles's famous use of the "voice of the shuttle" (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1454b16) to reveal the crime to Procne via woven "*grammata*" (schol. Ar. *Birds* 212.6) or written words was an innovation.[20] In this way, Sophocles is able to have the Greek and literate Procne safely read the contents of the woven robe in the presence of illiterate Thracian retainers or even of Tereus himself. Finally, in traditional mythology, Tereus had been transformed by the god into a hawk (as, for example, Aesch. *Supp*., 62) and not into a hoopoe. As Aristophanes's Tereus tells us, it was Sophocles who "mutilated" him in this way (110–111). Sophocles thus chooses for Tereus's metamorphosis not the more familiar example of aggression, the hawk (as, for example, Hesiod's hawk and nightingale), but a more bizarre bird, the hoopoe. The deus ex machina at the end of the play describes this bird as skittishly aggressive (fr. 581)—it is bold (θρασύς) in its full panoply (παντευχία) (2–3), and will always go "in hatred of these women" (9); it will live in deserted woods and crags (10), and, as a strange twist, will in the spring take on the form of the hawk to return again to a hoopoe in late summer.[21]

As Hall has argued, the depiction of barbarian tyranny in Attic tragedy served these poets as one of the most common and effective counterpoints for the affirmation of Athenian democracy and of Greek values generally.[22] Tereus appears as a stereotypical example of such a barbarian tyrant. The action of the drama arises out of the complete lack of control of the passions of the king.[23] Going against his pledge both to Pandion and his wife he rapes Philomela. As has often been pointed out, tyranny is especially

characterized in the Greek mind by overpowering and often bizarre erotic impulses;[24] and, as Benardete notes, Herodotus only uses the term *eros* of kings and tyrants.[25] By raping his sister-in-law, Tereus undermines the bonds of his and his in-laws' *oikos*, and is repaid in kind by the two Athenian women; he literally devours his own *oikos*. Likewise the tyrant's appetite is depicted in Greek literature as a kind of cannibalism that devours those around it. Alcaeus says of Pittacus that he "devours the city" (70.7 Voigt) and that "this belly made no reckoning with his *thumos* (heart), but easily trod his oaths underfoot and devours the city" (129.23 Voigt). The tyrant's appetites are insatiably destructive both of the city and ultimately of himself and his own.[26]

While this depiction of Tereus as an entirely negative and barbarous tyrant appears to be borne out by the fragments, we cannot know definitively whether certain elements of *pathos* or fatherly affection, for example, were not also artfully played up by Sophocles. Nevertheless, his manifestly brutal actions and final metamorphosis by the *deus* (and his unrepentant hatred of the women therein), taken together with the widespread association in Athens of tyranny with unrestrained and rampant appetites (erotic and otherwise), means that, to say the least, when the audience hears that the two Athenians in *Birds* have set out to find Tereus, and in particular the hoopoe of Sophocles's play, we may infer that it would recall a particularly brutal (though perhaps, in part, tragically pathetic), dissolute, and barbarous king. We may also suspect that the audience's curiosity would have been highly piqued as to what Aristophanes would do with this bizarre metamorphosis.

As often, Aristophanes does not give the audience what it wants straight away. Before the two Athenians meet Tereus, they first encounter Tereus's slave bird. This is the first sight we get of the results of bird metamorphosis. It is ridiculous, but also terrifying (60–91, esp. 85–7); because of the bird's huge gaping beak, Euelpides cannot distinguish what beast it is (69). It turns out to be a slave bird (70). Euelpides is, quite rightly, surprised at this. The only slave bird he has seen is that which has been defeated in a cock-fight (70–71). One never sees a bird actually serve another in nature. Furthermore Euelpides cannot fathom why a bird would even need a slave (74). To have a slave implies having needs and desires that cannot readily or easily be fulfilled. In nature birds are seen to feed on what they happen to chance upon around them; they do not require or, it appears, want the assistance of other birds. In reply to this question the slave bird puts forward his own hypothesis (75–79):

EU δεῖται γὰρ ὄρνις καὶ διακόνου τινός;
ΘΕ. οὗτός γ', ἄτ', οἶμαι, πρότερον ἄνθρωπός ποτ' ὤν.
τοτὲ μὲν ἐρᾷ φαγεῖν ἀφύας Φαληρικάς,

τρέχω ἀφύας ἐγὼ λαβὼν τὸ τρύβλιον·
ἔτνους δ' ἐπιθυμεῖ, δεῖ τορύνης καὶ χύτρας,
τρέχω 'πὶ τορύνην.

EU: Does a bird actually need a servant?
Se: Yes, this one does, because, as I think, he was previously a human being. Sometimes he gets a desire to eat Phalerian sardines, and I grab a bowl and run for sardines; or he has an appetite for pea soup, he needs a ladle and pot—I run for the ladle.

Unlike regular birds who feed off what is at hand, sometimes Tereus, because he was once human, feels an *eros* for what he does not have at hand and for which a more than simple effort would have to be made—he would have either to journey to get the ingredients or to find a man-made utensil with which to eat it. The nature of humans is such that subsistence is not always enough. One's *eros* impels it to seek what it lacks. This *eros* of Tereus is here as evident in Aristophanes as it must have been in Sophocles. But Aristophanes shows us how metamorphosis, both from a man to a bird, and from the tragic stage onto the comic stage, has affected him. His *eros*, once for rape and acts of *hybris*, characteristic of a tyrant, has become an *eros* for a particular kind of sardine (an Athenian specialty, cf. *Ach* 899–900) and soup.[27] He is neither his old, tyrannical self, nor yet completely a bird. Thus, as we shall see, he makes for the perfect intermediary between Peisetaerus and the bird chorus.

Though the servant bird offers us this human-like picture of Tereus, he goes on to say that his master is now sleeping after a meal of gnats and myrtle berries (81–2), a meal characteristic of a hoopoe and not a man. So again we are divided as to what to expect from the coming entrance of Tereus—will he resemble at all the tragic Tereus? Will he provoke terrible fear as the slave bird did?

The hoopoe announces his arrival with a paratragic line: "Open the wood (ὕλην, comically replacing the expected πύλην "gate") in order that I might come forth." This grand announcement, said while the wood was still closed, would then have stunningly revealed the hoopoe; this time, not an object of fear, like the slave bird, but an object of mockery and laughter. Tereus, like his old war-like self, is still wearing what appears to be a triple crested helmet (though here probably a hoopoe's crest, 94). Apart from this, however, he has only a "ridiculous beak" (99). He has no wing feathers (103–104), and, coming out from a nap, he was, more than likely, dressed only in a dappled body suit and thus, only very minimally decked out.[28] His appearance, in general, looks like no bird that Euelpides knows except for possibly the peacock (102).[29] Tereus, at least at this point, has been largely robbed of his kingly presence; only his helmet/crest remains.

Tereus turns out to be a sanguine and helpful friend for the two Athenians. He answers their questions and listens to what they want. Though now in the comic form of a hoopoe, he still understands human needs and, in particular, human desires. After each of the two Athenians describes his ideal town the hoopoe cries (135): "By Zeus, what terrible troubles you desire (ἐρᾷς)," or (143): "Poor you for your wretched ills, such things you desire (ἐρᾷς)." These lines are usually taken as ironic, implying something like "what wonderful things you desire."[30] But knowing the story of Tereus and his punishment, we might suggest that he really does pity them. Euelpides desires the type of feast to which he and his children are invited in celebration of a marriage. From Tereus's reaction we might recall his own "family feast," the "bathing of his children" and the outcome of his own marriage when human. Peisetaerus, in turn, wants the sort of place where, with impunity, he might seduce the child of a father with whom he has inherited ties of friendship (πατρικὸς φίλος). Tereus knows by experience what the consequences are for putting his own erotic desires before his duty to the house of his "family friend," his father-in-law, Pandion.[31] In any case, it is Tereus, the bird-man, who emphatically and sympathetically diagnoses the problems of our Athenians as *eros*. Nevertheless, understanding and, as we have learned, occasionally partaking of the human condition, he gives them his assistance.

As we have seen, Euelpides's *eros* leads him, unlike his companion, to take great delight in the description and prospect of bird life. Apart from what we might call the domesticated and benign *eros* within the family (a life of newlyweds), bird life is a life devoid of *eros*. One does not lack for anything, but all arises spontaneously. One does not have to store up or save and, therefore, there is no need of wallets and so, no desire for anything beyond what at each moment offers itself. For Tereus this life may seem to offer him a respite from his hyper-erotic life on the Sophoclean stage. Within fifty lines, however, Tereus will be jubilantly crying "iou iou" out of a desire to join with Peisetaerus in founding an imperial city which will rule men and destroy the gods.

PEISETAERUS'S *MEGA BOULEUMA*

Let us, for a moment, reconsider Peisetaerus and his position when he first comes upon his "great plan." Peisetaerus, for reasons left entirely vague by Aristophanes, has left Athens with his companion. As we only learn later it was Peisetaerus alone who was responsible for the journey (339–40):

EU αἴτιος μέντοι σὺ νῷν εἶ τῶν κακῶν τούτων μόνος.
ἐπὶ τί γάρ μ' ἐκεῖθεν ἦγες;
PI. ἵν' ἀκολουθοίης ἐμοί.

EU You alone are responsible for these problems of ours.
Why did you lead me from there?
PI. In order that you might accompany me.

Like Tereus who had begged that he might have an attendant (ἀκόλουθος, 73) in the form of the slave bird, so here Peisetaerus reveals that he had asked Euelpides along to have someone to follow or be subordinate to him (ἵν' ἀκολουθοίης ἐμοί).[32] It becomes clear that Peisetaerus's first persuasion occurred, in fact, before the action of the play.[33] He had persuaded the easily manipulated Euelpides to leave Athens, and had offered him the hopes of a city without cares, such as Euelpides had earlier described. In his conversation with Tereus, however, Eulpides stumbles upon the new idea, instantiated in the example of Tereus, of bird metamorphosis. It is at this point that Peisetaerus's plan is finally able to be realized.

Peisetaerus's plan is predicated on two basic suppositions. First are those fantastic elements characteristic of the comic stage: in this case the possibility of bird metamorphosis, of actually building a city in the air and so on. Also in the realm of fantasy is the necessary precondition that, for the master of persuasion, Peisetaerus, to achieve his goal, the birds must be able to understand human language and speech. As it turns out Tereus had taught them language because he had been with them a long time (200). Though apparently beneficial for the birds, speech will prove to be crucial to their downfall; it is through speech that they can be deceived and persuaded to give up their present contented existence. The second point is the, as to now, apolitical and anomian nature of the birds as well as the undefined condition of the area that they inhabit between earth and heaven.[34] Aristophanes has thus created for his hero potential allies and a space which offers an almost completely clean slate with which he can work. The genius of Peisetaerus's plan of colonizing the bird realm lies not only in its strategic position, but also in the very vacuum, the unlimited potential and plasticity, which both bird nature and the *polos* of the birds offer him and with which he may create his own cosmos in the form that would most satisfy, at least privately, human nature and human *eros*.

The *polos* of the birds is that through which all traverses (πολεῖται) but in which nothing remains or has its home. It is, as Peisetaerus later calls it, a gaping (*chaos* 192, 1218). Whereas the gods hold heaven and men have the earth, Peisetaerus, true *polypragmōn* that he is, sees in the *aer* a chance to gain dominion over that last piece of the Hesiodic cosmos which was unclaimed, which was still part of the gaping chaos, and therefore, potentially generative of new things when accompanied by the generative force, *Eros*.

As we have seen, Tereus, initially content with the quiet and apolitical bird life, within a few lines performs a complete about-face and readily and

happily joins with Peisetaerus as a fellow founder of a bird-*polis*. This shift in Tereus's attitude had already been hinted at by the slave bird. Because Tereus was once a man he occasionally feels the erotic impulses of human beings. Being a bird, however, and therefore apolitical, his desires were manifested in a benign *eros* for sardines or soup. Once Peisetaerus introduces the possibility of a *polis* of birds, the equation changes. Within a *polis* boundaries are fixed and hierarchies are necessarily set up. At the same time, being a member of a *polis* sets the individual off against members of other *poleis*. One can strive for power not only privately within one's own *polis*, but also in common against another *polis*. By reintroducing Tereus to the *polis*, Peisetaerus thereby reintroduces the hoopoe, Tereus, to that metaphorical *eros* which brought the human Tereus to power in Thrace.

Aristophanes introduces this scene in terms that clearly mark it off as an agon of persuasion: (163–4)

ΠΙ. ἦ μέγ' ἐνορῶ βούλευμ' ἐν ὀρνίθων γένει,
καὶ δύναμιν ἣ γένοιτ' ἄν, εἰ πίθοισθέ μοι.
ΕΠ. τί σοι πιθώμεσθ';
ΠΙ ὅ τι πίθησθε;

PI: I see a mighty plan in the race of birds, and also power which would arise if you should be persuaded by me.
EP In what are we to be persuaded by you?
PI In what are you to be persuaded?[35]

This emphatic tripling of the root πιθ- leads into Peisetaerus's first act of persuasion on the stage. In the first place, Peisetaerus gets Tereus to look at bird life from the point of view of human beings (164–171).

PI. ὅ τι πίθησθε; πρῶτα μὲν
μὴ περιπέτεσθε πανταχῇ κεχηνότες
ὡς τοῦτ' ἄτιμον τοὔργον ἐστίν. αὐτίκα
ἐκεῖ παρ' ἡμῖν τοὺς πετομένους ἢν ἔρῃ
"τίς ὄρνις οὗτος;" ὁ Τελέας ἐρεῖ ταδί·
"ἄνθρωπος ὄρνις ἀστάθμητος, πετόμενος,
ἀτέκμαρτος, οὐδὲν οὐδέποτ' ἐν ταὐτῷ μένων."
EP. νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον εὖ γε μωμᾷ ταυταγί.

PI: In what are you to be persuaded? First don't fly about everywhere gaping, as this is a deed which lacks honor. For example, if here among us someone asks, "Who is this," Teleas will reply, "The man is a bird, unstable, flighty, unpredictable, never remaining in the same place."
TE: By Dionysus, you're right to reproach us for this.

For human beings bird life is undirected and unproductive—they fly all about freely gaping; but there is no τίμη or honor in it. The unsettled way of life is, he says, *atimos* (166). In Athens such flighty, gaping people are derided as being birds. That the pre-political birds should be concerned about *atimia* is clearly humorous. Aristophanes is, to be sure, using the term here in a broader sense of "dishonorable" or to denote that the action will bring one no τίμη, but the term includes the idea of the lack of those rights which pertain in particular to a citizen of a *polis.*[36] For Tereus, however, who was once a human king, the concept of τίμη must be a tantalizing remembrance of what was and could be. Thus Peisetaerus's first act is to unsettle Tereus's bird-view of the world and to reintroduce him to the human perspective in which individuals are distinguished in terms of honor and shame.

Once Peisetaerus has convinced Tereus of the possibility of the metamorphosis of the *polos* into a *polis*,[37] he goes on to offer Tereus yet another incentive to colonization. Its position between heaven and earth means that the birds will be able to gain the power of life and death over men and gods (185–6), and therefore, will be able to exact taxes from them (φόρος). Like the Athenian empire, whose great wealth came from the taxes (φόροι) it often ruthlessly exacted from its allies, so the bird empire will tax an even wealthier race: the gods themselves. They will be able to starve the gods into submission with a "Melian famine" and rule humans like locusts, the bugs that birds eat. We are reminded of the tyrant that devours his subjects. Peisetairus offers Tereus not merely power, but power in its most ambitious and overreaching form. It is at this point that Tereus gives his jubilant cries of ἰοὺ, ἰού (193). Peisetaerus's plan offers him opportunities of honor, power, and wealth that could not exist in the bird realm as it is. Peisetaerus carefully crafts an argument that sets in motion a process of re-humanization or, at least, re-eroticization of the hoopoe, former tyrant of Thrace. Unlike in his later persuasion of the bird chorus, Peisetaerus need not, in persuading Tereus, mention the justice of the act, nor prove or even mention the ancient divinity of the birds. He plays upon the latent *eros* in the man-bird. Merely proving the possibility of power (*dunamis*) is enough for one who formerly enjoyed it.

In the *agon* with the birds, Tereus proves to be the vital element in getting the chorus to listen to Peisetaerus's plan. Once the birds have accepted the plan and Tereus has winged the two Athenians, however, he is not heard of again. Though Tereus was necessary, once he has performed his function he is discarded. Likewise, the initial plan that Peisetaerus put forward to Tereus is entirely dropped.[38] The birds do wall off the city and starve the gods, but the idea of charging a tax is nowhere mentioned again. The plan will end up not as a source for greater wealth per se for the birds (including Tereus), but as a bargaining tool by which Peisetaerus can gain the scepter and thunderbolt of Zeus for himself.

For Peisetaerus, Tereus plays a role, like Euelpides, of a helper on his journey. Euelpides, as we saw, was induced to leave Athens and the *polis* by the dream of a quiet and comfortable life. In stark contrast to this, Peisetaerus's persuasion of Tereus consists in offering him, the former tyrant, with his now sublimated passions, the chance in a newly founded *polis* to rekindle those desires. Among the birds, he was one of a large disorganized, gaping and not *polypragmon* flock. He had taught them to speak (200), for which the birds owe him gratitude (384); but he was no king among them.[39] With an imperial *polis* in the air, on the other hand, Peisetaerus offers Tereus a different dream.

Tereus returns to his *oikos*, or *lochmē,* where he rouses his wife, the nightingale, from her sleep with a beautiful ode that ironically sings of the reciprocity between birds and the Olympians—a situation that Tereus and the audience know must soon be destroyed. When he returns from the *lochmē*, Tereus is no longer decked out in his underclothes, but like the description of Tereus in the final scene of Sophocles's play, "in full panoply" (434–35). His metamorphosis is thus stunningly apparent to the audience.

For Peisetaerus's plan to succeed he needed a bridge between the ambitious and erotic human sphere and the unerotic, apolitical birds. He had to find an impossible animal, an erotic bird that would let him into the untouched garden of *physis*. It is only a Tereus, a stereotypically insatiably erotic tyrant and escapee from the tragic stage, who, metamorphosed into a bird, could betray the sweet life of the birds to Peisetaerus's ambitious regime. At the same time, we have also been shown that the existence of a *polis* is essential for the satisfaction of the greatest human desires.

NOTES

1. Parts of this chapter (now revised) were originally published as Holmes (2011). I thank *Syllecta Classica* for allowing me to reprint them here.

2. His wife, the nightingale, still sings in lamentation of their dead son, Itys (212); however, this is proverbially always the subject of her song.

3. That *eros* was believed to be a singularly human (and anthropomorphically, divine) trait, see Konstan (2013). As will become evident below I am using the term *eros* here only occasionally in the literal sense of "sexual desire." For its use in its literal sense see the recent collection *Eros in Ancient Greece* ed. by Sanders, Thumiger, Carey, and Lowe (2013). Prior to that volume, as the authors of the aforementioned collection make clear, an enormous amount of scholarship had appeared on the concept and polyvalency of *eros* in classical Greece and, in particular, on the rhetorical and political use of the term. For a good summary see Ludwig (2002, 7–23), esp. 9n 10 for bibliography; also Wohl (2002), Scholtz (2007). Ludwig (12–13) marks out certain parameters for the term: "Eros tends to be reserved for situations in which the agent already has his basic needs met. . . . Indeed eros is often used to describe

situations in which the agent gambles more basic goods, risking life or limb in an attempt to obtain a beautiful object of dubious material or practical value. . . . Eros occurs in cases in which the desire, whether sexual or not, becomes obsessional and the subject of desire becomes willing to devote nearly all of his or her life, time, or resources to achieving the goal." On *eros* in *Birds* see especially Arrowsmith (1973).

4. Most illustrative of this metaphorical *eros* is Thucydides's assertion that after the Athenians made the decision to sail to Sicily "Eros fell upon everyone alike to sail" (6.24.3) after which he describes the different objects of desire: victory, sights and sounds, money, power—depending on one's age and class. This "overwhelming desire" (*agan epithymia*) of the majority of the people, meant that the few opposed were too scared to speak up (6.24.4).

5. We might also compare Dionysus' *pothos* for Euripides at *Frogs* 53–5.

6. For Tereus's costume see Compton-Engle (2016, 132–4).

7. Cf. in particular Griffith (1987); Dunbar (1996, ad loc. 15). This word play had already been exploited by Sophocles in his tragedy, *Tereus*, if, following Welcker (1839, 374–88) and the majority of scholars, we assign fr. 581 to Sophocles as against Aeschylus (to whom Aristotle *HA* 633a 19ff. had originally assigned it). In *Birds* Aristophanes takes this word play a step further by punning also on the different forms of ἐπιπέτομαι (fly over). See in particular lines 48 and 118.

8. On the dating of Sophocles's *Tereus*, see Calder (1974, 91); Dobrov (1993, 213) and n.54; Radt (1999, 4.436).

9. On the absence of dialectal differences in tragedy see Hall (1989, 117–8).

10. Parsons (1974, 46); Burnett (1998, 180, n12). That this is the hypothesis of Sophocles's and not Philocles's play see Fitzpatrick (2001, 91).

11. Burnett (1998, 180) who notes that Ovid's "narrative, with its panoramic stretches of time and place, certainly does not reflect the shape of an Attic tragedy"; cf. Sommerstein and Fitzpatrick (2006, 147–8). See also Boemer's commentary on *Metamorphoses* (1976, 117), who argues that Ovid relied more on Accius than Sophocles. The reconstructions and interpretations of Sutton (1984, 127–32); Kiso (1984, 51–86, 139–147); Dobrov (1993) stray too far into unsupportable assumptions, especially as regards Dionysian elements.

12. Burnett (1998, 181).

13. Sommerstein and Fitzpatrick (2006, 155–7) conclude that the audience of "Athenian men would have considered Procne's act of revenge as justifiable" and cite Demosthenes' Funeral Oration which praises the tribe of Pandionidae in the following way (60.28): "The Pandionidae had inherited the tradition of Procne and Philomela, the daughters of Pandion, who took vengeance on Tereus for his crime against them. They hold that life is not worth living, if they do not show themselves as having the same spirit as those women, when an outrage is committed against Greece." They also go on to argue that a piece of sculpture on the acropolis by Acaemenes depicting Procne "when she had taken her decision against her son" (Paus. 1.24.3) and within her mother's grasp, illustrates "an Athenian mother sacrificing her child to uphold Athenian honour, and this, in turn, indicates that Procne was a significant figure in the Athenian imagination of the late fifth century BC."

14. *P.Ox.*42.3013: "[Tereus] disregarded his trust (τὰ πιστά) from Pandion and violated her."

15. Burnett (1998, 188) gives several layers to the significance of Tereus's child-devouring feast: "On the most obvious level, when the sisters force Tereus to swallow human flesh they make him act like what he is, a wild man from the outer regions. More specifically the meal is appropriate to one guilty of incest, because eating human meat stands to acceptable dining much as raping your sister-in-law does to acceptable mating: cannibalism is a kind of dietary incest. The consumption of a son, moreover, has a terrible suitability in the case of Tereus, the oath breaker and author of sexual violence, because with this action he destroys himself and his progeny, eating up his chance to have grandsons. He, the cutter of Philomela's tongue, performs a kind of self-castration by devouring what would have given him futurity. And finally, with this feast Procne gives back to her faithless husband the product of her own misplaced faith, returning her son to his source."

16. Burnett (1998, 178–91).

17. On the terms *basileus* and *tyrannos* in Greek tragedy, see the appraisal of Hall (1989, 210): "Terms such as *turannos* are in the fifth century semantically unstable, that is, their connotations are unusually ambiguous and only ascertainable from the context, for thematic associations work cumulatively and in conjunction with one another. The poets chose to omit or use suggestive words and symbolic actions according to their presentation of the worth or reprehensibility of a particular character. The words *turannos, ploutos, chrusos,* and *basileus* can be almost benign, as can language suggestive of softness or luxury, at least in reference to women. But in conjunction with, for example, cruelty or Phrygian slaves their ambiguity is resolved into something more sinister. The presence of any one item in the poets' 'vocabulary of barbarism' is by no means always significant: cumulatively, however, the implications become unmistakable."

18. See also Burnett (1998, 179n 7); Hall (1989, 104n 9). On the contemporary, political implications of the Thracian setting see Zacharia (2001).

19. Cf. West 1980 on *WD* ad loc. 568; but see also the cautionary remarks of Burnett 1998, 184n24. That the "Thracians were firmly established in Athenian consciousness as a stereotypical barbaric race," see Sommerstein/Fitzgerald (2006, 155 and n. 50); Hall (1989, 104–5); and Polymestor in Euripides *Hecuba* and Eumolpus in Euripides *Erechtheus.* Also note Accius' *animo barbaro* in n. 23 below.

20. Dobrov (1993, 204–5); Burnett (1998, 185–6).

21. The hoopoe has various, other strange and, in eastern cultures, mystical traits (see Thompson 1936, 95–100). Aristotle (*HA* 616a 35ff.) relates that the hoopoe makes its nest of human dung.

22. Hall (1989, 154–9, 192–200); for example, 192: "it is in the contrast drawn between democracy and despotism that the most conscious and powerful contrasts between Hellene and barbarian are drawn in tragedy as elsewhere."

23. Cf. the later depiction of Tereus in Accius: *Tereus indomito more atque animo barbaro / conspexit in eam; amore vecors flammeo, / depositus, facinus pessimum ex dementia / confingit*. (frr. 639–42, Warmington).

24. See in particular Catenacci (1996) and esp. chapter 3, "L'*eros*," 142–170; Hartog (1988, 330); Hall (1989, 208) who cites Euripides (fr. 850): "tyranny is besieged

on all sides by terrible desires (*deinois erosin*);" Wohl (2002, 215–70). See also the description of the "*epithumiae*" of the tyrant in Book 9 of Plato's *Republic*, as those which are usually felt in sleep, but in the tyrant are manifested in real life—including rape, incest and parricide (571c–d).

25. Benardete (1969, 137–38). Cf. also Archilochus (22.3) "I do not desire (ἐρέω) a mighty tyranny."

26. Compare also the soul which, in the myth of Er of Plato's *Republic*, chooses the greatest tyranny and therein sees "eating his own children" as well as other horrors (619b–c).

27. We might note that the very pea soup that Tereus desires is that by which Dionysus in *Frogs* is able to compare and illustrate to Heracles his own *pothos* for Euripides (59–65).

28. For Tereus's costuming see Dunbar (1995) ad loc. 94; and Gelzer (1996, 199), but especially Compton-Engle (2015, 133–4) who, following Dobrov, argues that Tereus's costuming here is based upon the "at least partial visual transformation" of Tereus at the end of Sophocles's play.

29. As Compton-Engle (2015, 175 n. 72), following Green (1985, 115), points out, the reference to a peacock "is best explained as a reference to the circular markings used to create the impression of plumage on the actor's bodysuit."

30. Against the regular view that these are ironic see Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 135): "Since κακῶν ἐρᾶν is sometimes used of unfortunates desiring what would destroy them [Hom *Od* 10.431; E. *Hek* 1280, *Hipp* 358–59, Semon. 1.22–3] Tereus's tone is at first surprised, then condescendingly sympathetic. This is more likely than the view . . . that it is ironical, which would be less amusing"; though she does not describe why he should be sympathetic aside from its amusement for the audience.

31. A strange aspect of both of the speeches is the fact that both mention the bathing of children (132, 140). Part of this may be humorous. Peisetaerus outdoes Euelpides by suggesting: "well go and bathe your children, I for my part like boys that have just bathed too, but from the gymnasium." But I would also tentatively put forward that in Sophocles's *Tereus*, Procne may at some stage have gruesomely suggested to Tereus that she has or will "bathe" their son Itys, referring to the boiling of their son for the stew.

32. According to *LSJ* ἀκολουθέω is frequently used of soldiers and slaves.

33. Cf. Dunbar (1995) ad loc. 339–40.

34. Cf. Konstan (1997, 9–10), who notes that in the prologue Aristophanes had created on the stage a place where "compass-directions do not apply. . . . Playfully, Aristophanes evokes a mysterious indeterminacy, a kind of metaphysical lostness, about the realm of the birds." Once Peisetaerus suggests founding a demarcated city there arises for the birds "a different way of conceiving space as territorial, a field marked by limits of property."

35. It is impossible to render the force of the middle voice sufficiently. I have, therefore, employed the passive in the translation.

36. Cf. Konstan (1997, 9 and n. 28); *LSJ* ἄτιμος A.2.

37. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 179) notes that πόλος is found in the fifth century only in the lyrics of tragedy and was, therefore, a highly poetic word, like our "vault" of heaven; though she does speculate that it may have been a technical, scientific term,

such as found at Plato *Timaeus* 40c. It is clearly used because of the word play with πόλις. Nevertheless it does further characterize Peisetaerus's sophistic technique, here with etymologies. In the following lines he will play with the verb πολεῖται (the bird realm "is traversed" or "subject to motion") and the noun πολῖται, and if Rusten (2013, 314) is correct the birds will destroy (ἀπολεῖτε) the gods "with the implied sense of 'un-citify.'" The irony of the argument as a whole is that once a city is founded and its inhabitants become citizens, freedom of movement both from within and without is no longer so easily available and the birds lose what is there natural prerogative.

38. Though one imagines that it would have been a spectacular and appropriate shock for the audience if the former cannibal, Tereus, or at least his costume, appears again at the end of the play as one of the rebel birds who is cooked up by Peisetaerus, given that the original plan of wealth and imperial rule over men and gods as outlined in this earlier scene, has been superseded by a more passive role for the birds, and with Peisetaerus alone as the new Zeus.

39. Cf. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 448–50), who argues against those who believe that Tereus had become king of the birds. As Tereus tells Peisetaerus, "I would join with you in founding the city, if it should seem good to the other birds" (197). As the birds' teacher in language, Tereus does have some authority among the birds: "we have always listened to you in the past" (385). He is not, however, their king.

Chapter 3

Persuading the Birds

As we have seen Peisetaerus could not be satisfied living that quiet, but golden-age "bird life" as outlined in Tereus's description to Euelpides (155–161). To attain the life he desires Peisetaerus must, instead, persuade the birds to change their nature and their way of life. Once nomadic, self-sufficient, migratory, and without boundaries, the birds must become settled, must wall in their world, and become *polis* animals. How Peisetaerus goes about this monumental task is the main question of this chapter. I have previously characterized the substance of his persuasion of the birds as thoroughly sophistic, but in addition, I argue here that Peisetaerus (and before him, Tereus), like all effective orators, appeals to the character or *ethos* of his audience.[1] The character of bird society, as depicted in this play at least,[2] is essentially threefold: it is community-oriented (not individualistic), it has (ironically) a special and reciprocated relationship with the gods through their song, and it is just. Bird justice, however, is not human justice, or at least, not positivistic—that is, based upon an obedience to conventional, established laws that are particular to different groups and regimes—but natural and universal. Peisetaerus persuades the birds that the current ordering and hierarchy of the universe is unnatural and therefore unjust. As I will argue, the birds have a kind of justice that is derived from a mixture of that found in Antiphon and the pre-Socratics. But before we fly ahead, we must first look more carefully at how Aristophanes sets up pre-Peisetaerean bird life as depicted by his characterization of the bird chorus.

THE BIRD CHORUS

The chorus of *Birds* represents actual birds. Like no other extant play, the plot is driven forward by the essential characteristic peculiar to this chorus, its wingedness, and all this entails.[3] Furthermore, of the choruses of Aristophanes's extant plays, the chorus of birds is that which is most integrated into the plot. The chorus never does or says anything that is not determined by their bird costume. Unlike in his earlier extant plays, the parabasis is delivered not as an artfully opinionated mouthpiece of the poet, but consciously as birds. Likewise, whenever the chorus appeals to the audience or to the judges, it wholly retains its dramatic character.[4]

The visual and dramaturgical aspects of the bird chorus also provide features unique to our Aristophanic corpus. After Tereus has woken his wife and musical partner, the nightingale, he summons the birds. In *Knights, Wasps, Peace,* and *Clouds* there are brief songs of summons to the chorus. The hoopoe's song, however, stands out as an extended solo, lyric monody.[5] The whole song, like a cletic hymn to a number of gods, moves in polysyndeton from one group of birds to another, arranged according to their habitat and food—from the birds of the field to the those of the garden, hills, marshlands, and sea (227–262). Tereus thus makes his invocation as inclusive as possible. He summons all birds from all environments. He does mention one specific place in the song—the marshlands of Marathon (246). Apart from this the call is universal. Using the same technique of suspense he had used earlier in the play, he delays the actual *parodos* by bringing out four exotic birds that arrive first on the roof of the *skene*, each distinguished by some eye-catching and individual feature.[6] The actual *parodos* is no less striking. The birds come on, unlike any other extant play, one by one and with increasing rapidity (296–304). Each bird represents and is decked out in the costume of a different species.[7] The effect must have been not only one of dazzling and kaleidoscopic beauty, but also an intense sense of the variety of birds on the stage and the illusion that all species of birds from all places were present.

Once the birds have come one by one onto the stage, however, they appear to form a single whole. Though varied in species, they exhibit a kinship with one another as regards their genus. They are, altogether as a genus, *philoi.* Attracted by the beauty of the strains of the nightingale, they represent "all the tribes of birds" (253–4). In their initial discussions with Tereus this concept of *philia* between the birds becomes explicit. Tereus quickly identifies himself to them as a *philos* (313) who brings a *philos logos* (316) to them. The birds become angry when they realize that a *philos* (329), Tereus, has betrayed them to men—their most hated enemy. Part of Tereus's enterprise to persuade the birds to listen to Peisetaerus consists of persuading them of

this human being's *philia* toward them. Tereus argues that though they may be enemies by nature, they are *philoi* by intention (371–381). Once Peisetaerus has shown the benefit of his scheme to the race of birds as a whole, he becomes for the chorus that old man who is now "most dear (φίλτατος) to me by far, transformed from the greatest enemy" (627).

The communion of feeling and friendship among the birds is underlined throughout the play by the deliberate repetition of συν- and ὁμο—compounds.[8] In Tereus's initial summons of the bird chorus, before he begins his enumeration of the five habitats of the birds, he gives in a single line a command to all birds to come: "Let every one of my fellow-winged (ὁμοπτέρων) companions come here" (229). That attribute most distinctive of birds, their wings, is the symbol of the concord among themselves and their distinction from all other beings. This communion of spirit, however, is pointed to most clearly in their feeding habits and their song. When Tereus first calls on his wife he names her his σύννομος, a word which encompasses linguistically she who "shares his songs" as well as she who "shares his pasture." This word is again used of her later by the entire bird chorus; she is to them the dearest "sharer in the songs (σύννομε) of all our hymns" (678). The beauty of her voice is a common possession of both Tereus and the birds as a whole. At the end of the play, all the races (πάντα φῦλα) of the birds are depicted together as "sharers in pasture" (συννόμοι), as they follow Peisetaerus in his wedding train (1756–57). For the birds, Tereus is (329–30) "he who was our friend, who grazed beside us in the fields that communally feed us (ὁμότροφα ἡμῖν)" even as Procne is their "nightingale and fellow feeder (σύντροφε)" (679). The birds freely and communally feed together and sing together.[9] There appears to be no competition among them.

Such communion is evidently not shared with their predators such as human beings. But the birds have a special relationship with the gods that, in respect to their songs at least, mirrors that among themselves. In his song to awaken the nightingale, Tereus describes the movement of the beautiful sounds emanating from her thicket, its echo up through the tree to the seats of Zeus, where Apollo and his chorus of gods respond in harmony with her song (209–222):

ἄγε σύννομέ μοι, παῦσαι μὲν ὕπνου,
λῦσον δὲ νόμους ἱερῶν ὕμνων,
οὓς διὰ θείου στόματος θρηνεῖς
τὸν ἐμὸν καὶ σὸν πολύδακρυν Ἴτυν
ἐλελιζομένη διεροῖς μέλεσιν
γένυος ξουθῆς. καθαρὰ χωρεῖ
διὰ φυλλοκόμου μίλακος ἠχὼ
πρὸς Διὸς ἕδρας, ἵν' ὁ χρυσοκόμας
Φοῖβος ἀκούων τοῖς σοῖς ἐλέγοις

ἀντιψάλλων ἐλεφαντόδετον
φόρμιγγα θεῶν ἵστησι χορούς·
διὰ δ' ἀθανάτων στομάτων χωρεῖ
ξύμφωνος ὁμοῦ
θεία μακάρων ὁλολυγή.

Come, you who share my pasture/song, cease from sleep. Release the strains of holy hymns, in which you lament from your divine mouth my and your much-bewailed Itys, trilling with the liquid melodies of your vibrant throat. A pure echo goes forth through the leafy milax to the seats of Zeus where gold-haired Phoebus hears it and, striking in answer to your elegies his ivory lyre, he sets up choruses of gods; and through immortal mouths comes in unison a harmonious divine cry of blessed ones.

Beginning from the divine mouth of the nightingale (211) and through her throat, the gods respond with a divine refrain from their own mouths (222). Like the birds themselves, the gods sing altogether (ὁμοῦ), and their refrain is in harmony with one another (ξύμφωνος). Later, in the lyric antode of the parabasis (769–784), the chorus describes the song of the swans in honor of their patron god, Apollo.

τοιάδε κύκνοι,
τιο τιο τιο τιο,
συμμιγῆ βοὴν ὁμοῦ πτε-
ροῖσι κρέκοντες ἴαχον Ἀπόλλω,
τιο τιο τιο τίγξ,
ὄχθῳ ἐφεζόμενοι παρ' Ἕβρον ποταμόν,
τιο τιο τιο τιο
διὰ δ' αἰθέριον νέφος ἦλθε βοά·
πτῆξε δὲ φῦλά τε ποικίλα θηρῶν,
κύματά τ' ἔσβεσε νήνεμος αἴθρη,
τοτοτο τοτοτο τοτοτο τίγξ
πᾶς δ' ἐπεκτύπησ' Ὄλυμπος·
εἶλε δὲ θάμβος ἄνακτας· Ὀλυμπιά-
δες δὲ μέλος Χάριτες
Μοῦσαί τ' ἐπωλόλυξαν.
τιο τιο τιο τίγξ

Thus did the swans—tio tio tio tio—sounding all together a harmonious shout with their wings, cried Apollo—tio tio tio tinx—sitting on the bank beside the Hebros river—tio tio tio—and through the aetherial cloud went the shout. All the various tribes of beasts cowered; the windless, clear sky quenched the waves—tototo tototo tototo tinx—The whole of Olympus resounded back. And wonder held its lords. The Olympian Graces and the Muses joyfully cried out in response—tio tio tio tinx.

Like the chorus of gods responding to the nightingale, the swans sing altogether (ὁμοῦ) and harmoniously (συμμιγῆ). The song described, however, is very different from that of the nightingale. It is a loud whooping cry which is accompanied by the beating of the birds' own wings.[10] As in the case of the nightingale song, Aristophanes describes the geographic movement of the song. Beginning from the banks of the river Hebros in Thrace, it moves through the clouds to heaven. Its effect, however, is felt throughout nature. Whereas the natural forces become still and Olympus reechoes back, all animals cower (πτῆξε). The gods, unlike animals on earth, rejoice in wonder (θάμβος) at the swan song. Thus the Olympian Graces and Muses cry out in response to the swans (ἐπωλόλυξαν). As is appropriate, they utter a μέλος in reply to the swans' βοά. Birds, Aristophanes implies, hold a special place in the universe vis-à-vis the gods. Their songs in all their forms, from the whooping of the swans to the trilling of the nightingale, reflect a part of the Olympians' divinity and thus can be responded to in kind. The other beasts of earth, cowered whether by fear or in awe of the swan song, cannot respond.

As creatures not of Olympus, but of the natural earth and countryside, the birds also have a special relationship with the rustic gods and nymphs. In the ode of the first parabasis, the chorus exhorts the nightingale, now the Muse of the Thicket, to accompany them in their sacred songs to Pan and the earth mother, Kybele (737–752). In the antode of the second parabasis, the chorus of birds describes their blessedness because nature has provided them with all means necessary to survive happily both the heat of summer and the cold of winter. In the winter, they tell us, they play together with the mountain nymphs, and in the spring they feed on the fruits of the Charites (1088–1101). As Perkell notes, it is too weak to call this existence of the birds "pastoral": "the dominant presence of Olympian gods in these lyrics and the absence of human beings from them would seem to make them something other than what is usually meant by pastoral."[11] The birds, to be sure, do have a rustic, idyllic existence; their intimate relationship with the gods, and, among non-bird beings, the gods alone, however, points to an existence different from the happy shepherds. The birds are more akin to the golden race in Hesiod's *Works and Days* or the pre-Mecone human beings in the *Theogony*. They live without thought of the harshness of nature or scarcity of food; they play with the gods, and live in a harmonious responsion with the Olympians. Unlike human beings, it seems, the birds offer no threat to the gods. On the contrary, birds provide the gods with the greatest of pleasures. From the descriptions of the movement of song from the birds, through nature and up to heaven, the birds appear to be the source of melodies for Apollo, the Charites and the Muses—and, therefore, man.

Thus the lyric odes of the bird chorus express ideas and a way of life at odds with the action of the play.[12] This disjunction is felt keenly in Tereus's

lyric address to the nightingale. Directly beforehand, Tereus had joyously approved of the idea of an imperial bird *polis* that would break the communion between birds and gods. Whereas the song of Procne reaches through the sky to heaven and is responded to in kind, the imposition of a walled city in the air would interrupt this responsion. Likewise in both *parabaseis*, the birds' announcements of their regained divinity and its benefits to human beings are interrupted by the lyric odes expressing their close association with the rustic gods, and to Apollo and to the Charites. The bird chorus remains oblivious to the new relationship that, we imagine, must inevitably result from their revolutionary actions. Aristophanes thus deliberately intersperses the humanly driven action of the play with lyric odes that point to a life of simple beauty within nature. A human being drives these natural, poetic beings to create a *polis* in the sky. The birds, however, even in the midst of great industry, great *pragmata,* retain their song and believe that the gods likewise will continue to share in it with them in cosmic reciprocity (e.g., 1097–1101). From the human viewpoint, on the other hand, the lyrics point to the loss that accompanies the colonizing of nature.

BIRD "NOMOI" AND BIRD JUSTICE

The oppositions between bird and man, *physis* and *nomos*, innocent nature and ambitious politics run throughout the play and form one of its central themes. This antithesis is most piquantly brought out by the play on the word "*nomos*" itself.[13] Most often this word is used in Greek literature, as above, to indicate what is traditional—the habitual use established by and particular to a given society and, therefore, its conventions and law. In this sense it is opposed to what is always and everywhere, the universal, *physis*. In another sense *nomos* is the melody or tune of a song. Thus, for example, Tereus exhorts Procne to let loose the "melodies" (*nomoi*) of holy songs. If accented on the second syllable, *nomos* means pasture or feeding place. These latter meanings of *nomos*—song and feeding—represent, as we saw above, the two central aspects of life for the birds. They partake of them in a sense of uncompetitive, communal friendship among themselves. Their *nomos* is, therefore, that which is most natural to them or, as Whitman so succinctly describes it, bird *nomos* is the "lawless nomos which is physis."[14] For birds as for human beings, *nomos* is king. For the birds, however, its essential nature does not vary from nation to nation, or from race to race. *Nomos* rules not by externally dictating to them how to act, nor educating them to curb their natural desires for the sake of the common good. Rather, the common good arises freely to the birds by living according to their nature. The freedom of their *nomos*, of their song and feeding, comes to light as a beneficent *physis*.

As we saw in the previous chapter, it is this anomian character of bird life that gives Peisetaerus the opportunity to create a wholly new regime in the sky. Nevertheless, as becomes evident throughout the initial encounters with the chorus, bird life, though anomian, is not, therefore, unconcerned with the concept of justice. Twice Tereus exhorts the birds to listen to Peisetaerus's plan on account of its justice (317, 384), and after Peisetaerus has persuaded the birds of his plan, they swear to join with him so long as he is "just, without guile and pious" (632) in his endeavors with them to unseat the gods. So what is this anomian bird justice?

As we have seen there is no need for laws in regard to relations among the birds themselves. They simply follow their nature. In conflict with the simple life of the birds, however, are the desires of predators and, in particular, human beings. Bird life is natural, but also highly vulnerable to the natural instincts and needs of man. Our first view of the bird chorus was one of the gradual arrival of birds of different species and without much order. They come on, as Peisetaerus tells us, cheeping and running about (305–6).[15] They soon become ordered into something akin to a hoplite phalanx, however, as soon as they realize that human beings are in their presence. Birds can fight in some sort of order, but only when first attacked. As the chorus announces (331–32), Tereus has "transgressed the ancient ordinances, has transgressed the oaths of the birds" (παρέβη μὲν θεσμοὺς ἀρχαίους, / παρέβη δ' ὅρκους ὀρνίθων) by leading the chorus into a trap made by humans. This is the only ordinance (θεσμός) mentioned by the birds in the play. It is ancient (ἀρχαῖος) because, as we soon find out, the human race has been the enemy of the birds "from the time when it came into being" (335), not only to the current generation of birds, but also to their forefathers (πάπποι) (374). Tereus states that humans are by nature the birds' enemy (371). Humans introduced into nature *doloi* (traps) (333a, 526–28, 1082–83) to capture birds and *technai* (skills) to cook them (531–39, 1579–82). The only bird *thesmos* is thus coeval with the coming into being of man and is set up in order to deal with the effect of the wiles and arts of man on the former order of the natural world. Their ordinance and oath provide the minimum level of justice required for the bird species' self-preservation and the continuation of their pleasant life in nature.[16] They are ordinances based upon the awareness, through the long experience of their forefathers, of the nature of the world around them: human beings do not live in and according to nature, but use their arts and wiles to control it.

This "natural" state of bird justice becomes clearer if we compare it with contemporary Greek views of the coming into being of human justice as shown, for example, by Protagoras's mythologizing account portrayed in Plato's *Protagoras.*[17] Protagoras describes the coming into being of mortal creatures and the allocation of faculties to them by Epimetheus. Whereas to all other species, including birds, he gives the means to live comfortably and

securely, to man he is unable to give any resource because all faculties had been distributed. After discovering this, Prometheus steals for man from Hephaestus and Athena the wisdom that comes with *technē* and fire. Because man has *technē* he is able to worship gods, develop speech, and find the means to live, but man is, nevertheless, not able to live securely among predatory beasts. Therefore, man has to form *poleis* even though the political art still resides with Zeus. Thus it results that, though they are safer from other beasts, they are not safe from themselves. They kept on doing each other injustices (322b8), and so scattered again. It is for this reason that Zeus introduces the political virtues: reverence/shame and justice. Man is therefore unique among animals both for his "technical" wisdom, and for the fact that, living in *poleis*, he naturally does injustice to his own species and, therefore, needs the political *techne* to curb his own desires.[18] Justice arises in order that the nature of human beings might not itself be the cause of the destruction of the human species.[19] In contrast, there are no constraints on bird nature apart from the necessary injunction not to associate with man. The ways of birds naturally looks to the good of the commonality (τὸ κοινόν) of birds.

In important respects, the ways of birds reflect the kinds of ideas put forward in the papyrus fragments of Antiphon's *On Truth*. To be sure, Antiphon does not mention a concept of natural justice.[20] Justice is always a conventional concept: "not to transgress the laws (*nomima*) of the *polis* in which one is a citizen." Nor, from what remains, does Antiphon appear to put forward a positive ethical doctrine that advocates a life "according to nature," as post-Socratic writers do.[21] He advocates upholding the laws in public, but in private the things of nature. Nevertheless, he puts forward a broad theory concerning the opposition between *physis* and *nomos*: "The things of laws are imposed (or additional), but the things of nature are necessary" (fr. 44(a)i 23–27).[22] For Antiphon, whatever is laid down as "advantages" by laws are in fact chains (*desma*) on nature, but those that are laid down by nature are free (*eleuthera*) (fr. 44(a)iv 1–7). To act in accordance with *nomoi* in fact brings about pain and disadvantage. Nevertheless, Antiphon does not, like Callicles advocate any megalanomian indulgence of these natural aspects. As Pendrick succinctly puts it, the "Calliclean strongman aims at pre-eminence in the state, Antiphon's individual at freedom from the state."[23] Furthermore, like the birds, Antiphon does not believe that parents should have a special position of honor vis-à-vis their children.[24] Nor, like the birds, does he believe that races of human beings are essentially different by nature: "By nature all men have been born alike in all things, both *barbaroi* and Greeks."[25] In sum, the birds and Antiphon agree in their essential approach to *nomoi* as given in the epirrheme of the parabasis (755–6): "As many things as are shameful and ruled over by law here [in the *polis*, Athens], all of these things among us birds [in nature] are noble." However, whereas Antiphon appears to abandon justice as merely conventional, the

birds conceive of justice as the natural order of things and the way things have always been.

In this respect bird justice appears to share certain affinities with pre-Socratic ideas concerning *Dike*. For Parmenides, for example, *Dike* is the goddess who maintains the proper order of the universe. It is justice (*Dike*) that "does not allow Being to come into being or to perish, but has clasped it in chains and holds it" (D-K B8.14) and that keeps the sun and moon and stars in their place (D-K B10). For Heraclitus also, justice is what keeps the sun in its place (D-K B94), but it is also the perpetual cosmic strife of coming into being and passing away (D-K B80). Human beings, however, do not recognize the Logos of things, nor do they recognize that everything is just (D-K B102): τῷ μὲν θεῷ καλὰ πάντα καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ /δίκαια, ἄνθρωποι δὲ ἃ μὲν ἄδικα ὑπειλήφασιν ἃ δὲ δίκαια. "To god all things are beautiful and good and just; but human beings have assumed that some things are unjust and others just." In sum, as Vlastos concludes, the pre-Socratics sought to find an order in nature:

> We may speak of this transition, the work of Anaximines and his successors, as the naturalization of justice. Justice is no longer inscrutable moira, imposed by arbitrary forces with incalculable effect. Nor is she the goddess Dike, moral and rational enough, but frail and unreliable. She is now one with the "ineluctable laws of nature herself"; unlike Hesiod's Dike, she could no more leave the earth than the earth could leave its place in the firmament.[26]

I do not mean to associate the happy birds directly with any specific pre-Socratic philosopher, but merely wish to offer this much broader concept of "naturalized" justice, which largely stands above and abstracted from human morality and justice as strict legality.[27] In *Clouds*, Aristophanes had already played with and parodied such conceptions of justice applied to the human realm. After his son returns (1288–95), Strepsiades is confronted by a creditor who demands at least the interest on his loan which he defines as the growth of his debt from month to month with "the flowing on of time." Then when asked whether he believes that the sea is bigger now than before, the creditor replies that it is not, "for it is not just for it to be bigger." At which Strepsiades is able to argue that if the rivers "flowing into" the sea do not justly make it bigger, how could it be just for the creditor to increase his debt with interest. As Dover notes, your ordinary Athenian would not reply with an answer in such pre-Socratic terms as this one.[28] But given the context of the play and its confrontation with the shifting and blurring of meanings of key civic values such as justice, Aristophanes employs the language and ideas of the pre-Socratics to show how they might be manipulated when applied to the practical matters of a *polis.* Justice is the inexorable ordering of the cosmos, not the obligation to pay one's debts.

Among the birds themselves, therefore, justice consists in living according to the natural order of things unconstrained by law or shame. They live in a peaceful state of harmony and reciprocity with each other as well as with both the Olympian gods and the gods of the fields, woods and mountains. Where intrusions come into bird life from the *doloi* of human beings, however, it is their ancient heritage to avoid all associations with man. The birds follow this way of their ancestors because of the fact that man is the birds' natural enemy.[29] It will be Tereus's task, therefore, to overcome this ancient and natural way of the birds, to persuade them to associate with at least two human beings, Peisetaerus and Euelpides, and to show that they too may be *philoi*. As we know, Peisetaerus also has bigger plans. He has to convince the birds to found a city set against the gods. At the same time he has to do this in accordance with the broader sense of bird justice—living according to nature. He does this by upsetting the birds' vision of the cosmos. That way of life passed down by their fathers was in fact unnatural. It is the birds and not the Olympians who are rightly kings.

PERSUADING THE BIRDS—TEREUS

As we saw in the last chapter Peisetaerus won over Tereus by re-introducing him to the possibilities of wealth, honor, and power available within a *polis*. Tereus's conversion to the plan is swift, almost instantaneous. He is able to be persuaded so quickly, because he was "once a human being." Nevertheless, as a bird, he also knows what it means to be a bird and their communality. He will only help in founding the city, "if it should be jointly resolved upon (ξυνδοκοίη) by the rest of the birds" (197). The birds are by nature hostile to all humans as well as unambitious. Their persuasion will thus be a taller order than Tereus.'

Having been convinced by Peisetaerus's plan, Tereus, still clad in his body suit and crest, thereafter enters the thicket in order to awaken his wife and to summon the birds. He returns to the two Athenians at line 270 as he helps them identify the different bird species. He is now, however, no longer dressed in his sleepwear but decked out in panoply, which is not put away until after the chorus has been mollified.[30] Tereus thus appears to have visually metamorphosed from the comically dressed bird, still sleepy from his feast of myrtle berries whom we first met, into something more akin to his non-comic, mythic bird character. As Sophocles described the metamorphosed hoopoe, it is bold in its panoply (θρασὺν . . . ἐν παντευχίᾳ, fr. 581, 2–3) in accord with the aggressive nature of the king it once was. Here among the birds on the comic stage, however, Tereus does not actually use aggression. Nevertheless, the vision of him in panoply must have made it clear that he was not only a diplomatic representative of the humans, but also a physical

presence to be reckoned with as he literally comes between the bird chorus and the two human beings (366–368).

When the birds become aware of the human presence, they form a mock hoplite phalanx while the two men humorously and ironically stave them off with cooking and eating utensils (343–365). The birds carry no artificial weapons but only their wings (345), beak (348), and claws (359). Thus when the *choregos* finally orders the chorus to put down their weapons like hoplites, the only weapons he can mention are their *thumos* (spirit) and *orge* (anger) (401–2). On the other side, Peisetaerus orders Euelpides to surround themselves with the man-made equipment with which, among other things, they cook and eat birds. Man without his Promethean *technē* is vulnerable and unable to withstand the birds' onset (356–391). Aristophanes thus brings to the forefront throughout these preliminary scenes the primeval hostility felt by the birds toward those intruders upon nature, human beings, and the fundamental opposition between *physis* and *technē*.

Tereus, who can think both as a bird and a man (119), however, intercedes and uses this knowledge to lay the groundwork for an alliance between the birds and Peisetaerus. It is important to note that Tereus nowhere mentions Peisetaerus's actual plan. He leaves this to Peisetaerus. He needs only to persuade the birds to listen. For this purpose Tereus establishes two points, both of which are congruent with the bird *ethos*: (1) that he remains a friend (φίλος (311, cf. 329, 385) and that these particular human beings might be friends despite their natural status as enemies (371, cf. 368) (2) that they might provide something that is useful for all birds (κοινόν, 316; cf 372, 381, 423, 457). He then finally suggests, but does not offer any proof, that it is just to listen to them (384). It will be Peisetaerus's task actually to prove the justice of his plan.

Although, especially in comparison to other hostile agons in Aristophanes, the birds are easily and quite quickly persuaded, Tereus's verbal arguments not only point humorously to the gullibility or stupidiy of the birds,[31] but also hint at the underlying insidiousness and unnaturalness of human beings taking advantage of birds. Most striking is his use of the particularly Athenian rhetorical trope of the conflation of erotic desire (ἔρως/ἐραστής) with political loyalty: in an attempt to calm the fears of the birds he calls the two men "lovers of this society (ἐραστὰ τῆσδε τῆς ξυνουσίας, 324), and later, he excitedly describes their reason in coming to the birds as (412–14) "an *eros* for your life and way of life and to live with you (ξυνοικεῖν) and be with you (ξυνεῖναι)." This description accords well with Tereus's earlier diagnosis of the two Athenians' erotic condition, while at the same time appealing to the birds' communality (three ξυν—compounds). In the context of deliberative rhetoric, however, it points to the well-worn demagogic ploy so humorously treated in *Knights.* There, Paphlagon, a caricature of the demagogue, Cleon,

vies with the sausage seller as the lover of Demos: "I love you, Demos, and I am your lover (*erastes*)" (732). This is no mere comic device, but points to a regular part of Cleon's and other demagogues' oratorical vocabulary.[32] By 414 BC, this motif and its odor of false loyalty must have been obvious if not trite to the audience. But here Aristophanes has added a more unnerving, albeit humorous, element. The object of their *eros* in both statements is "being with" (τῆς ξυνουσίας, ξυνεῖναι) the birds, with the obvious double entendre of "having (sexual) intercourse with." While this might be innocuous with Euelpides and his love of the "life of newly-weds," Peisetaerus we know wants, we might say, to de-flower the life of the birds, to make it political and to become an instrument of power. His "being with" the birds will transform it and it will permanently lose its unspoiled place in nature and the universe. So Tereus hints at the truth: by admitting men into their company the birds are also admitting that force which so characterizes the *poleis* of men—*eros,* the desire for more, *pleonexia*, and *polypragmosunē.*

Though persuaded to hear the men, the chorus, nevertheless, retains an ingrained sense of distrust about the ways of men. As the chorus restates in the ode of the agon, "A human being is by nature always tricky in everyway" (δολερὸν μὲν ἀεὶ κατὰ πάντα δὴ τρόπον πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπος 451–52). Nevertheless, they ask the clever human being, Peisetaerus, to speak in common to all (452–57). For whatever benefit he might bring them will be common to all birds (458–59).

PERSUADING THE BIRDS—PEISETAERUS

Peisetaerus, therefore, must persuade the birds that his plan will be just and good for all birds. He must transform his own position among the birds from a feared and most hated enemy to a most dear friend. Throughout the scenes preparatory to the main agon, we have seen that Tereus never mentions the plan of Peisetaerus. He does not mention the forming of a bird polis, the starvation of the gods nor the ruling of human beings. Rather he says, "He will win you over by saying that all these things are yours, both in this direction and that and here too" (422–25). Tereus, not yet knowing what Peisetaerus's ultimate means of persuading the birds will be, gives only a general argument. Aristophanes does not yet reveal to the audience Peisetaerus's new plan of reclaiming the bird's prior dominion of the cosmos.[33] As has become clear from the intervening scenes Peisetaerus cannot persuade the chorus using the same appeals to the erotic pursuit of power that he had used with Tereus.[34] Likewise, Peisetaerus does not even mention the idea of forming a *polis* until after he has implanted in them the just indignation felt at the usurpation of their prior rule.

Although Tereus has put away his arms (434–36), and the birds have set aside their anger, Peisetaerus is not willing to speak with the birds until they make a pact with him that they not physically attack him. Peisetaerus receives this pact with an oath from the birds (445–47). Human beings without manufactured arms are vulnerable before the aggression of birds. Peisetaerus, however, has the weapon of words and intellect, and he makes the foolish birds swear to a διαθήκη (settlement, 439) without having to swear himself. The birds, apparently unaware that words can be weapons, do not extract any oath from Peisetaerus that he not harm them in turn. This pact, based on an oath, is the first step by which Peisetaerus creates the city of birds. As in some sophistic accounts of the coming into being of justice in *poleis*, there arises a necessary compact that one neither harms nor is harmed in turn. For example, in Plato's *Republic,* Socrates's young interlocutor, Glaucon, gives an account of the coming into being of the lawful and the just in human *poleis*, as averred by "Thrasymachus and countless others like him," (358e-359a):

> ὥστ' ἐπειδὰν ἀλλήλους ἀδικῶσί τε καὶ ἀδικῶνται καὶ ἀμφοτέρων γεύωνται, τοῖς μὴ δυναμένοις τὸ μὲν ἐκφεύγειν τὸ δὲ αἱρεῖν δοκεῖ λυσιτελεῖν *συνθέσθαι* ἀλλήλοις μήτ' ἀδικεῖν μήτ' ἀδικεῖσθαι. καὶ ἐντεῦθεν δὴ ἄρξασθαι νόμους τίθεσθαι καὶ *συνθήκας* αὐτῶν, καὶ ὀνομάσαι τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἐπίταγμα νόμιμόν τε καὶ δίκαιον.
>
> And so when men wrong one another and are wronged and taste of both, it seems right to those who are not able to flee the one and to take the other to reap the profit of making *compacts* with one another not to wrong or be wronged. And from there they begin to set down laws and *compacts* and to name that which is ordered by the law as the lawful and just.

As Kahn notes, συνθήκη is the "semi-technical" word used to signify the social contract among citizens neither to harm nor be harmed (e.g., Demosthenes 25.16, Lycophron at Aristotle *Politics* 1280b 10, *Crito* 52d, Epicurus, *Sent*. 32).[35] Here Aristophanes humorously, but ominously, replaces the regular συνθήκη with Peisetaerus's διαθήκη. This settlement of non-aggression is not mutual, but one-sided. Nevertheless, it gives Peisetaerus the necessary precondition to begin to construct his polis in the sky.

The birds now order Peisetaerus to tell them for what purpose he has come to persuade (ἀναπείσων) them to his judgment (γνώμη, cf. 628). Peisetaerus, in an apparent fit of emotion, tells them (462–64):

> καὶ μὴν ὀργῶ νὴ τὸν Δία καὶ προπεφύραται λόγος εἶς μοι,
> ὃν διαμάττειν οὐ κωλύει. φέρε, παῖ, στέφανον· κατακεῖσθαι·
> κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ φερέτω ταχύ τις.

> I am truly teeming with desire [to tell you], by Zeus, and a particular speech has already been mixed. There is no stopping it being kneaded into its proper parts. Boy, bring a garland. You (birds) recline. Let someone quickly bring water for hands.

As Dunbar notes, in the context of the imagery of the mixing and kneading of dough, the initial verb, ὀργῶ, may call to mind the verb ὀργάζω, to make tender by kneading.[36] Thus Peisetaerus offers his speech as a laboriously worked platter of pastries. A few lines later, he says, in an aside to Euelpides, that he "for a long time now ha[s] been seeking to say a great, well-fattened speech which will fracture the souls of these birds" (465–66). To Euelpides, Peisetaerus offers the speech as a juicy piece of meat. The speech for both Euelpides and the birds becomes the rewarding feast after a battle set now in sympotic circumstances. Peisetaerus asks the slave to bring a garland, and some water for his hands, and bids the rest to recline.[37] Whereas Tereus persuaded the birds in something akin to an assembly, Peisetaerus brings the birds into a more private situation. They become part of his *hetaireia*. Like one revealing the Mysteries, Peisetaerus will reveal the truth about the universe to the birds.

As we have already noted two characteristics of the birds in particular stand in the way of Peisetaerus's goal of setting up a bird city that will gain power over gods and men. First, there is the intimate relationship between the birds and gods. Second is the natural ways of birds which they deem as a kind of natural justice—it is the way of all birds everywhere and at all times, it was the way of their ancestors and is this generation's way also. Peisetaerus, having kneaded up his speech for a long time, comes up with a way to cut through both objections. He does this by offering a new vision of the natural cosmos. It is an earlier vision and, therefore, to the birds, a more natural and so, a more just one. In fact, the previous generation of birds, the fathers of these birds, lost their rightful place in the universe to the gods. Peisetaerus shows to the birds that what they thought was the natural order was in fact not. In essence, Peisetaerus charges the Olympians with the same crime that Hephaestus charges Prometheus in *Prometheus Bound*: βροτοῖσι τιμὰς ὤπασας πέρα δίκης ("You gave prerogatives to mortals beyond justice" (30). But in *Birds* the gods, with guile, have taken for themselves the *timai* that are rightfully the birds.'

Birds, as Peisetaerus explains, existed before all of the gods, even earth. Birds used to rule over all races of men whether Persian, Greek or Egyptian (481–507); and men used to worship the birds like gods (514–516), sacrificed to them (518–519), and swore by them (520–521), "so great and holy did all men previously consider you" (522). Now they are merely the slaves (523) and delicacies of men (529–38). Not even the sanctuaries of the gods, their

supposed friends, offer refuge to the birds (525–6). The gods have usurped the birds' place and so have acted unjustly and impiously.

The birds submit readily to the idea that what is the most ancient also rightly rules (477–78). From this premise, it is easy for a clever speaker such as Peisetaerus to win his case with a few deft *tekmēria* (482). The birds, who look to nature as the standard, must allow that the original order of things was the most natural. They have already seen that with the coming into being of man there was a corruption of nature; that men brought traps and guile. Peisetaerus shows here that the gods themselves brought artfulness and guile against the natural order. Previously men did not eat birds, but worshipped them. Peisetaerus, therefore, offers the birds this chance to return to an ancient bliss and right ordering of things. As we see in the tetrameters after the agon (629–35), the birds view Peisetaerus, in a naive fashion, as clever, but also as the antithesis of the unjust and guileful activity that the gods, as they now believe, had brought against them:

ἐπαυχήσας δὲ τοῖσι σοῖς λόγοις
ἐπηπείλησα καὶ κατώμοσα,
ἐάν σὺ παρ' ἐμὲ θέμενος ὁμόφρονας λόγους
δίκαιος ἄδολος ὅσιος ἐπὶ θεοὺς ἴῃς,
ἐμοὶ φρονῶν ξυνῳδά, μὴ πολὺν χρόνον
θεοὺς ἔτι σκῆπτρα τἀμὰ τρίψειν.

Heartened by your words, I give warning and swear: If you set beside me plans of one mind with mine and go against the gods justly, without guile and piously, thinking things in harmony with me, then not much longer will the gods be wearing away my sceptre.

For the birds, Peisetaerus restores the natural state and, therefore, must be both just and pious, but also not a user of *doloi*—those things most characteristic of men and gods, in contradistinction to the birds. He, they believe, can be bird-like, be "of one mind" (ὁμόφρων) and think things that "sing in harmony" (ξυνῳδά) with the race of birds.

As is made evident in the antode of the agon, Peisetaerus attacks not only the activity of the gods, but also the previous generation of the birds, the fathers of these birds (539–549):

πολὺ δὴ πολὺ δὴ χαλεπωτάτους λόγους
ἤνεγκας, ἄνθρωφ'· ὡς ἐδάκρυσά γ' ἐμῶν πατέρων
κάκην, οἳ τάσδε τὰς τιμὰς προγόνων παραδόν-
των ἐπ' ἐμοῦ κατέλυσαν.
σὺ δέ μοι κατὰ δαίμονα καί τινα συντυχίαν
ἀγαθὴν ἥκεις ἐμοὶ σωτήρ.

ἀναθεὶς γὰρ ἐγώ σοι
τὰ νεόττια κἀμαυτὸν οἰκετεύσω.

Most, most grievous words have you brought, human being. How I bewail the baseness of my fathers, who in my time forfeited the prerogatives which my forefathers handed down. But you by some divine source or happy chance have come as a savior to me. For I will manage my life having entrusted to you my nestlings and myself.

The birds bewail the moral weakness of spirit of their own fathers who, in the chorus' own time (ἐπ' ἐμοῦ), lost all of the prerogatives (τιμαί) of their ancestors. He, therefore, becomes their savior.[38] They will manage their bird community by entrusting both themselves and their nestlings to Peisetaerus. He becomes the nominal head and father both of this generation and the next. As Dunbar points out, the sentiment of these lines would have moved the Athenian audience, and, in particular, the "middle-aged to elderly Athenians, who by contrast took pride in the fact that their own *pateres* had by exertion won a great empire and handed it over intact to the next generation."[39] Can we not, however, envision that this very hasty charge of weakness of will against their fathers be comically shocking to all but the most sophistic Greeks of all *poleis*? The bird chorus has no sense of reverence or shame before their own fathers, but readily gives way to Peisetaerus's arguments based on the origins and nature of things. At the same time, however, if the audience recalls Aristophanes's *Clouds* or has heard the contemporary, sophistic debates regarding *nomos* and *physis*, this pronouncement of the birds fits into their natural character. In *Clouds*, Aristophanes had parodied what would appear to be a contemporary motif in the *nomos*/*physis* debate of using examples from the animal kingdom to prove the rightness of activities.[40] In particular, Aristophanes (1427–9) used the example of the cock as Pheidippides' crowning argument to prove that father-beating was justified. This motif is clearly being used again here. Instead of merely referring to the example of birds, here Aristophanes brings onto stage an actual chorus of birds who live in a free community, unconstrained by conventions or *nomos*. It issues in the birds being able, without any embarrassment or feelings of guilt, to beat their fathers (758–59, 1349–350), but then later, to care for them in their old age (1355–357). Because the society of birds works according to nature, the younger and stronger will simply take the place of the older and weaker. The older do not feel threatened by this because it is also their natural place; it is simply their place in the pecking order. No greater honor or shame applies to either place in the bird society. Thus, when the younger birds find out the weakness of the actions of their fathers, they quickly and without any shame look to restore their initial and natural position of strength in the cosmos.

Peisetaerus, a man, as we have seen, up to date with contemporary philosophic debates, is able to use this very aspect of bird life to his advantage. I have already suggested how Peisetaerus looks to the anomian nature of birds to set up a completely new society. Here he uses this same aspect to persuade the birds to give up the ordering of their lives to him. Bird society's allegiance is more to the natural order than to the order of their fathers when the order of the fathers is proved to be against nature. Once Peisetaerus has undermined the authority of their fathers, his way lies open to the complete reversal of birds' ways. As the chorus tells him, "life will not be worth living if we do not regain the sceptre"—their natural place in the universe (550–51). Thus, now that the ways of the fathers are disposed of, he can finally suggest that the birds form a *polis* in the sky. This method of disposing of the fathers will prove to be central to Peisetaerus's ruling the whole cosmos—birds, men, and gods. Before he can set up a regime to his liking and with him as its king, he must first undermine the existing order—and this means in particular the undermining and replacement of the fathers in a place of authority. The birds turn out to be in some ways the easiest, because they by their nature and because they live according to nature do not have or need respect for fathers. As we will later see, for men and gods, he has to use different means.

Once Peisetaerus has convinced the birds of their rightful and natural position in the universe, he becomes their teacher (548, 550) in regaining the scepter. He first tells them to build a single city of birds in the air, walled off with giant bricks (550–552) - ironically, the sorts of precautionary measures that Tereus had told the birds one can learn from one's enemies (377–79). Thereafter they are to demand back their ancient rule from the gods. If the gods deny them, they must make a sacred war on the gods by not allowing them to pass to earth to rape mortal females (554–560). As we have already noted, Peisetaerus does not mention the destruction of the gods by starvation as he had done to Tereus, nor the imposition of taxes. When the gods actually give up their position, as Peisetaerus now argues, they will not be destroyed by starvation, but given a secondary position after the birds (κἄπειτα θεοῖς ὕστερον αὖθις, 563). Peisetaerus must continue to argue that the action of the birds is just. The war against the gods will be pious (556), whereas the actions of the gods are shown to be the lewd actions of adulterers (557–59). Peisetaerus reduces the gods to mere erotic beings, just as the birds recognize humans to be. The vulgar and prosaic language used to describe their sexual actions (ἐστυκόσι, μοιχεύσοντες, βινῶσι) puts these supposed rulers of the cosmos in their proper place.

As the chorus inquires, even if the gods give up their position as the primary gods, why will human beings regard the birds as gods? Men worship gods not as a matter of who the natural gods are, but who the gods are by convention or *nomos*. Thus, the birds ask (571), "How will men believe

(νομιοῦσι) that we are gods and not mere jackdaws?" Peisetaerus points out that like birds Hermes, Nike, Eros, and Iris are winged and depicted as such by men. But, he goes on to say (576–77), "If because of ignorance they believe (νομίσωσι) you to be nothing and those on Olympus to be gods," you must convince them by punishments and rewards. Human beings will establish as their conventional gods whoever has the power to control the success and failure of their lives. The birds will show their superiority to the gods by eating up their grain, which, as men believe, is in the hands of Demeter (577–580). Birds, it turns out, are able to take the place of the gods vis-à-vis man in all important respects. They can protect or harm harvests and herds; ensure success in wealth, health and longevity (578–610).

At the same time, they will be among men, unlike the Olympians, and will need only a few grains of wheat as sacrifice. Bird-gods will not want temples with gold fixtures, nor have distant sacred places like Delphi. Bird-gods will remain in the trees, bushes and fields (612–626). In the parabasis, the birds themselves re-iterate all of these advantages directly to men (709–736). In regaining the scepter from the gods, birds do not expect to change their way of life, to get more or to be aloof from the earth. They will retain their parsimonious and unerotic bird-like ways, but regain the rightful *timai* (542) that had been unjustly taken by the gods.

Konstan has argued that Peisetaerus wins over the birds by "rousing desire" in them. Peisetaerus's persuasion of the birds becomes "an initiation into desire" which makes birds "fallen creatures, now entered into the realm of desire," and so they are "infected by new longings" and a "passionate will to power."[41] As I have suggested Peisetaerus does not and cannot here use the arousal of *eros* as a successful technique in winning over the birds as he does for Tereus. Among human beings, birds may symbolize *eros* in the form of the gifts of an *erastes* to an *eromenos* (703–707), and wings may provide human beings with the ability better to satisfy their desires (785–800). But nowhere in the play is any bird, apart from the man-bird, Tereus, described as erotic. As we will see, the birds do not turn out to have "new longings," but throughout the play seek only their most ancient way of life in nature. The birds seek the *timai* that, they now believe, were once theirs. Peisetaerus thus arouses in the birds not *eros*, but a just indignation and the urge to restore the natural order to the universe.[42] It is Peisetaerus alone who, as tyrant, propels the ambitions of Nephelokokkugia up to Olympus itself. The eros that exists in Nephelokokkugia is Peisetaerus's alone; the birds merely follow orders. Eros, as Aristophanes's speech in the *Symposium* makes clear, is peculiar to man; it arises out of a lack and a yearning for a lasting wholeness and completeness, for a kind of divinity. The birds themselves possess a happy self-sufficiency; they lack nothing and even with divine rule ask for no new things for themselves - neither temples, nor large sacrifices.[43] Peisetaerus does not need to

suggest to the birds to destroy the gods, or to cast them into Tartarus, as Zeus does Cronos. They have been persuaded that the cosmos is not in its natural order and seek to reinstate this order. They do not want more, but the right ordering of what already is.

In order to achieve this order the birds are willing to entrust themselves completely to Peisetaerus; he will be the brains, they the brawn (636–37). They set out to regain their natural position in the cosmos, but the means they use to achieve this is, paradoxically, the formation of a polis with a human being and master of words as their teacher. Birds do not foresee all that will accompany the foundation of a bird *polis*, as, we will see, becomes very clear in the *parabasis*.

It was a widespread concept of sophistic political thought that the *polis* does not exist by nature but is a compact among men that they may survive in the world and not destroy one another. In order for the city to function properly, there must be constraints upon one's natural desires. Citizens must become *nomos*-abiding and feel shame or reverence (αἰδώς); they must, in Protagoras's terms, learn the πολιτικὴ τέχνη. Bird life, on the other hand, is content with the attributes given to it by Epimetheus. As the antode of the parabasis (1088–101) makes very clear, nature has provided all resource to them for food and protection against natural forces. In winter, they need no cloaks, nor in summer do they swelter. Their wings allow them to live in caves for warmth and shady leaves for protection from heat. Their way of life produces, as we saw, the free and uncompetitive sharing in the resources for life and in song; and a natural communion and gentle reciprocity with the gods. There is no faction among birds, nor are birds differentiated from each other in honor because of race, age or status. For Peisetaerus, however, whose aspirations seek dominion, it is only via a *polis* that birds can threaten gods and men. The pre-requisites of the *polis*—a social contract (at least, that he not be harmed) and a defined place which is acknowledged now to be the birds' "yours" (557)—have now been set in place, and the birds have been persuaded. The question remains as to how the rest of the universe will react.

NOTES

1. This is not unique to Peisetaerus (and Tereus) among Aristophanean heroes. As Hubbard (2007, 493) in his review of rhetoric in Aristophanes concludes, speakers fail in Aristophanes "precisely when they have misjudged the character of their audience and not tailored their presentation to its values."

2. Aristophanes goes out of his way to play down any animosity among birds as a race, even though, as would be known by anyone in the audience, some species of birds do hunt and harass other birds. In Greek literature one thinks most readily

of Hesiod's *ainos* of the hawk and nightingale (*WD* 202–212). See Aeschylus *PV* 488–92, where in Prometheus's description of the art of prophecy through bird signs he tells of πρὸς ἀλλήλους τίνες / ἔχθραι τε καὶ στέργηθρα καὶ συνεδρίαι ("what enmities, affections, and interactions they have with one another.)"

3. As Compton-Engle (2015, 129–43) points out, dramaturgically wings have a much more prominent role in the second half of the play; the first half concentrates more on beaks as the birds' weapons against their human enemies.

4. All of these aspects of the bird chorus are discussed more fully by Newiger (1957, 89–91), and later restated at (Newiger 1975, 275): "In keiner der anderen Komödien ist der Chor in jeder Phase des Geschehens so mit der Handlung verwoben und sich seiner Maske so bewußt. Es findet sich in diesem Stück kein Lied, das ein beliebiger Chor singen könnte—alle Äußerungen erfolgen aus der Vogelmaske heraus."

5. On the hoopoe's song see Fraenkel (1950); Silk (1980, 100–3); and Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 209–66): "The hoopoe's song is unlike anything else in Aristophanes; unlike his two later monodies it neither closely follows a tragic model (*Thes.*) nor shows stylistic exaggerations indicating parody (*Ra.*) . . . . In its widely varied rhythms . . . its echoes of bird calls, and its brief but vivid sketches of different kinds of landscape, it seems designed to charm the audience by strangeness, gracefulness and ingenuity rather than make them laugh." Cf. also Zimmermann (1984, 70) who argues that the language and style of the ode adds to the sense of the remoteness of the scene.

6. Dover (1972, 145); Dunbar (1995, 229–31). Compton-Engle (2015, 134): the "arrival of the chorus of birds is the most elaborate spectacle in all extant Old Comedy."

7. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 297–304) discusses how the order of the entrance of the different species shows that Aristophanes did have such elements as the effects of the color of the costumes in mind.

8. On this aspect of the bird chorus, as well as some of the issues below (e.g., their communion with gods) see especially Perkell (1993). Perkell argues that there are two voices in the play, that of the bird lyrics (traditional, religious, communal, and idealistic) and that of human ambition and appetites, as depicted by the birds, for example, in the parabasis, which "appeals to the lowest elements in man." She concludes that the idealism of birds "does not correspond to real events" and thus shows Aristophanes's cynicism toward idealism, especially as found in poetry (7, 15). I agree with her in many respects, but believe that she does not recognize that these "lowest elements in man" (i.e., father-beating, adultery, lack of patriotism etc.) are in fact part and parcel of bird life, though comically expressed. That is, they are comic expressions of actions that are done without fear of shame or charges of criminality and, therefore, natural. Birds do beat their fathers, but that is simply because their fathers are naturally weaker and/or wrong. Therefore, the "bird voice" is more complex than she believes.

9. For other examples of these compounds, see for example, the song of the swans in which "altogether (ὁμοῦ) sounding out with their wings their intermingled (συμμιγῆ) shout, they hymned Apollo" (769–773). Compare also the oaths of the

bird chorus with Peisetaerus. They swear that if Peisetaerus has plans in accord with those of the birds "ὁμόφρονους λόγους" and thinks things in harmony (ξυνῳδά) with them, the gods will not have their scepter much longer (631–635). Once Peisetaerus is welcomed into the community of birds, they expect him to become part of their communal way of life. Compare also the uses of κοινός. Tereus persuades the birds by saying that Peisetaerus's plan will be κοινόν (a gain common to all birds) 316; the birds tell Peisetaerus that any gain that he might give will be common (κοινόν) to all birds (457–9).

10. As Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 769) notes, the description here is of the whooper swan and not the mute swan found in the shorter Homeric Hymn to Apollo (21.1–3). "Aristophanes' βοά not, for example, μέλος . . . and verb ἴαχον, 'cried,' shouted,' are good words for the whooper swan." These swan sounds have been described as "a double 'whoop whoop,' with second syllable slightly higher pitched."

11. Perkell (1993, 7). Those who apply the term pastoral generally to the bird chorus are Pozzi (1991, 150–61), Reckford (1987, 331–33), and Moulton (1981, 100–1).

12. Cf. esp. Perkell (1993) and Reckford (1987, 331–33).

13. This is examined in its most sustained way by Alink (1983) who concludes (323), "The oppositions between birds and men can be phrased in the following terms: a) Birds cannot speak like men can; their language (logos) is their song (nomos). Men cannot sing like birds can. b) Birds do not live in a polis. Their dwelling place (nomos) is hill and dale, bush and trees, in short: nature. Men are inclined to change nature into a polis. c) Birds do not know any laws (nomoi), but they do have nomoi, which to them mean i) places to live and ii) songs to sing; their habitat and their music are normally unattainable for men."

14. Whitman (1964, 177).

15. Cf. the simile used by Homer of the disorganized approach of the Trojans (*Il.*3.1–9) like birds screeching, whereas the Achaeans come on in silence, breathing strength and in order.

16. Rothwell (2007, 151–82), as I do, argues that the birds possess a "pre-civic solidarity," but he goes on to argue that, as evidenced by their ability to form fighting units, learn language and so on, the birds have innate qualities that make them "naturally suited to become citizens" 174. As I have argued, and as both Tereus and Peisetaerus attest, birds are not naturally political, but disorganized, flighty, apragmon etc. They only become organized out of necessity when in the presence of their natural enemies, humans. For Rothwell, the play is a parody of the contemporary theories about the rise of civilization among human beings. I agree, but the parody arises, and is made funnier, by the fact that it is artificially and unnaturally imposed upon birds by the persuasion and intellect of Peisetaerus. In general, Rothwell too much tries to make bird life and early human life parallel without paying due attention to their clearly emphasized differences. Peisetaerus forces the birds to become human-like and thereby destroys something in the universe.

17. Obviously one cannot be sure how close Plato kept to Protagoras's account or whether Protagoras ever wrote such an account. The great majority of scholars believe, however, that the myth is Protagorean in its main features. On this debate see Gagarin (1968, 90–5) who among other things argues that the style and content

of the "Great Speech" are pre-Platonic and parallel that of fifth-century writers; also Schiappa (2003, 146–8). The fifth century saw a growth in anthropological accounts of human beginnings and *Kulturgeschichte,* for which see my conclusion. I focus on Protagoras's Prometheus myth here because later in the play Prometheus comes on as a crucial character in Peisetaerus's success.

18. This is essentially, though with more positive emphases, the same cause given for the origin of justice as that of Glaucon's recounting of the ideas "of Thrasymachus and countless others" as to the nature and origins of justice found in Plato's *Republic*. Men desire to do wrong, but doing wrong is outweighed by being wronged. Therefore they come to a compact not to wrong one another (358c–359d). Cf. also *Gorgias* (492c), *Crito* (50c), Critias (or Euripides) DK B 25, for a fuller account of which see my concluding chapter.

19. Cf. Decleva Caizzi (1999, 319) "according to this story then, aidos and dike are attributes common to all normal human beings. They do not represent the natural state of individuals, taken in isolation, but they are to be taken as natural to human beings in so far as man has become a social being."

20. Cf. Pendrick (2002, 60–61); Gagarin (2002); Furley (1989) against the conventional view that Antiphon did have a doctrine of natural justice. For this conventional view see references in Pendrick (2002, 61n 115).

21. Barnes (1982, 513–4); Nill (1985, 54).

22. I use the text and numbering of Pendrick (2002).

23. Pendrick (2002, 62).

24. Cf. fr. 44(a)v. 4–8 with *Birds* 757–59.

25. Cf. fr. 44(b)ii–iii with *Birds* 762–63. This aspect of bird life was already established in the parodos of the chorus. Birds come onto stage of all species and from everywhere—both those common to Greece and more exotic ones from Persia and elsewhere. The universal kinship of men by nature is also attributed to Hippias in Plato, *Protagoras* (337d).

26. Vlastos (1995, 83) concluding his broader argument which includes analyses of the Hippocratic writers, Anaximines, Empedocles, Parmenides, Anaximander and Heraclitus. Cf. also Irwin (1989, 41): "the naturalists' tendencies towards monotheism result from their basic determinist principles. They believe the universe is a world order; it displays laws and regularities . . . the order, law and justice of the universe manifest a single intelligence. Divine law and cosmic justice keep the sun in its place." Cf. Guthrie (1965, Vol. 2, 346). Compare also Euripides's *Trojan Women*, produced the year before *Birds*:

ὦ γῆς ὄχημα κἀπὶ γῆς ἔχων ἕδραν,
ὅστις ποτ' εἶ σύ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι,
Ζεύς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν,
προσηυξάμην σε. πάντα γὰρ δι' ἀψόφου
βαίνων κελεύθου κατὰ δίκην τὰ θνήτ' ἄγεις.

"Oh you supporting the earth and having your seat on the earth, whoever you are, most difficult to know, Zeus, whether you are the necessity of nature or the *nous* of mortals, I called on you in prayer. For going along your soundless path you direct all mortal things in accordance with justice." (884–89)

27. The broader connection with archaic and pre-Socratic cosmogony will be further underlined in the bird cosmogony of the parabasis. See Chapter 4.

28. Dover (1966, 245).

29. Thus playfully contradicting the account of early man by the vegetarian Empedocles, D-K 130, "They were all tame and gentle to human beings, both wild beasts and birds, and friendliness (*philophrosyne*) was kindled."

30. This is the only way to explain lines 434–36. See Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 434–36).

31. For example, Tereus argues that enemies can teach useful lessons which friends cannot; namely, precautionary measures against attack (375–80). As is clear to everyone apart from the birds, it is one thing to learn precaution from an enemy, but another thing altogether actually to listen to an enemy's advice. Furthermore, he uses ambiguous language. On being asked what *logoi* Peisetaerus has, Tereus tells the chorus that they are things ἄπιστα καὶ πέρα κλύειν (416), which means in context "incredible and more to hear" but would also be heard as "untrustworthy and more to hear." A few lines later Tereus tells of Peisetaerus plan for "a great blessedness, which cannot be uttered nor believed" (μέγαν τιν' ὄλβον οὔτε λεκτὸν οὔτε πιστόν, 421–2) with a similar ambiguity of being "untrustworthy."

32. Connor (1971, 99–101). See also Ludwig (2002, 143–45). Wohl (2002, 30–124) argues that the "fiction" established by Pericles, as evidenced in Thucydides's Funeral Oration, that the *demos* of Athens are *erastai* of the city (that is, manly, active, elite, potent lovers) is then debased by Cleon who turns the political relationship into one of prostitution. Scholtz (2007, 43–70) believes that the use of the *erastes* motif in *Knights* is comic hyperbole of a non-pederastic *philia* motif evident in oratory. He does not, however, appear to take into account its appearances in other plays. As evidenced by the *Acharnians* (143), such language is used not only of citizens for the city, but also of foreigners who wanted to show, in an overblown way, their affection for the city.

33. Cf. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 423–26): "In fact Peis. is about to 'win over' the birds to the idea that 'all is yours' not merely by proposing a scheme of conquest, as suggested by 163–93, but by revealing their ancient right to sovereignty. Ter's words can cover both cases, and the audience would not guess from them that a major surprise awaited them at 462–522."

34. Again cf. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 462–522): "thus the plan announced to the chorus in the antepirrhema, to depose the Olympians after blocking all communication between heaven and earth, becomes a matter of justice and restoration, not of mere expediency and usurpation."

35. Kahn (1979, 94–5 and n. 3 and 4). See this article for the prevalence of social contract theory among the sophists in mid to late fifth-century thought.

36. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 462–63). Cf. also the highly emotional state of the Weaker *Logos* in *Clouds*, as he prepares to refute the Stronger *Logos* (1036–38): καὶ μὴν πάλαι 'γὼ 'πνιγόμην τὰ σπλάγχνα κἀπεθύμουν / ἅπαντα ταῦτ' ἐναντίαις γνώμαισι συνταράξαι.

37. A garland was worn both in public meetings and in private symposia. But the imperatives to recline and bring water for the hands clearly indicates a symposiastic setting. I follow Dunbar (1995) (who follows Anon. Parisinus and Bentley) for the reading of these lines.

38. As Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 544–5) notes, "Being hailed as saviour(s) seems to have been confined in 5th c. BC to a man or men who had saved a country or city from its enemies in war."

39. Dunbar 369, who cites the Thucydidean speeches of Pericles as evidence (1.144.4; 2.36.1–2; 2.62.3). Sommerstein (1987, ad loc. 544) also refers us to the "Athenian citizen's oath of allegiance which included the clause 'I will bequeath the fatherland (sc. to the next generation) not smaller, but greater and better, to the best of my own ability and with the help of all.'" Stamatopoulou (2017, 201) adds that the tripartite division of the generations of birds (grandfathers, fathers, and current generation) mirrors the generational struggle of Hesiod's succession myth. Though, we might add, the lack of violence and warfare in the struggle indicates the differences in the natures of birds and gods.

40. Cf. Guthrie (1969, 104, 114n.4, 368).

41. Konstan (1997, 11, 14). Cf Arrowsmith (1972, 140) who argues that initially the birds are "untempted by Eros . . . still at one with the world around it . . . . Then, under the blandishments of political suasion, the Birds become estranged from apragmosune and hesychia; they are tempted by a dream of Eros."

42. As the choregos had noted the birds' weapons were *thumos* and *orge* (401–2).

43. Cf. Democritus D-K 245, τὸ χρῆιζον οἶδεν, ὁκόσον χρήιζει, ὁ δὲ χρήιζων οὐ γινώσκει. "The needy creature knows how much it needs, but the needy man does not."

Chapter 4

Persuading Human Beings

Peisetaerus had mentioned the formation of a bird *polis* to the birds as a purely offensive tactic for them to regain sovereignty from the Olympians: by walling heaven off from earth, they might interrupt the movement of the gods from above to mortals below. But the birds must also be recognized as gods by men. As becomes clear throughout the second half of the play, to be a god means to be a god to human beings.[1] Peisetaerus had convinced the birds that men will gladly honor the birds as gods. By the time Prometheus comes to the bird *polis*, men have stopped sacrificing to the Olympian gods altogether (1516). Human beings have heard the *parabasis*, the message of birds to men, and are delighted with the new gods and the way of life they provide. As the audience knows, however, the brains behind the birds—their *didaskalos*—is Peisetaerus.

In this chapter, therefore, we will consider how Peisetaerus (via the birds) persuades humanity to live in a bird-ruled universe. This will occur largely in the *parabasis*, in which the birds, masters of mimicry,[2] follow their master and offer an assortment of utopian options to human beings covering or, at least, laying the groundwork for all of Konstan's "nomies"—the anomian, antinomian, megalonomian—with the notable exception of the eunomian. The parabasis perfectly arouses a variety of desires of different types of human being. The gods, while new, are not so dissimilar from the old, just more generous and impartial; and in the epirrhemes pleasure is consecrated as the guiding principle of all action both on earth and among the new gods, thus opening the universe to a moral vacuity and plasticity that the soon-to-be king can make his own. The *parabasis* shows the ways in which a clever mixture of traditional and intellectualist ideas can be used to imagine a utopian cosmos that still fits into the norms of Greek religiosity (theogonies, sacrifice, mantistry, prayer etc), but that are purely aimed at converting, through

promises of pleasure, wealth, and freedom, humans to worshipping new gods. It is not necessarily a mirror of Athenian impiety, as Hubbard argues,[3] but a comic depiction of how pseudo-religions, molded playfully on a mixture of traditional and sophistic concepts of the divine, can readily win over new converts when they appeal to all-to-human desires and hopes.

But before we reach the parabasis, let us return to the character of Euelpides. He is the only human being who appears in the play who can provide us with anything like the reaction of the "regular Athenian" to Peisetaerus's arguments and proposals. He acts as a kind of on-stage barometer of, at least, one kind of human being's reactions to Peisetaerus's revolutionary plan.

PERSUADING EUELPIDES (AGAIN)

As we saw in the first chapter, Euelpides acted as a straw man for the setting up of the plot. He first came to light as a typical character of Aristophanean comedy—old and disgruntled, but wanting to find a solution to his troubles. The initial plan was to leave Athens for a more comfortable *polis*—a *polis* which was "naturally" great, in which luxury could be enjoyed without any attendant effort. Upon being questioned by Tereus, Euelpides comes to realize that the place he might want is a place which is not a *polis* in any form, but a more fundamentally pleasant place, in short, the natural, apolitical, and golden age-like life of the birds. As we have seen, these hints pointing to identifiable comic utopian plots that we might expect to follow are instantly cancelled by Peisetaerus's new plan to found a *polis* of birds that would occupy a hostile and profitable place between gods and men.

During Peisetaerus's persuasion of Tereus, Euelpides makes no remark. The quiet place Euelpides had wanted has turned into an aggressive, imperial, *phoros*-collecting *polis*. It is not until Tereus has returned to his *lochmē* (thicket) and roused the nightingale to sing that Euelpides again speaks. Swearing by Zeus Basileus, he remarks on the beauty of her voice. It has turned the whole *lochmē* into honey (223–24). That "life of newlyweds" that so appealed to Euelpides—the apolitical life of the *oikos* and its attendant pleasures—is reawakened for a moment in Euelpides's delight at Tereus's wife's tune. Peisetaerus, for his part, tells Euelpides to shut up (225).

Euelpides remains from this point on merely Peisetaerus's follower (340). He joins Peisetaerus in identifying birds and making fun of various contemporaries, but is soon shown to be a foot-soldier to Peisetaerus's general. Whereas Euelpides's first instinct is to flee the assembled birds out of fear, Peisetaerus holds his ground and improvises with what he has at hand (354–363). Now under attack and fearing for his life, all of his previous plans are forgotten; Euelpides wishes only to escape (355). He follows

Peisetaerus's commands and establishes a defensive position with their pots and pans (356–62). Likewise, when Peisetaerus begins to convince the birds of their divinity, Euelpides again takes up a secondary position as he adds to each of Peisetaerus's "proofs" a further example derived from the life and observations of a simpler, rustic type. But, whereas Peisetaerus undertakes this course of action because, as he tells us, he has been "full of desire to tell them for a long time" (462), nothing in Euelpides's responses shows that he is doing anything other than trying to help Peisetaerus extricate themselves from a tricky position. He is motivated by fear of danger, not by Peisetaerus's *mega bouleuma*.

Indeed, Euelpides is the only character to show any fear concerning the likely reaction of Zeus to the undertaking. As has already been noted, Peisetaerus's announcement that birds were previously kings and, therefore, because of their seniority, ought rightly now be kings is a new and unexpected twist to the plot. Euelpides alone responds with the reaction appropriate to such revolutionary words (479–80):

> πάνυ τοίνυν χρὴ ῥύγχος βόσκειν σε τὸ λοιπόν·
> οὐκ ἀποδώσει ταχέως ὁ Ζεὺς τὸ σκῆπτρον τῷ δρυκολάπτῃ.
>
> Well then, you (Peis.) really have to grow a beak for future use.
> Zeus will not readily hand back the scepter to the woodpecker.[4]

Euelpides realizes that Zeus will not give up his position without a fight and that Peisetaerus had better prepare himself for it. Likewise, even after the birds have been persuaded by Peisetaerus and have sworn an oath to join in fighting the gods, Euelpides retains his fearful position as regards Zeus's reaction. Peisetaerus explains that men will consider birds to be gods, because like some gods they possess wings. As a final example he gives (575): "And Homer said that Iris was like a trembling dove." To this example of a god likened to a frightened bird, Euelpides responds (576): "but won't Zeus thunder and send down winged lightning?"[5] Euelpides knows the winged depictions of gods too, and they are not all as timid as Iris.[6] As is typical of Peisetaerus's reactions to Euelpides's interjections throughout the *agon*, he simply ignores them and pushes on with his argument. Euelpides, however, raises questions that any *apragmōn*, quietist citizen might ask. Euelpides had heard first of the *dynamis* that will acrue to the birds in Peisetaerus's discussion with Tereus, and now the justice of the birds' claim to cosmic sovereignty. He is not, however, yet persuaded that for him—the unambitious type—there is anything in the plan that would warrant the dangers of a war with Zeus.

As became clear from Euelpides's own *tekmēria* (examples) in the *agon*, he is a simple, country type. He is not accustomed to the *astu* (494) and

possesses a pair of oxen (585). In short, he is akin to those mortals whom the birds need as worshippers if Peisetaerus's plan is to work. Thus his reactions to the explanation of the benefits of bird rule, as outlined by Peisetaerus, serve to mirror the reactions of his kind on earth. As Heberlein points out, in this part of the *agon,* Peisetaerus has to persuade not only the birds, but also Euelpides, who acts as a representative of "des kleinen Mannes, des Erleidenden, nicht des Planenden."[7]

In the anteppirrheme and antipnigos of the agon (550–625), Peisetaerus dispels Euelpides's fear and wins him back from his previous desire for the apolitical, avian life to the life of the human *polis*. Euelpides's initial motivations for living the bird life have, under the newly planned regime, been systematically undermined. Instead, for a second time, Peisetaerus offers Euelpides the initial goal of the journey as outlined in the prologue. With birds as gods, in contrast to the Olympians, the comfortable life among human beings will be easy and effortless. In Hesiod's *Works and Days* (42–44), Zeus famously hides human sustenance (*bios*) in the earth for humans to till and toil after. But if Euelpides and any mortal regards birds "as god, as sustenance (*bios*), as earth, as Cronos" (586),[8] all good things will be present for them. Aristophanes is clearly having some fun with his pun on *bios* (birds may not only assure sustenance for men, but may themselves also be part of man's diet). Nevertheless, the implication of this cluster of the birds' divine attributes and roles, especially to a Euelpidean type, is that these gods will actually provide *bios* freely, not hide it; that they are ancient and fertile like Earth,[9] and provide the golden age "automatic" sustenance such as under the reign of Cronos. Furthermore, as Peisetaerus later argues, divine birds and human beings will actually interact on earth (615–21), thus calling to mind the kind of relationship human beings and gods had before they were "separated" at Mecone (Hesiod, *Theogony,* 535). Birds will remain among men, and men will be able to communicate with the divine without burned sacrifices, without fire or *technē*, "by throwing a few grains of wheat" (621–26). Human beings will not have to wonder if their prayers are heard because the good things will appear instantaneously (παραχρῆμα, 625), given by birds still on earth. And, what really appeals to Euelpides, it will all be much cheaper too!

In enumerating the actual good things which bird-gods will provide, Peisetaerus moves away from cereal crops or beasts of burden, which are the most important part of the labor of Hesiod's farmer, and turns to the easy growth of the fruits that may grow freely from vines and fig trees, and which need no further processing to be consumed (588–91).[10] Likewise, in discussing the provision of wealth which human beings so desire (ἐρῶσιν, 592), the birds will provide sure signs of lodes of metal through augury (593) and will reveal the secret burial places of treasure (599–601). Wealth will arise spontaneously from the earth. Augury will also tell men when there will be fair weather or not

for "profitable trading" (594–97). Trade, which in Hesiod is the only option for a farmer apart from agriculture, and which, as Hesiod himself admits, when successful can bring huge amounts of *kerdos* or profit (*WD* 645), has lost all of its accompanying fears. With such easy access to profit, there will be no need for Euelpides to be bowed down by the labor of the field and by debt. He enthusiastically approves of each of the non-agricultural sources of wealth. He will sell his oxen (585) and tells us he will buy a boat and become a ship owner (598). When the news of easily found treasure is offered, he will sell the boat and buy a hoe (602). This is the life for him. As he tells the birds: "I would no longer remain with you" (598). Human life now appears to be better than the bird life that Euelpides had earlier envisioned. It offers all of the ease and automatic supply of needs as described in the golden age-like descriptions of Tereus's account of bird life, but, at the same time, it is not a life "without wallets." Those things which mark an end to the traditional golden age (mining and trading[11]) are also present, but have become easy and without danger. Pious men will be assured of wealth, and, therefore, of luxury. The human *polis*-life under birds, as put forward by Peisetaerus, will be that of the "cozy woolen blanket" in which Euelpides can curl up.

BIRDS PERSUADING MEN—THE PARABASIS

Peisetaerus's persuasion of the birds, as we have seen, is based upon a fundamental contradiction. Peisetaerus claims to restore to the birds their original and natural place in the cosmos. The birds are the most ancient race and, therefore, sovereignty is rightly theirs. Their rule and subsequent divinity, furthermore, will not change their ways. They will live as they have always done—on earth, in bushes, among human beings—but receive from the other beings of the cosmos the *timai* appropriate to them. Peisetaerus's persuasion of the birds thus, as we saw, accords with bird nature. The contradiction arises in the means by which, as he teaches them, they might reacquire their natural place: they must establish a *polis*, they must become *politika zōa*. That is, to reclaim their original and natural state the birds must, unbeknownst to them, kerb their natures and, like human beings, join the realm of *nomoi*.

With the birds won over, two elements become the necessary next step for Peisetaerus's plan: a) men must consider the birds as gods; 2) the birds must establish a *polis* and fortify the *aer* cutting off any intercourse between men and gods. This results in a comically incongruous parabasis. In the anapaests and pnigos, the bird chorus teaches mankind that they are the true gods by nature and therefore, that human beings ought rightly to consider the birds, and not the Olympians, as gods by convention (νομίζειν). In the epirrheme of the syzygy, on the other hand, they tell men to come to the birds. The birds

wish to have human beings both as worshippers *and* as residents of their *polis*—whether they will be additional settlers (*epoikoi*, 1307) or resident aliens (*metics*, 1318) is unclear. As we have seen, however, this apparent incongruity will not be intolerable in a bird-ruled universe. As Peisetaerus had taught the chorus, and as the birds tell men, bird-gods will not "run off and sit above, being haughty in the clouds like Zeus" (726–28). The birds, therefore, take this a step beyond Peisetaerus's teaching and offer to men not only the benefits of life under bird-gods, but also the pleasures that accompany life in what the birds consider a bird *polis*. Human beings, it appears, will not be defined vis-à-vis the new gods as they had been under the old. The birds envision a certain cohabitation and also offer men wings. They do not, however, offer men their divine status. The birds envision men-birds and bird-gods in the colony, but no men-gods.[12] As it turns out, however, Peisetaerus does not allow any human being to break these divisions—apart, of course, from himself.

THE ANAPESTS AND PNIGOS OF THE PARABASIS (685–736)

The anapests and pnigos of the parabasis are the musical, bird version of Peisetaerus's earlier argument that the birds are the rightful and natural gods.[13] But, whereas Peisetaerus only needed to prove that the birds are older than earth and, therefore, the rest of the immortals (468–9), the birds go back to the very origin or genesis of things. It is the birds' intention throughout the cosmogonic parts of the anapests to prove their prior claim to sovereignty of the cosmos by separating their birth from the conventional gods (as well as mortals) and by identifying the earliest beings with a certain birdiness. Thus, for example, Chaos becomes winged (698), Eros is hatched from an egg (696), and, *Gē* (Earth, 702) is demoted to being listed by far the last among the initial gods—and it is clear why: flying creatures have less respect for the solid earth.[14] Furthermore, the chorus tells humanity that it will teach two distinct things about the "things above": 1) the nature of birds and 2) the coming into being of gods (i.e. Olympians), rivers, Chaos and Erebus (691–2). The birds see themselves as clearly distinct from the rest of the cosmos.

The initial beings are all intangible, dark and thus invisible entities: Chaos, Night, Darkness (Erebus) and Tartarus (693).[15] The beings which make up the material cosmos—earth, aer, and heaven—do not yet exist (694). Thus it comes as no surprise that the first creation of these entities, laid by "dark-winged Night" in the endless folds of darkness (Erebus), is not simply an egg, but a wind egg—an egg which is unfertilized and has wind/nothing and not offspring inside.[16] But this must be the case. Eros, the being that causes

the mixing of all things, has not yet come into being;[17] thus Eros itself, if it is ever born, must be born without mixing, without fertilization, without sex. Thus the god Eros, born of unerotic parthenogenesis, is himself unerotic.[18] The birds also attribute this unerotic quality to themselves. They are fantastically hatched by the male Eros mingling (asexually) with the neuter Chaos in broad (and masculine) Tartarus;[19] and, as they make clear, "before Eros had mixed all things together" (700). Eros had not yet stirred the elements of the world to erotic reproduction. At the same time, the birth of Eros, brings not only mingling and reproduction to the cosmos, but as it appears, also light and beauty, his golden wings gleaming (στίλβων)[20] in the darkness, he is compared with "wind-swift whirlings" (ἀνεμώκεσι δίναις), very different from the scientific, impersonal whirling (δίνή/δῖνος) of Socrates (*Clouds* 150, 1472).

The birds here provide not only a pseudo-Hesiodic or mythic cosmology, but also one that combines familiar themes from the pre-Socratics and sophists (as evidenced by their declaration to teach περὶ τῶν μετεώρων, 690). Eros is born not only in Erebus, but in its infinite (ἀπεῖρος, 694) folds; an adjective highly suggestive both of Anaximander's originative substance or *archē*, which he designates *to apeiron,*[21] as well as the boundlessness of the Atomist's void.[22] There is, furthermore, the cosmogonic concept of Love mingling together all things (700). Empedocles made Love (though he terms it *Philotēs*, not *Eros*) that force which, when it "reaches the middle of the whirl . . . all things come together so as to be one . . . and as they mixed, there poured forth countless races of mortals" (D-K B35).[23] While we cannot push this allusion too far, the conclusion is clear. Birds were born before the erotic force enters the cosmos. Thus the birds, in their *physis* and genesis, are essentially unlike the Olympian gods, but are closer to some pre-Socratic original substance or moving principle of the universe: that which causes *eros*, but does not feel it, the unmoved mover of *eros*. They will not, we can assume, like the Olympians rape mortal women; will not, as Peisetaerus tells us, be constantly wanting more in the form of temples and sacrifices. They will be content with whatever they believe is in accordance with the original principles of the cosmos. Their place is, as we see, not only one of sovereignty, but also somehow prior to and outside of the normally erotic aspect of the world of mortals and immortals.

The birds are, therefore, appropriately the offspring of Chaos and Eros. The birds are naturally *chaos* creatures. They fly through the gaping void (1218), and are gapers (stupid, 165) themselves. So too, they are born before *aēr,* that substance so essential to Socrates's understanding of the cosmos (*Clouds* 265, 627) and, for Diogenes of Apollonia, the source of intelligence in the world (D-K, B5).[24] But they are in particular the offspring of Eros, the golden-winged god that inspires longing, but also the same god that, as

the birds have learned, brought Peisetaerus to them (324, 412). Though not erotic themselves, they acknowledge the central place of *eros*, that daemonic spirit that drives Peisetaerus ever upward, in their newly (re-)acquired cosmic hegemony. If they were not guided by the titanic desire of a human being, birds would still just be birds.[25] Or, conversely, a human being can become the highest of the gods only if the gods themselves are unerotic.

But let us refocus our view of the anapests as the persuasive means to win men over to bird rule. In structure and, in large part, content the argument of the bird chorus in the anapests follows closely Peisetaerus's earlier examples. It begins with an assertion of the seniority and divine status of birds (685–703; cf. 471–79). Thereafter they prove this assertion by *tekmēria* (703–22; cf. 481–522).[26] Finally they ask that humans conventionally consider (νομίζειν) them gods and relate the benefits that will arise therefrom (723–36; cf. 571–626).

As the superior to mortals, the birds claim to be in a position to challenge all of those humans who have claimed to teach the truth about nature and about the gods.[27] In particular they mention the teachings of Prodicus (692).[28] Prodicus, as far as we can gather, held that all of human religion derived from early man's worship of those things that benefited man's life and especially of those things that brought about agricultural fecundity such as the sun, moon, rivers and streams (Sextus Empiricus *Math*. 9.18; Themistius, *Or*. 30).[29] The gods are, thus, human creations; they exist by *nomos*. As we have already seen, the birds recognize that such is the way of human belief in the gods (571). Men will conventionally hold them to be gods when they see the benefits that will accrue to them. Thus the birds following Peisetaerus, who, following Prodicus, had argued that a belief in gods stems from the benefits that they can award (587), challenge Prodicus' proto-Euhemerism with their own.

But the birds here insist that they are also the natural and correct gods. They will teach that the *physis* of birds is one of a real, existing divinity whose worship is crucial to the success or failure of men's lives. For the birds, true belief (νομίζειν) will arise among men, as Peisetaerus had previously taught them (577–78),[30] from correctly knowing (εἰδότες ὀρθῶς, 692) nature.[31] In the proofs of their divinity the birds imply that men knew this all along but have somehow forgotten it. It is the birds and not the Olympians who reveal the seasons to men (709–715) so that they can have successful crops, business ventures, and thievery. Furthermore, the very language of divination shows that it is the birds and not the Olympians who give true foreknowledge of things (716–22): "You consider a bird all those things which are decisive in mantistry." Birds are not mere signs sent from the gods, but the gods themselves.[32] As we have already noted, this argument is all largely Peisetaerean: an assertion of the natural and original state of things, a series of proofs, and the conclusion that for these reasons men will rightly consider birds gods,

especially when backed up by rewards and punishments. It is important to note, however, that the bird chorus does not mention punishments, at least, at this stage.[33] The birds believe that their teaching and the rewards accompanying their worship will be enough to secure men's piety.

As Peisetaerus had done, the chorus offers men a world of easy, secure and abundant wealth and pleasure mixed with a golden age like communion with the gods (723–36):

> ἤν οὖν ἡμᾶς νομίσητε θεούς,
> ἕξετε χρῆσθαι μάντεσι Μούσαις
> αὔραις, ὥραις, χειμῶνι, θέρει,
> μετρίῳ πνίγει· κοὐκ ἀποδράντες
> καθεδούμεθ' ἄνω σεμνυνόμενοι
> παρὰ ταῖς νεφέλαις ὥσπερ χὠ Ζεύς·
> ἀλλὰ παρόντες δώσομεν ὑμῖν
> αὐτοῖς, παισίν, παίδων παισίν,
> πλουθυγίειαν, βίον, εἰρήνην,
> νεότητα, γέλωτα, χορούς, θαλίας
> γάλα τ' ὀρνίθων. ὥστε παρέσται
> κοπιᾶν ὑμῖν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν·
> οὕτω πλουτήσετε πάντες.
>
> So if you consider us gods, you will have us to use
> as prophets, muses, fair winds, seasons, winter, summer and a measured stifling heat. And we will not run away and sit on high, looking down on you from the clouds like Zeus. But being among you, we will give to you yourselves, to your children and children's children, healthy-wealth, sustenance, peace, youth, laughter, choruses, festivals and birds' milk. And so you will be worn out by good things, so wealthy will you all be.

As Peisetaerus had earlier done, they offer sure prophecy (cf. 593, 596) and fair winds for sea trade (cf. 597). The regular seasons will assure the easy production of fruits (cf. 588–91). The compound healthy-wealth perfectly mirrors Peisetaerus's claim (604) that by giving men wealth they must likewise be healthy. In sum, all of the dangers and uncertainties of life will be taken away. The sources of life will no longer be hidden. To top it off, the gods themselves will hilariously and impossibly provide men with their own milk. Unlike the Olympians, birds will begrudge men nothing so long as they recognize the birds' rightful place in the cosmos. With their *timai* restored among men, they will now interact with human beings in a manner of free-handed reciprocity, even as they do among themselves and with the gods. Indeed, both lyrics sections (737–52, 769–86) of the parabasis point to the fact that the birds do not expect any interruption in their musical relations with the Olympians.

THE EPIRRHEME AND ANTEPIRRHEME (753–68, 785–800)

In the anapests and pnigos (685–736) the chorus of birds, using and building upon Peisetaerus's "proofs," teaches men about the true or correct (*orthos*) nature of things in the cosmos; a nature of abundance, pleasure, and freedom that has been corrupted by the Olympians, but that corresponds with the nature of birds. In the epirrhemes, however, they return to the way of life that they know and have always lived: they return to their own life according to nature. This teaching they did not learn from Peisetaerus, but it was used by Peisetaerus to achieve his desired end, namely, to undo the way of life of their fathers.

The central teaching of both the epirrheme and the antepirrheme can be found in their first lines: "If any of you want to spend the rest of your lives *pleasantly* among the birds, come to us" (753–4), "there is nothing better or more *pleasant* than to grow wings" (785). Later we will learn from the messenger who was sent to human beings that it is this natural hedonism that persuaded human beings to welcome a bird-ruled cosmos: "but now having done an about face, they (all men, πάντες) are bird-mad, and they *out of pleasure* and in imitation do all things that birds do" (1283–84). While this natural hedonism thematically ties together the epirrheme and antepirrheme, it is essential also to be aware of the differences between the two. The hedonism of bird life appeals to all, but it will appeal to different men for different reasons.

In the epirrheme (753–68) the chorus addresses the audience directly (ὦ θεαταί) and invites them to join them in a life of pleasure "with the birds." The birds no longer appear to be addressing human beings as bird-gods, but as the founders of the new bird *polis* that humans may join. Athens is the 'here' (ἐνθάδ' 755, 757) in which you (ὑμεῖς 753, 760) Athenians live, whereas the birds inhabit a "there" (ἐκεῖ 758), the place "among us" (παρ' ἡμῖν 756, 758, 761, 765, 768). In the anapests the birds sang as their old unconfined and non-*polis* selves. Because no definite "there" existed, they were present to (παρόντες, 729) men, unlike Zeus who is in the clouds, and so they could give human beings all things instantaneously. Here in the epirrheme, on the other hand, they first conceive an image of their defined space, their new *polis*, in opposition to Athens. Yet their description of life in this space betrays their lack of understanding of political life. They go on to offer in their new *polis* a way of life which is, paradoxically, completely apolitical, where the normal distinctions among citizens are no longer felt:

εἰ μετ' ὀρνίθων τις ὑμῶν, ὦ θεαταί, βούλεται
διαπλέκειν ζῶν ἡδέως τὸ λοιπόν, ὡς ἡμᾶς ἴτω.

ὅσα γὰρ ἐνθάδ' ἐστὶν αἰσχρὰ καὶ νόμῳ κρατούμενα,
ταῦτα πάντ' ἐστὶν παρ' ἡμῖν τοῖσιν ὄρνισιν καλά.
εἰ γὰρ ἐνθάδ' ἐστὶν αἰσχρὸν τὸν πατέρα τύπτειν νόμῳ,
τοῦτ' ἐκεῖ καλὸν παρ' ἡμῖν ἐστιν, ἤν τις τῷ πατρὶ
προσδραμὼν εἴπῃ πατάξας· «Αἶρε πλῆκτρον, εἰ μάχει.»
εἰ δὲ τυγχάνει τις ὑμῶν δραπέτης ἐστιγμένος,
ἀτταγᾶς οὗτος παρ' ἡμῖν ποικίλος κεκλήσεται.
εἰ δὲ τυγχάνει τις ὢν Φρὺξ μηδὲν ἧττον Σπινθάρου,
φρυγίλος ὄρνις οὗτος ἔσται, τοῦ Φιλήμονος γένους.
εἰ δὲ δοῦλός ἐστι καὶ Κὰρ ὥσπερ Ἐξηκεστίδης,
φυσάτω πάππους παρ' ἡμῖν, καὶ φανοῦνται φράτερες.
εἰ δ' ὁ Πεισίου προδοῦναι τοῖς ἀτίμοις τὰς πύλας
βούλεται, πέρδιξ γενέσθω, τοῦ πατρὸς νεόττιον·
ὡς παρ' ἡμῖν οὐδὲν αἰσχρόν ἐστιν ἐκπερδικίσαι.

If any of you, spectators, wants to weave together, among us, the rest of his life pleasantly, let him come to us. For all those things which are disgraceful and ruled by *nomos* here are among us birds noble. For if here it is disgraceful to beat one's father, there among us it is noble, if someone, rushing against his father, hits him and says, "Up with your spur, if you are going to fight." If one of you happens to be a branded, runaway slave, this man will be called among us a dappled francolin. If someone happens to be a Phrygian in no way less than Spintharus, there he will be a Phrygilian bird of Philemon's stock. If he is a slave and a Carian like Execestides, let him grow grand-f(e)athers with us and native kin will appear. The son of Peisias wishes to betray the gates to the exiles; let him become a partridge, a chickling like his father. For among us it is in no way disgraceful to play the partridge.[34]

The birds claim that the life with the birds is pleasant precisely because (γὰρ) "all those things here that are *aischra* and ruled over by *nomos*, are among us birds *kala*." The birds recognize that among human beings the distinction between noble (*kala*) and shameful (*aischra)* actions is determined by law or convention (*nomos*). On the other hand, those actions that are not ruled by *nomos* are *kala* among birds because, we must infer, they are in accordance with *physis*. This free life according to nature and not "ruled by *nomos*" is thus the most pleasant. Certain deeds are *aischra* because they are under the control of *nomos*. Without *nomoi*, nothing is *aischra*.

As we saw in the previous chapter, these proposals accord, in a general sense, with those outlined by Antiphon. *Nomoi* (as opposed to *physis*) are constraints upon what our eyes may see, our ears may hear, our tongue may speak, our hands may do, where our feet might go and what our *nous* may desire (ἐπιθυμεῖ) (F44(II)30-(III)18). The benefits established by law are, therefore, chains upon nature and cause us pain (τὰ αλγύνοντα) and so cannot truly (τῷ ἀληθεῖ) be benefits (F44(IV)1–22). As examples Antiphon gives

the *nomos*-based actions of those who do not initiate violent actions, those children who treat bad parents well, and those who tend oaths to others while not taking one themselves—this latter, tellingly, exactly the kind of abuse of *nomos* that Peisetaerus had subjected the gullible birds to (445–7). Many of these actions, he tells us, would be found to be hostile to nature because "more pain exists in these actions though less is possible; and less pleasure, though more is possible, and to suffer ill though not to suffer ill is possible" (F44(V)17–24). For Antiphon the standard in giving higher priority to *physis* over *nomos* consists in the reckoning up of pleasures and pains, of advantages and disadvantages. *Physis* is a better guide for men because actions in accordance with *physis* create greater and truer advantages and pleasures.[35] Nevertheless, he realizes that, because human beings live in a society, justice is a necessary hindrance to nature, and *nomoi* must, in public at least, be upheld (F.44(I)12–24): "A human being would use justice most advantageously for himself if he should regard *nomoi* as great among witnesses, but when alone and without witnesses, the things of *physis*."[36] Therefore, in the same way as the birds' natural justice went beyond Antiphon's negative conception of justice (not to transgress laws), so too here the birds envision a paradoxically anomian *polis* in which one can freely and openly gratify one's natural desires not only in private, but also in public. But it is not Athens. It is the "there," "beside us" birds and a *polis* into which Peisetaerus will be the only human being admitted.

Nevertheless, in the antepirrheme (785–800), the birds return to the free and private enjoyment of pleasures in a recognizably Athenian and political context. The antepirrheme moves back from the "there" of the epirrheme to the "here" of the theater of Dionysus. The chorus illustrates a life that, by way of the possession of wings, is able to avoid the punishments or shame that may arise by freely gratifying one's *physis*.[37] Nothing is more pleasant than growing wings: instead of sitting hungry at a public performance of a tragedy one could fly home, eat and return in time for a comedy; or if one needed to defecate, he could fly off, let loose and return; if one is an adulterer one could fly off and have sex with a councilor's wife and return with impunity (786–92). Wingedness would allow the possessor the ability and freedom to satisfy his private pleasure as he wished and whenever his desire urged him.[38] The possession of wings, however, does not *justify* such easy satisfaction of desires or imply that these actions are now held to be *kalos* in Athens (as they would be in the bird *polis*). Rather, it allows one to get away with them. Adultery is still illegal, but with wings you will not be caught.[39]

The antepirrheme thus complements the pseudo-"golden age" teaching of the anapests (708–36) in its appeal to the Euelpidean type. The anapests describe the easy and abundant provision of good things, whereas the antepirrheme provides a vision of the freedom to enjoy such gifts. Wings will

provide that life of easy and unchecked pleasure so loved by Euelpides—and in Athens too. He left Athens precisely because he did not want to repay his debts and because he was tired of the way the law courts impinged on his life. He, as we saw, wants all of the benefits and pleasures of Athens' greatness, but none of its accompanying hassles and obligations. He desires a quiet and pleasant life in a regime that he knows can provide it; he does not wish radically to change or challenge the fundamental notion of a *polis*. As Euelpides had described his perfect life in the prologue, it is a familiar one of families and parties with neighbors, but without having to return the favor in bad times. With wings, as with a ring of Gyges, one can freely fulfill the desires of one's *physis* while still having the security of a *nomos*-based regime.

On the other hand, as we have seen, the epirrheme provides a very different picture that comically exaggerates the *nomos*/*physis* antithesis. The epirrheme, unlike the antepirrheme, points away from Athens to the birds themselves, to a society that is completely without *nomoi* and, therefore, where one could satisfy the pleasures of one's *physis* both privately *and* publicly. Among the birds there is no sense of shame or any other part of the political art. All things that are, in Athens, shameful, because they are ruled by *nomos*, are among the birds *kala*. There is no distinction in shame or honor between a dutiful and a disrespectful son, between a slave and freeman, a foreigner and a native, a traitor and a patriot. For each of these illegal or illegitimate humans there is a perfectly respectable bird: a cock beats his father, and a partridge, like his father, is not disgraced for "playing the partridge," that is, using ignoble and devious tactics.[40] At the same time, this is not an upside-down world. One who does not beat his father would not be accorded shame, nor would slaves, foreigners and traitors have greater honor. There are no *nomoi* to transgress and, therefore, without the restraints of *nomoi* (punishments and disgrace) *physis* alone will effectively and pleasantly act as guide.

Thus the epirrheme reiterates the other side of bird nature—the one that so appealed to Peisetaerus in his initial plan (and the potential abuse of which so silenced Euelpides).[41] The very emptiness of the bird *polos* and the anomianism of bird society provide a clean slate upon which a *human being* can write according to his own "natural" desires. As Peisetaerus had already known in the *agon* when he had denigrated the birds' fathers, father beating is allowed among birds. This, in turn, reflected Peisetaerus's own "ideal place" as outlined in the prologue. It was a place where, though being a friend of the family (*patrikos philos*), one would disappoint a father by not seducing his beautiful, young son. Peisetaerus seeks a place where the traditional (*nomimos*) place and authority of the father does not act as an obstruction to the fulfillment of his desires.

As must be abundantly clear, however, this way of life of the birds can only exist among birds. Theirs is the life without wallets and without wants. They

do not desire more. It is for this reason alone that their life can be completely anomian. They have no need to enter into "social contracts" of mutual non-aggression among themselves. They do not need to form a *polis*.[42] Having been persuaded by Peisetaerus that it is only through the formation of a bird *polis* that the natural order of things will be restored, however, they foolishly agree. More foolish yet, they offer a place in this *polis* to the erotic being, man. But the very things that make this place so appealing to man—an anomian freedom among themselves on the one hand, and the uninhibited and easy satisfaction of private desires on the other—can successfully exist only in a society of *birds*, whose nature is unerotic.[43]

The choice of birds as new gods, as we have seen, is perfectly calculated for Peisetaerus's goal. They are, in the first place, none too smart, but they can sing and mimic beautifully. They can take Peisetaerus's proofs and turn them into music. Furthermore, their way of life is, in a comically exaggerated Antiphontean sense, based upon *physis* and not *nomos*. This means, as it did in the case of Pheidippides in *Clouds*, that they do not feel shame in knocking down the ways of their fathers. But among the birds, the fathers will not react by burning down the phrontisterion. Because Peisetaerus has proved that their fathers were weak and gave up their rightful place in the universe, the birds, now bird-gods, provide a *tabula rasa* upon which Peisetaerus can write a new theology and theodicy. The initial accounts of this theology, as outlined in the *parabasis* as a whole, will appeal to and persuade both kinds of human being. It will, as we have seen, appeal to the Eulpidean kind—those who seek pleasure as a "cozy blanket" and the "life of newlyweds" without the *pragmata* of political life; but in the second place it will appeal to the *polypragmon*, the Peisetarean kind, those whose ambitions know neither law, nor piety, nor patriotism. This theology, to be sure, is dangerous. But at this stage, it is necessary for the overturning of the existing order, the order of the fathers. Before Peisetaerus can rule the cosmos, he must first destabilize it. Once his aetherial *polis* is established (that is, from lines 1118 onward) and once men conventionally recognize birds as gods, however, Peisetaerus can establish his own order, can himself become the father of gods and men—and birds.

NOTES

1. For example, as Peisetaerus says to Iris (1236–37): "Birds are the gods for human beings now, and to them must men now sacrifice, and not, by Zeus, to Zeus."

2. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 685–722): "The birds have clearly now digested, and faithfully reproduce in the person of their leader, what Peis. has revealed in the agon about their being gods older than Kronos and the (other) Titans and even than Earth herself, and about all the benefits that birds can confer on men. What is added here is

a systematic cosmogony, an account of how all things can into being, which provides a quasi-scientific framework for the place of the birds in the universe." Henderson (1997, 140): "the birds, his students, are apt. They follow suit by delivering, in the parabasis, a learned and sophistic theocosmogony in which they trace their origin to a pair of qualities that would aptly describe the Athenian demos of 414: chaos and eros."

3. Hubbard (1991, 157): "the *Birds* parabasis demonstrates the Birds' full acceptance of their new status as gods" and (together with the other parabasis and choral odes) 182 "help to clarify the play's significance by drawing attention to the fundamental unity of Athens' contemporary problems: overweening military ambitions, loss of reverence for the city's traditional gods and institutions . . . all rooted in the sophistic delusion that Man himself can somehow become God."

4. There is some ambiguity in these lines. They may also be taken as a positive assertion of the birds' victory over the gods, if the second line is taken as a question: "you really must grow a beak (i.e., become a bird) in future. Won't Zeus be handing back the scepter to the woodpecker soon?" This is, as Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 479–80) asserts, less likely "both because of the generally glum tone of Eu.'s other interventions in the scene and also because it would aptly introduce the theme of struggle between birds and Olympians which is developed in the antepirrhema."

5. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 576), following Fraenkel (1962, 92–4), gives this final example to Peisetaerus and changes the future πέμψει to πέμπει, thus giving "Peis.' list an effective climax": "and doesn't Zeus thunder and send down winged lightning bolts?" I would rather follow Bentley (followed by Sommerstein 1987 and Henderson 2007) in considering it a cautious and negative question to Euelpides. The last thing that Peisetaerus would want to do now is to call to mind precisely that weapon by which Zeus defeated the last group (the Titans) that threatened his sovereignty (Hesiod, *Theogony*, 689–710).

6. Iris herself enters later and backs up Euelpides's expectations (1238ff.)—though he, of course, is now long gone.

7. Heberlein (1980, 139): "Voraussetzung für die genannte Funktion des E. ist, dass er den Plan des P. ebensowenig kennt wie die Vögel und, obwohl er sozusagen Gesellschafter des Staatsgründers ist, von seinem Informationsstand her zu der zu überzeugenden Partei gehört und so die Folgen, die sich aus der Gründung des Vogelstaates ergeben, aus dem Gesichtswinkel des kleinen Mannes, des Erleidenden, nicht des Planenden, beurteilt."

8. This is the reading of the MSS and most commentators; needlessly, I believe, emended by Dunbar (1995).

9. As in Hesiod *Theogony*, 693 (cf. also Soph. *Ph.* 391, 1162; Eur. *Ph*. 686), Earth is *pheresbios*.

10. Hesiod spends only three lines of the *Works and Days* on the pruning and trenching of vines (569–572); and three and one half on their picking and processing (611–614). He does not mention the cultivation of figs. Cf. also the second book of Vergil's *Georgics* in which the easy and spontaneous cultivation of the vine is intentionally set off against the difficulty and harshness of the cultivation of cereal crops in the first book.

11. In Hesiod's golden age-like description of the "just city" there is no need for trade for "the fertile earth provides fruit" (*WD* 236–37). Cf. also Ovid *Met*. (1.132–5). For the discovery and use of metals as a sign of decline from the golden age, see Hesiod *WD* (150–51); Aratus (*Phaen.* 131); Lucretius (5.1241–42); Vergil (*Geor.*1.143); Ovid (*Met.* 1.138–43).

12. Cf. Dobrov (1988, 198) who argues that the original bird space was intermediate between gods and men: "this intermediate category is then allowed to assimilate to the higher category and lay claim to divinity, while the lower category (man) is made to assimilate to the intermediate one and participate in new privileges."

13. See n. 2 above. Stamatopoulou (2017, 201 and n. 73) notes that the birds' cosmogonic song, like Hermes' celebration of his own birth (*h.Hermes* 57–50), is an act of self-legitimation.

14. As noted by Stamatopoulou (2017, 206 n 89).

15. On other examples of dark beginnings to cosmogonies see Dunbar 438.

16. Guthrie (1966, 93) believes that Eros born from an egg is based upon the birth of Phanes/Protogonos (=Eros) from an egg in earlier Orphic texts. There is no evidence, however, that the birth of cosmogonic figures from an egg is an early Orphic motif, as Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983, 47) note. As they point out, 46–7, the most likely sources of the egg-motif are folk-lore (found also in many other cultures) and Epimenides, who depicts in his third generation of beings, two Titans bringing forth an egg which produces the rest of the divine race. In any case, the Aristophanic theogony surely chose the egg-motif, not to point to specifically Orphic doctrine, but simply because birds lay eggs. For further references see Bernabé (1995, 204–7); Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 694–5); Imperio (2004, 356–59); Stamatopoulou (2017, 203 n77, 207 n94).

17. Hesiod *Theogony* and Parmenides (DK B13), sensibly it seems, put Eros among the first things. The mingling of the first things cannot come about without the presence of Eros.

18. Neither in Hesiod, nor anywhere else in Greek mythology apart from the parabasis of *Birds* does Eros have offspring, nor does he have sexual encounters. Rather Eros causes or arouses sexual passion. Eros would not be the awesome god that he is if he were subject to his own power, as Socrates points out to Agathon in *Symposium* (196c). The chorus calls him Ἔρως ὁ ποθεινός (696); that is, not "Eros who is full of longing," but "Eros who inspires longing."

19. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 694–5), citing West 1966 on *Theogony* (ad loc. 116), argues that the neuter gender would "not prevent it from being a mother." In *Theogony*, however, Chaos is reproducing parthenogenically. It is not being impregnated by a male god with a male god as its bed. See Stamatopoulou (2017, 203 n.78) for her arguments rebutting West 1966.

20. Might we recall Peisetaerus nickname "Stilbonides," (139) as pederast? But compare also Odysseus' beautiful appearance before Nausicaa (στίλβων 6.237) likened to work which has gold overlaid with silver or, based on this Homeric scene, Simaetha' description of her beloved Delphis (στίλβων Theocritus 2.79) whose beard is more golden than helichryze. Imperio (2004, 361) notes that πόθῳ στίλβων is an epithet of Eros in Anacreon *PMG* 99.

21. On this connection in *Birds,* cf. Hubbard (1991, 166). On Anaximander's *to apeiron* see e.g. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983, 104–17).

22. Democritus D-K 68A37, 68A56, Leucippus D-K 67A1, Epicurus *Letter* 2.88. Compare also the "boundlessness" of Anaxagoras' first things D-K 1 and 2: καὶ γὰρ ἀήρ τε καὶ αἰθὴρ ἀποκρίνονται ἀπὸ τοῦ πολλοῦ τοῦ περιέχοντος, καὶ τό γε περιέχον ἄπειρόν ἐστι τὸ πλῆθος. ("For aer and aither are separated from the great surrounding, and the surrounding is boundless in size.")

23. See Bernabé (2005, 208).

24. It is notable that though the birds mention the absence of *Aer* (694), they do not mention when it actually did come into existence, thus pointing to their indifference to it as a substance, even though it is their realm.

25. As the chorus goes on to say, one proof of their birth from Eros is that they "are with those who desire" (τοῖσιν ἐρῶσι, 703); it is through their power (διὰ τὴν ἰσχὺν τὴν ἡμετέραν, 705) that ἄνδρες ἐρασταί (manly lovers) win over young boys. Thus they are like Eros; they do not partake in erotic activity, but cause it to come to fruition because they represent the *eros* of men to the *eromenoi*. They are, in this respect, superior to men; but they achieve nothing for themselves.

26. Like Peisetaerus they prove a past truth by a present practice: in this case the use of birds as love tokens to prove their birth from Eros; the use of birds as weather signs and in augury to prove their divinity.

27. The bird chorus uses, adapts, and thus challenges various sources. The chief one is clearly Hesiod's *Theogony*, but, as we have already seen, also certain pre-Socratic cosmogonies. Cf. Dunbar (1995, 437–38); West (1983); Bernabé (2005); Stamatopoulou (2017, 201–10), and nn. 16 and 22 above.

28. The introduction of Prodicus here is set up by the repeated use of ὀρθῶς at 690 and 692. Prodicus claimed to teach the correct and precise use of language (ὀρθοέπεια) (eg. Plato, *Phaedrus* 267c, *Euthydemus* 277e). Nevertheless, the chorus also seems to be imitating Peisetaerus who claimed that birds are the rightful (ὀρθῶς, 468) kings.

29. See Mayhew (2011, 38–50) and on this passage in *Birds* 171–175.

30. Peisetaerus had told the birds: "But if *out of ignorance* (ὑπ' ἀγνοίας) men consider (νομίσωσι) you to be nothing and the Olympians to be gods," the birds can show them by testing the power of the gods. The teaching of the parabasis takes the place of these tests.

31. Stamatopoulou (2017, 202) notes the contrast between the birds' claim to ὀρθός knowledge and the Muses in Hesiod who have two modes of communication with mortals, ψεύδεα. . . . ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα (lies like reality), and ἀληθέα (truth) *Theog.* 27–8.

32. Mayhew (2011, 174) argues that lines 719–21 may be "an effective criticism [of Prodicus' concern with homonymy], for Aristophanes is demonstrating how one word could be used (successfully, without confusion) to refer to a wide variety of things: bird and omen-and by extension from the latter, word, sneeze, token, voice, servant, donkey, and so forth."

33. This will not occur until the second parabasis (1077–87); that is, after the first group of interlopers. Likewise, the birds do not relate that they will soon be at war

with the Olympians if the latter do not surrender sovereignty back to them. As far as the birds are concerned men have simply been mistaken as to whom they conventionally consider to be gods.

34. The humor of the passage arises from various puns on names and/or comparison of different individuals with the behaviors of different species of birds. For details see Dunbar (1995, ad loc).

35. On Antiphon's hedonism see Pendrick (2002, 228); Nill (1985, 60 n.29); Havelock (1957, 281–2); Guthrie (1971, 113, 290–1). This hedonism accords well with Xenophon's portrait of Antiphon 'the sophist' (cf. Morrison 1953, 3–6). There, Antiphon is portrayed as vying with Socrates for students and as one who believes that "*eudaimonia* is luxury (τρυφή) and extravagance (πολυτέλεια)" (1.6.10). Later (1280–83), we shall see that in Athens the hedonistic bird doctrine has taken the place of precisely the kind of ascetic, Socratic, Laconism which Xenophon's Socrates puts forward against Antiphon.

36. As Decleza Caizzi (1991, 327) well notes: "Thucydides has the unknown figure he calls Diodotus say that violation of law is a natural instinct. In Antiphon's case, this does not imply that he invites anyone who can do so with impunity to rob a passerby as a way of providing himself with the means of satisfying his hedonistic impulse. Rather, we should take him to be inviting reflection on the way to live one's life with the minimum of discomfort in a cautious balance between natural demands and demands imposed by social life." See also Nill (1985, 52–74); he concludes 73, that Antiphon is not so radical as to suggest that it is best to live without *nomoi*, "rather, he only argues that it is not always in one's self-interest to observe moral requirements. Of course, his argument is radical inasmuch as self-interest is his criterion for action."

37. Cf. Hubbard (1991, 170): "In contrast to the epirrheme's emphasis on matters of *nomos* the antepirrheme lists the various ways in which the spectators would be free to satisfy the demands of their *physis* if they had wings. Our attention shifts from political liberty to personal liberty."

38. In some respects the pleasures attendant upon wingedness may represent the usual kind of pleasures that any Aristophanic comic hero seeks: eating, defecating, and having sex without restraint. Placed in the context of this parabasis, however, with its openly sophistic antithesis between *nomos* and *physis*, these examples are more akin to the teaching of the "weaker speech" of *Clouds* where adultery, in particular, is also the chief example of a "natural" desire (see Hubbard 1991, 170n37). The birds' argument, however, is clearly different from that given by the "weaker argument" in *Clouds*, which, I would argue, is Calliclean / megalonomian. The weaker argument argues in particular against the *sōphrosunē* proposed by the stronger argument (1071). One should, rather (and as the birds also suggest), obey the "necessities of nature" (1075) and "consider nothing shameful" (1078). If someone, educated by the weaker argument, is caught in adultery he can merely say, "I have done no injustice" (1080), and talk his way out of it. In *Birds*, however, the antepirrheme does not deny the *legal* injustice of adultery. Wings merely allow you to commit adultery (to obey a necessity of nature) without being caught. As has been quoted above, Pendrick (2002, 62): "the Calliclean strongman aims at pre-eminence in the state, Antiphon's individual

at freedom from the state." Wings, unlike the speeches of the weaker argument, only give one the ability to act undetected by others and therefore independently of the law; they do not teach one to ride roughshod over them. This, however, does not mean that the possession of wings is not open to abuse by men different from the Euelpidean type, as we shall see later in the case of the sycophant.

39. Cf. Antiphon fr.44(II)3–9: "If someone, in transgressing the laws, escapes the notice of those who agree upon them, he is free of shame and punishment; but if he does not, he is not." The question of justice in regards to crimes that are undetected was evidently an important issue at this time. In the *Republic*, Glaucon sets up the question of the inherent goodness of justice by imagining a person (Gyges) who had the power of invisibility and, therefore, of undetected injustice. Likewise the fragment of the satyr play, *Sisyphus*, speaks of a time when "*nomoi* stopped men from committing open acts of violence" (10–11) but nevertheless men did it secretly (λάθρᾳ) (12) until a clever man came up with the idea of an omniscient god. (cf. also Euripides fr.107c; Democritus DK 68B 30, 181, 264; Xenophon *Mem.* 1.4.18, 4.4.21).

40. According to the scholia this refers either, as Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 768) paraphrases, "to the birds' cunning tactics of hiding when threatened," or "feigning injury to distract hunters from the brood."

41. We must not be surprised then that when human beings actually come to Nepholokokkugia to become part of bird society, they are Peisetaireans (*polypragmones*), not Euelpideans. The Euelpideans are too happy enjoying the prospect of the new life under bird rule in Athens to want to make the journey.

42. As we had earlier seen, the birds are so ignorant of the way in which the essential compact of a *polis* works (namely the compact neither to do nor to suffer injustice) that they make a compact with Peisetaerus not to harm him, but do not ask a reciprocal compact not to suffer injustice at his hands.

43. This theme is taken up again in the *Ecclesiazousae*. There the society of communism in property and sex is impossible because human nature and human *eros* run counter to such a way of life.

Chapter 5

Nephelokokkygia I

Before the City is Founded

By the end of the first parabasis all of the necessary, preliminary elements of Peisetaerus's *mega bouleuma* have been established, but only in word. He has persuaded the birds to found a *polis* in order to regain cosmic sovereignty, and the chorus, in turn, has persuasively informed men of the pleasant existence that will arise under bird gods and by living according to bird ways. But before Peisetaerus can use his skills of persuasion upon the final element in the cosmos, the gods, his plan must be put into effect in deed. The bird *polis* has to be established and men must consider the birds as gods and worship them as such. Aristophanes delays the accomplishment of these important elements until after a scene consisting of a series of intruders and a second parabasis. It is only then that we learn that the sacrificial rites have been successful, that the wall has been built, and that men have stopped sacrificing to the gods and have become bird-mad.

Birds is unique in the extant Aristophanic corpus in presenting the accomplishment of the protagonist's plan only after the second parabasis.[1] The first series of interlopers marks further hindrances to the accomplishment of the initial project, not as, for example, in *Acharnians* or *Peace,* hindrances to the hero's enjoyment of the already accomplished goal. In the process of his founding the city, each of the five interlopers offers to Peisetaerus some element external to the proposed bird *polis*; they do not wish to join the city itself nor seem to have heard and been attracted by the chorus' anomian and hedonistic account of the soon to be established city. The second group of interlopers, on the other hand, attempts to gain for themselves something integral to the now founded *polis*. Let us, therefore, consider the function of these earlier scenes.

In the scenes after the parabasis, Peisetaerus takes the role of *oikistēs* (founder) of the bird *polis*. Like traditional *oikistai*, Peisetaerus settles the

birds in a strategic area, makes it defensible by ordering walls to be built, sets up and performs religious and cultic rites, and determines the social and political ordering of the new state.[2] Bowie has outlined how, throughout the play, Aristophanes uses motifs found in mythologies concerning the founding of *apoikiai*. For example, Peisetaerus seeks a new place because of some sort of grievance at home, uses animals as prophetic guides on his journey, confronts and overcomes the native inhabitants, and achieves his final goal through marriage to the daughter of the old ruler.[3] In the foundation scenes of *Birds* Aristophanes extends the liminal moments of the coming into being of Cloudcuckooland. Peisetaerus follows the customary procedures and rites in the founding of a *polis*, but at the same time makes it clear that his city will not be restricted by customary usage.

The bird *polis*, as outlined in the first parabasis, is expected to be a very different kind of *polis* from Athens. In particular, it is expected to be characterized by its birdish adherence to *physis* and not *nomos*; it is expected to permit father beating and treason. When Peisetaerus and Euelpides return to the stage, the chorus-leader is keen to learn what must be done to found the *polis* (809). Nothing that Peisetaerus tells him throughout this scene suggests that the city will be of a kind different from that outlined by the chorus in the parabasis. Peisetaerus rejects Euelpides's suggestion to give the city the "great name" of Sparta (813–14).[4] That would suggest that the city was like or emulated a human city: indeed, a city particularly famous for its obedience to *nomoi*. Rather, the birds propose that he come up with a name that signifies its difference from human *poleis*, something "from here" (ἐντευθενί, 817); something "very vacuous from the clouds and the meteoric regions" (ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν καὶ τῶν μετεώρων χωρίων / χαῦνόν τι πάνυ, 818). Ironically, the birds use words that do describe the emptiness and distance of avian life from human political life, but at the same time words that most characterize Peisetaerus's undertaking. It is χαυνός; empty and full of boasting, all talk.[5] As Peisetaerus goes on to say (824–25), this place is the plain of Phlegra where "the gods outshot the giants in bullshitting."[6] More pointedly ironic is that the project is now explicitly connected with the clouds and mid-air (τὰ μετέωρα): not only things insubstantial and divorced from reality (as Dunbar, 1995, ad loc. 817–18), but also, as we have seen, it is a project based upon techniques critiqued in his play, *Clouds*, in which the master of sophistry, Socrates, claims as his own realm and expertise τὰ μετέωρα (228).[7] In the context of that play the dwelling in and investigation of τὰ μετέωρα represent the sophistic attempt to bring phenomena associated with the divine into the domain of human, scientific reason.[8] It is, like Peisetaerus's goal, a rebellion against Zeus (see *Clouds* 245–53, esp 365–411). Thus the bird city will be called Nephelokokkygia, the city of cuckoos in the clouds: a mixture of dumb birds (cuckoos) and sophistic persuasion. Likewise, Peisetaerus quickly

rejects Euelpides's suggestion that Athena Polias be the protector, as she is in Athens, of the city's citadel (828). Rather, and again in keeping with the bird *polis* of the parabasis, he proposes that one of the birds, and in particular, the father beating bird—the cock (or Persian bird)—take this role.[9] The bird that will guard the *polis* will be that which most represents its *physis*-based, anomian foundations. Nevertheless, as essentially *physis*-based as Nephelokokkygia may claim to be, it is now a political entity and can no longer be a place without *pragmata*. The birds, never having experienced such a life and "by nature stupid and not *polypragmon* (471)," now largely fall into the background and follow Peisetaerus's orders.

Not surprisingly, the lover of the old bird life, Euelpides, will soon disappear from Nephelokokkygia never to return.[10] But prior to that, on his re-entry after the parabasis, Euelpides's physical appearance, like Peisetaerus's, has become akin to the bizarre human-bird metamorphoses already made fun of in the prologue. Like the "slave-bird" and Tereus, and unlike the bird chorus, the Athenians' costumes are ridiculous. Euelpides's place in the pecking order, however, soon becomes evident. Now that Euelpides is a man-bird, he is ordered by Peisetaerus to go and help the birds, and not to enjoy the new and easy life which bird-rule promised for men (837–44):

> ἄγε νυν σὺ μὲν βάδιζε πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα
> καὶ τοῖσι τειχίζουσι παραδιακόνει,
> χάλικας παραφόρει, πηλὸν ἀποδὺς ὄργασον,
> λεκάνην ἀνένεγκε, κατάπεσ' ἀπὸ τῆς κλίμακος,
> φυλακὰς κατάστησαι, τὸ πῦρ ἔγκρυπτ' ἀεί,
> κωδωνοφορῶν περίτρεχε καὶ κάθευδ' ἐκεῖ.
> κήρυκα δὲ πέμψον τὸν μὲν εἰς θεοὺς ἄνω,
> ἕτερον δ' ἄνωθεν αὖ παρ' ἀνθρώπους κάτω,
> κἀκεῖθεν αὖθις παρ' ἐμέ.
>
> Come now, you, march to the aer and give your assistance to the wall-builders, bring up gravel, strip down, work at the mud, pass up the hod, fall from the ladder, set up sentry-posts, keep the fires going, run around ringing the bell and sleep there. Send one herald above to the gods, and another from above downward to human beings. And then come back from there to me.

Like a return to his condition at the beginning of the play (βάδον βαδίζομεν, 42), Euelpides is ordered to march (βάδιζε) off to the *aer*. He has not achieved his desired settled state. The haste and busyness of his task is underscored by the asyndeton, the breathlessness of the commands. He must give assistance (παραδιακόνει) to the wall-builders, set up sentries and, even at night, run around (περίτρεχε) checking to see if the guards are awake by ringing bells. As Peisetaerus had earlier said, he brought Euelpides along on the journey

in order that he might be his attendant / ἀκόλουθος (340). Euelpides is, now more than ever, manifestly in this subordinate position, taking orders.[11] He is now like Tereus's slave-bird, who, against the usual nature of birds, was changed into a bird in order that Tereus might have an ἀκόλουθον διάκονόν τ' (an attendant and assistant, 73). Instead of just attending upon Peisetaerus, Euelpides will be attending beside (παραδιακόνει) the wall-builders. Euelpides's joke that the slave-bird was, in fact, a runner-bird (Τροχίλος, 79) has come back to slap him in the face—now *he* will be running around (βάδιζε, περίτρεχε) doing Peisetaerus's bidding and catering to Peisetaerus's *eros* as the runner-bird had catered to Tereus's. Bird life has suddenly become the antithesis of everything Euelpides had expected of it.

Euelpides, however, does not follow Peisetaerus's command to return to him, and in the description of the building of the wall Euelpides is not mentioned. The messenger bird emphasizes that birds alone (ὄρνιθες, οὐδεὶς ἄλλος 1133) accomplished the task. Iris is not aware of any messenger sent to the gods, but one is apparently dispatched to men, and this one later reports back to Peisetaerus. Perhaps we are to assume that Euelpides joined this messenger and stayed with men to enjoy the new life under bird gods. In any case, Euelpides makes it clear here that the servility and busyness of the new bird life is not for him; it will not turn out to be his cozy blanket. Euelpides is but the first of a series of human beings for whom the promised ideal of Peisetaerus's Nephelokokkygia turns out to be much different from what they hoped or expected. We must note, however, that of all the visitors Euelpides is the only genuine quietist or *apragmōn* who comes. It turns out that an *apragmōn* would only come to Nephelokokkygia as the deceived follower of a *polypragmōn*.

In order to accomplish the foundation rites to the new gods (τοῖς καινοῖς θεοῖς, 862) Peisetaerus orders a priest to lead the customary procession to the altar. A male slave carries the ritual basket and a second the lustral water. The priest, however, like the coming interlopers, soon attempts to take center stage from the protagonist. He conventionally begins with the bird version of Hestia,[12] and moves through different birds that have now appropriately taken the place of Olympian gods. Peisetaerus himself gladly adds to this list and regularly interrupts. From lines 881 to 888, however, the priest attempts to take complete control of the rite by ridiculously extending his invocations to an absurd degree.[13] He can only be stopped by Peisetaerus's command to halt and his abrupt expulsion from the stage. Peisetaerus, therefore, emphatically states that he will make the sacrifice alone by himself (ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸς . . . μόνος, 894).

It is under these conditions that Peisetaerus entertains each of the intruders. As in the interloper scenes of *Acharnians* and *Peace,* the chorus appears to slip into the background and to watch on as the protagonist deals with each

one. Unlike in *Acharnians* and *Peace*, however, where the chorus sings in praise of the cleverness and blessedness of the hero (*Ach.* 836–59, *Peace* 1027–31, 1033–38), the chorus of birds takes up a more active role and, in accordance with bird nature, show a more emphatic and explicit concord and endorsement of Peisetaerus's coming actions (851–58):

ὁμορροθῶ, συνθέλω,
συμπαραινέσας ἔχω
προσόδια μεγάλα σεμνὰ προσιέναι θεοῖ-
σιν

I am of one mind with you, and of one wish,
I join you in your recommendation to conduct
great and holy processional hymns to the gods.

The chorus, as it had earlier done (cf. 629–35), gives their authority to Peisetaerus to "be the brains" on their behalf in their joint undertaking and in a fashion appropriate to the communal spirit of bird life.[14] Peisetaerus may still be the savior of the birds (545), but he is not yet their *archon*. This can only occur after the city is actually founded (1123).

Each of the intruders enters the soon-to-be-founded *polis* offering something that might accompany the foundation of any conventional, human *polis* in fifth-century Greece. The encomiastic poet offers *kleos* among men, the oracle-monger authoritative knowledge of the gods' will, Meton an urban design, and the inspector and decree-seller legal and political security within the Athenian empire. All, with the exception of Meton, seek to gain some material reward in return for their services. Of these only the poet is given any recompense and only the poet is not beaten by Peisetairus. From this we might gather that the encomiastic poet alone provides a threat (or a service) to the city that the city under Peisetairus' guidance cannot deal with or provide itself. The city must keep these poets on its side and reward them (δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ποιητὴν ὠφελεῖν 947).[15] Peisetaerus wishes to retain all of the other prerogatives—religious, intellectual, and political—for himself alone.

The poet that arrives is, in particular, a poet of the old school.[16] He gives as his models Homer (910, 914) and especially Pindar (939) and tells Peisetaerus that he has composed many songs for Nephelokokkygia, including dithyrambs and partheneia—that is, civic/public songs—in the manner of Simonides.[17] He is the sort of poet that, in *Clouds*, Strepsiades (1354–58) and the Stronger Logos (966–68) love, but that Pheidippides (1359–62) and the Weaker Logos (984–85) despise. He comes to praise the newly founded city and, in return for the *kleos* (905, 921, 950) that he will bestow on the city, he seeks clothing. Taking up what appears to be a stock motif from the iambic

tradition, the poet in his unkempt and ill-clothed state looks like a slave and is shivering with cold.[18] The poet claims to have been celebrating the city for a long time—even before it existed, so swift is the report of the Muses. He is revealed to have a stock of well-worn pieces that he can apply to different cities;[19] but his choice of song here is not merely one with which, as Hubbard asserts, "he celebrates every other city."[20] Rather he adapts an appropriate hyporchema (fr. 105a Maehler) of Pindar and in the process identifies Peisetaerus with Hieron I, the tyrant of Syracuse and founder of Aetna:

> σὺ δὲ πάτερ, κτίστορ Αἴτνας,
> ζαθέων ἱερῶν ὁμώνυμε,
> δὸς ἐμὶν ὅ τι περ τεᾷ κεφαλᾷ θέ-
> λης πρόφρων δόμεν.
>
> But you father, founder of Aetna, whose name means holy rites, give to me, with a nod of your head, whatever you are willing to give.

That is, he rightly identifies Peisetaerus as a potential tyrant without actually naming him as such,[21] and he hints that the foundation of Nephelokokkygia is as suspect as Hieron's foundation of Aetna.[22] But at the same time, the poet shrewdly equates him with that tyrant who, perhaps most effectively, established around him a literary court circle, including Aeschylus, Pindar, Bacchylides, Simonides, Xenophanes, and Epicharmus. The poets are able to create legitimacy for the tyrant.[23] Indeed Pindar's first Pythian, celebrating the founding of Aetna in 476/5 and its continued good governance, points clearly to the power of the poets and poetry in the context of monarchical rule.[24] The poem begins and ends with references to the power of the *phorminx*—it calms and disarms even the force of Zeus's thunderbolt, his eagle, as well as Ares and other gods (1–12); but in the final stanza the phorminx and its attendant song are what preserve the reputation of the *aretē* of the good king (Croesus) as well as the wickedness of the bad (Phalaris) (94–100). Depending upon the actions of the king, the poet may cast him as a Croesus or a Phalaris. As Pindar had a few lines earlier said: "if you love to hear yourself always spoken of in terms of praise, don't grow weary in your lavish expenditure"(90). Like the poet in *Birds*, Pindar admonishes Hieron to keep the poets happy. Thus this anonymous encomiastic poet, comically taking up his pose of shivering poverty, hopes to take this role in Peisetaerus's Nephelokokkygia. He, like Pindar, knows the tremendous power he has both in the city itself, but especially, as an itinerant poet, around the Greek world.[25] As Peisetaerus admits, "this bane (*kakon*) will provide troubles (*pragmata*) unless we get clear of them by giving him something" (931–2), and, as he later says, "it is necessary to benefit the poet" (947). Peisetaerus gives to the "skilled poet" a

jacket and a tunic and sends him on his way. Now, as the poet tells us, he will leave the city and compose songs in its honor.

The next four interlopers who interrupt Peisetaerus's sacrifice do not get off so lightly. Each is physically beaten off stage by the hero. Three of these, the oracle-monger, the inspector and the decree-seller, represent different ways in which recognizably Athenian *polypragmosynē* is able to intrude upon the political life of the *poleis* within her empire. Furthermore each of them brings something that has clearly been accounted for in the parabasis as either unnecessary in a bird *polis* (laws and law courts) or as the birds' own prerogative (oracles and divination).

Like Hierocles, the oracle-monger (*chresmologos*) in *Peace*, this unnamed *chresmologos* interrupts the protagonist's sacrifice and is recognized as an *alazon* (983, cf. *Peace* 1045, 1069, 1120) who wishes to get for himself some tasty morsels. He attempts to claim as his own prerogative expertise in divine matters, in this case foreknowledge of the gods' will, and tells Peisetaerus that he has an oracle of Bacis which explicitly speaks of Nephelokokkygia. Peisetaerus trumps his Bacis oracle with one from Apollo and therewith beats him off of the stage. As Bowden has argued, outside of Aristophanes, *chresmologoi* were not regarded as "professionals" who sold oracles to the highest bidder, but were an important and respected element in public sacrifices and in political decision-making in Athens.[26] The two *chresmologoi* mentioned at 988 of *Birds*, Lampon and Diopeithes, were both clearly linked with religious matters in Athens, but were also men of prominence in political affairs generally.[27] Thus, those who were named *chresmologoi* were no mere quacks, but politically active and persuasive individuals, whose claims to divine knowledge were taken very seriously.[28] Prior to the Sicilian expedition, Alcibiades himself is said to have recited an oracle prophesying that "great *kleos* will come to the Athenians from Sicily" (Plut. *Nic.* 13.1; cf Thuc. 8.1). Thus, the portrayal of *chresmologoi* both here and in *Peace* as gluttons, is the comic rendering of their real use of oracles for political or private gain. More importantly for our purposes, *chresmologoi* appear to have played some role in the establishment of cleruchies in the Athenian empire. The Chalcis Decree[29] contains an amendment that Hierocles (the same *chresmologos* as found in *Peace*) should perform the sacrifices "from the oracles concerning Euboea." It is highly likely that these oracles were those chosen and interpreted by Hierocles himself, and the joke in *Peace* that he is "Hierocles from Oreos" (formerly Histiaea in Euboea)[30] shows that he must have gained quite some profit from his role as *chresmologos* and leader of the sacrifices at Chalcis, while at the same time furthering Athens' control in Euboea.[31] The *chresmologos* in *Birds*, therefore, is not "merely a nuisance"[32] to the founding of the city, but represents, among other things, the first attempt by a creature peculiar to the Athenian empire to annex the new city.

The inspector (*episkopos*) and the decree-seller, characters more explicitly linked to the mechanisms of the Athenian empire, represent not intrusions of religious *nomos*, but of constitutional and legal *nomoi*. The *episkopos* comes onto the stage carrying two voting urns (τὼ κάδω, 1032), thus revealing to the audience that he has been sent by the Assembly in order to set up a judicial system in accord with the democratic procedures peculiar to Athens.[33] The decree-seller, a profession evidently invented by Aristophanes, attempts to sell decrees that explicitly parody at least one *psephisma* that Athens had imposed upon member states of her empire.[34] Like other Athenians who, in Aristophanes's plays, represent Athenians abroad—as, for example, the ambassadors to Persia in *Acharnians* (65–108)—these creatures use the machinery of the empire for personal profit. Their own *polypragmosynē* and *pleonexia* matches and mirrors that of the empire. Their only payment from Peisetaerus, however, is a beating. Since neither gain any profit, each tries then to turn the law of the empire against Peisetaerus (1046–54). They are again beaten. The scene ends thus with a slapstick routine, showing in its most visual and physical form, the expulsion of Athenian *nomoi* from Nephelokokkygia.

The central intruder, Meton, is marked off from the rest by not desiring any material gain in return for his services. He takes an arrogant pleasure in the renown he has earned from his intellectual skills ("I am Meton known in Greece and Colonus," 997–98), but his motivation appears to be the theoretical and intellectual pleasure derived from the challenge of "geometrizing the aēr." Furthermore, he is the only intruder who is a named, historical figure. Though most well-known to us for his observation of the summer solstice and re-calculations of the calendar year,[35] he appears to have come to public attention around the time of this play in some unknown connection to the water supply in Athens.[36] In Plutarch, he is coupled with Socrates as having no good expectations for the Sicilian expedition, and he may have at this time been subject to public ridicule because of the suspicious means he employed in exempting himself and his son from participation in the Sicilian expedition.[37] He is thus a highly suitable candidate to represent the intellectual egghead on the comic stage.

After his initial grand and self-important entrance (992, cf. 997–98), Meton tells Peisetaerus that he wishes to measure out (literally, and humorously, to "measure the land-area of", γεωμετρῆσαι) the *aēr* and to divide it into acres. Because the city is unusually situated in the *aēr*, he can combine his famous knowledge of *ta meteōra* with his skill in geometry.[38] He comes, therefore, with "rulers of *aēr*" (κανόνες ἀέρος), and the city's form will actually resemble the meteorological figure of a star. This application of the scientific principles of a known intellectual to town planning is clearly not without precedent. Hippodamus, whom Aristotle describes

as a highly eccentric person who sought to be famous in all areas of the natural sciences (*Politics,* 1267b), had already theorized about a "best form of *politeia*" based upon the geometrical, triadic symmetry not only of its urban design, but also of its social and judicial structures.[39] Likewise here, Meton, not known outside of this passage for his town planning, seeks to impose scientific and geometric paradigms upon the physical design of the city.

Reiterating ideas attributed to Socrates in *Clouds* and to Hippon in Kratinos' *Panoptai* (K-A, 155),[40] Meton puts forward what appears to be a by now common comic-scientific topos that the sky can be best likened to a hemispherical baking cover (*pnigeus*, 1001). Oblivious to Peisetaerus's perplexity (1003) and now on a theoretical roll, Meton goes on to outline his geometric plans for the city and, in the process, ridiculously claims to have solved the famously impossible geometric problem of squaring the circle.[41] Like Strepsiades's reaction to Socrates's geometric cleverness in *Clouds* (180), Peisetaerus likens Meton to the traditional founder of the investigation of *ta meteōra*, Thales (1009).[42] As soon becomes evident, however, such cleverness is not wanted in Peisetaerus's Nephelokokkygia. Foreigners are being expelled and beaten up (1012–14); all have agreed to wallop *alazones* (frauds/swindlers, 1015–16).[43] Meton, aware of his own *alazoneia*, takes to his heels, but not without receiving a few jabs from the hero.

Clearly Aristophanes does not bring Meton onto the stage to represent a threat posed merely by the establishment of ordered urban planning, but more broadly the kind of threat that the study of *ta meteōra* and *ta physika* brings to the established ways of any city.[44] Even as in *Clouds*, where the private, intellectual longings that stir Socrates to scientific investigations turn out ultimately to be detrimental to the basic social fabric, so here, Meton's scientific perspective would not, as the sophistically trained Peisetaerus well knows, rest at urban design—just as it did not in the case of Hippodamus. In Nephelokokkygia Peisetaerus will not tolerate any theoretical, philosophical, or scientific challenges to the foundations of the city he is in the process of establishing.[45]

Nevertheless, of all of the interlopers in the play it is with Meton alone that Peisetaerus shows any kinship: "You know that I am your friend, but obey me and make a stealthy get-away" (1010–11). While not a professional intellectual like Meton, Peisetaerus, as we have already seen, uses the cleverness and *alazoneia* of the new intellectuals to reach the position he has achieved, but he cannot allow anyone else to practice that same activity in his new city. This quack and his *alazoneia* might threaten the bird order of the world, in the same way as, for example, the chorus told us Prodicus had challenged the Olympians (692). Peisetaerus had earlier told Euelpides that the site of the bird city is "the plain of Phlegra, where the gods completely out-shot the

earthborn in *alazoneia.*" Peisetaerus still has to compete with the gods in *alazoneia* and cannot let any possible rivals remain.

After chasing off the last intruder, Peisetaerus has still not completed the foundation rite of the city and is forced to go inside in order to complete the sacrifice there. He has, however, kept Nephelokokkygia in its pristine, birdish state. Any attempt to fill from without the vacuum of conventional *nomoi*—whether religious, intellectual, judicial, or legal—has been thwarted. To reiterate, this first group wanted to profit by imposing elements that would compromise the anomianism and self-sufficiency of the bird *polis*. They did not wish to take advantage or were unaware of its peculiarly birdish qualities. But, at the same time, at least as regards Peisetaerus, they represent a threat to the untouched potential that so attracted Peisetaerus in the first place. While protecting the naturalness of the bird *polis* from "foreign" laws and influences, Peisetaerus retains for himself the clean slate of bird society that he will be able to fill with his own laws.

Taking the play sequentially, however, these scenes do not mark a departure from the expected character of the bird *polis*, but rather underscore the message to human beings delivered in the epirrhemes. The bird *polis*, as far as can be gathered at this stage, will be anomian; and Peisetaerus shows here that he means business in this regard. Likewise, the second parabasis takes up the other theme of the first parabasis, namely human life under bird gods. Here too, the chorus largely reinforces the message of the first parabasis. It sings of the good things they can provide for man (1058–71; 1102–112); of the birds' blessed, natural self-sufficiency (1088–101) and their musical kinship with the nymphs of the mountains and the Charites (1108–101). But, unlike the first parabasis, it also tells of the punishments it can bring upon man (1072–87; 1114–118). Having witnessed Peisetaerus's beating off of intruders that threaten the bird *polis*, the chorus too reveals that it has its own form of *bia* to back up its divinity.[46] Nevertheless, the second parabasis does not contradict the vision of bird-divinity and bird-polity as described earlier in the play.

The ode begins, like the beginning of the anapests of the first parabasis, with the chorus asserting its divinity and its superior position over men (1058–61):

ἤδη 'μοὶ τῷ παντόπτᾳ
καὶ παντάρχᾳ θνητοὶ πάντες
θύσουσ' εὐκταίαις εὐχαῖς.
πᾶσαν μὲν γὰρ γᾶν ὀπτεύω . . .

Now to me, the all-seeing and all-ruling,
will all mortals sacrifice with holy prayers.
For I watch over the whole earth . . .

Unlike the first parabasis, the chorus emphasizes not simply its generic superiority as immortals, but in particular their Zeus-like position that seeks worship and that sees and rules all. The chorus thus begins by hinting that bird gods, like Zeus, will watch over all of the actions of men; and this means (or meant), in the case of Zeus, of the just and unjust actions of men. As Hesiod tells Perses (*WD* 267–69): "the eye of Zeus, seeing all things and knowing all things, even now looks upon these things, if he wishes, and he is not unaware of what sort of justice a city holds within."[47] The birds' vigilance of the earth turns out, however, not to be aimed at keeping guard over mortals' obedience to justice, laws and oaths, but at protecting the crops, fruits and gardens on earth from all the races of biting insects (1062–71); that is, they will protect those things that provide easy sustenance and pleasure for both birds and human beings. As in the first parabasis, conventional justice among human beings will not be a prerogative of the birds nor play a role in a bird-ruled universe. Bird gods will provide omens equally for those who wish to sow crops or to set sail, as they will for a thief (Orestes) to mug people in warmer clothing (709–712). Likewise birds (now in the persona of the actual bird chorus of Aristophanes's play) promise to the judges in return for victory, not only money (1105–108), a majestic home (1109–1110) and extra food (1113–114), but also, as no other Aristophanean chorus, the means by which magistrates might steal from the public funds (1111–112).[48]

As in the antepirrheme (785–800) of the first parabasis, in the epirrheme (1072–87) of the second parabasis the chorus moves to the "here" (ἐνθάδε, 1076) of the theater of Dionysus. The birds recognize that in the "here" of Athens declarations are made (1072–75) at this festival to kill both those who aspire to tyranny as well as Diagoras the Melian—infamous for his sacrilege of the Eleusinian mysteries and mocker of the Greek gods, and, perhaps, a disbeliever in gods in general.[49] The irony, dramatic and otherwise, is exquisite. The birds know of these declarations but, being birds, cannot understand their civic (or eunomian) purposes—the protection of the political and religious foundations of the city. Their new founder, Peisetaerus, himself almost perfectly encapsulates, though on a cosmic level, the combined threat that the Athenians are guarding against. Nevertheless, though not interested in (or unable to understand) conventional injustice among humans, bird gods will publicly punish one particular human offence: the trapping and selling of birds (1076–87). They call for the death of Philocrates (ironically, that bird seller who sold to Peisetaerus and Euelpides those birds that guided them to Tereus (14)) and they threaten with punishment anyone who keeps caged birds in their yard. Now that the birds are gods among men, they set in place a single decree that, in the human sphere, corresponds to that solitary bird ordinance and oath among birds: that birds not help in the trapping of birds (331–35). Birds do not impose

laws restricting the conduct of human beings among human beings; but they do outlaw the use of *doloi* by human beings against birds. Human beings are still "by nature tricky in every respect."

The second parabasis thus confirms the teachings of the first parabasis and further underlines the affirmation of its doctrines as evidenced in Peisetaerus's expulsion of interlopers. The birds may be gods and may have joined in resolving to found a *polis*, but, as they have conceived it, it will be a *polis* without human convention, and they will rule according to bird nature, but now, since they have become gods, with one enforceable ordinance: self-defence. The bird *polis*, however, has not yet been successfully founded, and they do not yet possess Zeus's scepter.

NOTES

1. Cf. Zanetto (1987, ad loc. 904a-57): "La sequenza dei cinque incontri appartiene quindi al momento costruttivo del progetto comico, a differenza di quanto avviene in altre commedie, dove scenette apparentemente simili hanno invece la funzione di esemplificare e celebrare il trionfo del protagonista: d'altra parte gli *Uccelli* costituiscono un *unicum* nella produzione di Aristofane anche per la vitalità drammatica della vicenda, tesa—pure dopo la seconda parabasi—al suo compimento finale." Cf. also Zanetto's note (1987, ad loc. 801–50); Zimmermann (1987, 50–52).

2. See Malkin (1987, 27, 68, 140); Graham (1964); and on the parody of such foundations here in *Birds* see Habash (1994, 83–111). The locus classicus for the role of *oikistes* is Homer *Od.* 6.8–10: Nausithoos "settled them in Scheria . . . and drove a wall around the city, and built houses and made temples of the gods and portioned out land." Compare also Plato *Laws* (739a ff.), who gives to the *oikistēs* the role also of determining the form of government and laws.

3. Bowie (1993, 152–65). Also Rothwell (2007, 158).

4. Euelpides, in thinking of a "great name" for a city and with his parochially Hellenic outlook (cf.148), can only come up with the other great *polis* he knows besides Athens (cf. 37, 123), Sparta. Peisetaerus quickly dismisses this with mockery. I follow Dunbar's line allocation here.

5. Cf. Olson (2002, ad *Acharnians* 634–35) on the term χαυνοπολίτας: "The man who is χαυνός fails to see things as they are and prefers fine words and self-serving illusions (esp. Sol. Frr 11.6–8, 34.1–4; Arist. *EN* 1123b8–9."

6. Note that at *Clouds* 852–4 Pheidippides is mocking his father for the nonsense he has learned from Socrates and states that ταῦτ' ἔμαθες τὰ δεξιὰ /εἴσω παρελθὼν ἄρτι παρὰ τοὺς γηγενεῖς; ("Are these the sophisticated things you've learned going in there just now from these "giants"? As Dover notes (1968, 203): "It's point here is probably that the Giants were enemies of the Olympian gods, and so are Socrates 'the Melian' and his students."

7. Cf. Eupolis's *Kolakes* (K-A157) where it is said of Protagoras that he ἀλαζονεύεται μὲν, ἁλιτήριος, περὶ τῶν μετεώρων, τὰ δὲ χαμᾶθεν ἐσθίει.

8. Cf. Parker (1997, 210–11) who recognizes that within the traditional religious framework in Athens "certain forms of doubt, criticism, and revision were, in fact, traditional;" but concludes, "from the contemporary evidence, beginning with *Clouds* . . . it emerges that one position above all was feared: that of the 'atheist' scientist, who substitutes chance and necessity for the gods as an explanation of celestial phenomena-and so deprives Zeus of his thunderbolt." See 209 n.42 for further contemporary examples.

9. The significance of this bird lies not only in its father beating nature, but also in its non-hellenic origin. Unlike Euelpides who, as we have seen, is entirely parochial, Peisetaerus is not afraid to choose a bird barbarian in origin. This too is in keeping with the bird teaching of the parabasis.

10. It would have been very easy for Aristophanes to re-introduce Euelpides to the stage. Peisetaerus orders him to help with the building of the wall, and then to report back to him (837–44). Later a messenger comes to Peisetaerus to tell him of the progress there (1122–63). If Aristophanes had so chosen, Euelpides could have taken this role as Peisetaerus had asked.

11. Arrowsmith (1973, 138) points out that by likening Euelpides to a goose (805), χήν, (cp. κέκηνα from χάσκω, to gape) in this scene, Peisetaerus "describes Euelpides as the consummate chaotic 'sucker'—a silly, cackling goose."

12. Cf. Habash (1994, 104) who compares this list with that of Plato's Athenian stranger at *Laws* 745b-c.

13. Zanetto (1987, ad loc. 882–88): "si possono notare sequenze di nomi uniti da consonanza o da identita d'accento, che suggeriscono la monotonia di una serie senza fine." For "the deliberate sound-pattern" of this list see also Dunbar (1995 ad loc. 882–88).

14. On the constant use of συν- and ὁμο- prefixes used by the bird chorus see Chapter 3.

15. Why Peisetaerus does this we will discuss in the following chapter, especially in comparison with a different poet that Peisetaerus does not admit to his city, that is, a "new poet."

16. On this interloper in *Birds* see Martin (2011, 87), who concludes that his depiction is not simply confined to a comic pastiche of clichés and tropes but "captures the actual discourse of praise-poets in the fifth century BCE."

17. Simonides' comic caricature as avaricious (cf. *Peace* 697–9, where Sophocles is said to be becoming like Simonides because he will do anything "for the sake of profit (*kerdos*)) is clearly the joke here. See Martin (2011, 101).

18. cf. Compton-Engle (2015, 140) who also notes a comparison between the beggar poet and Odysseus's scheme to receive a cloak from Eumaeus in the *Odyssey*. Cf. Hipponax frs. 32 and 34. Thus Aristophanes is able to have some fun with the concept of the poet as the "attendant of the Muses" as found in Homer, Hesiod and elsewhere. Later Theocritus *Idyll* 16 will combine this iambic image with that of Simonides' encomiastic poetry, as he seeks to gain patronage from a different Hieron.

19. Martin (2011) argues that it is the very canned nature of the praise poet's repertoire that is the joke here—i.e. they are able to compose praise-poems before cities are even founded.

20. Hubbard (1997, 34).

21. It is not until the exodus that the birds call Peisetaerus a *tyrannos* (1708). The poet freely interpolates into the Pindaric poem the lines δὸς ἐμὶν ὅ τι περ τεᾷ κεφαλᾷ θέ- /λεις πρόφρων δόμεν, thus identifying Peisetaerus not only with Hieron, but also Zeus and his nod (cf. Homer *Il.* 1.524, 8.175 etc.) The Muse of the poet does indeed understand Peisetaerus's ambition quickly.

22. As Diodorus Siculus tells us, Hieron removed the inhabitants of the original town, Catana, settled his own settlers from the Peloponnese and Syracuse, and simply changed its name to Aetna (since it lies on the slope of Mt. Aetna). He goes on to say that he did this not only to have more allies close to Syracuse, but also "that he might gain heroic honors from a town of ten thousand people" (Diod. Sic. 11.49.1–2); and this, in fact, did occur—in 467 Hieron died and "won the honors of a hero" from the people of Catana precisely because he was founder (Diod. Sic. 11.66.4). As Morgan (2015, 57–67) notes, Diodorus appears to be hostile to Hiero, especially in comparison with his brother, Gelon. But Morgan goes on to elucidate the ways in which the foundation of Aetna figured in Hieron's attempts to strengthen his tyranny by manipulating ethnic politics (i.e., Dorian) among other things. The Athenians at this time would have been acutely aware of this *polis*, situated north of Syracuse. Catana (Aetna) is the place in which Alcibiades had persuaded the citizens to harbor the Athenians and where the Athenians had just wintered in Sicily. It is also the place in which the Salaminia attempted to pick up Alcibiades.

23. Although the poets suggest that Hieron's regime was one of open and free speech, other sources tell us of his creation of a secret service that reported anything untoward said against the tyrant (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1313b11–16; Plut. *Mor.* 522f-523a), of his avaricious and violent nature, and of unpopularity generally (Diod. Sic. 11.67.4) Cf. also Plato, *Protagoras* 346B: "I think that often Simonides thought that he himself was praising or singing encomia of tyrants or someone else of such a kind not willingly but under compulsion." Athanassaki (2003, 120) has argued that the extraordinary violence of the description of the volcanic eruption in Pindar *P.*1 is a metaphor for the cruelty of Hieron's enforced settlement of Catana: "Colonial violence and disruption are simultaneously reflected and sanctioned in the myth of Typhos."

24. Cf. see especially Morgan (2015, 300–58), Gantz (1974, 143–51); Koehnken (1970, 1–13).

25. Morgan (2015, 16) argues that Pindar's poetry and its depiction of Hieron as a representative of a "good" king in the mold of Homer's and Hesiod's was designed not only to establish his authority among his own citizens, but also "to provide for it conceptual underpinnings that would integrate it into broader Greek conceptions of authority and identity" throughout the Hellenic world." Martin (2011, 86): "Cloud-cuckooland, like it or not, has become the matter for song. The implicit bargain is that its *kleos* will spread, through the medium of *mousike*. Just as Pindar's allusion to the blessings of Arkesilas [in *Pyth* 4.275–80] foregrounds the continuing role of his own art in the eventual success of ruler and city, the anonymous poet's invocation of the Muse in Aristophanes' play hints at the potential of reperformance."

26. Bowden (2003). Cf. also Dillery (2005). Flower (2007, 62–63) argues for a lower status for *chresmologoi* vis-à-vis *manteis*.

27. Cf. Bowden (2003, 268–70). Diopeithes is associated not only with a decree regarding impiety (Plut. *Per.* 32.1), but also the Methone decree (*IG* i3, 57); and the scholiasts to Aristophanes call him a *rhetor* and associate of Nicias. Likewise Lampon was a friend of Pericles (Plut. *Per.* 6.2–3), one of the two founders of Thurii (Diod.Sic. 12.10.3–4), and is mentioned by Thucydides (5.9, 5.24) as having signed the Peace of Nicias and being involved in the treaty with Sparta. Lampon, as well as Hierocles, attained the right to eat in the Prytaneium (cf. Olson 1998, 277).

28. Cf. the use made of oracles in *Knights* by the Paphlagonian and the sausage seller.

29. *IG* i3 40. Usually dated to 446/5, but perhaps to be dated to 423, see Mattingly (1996, 53–67).

30. Cf. Olson (1998 ad loc. 1045–47).

31. Cf. Meiggs (1972, 304–5) who says of the use of oracles and religion in the empire as shown by the Chalcis Decree: "though Thucydides dismissed oracles as idle superstition, a decree passed by the Assembly after the crushing of the Euboean revolt in 446–445 demanded 'that the sacrifices prescribed by the oracles should be carried out as soon as possible', and the generals were to see that there was no delay. It was natural therefore that Athens should invoke religion to support her claims to rule."

32. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1021–34).

33. We know from the Erythrae Decree (*IG* i3 14) that an *episkopos* was sent to Erythrae in order to assist in the supervision of the restoration of a democratic *boule*. His position is thus a temporary one. Cf. Meiggs (1972, 212–3): "We should regard the *episkopos,* as his name implies, as a visiting commissioner sent to investigate, report, and, when necessary, take action;" and 585, "An *episkopos* is an inspector sent out by Athens, who is concerned primarily with constitutional and political matters."

34. Cf. Meiggs (1972, 586–87): "The decree-seller offers three sample decrees. Of these the second is a clear parody of the Coinage Decree . . . It is possible that the other two also reflect decrees that had actually been passed by the Assembly. The first recalls the special procedure and penalties laid down for anyone who killed an Athenian in any city of the empire, a protection that was also extended to favoured *proxenoi*."

35. Cf. *Clouds* (607–26) for the chorus' negative views on Meton's reform of the calendar.

36. Cf. Phrynichus' *Monotropos* fr.22 (which was produced during the same festival as *Birds*) where he is described as ὁ τὰς κρήνας ἄγων.

37. Cf. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 992–1020). Meton allegedly burned down his own apartments and came before the people pleading that, in light of the calamity, he and his son be exempted. (Plut. *Nic.* 13.7–8, *Alc. 17.5–6*, Aelian *VH* 13.12). Dunbar concludes: "Meton's wearing of *kothornoi* in this scene may be reflecting taunts of unmanly evasion of the expedition to Sicily." But this image of the dandy-philosopher was conventional. Aristotle tells us that Hippodamus went around with long hair, expensive adornments and warm clothes in the summer as well as the winter (*Politics*, 1267b26–29).

38. In *Theatetus* (173c-174a) Socrates tells Theodorus that the mind of the philosopher is borne in all directions, "to quote Pindar 'both below the earth,' and measuring (γεωμετρεῖν) plane surfaces, and 'above the sky,' studying the stars

(ἀστρονομεῖν), and investigating everywhere every nature of the whole of each of the things that are." Aristophanes's comic city in the sky provides the philosopher the opportunity to do both at the same time. As an example of such a man Socrates mentions Thales who fell down a pit while looking at the stars; to whom Peisetaerus will liken Meton.

39. Aristotle *Politics* 1267b22–68a15, Hubbard (1997, 26), McCredie (1971).

40. Cf. also Diogenes (D-K, A12) who conceived of the stars as outlets or gaps in the sky above (διαπνόαι τοῦ κόσμου).

41. Cf. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1005): "this [reference] shows that by 414 B.C. the insoluble geometrical problem of *squaring the circle* . . . was already so familiar that a reference to it in a comic context would raise a laugh."

42. On this use of Thales in Old Comedy see Dover (1968, xxxvi).

43. On the meaning of *alazon* in Aristophanes cf. McDowell (1990, 289) who concludes "that an *alazon* in Old Comedy is a man who holds an official position or professes expertise which, he claims, makes him superior to other men; he exploits it, normally in speech, to obtain profit, power, or reputation; but what he says is actually false or useless." On sophists as *alazones* in comedy cf. *Clouds* (102) where Pheidippides identifies the inhabitants of the *phronisterion* as *alazones*; and in Eupolis's *Kolakes* (K-A 157) it is said of Protagoras that he ἀλαζονεύεται μὲν, ἁλιτήριος, περὶ τῶν μετεώρων τὰ δὲ χαμᾶθεν ἐσθίει. That is, sophists presume to have sure knowledge of a subject about which they can only speculate; but they use this speculation for their own advantage. This appears also to be Socrates's critique of sophists in *Protagoras* (311b-314c). Socrates likens a sophist to a merchant who hawks his wares (his *mathemata*), praising them all equally, but ignorant of whether they are good or bad for the soul (313d1-e1) and thus ignorant of what they essentially are.

44. Cf. Zimmermann (1993, esp. 267–75) who recognizes that Meton represents a type, the "intellectual," not simply a "town planner" 268: "indem Peisetairos den Gelehrten ohne Respekt abblitzen lässt und ihn vom hohen Sockel seiner Kothurne herabholt, wird vorgeführt, wie der athenische Mutterwitz, der common sense des Athenes Bürgers sich durchsetzt und den Anspruch der Wissenschaft und die Einbildung ihrer Vertreter als hohle Phrasendrescherei und Aufgeblasenheit, als *alazoneia*, entlarvt."

45. Amati (2010) argues that Meton's urban design being open and democratic clashes with Peisetaerus's closed, tyrannical regime.

46. Cf. Hubbard (1991, 175): "the ode [of the second parabasis] evokes the first benefit of the Birds to mankind that Peisthetairus listed in vv. 588–91, ridding the fields of destructive insects and pests. In effect this is what Peisthetairus has just finished doing in the iterated type scenes leading up to the second parabasis; one by one he has removed from the stage various parasites who endanger the fertility and freedom of his new polity. The epirrheme proceeds to illustrate this process of pest removal with specific examples."

47. Zeus as the all-seeing overseer of the just and unjust actions of men is ubiquitous in Greek (and mutatis mutandis in Indo-european) literature; for references cf. West (1978, ad loc. 267).

48. On the "crowbar" supplied to the magistrate to pilfer funds, Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1111) remarks, "comedy regularly assumes (cf. *Eq.* 258, *V*, 554, *Th.* 810–15) that

magistrates will wish to embezzle from public funds." That may be so, but in each of the cited examples such actions are actually being condemned by the chorus (and Philocleon). Nowhere in the extant plays does the chorus approve of criminal actions directed against the common good.

49. For Diagoras see Whitmarsh (2016, 182–86). He argues that Diagoras not only profaned the mysteries and was exiled around 416 (as most scholars believe), but was an atheist, in the modern sense. The title of his work, ἀποπυργίζοντες λόγοι ("arguments for knocking [the gods] from their towers"), though others deny it is by Diagoras, seems most apropos for the action of *Birds*. Aristophanes twice alludes to Diagoras of Melos' "atheism" elsewhere: at *Clouds* 830, Socrates is called "Socrates the Melian" in the context of Zeus's expulsion by Whirl (*Dinos*) as king of the gods; and in *Birds* itself, Peisetaerus refers to his plan to starve out the gods, as a "Melian famine" (186), that is, it not only suggests the siege that the Athenians had ruthlessly brought against the island of Melos, but it also alludes to what will actually happen in the course of the play—the Olympian gods will lose their power through human non-belief in them.

Chapter 6

Nephelokokkygia II

After the City is Founded

The second parabasis along with Peisetaerus's treatment of the various interlopers has re-affirmed the radically anomian character of Nepholokokkugia as outlined by the chorus in the first parabasis. In the first seven lines delivered directly after the second parabasis, three pieces of information are given that, on the other hand, point to the crucial turning point in the play (1118–24): the founding rites of the city have proved successful, the wall has been built, and birds now, for the first time, have and name an *archon*, Peisetaerus.

PE. τὰ μὲν ἱέρ' ἡμῖν ἐστιν, ὦρνιθες, καλά.
ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους πάρεστιν ἄγγελος
οὐδείς, ὅτου πευσόμεθα τἀκεῖ πράγματα.
ἀλλ' οὑτοσὶ τρέχει τις Ἀλφειὸν πνέων.
ΑΓ ποῦ ποῦ 'στι, ποῦ ποῦ ποῦ 'στι, ποῦ ποῦ ποῦ 'στι,
ποῦ, ποῦ Πεισέταιρός ἐστιν ἄρχων;
PE. οὑτοσί.
ΑΓ ἐξῳκοδόμηταί σοι τὸ τεῖχος.
PE. εὖ λέγεις.

PE. Our sacrifices are successful, birds. How surprising that no messenger is here from the wall of whom we might ask about the things there. But lo, here is someone running, gasping like at the Olympics.
ME. Where where is, where where where is, where where where is, where where is Peisetaerus, the ruler?
PE. Here I am.
ME. Your wall has been built.
PE. That's good news.

The bird *polis* has finally been established in deed. The birds now have their own realm which is physically demarcated from the other realms, and as a corollary Peisetaerus is now for the first time called *archon*. As we will soon see, the wall is all but useless as a defensive structure; its function in the play, however, is to define further Nephelokokkygia as a traditional polis.[1] Bird society, a freely sharing commune of *philoi* whose pecking order is based upon a ranking of natural strength and ability, devoid of questions of ambition and guilt, now has boundaries and as its ruler an old but clever, bizarrely metamorphosed Athenian. The joint authority previously emphasized between birds and Peisetaerus (627–37, 851–58) is not again mentioned in the play. The birds simply follow their *archon's* commands. Likewise, the reciprocity and musical responsion between birds and Olympian gods has disappeared. The actual foundation of the city has changed everything.

But before the effectiveness of the bird *polis* is tested, we are given an account of the dimensions and construction of the wall, an action contemporaneous with Peisetaerus's sacrifices to the new gods. The entire scene is a parody of Herodotean descriptions of foreign *thaumata* and, in particular, the walls of Babylon.[2] Like Herodotus (e.g. 2.127.1) the messenger has himself measured the height of the wall (1130). It is six hundred feet high (1131), double the height of the Babylonian wall (1.178), and its breadth can accommodate the huge wagons of two notorious boasters (1125–29), where the Babylonian wall only had room for a four horse chariot (1.179.3). The means and rapidity of its construction bring amazement to both the messenger and Peisetaerus (1166–67).

It was the birds themselves that built the wall and, humorously, with their very own hands (αὐτόχειρες). The description here reminds us of the earlier "hoplite" attack by the birds on the two Athenians where the birds, unlike Peisetaerus and Euelpides, do not need any forged, artificial, "Promethean," equipment. The birds' wings and beaks, as well as their *thumos* and *orgē*, were their only weapons. Here natural capacities (whether real, putative or created out of puns) and simple gathering of material provide all resources.[3] Cranes swallowed the foundation stones from Libya, and corncrakes used their beaks, like masons' hammers, to dress them; storks, creatures of muddy environs, brought the bricks (ἐπλινθοφόρουν)[4] and the river birds brought the water. The geese used their large feet, "like shovels," to cast mud into troughs carried by herons, also of muddy environs.[5] Ducks, whose distinctive feather pattern gives them the look of men with their tunics girded up for work, laid the bricks, while swallows used their tails as trowels and stored the mud in their mouths. The woodwork for the gates and parapets was made by pelicans who used their beaks as axes (ἀπεπελέκησαν).[6] There was no need for laborers, human masons or carpenters (1133–34) and no need to hire any professionals at a fee (1152)—the birds still have a life without wallets.

All the material arises spontaneously and is simply picked up by the birds in the same way as they collect food or materials for their nest. Their building of the wall does not differ from the way birds have always acted. They work in their familiar, collective unison, and even in their building of the wall they do not need the fire of Prometheus.[7] The birds, though ostensibly now "political animals" and ruled by an *archon*, have not essentially changed in their nature. They have obeyed the commands given by Peisetaerus to Euelpides (cf. 841–42 and 1159–60; but note that Euelpides's actual assistance is nowhere mentioned) in order to achieve the goal of returning to the natural order of things. But unbeknownst to the birds, they have become like Tereus's slave bird, answering to the commands of Peisetaerus as Euelpides ultimately refused to do.

The first test brought to the now founded and fortified bird city marks also the first interaction between Peisetaerus and the Olympian gods and thus our first view of how Peisetaerus, when confronted directly by the Olympians, will deal with this final component in the cosmos. A second bird messenger enters, revealing that one of the gods has flown into the *aer*, now the defined space of the birds. The birds now formally declare that the "sacred war" between birds and gods has begun (1189–95). Aristophanes deliberately keeps the identity of the divine intruder anonymous, though we do know it is a god with wings (1176). Throughout the preliminaries to the god's arrival the masculine gender is used of the intruder (1174, 1175, 1178, 1182, 1195, 1197). Thus the audience might be led to believe that it was about to witness one of those gods, perhaps the winged Hermes, that Peisetaerus had already described, coming down from Olympus "with a hard on" to rape a mortal woman (556–560). The god turns out to be, however, a different winged god, Iris the rainbow and messenger of Zeus, a much weaker god who, as Peisetaerus had earlier indicated, was in literature likened to a "trembling dove" (575). It is possible, furthermore, that "Iris threatened by sexual assault . . . was a familiar theatrical spectacle," particularly in satyr plays.[8] Peisetaerus thus gets the ideal god—the most sexually vulnerable and most timid—to take his threat up to heaven.

With the appearance of Iris it becomes evident that the bird wall is not as effective[9] as it may first have appeared, that no bird actually went to the Olympians and, most importantly, that the birds have been incompetent guardians of the wall (1208–15). This is the first experience birds have had in defending their political space. The birds had previously conceived political life in Nepholokokkygia as one in which it would not be a shameful thing to "betray the gates" to those who might threaten the city (766–68). The birds now must guard the gates (1158, 1208–10) and come to understand what it means to have property, to have something that is legally their own. In heated conversation with Iris, Peisetaerus remarks:

PE. κἄπειτα δῆθ' οὕτω σιωπῇ διαπέτει
διὰ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἀλλοτρίας καὶ τοῦ χάους;
IR. ποίᾳ γὰρ ἄλλῃ χρὴ πέτεσθαι τοὺς θεούς;
PE. οὐκ οἶδα μὰ Δί' ἔγωγε· τῇδε μὲν γὰρ οὔ.
ἀδικεῖς δὲ καὶ νῦν. ἆρά γ' οἶσθα τοῦθ' ὅτι
δικαιότατ' ἂν ληφθεῖσα πασῶν 'Ιρίδων
ἀπέθανες, εἰ τῆς ἀξίας ἐτύγχανες;

PE: Well, do you then in this silent way fly through this city that *belongs to someone* else, through the void?
IR: But by what other way ought we gods to fly?
PE: I don't know, by Zeus; but by this way surely not. Even now you are committing an injustice. Do you know that, if you were to get what you deserved, you, above all Irises, would most justly be captured and killed?

The gaping *chaos* and *polos* of the birds is no longer that through which everything freely passes (181–2). By instituting property, Peisetaerus sets in place a new kind of justice in bird world, one marked by the transgression of boundaries in a previously unbounded sphere. It thus marks the first stage in the introduction of legal or prescribed *nomos* and *dike* to the bird realm. To be sure, this initial law does not affect justice within the bird community. It is foreign policy and directed outwards. But it points to what will later become very apparent: as political creatures the birds themselves will soon be subject to laws and proper legal behavior; they will have, to coin Antiphon's phrase, "chains on nature" whose transgression will be punishable even by death (1583–85).

But let us return to this scene as a whole. As we earlier saw, Peisetaerus won the birds over to his side by arguing that the birds have an earlier, and therefore, in bird terms a more natural, right to kingship. They therefore agreed to found a *polis* as a purely offensive and strategic means to this end. By barring the transit of the savor of sacrifices from human beings up to the gods and the transit of erotically inflamed gods down to human beings, they will have the right bargaining tools to regain the scepter. In this scene we see that both of these objectives have been achieved (1264–67). Iris, herself having been threatened with sexual assault, is shooed away (1258) and, as she tells us, the gods are starting to get hungry (1231–33). But she also raises another issue, one which previously only Euelpides had foreseen (576): the gods have their own weapons which may threaten to destroy the entire race of birds (1238–42).

Thus, as becomes evident throughout this scene, Peisetaerus cannot at this stage win over the gods by arguing, as he did with the birds, that the birds have a more just claim to cosmic sovereignty because of seniority. Rather, it becomes a question of usurpation by force and the right of the stronger. As Peisetaerus tells Iris (1225–29):

δεινότατα γάρ τοι πεισόμεσθ,' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ,
εἰ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἄρχομεν, ὑμεῖς δ' οἱ θεοὶ
ἀκολαστανεῖτε, κοὐδέπω γνώσεσθ' ὅτι
ἀκροατέον ὑμῖν ἐν μέρει τῶν κρειττόνων.

We will suffer the most terrible things, it seems to me, if, while we rule over the rest, you gods will keep on acting with your usual licentiousness and not realize that you, in turn, must obey the stronger.

This passage offers a change in the understanding of the direction of the play. Bird cosmic sovereignty is no longer presented as a return to a past and rightful ordering of the cosmos, but as the next stage (ἐν μέρει) in a succession determined by strength alone. Even as Kronos usurped Ouranos' place, and Zeus Kronos,' now Peisetaerus shall take Zeus's place.[10] As the rulers of the cosmos the gods were able to act without any restraints (ἀκολαστανεῖτε), with complete freedom.[11] But it is the new gods (or, at least, Peisetaerus) who will now be able to "act without restraint" in all three realms precisely because they will rule all.

Iris is, however, unaware of this new hierarchy in the universe until Peisetaerus bluntly tells her: "birds are gods to humans now and to them must they sacrifice and not, by Zeus, to Zeus" (1236–7). To this Iris replies in high paratragic language:

ὦ μῶρε, μῶρε, μὴ θεῶν κίνει φρένας
δεινάς, ὅπως μή σου γένος πανώλεθρον
Διὸς μακέλλῃ πᾶν ἀναστρέψῃ Δίκη.

Oh fool, fool, don't rouse the terrible passions of the gods lest Justice with the mattock of Zeus destroys your whole race utterly.

Peisetaerus's action is against that justice which wields Zeus's weapons and strength. With indignation he tells Iris to stop trying to scare him with bogeymen (μορμολύττεσθαι) as though he were some Asian slave. Matching Iris in both tragic diction and his threats, Peisetaerus boasts of having fire-carrying eagles (Zeus's own birds) and porphyrion birds that will attack Zeus more effectively than the giants did together with their leader, Porphyrion (1243–52).[12] Justice, as already implied in Iris' description, is only effective when it has power (the mattock) behind it. Because, as he claims, he is the stronger, Peisetaerus can set down his own justice against that of Zeus. He has established and become ruler of a city between heaven and earth through which it has become an unjust and punishable act for the gods to pass (1221–23). Or to put it another way, Peisetaerus has in this way dissolved the previous order (or *dike*) of the cosmos. The punishment effected by justice is, as every clever Greek knows (as opposed to the Phrygian or Lydian), merely a "bogey-man"

used by the stronger to enforce his rule. This is not anomian bird justice, but rather the megalanomian justice of the weaker speech in *Clouds* (902–6; 1421–9), of Plato's Callicles and Thrasymachus, and the Athenian ambassadors to Melos as represented by Thucydides.[13] The Melians argue that, though the Athenians may be the stronger, they trust that the gods will favor them because they are "pious men set against unjust men" (5.104). The Athenians, however, conceive of a human justice that mirrors that among the gods, that is, the Melians ought not to trust in a distinction between "just" and "unjust" in the conventional sense, but in the stronger and the weaker. As they state (5.105.1):

> οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔξω τῆς ἀνθρωπείας τῶν μὲν ἐς τὸ θεῖον νομίσεως, τῶν δ' ἐς σφᾶς αὐτοὺς βουλήσεως δικαιοῦμεν ἢ πράσσομεν. ἡγούμεθα γὰρ τό τε θεῖον δόξῃ τὸ ἀνθρώπειόν τε σαφῶς διὰ παντὸς ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίας, οὗ ἂν κρατῇ, ἄρχειν.
>
> We do not claim as just nor do anything beyond the human belief about the actions of the gods nor our own designs among ourselves. For we think that both the divine (by reputation) and the human (as is clear) by a necessity of nature always rules wherever it may have the power to do so.

Thus the just among both men and gods is not an absolute and immutable conception of right in the world which brings down nemesis on its transgressors, but merely that right which is most conducive to the ambitions and self-aggrandizement of whoever is in power. Zeus's power and the ordering that supports that power is merely conventional and may, in turn, be overturned.[14]

The simplest statement of the relativistic nature of justice comes in *Clouds*, where the Weaker Logos, not pulling any punches, denies the existence of the goddess justice altogether (902). For, "if Dike resides with the gods, how is it that Zeus has not been destroyed for chaining up his own father?" (904–6) In short Peisetaerus will use against Zeus that same justice that Zeus had used against his father Cronos (who himself was the first "father-beater," namely of Ouranos).[15] Before Peisetaerus can live freely in a universe ordered according to his will, he must first do away with that older order and *dike*. If we were to judge only from the Iris scene, it appears that this will be achieved merely by force, by that concept of justice that recognizes only the "natural necessity" of might's desires.

The destabilization and overturning of the order of the cosmos is underlined also by dramaturgical aspects of the scene. To begin with, Aristophanes reverses the traditional, tragic role of the *deus ex machina*, which serves to underline the incommensurability between the divine and human realm. Iris, however, arriving on the stage aloft from the *mechane* is soon shown to be powerless before the threats of Peisetaerus. Where previously the gods came

down to earth to rape mortal women, Peisetaerus, both by double entendres as well as by explicit threats of rape, shows that the tables have now turned on the gods. It is he who will now have this power over the gods. The *deus ex machina*, regularly brought onto the tragic stage to re-impose the divine order and the divine will, here on the comic stage ironically serves rather to underline the upsetting of the cosmos, the change in the ordering or *dike* of the Olympian-ruled universe.

In the same vein, Aristophanes here introduces in its most explicit form an analogy between Peisetaerus's undertaking and the Gigantomachy. This had been alluded to in passing earlier in the play (553, 823–5), but at that stage there was no indication that the birds would actually threaten to attack Olympus itself. Indeed, the analogy between Cloudcuckooland and the plain of Phlegra pointed not to violent battles but, as befits the comic stage, to a contest in boasting (823–5). As has often been pointed out, the Gigantomachy was a popular motif in archaic and classical art and literature that represented the final stage in the victory of civilization over barbarism, of law and order over lawlessness and violence.[16] Here, however, Peisetaerus implies that Zeus's *dike* is no more authoritatively civilizing or just than the order that he himself wishes to set up. He hints, however misleadingly, that, as in *Prometheus Bound*, although *mētis* (cunning intelligence) is necessary for victory, it will ultimately be the henchmen, *Bia* and *Kratos,* that establish and enforce power and authority.

Thus, by the end of the Iris scene, the play looks to be heading, in quasi-tragic or epic fashion, toward a final showdown of force along the lines of a Gigantomachy or Titanomachy. In order to confront the gods Peisetaerus has to make use of that most natural right that Zeus had initially drawn upon to gain sovereignty, the right of the stronger, of the son against the father. It is this use of force that gives Peisetaerus the power to establish what is now just and unjust. The correct (ὀρθός), Peisetairean bird theogony that rivaled Hesiod's in the parabasis will not be enough to convince the gods as it did men. As it turns out, however, no battle will be necessary—this is, after all, a comedy. Armed both with the knowledge of Prometheus and his own rhetorical skill, Peisetaerus will restore order to the cosmos and become himself the new Zeus. As in the Gigantomachy, the crucial element in the victory will lie in the hands of Heracles.[17] Peisetaerus, unlike the giants, however, will not use force against this son of Zeus, but persuasion. It will turn out to be as Peisetaerus had suggested: a "battle in alazoneia."

We have learned from Iris that the savor from sacrifices has not been reaching heaven. But we have also learned that human beings are essential in Peisetaerus's plan not simply because the Olympians need the sacrifices for survival, but because it is human beings that define gods as such. Gods are gods because they are gods to human beings (1235–7). Thus it becomes

essential that the audience learns, first, how humans have reacted to the new divinities and the way of life they offer and, secondly, how Peisetaerus will, in turn, define human beings in the new order of things. Will he live up to the birds' offer (726–29) to return to the pre-Mecone state of things in which men and gods co-existed?

A herald comes on stage returning from mortals (and Athenians in particular), carrying a golden crown, awarded by mortals, for Peisetaerus's wisdom (1274–75).[18] In particular this honor is awarded for his founding a *polis* in the sky (1277, 1280). In this scene the herald need not mention whether or not human beings have accepted the birds as gods, whether they have stopped sacrificing to the Olympians. This was already implied by Iris (1230–33) and will be said explicitly by Prometheus (1515–20). Here Aristophanes points less to whether the divine aspects of bird hegemony (that is, the teaching of the anapests of the parabasis) have been persuasive among men, but rather focuses on whether the social and moral teaching of the birds (that is, the epirrhemes) has won men over. He thus sets the stage for the subsequent interloper scenes.

The bird city, as the herald tells us, has become "most renowned" and Peisetaerus now has won much honor from human beings (1277–78). Human beings have not only changed to whom they must sacrifice, but have now a very different interrelationship with the divine. The divine is now a recognizable *polis* which human beings can actually imitate (1285) and to which they can aspire (1305–7). In the past to imitate or to aspire to the way of life of the gods would be hybris and injustice (1236–42, 1259).[19] The human condition in the age under Zeus was one of labor and scarcity in sharp contradistinction to the pleasant life of the gods, and under these conditions the best way of life was held "by all men" (1281–83) to be that which the Spartans lived—one of an apparent asceticism and *sōphrosynē* (self-restraint).[20] Thus, before Peisetaerus had founded this city Athenians, at least superficially, were lovers of and mad about Sparta. In imitation of Socrates they appeared not to concern themselves with the pleasures of the body—they let their hair grow long, went hungry and didn't bathe. Now, as the bird herald tells us, they have done a complete about face and are mad about a completely different city, and "they do all things out of pleasure even as birds do and in imitation of them" (1283–85). In particular, as the bird herald sees it, they now no longer go hungry like Socrates, but "from early in the morning they fly, just like us, to pasture (*nomos*); and then come to land at the papyrus stalls and then feed there on the decrees" (1286–89). The *sophia* of Peisetaerus (1271, 1272, 1274) appears to have achieved that promise of the pnigos of the parabasis—a movement from iron age want to golden age hedonism. At the very least Socratic asceticism has been shown to be unenviable and unnecessary.

Nevertheless, though human beings may have become bird-mad, overtly hedonistic and have begun singing many songs about birds, they have not essentially changed. What the herald took to be happy feeding was in fact Athenians happily going about the habitual litigiousness that Euelpides had already described. Human beings are the same, even though the new bird doctrine has been welcomed and widely accepted. Human beings are faddish. The newest and most attractive theories can quickly undermine the old and traditional; but they have little real effect on man's actual actions. Their change is as superficial as changing their own names to those of birds (1290–98). Through the persuasion of the parabasis, men's "madness" or *mania* can be "turned about face" (cf. 1281 and 1284). Their passion is directed away from that ideal state suggested in the Spartan way of life to its exact opposite, a freely expressed hedonism. But constant throughout is their human desire for more, their *pleonexia,* which the bird herald can only misinterpret as harmless and care free feeding.

Whereas Tereus had described Peisetaerus and Euelpides as having a desire (*eros*) for the bird way of life (412–14) and as lovers (*erastai*) of their gathering (*sunousia* 324),[21] now all men feel desire (ἔρωτες) for the bird *polis* (ἐμᾶς πόλεως 1316) and are *erastai* of their country (τῆσδε τῆς χώρας 1279). Bird life has become something steady and political and thus broadly imitable and attractive. Xenophanes had mocked anthropomorphic gods by pointing out that if cattle had gods they would be look like cattle and so on with other creatures (D-K B15). Turning this on its head, Peisetaerus has made animals that aspire to divinity take on a peculiarly human aspect. Thus bird life no longer lacks honor among men (cf. 166). Rather, as the herald anticipates, "more than ten thousand will be coming from there to here wanting wings and the ways of curved-taloned birds" (1306). The bird *polis* is expected to be given the epithet πολυάνωρ, "populated by many men" (1313). And why not, asks the chorus, because everything is there that is beautiful for a man (1318–22):

τί γὰρ οὐκ ἔνι ταύτῃ
καλὸν ἀνδρὶ μετοικεῖν;
Σοφία, Πόθος, ἀμβρόσιαι Χάριτες
τό τε τῆς ἀγανόφρονος ῾Ησυχίας
εὐήμερον πρόσωπον.

For what beautiful thing is not here for a man to take up residency? Wisdom, Longing, the immortal Graces and the happy face of kindly Tranquillity.

Everything that they offered in the pnigos of the parabasis (723–736), everything that Euelpides so desired is there, but now mixed also with the wisdom (*sophia*) of their ruler, their brains, Peisetaerus. The birds imagine a *polis*

for a human *metic* (permanent resident) that is like their garden of the graces (1100–1); it is a place that they imagine will be free from cares and from *pragmata*.[22] Even as the birds had misinterpreted the litigious activity of men as birdish, they believe that humans with quiet ways like their own will be coming to join their city.[23] The folly of the belief that Nepholokokkygia will be a second garden of the Graces is ironically underlined by the juxtaposition of the chorus' idyllic song with the feverish activity of Xanthias and Manes onstage as they rush to bring on baskets of wings while Peisetaerus tries to beat them into working faster.

By the end of the herald scene we are now aware of the effect of the foundation of the aetherial *polis* on each of the three realms. First, the birds have become political animals, though they are still unaware of what this implies. They have a defined space that they must defend as their own (though still communal) property. Thus, there is now a distinction between patriot and traitor, between foreigner and citizen, ruler and ruled. Prescriptive and legal justice has raised its head. At the same time, however, they still envision their political life as an anomian and peaceful paradise. They mistake νόμος (law) for νομός (pasture). The gods, for their part, have become aware of the threat of Peisetaerus's plan to their *timai* and divinity and to the Olympian ordering of the universe. Peisetaerus, at this stage, threatens to use against the gods that form of justice that the gods use among themselves and not that which they impose on the rest of the universe. "Justice" is merely a bogey-man that the stronger uses to enforce its rule. The only real justice is the right of the stronger and younger against the older and weaker. It is, in short, that right, so feared by Zeus and so embraced by the new intellectuals, of the son to depose the father.

Among human beings, however, the new order, conceived along the lines of the parabasis' teaching, already appears to be in place. The bird *polis* has replaced Sparta as the object of their *mania* and *eros*. Asceticism has been replaced by hedonism; one idealized *polis* has been replaced by another. As is already intimated, humans, unlike birds, will not be content with simple *hēsychia*; they continue to want to get more and get the better of their enemies in the law courts. The birds' initial judgment that a human being only ever acts to gain some profit (*kerdos*) for himself or for his own, to outdo enemies and to benefit friends (417–20), was correct. This will become more than evident in the following interloper scenes.

The prior ordering and *dike* of the universe has become unstuck, but the essential natures of the inhabitants of each of the three realms have remained unchanged. Peisetaerus has achieved his *tabula rasa* out of the chaos, the once formless gaping, which itself mirrors the natural gaping of birds. This, however, will not be left blank for long. Its first scribblings have already been hinted at.

NOTES

1. See Kosak (2006, 173–80), quoting Camp (2000, 177): "a substantial circuit wall was the sine qua non of the Greek *polis*" and "the basic picture of a Classical *polis* [is] a critical mass of population and a fortified site. All the rest is window dressing."

2. Cf. How and Wells (1928, ad loc. 1.4.2) and Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1125–31) who adds to their examples by noting that *Birds* 1144 ("this too was discovered and most cleverly"): "is another Herodotean touch" cf. Hdt. 4.46.2. Thucydides also had written of the quick building of the Peiraeus walls in Themistocles' time (1.90.3); but, as Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1127) notes, it is unlikely that this is a parody of Thucydides's *History*. Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella (2007, 199) state that "the hypothesis that lines 1124ff of Aristophanes's *Birds* presuppose knowledge of this passage [i.e., Hdt. 1.179.1] by the poet or his Athenian public rests upon a very fragile basis." I find that hard to believe. See esp. Fornara (1971, 25–34).

3. A comic inversion of Democritus' theory (D-K 68B154): μαθητὰς ἐν τοῖς μεγίστοις γεγονότας ἡμᾶς· ἀράχνης ἐν ὑφαντικῇι καὶ ἀκεστικῇι, χελιδόνος ἐν οἰκοδομίαι, καὶ τῶν λιγυρῶν, κύκνου καὶ ἀηδόνος, ἐν ὠιδῇι κατὰ μίμησιν. ("we are students [of animals] in very important things. In imitation of the spider in weaving and mending, of the swallow in house-building, and of the trilling of the swan and the nightingale in singing"). Here the birds perform their jobs in imitation of humans.

4. I follow Higham's (1932, 106–7) defense of the manuscript reading. Dunbar (1995), following Bergk 1897–1990, reads ἐπλινθούργουν "made bricks;" but this does not at all fit in with the rest of the description in which all of the materials are gathered and not made.

5. These troughs appear to be the only equipment that the birds use which is not part of their body. Because such a connection exists between the rest of the birds and their "tools," however, there must be a connection between herons and troughs which we do not know; in any case these "troughs" were a generic term for any sort of carrying vessel and might refer to, for example, some hollow fallen wood or may be stolen from human beings.

6. On each of these points see the detailed comments of Dunbar (1995, ad loc).

7. In his earlier command to the birds to wall off the *aer* Peisetaerus had told the birds to "wall it around with large *baked* bricks like Babylon" (552). There is no mention of baking the bricks in this description.

8. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1196–261).

9. I do not believe that we are to infer from this scene that the wall does not actually exist, as Kosak (2006). Heracles later affirms the existence of the wall (1576), and Peisetaerus's incredulity concerning the account of the rapid construction of the wall as "truly like lies" (1167) is humorously directed toward Herodotean or other accounts of *thaumata* and does not necessarily suggest its non-existence. Such fantastically implausible deeds, like the dung-beetle ride to Olympus, are perfectly suited to the stage of Old Comedy. This is not to deny, however, that the metatheatrical statements that these deeds are impossible may serve humorously to underline their fantastic nature.

10. Cf. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1228). On the importance of the "Succession Myth" in *Birds* see Stamatapoulou (2017, 192–200).

11. If we can judge by the speeches of Plato's Callicles, *akolasia* appears to be one of the catch-cries of those intellectuals who, arguing from the standpoint of *physis*, sought complete freedom from social restraints (the term is used twenty-one times in the *Gorgias*—far more often than in any other dialogue (the *Republic* having fifteen occurrences). For example, Callicles says that the many enslave the stronger by nature by calling *akolasia* shameful and he concludes (492c): "luxury and *akolasia* and freedom, if they have the power to back it up, are virtue and happiness; but all the rest, the cosmetics and agreements among men that are against nature, are mere babblings and nonsense." (τρυφὴ καὶ ἀκολασία καὶ ἐλευθερία, ἐὰν ἐπικουρίαν ἔχῃ, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετή τε καὶ εὐδαιμονία, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ταῦτ' ἐστὶν τὰ καλλωπίσματα, τὰ παρὰ φύσιν συνθήματα ἀνθρώπων, φλυαρία καὶ οὐδενὸς ἄξια.) Cf. also *Clouds* 1347, where the adjective *akolastos* describes the boldness of Pheidippides as he proves that father-beating is just; and in Critias's *Sisyphus* it is *nomoi* in particular that act as restraints on men's desires to do injustice: ὅτ' οὐδὲν ἦθλον οὔτε τοῖς ἐσθλοῖσιν ἦν / οὔτ' αὖ κόλασμα τοῖς κακοῖς ἐγίγνετο. / κἄπειτά μοι δοκοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι νόμους /θέσθαι κολαστάς, ἵνα δίκη τύραννος ᾖ.

12. Aristophanes is punning here on the fact that the porphurion is both a species of bird and the name of a Giant; and also that the word sounds like the word for "fire-bearing," *purphorion*, in the previous line.

13. To be sure bird justice does recognize the "right of the stronger," but it recognizes this precisely because it is set in an anomian and free society. Bird justice is the free expression of each individual's (not merely the rulers') natural abilities without hindrance from the law. It forms its pecking order because it is the natural order. It does not arise out of ambition or shame. The stronger rule because it is in the interest of the natural community (*to koinon*), not only the rulers.' Peisetaerus here, on the other hand, is saying that justice is just another "bogey-man" that lies in the hands of the stronger to keep his rule secure. Likewise, Calliclean and Thrasymachean justice is the right of the stronger which either tramples the established laws under foot (*Gorgias* 483b–484c) or creates and manipulates conventional justice based upon laws to gain dominance over others for private advantage (*Republic* 338e–339b).

14. Cf. Callicles (*Gorgias* 484a-b) ἐὰν δέ γε οἶμαι φύσιν ἱκανὴν γένηται ἔχων ἀνήρ, πάντα ταῦτα ἀποσεισάμενος καὶ διαρρήξας καὶ διαφυγών, καταπατήσας τὰ ἡμέτερα γράμματα καὶ μαγγανεύματα καὶ ἐπῳδὰς καὶ νόμους τοὺς παρὰ φύσιν ἅπαντας, ἐπαναστὰς ἀνεφάνη δεσπότης ἡμέτερος ὁ δοῦλος, καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἐξέλαμψεν *τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιον*. ("But if, as I think, a man (*anēr*) is born who has a sufficiently powerful nature, he will shake off and burst through and escape all these things [conventions]. He will trample over our written laws and spells and charms and all those conventions (*nomoi*) that are against nature. This slave of ours will rise in revolt and be shown manifestly to be our master, and then will the *justice of nature* shine forth.") Guthrie (1962, 84–106).

15. That the Greeks of the fifth century had some problem with Zeus's means to power, see, for example, Aeschylus *Eum*. 640, Plato *Euth* 5, *Symposium* 195c; Euripides *Heracles* 1340–44; but in particular *Prom. Vinct*. The chorus says of Zeus:

ἀμέγαρτα γὰρ τάδε Ζεὺς / ἰδίοις νόμοις κρατύνων / ὑπερήφανον θεοῖς τοῖς / πάρος ἐν δείκνυσιν αἰχμάν. (403–6). Zeus sets up laws to his private advantage. νέοι γὰρ οἱα- / κονόμοι κρατοῦσ' Ὀλύμπου· / νεοχμοῖς δὲ δὴ νόμοις Ζεὺς / ἀθέτως κρατύνει, / τὰ πρὶν δὲ πελώρια νῦν ἀιστοῖ. (148–51).

16. Cf. Vian (1952); Parker (1987, 192); Moore (1995); Clay (2004, 113–5).

17. Cf. West (1966, ad loc. 954); Hesiod fr. 43.65 M-W; Apollodorus 1.6.2

18. See Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1274–75) who argues that the audience could not tell if the crown was awarded by the Athenians or by the birds themselves. Since the herald has explicitly come from mortals, however, it makes much more sense that the audience would infer that the crown had been awarded by mortals. It may be that gold crowns were awarded to citizens at the Dionysia (as it was later to Demosthenes); there is, however, no evidence for this in the fifth century. In 423 Brasidas had been given a gold crown by the people of Skione for "freeing Greece" (Thuc. 4.121.1); and Themistokles had been given an olive crown by the Spartans for his "wisdom and cleverness" (Hdt. 8.124). According to Plutarch, Alcibiades was given a gold crown by the Athenians on his return from exile (Plut. *Alc*. 33.2).

19. Examples of the punishment for such actions are numerous in Greek mythology. To give but one example, consider the punishment given to mortals on account of the actions of Prometheus who gave them the divine gift of fire and who attempted to keep them on some sort of parity with the gods at Mecone. Compare also Aristophanes's speech in Plato's *Symposium*.

20. Clearly the herald has a comically skewed vision of Athenian life before the bird city was established. Nevertheless from a bird's eye view Laconism would have been visible especially among the most prominent younger men in Athens. In *Wasps* the chorus accuses the nouveau riche Bdelycleon of anti-democratic sympathies because he dresses like a Spartan and, in Spartan fashion, does not trim his beard (475–7). Callicles is able to talk about the oligarchic Laconisers with "boxed ears" (*Gorgias* 515e8 and see Dodds' commentary 1959, ad loc.), and Socrates in *Protagoras* mentions "those who have boxed ears since they imitate [the Spartans] . . . and they love gymnastics and wear short cloaks" (342b-c).

21. As we saw, this was a deliberately deceptive description by Tereus. Peisetaerus, as opposed to Euelpides, was in love with the exploitation of bird ways and the bird community, not with their current ways as such.

22. Cf. also *Peace* 456, where Pothos and the Charites are among those deities to whom Trygaeus prays while trying to free Peace. In the *Bacchae* the chorus identifies Pieria, the seat of the Muses and the slope of Olympus, as the place where "the Charites and Pothos" live; a place to which the chorus wishes to escape; a place where there is peace (389 Hesychia, 419 Eirene) and not the arrogance of men like Pentheus; where there is the wisdom (*sophia*) of Dionysus (395, 427) and not the cleverness (*to sophon*) of overly clever men (395, 428). Cf. Dodds (1960, ad loc. 389–92, 402–16); Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1330–2).

23. As we earlier saw, when the quiet Athenian, Euelpides, had learned of all the good things that bird-divinity would provide men he had exclaimed "I would no longer remain here with you" (598), and he is now long gone. It will not be Euelpidean types that try to gain wings.

Chapter 7

The Return of Nomos

πῶς; ἔφη.

ὅσοι μὲν ἄν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, πρεσβύτεροι τυγχάνωσι δεκετῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει, πάντας ἐκπέμψωσιν εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς, τοὺς δὲ παῖδας αὐτῶν παραλαβόντες ἐκτὸς τῶν νῦν ἠθῶν, ἃ καὶ οἱ γονῆς ἔχουσι, θρέψωνται ἐν τοῖς σφετέροις τρόποισι καὶ νόμοις.

How [will they establish Socrates' ideal city]? he said.

Let them expel to the countryside all of those who happen to be older than ten in the *polis*, and having removed their children from the current customs, which their parents have, let them rear them in their own ways and laws. (Plato, *Republic* 540e)

Peisetaerus is now the *archon* of bird-land—a strategically intermediate place that human beings now emulate and the gods rival. The standards governing behavior and the ordering of the universe, likewise, are now based upon two fundamentally avian principles: the naturally pleasant and the naturally strong. As I argued in the introduction, these were the two decisively problematic and destructive sophistic subjects that Aristophanes had identified in *Clouds*. It becomes particularly worthwhile, therefore, to reconsider the foregoing action of *Birds* in the light of a more thorough reading of *Clouds.*[1]

The action of *Clouds* arises out of an old man's attempt to set his *oikos* aright. He has debts incurred not by his own extravagance (he would prefer to live his old, simple rustic life), but that of his wife (55) and son (cf. 447–8, 1177). Nevertheless, he owes them his duty as a husband and father. Thus he spends his nights tossing and turning in his bed in order to find a way to keep them happy and to pay for their extravagant desires. Finally a daimonic and extraordinary (76) idea comes to him to send his son off to Socrates's *phrontisterion*. Although his son had sworn an oath by Dionysus to obey his father,

Pheidippides refuses and then mocks his father's attempt at punishment (105–125). Even before his education at the hands of Socrates, Pheidippides shows a kind of moral disposition and lack of *aidōs* (shame/reverence) not so different from that despised by the Stronger Logos (992–999) and one ripe for the Weaker Logos' hedonistic teaching. He has an unchecked spirit directed only at his own pleasure, which for the time being consists of chariot racing.[2]

In this desperate situation, Strepsiades himself goes to the *phrontisterion* specifically to learn the Weaker Logos (116, 244–5). He does not know what else goes on there. As it turns out, to learn the Weaker Logos he must also learn astronomy, metrics, linguistics, and a questioning introspection; he must get to know himself (842) and the true nature of things. When the chorus accepts Strepsiades under its tutelage, acknowledging (457–461) that he has a bold and ready spirit (for he has endured the hardships that have accompanied the excesses of his family), it hands him over to Socrates for an initial review of his character and his intelligence.

Socrates, as he tells us, needs first to know the character (*tropos*) of the old man (478) in order that he may bring to bear upon him the latest weapons (*kainas mechanas*, 479–80). But Socrates asks no questions about his moral character or the morality of his desire to learn rhetoric. He asks only whether he has a good memory and a facility with words and lofty thoughts (482–90). Socrates's criterion is one purely of mental capacity.[3] As in the Socratic teaching of the "earlier" Platonic dialogues, knowledge alone appears to be sufficient for virtue.[4] If a student is suitably clever Socrates can lay siege to him, like a town, and reduce his previously held conventional beliefs about the world (its fortifications) to rubble.[5] Thus Strepsiades is ordered to enter the *phrontisterion* naked (498).

When one's student is a simple rustic in desperate straits (like both Euelpides and Strepsiades), the temporary undermining of long-held, conventional beliefs is easily achieved by sophistic displays of knowledge and the promise of future wealth and happiness that can be got thereby. Strepsiades is quickly disabused of his conventional belief in Zeus.[6] In his place are set gods of insubstantial airiness: *Aer*, *Aither*, Whirling (*Dinos*), Gaping (*Chaos*), and Rhetoric/Tongue (*Glotta*). Likewise Socrates questions the conventional genders of words, and, like a Prodicus, tries to teach him the correct (*orthos*) use of words. While Strepsiades is able to grasp a few basic "new ideas," he is not able to remember them; and while he gains some successes in sophistic rhetoric, he nevertheless finally pushes Socrates to despair of being able to teach him.[7] At the behest of the chorus, he has his cleverer and younger son sent to the *phrontisterion* to learn the Weaker Logos, but not without having accepted the basic tenets of Socratism, namely that the more clever have the right to get the better of the more ignorant,[8] and that those things which exist by convention ought to be subjected to Socratic inquiry or elenchus.

The agon between the Stronger and Weaker Logoi provides us not only with a justification of their respective forms of education, but also with an example of the different forms of rhetoric. Indeed, the contest does not come about to determine whether the old education is superior to the new; but which of the two Logoi is more effective and has the greater *sophia* (954–57). As soon becomes clear, however, the two Logoi are *logoi* of very different natures. In particular, the Weaker Logos employs the thoroughly sophistic technique of antilogy.[9] The Weaker Logos concedes to the Stronger Logos the right to speak first. The Stronger Logos thus gives a long and extended speech that outlines the traditional mode of education and the sort of character it forms. The Weaker Logos is then able to take to take this speech apart in smaller, interrogatory attacks that produce aporia or, at least, anger. It uses the conventions and mythology of traditional works (Ibycus' Heracles, Homer's Nestor, and Peleus) to prove, in a clearly specious way, the contradictions within this educational tradition.

The traditional education of the Stronger Logos is in essence the habituation of the young to *sōphrosynē* and just behavior (962) consisting in obedience to the *polis*, its *nomoi* and its elders. It begins in childhood (963) with the traditional music and gymnastic education. The youths learned by rote songs written in the mode "which their fathers handed down to them." Punishment for trying anything that smacks of the "new music" was a sound beating. At the gymnastic trainer's, they acted with complete modesty and did not try to arouse the passions of older men (961–83). Such an education produced in particular a class of citizens and soldiers who were willing to fight and die for the *polis*, the race of Marathonomachai (985–6). It was an education that encouraged deeds and discouraged words; foot-races in the park and not contests of the tongue in the Agora or the law courts (1002–09). As the chorus makes clear in their praise of the speech, the account of the old education is attractive precisely because it worked in the past; it produced the happy (*eudaimones*) men of the age of Marathon (1028–29). But it has no rational account of why it is intrinsically better to be *sōphrōn* and *dikaios*,[10] nor does it claim to teach its students the inherent benefits of its method. The students will grow up to act habitually in accordance with the obedience and moderation of soul demanded by the traditional education, but they will not be able to justify it.

The education of the Weaker Logos proves to be its opposite. Its students will be able to justify in argument any action that they might commit, but they will act in accordance with desires completely unchecked by any established, civic conventions or *nomoi*; they will, in short, "use their *physis*" (1078). They will consider nothing shameful and, therefore, feel no qualms about the shame that conventionally accompanies being buggered (1085). The only criterion for actions will be the pleasures one can gain from them (1071–2) and

not whether they are just or unjust, honorable or shameful. The final proof that the Weaker Logos offers is characterized as visible fact and not theory; the vast majority (πολὺ πλείονας (1099) of the audience are hedonists. They are the wide-assed; those who put pleasure before *sōphrosunē* and *aidōs*.

Thus the Stronger Logos in the end concedes merely to numbers and popular opinion. If everyone else is doing it, my way is no longer the Athenian way, so I might as well switch sides. We might have wanted the Stronger Logos to say, "well, all of you are wrong. The ancient way is the best way; *sōphrosunē* is good in itself." But he does not have the intellectual make up to do so; thus his attempts at refutation of the Weaker Logos are only outbursts of spleen.[11] Like Plato's noble dogs, the guardians of Callipolis, the Stronger Logos's *thumos* has been trained only to bite enemies of the *polis* without question.

Impressed by the Weaker Logos's victory, Strepsiades entrusts his son to Socrates's *phrontisterion* with the illusion that he will be trained and educated in such a way as to benefit his house. Strepsiades's first words to his son on completion of his studies are ironically, "Oh child, my son, come outside, obey your father" (1165–66). Once having had a great passion for horses, Pheidippides' passion is now directed at new and clever thoughts. But his use of these will not be limited to the courtroom and the public sphere, as his father thought. The Weaker Logos alone may have persuaded Strepsiades, the desperate old man who after long suffering found the Weaker Logos as his final recourse for his problems; but Pheidippides, the passionate and malleable young man, the student of both the Logoi and of Socrates, now has games to play more exciting than horse-racing. He delights now in being able to look down with scorn upon what is conventional, and nothing is set in its place beyond intellectual delight (1399–405). His allegiance has turned from *polis* and *oikos* to the *phrontisterion* (1467). Thus, the whole exchange between father and son is portrayed more as Pheidippides' platform to display his newly acquired cleverness than any sustained desire to beat his father. For this son (as opposed to the father beater in *Birds*), there is no material gain in beating his father (he does not want to kill him, after all) other than the right to do so and the joy in being victorious at speaking as he once took pleasure in being victorious in chariot racing.[12] The Socratic education and sophistic antilogy with its "new weapons" has successfully demolished the civic and familial walls that used to encompass the young Pheidippides; but in their place is now only a vacuum of words and arguments.

Nevertheless, as the chorus states, "I imagine that the hearts of the young are pounding as to what he will say" (1391–92). While the justification for father beating may be just another exercise for Pheidippides, it strikes at the very core of the play. The term *patroloias*, father beater, has been applied to both the Weaker Logos (by the Stronger Logos, 911) and, more literally, to

Pheidippides (by his father, 1327), and both have welcomed the epithet as a form of praise. The role of the father within the *oikos* mirrors the role of *nomos* and tradition within the *polis*. The father holds that authority which cannot be questioned and which arises out of "that respect which is due to age, exercising a kind of royal power" (Aristotle, *Politics* 1259b). The image of the son beating the father thus opens out into a broader network of ideas representing the revolt of that which has strength by natural talent and intelligence against that which has strength through tradition and habitually instilled conviction;[13] it represents *physis'* battle against *nomos*.[14] As O'Regan states, "transgression of the traditional sanctity of the father is a test against which those who stand outside conventional civic values try themselves and their theories, and conversely, heinous behavior is measured."[15]

Thus the final agon of *Clouds* between father and son comes to light as the crux and summation of the intellectual life represented by the *phrontisterion*, brought down from the *aither* into the *oikos* of a simple rustic. The conflict between father and son arises over their differences in regard to poetry and music, elements central to the traditional education as outlined by the Stronger Logos. After eating their meal in celebration of Pheidippides' education (1213) and turning to drinking, Strepsiades asks his son to take up the lyre and sing a song by Simonides (1356). Such sympotic amusements, as Dover points out,[16] had become passé in intellectual circles who preferred to discourse cleverly on diverse topics. It is, as Pheidippides says, *archaios* (1357). Seeing that his son refuses to sing, Strepsiades checks his anger and asks that he at least recite a speech from a tragedy of Aeschylus and, when that too is refused, from one of the newer tragedians. Pheidippides proceeds to recite a speech from Euripides about incest between a brother and sister (1361–72). As the scholia note, the speech refers to one from Euripides' *Aiolos* of which we have a number of fragments and an hypothesis preserved in the Oxyrynchus papyri.[17] This play was clearly controversial among contemporary and later philosophers and historians for the treatment of its shocking subject matter.[18] In the first part of the play there was an extended scene in which the son, Macareus, while concealing his real motives and desire for Canace, his sister whom he has impregnated, cleverly persuades his father that it is beneficial for the household to allow his sons and daughters to intermarry.[19] Later in *Frogs,* Aristophanes parodies Macareus' most infamous line from this exchange, "What is shameful, if those who indulge in it do not think it shameful?" Antisthenes, the student of Socrates, is said to have retorted to this line with the quip "the shameful is shameful whether one thinks it is or not" (Mallach fr. 72).[20] But, as in *Clouds*, the cleverness of the son is not allowed to triumph for long. Macareus' rhetoric fails when it comes face to face with reality and his private *eros* is exposed. Aeolus orders his disgraced daughter to commit suicide, and Macareus himself likely chooses this option too.

Throughout this entire section of *Clouds*, Aristophanes takes great pains to keep the focus on the impact of the new education upon the *oikos* and on the power of *logoi* to question the foundational laws of society—those of the family. As in bird society, nothing is any longer *aischron* (shameful). The poetry of the old education that habituated the souls of the young to recognize and revere those *nomoi,* which are the necessary preconditions for a settled political and domestic life, and to curb one's "natural desires" for the benefit of the common good has been superseded by a poetry that is willing to question or, at least, bring to light the tensions within such requirements.

It is thus highly fitting that father beating should constitute the punishment for Strepsiades's indignation at ideas so destructive of the *oikos*. Accordingly, Strepsiades comes rushing out of the house into the public space. As O'Regan notes, "having just spurned the city and its laws, Strepsiades now needs the community to assert the purely conventional sanctity of a father's body and protect him from the illegal force of the stronger man who is his son."[21] While we are only *told* about the actual father beating, we actually see the dispute concerning its justification on stage. Under any normal circumstances such a battle would not be necessary. As Strepsiades notes, "but nowhere is it considered lawful that a father should suffer this" (1420). As already noted, however, Strepsiades has been educated just enough in the *phrontisterion* to be of the opinion that *nomoi* can be questioned, that wisdom about the *physis* of things should override unquestioning convention and thus, that the more clever should rule the more stupid.

It comes as no surprise then that the clever and young Pheidippides easily convinces his father that it is just to beat one's father. Strepsiades, foolishly using sophistic terminology, urges the men of his generation to concede to their cleverer sons what is reasonable (*epieikē*, 1438) and fair in so far as it can be adduced from probability (*eikos* 1439, cf. 1418). To anyone hearing Pheidippides's argument, however, his case is anything but reasonable, let alone just. To begin with, he speciously argues that if someone beats another it is out of good will (as a father does a son) and, therefore, just (1410–14). He argues that old men ought to be beaten because they are in a second childhood, but in the next line argues that it is more reasonable to beat old men because they ought to know better. He argues that reasonable persuasion ought to be the basis of law-making; but then uses as proof of the justice of father beating the example of roosters, a species that neither discusses nor writes laws. And as it turns out, Pheidippides will only gain some advantage from the new law if he himself does not have any children of his own.[22] Under a system where fathers constantly fear sons (and thus, stop reproducing) there would soon be no society in which to live.

But such practicalities do not much matter. Pheidippides is just enjoying his new game. Nevertheless, we can see the essential strategy that he

has learned from the training of the *phrontisterion* and the Weaker Logos. In the first place, one has to discredit the authority of *nomos* both in specific examples (1410–1419) and more broadly (1421–24). *Nomos* is artificial; it was made by a man in the past and this ancestor persuaded people in the past to accept it (1421–22). Because law has no greater authority than one man's persuasion, it is open to someone else to persuade others to obey a new law. Once this debunking of law is complete, the way is open to assert, as the Weaker Logos did, the necessities of nature. In nature one sees chickens and other animals violently taking on their fathers; and humans are like animals except animals do not write up laws. But once the idea of *physis* in the animal kingdom is invoked and accepted as the standard of conduct, the clever speaker could argue virtually anything, so many and varied are the actions of creatures in nature.

As is clear, these "natural laws" are summoned only to the degree that they accord with the goals, desires, and pleasures of the speaker. As Strepsiades astutely (for once) points out (1430–31), if one is going to use the natural state of mere animals as the standard by which one lives (in this case the father beating exhibited among roosters), then ought not one to take up the natural life in all its forms, pleasant and unpleasant, eating dung, sleeping on perches? The natural life, it is implied, may not provide the hedonistic life that the Weaker Logos promised. Indeed, it is likely to erode pleasure altogether. It is precisely because of speech and law that men are able to live securely and thus acquire more civilized pleasures—comfortable beds and good food.[23] And Strepsiades might have gone on to make this argument. But, while Strepsiades is not dazzled by the argument which invokes the example of natural creatures, he is still awed by Socrates. Thus Pheidippides has only to invoke his name to stop his father in his tracks (1432).

This first victory is not enough for the spirited Pheidippides; he wants a second one, an "even greater evil" (1444–46; 1440). But before Pheidippides can even begin to argue that it is just to beat one's mother, Strepsiades silences him. The time for words is over and the time for deeds has begun. Strepsiades now reverts back to what he has known from the beginning, but which has been clouded by words. He must secure his *oikos*. His reversion is characterized as a movement away from the intellect back to the habituated, ingrained ethos of an old rustic. As Nussbaum concludes,

> [Strepsiades] may be able, in his old age, to return to his own nature; the son's more malleable personality has been turned from him by Socratic questioning. To imagine him [Pheidippides] returning to the old paternal ways would be an optimism nowhere justified in the play . . . If Strepsiades has Zeus, Pheidippides is left with Chaos and Vortex. And both, as Aristophanes deeply sees, are left, in the wake of education, without the bonds of obligation and family feeling that informed their ignorance.[24]

But as is plain, while Pheidippides may have discovered new rhetorical tools, become more sophisticated, and questioned conventional morality in the Socratic fashion, his temperament has not changed. He is still a spoiled youth and still spirited and competitive. He is no ascetic Socrates who has turned away from human things and now contemplates the things in the *aēr* or in himself. Socrates and, in particular, the Weaker Logos have given him weapons, and he will use them for whatever end he wishes.

Thus the fundamental problem that we saw in Socrates's attempt at educating Strepsiades raises its head again with Pheidippides. Socrates does not concern himself with the moral character of those he teaches, nor does he appear to be aware of the danger this might involve. Indeed, in matters that are concerned with just and unjust behavior, the only intellectual training appears to be one which is entirely negative and destructive. As evidenced by the Weaker Logos, all conventional morality and justice is denied and becomes subordinated to an indeterminate and unproven conception of human *physis,* the sole motivation of which appears to be a brutish and corporeal pleasure. Socrates nowhere asserts such immoral behavior himself, but at the same time, he gives no guidance at all in regard to civic conduct. Once his student has left the *phrontisterion,* he may use his intellectual education as he pleases.

The play does not, however, simply endorse the Stronger Logos and Strepsiades's final act. As Strauss points out, "Strepsiades's return to piety and justice is not a return to legality."[25] In the new state of things the very validity of *nomos* has itself been thrown into question. Strepsiades's only choice is violence: to burn down the *phrontisterion* together with its students. The play thus ends in *aporia*. Justice and Zeus are restored, but *nomoi* and conventional mores, under the destructive power of antilogical arguments, are completely defenseless before the intellectual and rhetorical onslaught of the Weaker Speech. At the same time the Weaker Logos and the inhabitants of the *phrontisterion* have underestimated the power and necessity of the political virtues, and in particular, of justice and lawfulness. Only someone like Socrates—an ascetic who is not concerned with the pleasures of the body, whose study is aimed at understanding the nature of things for its own sake and not out of a desire for wealth (Strepsiades) or honor (Pheidippides)—can live this life without himself harming society. But Socrates, living as a *psyche* in the *meteōra*, must by necessity return to the earth, the body, and the *polis*.[26] In order to achieve the *sōphrosunē*, or at least, asceticism of Socrates, however, one first needs the old education (the rod of the schoolmaster and the habits of soul instilled by the old Muses), not the new. Because Socrates concerns himself only with the intellectual capacity of the students and not the appetitive parts of the soul, the weapons of his intellectualism must inevitably be abused and misunderstood.

FROM CLOUDS TO CLOUDCUCKOOTOWN

It is evident that Peisetaerus is no Socrates. He is no ascetic nor is he a "meteorologist." The hero of *Birds* comes into the land of *physis*, and his first act is to turn it into an imperial *polis*. Aristophanes's Socrates, we might imagine, would happily live with the birds in the *aēr*, untroubled by human affairs and desires; eating the meager but freely growing offerings of mint and sesame. Peisetaerus, on the other hand, recognizes the political necessity that accompanies the human condition. Human beings constantly desire more and better things. Thus Peisetaerus, a man of the greatest desires, persuades the former human tyrant Tereus that there is great power and wealth in the realm of the birds. In their disorganized state the birds could not achieve such ambitious designs. They must found a strategically placed and shrewdly conceived *polis*. Like a human *polis*, this new *polis* is based upon an initial contract and in particular a contract of non-aggression with a view to collectively shared goods (448–45, 459). After having barely warded off the violence of the birds, Peisetaerus agrees to teach the apolitical birds his *logoi* (437–8) as long as they do not peck his eyes out. Thus their contract in *logoi* to put an end to the threat of *bia* (force/violence) points to a second reason as to why the formation of a *polis* is essential to Peisetaerus's plan. It is only in a *polis*, a place of putatively shared goals and agreed upon checks on violence and natural desires, that the power of persuasion (Peisetaerus's supreme weapon) can be fully and effectively used. But, as we learned from *Clouds*, persuasion may in turn become just another tool for gaining the satisfaction of one's desires. Words can take the place of violence as the instrument and vindicator of selfish and disgraceful activity. Thus, as Strepsiades learns, the only recourse turns out to be a reversion to violence; he must justly—though illegally—burn down the phrontisterion. The Weaker Logos, as an instantiation of the corrupt power of words, sets up the preconditions for his own demise.

But what does Peisetaerus do? Via sophistic persuasion he creates a *polis* of the creatures of untouched *physis*. In the parabasis this *polis* comes to light as no *polis* at all. Peisetaerus and his birds offer to men the anti-*polis* of their wildest dreams. Everything will arise freely for them and in abundance; the necessities of nature likewise may be freely indulged. If, as Pheidippides imagined, one wishes to beat up one's father or betray the city or do anything "considered shameful since it is ruled by *nomos*," then one can come and live with the birds. In turn if, like the Weaker Logos, it is adultery that one is after, the birds can supply you with wings and you will not get caught. All of the things that the Weaker Logos offered are there for the taking by *all* human beings; you do not have to be one of the few clever speakers. It comes as no surprise, then, that men have turned away from the Socratic school, the school of Spartan asceticism (1280–83). To attain the "necessities of nature" via the

phrontisterion is far too much hard work and requires the memory and intellectual capacity with which only a few are endowed. Peisetaerus, the Aristophanic comic hero, has capped and defeated Socrates because he understands human nature; he understands such men as Euelpides and Strepsiades, but also Pheidippides and the students of the Weaker Logos. This comic hero, unlike the ascetic philosopher, understands *eros* and the appetitive parts of the soul.

By the time we get to the second group of interlopers Peisetaerus has successfully applied the fundamental method of the *phrontisterion*. The old *nomos* has been done away with and in its place is set a socio-political vacuum which offers all things to all people and nothing to anyone; the fulfillment of all of one's "natural" cravings without check. But where in an anomian bird-like cosmos can Peisetaerus's persuasion continue to be powerful? As O'Regan has well pointed out in regard to *Clouds*, by creating *logoi* that are opposed to law and that validate private hedonism "the sophists are convicted of having forgotten, or destroyed, the prerequisites for their own power, the necessary suspension of physical violence and the creation of an arena for speech."[27] Thus the question now becomes whether the clever comic hero is able to rule a cosmos whose *dike* (justice) is the free pursuit of pleasure and the necessities of nature. Can the master of clever persuasion still succeed in a cosmos in which *Bia* (violence) has replaced *Peitho* (persuasion) and whose rule, as he tells Iris, is determined by force alone? Where violence against fathers, masters, the city and even the gods is hindered neither by law or shame?

As we have seen in the last few chapters, Peisetaerus has already intimated that the way of life promised by the birds, as persuasive a tool as it is, might not be quite what is expected. To be sure, Peisetaerus did rid Cloudcuckooland of anything that smacked of any external restraint on the free and natural bird life. But he also got rid of the natural philosopher, that Socrates-like character who might have challenged Peisetaerus's conception of the universe and brought philosophic/scientific forces into his *polis*. Likewise he not only praised the old-fashioned praise poet, but he became his patron. Patriotic songs in the mode of Simonides and Pindar in praise of Cloudcuckooland and the new gods might be necessary in the future for the "*archaios*" (old[-fashioned]) education in which its citizens will be trained. As for the birds, the creatures of *physis* par excellence, he has already tamed and trained them to look after and guard their walled-off property which they recognize now as their own. Peisetaerus is not as foolish as the inhabitants of the *phrontisterion*. Now that his city is actually founded, Peisetaerus will reverse course. He corrects the imprudence of the phrontisterion; he learns from *Clouds*—he judges and punishes immoral behavior, gets rid of the new poets, and harnesses the father beating spirit for the good of the city.

Nevertheless his ultimate aim is not a "just city" for its own sake, rather as the necessary condition for his own rule and divinity.

THE SECOND INTERLOPERS

As has already been noted, the second group of interlopers differs from the first in that the second group arrives when the hero's project has been accomplished. Each of the three is a member of the younger generation (the "sons") who seeks some benefit they might gain from some aspect of bird life. They do not try to impose any external restraints on it. As in the first group of interlopers, the central interloper is a named figure well-known to the public and, as we will see, like Meton he is set off from the rest in other ways. It is the task of Peisetaerus to arrange the wings and distribute them to the "bird-mad" human beings who will soon come to Nepholokokkugia. In particular the chorus asks him to examine the human beings in a wise or prudent fashion (*phronimōs*) and to distribute the wings most suitable to each (1330–34).[28] Thus Peisetaerus's first task is to understand the character of each of the interlopers, in much the same way as the chorus of *Clouds* (476–80) had first told Socrates to make trial of Strepsiades's *gnōmē* (judgment) and *tropos* (character)—a task that we saw Socrates is incapable of doing.

The first to arrive is a young man, the would-be father beater, who confirms the report of the bird messenger that human beings, in their bird-madness, are singing songs about birds. He has clearly heard the hedonistic message of the parabasis: "Nothing," he announces, "is more pleasant than to fly" (1342; cf. 754, 785). In particular he takes up the offer of the epirrheme, as opposed to the antepirrheme, actually to live with the birds (1345; cf. 754). Indeed he is the only one of the three interlopers to take up this offer, and thus Peisetaerus's treatment of the young man represents his treatment of all who come for the message of the epirrheme.[29] Both Cinesias and the sycophant merely want the possession of wings. The father beater on the other hand also has a desire for the *nomoi* of the birds. He has heard that it is "held by *nomos*[30] to be noble for birds to strangle and bite their father" (1348). As we have seen, this is not quite the case. Nothing is held by *nomos* to be *kalon* among the birds; what is *kalon* among the birds is to act in accordance with natural instinct and needs. There is no such thing as the shameful (*aischra*). Things are shameful among human beings precisely because they are ruled by *nomos* (755). The young man believes that there is a *nomos* among the birds that it is noble to choke one's father. Under such a regime he would not have to pay the penalty in punishment or shame for his action. The young man is therefore no Socratically trained Pheidippides. He does not wish to ride roughshod over the laws by speciously proving that it is right to beat (or in this case, kill) his father.

Rather, he would actually take up residence in a new town in order that, as he believes, he might *legally* strangle his father.[31]

But Peisetaerus refuses to give the young man the option of actually killing his father. He takes up the young man's misinterpretation of the epirrheme and affirms that there are in fact *nomoi* in Cloudcuckootown, and not only of the singing variety: "We hold it by *nomos* that he is brave who, when he is a nestling, beats his father" (1349–50). He does not mention father killing and he shrewdly exchanges *kalos* for *andreios* (brave or "manly"). To beat one's father is not held to be noble, but merely a sign of strength or courage and that one is coming to manhood (that is, becoming "manly"). But there is another law among the birds, an ancient one, actually written down on pillars (*kurbeis*)—such as were in the Athenian agora—that once the father stork has taught his nestlings to fly, the nestlings must in turn look after the father (1356–57).[32] As I have already discussed, in bird world these two "laws" are not paradoxical. Birds can beat their fathers as children and then look after them later without any shame involved. In Peisetaerus's new regime, however, these things have now become bird convention or *nomos* as they were not before and thus subject to what is shameful and what is noble. In fact, Peisetaerus's new "ancient law" is, as Dunbar points out, "clearly adapting to the bird world part of the Solonic law on ill-treatment of parents . . . which was punished by loss of civic rights."[33] Having previously dismissed the representatives of Athenian law, Peisetaerus now introduces a law of Athens, but under his own authority. Peisetaerus becomes the law-giver, the Solon for the birds. As the young man realizes, he will not gain anything by living among the birds if he has to feed his father.

We might expect the scene now to end. The hero has frightened off the first noxious element attempting to enter the new bird polis; but strangely he does not end there. He actually states that the young man has come "with good intentions" (*eunous*, 1361). As it turns out, according to the plan that Peisetaerus outlines, the young man will not have to feed his father, but at the same time, he will not beat him or get all his property. Rather Peisetaerus, as he had done to Euelpides, encourages him to give up his family, both his father and his property, and to make his own way in life by joining the bird army. He will wing him as though he were an orphan bird (1361). That is, on the one hand, he will give him wings for free, as the Athenians gave hoplite armor to children orphaned by war;[34] but, more importantly, as the scholia point out, he will give him the opportunity to act as though his father were dead. Peisetaerus does for the young man what the young man would have done for himself and, by making him an orphan, he brings it about that the action of this legal-minded young man will not go against the law of the storks. Finally, he gives to him advice such as he received as a boy: "Don't beat your father" (it is no surprise that Peisetaerus needed this advice when

he was young!). Even as he had taken the place of the birds' fathers in directing the ways in which the birds lived (539–47), now he takes the role of the father for the would-be father beater. Simultaneously he takes on the role of surrogate father beater (or even father-killer). He will be the only "father beater" in Birdtown. Now that his *polis* is founded, while he is not unwilling to encourage the young man to leave his father, he is not willing to admit the father beating spirit that he himself had used to reach his position in the newly founded *polis* and newly ruled cosmos. He does not make Socrates's mistake of undermining *nomos* and leaving nothing in its place. He himself becomes the new father, the new Solon, the new Zeus.

Peisetaerus's task was to examine the arrivals prudently and to deck them out with the appropriate wings. It may be surprising, therefore, that after telling the young man not to beat his father he decks him out in the features of a rooster, the father beating bird par excellence. As we saw from *Clouds*, one of the main objections that Aristophanes makes to the Socratic education is that it does not properly examine and address the ethical training of the appetitive parts of the soul, particularly of the young. The Pheidippides who first came onto the stage prior to his Socratic education was very much like the young man of *Birds*. While he does disobey and mock his father, he nevertheless finally agrees, against his will, to obey him and enter the *phrontisterion*. He is initially, like the young man, essentially law-abiding; but all of his energy, desires, and even dreams (25, 28, 32) are at this stage directed at his own youthful pleasures, chariot racing. The young man in *Birds* comes on as similarly fanatical. He is bird-mad, he desires (ἐπιθυμῶ, 1345) the bird laws, and desires (ἐπιθυμῶ, 1352) to strangle his father and to get everything.[35] In short he is prime material for the *phrontisterion*.

In his character appraisal, Peisetaerus recognizes two important qualities in the young man. He is, in the first place, well-intentioned (*eunous*). He comes to obey what he believed the birds considered to be lawful and, in particular, noble (*kalos*). He is concerned about civic honor. But at the same time he is *machimos* (bellicose or "up for a fight" 1368). He has that youthful, agonistic, and pugnacious spirit that Pheidippides first directed at horse-racing and later at "looking down on the laws." Unlike Socrates, Peisetaerus aims to make use of this spirit for civic purposes: to do garrison duty, serve in the army, and to earn an honest wage (1367). This warlike spirit, made visually evident by the bird version of hoplite armor—the features of a cock—will now be directed not at the father (1368), but outwardly at those who threaten the *polis* on its borders (1369). The young man, under Peisetaerus's tutelage, thus becomes like one of the Platonic Socrates's young and noble dogs in *The Republic* whose *thymos* is habituated to help friends and harm enemies. The young man leaves with the words: "By Dionysus, I think that you speak well, and I will be persuaded by you." The noble character of the young man is shown by the

fact that he can be turned to his civic duty by persuasion; he does not need the subsequent beatings meted out to Cinesias or the sycophant.

If the young man represented all of those who would come to Nephelokokkygia inspired by the birdish anomianism of the epirrheme, the sycophant represents all those that would come for the freely enjoyed and illicit hedonism propounded in the antepirrheme. This, as we saw, was not hedonism free from laws (as in the epirrheme), nor was it the hedonism of the Weaker Logos that was possible because it could "argue things opposite to *nomoi* and *dikai*" (1040); rather, it was an indulgence in illegal pleasures undetected by laws. Although the bird chorus in the antepirrheme mentioned such typical comic pleasures as eating and farting, its final example, adultery with a prominent citizen's wife, appeared less socially innocuous. As we might recall, it was also the crowning example in the Weaker Logos' proof of the benefits of the life which was not *sōphron* (1076–81). Here, with the aid of wings, the sycophant's target will not be Athenians, but foreigners in the allied states. He will be able to make an illegal summons, quickly fly back to Athens and set a court date before the foreigner can possibly arrive and justly plead his case. The victim will lose by default and the unjust accusation by the sycophant will not be discovered by the court. In the meantime the sycophant will have already absconded with his victim's property (1453–60).

Like the would-be father beater, the sycophant comes onto the stage wearing the mask of a young man (*neanias,* 1431); but the sycophant is conspicuously and shabbily dressed in a patched up cloak.[36] Unlike the first young man, he wants nothing to do with the bird *polis* per se. He merely demands wings (1420, 1436) in order to facilitate certain problems he faces in regard to a profession held to be unlawful and unjust by the public (1435, 1450). He thus comes to Peisetaerus in search of wings in a way akin to Strepsiades's attempt to learn the Weaker Logos from Socrates.[37] But, as he had done with the first young man, Peisetaerus does not concede to him the promises of the bird doctrine; rather he makes trial of his character and way of life in an attempt to change his mind (1433–35).

> ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἕτερα νὴ Δί' ἔργα σώφρονα,
> ἀφ' ὧν διαζῆν ἄνδρα χρῆν τοσουτονὶ
> ἐκ τοῦ δικαίου μᾶλλον ἢ δικορραφεῖν.
>
> But, by Zeus, surely there are other and *sōphron* jobs by which a man like you ought to make his living—and in a just way in accordance with the law not by stitching together points of law.

Peisetaerus flatters the young sycophant and calls him a real man (*anēr*); an adult ought to make his living in an honest or *sōphron* way. He pulls no

punches and directly confronts the ethical problem of sycophancy before he will give the intruder wings.

The young sycophant, however, does not want words but wings (1436). Nevertheless Peisetaerus, the consummate crafter of words, replies that one is actually winged by words. By words one is lifted on high, as every father knows who has seen his young son turned to a state of excited passion by a two-bit horse commander like Dietrephes or by tragedians (1440–45). As Peisetaerus well knows, it is far more difficult to inspire fathers with words; one has to get to the sons and in this scene he attempts just such a rhetorical maneuver. He urges the young sycophant to turn to lawful (*nomimos*) work (1450). His words here, however, are in vain. As the youth tells us, his way of life goes all the way back to his grandparents (1452). As is readily apparent, this young man is incorrigible. The time for words is over; it is now time for beating. Clearly the image of "winging with words" is a motif central to the play.[38] Peisetaerus has shown throughout the play that he can excite people with words and make them do willingly what they would not otherwise have done. But in this context, we are surely meant to see that Peisetaerus is also aware of the opposite. In certain incorrigible cases words have no effect at all. An education which, among other things, tries to turn the appetitive impulses of its students, if not to civic virtue, at least to mere civil obedience, requires the schoolmaster's rod as well as his words. Not all young men will be as noble as the father beater.

In the central position there arrives a man known to Peisetaerus, Cinesias. He is not explicitly a young man (*neanias*), like the other two, but he is certainly a representative of things new and in particular, new music. In the famous fragment from Pherecrates' *Cheiron* (K-A, 155), the goddess Muse (probably decked out as an *hetaira*) singles out four "new poets" as her corrupters—two dithyrambists (Melanippides and Cinesias) and two composers of nomes (Phrynis and Timotheos).[39] Of these Cinesias is the only Athenian. In particular, Cinesias and Phrynis are accused of introducing intricate modulations (*kampai*) which went beyond the traditional modes (*harmoniai*). The Stronger Logos in *Clouds*, likewise, tells of the old education that used to beat boys for "disfiguring the Muses" by "modulating some modulation (*kampē*) such as those hard to stomach modulations in the style of Phrynis" (969–71). The boys, rather, used to walk in good order (*eutaktos*, 964) to the accompaniment of the kithara.[40] As Csapo argues, the vocabulary of "orderliness" found throughout the discussions at this time concerning music and its ethical effects was clearly suggestive of the production of martial and civic virtues among Athenians, especially among the elite: "*eutaxia* and *eukosmia* therefore implied knowing one's place and keeping to it through the proper exercise of self-control and self-denial."[41]

The importance of music education for the habituation of the character of young men to civic virtue as outlined by the Stronger Logos and which "followed the *harmoniai* of their fathers," had been given theoretical support by Damon in the 430s and must have influenced the criticism of new music found in Old Comedy. As Wallace has pointed out in regard to the musical theories of Damon, "musical styles not only 'fit' behavior, they also determine or shape it, both for individuals and society."[42] Clearly drawing on the theory of Damon that changes in modes of music bring about changes in political *nomoi*, Plato has Socrates in *Republic* and the Athenian Stranger in *Laws* give a central place to musical styles for the education of citizens. Indeed, in *Laws,* the Athenian Stranger argues that the sham cleverness and disrespect for laws that existed in Athens arose precisely out of the new music which mixed up different styles and whose aim was pleasure alone (700a-701b).[43] Thus, the disorder of new music creates a concomitant disorder in society; the putative lack of substance in its content brings about citizens who lack substance. And so, for example, Cinesias, taking on the negative attributes of his composition, becomes, in *Birds*, a sickly man of lime wood (1377), a light and pliable inner bark that, as it were, has no spine.[44]

Cinesias arrives on the stage of *Birds* in pursuit of wings. Differing from the other two interlopers, who wish to become predatory birds, Cinesias wants to become a nightingale. As soon becomes apparent, he is attracted by the teaching of neither the epirrheme nor the antepirrheme. As is appropriate to a new poet, he could not care less about the actual verbal content of the parabasis.[45] His interest is the aulos solo of Procne, the nightingale, that proceeded the parabasis.[46] By getting wings, he could fly into the realm of the *meteōra* (using the poetic form *metarsios*, 1383) and there gather from the clouds misty and opaque content for his astrophic *anabolai* or preludes. He comes for no material gain, but rather, as he says, for the sake of his *technē*.[47] He is a specialist and professional; one of those *sophistai* whom in *Clouds* the cloud goddesses nourish: "those modulators of dithyrambic choruses, men who are meteorological quacks, lazy and do nothings" (331–34; cf. *Peace* 827–31). He wants nothing to do with the actual city of birds, but seeks to be amid the clouds and the *aēr*.

As the text indicates, Cinesias comes on dancing intricate circling dances. He says (somewhat strangely for the reader) that he moves "with a fearless body"—an indication that his dance parodied excessive dithyrambic movements.[48] He repeatedly sings of his movements: "now on one path now on another" (1374), "seeking a new path" (1376), "leaping up, I move along by the various blasts of wind" (1395–6)," "at one time toward the south path, at another moving my body closer to the north" (1398–99). This is not only parody of the new music and its obsession with natural, mimetic forms; it also calls to mind the initial description of bird life, "flying everywhere gaping,"

"unstable, flighty, unpredictable, never remaining in one place" (165–71). Cinesias, a man naturally kindred to the birds in his musical style and lack of stability and weightiness, desires the bird life for its old, pre-political ways in which one is not restricted by the boundaries that the *polis* puts on an individual; movement need not be "in good order" (*eutaktos*); the poet is not restricted by conventional forms of music. In short (following the criticism of Plato and others against the new music), the old-time bird poetry need not have any civic function whatsoever beyond its imitations of natural beauty and production of pure pleasure.

As he had done to the father beater, Peisetaerus defeats the interloper, Cinesias, by bringing him back to the political reality of the new bird *polis*. Seeing that in Athens he is fought over by the tribes for the dithyrambic competitions, Peisetaerus invites him "to stay here with us and train the corn-crake chorus [Crekopis, punning on the Athenian tribe Cekropis] for Leotrophides [an Athenian who was mocked for his extreme thinness]" (1404–7). Cinesias recognizes now that Peisetaerus is mocking him. But is it simply because, as Dunbar (ad loc. 1405–7) presumes, the *chorēgos* (Leotrophides) and the name of the tribe (Crekopis) are both offensive to Cinesias? Surely Cinesias also realizes that if he takes up Peisetaerus's offer to join Cloudcuckootown he will be in the same position as he was in Athens—a trainer in the service of *polis* and *phylē*. To recall Cinesias' earlier words, by acquiring wings he seeks in particular *anabolai* (1385). Comotti gives the fullest analysis of *anabolē* and related terms in regard to dithyrambic poetry. He concludes that these were solo, astrophic pieces performed before (and hence usually translated as "preludes") the strophic, choral elements.[49] Over time these and other solo forms, collectively referred to as *nomes*, took larger roles in the performance of dithyrambs and were important in the development of experimental poetic techniques.[50] The fact that it is Peisetaerus's admonition to train (διδασκάλειν) choruses in the polis that finally gets rid of Cinesias points to his true desire: these solo pieces as works of art in themselves, *ars gratia artis*.[51] In the land of the birds Cinesias wanted to be free of choruses altogether, to seek out *anabolai* by himself amid the clouds, to live the old bird life without the restraints of conventional modes and to go wherever the breezes might take him.[52] He is the only truly bird-like human who enters the stage; but there is no longer any place in Cloudcuckooland for such creatures.

That life which the chorus of birds had offered in the epirrhemes of the parabasis based on the free indulgence of one's nature has, by the end of the second group of interlopers, been systematically denied to human beings. Peisetaerus, a *phronimos* judge of character, has persuaded or beaten the young men who approached the new bird city and urged them on to civic and lawful work. This clever, old man will not deny the importance of the education of the Stronger Logos in *sōphrosynē*: the habituation of the appetitive

parts of the soul that arises through music (*Clouds* 964–72), military training (985–89), and obedience to laws and fathers (990–99). Nevertheless, he will not deny himself the cleverness of the Weaker Logos.

NOTES

1. I do not claim much originality in the follow interpretation of *Clouds*, though unlike others my exposition focuses on correspondences with *Birds*. The most important influences are Nussbaum (1980); Hubbard (1991); O'Regan (1992); Vander Waerdt (1994). There is much to learn from Revermann's 2006 performance-based interpretation. For the language of Socrates see Willi (2003, 96–117). For fuller bibliography see my Introduction and notes to the section on *Clouds* therein, and Konstan (2011).

2. Later Strepsiades will recognize that horse-racing, while expensive, is a harmless and perhaps even therapeutic pursuit in comparison to his son's later pursuits (1399–1407).

3. In the course of educating Strepsiades, Socrates does appear to put him through a course in ascetic self-denial. He makes him lie on flea-infested bedding and so on. The purpose of this is not to produce moderation, but to produce a state in which mind is, to coin a Platonic phrase, alone by itself; where thoughts can be relaxed, and let go, or chopped up into little bits. The goal is thus purely intellectual and not aimed at a healthy state of the entire soul per se.

4. On the connections between Socrates of *Clouds* and Socrates of Plato's "early" dialogues, see Nussbaum (1980, 71–5) and Konstan (2011).

5. Cf. O'Regan (1992, 65–6).

6. As Socrates tells Strepsiades, Zeus is not the conventional currency (*nomisma*, 248) in the *phrontisterion*.

7. Concerning the ambiguous nature of Strepsiades's success in rhetoric, see O'Regan (1992, 85–8).

8. Thus later he asks the creditor, "how is it just (*dikaios*) that you receive back your money when you don't know anything about meteorological matters?" (cf. also 1201–2, 1241, 1249–51) This, however, will prove to be his undoing, because on this assumption he must concede the justice of father beating to his cleverer son.

9. Nussbaum (1980, 51–2, 73–4) calls the Weaker Logos' technique the negative elenchus and identifies it solely with Socrates. As Kerferd (1981, 34, 85) has remarked, however, the elenchus ought not to be attributed to Socrates alone. The Weaker Logos is but one of Socrates's weapons; it ought not to be identified with him.

10. The chorus had asked the Stronger Logos to "tell us of the nature (*physis*) of yourself" (960). As Nussbaum (1980, 54) remarks: "We might expect that the invitation to tell about his *physis* will prompt a significant contribution to the *nomos*/*physis* debate—possibly an attempt to connect traditional morality with the facts of nature, or at least with substantial benefits to human life. Right, however, simply begs the question."

11. Nussbaum (1980, 62): the Stronger Logos "is clearly indifferent to reason and to the reasoned justification of his opponent's proposals. His weapons are abuse,

intolerance and disgust. One claim is answered by threat (899); others by name-calling and unsubstantiated slurs (909–11, 916–18, 925–9, 1046, 1052–4, 1016–23); a hackneyed argument, easily answerable, by vomiting into a basin (904–6)." Cf. also Vander Waerdt (1994, 77); Hubbard (1991, 95).

12. This, as the chorus had earlier pointed out, is "what it is likely that every clever (*dexios*) man considers the best thing, being victorious in acting, deliberating, and making war with the tongue" (418–19).

13. Within the *Clouds* itself this is further underlined by the repeated use of the epithet Cronos to connote an old-fashioned person soon to be shown the folly of following the tradition ways and ideas. When Strepsiades continues to believe that Zeus punishes perjurers, Socrates calls him a lunatic smelling of the age of Cronus (who was deposed and punished by his son, Zeus) and it is twice used by the Weaker Logos against the Stronger (929, 1070 and cf. 999).

14. Thus it is no surprise that father beating is the first example that the birds use to make clear the anomian character of their society.

15. O'Regan (1992, 116).

16. 1968 ad loc. 1353–90; cf. Eupolis K-A 139, and Plato *Protagoras* 347c.

17. For the reconstruction of this play, see in particular Jaekel (1979, 101–18); Collard and Cropp (2008, 12–5); Telo (2010, 297–308); Ruffell (2011, 322–4).

18. Hartung (1843, 265); especially Plato, *Laws* 838 a-d.

19. As Jaekel (1979, 115–6), points out, this is indicated by the choral passage (fr. 27, Kannicht) which questions the "*poikilia*" (subtlety, intricate cleverness) of human beings; or as Collard and Cropp (2008, 13) "hints at the danger from man's ingenuity." Cf also fr. 28 (Kannicht) which is impossible to assign to a speaker: " it is a clever (*sophos*) man who is able to chop up (*suntemnein*) many words in a brief space." As Telo (2010) argues, the relationship between Aeolus and Macareus mirrors that of Strepsiades and Pheidippides. A foolish father loses his authority to his clever son. It is not clear, however, whether Aeolus regains his dignity by the end of the play.

20. αἰσχρὸν τὸ γ' αἰσχρόν, κἂν δοκῇ κἂν μὴ δοκῇ. Cf. also Ath. (582d) where there is a story that the prostitute, Lais, throws Macareus' line back in Euripides' face.

21. O'Regan (1992, 116); Cf. Strauss (1966, 38).

22. The argumentation of these lines is highly elliptical. Strepsiades is telling his son that under the present *nomos* he, if he has a son, will be able to punish his son without fear of retribution from the son. Pheidippides replies that if he himself does not have a son, under the present *nomos*, Strepsiades will have the last laugh because the *nomos* has worked for him but not for Pheidippides. Thus we have to draw out the conclusion that Pheidippides' argument is feasible only if he sets up the new law and does not have a son of his own thereby getting the best of both worlds. Here we might recall the various generational myths in the *Theogony* in which each of the fathers fears the coming of a son (and the father beating that will accompany them).

23. Cf. Lysias 2.19: "Having considered it to be the work of beasts to be ruled by each other through force, but to be appropriate to men through law to determine the just, and through *logos* to persuade, and in action to serve these; by law being ruled, but by *logos* being taught," and Plato *Protagoras* 322a-b.

24. Nussbaum (1980, 79).

25. Strauss (1966, 45).

26. Cf. again *Theatetus* (173c-174a). Socrates tells Theodorus that the mind of the philosopher disdains political things and is borne in all directions, "to quote Pindar 'both below the earth,' and measuring (γεωμετρεῖν) plane surfaces, and 'above the sky,' studying the stars (ἀστρονομεῖν), and investigating everywhere every nature of the whole of each of the things that are."

27. O'Regan (1993, 89).

28. As always the birds leave the brain-work to Peisetaerus, the unspeakably *phronimos* man (427). The bird herald had originally said that many people will be coming "asking for wings and crooked-taloned ways of life" (1306). As we saw in both parabaseis, birds see no distinction between legal and illegal activity; they can help with both and seem to see no problem in dealing out crooked talons to human beings as well as wings. Peisetaerus, however, in his *phronimos* fashion, will not be dealing out any such crooked-taloned ways of life to anyone.

29. As we will see, his treatment of the sycophant will represent his treatment of those who come for the immoralism of the antepirrheme. Cinesias comes for entirely different purposes.

30. I translate *nomizetai* in this strong way because it must gain this force in the context. The young man says, "I desire your *nomoi*," Peis "What sort of *nomoi*? For many are the *nomoi* of the birds?" Young man "All of them, but especially that it is considered *nomos* (*nomizetai*) . . . . . ." Compare Xen. *Hieron* 3.3. for an analogy.

31. Cf. Strauss (1966, 182). In essence, the father beater mistakes anomianism for antinomianism.

32. As noted in the discussion of *Clouds*, once the natural activities of animals are established as the moral standard for human activity, the door is open to countless arguments and counter-arguments. Peisetaerus just has to find the right birds.

33. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1353–57); cf. *Ath. Pol.* 56.6, Diog. Laert. 1.55.

34. This image would be very vivid to the audience. Before the dramatic festival there is a ceremony actually in the Theater of Dionysus in which children orphaned by war and reaching the age of eighteen were presented with hoplite armor by the state. See Dunbar 1995, ad loc. 1360–61.

35. This heady, desirous state may have been further underlined by a missing line in the text at 1343. The scholia tells us that Aristophanes (of Byzantium) filled the space, perhaps inspired by a prose explanation of the line, with the words "and I desire (ἐρῶ) the *nomoi* among the birds." While this idea is restated in 1345, it may not be a mere gloss of the later line, but an excited doubling of thought by the young man.

36. In Athens those who made a prosecution and did not win one fifth of the jury's votes were liable to a large fine. Perhaps the poverty of the sycophant shows that he has suffered this treatment in the past.

37. Peisetaerus calls the sycophant's work "στρεψοδικοπανουργία" 1468; cf. *Clouds* 434, 1455.

38. Cf. in particular Whitman (1964, 172–8, 198–9) and Dobrov (1990, 209–33). For an excellent critique of Whitman's excesses see Arrowsmith (1973).

39. See Dobrov and Urios-Aparisi (1995) on the motif of the hetairization of the Muse.

40. The kithara was the orderly instrument whereas the aulos brought with it the possibilities of much more varied *kampai*; cf. Csapo (2004, 217–21). In Plato's *Protagoras* (326b) it is asserted that the young learned the kithara in order to gain *eurythmia* and *euarmostia* in their souls.

41. Csapo (2004, 238) and revised and updated in Csapo (2011, 89–108).

42. Wallace (2004, 258).

43. On Plato and New Music see Csapo (2011, 112–28).

44. There has been much recent work that has challenged this orthodox understanding of the negative (especially moral) impact of new music on lyric poetry and society. As Kowalzig and Wilson (2013, 19) summarize it, "[o]nce the hostility of its critics and competitors has been taken into account, it is possible to say that the 'New Musical' dithyramb was probably the most truly 'democratic' genre to emerge from Athens. What it may have lost by comparison with its older forms in terms of direct mass amateur participation in choroi was balanced by the gain of its enormous popularity-and in what appears to have been a distinctively 'demotic' poetics." See especially Csapo (2004, 2011); D'Angour (2006); Franklin (2013, 213–36); LeVen (2014, 71–112). Aristophanes, however, appears to be one of those "critics and competitors" who, like Pherecrates, took issue with the ethical implications of new music. See especially Philodemus *De Mus.* 4, col 128, 31–42, who couples Damon with "the comic poets" as those who "allege" that music breeds immorality. Nevertheless, Aristophanes has an ambiguous relationship with new music, as he does with the sophists. In this very play he incorporates new musical techniques in his Hoopoe aria. But as Pohlmann (2011, 44) maintains Aristophanes takes the metrical liberties that new music offers and applies them "without any element of extravagance, aiming only at the most naturalistic imitation of the music of birds." As he concludes (62) after examining other astrophic lyric pieces in Aristophanes (e.g., the frog song in *Frogs*), Aristophanes "enjoys experimenting with the rhythmic and melodic achievements of 'New Music' for the purposes of his own genre: comedy." Cf. Zimmermann (1993, 48).

45. On the priority of music over verse in New Music see Csapo (2011, 83–5).

46. If Barker (2004, 185–204) is correct in arguing that the aulos playing of the Nightingale prior to the parabasis of *Birds* was a parody of new music and that, like the prostituted Muse in Pherecrates' *Cheiron*, Procne was decked out as a prostitute, Cinesias' desire to become a nightingale becomes yet more pointed. And perhaps, as Barker suggests, the aulos player-nightingale-prostitute returns to the stage for this scene, thus exhibiting visually the new music's prostitution of the Muse.

47. He is thus well-paired with the central interloper of the first group, Meton, who also arrived for no material gain, but for a challenge to his intellectual skill.

48. Pausanias tells us (9.12.5–6) that Pronomos, the aulētēs (piper), "delighted his audience somewhat excessively both with his facial expressions and with the movements of his entire body," quoted in Csapo (2011, 73).

49. Comotti (1989, 116): "Le anabola avrebbero cosi perso del tutto il loro originario carattere funzionale di dedica e di introduzione per diventare delle vere e proprie 'arie di bravura', non certo improvisate ma accuratamente composte per dare il massimo risalto alle qualita espressive ed interpretative del cantante solista." See also Zimmermann (2008, 24); LeVen (2014, 73).

50. See Franklin (2012), who quotes ps-Aristotle, *Problems* 19.15: "Why is it that *nomoi* were not composed in antistrophes, but other songs—those for the chorus—were? Is it because *nomoi* were the pieces of professionals, and since they were already capable of mimesis and adaptation, their song became long and multiform? And just as with the diction, the melodies too followed the mimesis, always becoming different. For it is more necessary that melodies be mimetic than words. Which is also why the dithyrambs too, after they became mimetic, no longer had antistrophes, although they had once had them. And the reason is the fact that in antiquity it was the free citizens themselves who were in the choruses; and so it was hard for many to sing in the professional style, so that they used to sing melodies in a single *harmonia*. For it is easier for one person to make many modulations than for many, and for a professional rather than those who are safeguarding the character (sc. of the composition). Wherefore they used to compose simpler melodies for them. And the antistrophic form is a simple thing, since it has number (or 'one rhythm') and is measured by a single unit. And it is for this same reason that pieces sung from the stage (i.e., those of actors) are not antistrophic, but those of the chorus are; for an actor is a professional and mimetic, but a chorus is less so."

51. D'Angour (2011, 195, 204) on this scene in *Birds* comments, "[i]n this passage the dithyramb appears to be envisaged as a virtuoso solo performance rather than the circular dance that more often characterizes it. This was not the only metamorphosis the genre had undergone . . . .The decline of amateur musical skills was irreversible. While dithyrambs continued to require formal choric performances, the term 'dithyrambic' came to be applied to virtuoso solo songs (kitharodic *nomoi*) sung to lyre accompaniment." Cf. Martin (2011, 91–2): "[Cinesias'] flying fantasy is like a sublimated form of wandering—it is all in the mind and words, an escape from his more mundane task of *didaskalos*."

52. Cf. Plato *Gorgias* (501e-502a): τί δὲ ἡ τῶν χορῶν διδασκαλία καὶ ἡ τῶν διθυράμβων ποίησις; οὐ τοιαύτη τίς σοι καταφαίνεται; ἢ ἡγῇ τι φροντίζειν Κινησίαν τὸν Μέλητος, ὅπως ἐρεῖ τι τοιοῦτον ὅθεν ἂν οἱ ἀκούοντες βελτίους γίγνοιντο, ἢ ὅτι μέλλει χαριεῖσθαι τῷ ὄχλῳ τῶν θεατῶν; "What about the production of choruses and poetry of dithyrambs? Is it not clearly of such a kind [namely produced for pleasure alone]? Or do you believe that Cinesias, son of Meles, is at all concerned about how he will say something which would make his audience better or is it that he intends to please the mass of the audience?"

Chapter 8

Persuading the Gods

PROMETHEUS KEKALUMMENOS

With the expulsion of the second group of interlopers Peisetaerus has established Cloudcuckooland as a paradigm for human beings very different from that initially offered in the parabasis and which caused such eros and mania in human beings. It will be a place not so different from a traditional Greek polis, based upon law and respect for elders and within which the private desires for pleasure and gain will be moderated for the sake of the common good. Cloudcuckooland, however, is not merely a city; it is also the seat of the new gods. Peisetaerus has yet to gain the scepter and lightning bolt of Zeus. As the Chorus had stated in the second parabasis, it is the birds who now see all and rule all (1058–59); but the birds themselves would not be involved in or concerned about the justice of human affairs. Peisetaerus's treatment of the second group of interlopers has thrown this passive aspect of bird divinity into question; but even with the establishment of Nephelokokkugia as a paradigm of old-fashioned *eunomia*, it has become clear that *nomos* and persuasion may work as agents of civic virtue only for some human beings; others need that mattock with which *Dike* keeps human beings in check (1240). At the same time, Peisetaerus has yet to deal with the threat of violence from the Olympians that Iris had outlined. The final threat to the *akolasia* (unrestrained passion) of our comic hero must come from the Olympians themselves.

After two choral passages (which will be dealt with in the next chapter), a figure enters the stage carrying a parasol and "wrapped up" either by his cloak pulled up over the back of his head so as to cover his face completely or by some sort of veil.[1] At this stage it would be impossible for the audience to discern who the character might be, though it would assume from the

costume that it is female.[2] We do, however, learn two points in the comic confusion caused by the cloaking of the figure: (s)he fears being seen by Zeus and the gods (1494, 1496), and his or her goal is explicitly to find Peisetaerus (1495). Could this be Iris returning, now with her wings clipped and scared of Zeus because she had not reached mortals and stopped the famine? Or some "Alcmene, Alope or Semele" (or even Io) who flees Zeus coming down from Olympus "with a hard on" (557–9)? The scene, as it develops, thus provides a complete inversion of the Iris scene in which the audience expected a male god. Here, instead of a female Olympian or a mortal, a male Titan is brought on stage.

Once uncovered, the figure is instantaneously recognized by Peisetaerus to be Prometheus, a god dear to the hero (*philos*, as Meton was (1010))[3] and, more generally, to Athenians who, as far as is known, were the only Greeks to worship Prometheus in cult.[4] The torch race in his honor, from the Academy to the Keramaikos (cf. *Frogs* 129–33), was connected with the cult of Hephaestus and honored the technical skills (particularly pottery) that were such an important part of the Athenian economy. Likewise Prometheus's depictions in Athenian art of the fifth-century focus on his role as fire-bringer and not, as in the art of Archaic Greece, on his punishment.[5] In Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, Prometheus's cleverness is shown to be far inferior to Zeus's; his theft of fire for human beings and his attempted deceptions ultimately bring about bondage for the Titan and, for human beings, their final separation from gods and their allotment to a life of want and toil. From what remains of the literature from Hesiod up through the fifth century, the Prometheus theme appears rarely to have been touched. Aeschylus appears to be the only tragedian who dealt with the myth as the main subject of tragedy (but cf. Sophocles's satyr play, *Pandora*).[6] From what remains of this trilogy (or dilogy[7]) it is clear that Aeschylus remodeled many aspects of the Hesiodic version. It is Prometheus and not Gaia who gives Zeus advice essential to his victory over the Titans; Prometheus's theft of fire is explicitly motivated by his love of human beings and not by his rivalry with Zeus; and Prometheus, even while chained, provides a critical problem for Zeus because of his foreknowledge of a fatal marriage that could lead to Zeus's downfall. As has often been noted, the Aeschylean Prometheus, at least in the *Prometheus Bound*, represents the power of knowledge and guile set against the forces and advocates of brute strength and violence.[8]

In *Birds* Prometheus retains many of these Aeschylean features and Aristophanes's knowledge of the play is evident from a variety of allusions throughout.[9] When last we saw Peisetaerus with a god it was Iris who was sent away with threats of violence both against herself and Zeus in a scene that hinted at a coming Gigantomachy. Now Prometheus comes to Peisetaerus, as he had once come to Zeus during the Titanomachy, with advice

of guile rather than of force; in particular, his advice concerns a future marriage that will precipitate Zeus's downfall. He states that he is doing what he is doing because he hates the gods and loves human beings (1545–49); but not, as it seems, birds—and who could blame him after being the daily meal of Zeus's eagle! This Prometheus, however, is not the overtly proud Prometheus of Hesiod nor yet that of Aeschylus who boasts and blusters against Zeus and his tyranny. This is a Prometheus who has learned his lesson; chastened and scared out of his wits. He knows by long and hard experience the power of Zeus. The question remains to what degree he has learned from his earlier mistakes.

On the most practical level, the appearance of Prometheus is necessary to the plot of *Birds* as a means of providing inside information about developments on Olympus. "Zeus is done for," he tells Peisetaerus, but not because the savor (*knisa*) of sacrifices from human beings is being blocked from Olympus by the bird-wall, but rather because human beings have stopped sacrificing to the Olympians altogether (1514–20). But why, we might ask, does Zeus not simply smash Cloudcuckootown to bits and show his power to mortals as Iris had threatened he would do (1238–42)? As it turns out, the Olympians also have barbarian gods to deal with; ones scarier than the threat that the birds present. The Olympians have kept them at bay by importing to them parts of the sacrifices (1524), but now deprived of this they are threatening to march against Zeus (1522). Peisetaerus (and Prometheus too) therefore realizes that divine sovereignty need not be determined by might alone. The threat of violence to the Olympians from both sides (from the Triballian gods up-country (ἄνωθεν 1522) and the birds from below) would leave the Olympians vulnerable. The Olympians and the Triballians (who have come to some sort of uneasy agreement among themselves to live democratically (1570)) will soon be sending ambassadors to make a settlement. Thus the scene is set for the great persuader again to work his magic.

Prometheus thereafter tells Peisetaerus to demand from Zeus the scepter for the birds. This has been the goal all along and so comes as no surprise. In this regard Prometheus plays the same role as he did in *Prometheus Bound*, in which he knew of "the new plan by which [Zeus] is to be stripped of his scepter and position" (*timai PV* 170–1). In *Birds*, however, he is not shouting this news indiscriminately to any passerby, but tells it in secret under the protection of a parasol. More importantly Prometheus adds a second demand: Peisetaerus must ask that Zeus give *Basileia* to him as his wife (1536). It is in this advice that the most unexpected twist resides. The overthrow of Zeus will not arise, as threatened in the Prometheus trilogy, from Zeus's marriage to a goddess (*PV* 908–10) and his offspring, but by the marriage of Peisetaerus to a goddess hitherto unknown to Peisetaerus—and the audience—for Peisetaerus must ask who this Basileia is.[10] She is the final linch-pin in Peisetaerus's

plan and could only be known through Prometheus's betrayal of the source of Zeus's political power.

As in the Titanomachy of *Theogony* and in the *Prometheus Bound*, the penultimate scenes of *Birds* present the universe in a state of crisis and disorder. Unlike Hesiod, Aeschylus does not so quickly resolve the problems that attend "new rule." In Hesiod's *Theogony*, the victorious Olympians voluntarily urge Zeus to become their king and he justly allots to them their *timai* (883–5). That his rule would be one of good counsel and justice is reaffirmed by his first two marriages. His first wife, as king of the gods, is Metis or "cunning intelligence" who was destined to bear the successor to Zeus's rule. In order to prevent this threat Zeus swallows Metis who will in future be able to give advice inside him. Secondly, he marries Themis who gives birth to all the gods that look over the justice and injustice of human beings. Zeus thereby consolidates his manifest power with justice and intelligence.

In Aeschylus, Zeus's politically legitimate and just rule is not so easily achieved.[11] His prolonged conflict and final reconciliation with Prometheus thirteen generations later represents, among other things, an extended version of the swallowing of Metis by Zeus. In *Prometheus Bound,* Zeus's rule is characterized particularly by its newness and its harsh and violent attempts to establish itself. The chorus states that "new steersmen rule Olympus; and Zeus without *themis* rules with newly-contrived *nomoi*" (148–50; cf. 955, 960) and that "Zeus rules with *idioi nomoi*" ("his own personal laws," 404); and Oceanus remarks that "a harsh monarch rules without accountability" (324; cf. 312). Set against this arbitrary power based, as the opening of the play makes so evident, upon *Kratos* (Power) and *Bia* (Violence) is the philanthropic and cunning intelligence of Prometheus now brutally chained to a rock. He alone went against Zeus's plan to destroy the human race (233–38) and stole fire for mankind—"the teacher of every *technē* for mortals and a mighty resource." Nevertheless the harshness of Zeus is matched only by the arrogance and even the hybris of Prometheus.[12] He gave to mortals "*timai* beyond *dike*" (30, spoken by Hephaistus) or "beyond due measure" (spoken by the chorus, 507); his punishment, as Oceanus states, is "the wages of an excessively arrogant tongue" (318; cf. 180); and "for all his cleverness, he does not clearly know that punishment is brought against a misguided tongue." Prometheus, as Hermes astutely remarks, actually seems to revel in the punishment brought against him (971). He is as much a law unto himself as Zeus is; and Hermes' final arguments to Prometheus, to turn to moderation (*sōphronein*, 983), right thinking (*orthōs phronein*, 1000) and sensible counsel (*euboulia*, 1035, 1038), though praised and urged by his allied chorus of Oceanids, are rudely dismissed by the Titan as he welcomes his coming tortures.

It is impossible to know in detail the action of the following play, *Prometheus Unbound*. The play clearly contained descriptions or scenes that included Prometheus still bound and tortured by the eagle; the killing of the eagle by Heracles and Prometheus's foretelling of his coming labors; the revelation of Prometheus's secret concerning Zeus; his reconciliation with Zeus and final release; and descriptions of the future cult of Prometheus in Athens.[13] Might and cunning intelligence (*mētis*) are reconciled. As Griffith concludes, "cosmic order requires that the two be combined." But how does this reconciliation affect man's lot? In *Prometheus Bound* we learn that Prometheus had protected man from annihilation by stealing fire for man and teaching him all of the arts. He taught them to house themselves, to predict the seasons, numbers, writing, sailing, domestication of animals, medicine, prophesy and mining (447–506). But, as Conacher and Griffith both emphasize, a glaring omission from his speech and education of human beings is the communal or political arts. Therefore, as Griffith concludes, "we must assume that these are still lacking, perhaps to be supplied by Zeus in the sequel."[14] Prometheus may give human beings technology to gain their needs and to bring them to the brink of civilization, but he did not appear to have the foresight to teach them how to live peaceably among themselves. Indeed, in his description of Io's future wanderings, Prometheus describes a world of war and violence, inhabited by bellicose Scythians, Chalybes, and Amazons.

We cannot know to what degree this failing on Prometheus's part is emphasized in the now lost sequel. But in Plato's account of Protagoras's myth concerning the coming into being of the political art, a myth clearly based upon the Aeschylean tradition more than the Hesiodic,[15] Prometheus's failings (or, at least, his insufficiency) become more than evident. As in Aeschylus's account, human beings are helpless creatures in a harsh world, though not because of Zeus's anger, but through the mistakes of Epimetheus. Prometheus thus steals fire and, therefore, the arts that are necessary for their livelihood (*bios*). They acquire speech and produce houses, clothing, cultivate their own food and worship the gods, much as they did in the tragedy. They formed cities in order to protect themselves from wild beasts, but "committed injustices against one another since they did not have the political art" which resided with Zeus (322b). The Promethean arts, as outlined by both Aeschylus and Protagoras, are alone not sufficient for the survival of human beings. That kind of intellect that is purely technical or scientific is not alone sufficient for the good ordering of society or the moderating of the private desires of human beings.

In the tragedy, the insufficiency of the Promethean arts is most conspicuously evident in the arrogance of Prometheus himself, the savior of human beings who, out of "excessive love" of them, is willing to go beyond *dike*, and to undergo further torture in the pride of his own intellect and foresight.

He scorns the path of *sōphrosunē* and *euboulia* (good counsel) that Hermes and the chorus urge. To be sure, Aeschylus elicits our sympathy and partisanship with him insofar as he is philanthropic. In the end, however, while justice may be restored to the universe, the political arts brought to human beings, and their savior freed, Prometheus, for all of his forethought, is clearly Zeus's inferior. Even on Olympus, the intellect must be curbed before the political necessities of justice.

Playing with the particularly Aeschylean and Protagorean Prometheus, Aristophanes brings on a wily but humbled and emasculated figure of vengeance.[16] He now knows the kind of prudent shrewdness that is necessary to secure the scepter. Peisetaerus must marry *Basileia* who is Zeus's treasurer not only of the thunderbolt, but also of everything else that is essential for Zeus's rule (1537–41):

> καλλίστη κόρη,
> ἥπερ ταμιεύει τὸν κεραυνὸν τοῦ Διὸς
> καὶ τἄλλ' ἁπαξάπαντα, τὴν εὐβουλίαν,
> τὴν εὐνομίαν, τὴν σωφροσύνην, τὰ νεώρια,
> τὴν λοιδορίαν, τὸν κωλακρέτην, τὰ τριώβολα.
>
> She is a most beautiful maiden who is the treasurer of Zeus's thunderbolt and absolutely everything else: good counsel, obedience to law, moderation, dockyards, wrangling words, the paymaster and three-obol payments.

Basileia combines all of those requirements essential for political rule: not only might and the power to punish (the thunderbolts) and the rewards and pleasures for human beings, and especially Athenians (the ship yards for trade/war; the easy doling out of state funds; public wrangling and slander), but also the political virtues. In short, she represents in divine form and stands in synecdoche for (much as Metis and Themis did in Hesiod) all that Peisetaerus has already taken pains to establish to gain cosmic sovereignty. As we saw in Peisetaerus's initial appeal to human beings, his preliminary means of persuasion consisted of showing mortals that they would gain wealth and all good things freely and easily (589–602; 729–37) and could act according to their natural desires (753–768, 785–800). Human beings, in turn, took up this life of easy hedonism, but as it turned out, they actually took their greatest pleasures in waking up early and pasturing on points of law (1286–89), just as Euelpides had described in the prologue (41–2). Men, and in particular Athenians, want the rough and tumble of public life (*loidoria*) as much as their easy wealth (the dockyards, the three obolses) for a happy life. But, as became evident from his treatment of the second group of interlopers, Peisetaerus will also have the stick. *Basileia*, the former *paredros* of Zeus (1753) and the comic equivalent of his other *paredroi*, Dike (Hesiod *WD* 256–62) and Themis (Pindar *O* 8.22), will be able to provide for the new ruler a divine

source of moderation of desires (*sōphrosunē, eunomia*) for the sake of the common good backed up by the threat of thunderbolts; but she also understands human desires and human nature and can deal out pleasures. What *Basileia* presides over are precisely those things that Peisetaerus has been manipulating from the beginning. He now only needs that ultimate guarantor of force, Zeus's lightning bolts.

The advice of Prometheus paves the way for the action of the rest of the play. He tells two things that Peisetaerus did not and could not know: that the Olympians are desperate because the "barbarian gods are shrieking like Illyrians" and are threatening to march against them and so will be sending ambassadors; and, secondly, that Zeus has as his steward a previously unknown goddess who deals out all of the necessary requirements of ruling. It is highly fitting that this information should be given to our comic hero by that god who, on the tragic stage, failed in his rebellion against Zeus precisely because he lacked an understanding of the tools of the political art—precisely those things over which *Basileia* is the treasurer. Now, after long punishment and a life as self-imposed political exile ("an out and out Timon," 1549) among the gods, he enters and leaves the comic stage (like the Io of *Prometheus Bound*) as a frightened girl. He carries his parasol so that he might appear like a young girl in a religious procession; and, to add further insult, Peisetaerus gives him his night-stool to carry as well (1552).

THE DIVINE EMBASSY

In the Iris scene Aristophanes had prepared us for a final showdown of force between the birds and the Olympians. Peisetaerus laughed with scorn at the threat of an avenging *Dike*. Peisetaerus, as he threatened, had the power to destroy Zeus and thus the threat of *Dike* punishing hybris was no more than a bogey-man used to intimidate slavish types (1243–51). As we learned from the second interloper scene, however, Peisetaerus is not so foolish as to deny the power of *Dike* in regard to men. Prometheus, furthermore, has revealed that the heavenly realm is not so different from the human realm. The Olympians, like the Athenians, do not hold a monopoly on divine *Bia* (Violence)—there are also barbarian gods. Therefore the way is laid open for *Peitho* (Persuasion).

At the same time, this penultimate scene pushes to the extreme the confounding of the ordering and hierarchy of the universe that began with Peisetaerus's plan to found a bird polis. Barbarian gods are now part of a divine democracy (1570); Poseidon is addressed as a human being (*anthrōpos*, 1638); the immortal Zeus can die and must follow Solonian inheritance laws (1660); the once human, now divine Heracles wants his meat and not merely the *knisa*. The birds, still the rightful gods of the cosmos (1600–1), at the

same time retain their old role as a source of food for a human being and hungry gods; while Peisetaerus himself is a bird (1600), a human being (1575) and a god (1600–01, 1634–5). It is for Peisetaerus to set the cosmos in order according to his will. Like Zeus at the first sacrifice at Mecone, where gods and mortals came to their settlement, Peisetaerus will be the winner in guile at this feast and settlement, and human beings will once again know their place.

Aristophanes quickly establishes the characteristics of the three divine ambassadors. Poseidon opens with two dignified and paratragic lines which are soon reduced to abuse of the Triballian god, who is clearly unused to the formal cloak of the Greeks. In accordance with Xenophanes' criticism that the gods are merely likenesses of the beings over whom they rule (D-K B16), the Triballian god is, like the Triballi, "the most barbaric of all the gods." In this formal setting, however, he does not appear to be violent and "shrieking like an Illyrian," but a bumbling incompetent who can be intimidated by Heracles (1628–9) and whose gibberish can be interpreted by either side as it sees fit. Heracles, playing his stock comic role as a glutton,[17] is hungry and so, to the dismay of Poseidon, eager to use violence against the human being who has blockaded the gods. This back and forth between the appetites and anger of Heracles, on the one hand, and a more tempered and rational Poseidon, on the other, is fundamental both to the humor of the scene and to Peisetaerus's strategy. As Peisetaerus had made his way into the bird world via the bird that was a former human and erotomaniac, so too his final act of persuasion to secure his godhead will be, in the most decisive respect, to convince that god who was once the most appetitive and passionate of human beings, the son of Zeus himself.

Following Prometheus's advice, Peisetaerus needs to persuade the embassy of two points: first, that the gods must return the scepter, which represents the hegemony of the cosmos, to the birds as a whole; secondly, that Zeus must give *Basileia* to Peisetaerus as his wife. As Peisetaerus knows (and as Prometheus reaffirmed) the scepter means little without the force (lightning bolts) and political tools to retain it.

Peisetaerus wins Heracles over to the idea of returning the scepter to the birds merely by the presence of barbecued bird meat (1603). Poseidon, on the other hand, means to give Peisetaerus a run for his money. He announces that the gods have nothing to gain by fighting the war and that the birds have everything to gain by making peace (1591–1594). In a move used by Peisetaerus throughout, Poseidon offers to the birds the constant enjoyment of ponds filled with rainwater and a life of halcyon days—a bird utopia. As Poseidon will soon learn, Peisetaerus is the master of the utopian game, and so Peisetaerus ignores this offer altogether. Peisetaerus regains control by shifting the argument from Poseidon's position of expediency (οὐ κερδαίνομεν ("we get not profit,"1591, or in Thucydidean terms τὸ συμφόρον) to that of

τὸ δίκαιον (justice). In short he summons again the argument by which he had first won over the birds (1596–1602):

ἀλλ' οὔτε πρότερον πώποθ' ἡμεῖς ἤρξαμεν
πολέμου πρὸς ὑμᾶς, νῦν τ' ἐθέλομεν, εἰ δοκεῖ,
ἐὰν τὸ δίκαιον ἀλλὰ νῦν ἐθέλητε δρᾶν,
σπονδὰς ποεῖσθαι. Τὰ δὲ δίκαι' ἐστὶν ταδί,
τὸ σκῆπτρον ἡμῖν τοῖσιν ὄρνισιν πάλιν
τὸν Δί' ἀποδοῦναι. κἂν διαλλαττώμεθα
ἐπὶ τοῖσδε, τοὺς πρέσβεις ἐπ' ἄριστον καλῶ.

We did not begin the war with you first, and now we are willing, if you agree and if you are willing even now to do what is just, to come to terms. And what is just is this: that Zeus return the scepter back to us, the birds. And if we reconcile on these terms, I invite the ambassadors to lunch.

The birds did not begin the war, for the gods first usurped the throne from the birds and it is just that Zeus restores it to them. Poseidon does not refute this argument, but he clearly will not be won over, as the birds were, by the argument from τὸ δίκαιον (justice) and priority of rule. Thus, Peisetaerus strategically moves back to τὸ συμφόρον (expediency). The gods will actually be stronger and have more secure power and honor if the birds rule over human beings below. The neglect of those aspects of human life by which piety is chiefly measured, oaths and votive offerings, will be instantly punished by birds. This is enough to win over Poseidon, and they vote to return the scepter to the birds (1606–25).

As traditional and *nomos*-abiding justice was restored to the human realm, so too now is traditional piety, but of a more efficient kind. The atheistic Socrates of the *Clouds* had argued that the indiscriminate nature of Zeus's punishment of impiety, the thunderbolt, was proof of his non-existence (398–402). Now the Olympians will have no such problem. As it turns out, the fact that birds live among human beings and not up in the clouds, will turn out to be not so pleasant and inexpensive for human beings as Peisetaerus first suggested:

ὁ κόραξ παρελθὼν τοὐπιορκοῦντος λάθρᾳ
προσπτόμενος ἐκκόψει τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν θενών.

The crow will approach, undetected by the perjurer,
And in its flight, strike and knock out his eye. (1611–12)

καταπτόμενος ἰκτῖνος ἁρπάσας λάθρᾳ
προβάτοιν δυοῖν τιμὴν ἀνοίσει τῷ θεῷ.

Flying down, the kite having snatched undetected the value
Of two sheep will bring it up to the god. (1624–25)

Previously, Peisetaerus had argued that the raven would prove bird divinity to men by knocking out the eyes of sheep (582–3), now they will punish by knocking out men's own eyes and the kite, renowned for stealing the meat from the altars of the gods (892, *Peace* 1099–1100) will now steal from human beings and bring it to the gods. A very striking fact in both cases is that the birds will act secretly, undetected (λάθρᾳ) by the impious one, as they swiftly fly down from above. In the antepirrheme of the first parabasis, this ability to go undetected via wings was the "great and pleasant" aspect of bird-hood par excellence. It was offered to human beings by the Chorus, like a ring of Gyges, to do whatever hedonistic or even criminal act they wanted—eat, shit, or commit adultery—and get away with it. Now, however, wings will be turned against human beings and will be part of a more efficient means to keep men in their duty to the gods. Indeed if the birds in this role resemble anything it is the "guardians of Zeus" of Hesiod's *Works and Days* (252–5):

> τρὶς γὰρ μύριοί εἰσιν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ
> ἀθάνατοι Ζηνὸς φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,
> οἵ ῥα φυλάσσουσίν τε δίκας καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα
> ἠέρα ἑσσάμενοι, πάντη φοιτῶντες ἐπ' αἶαν.
>
> For thirty thousand are Zeus's immortal guardians over
> mortal men on the fruitful earth, and they keep guard
> over their judgments and crooked deeds, dressed in *aer* (i.e.,
> invisibility), as they go over the entire earth.

Like the birds, Zeus's guardians come upon mortals undetected, in this case, invisible. But the birds are not simply watchers, they are also punishers. They will not be slow like Homer's limp-footed *Litai*—entreaties to the gods—(*Iliad* 9.502–12), but act straightaway. Previously the birds had promised that, because they lived among men, all good things would come to them instantaneously (παραχρῆμα, 625). As it appears, however, the birds will have a different function on earth.

With the alliance between gods and birds restored, the world, as it seems, will return to its old order, but under a tighter administration. Men will be kept in line in their observances of the gods above, the gods will get their due honor from below, but the birds, while they will regain the scepter and "rule below," appear to have become again the servants of the Olympians and their own *tyrannos*, Peisetaerus. The question remains whether Peisetaerus himself will become the ultimate *tyrannos*, a new Zeus.

As Poseidon well knows it is one thing to return the scepter to the birds, but another thing altogether to give to Peisetaerus as his wife *Basileia*, the treasurer of Zeus's thunderbolt and all those things that ensure a stable rule. Or to put it in different terms, as Zeus had learned in the *Prometheia*, it is one thing to acquire

rule, another thing to retain it. Poseidon refuses even to discuss the issue of *Basileia* and announces that the embassy is leaving. Tempted by Peisetaerus's barbecue, Heracles still remains very much interested. Poseidon, therefore, attempts to use Heracles's appetites to his own advantage: if Zeus loses his sovereignty and dies, Heracles will be left with nothing and become impoverished (πένης, 1644). In this position Peisetaerus has to up the ante. Barbecued chicken will not be sufficient to win Heracles over this time, but rather that other aspect of Heracles (so evident in Euripides' recent play, *Heracles*), his anger or thymos.[18]

Heracles had entered the stage with words not dissimilar to those of the father beater (1574–78):

Ἡ.Ρ. ἀκήκοας
ἐμοῦ γ' ὅτι τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἄγχειν βούλομαι,
ὅστις ποτ' ἔσθ' ὁ τοὺς θεοὺς ἀποτειχίσας.
Π.Ο. ἀλλ,' ὦγάθ,' ἠρήμεσθα περὶ διαλλαγῶν πρέσβεις.
Ἡ.Ρ. διπλασίως μᾶλλον ἄγχειν μοι δοκεῖ.

HE. You have heard my opinion; I want to strangle the human being who is walling off the gods.
PO. But my good man, we have been chosen as ambassadors concerning reconciliation.
HE. Then I resolve to strangle him twice as bad.

Like the father beater, Heracles has come to Cloudcuckooland filled with a desire to do some strangling (ἄγχειν).[19] Heracles, the experienced strangler of beasts and men, however, has his anger turned outward, against the enemies of the state and not his father. He has come down to be the muscle for Poseidon's clever diplomacy; but, as we have already seen, such evident lack of moderation can also be turned against the intentions of the embassy. Thus Poseidon makes clear in practical terms what Peisetaerus's offer means. Heracles, this "fool and belly" of a man (1604), might have his feast on some birds now, but will lose absolutely all of Zeus's property in the future (1644–45). Peisetaerus quickly steps in and calls Poseidon's argument complete and utter sophistry (περισοφίζεται). As soon becomes apparent this plain of Phlegra is seeing its final battle in *alazoneia* and, as in the first Gigantomachy, Heracles will prove to be the key to victory.

Peisetaerus pulls Heracles aside from his uncle to persuade him alone (1647). Although this is a common device in new comedy, this is the only time of which we know that an old comic poet employed the device of two characters conversing aside and unheard by a third character.[20] In tragedy we only know of one such occasion (Eur. *Ion* 1520–52). For Aristophanes to resort to such an extraordinary device we must assume that he wanted to make it very clear either that Peisetaerus could not persuade Heracles with

his uncle present or that Peisetaerus did not wish Poseidon to hear the method and the terms on which he wins Heracles over. As we saw earlier, Peisetaerus had persuaded the birds by arguing that their fathers were incompetents and then, via the birds, he had persuaded human beings that they would live a much more pleasant life in accordance with nature, beyond the reach of the authority of *nomoi* in the *polis* and fathers in the *oikos*. Now that he must win over the gods, it is highly fitting that his decisive move is physically to separate the younger and passionate son of Zeus from his older and conventional uncle. Now that *nomos* and *dikē* have been re-established, however, Peisetaerus cannot use the megalanomian argument that the younger and stronger has the natural right to overthrow and take the place of the older and weaker. Instead, he uses *nomoi* against the father and, in particular, those *nomoi* that concern the right relations between fathers and sons. As Peisetaerus argues, Heracles may be Zeus's son by nature, but he is not recognized to be his son by law (1649–50):

> τῶν γὰρ πατρῴων οὐδ' ἀκαρῆ μέτεστί σοι
> κατὰ τοὺς νόμους. νόθος γὰρ εἶ κοὐ γνήσιος.
>
> For according to the law not even a shred of your father's estate will be yours.
> For you are a bastard and not legitimate.

Heracles's mother is not an Olympian and, therefore, according to Athenian law, at least, Heracles has no claim to Zeus's property or rule.[21] In fact, as Peisetaerus speciously alleges, Poseidon himself as "legitimate brother" will be the person to gain most when Zeus dies. Heracles is dumbfounded by this, and we might imagine him looking over toward Poseidon in anger as Peisetaerus reveals Poseidon's motive in "raising up" Heracles's hopes of inheritance (1657). But Peisetaerus must also turn Heracles's anger against his father.

Heracles himself had no idea that he was a bastard (*nothos*, 1651). As a final proof, Peisetaerus brings Heracles to acknowledge that Zeus himself has not treated him as a legitimate son: he has not even introduced him into his *phratry*—a clear proof that the father believed that his son was legitimate. Thus Peisetaerus makes Zeus complicit in this deception and plan to leave Heracles with nothing. Zeus, unlike, for example, Pericles,[22] has done nothing to provide for Heracles, and the law of Solon prevents any redress on Heracles's part. But, as the audience must have known, there was another law of Solon that stated that a son had no legal duty to provide for his father if he had not taught him a trade or if he begot him out of legal wedlock.[23] Heracles, therefore, has no *legal* obligation to his father. By demonstrating Heracles's status as a bastard, Peisetaerus is able to achieve his final, but legal, "father beating." Heracles gapes upward (ἄνω) into the sky and has "assault and

battery in his eyes" (1671). His desires for strangling are now turned away from Peisetaerus and upward toward the sky, the realm of his father.

In accordance with typical Peisetairean strategy, once Peisetaerus has stirred up the anger of Heracles against his father, he consolidates their alliance by offering him what he has always desired and what his father refused to give him: tyranny over the Olympians (1673).[24] As a final incentive (and in addition to the tasty bird-roast), Peisetaerus offers Heracles that most utopian of drinks, birds' milk (1673; cf. 734, Dunbar (1995) ad loc. and *Wasps* 508). Not surprisingly, Heracles remarks that he was always of the opinion that Peisetaerus's terms concerning Basileia were "just" (1674–75).

In each of the three realms (bird, human and divine), Peisetaerus succeeds by setting the younger generation against the old and thereafter setting himself in the place of authority formerly held by the "fathers." In *Clouds*, Pheidippides had asked his father whether he wanted to hear the proof of father beating via the weaker or stronger speech (1336–7). The one proffered was that of the weaker speech. Pheidippides proceeded to undermine the authority of *nomos* and established practice, and looked instead to the necessities of nature (using birds as his example). Likewise in *Birds*, Peisetaerus had initially won over the race of birds and then that of men by setting up that most intangible and easily manipulated concept, *physis*, as the standard by which the universe ought to be ordered. In such a world sons, like Pheidippides can, with "natural" justice, rise up against their fathers. In the final scenes of *Birds*, on the other hand, after the Father Beater has been turned away to the frontiers, Peisetaerus offers a justification for a special case of "father beating" in accordance with the "stronger speech," that is, in accordance with what is conventionally or legally just. Peisetaerus merely exchanges *nomos* for *physis* as his standard. This creates a situation that is the complete inversion of bird society. In a strictly political and legal society, fathers only owe sons their duty out of law, not out of natural affection. Zeus begat Heracles out of wedlock and did not introduce him into his phratry, thereby denying his son's legal claim to inheritance. Because Heracles has no legal duty to his father to support him, his betrayal of him is, therefore, not legally unjust. Peisetaerus is able to gain the alliance of Heracles to join him against Zeus on legally just terms.

In *Clouds*, the Weaker Logos summarily dismissed the Stronger Logos' assertion that Dike exists. As he argued (904–6):

> πῶς δῆτα Δίκης οὔσης ὁ Ζεὺς
> οὐκ ἀπόλωλεν τὸν πατέρ' αὑτοῦ
> δήσας;
>
> How then, if justice exists, has Zeus not
> Been destroyed, since he bound his own father?

Under Peisetaerus's rule, no one will be able to question the existence and power of *Dike* on these grounds. Peisetaerus's final ousting of Zeus had to be in accordance with conventional justice. Illegal father beating has been put in its place; but men clever with words can still bring it about within the realm of *nomos*.

At the same time, the real means to power has been exposed to be not father beating per se, but the persuasion of sons by clever older men to their cause. As Peisetaerus had told the sycophant, in barber shops, fathers are constantly complaining about how their sons' ambitions are given wings by politicians, generals and tragedians (1440–45). In *Clouds* and *Birds* we see sons turned against their own fathers by two kindred but very different men. What clearly distinguishes Peisetaerus from Socrates is, on the one hand, Peisetaerus's prudent assessment of character, and on the other, his erotic nature. Where Socrates denies the existence of Zeus, Peisetaerus takes Zeus on at his own game. Where Socrates teaches anyone the method of antilogy that can undermine the conventional, represented by father beating, Peisetaerus keeps father beating strictly under his own control.

NOTES

1. Hague (1996, 43).

2. On the *kalumma* (veil or wrap) and the parasol as paraphernalia associated particularly with women, see Hague (1996, 43–6); Stone (1981, 202–3, 258). Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1508–9) notes that "a parasol is a comically incongruous item for Prom. to be carrying, for its use at Athens seems to have been a female preserve."

3. Prometheus is thrice called a *sophistēs* in *Prometheus Bound* (62, 944, 947). Therefore, his "dearness" to Peisetaerus may not only be because of his connections with Athens and his rebellion against the Olympians, but also his sophistic qualities, for which see Ruffell (2012, 40, 76–7).

4. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1494–1552).

5. Griffith (1983, 3 n.10).

6. For the sake of convenience I will call the author of *PV* Aeschylus, though I am aware of the problems (see n. 15 below). The large number of echoes of *PV* in *Birds* (for which see Dunbar 1995, ad loc. 199–200) may add to the argument for a later dating of the play.

7. As argued by Sommerstein (2010, 37–9, 227–8).

8. Detienne and Vernant (1978, 58–61); Conacher (1980, 8–10); Griffith (1983, 10); Ruffell (2012, 43).

9. Like mortals (*PV* 443–4), the bird chorus, once unintelligible now have learned speech (199–200). When they assume their divine status they address mortals in terms clearly borrowed from the Oceanid chorus of the tragedy (cf. 685–7 and *PV* 547–8) and from Prometheus's own description (cf. 687 and *PV* 448). The paratragic

description of the bird-squadron chasing Iris and the rushing sound of wings is highly reminiscent of the approach of the Oceanid chorus (1182–83; cf. *PV* 1123–25). Cf. Herington (1963, 238 and n. 12).

10. On the question of the identity of Basileia see the summary of accounts in Newiger (1957, 92–103) and Hofmann (1976, 147–60). Most recently Dix and Anderson (2007) have proposed that she is modeled on Athena, but see the remarks of Stamatopoulou (2017, 215 and n. 122) who like me, argues that Basileia is an Aristophanic invention. The audience was not meant to equate Basileia with any particular goddess (the proposals have been Hera, Athena, Pandora, Basilinna). She is, like other goddesses created in Aristophanic plays such as Opora (*Peace*) and Diallagē (*Lysistrata*), created for the purposes of this play and is precisely who Prometheus says she is: Zeus's treasurer of all those things that keep his rule secure, and, as her name implies, represents "sovereignty." Against the latter point, it has been argued that her name, ending in a short and not long alpha, literally means "royal lady" as opposed to the abstract term "royalty." But, in the first place, it is clear from the play that by marrying "royal lady" Peisetaerus will gain "royalty"; thus, as Dover (1972, 31) remarks, she is "a deity invented for the occasion, a representation in tangible, personal form of the idea that Peisetairos acquires supreme power"; and, in the second place, as McDowell (1995, 218 and n. 33) argues, "the possibility that the length of such alphas was considered variable, at least by Aristophanes, is indicated by *Birds* 604, where he gives hygieia a long final alpha although other authors make it short." For further arguments to this effect, see also Bowie (1993, 163–65); Silk (2000, 407).

11. Cf. Detienne (1978, 59): "The entire trilogy is constructed on this theme of the danger that threatens the rule of the master of the gods. In depicting the sovereignty of Zeus it shows, not the aspect of stability and permanence which Hesiod conveys, but a state of crisis which Zeus can only overcome at the price of reconciliation with the bound Titan, by releasing him from his bonds and by bringing about a transformation in royal power which henceforth must include justice and wisdom."

12. Podlecki (1969) argues convincingly that most of the charges that Prometheus lays against Zeus can equally be applied to him. Both are arrogant, unbending, listen only to their own counsels, and cannot be persuaded, to name but a few. Cf. also Griffith (1983, 10); Ruffell (2012, 35–36).

13. Cf. in particular the reconstruction by Griffith (1983, 281–305) who follows Pohlenz (1954) and Fitton Brown (1959). Also Ruffell (2012, 47–49).

14. Griffith 167–68. Cf. also Conacher (1980, 51 n29), Sommerstein (2010, 227), Ruffell (2012, 49), and the ode to man in *Antigone* in which, in contrast to *PV*, the political art is set at the peak of man's achievements. White (2001) argues that Prometheus does not understand the trajectory of Zeus's plan for justice and the political arts, but that they are alluded to even in *PV*.

15. Cf. Griffith (1977), West (1979) who, however, argue that the play is not Aeschylean, but by a later author and that *PV* was influenced by Protagoras and not vice-versa. Ruffell (2012, 73–74) argues that even if the play was Aeschylean, Protagoras's theories might have been extant already by around 460 BC. It is not important to my argument in which direction these ideas flowed, merely that they were intimately connected with the Promethean theme in fifth-century Athens.

16. Cf. *PV* 1002–06 where Prometheus emphasizes that he will never become "womanly in mind" or "imitate the ways of women" when he approaches Zeus.

17. Cf. Heracles's depiction in *Frogs* and the scholia to *Peace* 741.

18. See for example, Euripides, *Heracles*, 1210–13, the words of Amphitryon as he attempts to stop Heracles from killing himself after discovering he has murdered his family: ἰὼ παῖ, κατά- / σχεθε λέοντος ἀγρίου θυμόν, ὦι / δρόμον ἐπὶ φόνιον ἀνόσιον ἐξάγηι / κακὰ θέλων κακοῖς συνάψαι, τέκνον. "Oh son, check that thymos of a savage lion by which you are led on a murderous and impious course wishing to add ills upon ills."

19. See 1347–52. Cf. also the description of the plot of an unidentifiable comedy that is referred to in *Wasps*' parabasis (1039). Aristophanes describes the subject of the comedy as οἳ τοὺς πατέρας τ' ἤγχον νύκτωρ καὶ τοὺς πάππους ἀπέπνιγον "Those who strangle their fathers at night and choke their grandfathers." In *Ecclesiazousae* Blepyrus worries that father beating will become even more prevalent in the new society in the following terms (639–41): οὐκοῦν ἄγξουσ' εὖ καὶ χρηστῶς ἐξῆς τὸν πάντα γέροντα / διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν, ἐπεὶ καὶ νῦν γιγνώσκοντες πατέρ' ὄντα / ἄγχουσι. τί δῆθ' ὅταν ἀγνὼς ᾖ; πῶς οὐ τότε κἀπιχεσοῦνται; Strangling appears to be the *vox propria* for father beating. As Sommerstein remarks on this passage from *Ecclesiazusae* (1998, ad loc. 639), "the expression seems to equate rebellious sons with the nightmare-demon Epioles or Epiales who suffocated his father."

20. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1647).

21. MacDowell (1978, 86–90, 101). Plutarch, *Themistocles* 1.3. There was a cult for Heracles the *nothos* at Cynosarges used by the *nothoi* of Athens as a gymnasium. (Demosthenes, *Against Aristagoras* 214, Harpocration, *Lexicon* s.v. *notheia;* Suda, s.v. *Antisthenes).*

22. Pericles had had a son by his foreign wife, Aspasia, which meant that under his own citizenship law he was not legitimate. After the death of his legitimate sons during the plague he persuaded the Athenians to "enroll the bastard son into the *phratries* and to give him his name." (Plutarch, *Pericles*, 37.5.)

23. Plutarch, *Solon* 22 citing Heracleides Ponticus. This law formed an exception to the very law that Peisetaerus had previously quoted to the father beater as bird-law; namely that it was the law that sons look after their fathers after the fathers had taught them to fly.

24. As Stamatopoulou (2017, 220–1) argues, Peisetaerus here uses a strategy "straight out of Zeus's playbook in the *Theogony*." That is, he forms tide-turning alliances (esp. the Hundred-Handers 383–403, 639–63) by promising *timai* to those who previously had none.

Chapter 9

Peisetaerus Tyrannos

PEISETAERUS AND THE BIRDS

During the penultimate scenes of *Birds* the Chorus has remained entirely silent concerning its opinions on the progress of the action. Peisetaerus has restored the universe to a state not so dissimilar to the status quo ante under Zeus and has himself been hailed as *archon* and will soon have Basileia as his wife. When Peisetaerus does return from Olympus, however, the Chorus of birds is emphatic: Peisetaerus has brought the greatest possible happiness to the race of birds (1706–8). As the final line of the play testifies, Peisetaerus has conquered the universe and become the highest of the gods. Aristophanes has cleared the way for the most absolute victory of any fictional character in the history of literature. Nevertheless it behooves us to examine with care how Aristophanes sets the stage for this victory.

Interspersed throughout the preceding scenes, the Chorus sings four lyric sequences (1470–81, 1482–93, 1553–64, 1694–1705) that are concerned with various "wondrous" things on earth, each of which point to some corrupt human activity. In these choral passages, the birds return to their initial and natural character; they fly everywhere (1470–1), not settled in one place (164–172) and, like Tereus, have seen all sorts of things (118), though, we must hasten to add, they do not, like the hoopoe, "understand all things that a human being does" (119). But one should not see these lyrics as a kind of commentary of the birds themselves on what they have witnessed on stage. Just as the birds continued to sing lyrics expressing their communality with the Olympians (769–784) and their benign and peaceful co-existence within nature (737–752; 1088–1101) during their very rebellion against the gods and their imposition of a city upon nature, so too in these later choral passages they merely describe, in their pre-Peisetairean bird fashion, a variety of

ethnological *thaumata* (wonders) without expressing judgment.[1] They offer a bird's-eye and peculiarly distorted view of life on the ground. What they take to be a large and strange tree is in fact a corrupt Athenian (1475); they mistake the hero Orestes feasting with human beings for the Athenian thief Orestes (1490); what they believe to be Socratic necromancy is, in fact, life in the *phrontisterion* (1555–64); and sophists and sophist-trained orators are, to the birds, weird creatures that literally live by their tongues (1694–705). For all of their "education" at the hands of Peisetaerus, the birds are still the stupid, unreflective creatures they were from the start. They know men are tricky, but they still do not comprehend their corruption.

Nevertheless, Aristophanes composes the birds' mixed-up description of the terrestrial world not merely for fun or good old personal abuse.[2] The penultimate scenes of the play, as we have seen, constitute Peisetaerus's re-creation of an ordered universe, and indeed, his overwhelming success. The bird lyrics, in contrast to the surrounding scenes with their comic battles in *alazoneia*, offer a series of grotesque images that, to the birds, are "by nature something bizarre" (πεφυκὸς ἔκτοπόν τι 1473–74), but turn out to be all-too-human, and all-too-Athenian.[3] Furthermore, in each passage (or pair of passages) Aristophanes re-iterates or provides a variation on the problems that Peisetaerus has dealt with in the scene(s) preceding their lyric song. On one level, therefore, the passages underline the apparent establishment of Peisetaerus's new political and, finally, cosmic order in contrast to the Athenian *polis*. But at the same time, the lyrics also provide an ironic counterpoint to Peisetaerus's actions in Nepholokokkugia. As Peisetaerus moves from law-giver to Promethean rebel to the king of the universe, the intervening lyric pieces—which, as Moulton points out, move in a crescendo from criminality and cowardice to the more insidiously sinister activities of sophists and rhetoricians[4]—increasingly tend to undercut Peisetaerus's achievement. For whatever he has achieved up above, human beings still remain fundamentally corrupt.

As we saw, the treatment of the second group of interlopers pointed to Peisetaerus's return to the necessities of civic virtue and education. In particular we saw Peisetaerus attempt to create *nomimos* (lawful) citizens whether by words alone (the father beater), or by finally resorting to violence (Cinesias and the sycophant). The two lyric passages that follow the violent expulsion of the sycophant (unlike the two later lyric passages that raise the problem of the philosopher [Socrates] and the rhetorician [Gorgias]), deal with two Athenian individuals who provide problems not because of their teaching and science, but because their activity is in itself directly detrimental to the public good.

The huge and useless Cleonymus[5] tree which lies beyond Spirit or Courage (*Cardia,* 1474) is clearly something even worse than the young sycophant.

Here is no starving young man, but one big and fat (cf. 287–90) that "blooms" in the spring and "sycophantizes" or "gives out the fig" (1478–79). He is the politician who thrives by denunciations and, at this time, was famous for proposing in the assembly to give one thousand drachmas to whoever would inform on those who had profaned the Mysteries (Andocides 1.27). Cleonymus, as citizen and politician, stands in stark contrast to Peisetaerus. Like Peisetaerus, he has a natural propensity for words: he sprouts denunciations as though in accordance with the natural cycle of things. But the fruit of his words is "good for nothing" (1476). Peisetaerus with his words, as we saw, had turned the father beater's passion and his "manliness" or courage to what was productive for the city. Cleonymus is himself a traitor and coward (1480–81): "in the winter time, in turn, he sheds his shield."

In the next passage the Chorus describes a place where "human beings lunch and spend time with the Heroes" (1485–88). It is a place right beside the darkness, where there are no lamps (1482–83). In the evenings, however, it is not safe to be together with the heroes because the "hero Orestes" would beat them up and steal their cloak (1487–93). The night and the perpetual darkness offer the thief a cloak of invisibility. In this way the thief is able to commit crimes and get away with them. The perpetual darkness provides the same protection from the law that a ring of Gyges or, as we saw in the first parabasis (785–801), wings might provide. But even without wings some human beings have found a way around the law, and the violence that Peisetaerus so justly used against Cinesias and the sycophant may, in turn, also be used against the just.[6]

Directly following this initial pair of lyrics, Prometheus comes onto the stage hidden in women's clothing. The Prometheus scene, as we found, further underlined the necessity of the political *technē* and virtues for Peisetaerus's success. Prometheus, who acts as the representative par excellence of scientific and sophistic (though not political) *technē*, entered and left the stage chastened and fearful. For all of his cleverness he was not able to revolt against the political might and shrewdness of Zeus and his treasurer Basileia. It is, therefore, highly fitting that the birds should directly thereafter sing of the visit of the politician, Peisander, to the sophist, Socrates (1553–64). Peisander was among the foremost politicians of the time and, like Cleonymus, was conspicuous for the vehemence of his investigations into the affairs of the Herms and Mysteries; and, again like Cleonymus, he is mocked here for his lack of courage (1557). He journeys to a lake near the Sciapodes, the Shadow-feet men, where Socrates practices *psychagogia* (leading of souls [from the dead]). The Sciapodes are creatures that, like Prometheus who had left the stage under a *sciadeion* (1550), constantly used one foot to shade themselves from the sun.[7] Aristophanes is clearly playing with the joke, so often used in *Clouds*, that all of Socrates's students are pale and pasty, and

went about unshod and unwashed. Coming to these ghosts of men, Peisander plays Odysseus and slaughters a camel to attract the ghosts with the beast's blood. In the Socratic realm of souls, however, the only creature that emerges is Chairephon, the bat (1564). Peisander visits Socrates in order that he might "see the *psyche* that had deserted him while he was still alive" (1557–58). On one level, the passage is simple personal abuse against a prominent individual who is leading the prosecution against impious actions. Peisander, elsewhere in comedy mocked for his cowardice,[8] has lost his "spirit" or "courage" while alive and comes, of all places, to Socrates and his gang of impious souls for help.

More importantly, however, the whole passage works so effectively precisely because, in contrast to Peisetaerus who can combine sophistic learning with political understanding, Peisander, the politician, and Socrates, the sophist, work on completely different levels and at cross purposes. Socrates practices *psychagogia* in that he persuades and guides (astray) the souls of his students by his teaching.[9] Peisander has heard of Socratic *psychagogia* but mistakes it for necromancy of the Homeric kind. Peisander is no more concerned with or understanding of the Socratic education of his *psyche* than was the rustic Strepsiades. Each came to the *phrontisterion* as a desperate measure in a desperate situation. We might wonder if Socrates will be so foolish as to allow this demagogue into his *phrontisterion* as he did Strepsiades. We know for sure that Peisetaerus would greet both of them with a sound beating. And as for the iconoclastic thinking types, the Prometheuses and Socrateses—they will soon be carrying Peisetaerus's night-stool as we just witnessed (1552).

By the time we reach the embassy scene, Cloudcuckooland has become a *nomos*-ruled *polis* in the *aēr*, and it is, in part, because of this fact that Peisetaerus can win over the ambassadors. We have not, however, seen the bird-*polis* in operation as such; we have not seen what bird politics is like. Their world once open, without boundaries and anomian precisely because they lived in accordance with their natures and the natural hierarchies of birds, a world in which they fed freely and communally with one another, now has laws that impinge upon their natures. The birds, who had everything they needed and desired no more, allowed an erotic and clever human being into their community. Nevertheless, as we have seen, up until this point bird life has remained largely like the old bird life. They have built a wall, but they only used the natural abilities that are instinctive and particular to each species; the walls are guarded, but the birds are terrible guards and freely let their enemy in; and, as evidenced by the lyric passages, they still view the corruption that accompanies political life as something alien to themselves, as *thaumata* (wonders). The embassy scene provides the first concrete example of the impact of political life upon the birds themselves. The first legislative

decision (ἔδοξαν) in Cloudcuckooland is made against "certain birds" that "have been judged to be committing injustices by attempting to revolt against the democratic birds" (1583–85) and the punishment is not only death, but being marinated and fried. We are left to wonder what they did, what sort of law courts exists, and who did the judging. By omitting any such explanations, Aristophanes alludes to the motif that he had previously used in *Wasps* in which unfounded charges of tyranny and conspiracy against the democracy could be brought against public figures willy nilly (*Wasps* 344–45, 463–507)[10] and this would have been particularly topical in the wake of the investigations into the religious scandals of the previous summer.[11] We cannot but conclude, therefore, that Aristophanes means to imply that these birds have been condemned to death on trumped up charges of anti-democratic behavior, contrived by the new *archon* and judged by the birds. In the newly formed political environment, Peisetaerus holds all the tricks. Nevertheless, we cannot dismiss the fact that there may be at least a few birds who are bristling their feathers against the *archon* and whom Peisetaerus sees as his enemy. There is now, as there was not before, a them and an us within bird society—a lack of *homonoia*. The *polis* requires, at least in the name of the putative common good, that its citizens act in accordance with its rulers and laws. The anomian birds it seems must soon themselves, in contrast to their teaching in the first parabasis (753–64), learn the political virtues of shame and justice if they are to curb their natures and survive.[12]

The scene, however, appears to detail more than mere punishment. Peisetaerus is actually cooking these birds with one of his own recipes (cf. 533–38) and making preparations to eat them. We see him grating cheese and silphium over them (1579; cf. 533–34), glistening with oil (1590; cf. 533–35), and roasted over coals (*anthrakas,* 1581; cf. 532)—the special gift of Prometheus, specifically to human beings. As Peisetaerus had remarked to Prometheus (1546), "it is on account of you alone of the gods that we cook on coals." Are we to see in Peisetaerus, therefore, one of those "barbarian" and cannibalistic tyrants so vividly portrayed by Herodotus, and indeed by Sophocles in his *Tereus*?[13] Romer argues that "there could be no clearer, cruder, more tyrannical instance of his subjects existing (or ceasing to exist) for the benefit of the ruler alone."[14]

Before we go that far, we must also consider Peisetaerus's barbecue from the context of the scene as a whole, that is, of the divine embassy that will determine the allocation of *timai* among the birds and Olympians. The gods have sent ambassadors to Peisetaerus because they are starving and are threatened by the hungry Triballian gods. The fortified bird city has not only interrupted the exchange of all human sacrifice from below to the gods above, but humans do not make sacrifices at all (1515–18). And why should they? Human beings now have gods who reside with them and do not sit up

haughtily on Olympus (726–8). The differentiations between human, animal, and god have become less distinct as humans were offered the opportunity to live with the birds and to grow wings. Thus it becomes highly pertinent that, during the scene in which a rebel against Zeus comes to terms with the gods concerning the ordering of things (as, in Hesiod, occurred at Mecone), this new Prometheus is preparing a dinner as a trick to outsmart the gods. Our new Prometheus, however, will succeed where the old one failed.

Clearly the irony here is that the dinner consists of certain of the new gods themselves. But is it a problem? Rather, does it not affirm what Peisetaerus will achieve in the embassy scene, namely the restoration of sacrifices and so the proper demarcations between human beings and gods, and the return of the birds to their status as servants of the gods? So here, the birds become again a source of food for at least one human being and, therefore, a source of *knisa* for the gods. The division at Mecone has been restored; but with Peisetaerus on top. Romer argues this case along similar lines, but concludes: "paradoxically, it is Peisetaerus's most tyrannical gesture—his barbecue—that challenges Olympian orthodoxy most deeply, but then reassures the continuity of Olympian violence into the future."[15] But was there ever any doubt that Peisetaerus would continue such violence? We only need recall the Iris scene to realize that Peisetaerus would use Zeus's own violent tactics against him. Peisetaerus's final goal is to become a god; he wants that power and honor that distinguishes gods from human beings. If he is to be truly successful, Peisetaerus, like Zeus before him, must (re-)establish those boundaries. Thus our new Prometheus, who successfully outwits Zeus, must reinstitute the sacrifice that is symbolic of the distinction between gods and men without which his triumph is meaningless.[16]

Aristophanes's play with the mythic trials of Zeus in establishing his divine rule does not stop here. Zeus and earlier divine rulers each had to combat various resistances from their sons, each of whom were, in one way or another, "eaten." Ouranos, as Hesiod tells us, hid his children away in a cavern of earth, Kronos swallowed his children, and Zeus himself deceived Metis and put her in his belly because it was ordained that her son should take Zeus's place. To be sure, we have in *Birds* comic deflation and mythical travesty, as a few birds lie sizzling on the barbecue. Nevertheless Peisetaerus's first act after his victory is, thus, not the cold-blooded act of a vicious tyrant but a parody of the divine pattern: a pre-emptive act of eating; violent but necessary to establish a secure regime and, clever politician that Peisetaerus is, it is not done under his tyrannical authority (as Zeus's Aeschylus had done)[17] but under a law to which all (barring Peisetaerus, of course) are subject and which is enacted for the sake of the democracy.

To add yet a third piece of mythical travesty, Aristophanes is not only having fun with the generational conflicts on Olympus, but also the punishment

meted out against Prometheus. Whereas Prometheus was bound to a rock only to be eaten daily by a giant bird until the eagle is shot and he is freed by Heracles, here rebel birds lie on Peisetaerus's barbecue with a hungry and gluttonous Heracles constantly looming over them! To be sure we do pity the birds their stupidity, but Peisetaerus is not doing anything beyond what Zeus had done before him. Indeed, even as Peisetaerus had brought about a legal father-beating of Zeus via Heracles, so too here Peisetaerus achieves some legal "son-swallowing."[18]

Thus in the final lyric passage (1694–1705) the birds sing of a group of gluttonous creatures who cultivate and reap their food with their tongues. Unlike the earlier *thaumata*, these creatures are, to the birds at least, overtly barbarian creatures (1700) but, ironically, situated in a recognizably Greek and, indeed Athenian place. They are in Phanai (in Chios, but also a pun on the verb *phainein*, to denounce, 1694), and near the Clepsydra (1694–95), a name often given to springs, but also the term given to the water-clock that regulated the lengths of speeches in Athenian law courts and, finally, their presence provides an aetiology for what the birds see as the peculiarly Attic custom of "cutting the tongue off separately" (1705). The birds sing of Gorgiases—non-Athenians who makes their money by teaching men the art of rhetoric; but also Philips—those who, by their education in this art, become "barbarian" by using their tongues to satisfy their appetites, their bellies.[19] As Dunbar (ad loc. 1702) points out, the repetition of *philippoi* at 1702, "is probably intended to focus the attack on Philip rather than on Gorgias." But the focus of the piece does not appear to be on a particular individual, but rather a type of individual: those men trained by the sophists who were able to abuse the law courts for private gain. These Belly-in-tongue creatures are *philippoi*; not only Philips but also "horse-lovers," and it is because of them that "everywhere in Attica the tongue is cut out separately." Elsewhere in Aristophanes (*Peace* 1060, *Wealth* 1110) this image alludes to the custom whereby the tongue is set aside as a perquisite for the officiating priest.[20] Here two interpretations have been put forward. Either the Athenians would like to cut the tongue out of these sycophants as they do with sacrifices,[21] or the Athenians now realize the importance of the tongue in public speaking and so this "suffices to explain the otherwise mysterious treatment of the tongue in sacrifices."[22] But we ought rather to read this in the context of the whole passage; that is of this sophist-trained barbarian race. The fact that they are "lovers of horses" in this context points to the young upper-class men, such as Aristophanes had made Pheidippides aspire to be (cf. esp. *Clouds* 12–16), who were the likely targets of such men as Gorgias, and from whom he and other sophists received their huge wages (and sated their bellies). When we then hear that the tongue is now being cut out throughout Attica, we, therefore, recall Socrates's new gods in *Clouds*, among which was Tongue itself

(423–24 cf. also 247–48, 1058–59).[23] Thus these young "horse-lovers" cut out the tongue itself actually in honor of the new god, "Tongue," by which they make their livelihood. This organ, previously set aside for the priests, now appears to be set aside for sophists to worship or even ingest. As Dionysus is wine and its divine powers, so tongue might imbue one with Tongue.

On the one hand, this lyric passage points to a positive aspect of Cloudcuckooland in contrast to corrupt human life. Peisetaerus has rid the place of all other *alazones*, including the sycophant who wished to abuse the law courts for his own advantage. On the other hand, however, in the previous scene Peisetaerus, arguing like an advocate in the law courts while at the same time cooking up rebel birds, now appears to be akin to these belly-in-tongue creatures. The embassy scene, as we saw highlighted the way in which *nomoi* themselves can be used not only as a check on private desire and ambition but also as a weapon for gratifying such desire. The rhetoric such as Peisetaerus has displayed is able to bamboozle its audience. Peisetaerus, who had once argued to Iris that might is the only criterion for rule and that *Dike* is just a bogey-man to frighten ignorant slavish types (1243–52), has now argued that his rule is based on *Dike* itself. The parody of the language of diplomacy and the law courts in the divine embassy scene is set in stark relief by this most grotesque lyric passage. The tongue may argue for *Dike*, but its goal is the satisfaction of the stomach or *gastēr*—the erotic and *pleonectic* or insatiably greedy part of man that, in this comedy at least, defines human beings and gods in opposition to birds. Peisetaerus may recognize the political necessity of *eunomia* and *sōphrosunē* in the universe, and he will soon have Basileia to mete out these virtues; he himself, however, is far from *sōphrōn*.

THE EXODUS

In the exodus, one particular point is emphatic: Peisetaerus is the new Zeus. Nowhere does the bird chorus directly mention its own divinity and, what is most pathetic, there is no mention whatsoever of the scepter that ought to be transferred to the birds (1600, 1625). The birds are now "most blessed" (1725) because of the marriage that Peisetaerus is making "for this *polis*" (1725) over which he is now *tyrannos* (1708). Peisetaerus's position as the new Zeus is, in particular, signified by his possession of the thunderbolt, "the winged shaft of Zeus," which he now wields in his hand (1714) and which must have been visually emphasized on stage. Its presence is further underlined throughout the exodus by the preponderance of imagery signifying flashing, burning, gleaming. Peisetaerus's entrance is likened to the gold-shining rush of an all-gleaming star (perhaps a comet) or the flashing of the sun's rays (1709–12). One wonders whether in a production that is perhaps the most

expensive that Aristophanes staged, he had access to a *keraunoskopeion*—a whirling prism that was able to produce the effect of lightning flash[24]—for Peisetaerus's entrance. One would assume, with Sommerstein (1987, ad loc. 1751), that the *bronteion*, a device made of pebbles and brass to reproduce the sound of thunder, was employed, especially at lines 1744–54, where it is the thunderbolt itself and not Peisetaerus that the chorus praises.[25] In any case, the chorus stresses in vivid terms the awesome power of this weapon. It is δεινός (terrible/awesome) (1747) and able to shake the earth (1750–52). At lines 1749–50 they describe it as the "immortal, fire-bearing (πυρφόρον) shaft of Zeus," which calls to mind both Peisetaerus's earlier threat of sending "fire-bearing eagles" against Zeus (1248), but also the pun with which he played upon the name of the king of the Giants, Porphurion, smashed by the thunderbolt and killed by Heracles, who was not able to achieve the feat that Peisetaerus has accomplished. The chorus concludes (1752–54) that it is explicitly "because of you [thunderbolt] that he [Peisetaerus] is victorious in every way and also possesses as his *paredros* Basileia." Peisetaerus, like Zeus before him, now possesses the two requirements for ordered rule: the restraints on violence that accompany the imposition of political virtues (Basileia) and the force to back them up (the thunderbolt). The thunderbolt is not produced at the whim of random meteoric elements as the student of the *phrontisterion* held, but in the hands of the king of the gods (1751).

Thus, the exodus of *Birds* and Peisetaerus's triumph diverges greatly from those of Aristophanes's earlier heroes. As Henderson has noted, a "striking difference" between Peisetaerus's triumphant final scene and those of Dicaeopolis, Demos, Philocleon or Trygaius is its lack of obscene and erotic elements. "Indeed" as Henderson concludes, "there is no obscenity at all in the final 504 lines of the play."[26] Peisetaerus's triumph is not one of revelry and the free and uninhibited expression of physical desires. He does not cavort with *hetaerae* (as is the case with Dikaiopolis, Demos and Philocleon), nor a goddess of fecundity (and thinly veiled *hetaera*) like Trygaius' *Opora*. He marries Basileia, a goddess who represents his attainment of absolute power. The Chorus proclaims him, with the traditional ritual shout for victors, the "highest of the gods" (τήνελλα καλλίνικος, ὦ δαιμόνων ὑπέρτατε, 1764–65). Peisetaerus is the victor over the gods in his Gigantomachic contest in *alazoneia* (824–25).[27]

Furthermore although the exodus does include features that are used in Aristophanes's earlier plays such as the chorus' praise of the hero as their benefactor, a wedding procession and song (as in *Peace*), the hero's command to the chorus to follow and their subsequent victory cries of τήνελλα καλλίνικος (as in *Acharnians* 1227–34), the tone of the entire piece remains highly elevated throughout. There is no comic deflation or mythical travesty, as one might expect. On one level the humor of the scene must come from

the very fact that there is no let up in the hero's celebration of himself as the ruler of the world. Everything is overdone, exaggerated, gaudy.[28] But on another level it is the visual play going on here, best revealed in Peisetaerus's final words:

ὄρεξον, ὦ μάκαιρα, σὴν
χεῖρα καὶ πτερῶν ἐμῶν
λαβοῦσα συγχόρευσον.
αἴρων δὲ κουφιῶ σ' ἐγώ.

Stretch out your hand, blessed lady; take hold of my wings and dance with me.
I myself will lift and bear you lightly up.

Throughout the second half of the play, Peisetaerus has been ridiculously decked out not only in the traditional comic mask of an old man, but also with the scrawny wings of a black bird and with a few black feathers sticking down from his head in the shape of an up-turned bowl (806). Now that Basileia is actually on the stage, the incongruity between this deformed, hybrid man-bird and his Gigantomachic victory is visually underlined as they come on stage side by side.[29] The bird Chorus itself further emphasizes this incongruity by juxtaposing this wedding and the glorious marriage of Zeus to Hera with golden Eros as their groomsman (1731–41). At that time, it was not a chorus of birds that hymned the happy couple, but the Moirai themselves. Here, in stark contrast, Peisetaerus with the thunderbolt in his hand finally offers to his beautiful bride, not the golden wings of Eros (1738, cf. 697), but his puny black wing. Although Peisetaerus is triumphant, Aristophanes also suggests that, for all of Peisetaerus's restoration of order, this fantastic world is out of whack.[30] We do not share in his triumph, as we do with Dicaeopolis, Demos or Trygaeus; rather, like subjects, we stand apart and watch. Aristophanes directs us, in this final scene, to laugh along at his cleverness, but also to recognize, as Peisetaerus does not, how hideous he looks to everyone else. The man who has deconstructed and reconstructed the universe, who has re-established the cosmos' law and the proper order and hierarchy of its parts, himself lies outside of and in violation of that order: he is a hybrid bird-man-god. He is what we cannot say of any other Aristophanic hero: unnatural.[31]

NOTES

1. The exception (discussed below) is the race of belly-in-tongue creatures whom the chorus describes as *panourgon* (1695).
2. Moulton (1981, 26–47) points out these aspects of the lyric pieces.

3. Rusten (2013, 298–315) notes that in the new spatial perspective of Nephelokokkygia, the periphery is no longer determined by horizontal, but vertical, axes. Thus Athens (and the rest of the world) as below (κάτω) now becomes the sort of hyper-peripheral place, the descriptions of which Herodotus says he scorns and refuses to discuss (Her. 4.36).

4. Cf. Moulton (1981, 45).

5. For Cleonymus see Storey (1989); Olson (1998, ad loc. 446). Griffith (2012) argues that this choral passage is indebted to Pindar *Olympian* 12.

6. Cf. *Republic* 361a-8 where, in Glaucon's description of a private man (as opposed to a tyrant) getting away with injustice, he must do it either unseen (λάθρᾳ) or by violence. Orestes is able to combine both.

7. Cf. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1553–5). Though, Rusten (2013, 311) points to the pun on the word σκία meaning both shadow and soul, as Homer *Od.* 10.495.

8. Cf. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1553–5).

9. In *Phaedrus,* Socrates remarks that the power of *logos* actually is *psychagogia* (271c). On the play with the word here see LSJ II.2.; Sommerstein (1987, ad loc. 1555); and cf. *Clouds* 94, 506–8.

10. See Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc. 344–45); Roisman (2006, 66–8); Levant (1997, 185–200).

11. Thucydides 6.60: Ὧν ἐνθυμούμενος ὁ δῆμος ὁ τῶν Ἀθηναίων, καὶ μιμνῃσκόμενος ὅσα ἀκοῇ περὶ αὐτῶν ἠπίστατο, χαλεπὸς ἦν τότε καὶ ὑπόπτης ἐς τοὺς περὶ τῶν μυστικῶν τὴν αἰτίαν λαβόντας, καὶ πάντα αὐτοῖς ἐδόκει ἐπὶ ξυνωμοσίᾳ ὀλιγαρχικῇ καὶ τυραννικῇ πεπρᾶχθαι. ("Considering these things and remembering what they knew about them by hearsay, the Athenian *demos* were riled and suspicious of those who were blamed for the mysteries affair, and it all seemed to them to have been done to further a conspiracy for oligarchy or tyranny.")

12. Cf. Zeus's demand at *Protagoras* 322d: "set it down as a law from me that he who is incapable of sharing in shame and justice is to be killed as an illness to the city."

13. Cf. Bowie (1993, 168–9); Auger (1979, 84).

14. Romer (1997, 63).

15. Romer (1997, 64).

16. Stamatopoulou (2017, 213–4) has correctly pointed out, *pace* Romer (1997), that this scene does not depict a sacrifice—there is no ritual or attending priests. Rather, she argues, as 1515–25 shows, there is at this point "a collapse of sacrifice." This is merely a culinary scene. As I am arguing, however, this scene, like the feast at Mecone in Hesiod, is a new (or comically reperformed) aetiology for sacrifice, though one in which Zeus is not the victor, but out-tricked by Peisetaerus.

17. Cf. Aeschylus *PV* where it is said that "new steersmen rule Olympus; and Zeus without *themis* rules with newly-contrived *nomoi*" (148–50; cf. 955, 960) and that "Zeus rules with *idioi nomoi*" (404); and Oceanus remarks that "a harsh monarch rules without accountability" (324; cf. 312); and at *Wasps* 465 Bdelycleon is accused by the chorus of tyranny because he shuts them out of the laws—obviously a pun, but nevertheless indicative of the perception of tyrannical rule; Euripides *Suppliants* says of tyranny (429ff.): "There are no common *nomoi*, but one man rules, having acquired the law for himself alone."

18. The birds had made Peisetaerus a member of their *oikos* and had entrusted their nestlings to him (546–7).

19. At *Wasps* 421, Philip is called the son of Gorgias (τοῦ Γοργίου), but we are surely meant to understand this as comic exaggeration for "having a close relationship with" in some way or other. Cf. *Acharnians* 1131, *Wasps* 325 and Sommerstein (1987, ad loc. 1701).

20. In addition to Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1702–5), see Kadletz (1981) and Olson (2003, *Peace* ad loc. 1060).

21. Cf. Sommerstein (1987, ad loc. 1705), Rosenbloom (2009, 200).

22. Cf. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1702–5) and Rusten (2013, 313).

23. At *Frogs* 892, it is also one of Euripides' gods; cf. Sophocles *Philocetetes* 98–99. On the apotheosis of "tongue" on the fifth-century Athenian stage see Rosenbloom (2009, 207): "the trope of rhetoric as 'tongue' explores what is lost when speech acts before mass audiences represent, create, and move reality in the absence of valid claims to authority and knowledge external to them."

24. Pollux 4.130. Arnott (1962, 89) who notes that there is no evidence for its use in the classical period.

25. Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1720–65) notes that "although Ar. could have left both sound and sight of thunder and lightning to be imagined from his words, the visual aspect, impossible to reproduce adequately, seems more likely to have been left to the imagination." On the *bronteion* see also Pollux 4.130 and Arnott (1962, 89–90). It is curious to note that if these special effects were used both here in *Birds* and in the end of *Prometheus Bound* both plays begin in the untrodden wilderness and end with a spectacle of thunder and lightning.

26. Henderson (1991, 85).

27. Cf. Archilochus fr. 119 and Euripides, *Her.*,177–80: Διὸς κεραυνόν τ' ἠρόμην τέθριππά τε, / ἐν οἷς βεβηκὼς τοῖσι γῆς βλαστήμασιν / Γίγασι πλευροῖς πτήν' ἐναρμόσας βέλη / *τὸν καλλίνικον* μετὰ θεῶν ἐκώμασεν. "I call on the thunderbolt of Zeus and the chariot on which he moved against the Giants, offspring of Earth, shot them in the sides with his winged arrows and celebrated his triumph together with the gods."

28. Cf. Parker (1997, 356): "[f]or their hymn to Zeus's thunderbolt, the chorus uses an appropriately dignified meter: dactylic. However, as the triteness of diction shows, the dignity is appropriately bogus."

29. As Dunbar (1995, ad loc. 1706–19) notes of the herald's announcement of the arrival of Peisetaerus and Basileia, there is "none of the comic bathos" as would usually be found in such an exalted piece. Rather the "incongruity usual in paratragedy seems here confined to the contrast between the extremely elevated tone and the unheroic, grotesque mask and wings of the old Athenian Peisetaerus."

30. Cf. Revermann (2014, 285) in a chapter on the divine in Old Comedy: "no human, especially no comic protagonist, acquires the status of a divinity or a cult hero, at least not without a great deal of ambiguity and opaqueness. The most telling case in point is Peisetaerus in *Birds* who ends up as the ruler of the new gods—but he is a bird-man, hence fantastically displaced into an imaginative world." See also Zimmermann (2014, 155).

31. At the end of her article on *Clouds*, Nussbaum (1980, 96) relates an anecdote that nicely captures this aspect of the play, though from a different dramaturgical perspective. She describes when she played Basileia opposite Bert Lahr's Peisetaerus. "Deliberately, day after day, he did not powder his clown makeup; the result was that unless I cleverly dodged my face emerged splotched with red grease paint," which she didn't like. "But Lahr understood a lot about this play. He used to say that the *Birds* was darker to him even than *Godot*—and that, at least, got good reviews. Still he intuitively knew what that wedding was about. Whether he thought he was, as Lahr, having some fun at the expense of a vain bit-player, or, as Peisetaerus, showing Basileia that power too can be mocked and made ridiculous, he knew and showed somehow the spirit of vanity, greed, and self-absorbed gloating that makes an Aristophanic wedding far from a triumph of *Grundwohlsein*." See also the German poet, Heinrich Heine, in an 1825 letter to Friederike Robert, wife of Ludwig Robert, a minor Berlin playwright: "Shortly before reading the 'Bird of Paradise' I made the acquaintance of some entirely different birds, namely 'The Birds' of Aristophanes. Perhaps, lovely lady, you have never heard anything about them, or you have heard little about them that was correct. Even my teacher A.W.v. Schlegel, though as fine as the eye of a needle, made an unbearably shallow and false judgment about them in his dramaturgical lectures, when he declares it a funny baroque game that in this play the birds come together and found a city in the air and announce the cancellation of their obedience to the gods etc. etc. There lies, however, a deeper, more serious significance in this poem, and while it greatly amuses the exoterical kechenaeans (i.e., the Athenian gapers) with its fantastical figures and games and jokes and playful allusions, for example, to contemporary diplomacy, the esoteric (i.e. me) discerns in this poem an awful conception of reality; I see therein the god-defying madness of humankind, a real tragedy, all the more tragic since that madness wins out in the end and happily persists in the illusion that its city in the air actually exists and that it has defeated the gods and got everything, even possession of the almighty glorious Basileia" trans. Newman (1997, 231).

Conclusion

χαρίεν οὖν μὴ Σωκράτει
παρακαθήμενον λαλεῖν,
ἀποβαλόντα μουσικὴν
τά τε μέγιστα παραλιπόντα
τῆς τραγῳδικῆς τέχνης.

So it isn't beautiful to sit and babble with Socrates, casting aside Poetry and leaving behind the most important matters of the tragic art. (Aristophanes, *Frogs,* 1491–95. Addressed to Euripides)

In *Birds*, Aristophanes presents us with a chorus of self-avowed father beaters (757–59). We might imagine, if I might be permitted my own flight of fancy, that when Aristophanes first came up with his idea for *Birds*, he toyed with the idea of putting a human being in a fantastic society of birds, such as Pheidippides had briefly outlined in *Clouds*, where sons could beat fathers with impunity and citizens could live without laws (1427–29). This would be no ordinary comic hero, but one of the intellectual elite, a former student of the *phrontisterion*, but not a young man, such as Pheidippides or the *katapugōn* of *Daitales*, but an old man. He has not only the skills taught by Socrates and the *Logoi* that dwell with him, but the experience of political society akin in some respects to that displayed by the wily old men of *Acharnians* and *Peace*. This old man escapes not only from Athens, but from the world of *nomos* into the realm of pure *physis*, free from the obligations of *polis* and *oikos*, and with wings he will be able to live not only in the world of *physis*, but in the physical and moral vacuum of the *Aēr*.

But this turns out to be only the beginning. Anomian bird life soon gives way to something greater. His hero will create a bird *polis* out of apolitical creatures. That is, he not only founds a *polis* and brings about a *synoikismos*

(union) of formerly dispersed inhabitants,[1] but he founds the very first bird *polis*. In this way Aristophanes opens up not only the *nomos*/*physis* debate, but now the related and equally prominent contemporary debate concerning the origins of the *polis* and political life.[2]

In a useful article on the origins of contract theory in ancient Greece, Kahn has gathered together the sources, originating around the middle of the fifth century, that conceived of the idea of the development of political life as one of progress out of a more bestial and uncivilized state.[3] Although no single surviving text of the fifth century has in itself all of the elements that Kahn outlines, he finds that each of the elements found in the full account in Lucretius Book 5 can be traced back to fifth-century sources.[4] The initial phase consists in the imagining of humans in a beastlike state in which there are no laws and each individual or family acts purely in its own interests: thereafter comes the discovery of fire, the arts, and language. Then cities come into being together with justice and laws that help to prevent human beings doing and suffering injustice and violence at each other's hands. As Kahn notes, this important step arises either out of a contract among individuals or results from the cleverness and persuasion of a single individual. Within this context arise also discussions of the origins of religion and the development of more sophisticated arts such as the domestication of animals and agriculture, and metallurgy.

I have already discussed this progression as it is found in the Prometheus myths developed by Aeschylus and Plato's Protagoras. Human beings are given the technical arts by Prometheus and these provide for their needs. They are able to provide for themselves, but because they only live in small communities, they are not able to defend themselves against animals; later, when they do live in larger communities human beings end up killing one another. The technical arts alone are not enough to ensure human survival. They also require the political art. Let us take as a further example the Sisyphus fragment attributed to either Critias or Euripides:[5]

ἦν χρόνος ὅτ' ἦν ἄτακτος ἀνθρώπων βίος
καὶ θηριώδης ἰσχύος θ' ὑπηρέτης,
ὅτ' οὐδὲν ἆθλον οὔτε τοῖς ἐσθλοῖσιν ἦν
οὔτ' αὖ κόλασμα τοῖς κακοῖς ἐγίγνετο.
κἄπειτά μοι δοκοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι νόμους
θέσθαι κολαστάς, ἵνα δίκη τύραννος ᾖ
<> τήν θ' ὕβριν δούλην ἔχῃ.
ἐζημιοῦτο δ' εἴ τις ἐξαμαρτάνοι.
ἔπειτ' ἐπειδὴ τἀμφανῆ μὲν οἱ νόμοι
ἀπεῖργον αὐτοὺς ἔργα μὴ πράσσειν βίᾳ,
λάθρᾳ δ' ἔπρασσον, τηνικαῦτά μοι δοκεῖ
<> πυκνός τις καὶ σοφὸς γνώμην ἀνήρ

<θεῶν> δέος θνητοῖσιν ἐξευρεῖν, ὅπως
εἴη τι δεῖμα τοῖς κακοῖσι, κἂν λάθρᾳ
πράσσωσιν ἢ λέγωσιν ἢ φρονῶσί <τι>.
….
τοίους πέριξ ἔστησεν ἀνθρώποις φόβους,
δι' οὗς καλῶς τε τῷ λόγῳ κατῴκισεν
τὸν δαίμον' οὗτος ἐν πρέποντι χωρίῳ,
τὴν ἀνομίαν τε τοῖς νόμοις κατέσβεσεν
….
οὕτω δὲ πρῶτον οἴομαι πεῖσαί τινα
θνητοὺς νομίζειν δαιμόνων εἶναι γένος

There was a time when the life of human beings was disordered and beastlike, and a servant to force, when there was no reward for the good nor any punishment for the bad. And then I think that humans decided to establish laws to punish [wrongdoers] so that justice might rule and be master over crime and violence. And they punished anyone who did wrong. Then, since the laws held public deeds in check and prevented men from open acts of violence, but they acted secretly, then it was, I believe, that a shrewd and clever-minded man invented for mortals a fear of the gods, so that there might be a deterrent for the wicked, even if they act or say or think anything in secret. Such were the fears with which he surrounded humans and by which this clever man nobly established the deity in the proper place, and extinguished lawlessness by means of laws. . . . It was thus, I think, that someone first persuaded mortals to believe that there is a race of gods.[6]

Here *Kulturgeschichte* is used to show not only the progression of human culture, but also the manipulation in such developments by a "*sophos*" (wise) man whose weapon is persuasion. As the clever man realizes, laws alone are not sufficient to stop injustice. Men will try to get away with crimes undetected. There must also be the fear of the divine mattock of justice and, therefore, the creation of omniscient gods. The institution of gods as protectors of civic virtue, both here and in Protagoras's myth (322d), is the final requirement for the establishment of *eunomia*. The progression, in short, is as follows: a beastlike state > language and arts > *polis* and *nomoi* > religion and gods. In a similar fashion, the so-called Ode to Man in Sophocles's *Antigone* (332–75), moves from praise of men's *technai*, to learning speech and having "the temper that rules cities by laws (*astunomos*)" and finally "the laws of the earth and the pledged justice of the gods."

In *Birds*, Peisetaerus himself must go through this entire process in order to civilize the birds and make them political animals and later, gods. But as was not the case for the original *sophos* in Sisyphus' account, for Peisetaerus (and for every contemporary *sophos*) traditional gods have already been set in place. Likewise, he must not only found the bird *polis*, he must do it in a way

that will appeal to human beings, that will create "bird-mania" among them and cause "a complete about face" in human ways (1283–4). To add yet a further problem, the birds are happy with their natural way of life. Nevertheless, Peisetaerus takes them all on and creates his own new civilization in a process remarkably similar to contemporary sophistic accounts. This progression, as I have made clear, is not without its stops and detours. In *hindsight* we are able to see that the process is broadly eunomian and we might even say, Protagorean; but as we have seen Peisetaerus is clever enough to manipulate the characteristics of each of the different stages—the golden age (antinomian), anomian, megalanomian, eunomian—as they arise to his advantage.

The very setting of the play in untouched nature points to the empty and primordial backdrop that is essential to Peisetaerus's success. By the end of the prologue Euelpides, for his part, has found a way to escape from political life back to a beastlike (θηριώδης in Sisyphus' terms) life in which the individual and private *oikos* is central. But old Euelpides will soon fall into the background, as Peisetaerus erupts as that *sophos* who will persuade the birds to form a *polis* and to live by laws. The necessary pre-condition for political life—language—has already been taught to the birds by Tereus (200), the former erotic human being who betrays the innocent birds by means of the very language that he had taught them. He persuades them, at least, to listen to Peisetaerus. The birds, however, have no need to form a *polis*. Like early, pre-political man, or like the "city of pigs" in Plato's *Republic* (369a–372c), the birds have all they need. Their needs are satisfied by nature and they do not desire anything beyond what is theirs. If the birds injure each other in any way, it is in accordance with their natural pecking order. They have a symbiotic relationship among themselves, with their environment, and even poetically with the Olympian gods and the gods of the countryside. It is primarily by human beings that birds are harmed and it is only in regard to them that they have set up certain oaths and ordinances. Therefore, it is only with Peisetaerus, their human founder, that they must form a "social contract." But even in this are they duped. They swear only that they not harm him, not that they not be harmed (438–45). Thus the second, albeit modified, prerequisite of political life—the agreement not to do or suffer injustice—is established.

Thereafter, in a giant mash of sophistic techniques, Peisetaerus makes his positive case for the establishment of a bird *polis*. The birds, like pre-political man, may have all that they need, but, as Peisetaerus persuades them, they are constantly being wronged by the gods who have deprived them of their sovereignty and honor, and it is for this reason that they are killed and eaten by human beings (522–28). By nature, Peisetaerus argues, the birds are kings of all and over Peisetaerus (a human being) first of all. By returning to the earliest natural state, which the fathers of the birds had cravenly yielded to the

gods, birds will no longer be eaten by man nor lose their cosmic sovereignty. Under Peisetaerus's guidance, the first bird city thus arises out of just indignation at losing their rightful and natural place in the cosmos. To be sure, the birds do not need to form a *polis* for the preservation of their species. They are not defenseless but have wings and, more importantly, they are not erotic human beings who constantly desire more and wrong each other. But the founding of the bird *polis* nevertheless resembles the founding of the human *polis* (though not the *polis* of the *Protagoras*) in that it is masterminded by a single *sophos* and thus also proves to be a clever contrivance by which a single, erotic individual may gain and cement his power.[7] Peisetaerus's persuasion is complete as the birds pledge themselves and their nestlings to this *sophos* (544–47).

Peisetaerus's persuasion of the birds is, however, the easiest step. Not only do they admit to being stupid, but they are also natural father beaters. They have no laws and do not blink at giving up the ways of their fathers in favor of Peisetaerus's new ways. The greater problem will lie with human beings and the gods. Peisetaerus, however, will get around this easily by appealing to human beings first and establishing bird anomian hedonism and golden age ways as the new standard. Thus in the middle third of the play Peisetaerus halts the progress of the bird *polis* in its infancy. By making the ethical and political vacuum of bird life sovereign, Peisetaerus opens up the way for his own cosmic rule. If bird rule is to prevail, the bird *polis* cannot yet appear to be like a *polis* that any human being recognizes. Likewise, bird divinity cannot yet resemble Olympian divinity. So what sort of gods are they?

In accordance with their golden age (antinomian) and anomian promises the birds are initially nothing like the avenging gods of *Sisyphus*. They are the earliest gods (702–3); they provide all good things to human beings, like under an age of Cronos (708–736). They will not sit up haughtily away from men (726–36), but be with them, and actually invite them to join their new *polis* (754). For those who stay in their own *polis*, even criminals (710, 793), they will provide the ability to satisfy all of their desires through the aid of wings (785–800). The birds of the first parabasis are not punishing gods, nor are they concerned about the distinctions between the activities of gods and the activities of men. Indeed, men are encouraged to act like the bird gods.

By stalling the creation of the divine bird *polis* in its anomian phase, Peisetaerus thus creates a situation in which the universe is temporarily returned to an original state of plasticity and so up for grabs for whatever *sophos* can persuade the rest of the universe to obey him. There arises a battle in words for control of the universe, as Cloudcuckooland becomes Phlegra, the site where the gods had once "completely outshot the earthborn in bullshitting (*alazoneuomenoi* 824–5)." In order for the master of sophistic persuasion to rule and gain the highest freedom, he must first knock down absolutely all

traditional conceptions and boundaries in both cosmos and *polis*. In short, Peisetaerus finds or, more accurately, creates for himself a *tabula rasa*. He has gained that position that Pheidippides had imagined for "that man of old" who first "by speaking persuaded the ancients" to accept his laws (1421–24), but on a cosmic scale. Peisetaerus is now able, like the *sophos* of the Sisyphus fragment, to persuade people to obey his laws and believe in the gods, but in this case, he himself is the king of the gods.

But once it is actually founded, the bird *polis*, which appealed to human beings because of its outright anomian hedonism, starts to write laws—old laws, but under a new authority. Where initially Peisetaerus had dismissed Dike (Justice) and the mattock of Zeus as nonsense (1244–45), he comes to a pact with the Olympians more effectively to punish impious human beings by birds that swoop down "unseen" (1616–27). The bird gods are no longer pre-Olympian gods of nature that freely give all to men and let them act like gods, but the punishing gods of the *Sisyphus* fragment. All of the elements needed for *eunomia* have returned to the human *polis* and also to the now political bird *polis*, as transgressors against the new regime are fried on stage. The birds are now truly political animals. But the essential and underlying prerequisite for the entire process was Tereus's teaching the birds speech. Speech, as elsewhere in contemporary thought, is fundamental for civilization.

Thus Peisetaerus himself comes to light as a more prudent (and far older) student of the *phrontisterion*. Peisetaerus, who is "old but young in *gnome*" and knows his rhetoric and the art of antilogy, does not make the mistake of Socrates. *Birds* ends, as we have seen, with the re-establishment of obedience to law, respect for parents, and the honoring of the traditional gods. He has defeated or cleverly expelled all of the fathers, so none will come to burn down his house. Nevertheless it would be very difficult to characterize Peisetaerus himself as *sōphrōn*. He certainly understands the political necessity of *sōphrosunē*, but it comes to light as another tool for his ultimate absolute rule. It is surely no accident that the final lyric piece prior to the exodus consists of the grotesque image of the race of tongue-in-belly men. Persuasion's power creates the political environment in which speech can take the place of violence, but that same power is susceptible to abuse. As we have seen throughout the play, Peisetaerus has kept the power of speech strictly under his own control. He taught the birds the thrust of the teaching of the parabasis, but left it to them to poeticize; he appeased and patronized the encomiastic poet; but he expelled both the philosopher, Meton, and the "new" poet, Kinesias; he sent off the priest for uttering the wrong prayers; and created his own oracles, sending the oracle seller packing. The prudent politician/sophist knows and uses the power of words, but he also knows its dangers. For such a man to rule he must expel all other pretenders to

knowledge. As he tells Meton (1012–13), the promised anomian bird *polis* is ironically "like in Sparta, they are performing a *xenelasia* (driving out of foreigners)."

Between *Daitales, Clouds,* and *Birds* we, therefore, might postulate that Aristophanes's understanding of the sophists has broadened. In *Clouds*, Aristophanes brings to light the civic problems that arise when the teachings of the *phrontisterion* are inevitably brought into public life. Socrates alone by himself, sitting up in the *meteōra* without a care for life on the ground, is harmless. He has both the weaker and the stronger *logoi* in his house and has no preference for one over the other. His students, however, do not have the Socratic self-control or even the desire to live the *theoretikos bios*. They may take their knowledge back to the *oikos* and to the streets and courts of Athens, and there undermine the very bases upon which these institutions stand. In comic terms, they will prove that it is right to beat their fathers. When we come to *Birds* of 414 we learn that these Socratizers are the Laconomaniacs (1281–83; cf. *Gorgias* 515e8). That is they are the rich, noble youth who, having lost much of their hereditary power in the democracy, privately turned away from Athens. Aristophanes had already well parodied these men and their *hetaireai* in *Wasps* (esp. 1122–263). But after *Wasps* and prior to the Sicilian expedition, it had become clear, in particular through the affairs of the Herms and Mysteries, that the aristocratic *hetaireiae* were becoming more organized, though still largely ineffective.[8] Citing in particular the groups around Critias and Antiphon, Carter concludes that, "the *apragmon* youth of the 420s was coming round more and more to an active attitude, and that the social club, the *hetaireia*, formed the perfect means for organizing action."[9]

As both Henderson and Hubbard have correctly argued, Peisetaerus, the "persuader of his *hetairoi,*" fits precisely into this social and intellectual milieu.[10] He undertakes what each of these *hetairoi* would only dream of doing: he leaves behind the political and religious maneuvers that have beset and inhibited the upper-class, sophistically educated intellectual in the democracy, and he founds a *polis* and a cosmos in which his skills might receive their due rewards and his desires might be met. Aristophanes has created a character that has the ambition of an Alcibiades, but who knows (especially in the light of Alcibiades' failure) that you cannot fulfill this ambition and take on the *polis* and its gods within the *polis* itself. Such a student of Socrates could only succeed in a fantasy far from the city:[11] where birds talk, the *aēr* can be fortified, gods can be starved, and human beings can live up in the *meteōra* and clouds together with the cuckoos; a place where he can create from scratch a new city and re-create with his words the cosmos itself: no one could prosecute the new Zeus himself for impiety. He succeeds and we cannot but laugh along at his cleverness: so that is the limit, we muse to

ourselves, to which the erotic ambitions of someone like Alcibiades would aspire, if only he could. At least on the comic stage, the boasts of philosophy can come true, human reason and persuasion are able to bring about perfect happiness and freedom, but only for one isolated human being.

At the same time, however, Aristophanes is pointing out to the *sōphrōn* and wise in the audience that the arguments of these, now older, sophistically trained men, educated in the 420s and beyond, are more clever and daring than *Clouds* suggested (as will be proved to be the case in 411 and 404). Peisetaerus may be more prudent, but he still wishes, like the Weaker Logos, to "indulge his *physis*." Unlike Socrates he has come to grips with both the rational and irrational or erotic strands of human nature and can use his clever tongue to appeal in a variety of ways to each; and unlike the Weaker Logos, or a tyrant of Calliclean aspirations, he does not want, in the end, to treat the laws with contempt. Once his rule is established he returns to the old-fashioned ways. But while he *finally* argues for justice, *sōphrosunē*, *eunomia*, *euboulia* (or in other words, he uses the Stronger Logos), in the end, his goal is, like the tongue-in-belly men, purely private and insular. No other human being is admitted into Cloudcuckooland, nor for all of his revolutionary actions, is the world changed for the better of other human beings. One *alazōn* has replaced another.

So does this mean that the play is dystopian? Hubbard, whose reading of the play is entirely dystopian, recognizes the return to *nomos* in the final quarter of the play but classifies it as a way for Peisetairos "to consolidate his own social control over Cloudcuckooland."[12] He is right, but isn't all *nomos* a means of social control? Cannot we more positively assert that he consolidates the social order of the city and cosmos through his legal kingship? He is replacing Zeus, not becoming an "evil Zeus." The laws he passes are not oppressively despotic but aimed at prudent, social stability as we see in the interloper and Prometheus scenes: respect for fathers, *sōphrosynē*, anti-sycophant, and so on. Furthermore, Hubbard fails to raise the issue of why Aristophanes makes Peisetaerus victorious. We must conclude that Aristophanes acknowledges the apparent efficacy of the eunomian turn (or element) of the sophists, while aware of the self-aggrandizing nature of their ambition.[13] Peisetaerus is establishing a just cosmos and, therefore, must be victorious.

Nevertheless, while the regime may be just, it is not beautiful. Zeus has become an ugly bird-mutant. As Aristophanes emphasized in *Clouds*, the sophists are amusical.[14] They teach not through poetry as the old education did, but through rhetoric and science. In short, as Dover says, they lack *charis*.[15] Peisetaerus is himself aware of the importance of poetry for the establishment of his new gods and new polis. He lets the poetic birds, not himself,

persuade human beings and he rewards the lyric poet for his encomia of Cloudcuckooland. After the *polis* is founded, however, the birds never again sing of their musical reciprocity with the Muses, the source of melodies for men, nor does the nightingale reappear. The birds are now political and the policemen over human beings. By the end of the play, the birds sing not in harmony with nature but either of the grotesque and human anomalies in the world or in praise of their new tyrant and his weapon, the thunderbolt, while recalling the beautiful wedding of Zeus and Hera. Peisetaerus, once a most feared enemy of the birds, has tamed the birds; but by taming the birds, we also know that the natural order of the cosmos now ruled by the sophist has lost something. As the play ends we realize that the politicized birds, now the subjects of their sophist-king, will no longer be able to provide those tunes (*nomoi*) that so beautifully and intuitively[16] responded to the natural order of things.

Thus Aristophanes, the poet, while acknowledging the power and potential of sophistic ways, points out that they are also repugnant—like the final image of Peisetaerus with Basileia—and so, off the comic stage, they must be politically infirm, corrosive, and ultimately, incapable of addressing the necessary requirements of society as a whole. Not only does the act of rationalizing and scrutinizing traditional ways and *nomoi*, however ostensibly well-intentioned this act may be, leave society in a giddy state of unbalance and so open to corruption, as we saw in *Clouds,* but it also deprives these same ways and *nomoi* of their beauty, honor, and their reverential nature. In short, *Birds* articulates what Plato will later call the "old quarrel between poetry and philosophy" (*Republic* 607b).[17]

Perhaps it is apt to finish with Nietzsche, who in his *Birth of Tragedy* joined Aristophanes in identifying "Socratism" as a deadly threat to Greek music and poetry, and, therefore, to the whole of Greek culture.

> This is the reason why the figure of Socrates disturbs us so profoundly whenever we approach it, and why we are tempted again and again to plumb the meaning and intentions of the most problematical character among the ancients. Who was this man who dared, singlehanded, to challenge the entire world of Hellenism—embodied in Homer, Pindar, and Aeschylus, in Phidias, Pericles, Pythia, and Dionysus—which commands our highest reverence? Who was this daemon daring to pour out the magic philter in the dust? this demigod to whom the noblest spirits of mankind must call out:
>
> *Alas!*
> *You have shattered*
> *The beautiful world*
> *With brazen fist;*
> *It falls, it is scattered.*!"[18]

NOTES

1. Bowie (1993, 152–65) has pointed out the many connections in the play between Peisetaerus's foundation and traditional accounts of the foundations of various *poleis*. Kanavou (2012) discusses similarities between Peisetaerus and Theseus, founder of Athens.

2. See also DeCarli (1971, 49–55); Rothwell (2007, 151–82). The latter emphasizes a correspondence between the anthropology of *Birds* and Thucydides's *archaeology*.

3. Kahn (1981, 92–108).

4. Such a procedure had already been undertaken by Cole (1967, esp. 56–9) who claimed that the original source of all such anthropological accounts of *Kulturgeschichte* was Democritus. See also Vlastos (1946, 51–9).

5. Diels-Kranz attributes this fragment to Critias; but more recently Dihle (1977, 28–42) has argued against the traditional attribution and assigned it to Euripides. Scodel (1980) believes that the fragment comes from the satyr play that accompanied Euripides' Trojan trilogy of 415. This would fit nicely with the themes found here in Aristophanes's play of 414. For more bibliography on this question see Collard (2007, 68).

6. Translation based on Kahn (1997).

7. Cf. Lucretius 5.1105–09 on the formation of the first human cities: Inque dies magis hi victum vitamque priorem / commutare novis monstrabant rebus et igni, / ingenio qui praestabant et corde vigebant. / condere coeperunt urbis arcemque locare / praesidium reges ipsi sibi perfugium. "And more each day these men, who excelled in natural talent and were stronger in heart, showed them to change their old way of life by new things and by fire. And they [the talented ones] began to found cities and to set up citadels as strongholds and refuges for themselves, themselves being the kings." Lucretius' account, itself most likely based on an account of the fifth century, asserts that the first cities were formed not by the weak to protect themselves against the strong, but by the strong and clever as a means both of protecting their power and, as he shows in the sequel (5.1120–35), of further advancing it.

8. On the social and intellectual background of those who were charged for impiety in these affairs see Ostwald (1986), appendix C, 537–50.

9. Carter (1984, 74). See also Forrest (1975), Strauss (1993), Mitchell (2015, 151–2).

10. Henderson (1997), Hubbard (1997).

11. Cf. Sommerstein (1987, 4): "Nowhere, even in Aristophanes, are the laws of the universe so utterly set aside for the hero's benefit. He has but to will it, and it is so. His power is total."

12. Hubbard (1991, 172).

13. We might compare the legal positivism of Plato's Thrasymachus, a position that Glaucon later characterizes (358c) as typical of the arguments of countless other sophists (*Republic* 338e): τίθεται δέ γε τοὺς νόμους ἑκάστη ἡ ἀρχὴ πρὸς τὸ αὑτῇ συμφέρον, δημοκρατία μὲν δημοκρατικούς, τυραννὶς δὲ τυραννικούς, καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι οὕτως . . . τοῦτ' οὖν ἐστιν, ὦ βέλτιστε, ὃ λέγω ἐν ἁπάσαις ταῖς πόλεσιν ταὐτὸν εἶναι

δίκαιον, τὸ τῆς καθεστηκυίας ἀρχῆς συμφέρον. "Each rule sets down its laws with a view to its own advantage, a democracy sets down democratic laws, a tyranny tyrannical laws and the rest in the same way . . . so this, O best of men, same thing is what I say is justice in all cities, namely the advantage of the established rule."

14. Stark (1953, 83) rightly notes that Socrates's education of Strepsiades altogether ignores the musical *technē* and does not appreciate the tragic *technē*. Cf. also Segal (1996, 162–81); Perkell (1993, 8).

15. Dover (1968, lvi), though Dover says this only of Socrates. He concludes, Socrates of *Clouds* "was indifferent to what Aristophanes, in common with most of his audience, regarded as the good things in life."

16. As Plato's Socrates (*Ion* 534b), with perhaps a twist of irony, poetically describes the (apian not avian) characteristics of poets: "The poet is a light thing, winged and holy, unable to make poetry before he is inspired and out of his mind and has no intelligence in him."

17. For Plato's Socrates, poetry (or, at least, her defenders) must be able to prove rationally that it is beneficial for cities and individuals (*Republic* 607d–e). He is aware of its pleasure and enchanting power (607c), and the pain of its loss in society (607e), but concludes "it is impious to betray what is believed to be the truth" (607c). On the ambivalence of Plato toward poetry see Halliwell (2011, 155–207). See also Plutarch, *Nicias* 23. οὐ γὰρ ἠνείχοντο τοὺς φυσικοὺς καὶ μετεωρολέσχας τότε καλου μένους, ὡς εἰς αἰτίας ἀλόγους καὶ δυνάμεις ἀπρονοήτους καὶ κατηναγκασμένα πάθη διατρίβοντας τὸ θεῖον, ἀλλὰ καὶ Πρωταγόρας ἔφυγε, καὶ Ἀναξαγόραν εἱρχθέντα μόλις περιεποιήσατο Περικλῆς, καὶ Σωκράτης, οὐδὲν αὐτῷ τῶν γε τοιούτων προσῆκον, ὅμως ἀπώλετο διὰ φιλοσοφίαν. ὀψὲ δ' ἡ Πλάτωνος ἐκλάμψασα δόξα διὰ τὸν βίον τοῦ ἀνδρός, καὶ ὅτι ταῖς θείαις καὶ κυριωτέραις ἀρχαῖς ὑπέταξε τὰς φυσικὰς ἀνάγκας, ἀφεῖλε τὴν τῶν λόγων τούτων διαβολὴν καὶ τοῖς μαθήμασιν εἰς ἅπαντας ὁδὸν ἐνέδωκεν. "For people at that time could not bear the natural philosophers and so-called 'meteora-prattlers,' because they reduced what was divine to irrational causes, random powers, and necessary occurrences. Protagoras was exiled, Pericles scarcely saved Anaxagoras when he'd been imprisoned, and Socrates, although not being concerned with such matters, nevertheless died because of philosophy. But later the shining reputation (*doxa*) of Plato, because of the man's way of life, and because he assigned the necessary laws of nature to the gods and to more authoritative principles (*archai*), removed the ill repute of these theories (*logoi*) and gave to their doctrines a path for all." That is, we might say, Plato poeticized or made philosophy beautiful (cf. Plato, *2nd Letter* 314c).

18. Trans. Kaufmann (1968, chapter 13). The final verses are Goethe, *Faust* 1.1607–11. While Nietzsche later faulted *Birth of Tragedy* on a number of grounds he marks out in *Ecce Homo* certain aspects that remained seminal for him (Kaufmann 1989, 271): "Secondly, there is the understanding of Socratism; Socrates is recognized for the first time as an instrument of Greek disintegration, as a typical decadent. 'Rationality' against instinct. 'Rationality' at any price as a dangerous force that undermines life."

Appendix 1

Line Allocation in the Prologue

At the beginning of the *Birds*, two men come onto the stage, each accompanied by a bird, perhaps real and attached to strings.[1] It would have been very obvious to the audience that these were old men by their masks. The written text of the play, as it has come down to us, however, offers only hints to any differentiation between the two characters at this early stage. At lines 13–19, one of the two old men addresses the audience and relates briefly that their mission is to find Tereus and that the bird seller, Philocrates, sold them each a bird for this purpose: one (τουτονί) a jackdaw for an obol, the other (τηνδεδί) a crow for three obols. For the textual critic, the references to the two birds help in some places to differentiate one speaker from another. But even the deictic demonstrative pronouns τουτονί and τηνδεδί do not give us any certainty as to which of the two birds accompanies the speaker and which his companion.[2] For the ancient audience, the two birds may have acted as visual aids to help distinguish the two old men as they wander around the stage. Perhaps, the smaller, and therefore, less expensive jackdaw may have been the guide for the character who was likewise decked out in clothing of lesser quality and a ruddier, more rustic mask; or perhaps one had more padding, and the other was thinner. Nevertheless, as obvious as these distinctions may have been for the ancient audience sitting in the theater of Dionysus, for the modern reader the prologue of the *Birds* is beset with problems and uncertainty as regards line allocation.[3]

The earliest ancient papyri of Old Comedy provide only the most basic indications for change of speaker, such as the double point or a *paragraphos*.[4] Thus the modern textual critic has an equal authority with our earliest manuscripts to allocate lines to characters.[5] Until Sommerstein, as well as Zanetto, in 1987, all modern editors of the *Birds* had given the speeches addressed to the audience containing explanations of the plot, as well as the role of chief

interlocutor first of Tereus's slave and then of Tereus himself to Euelpides.[6] In 1960 Fraenkel expressed his uneasiness about the prominence of Euelpides in the prologue, but admitted that Aristophanes may have chosen to have Peisetaerus grow gradually into the leading role.[7] Thus it is only after line 93, where the two old men meet Tereus, that Fraenkel gives to Peisetaerus the leading role in the dialogue with Tereus. Fraenkel gives no real internal evidence for this conclusion apart from offering evidence to suggest that the line allocation of 128–42 has been reversed by the manuscripts and arguing that Euelpides's role here, as later in the play, is merely an echo of Peisetaerus.

Fraenkel's uneasiness was then developed by Marzullo into an almost entire reversal of the manuscript line allocation of the prologue. As Marzullo correctly points out, only internal reasons can guarantee the correct line allocation.[8] His internal reasons, however, are either inappropriate to the comic genre or do not take into account the movement of the play as a whole. His thesis is based on two central points: (1) that Peisetaerus, as the originator of the scheme which will later become the focus of most of the play, should have the leading role from the beginning and thus be given any lines which show initiative or superiority; (2) that lines of elevated tone (paratragic, archaic, etc.) should be assigned to Peisetaerus, while lines that are more vulgar or crude should be assigned to Euelpides.

Point two can be disregarded without much argument. As Dover and, more recently, Silk have clearly pointed out, discontinuity of style is a key feature of Aristophanic and Old Comic writing generally: "In Aristophanes the stylistic quality of a speaker's (or a singer's) words switches frequently and, often, drastically."[9] Within a few lines a character's register can move from the highest poetic forms to obscenities. Thus it would be a serious error to use stylistic registers to determine line allocation in comedy. As the two chief critics of Marzullo point out, the comic effectiveness of the scene is actually augmented by the fact that the elevated elements tend to come from Euelpides, who later takes the role of a *bomolochos*.[10]

Marzullo's first point has been criticized from a number of angles. Nesselrath, expanding on some ideas already evident in Russo,[11] argues that the audience would not necessarily expect that the character who takes the role of explaining the background situation to them and who takes the lead in the initial dialogue will be the dominant character in the play. As evidenced by Aristophanes's earlier plays, *Peace*, *Wasps,* and *Knights*, when two characters introduce the play, they tend to recede into the background. To be sure, in *Peace* and *Wasps* the characters are slaves and are clearly subordinate to a master for whom they are doing some task. But in *Knights*, the slaves are thinly disguised representatives of Nicias and Demosthenes, and their master Demos has not commanded them to do anything. They themselves are planning some way to get rid of the Paphlagonian (Cleon). But as soon as the

Sausage Seller is set on his task, the initial characters are barely seen again. Thus, while Nesselrath's argument disposes of Marzullo's first assumption, it does not necessarily support the restoration of the manuscript line allocation.

For *Birds*, the more important question, I would argue, is how the prologue works in regard to the action of the play as a whole. In lines 39–48 one of the characters tells the audience why they have fled Athens:

> οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὖν τέττιγες ἕνα μῆν' ἢ δύο
> ἐπὶ τῶν κραδῶν ᾄδουσ', Ἀθηναῖοι δ' ἀεὶ
> ἐπὶ τῶν δικῶν ᾄδουσι πάντα τὸν βίον.
> διὰ ταῦτα τόνδε τὸν βάδον βαδίζομεν,
> κανοῦν δ' ἔχοντε καὶ χύτραν καὶ μυρρίνας
> πλανώμεθα ζητοῦντε τόπον ἀπράγμονα,
> ὅποι καθιδρυθέντε διαγενοίμεθ' ἄν.
> ὁ δὲ στόλος νῷν ἐστι παρὰ τὸν Τηρέα,
> τὸν ἔποπα, παρ' ἐκείνου πυθέσθαι δεομένω,
> εἴ που τοιαύτην εἶδε πόλιν ᾗ 'πέπτετο.
>
> For cicadas sing on the branches for a month or two, but Athenians sing their whole life through on points of law. It's for this reason that we have made this journey; we wander about, carrying a basket and pot and myrtle branches, seeking out a quiet place, where we might settle and carry on our lives. Our expedition is to Tereus, the hoopoe, wanting to ask him if he has seen such a city somewhere in his flights.

The Athenians are always singing on about lawsuits; they are meddlesome, that is, generally πολυπραγμών. Therefore our character seeks a τόπον ἀπράγμονα, a quiet place, free from troubles and meddlesomeness. Later one of the characters in similar terms tells Tereus why they have come to see him (120–22):

> ταῦτ' οὖν ἱκέται νὼ πρὸς σὲ δεῦρ' ἀφίγμεθα,
> εἴ τινα πόλιν φράσειας ἡμῖν εὔερον
> ὥσπερ σισύραν ἐγκατακλινῆναι μαλθακήν.
>
> For these reasons then have we come here to you as suppliants, if you might tell us of some city, woolly like a mantle and soft to lie back in.

This is, clearly, a more figurative way of saying that they seek a τόπον ἀπράγμονα. It is a nice and woolly town, like a place where one could curl up in a soft blanket: a place without worries or cares. Finally, after describing their ideal towns and rejecting Tereus's suggestions of already existing towns which might accommodate their desires, one of the characters asks what the bird life is like (155–161):

ΧΧ. οὗτος δὲ δὴ τίς ἐσθ' ὁ μετ' ὀρνίθων βίος;
σὺ γὰρ οἶσθ' ἀκριβῶς.
ΕΠ. οὐκ ἄχαρις εἰς τὴν τριβήν·
οὗ πρῶτα μὲν δεῖ ζῆν ἄνευ βαλλαντίου.
ΧΧ. πολλήν γ' ἀφεῖλες τοῦ βίου κιβδηλίαν.
ΕΠ. νεμόμεσθα δ' ἐν κήποις τὰ λευκὰ σήσαμα
καὶ μύρτα καὶ μήκωνα καὶ σισύμβρια.

ΧΧ. But what is this life with the birds like? For you know it in all its details.
HO. It's very comfortable. First of all here we have to live without a wallet.
ΧΧ. You have taken a lot of counterfeit out of life.
HO. And we pasture in gardens on white sesame, myrtle-berries, poppies and mint.

The life of the birds is clearly the type of life that our Athenian would like to live. It is a life without wallets and money, where one lives off the things freely growing in gardens. This, to be sure, is a step beyond the *apragmōn* place which he had first imagined. It is a place even more *apragmōn*, a place situated in Hesiod's golden age (*WD* 116–118). Because birds have no wants beyond what nature provides, there will be no need for laws or law courts, nor for the polis itself. Our Athenian who left in search of a cozy polis, has found his ideal place among the pre- or un-political birds.

In Marzullo's reckoning, each of the lines quoted above should properly be assigned to Peisetaerus.[12] Peisetaerus, therefore, we must assume, represents in Marzullo's eyes, the quintessential *apragmōn*. Such a conclusion, however, in no way tallies with the subsequent picture that is formed of Peisetaerus in the rest of the play. Directly after the description of bird life quoted above, Peisetaerus announces his plan to starve the gods into submission by founding a bird *polis* between earth and heaven in order that the birds might gain power and wealth through tribute—hardly a life without wallets. Indeed, Peisetaerus wishes to change the very nature of the birds. Far from wanting the hyper-*apragmōn* and apolitical life of the birds as described by Tereus, he sees in the bird *polis* "a mighty plan and power (*dunamis*)." At line 471 he, in fact, criticizes the birds for being by nature stupid and not *polypragmōn*.

This contradiction between the goals set out in the prologue and the actual action of the play has been remarked upon by several commentators. Henderson sees in Peisetaerus a new type of Aristophanic hero; he is "complex to the point of being self-contradictory"; "[w]e are at a loss to recognize in him a generic category that could contain both an *apragmon* and a persuader of the masses, a quietist and an imperialist, an alien expert and a ruler."[13] However, he does identify him with a certain "recognizable social stratum," that of the "intellectual and social elite," who, though born and raised to rule, chose in the democracy "not to be ambitious for public distinction."

These are those members of the upper class that Pericles chides as being not *apragmōn* but useless (*achreios*).[14] Thus for Henderson, "in Peisetaerus we see a man who opts for the life of an *apragmon* but then changes his mind when he spots a chance to rule."[15] I agree with Henderson that Peisetaerus is, in fact, a frustrated member of the intellectual elite—as becomes very apparent at and after line 161 of the play. But the character that takes the leading role in the prologue is clearly not politically ambitious, but one who seeks to avoid any problems that might arise from political participation.[16] His desire is for a quiet and independent family life in the country (110, 128–134) or the absence of the *polis* altogether such as life with the birds offers.

Konstan also recognizes contradictions in Peisetaerus and the plot of *Birds* as a whole. As he notes, "The original impulse behind the venture of the two Athenians seems to have been all but forgotten in the new scheme."[17] He sees in Cloudcuckooland a complex intersection of different conceptions of utopia. Thus the "inconsistency of characterization of Peisetaerus is a product of the complex ideological construction of the birds' domain," with the result that Cloudcuckooland turns out to be a "complex image of Athens' own contradictions."[18] As I have argued in the Introduction, however, Peisetaerus does not reflect inconsistencies in Athenian desires, but actually manipulates these divergent desires. In Euelpides, Aristophanes has created a vehicle by which we can see how the "persuader of his companion," Peisetaerus, manipulates at least one type of human and utopian aspiration for his own ends.

Thus I believe that it is more helpful, with Corsini, to recognize that Euelpides and Peisetaerus are not homogenous in character or intention from the beginning. Corsini argues that they represent two opposing sides of the Athenian character: *apragmosynē* and *polypragmosynē*.[19] Corsini, however, argues that Euelpides is an entirely negative character. He represents the apathy and stupidity of those Athenians who have let the *polypragmones* get their way. He desires the fulfillment of his most basic and elemental needs and looks only to his private interests. It is true that Euelpides may pale in comparison to Peisetaerus in intellect and ambition, or even in comparison to Dicaeopolis and Trygaeus, but he does not differ from Dicaeopolis or Trygaeus in his actual goals. Each of these earlier characters in the end wants nothing more than the enjoyment of his old and *apragmōn* way of life. Euelpides's dream of a life without debts, in the country-side, hating the law courts, enjoying parties with friends and family (128–34) as outlined in the beginning is surely the conventional Old Comic dream.[20] It thus proves very difficult to view Euelpides, as Corsini does, as representative of the selfishness and passivity of the Athenian demos.

Nevertheless, Corsini has set up the real problem inherent in Marzullo's argument in regard to line allocation. As Ehrenberg has pointed out in his article on *polypragmosunē*, "the great founder of Cloud-Cuckoobury is

certainly not an *apragmōn*."[21] As we only learn later in the play, it was he that originally induced Euelpides to come on the journey (340).

In the prologue Aristophanes is, in fact (as I argue in Chapter 1), playing with the expectations of the audience. He leads the plot and characterization of the protagonists in a certain direction, enticing the audience into a familiar utopian scenario. He unfolds a character (Euelpides) who in many respects resembles the protagonists that are familiar to us from his earlier plays—that of the marginalized and disgruntled old man. Euelpides thus acts as a foil that will then make way for a very different "old man," one who has for the most part been playing second fiddle for the duration of the prologue.[22] The revelation of Peisetaerus's *mega bouleuma* thus creates a stunning dramatic reversal of the expected movement of the play. The Euelpidean dream of an antinomian golden age or an anomian, avian utopia will thread its way in and out of the play, but it will always be subordinate to and controlled by the master of words and *alazoneia*, Peisetaerus.

NOTES

1. Dunbar 1995, ad loc. 1–91. Compton-Engle (2015, 175 n. 70) believes that fake birds with large beaks are more likely.

2. Dunbar (1995 ad loc. 17–18): τουτονί could refer to the speaker's own bird or to his companion's, though more naturally to the speaker's.

3. Wilson (2007, 115) resignedly concludes that the "problem of attribution in this scene is hardly soluble." Though he does recommend Nesselrath 1996 as a thoughtful discussion—with whose reading I largely agree.

4. J. C. B. Lowe 1962, 27–42. Also Sommerstein 2010, 405–6.

5. Wilamowitz 1927, 63; Fraenkel 1960, 62–63.

6. Coulon (1928), I believe, has provided the best line allocation for the prologue. He follows the manuscript line allocations of Venetus Marcianus (V, eleventh/twelfth century) and Parisinus Regius (A, ca. fourteenth Century). Kakrides (1973) follows most of the earlier editors but makes Peisetaerus the chief interlocutor with Tereus; Dunbar (1995) gives the first expository speech (13–22a) to Peisetaerus but the second (27–48) to Euelpides; thereafter she largely uses the same allocations as Sommerstein, 1987; Henderson (2000), though differing in a few details from Dunbar (e.g., he has Peisetaerus ask Tereus about bird life [155–56]), follows her in the allocation of the longer speeches. Wilson's 2007 allocation is for the most part identical with Sommerstein's up until line 145 (i.e., all of the longer speeches are given to Peisetaerus), at which point it becomes identical with Dunbar's up until Peisetaerus's "big plan."

7. Fraenkel (1960, 64): "Zunächst muss ich gestehen dass mir unbehaglich zumute wird, wenn in diesem Szenenteil unsere Ausgaben den 'Euelpides' so sehr in den Vordergrund rücken. Aber ich sehe das nicht als entscheidend an. Man könnte sich ja vorstellen—freilich, wie ich glaube, gegen den Geist der Aristophanischen Komödie—das Peishetairos erst allmählich in seine Führerrolle hineinwächst."

8. Marzullo 1970, 683.

9. Silk 2000, 211 and passim in Chapter 5. I would not, however, go on to agree with Silk's further point that Aristophanes's characters themselves (i.e., not just their diction or style) are "discontinuous-recreative," that is, that a character's characterization can be remade from scratch at any given point within the play, and that they have little or no realistic qualities. Clearly Aristophanes's characterization is not the realism of Menander's comedy, but while a character's diction and stylistic register may not be consistent, their choices and actions are, if sometimes comically perverse, at least plausibly consistent; see Dover's (1972, 59–65) and (1987, 248) more moderate line: Aristophanic characters "develop essentially through what they say without help from the way in which they say it;" as well as Ruffell 2014, 147–67. See also Dobrov's 1995, 47, formulation of the character as occasionally becoming the puppet of the comic poet/ventriloquist, the moments "when we sense the author's presence/voice in the speech of a fictional figure as this speech departs from, or surpasses, its speaker in intelligence, sophistication, tone or scope."

10. Nesselrath 1996, 93; Corsini 1993, 683–4.

11. Russo 1994, 148–49.

12. Sommerstein follows Marzullo in the first two, but not in the third passage.

13. Henderson 1997, 137–8.

14. Thuc. 2.40.2 and see Carter 1986, 27–35; Christ 2006, 38.

15. Henderson 1997, 138–9.

16. On the different "citizenship strategies" under the democracy in classical Athens see Christ (2006, 37–9) who describes a spectrum from the self-serving *philotimos* to those who tried to avoid political activity altogether.

17. Konstan 1997, 4.

18. Konstan 1997, 16–17.

19. Corsini 1993, 684; see also Nesselrath 1996, 93; Perkell (1993, 3): "Two remarkable self-enhancing fantasies bracket the play, the first (Euelpides's) regressive and infantile, the second (Peisetairos') infinitely progressive and assertive. Both aim at invulnerability, the first through seeking a wholly supportive and unchallenging environment; the second through wholly dominating the environment and triumphing over the conditions of mortal existence;" Perkell follows Coulon's line allocation.

20. For more on the characterization of Euelpides and the similarities and dissimilarities with earlier Aristophanic heroes see Chapter 1.

21. Ehrenberg 1947, 55.

22. See Russo (1994, 149): "Whenever Euelpides expounds the purpose of the voyage, Peisetairos is either at a distance from him or absorbed in something else: cf. 12–22, 27–49, 114–22."

Appendix 2

Pederasty in Aristophanes

οὐδεὶς κομήτης ὅστις οὐ ψηνίζεται
There is no aristocrat who is not penetrated. (*Com. Adesp.*12, Kock)[1]

When Tereus asks Peisetaerus and Euelpides what sort of city they would most gladly live in (127), Peisetaerus responds that it would be one where he would be censured for not trying to seduce and fondle the young son of a family friend. Dunbar argues that such an action would obviously be disgraceful in Athenian society, but downplays any significance to the pederastic context of the description: "In Old Comedy it is assumed that *any normal man*, if given a chance, would happily indulge his sexual appetite with any attractive male or female available," and citing Dover, asserts "Ancient Greeks regarded as equally natural a man's desire for a boy and for a woman."[2] As regards comedy, Dover argues that "there is no passage of comedy which demonstrably ridicules or criticizes any man or category of men for aiming at homosexual copulation with beautiful young males or for preferring them to women"[3] and that, more generally, prejudice was only felt against homosexual activity if it took a passive instead of an active role.

Here I will argue, largely following Hubbard, that while "homosexual copulation" might not be a source of ridicule in Old Comedy, the institution of pederasty, clearly was. Hubbard argues,[4] that the texts of both comedy and oratory "reveal a condemnation not merely of adult passivity or effeminacy, but of the institution of pederasty more generally."[5] The popular perception of pederasty is "always elitist" and would be associated "either with Dorians, thus confirming often suspected philo-Laconian leanings of its upper-class practitioners, or with soft-living, effeminate Ionians."[6] I believe that Hubbard's "condemnation" is too strong a word here, but the evidence he presents

does point to a popular recognition of the elite institution of pederasty as an object of public ridicule, if not derision.[7]

Apart from the passage of the *Birds* discussed in Chapter 1, Dover focuses on two Aristophanean passages which, he argues, point to the tolerance of active pederasty in Attic comedy.[8] One comes from the speech of the Weaker *Logos* in the *Clouds*. The Weaker *Logos* argues that if one becomes *sōphrōn* one misses out on the good things in life, namely boys, women, kottabos, food, drinks, and fun (1071–4). It would be very difficult, with Dover, to argue that the arguments of the Weaker *Logos* point to things that have popular approval. Furthermore, the students of Weaker *Logos* are obviously the elite, or if not when they enter, the implication is that with the education of the Weaker *Logos*, the student will soon be in such an elite position.

The other, more problematic, passage comes from Dicaeopolis' hymn to Phales in the *Acharnians*. After establishing his private peace Dicaeopolis celebrates a country Dionysia, and sings to Phales, the god of the processional phallus (263–75).

> Φαλῆς, ἑταῖρε Βακχίου,
> ξύγκωμε, νυκτοπεριπλάνητε, μοιχέ, παιδεραστά,
> ἕκτῳ σ' ἔτει προσεῖπον εἰς
> τὸν δῆμον ἐλθὼν ἄσμενος,
> σπονδὰς ποησάμενος ἐμαυ-
> τῷ, πραγμάτων τε καὶ μαχῶν
> καὶ Λαμάχων ἀπαλλαγείς.
>
> πολλῷ γάρ ἐσθ' ἥδιον, ὦ Φαλῆς Φαλῆς,
> κλέπτουσαν εὐρόνθ' ὡρικὴν ὑληφόρον,
> τὴν Στρυμοδώρου Θρᾷτταν ἐκ τοῦ φελλέως,
> μέσην λαβόντ', ἄραντα, κατα-
> βαλόντα καταγιγαρτίσαι.
>
> Phales, companion of Bacchios, fellow reveller, night time wanderer, adulterer, pederast, I summon you in the sixth year, I who have come gladly to my deme and made treaties for myself, and have been released of battles and Lamachuses.
>
> For it is far more pleasant for me, Phales, Phales, to find a blooming young girl with stolen wood, Strymodorus' Thratta from Phelleus, and to take her round the middle, lift her up, cast her down and take her flower.

Dicaeopolis begins his hymn, in the conventional cletic manner, with various epithets each representing different aspects of Phales. He is a companion of Dionysus, a fellow reveler, one who goes about by night in search of sexual adventures, including seducing free born women (μοιχέ) and free born boys (παιδεραστά). In this first verse Phales is not simply *eros* but uninhibited drunken revelry which expresses itself in illicit and unrestrained sexual

activity. This does not imply that Dicaeopolis approves of all of these aspects. The hymn's purpose is to ask the god to be present to drink with them and thus, as is essential in any cletic hymn, he must call upon the god in all of his aspects to come to them. Pederasty, like adultery, is a part of Phales's realm. It becomes clear in the second verse the type of sexual behavior that Dicaeopolis longs for now that peace has come—one in which he can rape a neighbor's slave girl on the pretext of punishing her for theft. Thus, while acknowledging the various forms that Phales's power can take, Dicaeopolis himself longs neither for adultery with free women nor pederasty, but the sexual opportunities that may again arise to him in his rustic deme. The hymn is, to be sure, a celebration of sexuality in all of its forms, especially in the context of Dicaeopolis's private peace and his freedom from the malevolent urban and bellicose elements of Athens. This, however, does not imply the public's or even Dicaeopolis's approval of all of these forms.

If we turn to the *parabaseis* of both the *Wasps* and the *Peace* a clearer public view of Aristophanes's attitude toward pederasty becomes evident.[9] In each of these *parabaseis* he gives a short biography of his career as a comic poet. In the *Wasps* passage he reproaches the audience for not properly repaying him for all he has done for them and for his not being carried away by earlier successes.

> ἀρθεὶς δὲ μέγας καὶ τιμηθεὶς ὡς οὐδεὶς πώποτ' ἐν ὑμῖν,
> οὐκ ἐκτελέσαι φησὶν ἐπαρθείς, οὐδ' ὀγκῶσαι τὸ φρόνημα,
> οὐδὲ παλαίστρας περικωμάζειν πειρῶν·
>
> And when he was raised to greatness and honored as no one amongst you before, he says that although he was exalted he did not take it to extremes, nor swell his pride, nor hang around the palaestras making passes.

Dover argues that the point of this passage is merely to show that Aristophanes was not so conceited as to believe that he could gain sexual advantage by his enhanced standing in Athens and concludes, "substitute 'dancing schools' for 'wrestling schools' and 'girl' for 'paidika,' and the point would remain entirely unaffected."[10] Aristophanes, however, is clearly testifying to an allegiance with the values of the audience, the *demos,* who so underrated him in his last comedy. He acknowledges that his honor and status in society was greatly enhanced but that he was never so puffed up as to partake in the elitist activity of hanging around the palaistras; nor, as he goes on to say, did he prostitute his Muses in order to win some favor from a pederastic member of the elite. As Hubbard concludes, "What Aristophanes shares with his public is not a preference for sexual abstinence but a dislike for pederasty."[11] Though we hasten to add, *pace* Hubbard, that whether Aristophanes himself (i.e., not the persona of this *parabasis*) shares this opinion, remains to be seen.

Thus, to return to *Birds,* when we come to Peisetaerus's first extended speech in the *Birds* we cannot, as Dunbar does, regard him as "any normal man" in Greek comedy who would "happily indulge himself with any attractive male or female available." He describes his activities in his ideal city as precisely those which mark out the upper-class, predatory pederast who seeks boys at the gymnasium. This is the activity, as we see in *Clouds,* of men such as Socrates.[12]

NOTES

1. Literally the verb appears to mean "to be pollinated artificially," as of figs.
2. Dunbar 1995, ad loc. 137–42, citing Dover 1978, 60–68.
3. Dover 1978, 137.
4. Hubbard 1998, 48–78. Florence (2014, 370–71), in her survey of sexuality in ancient comedy, commends Hubbard's work in that, his "emphasis on class and social differences in the formation of various cultural attitudes about sexuality serves as another important corrective to the earlier emphasis on institutional displays of power." Davidson also argues against Dover's claim about comedy's prejudice against only the passive homosexual partner in his article of 2001 (12–13; 21–22). He also notes that Dover's position had evolved from a more moderate and correct position in his article of 1964, but he does not appear to take up this subject in his book of 2008, apart from noting that "there seems no doubt at all that Athenian Love had a deeply elitist or even aristocratic coloring, but there are very few signs of popular antipathy to the phenomenon" (604). Hubbard's article does not appear in his bibliography. In his earlier book (1997) Davidson had argued that popular contempt was directed not at passivity in the homosexual act, but at a lack of self-control. Fisher 2001, however, argues that pederasty was widespread among the *demos* in late fifth-century and fourth-century Athens, though he does admit (36) that "this activity may have been especially frequent in the leisured classes." He does not, however, attempt to rebut any of the evidence that Hubbard put forth, especially from the fifth century or comedy. I suspect that if he had done so, it would have disturbed his organic reading of the speech *Against Timarchos*.
5. I do not mean to imply that all active homosexual acts are mocked, but those associated with the institution of pederasty, and therefore, at least to the non-elite Athenians, the debasement of Athenian, citizen youth. For non-pederastic homosexual desire see, for example, Bdelycleon at *Wasps* (687–90) and the wasp chorus (1070). Therefore, the fact that the rejuvenated Demos in *Knights* (1384–86) enjoys the gift of a slave boy as much as a slave girl, does not detract from this argument, because he is dealing with a non-citizen. In any case, Demos replies in the next line, "Blessed me, I am falling back into my old ways," meaning, presumably, that like the rest of his appearance (including his golden cicada pin and old-fashioned clothes 1331) he has returned to the earlier more elite *demos* of around the time of the Persian war. Thus his homosexual desire returning further underlines his elitism.

6. Hubbard, 48–50. See also Henderson (1991, 58): "It is a standard Aristophanic notion, which we will see again and again in the plays, that the only natural sex is the free heterosexual variety" and (208) "there can be no doubt that heterosexuality is presented in comedy as the normal sexual state . . . . Homosexuality, on the other hand, rarely appears in comedy without some pejorative coloration." Henderson (1991, ix) reiterates the "homophobia" of Old Comedy in the preface to the second edition. See also Ostwald 1986, 235–6 and n. 141.

7. Shapiro (2015, 177–207) argues that while the institution of pederasty is elitist, it is not condemned by the non-elite, but seen as kind of status symbol and something to aspire to, and that, as in "elitist" texts (Plato, Xenophon etc.), only illegitimate or immoral forms of pederasty were condemned, while properly performed and moral examples of pederasty were not only approved of, but proof of good character. This may be so for fourth-century law courts (though how close the published (elite?) versions of the speeches were to the actual speeches is an enormous question I cannot touch here), but, as Shapiro herself points out, no evidence for such an argument can be found in Aristophanes (or at least, there is only evidence that shows that "immoral" forms of pederasty were condemned; not that "moral" pederasty was approved of).

8. Dover 1978, 155–7.

9. For similar ridicule of pederasty in other poets see Hubbard 1998, 54–5; Henderson 1991, 215–19.

10. Dover 1978, 138.

11. Hubbard 1998, 51. At the same time, as discussed in the introduction, these lines may also contain a gibe at Eupolis.

12. *Clouds* 177–9 and see Sommerstein's (1982, ad loc. 177–79) explanation of these difficult lines. See also at *Clouds* 348–50, the mockery of the active pederast Hieronymus, son of Xenophantus, who was a tragic and dithyrambic poet, but also both here and at *Acharnians* 388–90, one of the long hairs (i.e., the elite, pro-Laconians).

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Index

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