



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## The Court of Comedy

Wilfred E. Major

Published by The Ohio State University Press

Major, E..

The Court of Comedy: Aristophanes, Rhetoric, and Democracy in Fifth-Century Athens.

Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2013.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/27532>

# 3

• • •

## The Young Comic Playwrights Attack, 425–421 B.C.E.

---

ὑποδύεται ὑπὸ τὸ σχῆμα τὸ τῆς πολιτικῆς ἢ ῥητορικῆς.  
Rhetoric puts on the appearance of politics.

—Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.7.1356a27–28

---

Aristotle laments the role of rhetoric in political deliberation and even idealizes political decision making that is devoid of rhetoric, but when Aristophanes composed comedies for performance in the 420s B.C.E., he had no reason to reckon the novel turns in language of the time as fundamentally distinct from political discourse. Indeed, the presence of unorthodox language in public debate and Gorgias' speech making, successful both as performance and for its political achievement, could only have testified that the language that came to be called "rhetoric" was enmeshed in the deliberations of the Athenian democracy. Since for Aristophanes it was also established that comedy engaged the political environment of the democracy, including the language of its prominent citizens (Chapter 2), it is no surprise that *Acharnians* of 425 B.C.E. dramatizes the language of democratic debate not in terms of adherence to the formalized system of "rhetoric" of the next century, but in terms of the current debate about spectators, deliberation and democracy.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Athenian theater's relationship to democratic deliberation is much debated. For study of

It is telling, by contrast, that when scholars have searched Aristophanes' *Acharnians* for examples of speech making under the influence of rhetoric, they have turned to Dicaeopolis' speech to the chorus (496–556), several episodes into the play, and bypassed completely the opening scene, set in the Assembly of Athens, where speeches about public policy would normally take place.<sup>2</sup> It is logical to turn to Dicaeopolis' speech, of course, since the scene in the Assembly does not feature, and indeed cuts off, any debate or opportunities for speech making. Instead, the type of debate that belongs in the Assembly, about public policy, takes place near Dicaeopolis' home. Racing ahead to the full speech overlooks this translocation, overlooks that Aristophanes makes an issue of the fact that speech making and deliberation do not take place in the Assembly, where they should. This emphatic absence means spectators of the play have reason to be watching for a speech, and that the speech finally arrives in an unexpected locale is significant. It is a repeated and core argument of this study that Aristophanes is purposeful in transferring the setting of speeches and oratory and that restoring the deliberative process to its normal location is equally meaningful. The plays of 425 to 421 B.C.E. not only involve translocation of the deliberative process, and of the act of speech making within it; such transfers are central to the action and the basic cause-and-effect of each play. *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Clouds* and *Wasps* all feature processes central to the democracy (public debate, trial by jury, education) stalled in their normal and proper locations and translocated to other environments. In each play, the underlying assumption, usually explicit, sometimes implicit, is that a normal and healthy process takes place in its proper public democratic institution. In this sense, Aristophanes' comedies are grounded in an ideology consistent with a functional and empowered democracy, and criticisms of its failures or errors should be construed in this context. Moreover, the translocation process works both ways. When Aristophanes celebrates the happy restoration of Athens in *Peace*, he translocates authority and the deliberative process away from its nontraditional location back to its proper democratic home, in this case the Council. In *Acharnians*, however, Aristophanes carefully and consistently dramatizes and emphasizes translocation away from the traditional and proper location for deliberation, the Pnyx, and the traditional and proper occasion, the Assembly.

---

modern theories about democratic deliberation and Aristophanes, see Zumbrunnen (2012), and for tragedy's engagement with this issue, see Goldhill (2009), Hall (2009) and Hesk (2011), with the important response by Heath (2011). Cf. the Introduction.

2. Murphy (1938, 101–4); Harriott (1986, 27–36); Sousa e Silva (1987–88, 99–102).

THE ASSEMBLY IN *ACHARNIANS*

At the original performance of *Acharnians* in 425 B.C.E., the set in the Theater of Dionysus, before any performers appeared, might or might not have signaled to the spectators that the setting is the Pnyx, but the script is unambiguous that this is the setting. In the same scene that indicates this setting, however, the play repeatedly sounds notes of dislocation and frustration. Throughout the monologue that opens the play, Dicaeopolis harps on the theme that the deliberative process is occurring in the wrong places (1–39). His first example, Cleon coughing up money to the Knights (5–8), is predicated on an attempt by Cleon to short-circuit deliberation, but an attempt that rebounds on its instigator. Unfortunately, Dicaeopolis does not specify the location of this example, presumably because the audience would have known it without prompting. If, as many scholars have argued,<sup>3</sup> the passage refers to a scene in *Babylonians* of the previous year, then this first event, a public political action, “a worthwhile thing for Greece” (ἄξιον γὰρ Ἑλλάδι, 8), takes place not where it should (a court, or perhaps the Council and Assembly), but in the theater. The next events, good and bad (a tragedy by Theognis, the music of Moschus, Dexitheus and Chaeris, 11–16), all take place in the theater.<sup>4</sup> If political justice has taken place in the theater, and otherwise the theater is the site of pleasure and pain, what is happening in the political arena? Dicaeopolis soon explains: nothing, because the Pnyx is deserted when it should be in session (19–20). Instead, the spectators are in the Agora, not deliberating or giving speeches but engaging in talk without substance (λαλοῦσι, 21; cf. the Appendix). They specifically stay out of the physical space of the Assembly (22).<sup>5</sup>

Even the Prytaneis are not present in the Assembly (23). When they do arrive, late, they are coming not to engage in the business of the Assembly but instead to scramble for the seats that will provide the best view (23–26).<sup>6</sup>

3. Olson (2002, 66–68) provides a survey of the issues. On the thorny issues the passage raises about the censorship of Old Comedy, see the debate in Sluiter and Rosen (2004).

4. Brockmann (2003, 27–41) argues that Theognis was directing a revival of Aeschylus’ *Persians* here. Sidwell (2009, 293–95) incorporates this notion into a chain of antidemocratic targets from Pericles to Eupolis. If by chance the lines do refer to a revival of *Persians*, there could be a political alignment at issue, but the evidence is slight at best. Cf. Chapter 6.

5. How the σχοινίον . . . μεμλτωμένον functioned is not certain, for which cf. Olson (2002, 73); but the metaphor is clear: people are actively avoiding the border that would have them in the physical space of the Assembly and engaged in its processes. Shear (2011, 131–34, 269–85) analyzes the conversion of the Agora into markedly democratic space in the fourth century, but *Acharnians* long predates this transformation.

6. See Olson (2002, 75) for a survey of the textual and interpretive problems in these lines, but

The absence of substantive deliberation in contrast to eager viewing recalls the criticism found in Thucydides, where Cleon rebukes the audience at the Assembly along analogous lines: σοφιστῶν θεαταῖς ἐοικότες καθήμενοις μᾶλλον ἢ περὶ πόλεως βουλευομένοις (“You resemble seated spectators before performers more than those deliberating about their city,” 3.38.7).<sup>7</sup> The Prytaneis race to be seated spectators rather than civic deliberators. Thus Aristophanes, in his satire of the deliberative processes, maintains the same contrast as Thucydides.

Next Dicaeopolis makes explicit that the proper business of the Assembly, deliberating about peace, has no value (27), and he invokes the entire political community (ὦ πόλις πόλις), but in vain, for at this point there is no place where the desired process is taking place. Now Dicaeopolis begins reconstituting the Assembly and attempting to create a space for the process he desires.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the Prytaneis, he himself always attends the Assembly ahead of everyone and then sits alone (28–29). With no deliberative process transpiring, Dicaeopolis feels the pull of other locations, his *deme* in particular, which is notably free of the invitations and sales pitches of the Agora (32–36). Lest this wistful thinking suggest that Dicaeopolis is merely at the Pnyx to get the best seat as a spectator of the oratorical displays, he explains his purpose exactly (37–39):<sup>9</sup>

νῦν οὖν ἀτεχνῶς ἤκω παρεσκευασμένος  
βοᾶν ὑποκρούειν λοιδορεῖν τοὺς ῥήτορας,  
ἐάν τις ἄλλο πλὴν περὶ εἰρήνης λέγῃ.

So consequently, I’ve come totally prepared  
to shout, interrupt and abuse the speakers,  
if anyone speaks about anything except peace.

As for formal rhetorical technique, in modern terms, Dicaeopolis’ monologue to this point can be labeled a priamel, but this structure does not correspond to any outline or component in ancient Greek rhetoric and is not geared to resemble or recall a piece of oratory.<sup>10</sup> It does, however, set

---

the purpose of the Prytaneis’ actions seems clear.

7. Cf. the Introduction, 3–5.

8. Cf. McGlew (2002, 57–78), for whom it is crucial that Dicaeopolis here pursues personal desire rather than state-sanctioned sacrifice.

9. Cf. the entries on shouting and screaming in the Appendix.

10. Edmunds (1980, 26–33) analyzes *Ach.* 1–39 as a priamel, setting up the opposition between poetry and politics. Race (1982, x; cf. 36 n. 11) notes that no ancient rhetorician describes a figure

up the expectation that there should be a functional Assembly and that the spectators should be fully engaged in the deliberative process. Aristophanes, having built up this expectation, establishes suspense and tension until the anticipated speech making takes place. That he delays the speech and the deliberative process until well after the Assembly is adjourned says as much about the absence of functional process at the Assembly as it does about the functional deliberations once they occur.

After Dicaeopolis' initial monologue, the Assembly does begin (with the Prytaneis entering just as Dicaeopolis describes, 40–42, confirming Dicaeopolis' reliability as an interpreter of events), and Aristophanes continues to set the expectation of deliberation against the frustration of this expectation. The herald confirms that parties are now within the physical space of the meeting (43–44).<sup>11</sup> One citizen, Amphitheos, is present and immediately ready to initiate the deliberation about peace (45), as Dicaeopolis earlier called for, but he is just as quickly removed from the space (54). When Dicaeopolis objects to the failed attempt at deliberation, the herald responds by telling him to sit down and be quiet (κάθησο, σίγα, 59), an inversion of the behavior Dicaeopolis came ready to engage in and which he has established as proper engagement in the deliberative process. For the rest of the proceedings of the Assembly, Dicaeopolis comments but cannot participate (60–166).<sup>12</sup> Forced ironically to be a spectator of what is said, he now offers perspective for the benefit of the spectators of the play, but his comments only reinforce the distance between the activities around the Pnyx and the proper business of the Assembly (note especially 101–7, where Dicaeopolis literally interprets the speech of Pseudartabas).<sup>13</sup> Eventually, the language of the Assembly proves functional only to terminate dialogue entirely. Addressing the Prytaneis, Dicaeopolis shuts down the Assembly (169–72; Dicaeopolis' call, ἀπαγορεύω μὴ ποιεῖν ἐκκλησίαν, in 169 mirrors the herald's question at the beginning of the meeting, τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται, 45).

---

comparable to the priamel. Compton-Engle (2001) compares this speech with Silenus' opening catalog of πόνοι in Eur. *Cyc.* 1–40 against the backdrop of tragic priamels. Motifs like ὦ πόλις πόλις (27) have their parallels in drama rather than extant oratory (cf. the same phrase in Eupolis fr. 219 and Sophocles, *OT* 629). For two quite different analyses of the entire prologue, see Gordziejew (1938) and Platter (2007, 42–62).

11. The script does not specify whom the herald moves inside the area, but the key point is that participants are now explicitly within the borders of the functional territory of the Assembly, and the deliberative process should follow.

12. See Buis (2008, 250–62) for a close reading of the tensions in the diplomacy with foreign nations in this scene.

13. See Slater (2002, 42–49) on Dicaeopolis as actor, spectator and liaison with the audience.

With the dysfunctional Assembly ended, paradoxically, the deliberative process Dicaeopolis has sought now begins almost immediately. Amphytheos returns and Dicaeopolis quickly negotiates his thirty-year peace (175–203). While about the Pnyx deliberation and dialogue result in no consequence, now cause and effect take place. The peace treaty brings on both the chorus of Acharnians (204–36) and Dicaeopolis’ celebration of the rural Dionysia (237–79). The confrontation between them begins with the chorus refusing to listen at all (280–327, esp. 295, 298, 303, 323–24). Dicaeopolis will manage to compel a deliberative process, but he still cannot use what should be the appropriate institution and venue, so he turns to the resource he has invoked several times already: tragedy.

As Helene Foley has argued in detail, Aristophanes has Dicaeopolis invoke tragedy through much of *Acharnians* to bolster the play’s broader political themes.<sup>14</sup> The protagonist finally engages in the deliberative process that was a nonstarter in the Assembly and opposed by the chorus of Acharnians. Armed by Euripides and clothed in tragedy, Dicaeopolis finally compels permission from the chorus to address them, ἄνδρες οἱ θεώμενοι, “gentlemen spectators” (496), and begins his speech (497). This form of address can appear metatheatrical or in some way discordant with the illusion of the environment of the play, but it is not, really. It simply resumes and maintains a metaphor that was already implicit in Dicaeopolis’ monologue at the beginning of the play, when he criticizes the Prytaneis for their lackadaisical commitment to deliberation, combined with their enthusiasm for a good show of speeches (again cf. the rebuke of Thucydides’ Cleon of those at the Assembly as mere spectators of speeches: θεαταὶ . . . τῶν λόγων, 3.38.4). Dicaeopolis was reduced to such a spectator during the Assembly in the play, and so the spectators of *Acharnians* have at least some reason to expect, and some of them even to look forward to, an occasion finally to watch someone in the play deliver a speech.

### DICAEOPOLIS’ SPEECH (496–556)

The speech Dicaeopolis gives here serves as a good example of how previous attempts to align speech-making practice in Aristophanes’ plays with the dictates of later rhetorical theory can look logical in their bare outline but not hold up under closer examination. Charles Murphy’s 1938 article is the

14. Foley (1988) closely analyzes this dynamic. Biles (2011, 56–96) concentrates on the poetic allegiances Aristophanes builds through Dicaeopolis to achieve victory. Cf. P. Wilson (2007) on the issues related to victory in competition in this model.

most often cited study of rhetoric in Aristophanes, and he devotes his most detailed analysis to this speech.<sup>15</sup> His scheme is the following:

1. Προοίμιον, 496–512
2. Πρόθεσις, 513–14
3. Πίστεις, 513–54
  - a. 515–22. The Athenian sycophants were unjust to Megara in the matter of confiscation.
  - b. 523–29. The rape of the harlots, begun by the Athenians, led directly to the war.
  - c. 530–34. Pericles introduced the Megarian decree for personal reasons.
  - d. 535–39. We refused to reconsider the decree.
  - e. 540–54. (*Refutatio*) “What should you have done under similar circumstances?”
4. Ἐπίλογος, 555–56

Murphy’s scheme relies on the axiom that the canonical divisions of speech (prologue, narrative, proof, epilogue) are already fixed and widely accepted.<sup>16</sup> Even without this underlying assumption, however, the scheme does not match Dicaeopolis’ speech. Murphy describes the proem as “unusually elaborate,” as he must, since it includes many statements not required, and not typical, of a προοίμιον. It certainly does not resemble a προοίμιον as given as an example in *Knights* 1344 (see below), which is an initial statement of praise and flattery. When Dicaeopolis says (496–98):

μή μοι φθονήσῃτ', ἄνδρες οἱ θεώμενοι,  
εἰ πτωχὸς ὢν ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἀθηναίοις λέγειν  
μέλλω περὶ τῆς πόλεως.

Don't bear me ill will, gentlemen spectators,  
if I am a beggar and yet among the Athenians I  
intend to speak about the city.

Murphy finds here the device of diminution (ἐλάττωσις), but these lines are also a direct parody of lines from Euripides’ *Telephus* (fr. 703), so we

15. Murphy (1938, 101–4).

16. Usher (1999, 22), who persists in propping up the older model, offers a taxonomy like that found in Murphy, except in even stronger terms, saying that the divisions here “one may assume to have been available to a speechwriter plying his trade from about 420 B.C.”



would have to accept that Aristophanes is borrowing the device from Euripides' original speech.<sup>17</sup> Even if we accept this identification, it seems that the lines do more to establish Dicaeopolis in his parodic character than repeat any rhetorical device from Euripides. If there is any establishment of rhetorical formality here, it disappears entirely in the next few lines as Dicaeopolis (and in some fashion Aristophanes) declares the authority of comedy to speak on justice (499–501). This statement and the following lines on the environment at the Lenaea (502–8), far from continuing in the manner of a properly formal rhetorical speech, instead emphasize that we are anywhere but in a location typical for a forensic speech.

αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἔσμεν οὐπὶ Ληναίῳ τ' ἄγων,  
 κοῦπω ξένοι πάρεισιν· οὔτε γὰρ φόροι  
 ἤκουσιν οὔτ' ἐκ τῶν πόλεων οἱ ξύμμαχοι  
 ἀλλ' ἔσμεν αὐτοὶ νῦν γε περιεπτισμένοι·  
 τοὺς γὰρ μετοίκους ἄχουρα τῶν ἀστῶν λέγω.

For it's just us, and it's the contest at the Lenaea,  
 And there're no foreigners yet. Neither the tribute  
 Nor the allies from the other cities have arrived.  
 But at this point we are the processed grain,  
 Because the immigrants are the bran. (504–8)

Murphy labels the last line here a προκατάληψις,<sup>18</sup> as it preempts a potential objection from the audience, but there is no reference to such an objection, as opposed to later in the speech when Aristophanes is perfectly willing to refer to such objections (540). Rather the line is the last detail in his description of the gathering.

The next section in the scheme (513–14) is the following:

17. For formal rhetorical technique in Euripides' *agons*, see Lloyd (1992, 19–36). Scholarship on rhetoric in tragedy has yet to recognize the developments in the recent research on the development of fifth-century rhetoric. Gallagher (2003) attempts a detailed linkage of the *agon* in *Electra* with the Sophists' rhetorical doctrines. For an analysis of "rhetoric" in Euripides, very broadly defined, see Mastrorarde (2010, 207–45). For Euripides' appropriation of late fifth-century philosophy generally, see the extensive catalogs in Egli (2003) and the survey in Dillon (2004). More superficially, see Conacher (1998). Cf. Chapter 6. Sansone (2012) explores drama (primarily tragedy) and the invention of rhetoric. I regret that it arrived too late for me to engage with its novel thesis.

18. This line is deleted by N. G. Wilson, because of the difficulty of the metaphor. See Whitehead (1977, 39–41) and N. G. Wilson (2007a, 26). This is not germane to my discussion of Murphy's analysis, but I agree with Wilson that the line and its characterization of metics is entirely inconsistent with other statements in Aristophanes. On the issue of inclusion in deliberation with regard to foreigners and others, see below on *Knights* (72–73), and Chapter 5 on Lysistrata's central speech.

ἀτὰρ, φίλοι γὰρ οἱ παρόντες ἐν λόγῳ,  
τί ταῦτα τοὺς Λάκωνας αἰτιώμεθα;

Since everyone here at the speech is friends,  
Why do we blame the Spartans for this?

Murphy calls this a πρόθεσις, a declaration of the subject of the speech, but the couplet is barely even that. The first line has nothing to do with such a declaration, and the second line simply picks up the thought in the few previous lines, still part of Murphy's προοίμιον, where Dicaeopolis cites the damage the Spartans inflicted on his own farm. Murphy elides the problem by saying the section "continues the attempt to win favor" (102) and invoking the authority of the *Rhetoric to Alexander* that a πρόθεσις should come at the end of a προοίμιον when the speaker faces prejudice (29.1437b34–38a2).

Murphy does not point out, however, his unorthodox privileging of the πρόθεσις, for he elevates it to the status of the second section in the speech, when it is not normally a division at all. Why he does so becomes evident with the next section of his scheme. Because there is nothing that corresponds to the narrative (διήγησης) and proofs (πίστεις) to yield a quadripartite division of the speech, Murphy elevates the πρόθεσις, declares the third section the πίστεις, and, to cover the διήγησης, says: "The proofs consist mainly of a narration of certain facts." This makes the section seem more like a narrative than a set of proofs. Whether the section is a narrative, a set of proofs or both at the same time, it violates the canonical quadripartite division of a speech by not having separate sections devoted to narrative and proof, to say nothing of being in canonical order. Murphy's scheme downplays this problem and reckons the πρόθεσις a full division to mask the deficiency.<sup>19</sup>

The scheme ends with a two-line so-called ἐπίλογος (555–56):

ταῦτ' οἶδ' ὅτι ἂν ἐδραῖτε· τὸν δὲ Τήλεφον  
οὐκ οἰόμεσθα; νοῦς ἄρ' ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔνι.

I know that's what you would have done. And we don't think  
so of Telephus? Then we're really out of our minds.

19. The underdifferentiation of narrative and proof is a notorious problem for those insisting that the canonical principles of classical rhetoric were in force in the fifth century. Even Usher (1999, 23–24) has to acknowledge the nebulous evidence for narrative sections in early speeches. See Timmerman and Schiappa (2010, 137–70) for attempts to analyze early oratory using established fifth-century narrative patterns instead of fourth-century ones.

Like the first lines of the speech, these are direct parodies of Telephus' speech in Euripides (fr. 710) and signal the conclusion to Dicaeopolis' parody more than constituting any formal peroration. If Dicaeopolis' speech resembles any formal oratorical structure, it is that more common of fifth-century speeches, loosely inspired by ring composition from oral poetry and with a body containing a sequence of arguments.<sup>20</sup>

More important than the structure of Dicaeopolis' speech is its effect: the members of the chorus react to what he has said. Some members stand their ground and remain opposed to Dicaeopolis' position, but others defend both his position and his right to speak (557–65). In this way, even those opposed to Dicaeopolis are at least involved in the process on the terms Dicaeopolis described them (ready to insult and stop any speaker not addressing the topic he wishes; cf. lines 37–39). Far from mere spectators, the full chorus is now active deliberators.

Cause and effect are important here. Once Dicaeopolis engages in the deliberative process after disbanding the Assembly, from the moment he begins negotiating with Amphitheos, his speech has real effect. Once he completes his speech, half of the chorus joins him; when the other half invokes Lamachus, Dicaeopolis repels him, too, and the full chorus explicitly acknowledges that his speech has proven successful deliberation for the people of Athens (627–28):

ἀνὴρ νικᾷ τοῖσι λόγοισιν, καὶ τὸν δῆμον μεταπέθει  
περὶ τῶν σπουδῶν.

The man has won with his speeches and convinced the Demos  
about his treaty.

Dicaeopolis remains dominant throughout the rest of the play, easily repelling challengers and unwanted visitors. The process that brought him to this point, however, is exactly the one he came to the Assembly to enact: engagement with speakers and deliberation about policy. When it cannot take place at the Pnyx, Aristophanes shows that the appropriate location does not support the process, but that the democratic process itself does function, and exceptionally well. Dicaeopolis enacts it, and all benefits flow to him as a result.<sup>21</sup>

With this fundamental point established, that the democratic process

20. Timmerman and Schiappa (2010, 157–67).

21. P. Wilson (2007) elegantly explores the tension between Dicaeopolis' success, Aristophanes' victory in festival competition and the prosperity of the community at large.

does work but it is currently not operational in the appropriate and established political institution, Aristophanes has his chorus deliver the *parabasis*, wherein he can discourse more on the deliberative process. Addressing the spectators seated in the theater (πρὸς τὸ θέατρον, 629), an area where the deliberative process remains functional, the chorus says (630–32):

διαβαλλόμενος δ' ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐν Ἀθηναίοις ταχυβούλοις,  
ὡς κωμῶδεϊ τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν δῆμον καθυβρίζει,  
ἀποκρίνασθαι δεῖται νυνὶ πρὸς Ἀθηναίους μεταβούλους.

Slandered by the Athenians who are quick in their deliberations,  
on the charge that he mocks the city and degrades the Demos,  
he must answer now, before the Athenians change their judgments.

He raises the issue of the Athenians' rush to judge and the instability of their judgment with two *hapax* epithets, *ταχυβούλοις* and *μεταβούλους*.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, Aristophanes and his chorus are engaging in the deliberative process by presenting policy recommendations in a public speech. The speech raises two issues with regard to the deliberative process: attention paid to outside influence, and simple flattery (633–35):

φησὶν δ' εἶναι πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν ἄξιος ὑμῖν ὁ ποιητής,  
παύσας ὑμᾶς ξενικοῖσι λόγοις μὴ λίαν ἐξαπατᾶσθαι,  
μήδ' ἥδεσθαι θωπευομένους, μήδ' εἶναι χαννοπολίτας.

The poet says he deserves rich compensation,  
because he stopped you from being too much deceived by foreign speeches,  
and from enjoying being flattered and from being gape-open citizens.

Aristophanes has dramatized this deceptive influence earlier in the play, the scene of the Assembly, where such deliberation as there was consisted of flattery and deception by ambassadors and foreigners. Now he gives examples, and these are examples of *προοίμια* as Aristophanes knows the term, flattering prefaces to a speech (635–40):

πρότερον δ' ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν πόλεων οἱ πρέσβεις ἐξαπατῶντες  
πρῶτον μὲν ἰοστεφάνους ἐκάλουν· κάπειδῆ τοῦτ' οἱ εἶποι,

22. Reinders (2001, 156–59) studies these terms in the context of Aristophanes' vocabulary for the Demos and class distinctions in general.

εὐθύς διὰ τοὺς στεφάνους ἐπ' ἄκρων τῶν πυγιδίων ἐκάθησθε.  
 εἰ δέ τις ὑμᾶς ὑποθωπεύσας λιπαρὰς καλέσειεν Ἀθήνας,  
 ἠὔρετο πᾶν ἂν διὰ τὰς λιπαρὰς, ἀφύων τιμὴν περιάψας.

Previously ambassadors from the allied cities tricked you,  
 first by calling you “violet-crowned”: at the moment anyone said that,  
 just “violet-crowned,” you’d sit at the tips of your asses.  
 And if anyone really buttered you up by saying “Glistening Athens,”  
 he’d get anything for that “glistening,” wrapping you in honor worthy of  
 sardines.

Aristophanes returns to the value of what he does and explains what is and what should be happening: he is demonstrating how democracy functions, so the allied states will learn about democracy, too, not flatter the Athenians in a dysfunctional deliberative environment (641–42):

ταῦτα ποιήσας πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν αἴτιος ὑμῖν γεγένηται,  
 καὶ τοῖς δήμοις ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, δείξας ὡς δημοκρατοῦνται.

For doing this, he deserves rich compensation,  
 and for showing the Demoi in the allied cities how democracy works.

After an extended example of the value that foreigners like the King of Persia recognize in the comic poet, he again declares how the deliberative process works (656–58):

φησὶν δ' ὑμᾶς πολλὰ διδάξειν ἀγάθ', ὥστ' εὐδαίμονας εἶναι,  
 οὐ θωπεύων οὐδ' ὑποτείνων μισθοὺς οὐδ' ἐξαπατούλλων,  
 οὐδὲ πανουργῶν οὐδὲ κατάρδων, ἀλλὰ τὰ βέλτιστα διδάσκων.

He says he'll teach you plenty of valuable things, so you'll prosper,  
 Without flattering or dangling rewards or diddling you  
 Or resorting to any means or sprinkling you, but just teaching you the best.

For the *pnigos*, the chorus taunts Cleon and dares him to do what he can (659–64). Naming Cleon now identifies him as a bottleneck in the deliberative process, one who engages in the sort of flattery and deception Aristophanes has been criticizing.

It is ironic in retrospect that Thucydides puts in Cleon's mouth some of these same metaphors to describe and berate the dysfunctional deliberative

process, but the parallel imagery toward different ends suggests the possibility that the terminology of spectators and dysfunctional deliberation was not original with either Thucydides or Aristophanes and, more significantly, that the authors had quite different perspectives on the nature of, and solution to, the problem of the deliberative process not yielding positive results. Although Thucydides does not explicitly state a solution to the problem, he offers a positive portrait of Pericles and his domination of the political processes, praising the fact that he led the Demos rather than the other way around (2.65.8–9). As we have already seen, comedy did not react to Pericles this way, indeed quite the opposite. Moreover, Aristophanes in *Acharnians* continues depicting Pericles as a damaging arrogant tyrant (524–34), consistent with comedy's criticisms during Pericles' lifetime, so there is additional reason to believe that Thucydides and Aristophanes diverged in their representation and evaluation of politics and individuals. That both of them despised Cleon does not mean they did so from a similar political orientation. Thucydides describes Periclean democracy as such in name only, with the man himself prudently guiding Athens, but characterizes Cleon as an ignorant, violent fool, with the two leaders having in common only their ability to criticize the Demos and yet to compel it to act.<sup>23</sup> Aristophanes finds the deliberative process in the Assembly (and the Council, as other plays show) to be the key to the democracy and trusts the Demos' judgment. Dicaeopolis narrates Pericles' role in the war as resulting from petty personal vengeance (524–30). Personal aggrandizement will be core to Aristophanes' charges against Cleon in *Knights*, too. Both Pericles and Cleon eviscerate the deliberative process by driving the Demos along with flattery and contempt rather than discussing policy. And while Aristophanes (at least satirically) promotes himself as a teacher of integrity and respect, and although Thucydides nowhere explicitly refers to comic playwrights, it seems a safe conclusion that the historian did not consider comedy a source of valuable advice for Athens in times of crisis.

In the remaining sections of the *parabasis*, Aristophanes turns to the processes in another anchor of democratic institutions, the courts. The elderly chorus members first complain about the rough and unjust treatment they suffer from young prosecutors. As is typical of comedy of the fifth century, *rhetores* are a sort of species of creature unleashed by the spectators (ὑπὸ νεανίσκων ἔατε καταγελάσθαι ῥητόρων, 680), but in turn the prosecu-

23. Pope (1988) argues that Thucydides criticized factionalism in Athens rather than democracy as an ideology or government. Yunis (1991) argues that Thucydides equates Periclean rhetoric with instruction of the Demos, in contrast to demagoguery, which is negative for the Demos and therefore criticized by Thucydides.

tors hunt the weak old men with verbal round rocks and traps tripped with words (στρογγύλοις τοῖς ῥήμασιν . . . σκανδάληθρ' . . . ἐπῶν, 686–88). After the generic criticism, Thucydides son of Milesias becomes the example, again a reminder that Aristophanes and comedy stand in opposition to Pericles and his brand of politics, here to the point of sympathizing with Pericles' most prominent opponent. As regards terminology, as in *Banqueters* (fr. 205), there seems no particular distinction between ῥήτορες (680) and συνήγοροι (685, 705), and Thucydides' prosecutor uses substanceless talk (λάλω, 705), as does Alcibiades (καὶ λάλος χῶ Κλεινίου, 716).<sup>24</sup> Aristophanes will flesh out the issues in the courts fully three years later in *Wasps*.

But for his play of the next year, Aristophanes keeps his focus on the Pnyx, the functioning of the Assembly and the man who wielded his power there.

## RULING DEMOS: KNIGHTS

*Knights* concentrates on the tensions and failures in the deliberative process every bit as much as, indeed more than, *Acharnians*, and Aristophanes is more emphatic about the key to successful deliberation, and the benefits that result from it. The focus is different, though, in that *Knights* bores in on components and participants who received only passing attention in *Acharnians*. Whereas in *Acharnians* the Prytaneis are tagged as the failures of the Assembly for being mere dithering spectators, now the collective will of the Demos becomes central to restoring the process. Cleon's flattery and deception of the Demos is a topic the chorus mentions obliquely in the *parabasis* of *Acharnians*, but now Cleon becomes the critical barrier to a functional democracy. Success in the deliberative process for Dicaeopolis meant prosperity for him. Now the functional judgment of the Demos, not only at the Assembly but also in the Council, means Athens restored to the imperial greatness of its pre-Periclean days.

The location of the deliberative process also remains crucial in *Knights*, and activity on the Pnyx in particular. Demos is introduced as belonging to the Pnyx as his deme (Δῆμος Πυκνίτης, 42).<sup>25</sup> Cleon is projected as a giant monster with one leg in the Assembly (76). The dynamic of deliberation is

24. Cf. the entries for all these terms and individuals, plus that for Euathlos, in the Appendix. Like most editors, I follow Hamaker's emendation of Κεφισοδήμω to Κεφισοδήμου in line 705.

25. See Reinders (2001, 61–70, 123–30) for a breakdown of Aristophanes' characterization of the Demos.

problematic in ways similar to that described in *Acharnians*. Where there the Athenians are quick to judgment, quick to change their minds and easily deceived by flattery, in *Knights*, Demos is (41–43)

ἀκράχολος,  
Δῆμος Πυκνίτης, δύσκολον γερόντιον  
ὑπόκωφον.

quick to anger,  
Demos of Pnyx, cranky, a little old man  
and deaf.

The barrier to the deliberative process is the same deceptive flattery dramatized and criticized in *Acharnians*, but here it is Cleon in the form of the Paphlagonian slave who embodies this problem (ἤκαλλ' ἐθώπευ' ἐκολάκευ', ἐξηπάτα, “He fawns, sucks up, flatters, deceives” 48). There is no deliberation or debate, not even from the race of *rhetores*, for Cleon stands ready and flicks them away (ἔστῶς ἀποσοβεῖ τοὺς ῥήτορας, 60). The slaves Demosthenes and Nicias are reduced to deliberating about the best way to commit suicide (80–100). Demosthenes’ solution is to get drunk, because then the rewards of good deliberation follow (90–94):

οἶνον σὺ τολμᾶς εἰς ἐπίνοιαν λοιδορεῖν;  
οἶνου γὰρ εὐροις ἂν τι πρακτικώτερον;  
ὄρᾳς, ὅταν πίνωσιν ἄνθρωποι, τότε  
πλουτοῦσι διαπράττουσι, νικῶσιν δίκας,  
εὐδαιμονοῦσιν, ὠφελοῦσι τοὺς φίλους.

You dare to dispute that wine leads to thinking?  
Could you find anything more effective than wine?  
You see, when people drink:  
They get wealthy. They prosper. They win their cases.  
They’re blessedly happy. They help their friends!

Lubricating the deliberative process yields victory and success. To make success appear simultaneously traditional and democratic, Aristophanes makes it come in the form of the traditional formula of helping one’s friends and harming one’s enemies. He explicitly includes the ability to help friends, while harming enemies comes in the form of winning court cases against



them, using an established process via a democratic institution. Even drunkenness is a virtue if it leads to deliberation, and just starting to drink starts the mind on the process (99–100):

ἦν γὰρ μεθυσθῶ, πάντα ταυτὶ καταπάσω  
βουλευματίων καὶ γνωμιδίων καὶ νοιδίων.

If I get drunk, I'll sprinkle everything here  
with little resolutions, thoughts and ideas.

Once again, deliberation is stalled in the Assembly but the process itself emerges elsewhere: for the moment, in the drunken talk among slaves in the house of Demos. Again as in *Acharnians*, once the deliberative process begins, translocated and wine-addled as it is here, progress begins immediately. Fortified with drink, Demosthenes has Nicias steal the Paphlagonian's oracles. The oracles describe the succession of "sellers" who control the affairs of the city (ἔξει τῆς πόλεως τὰ πράγματα, 130). Cleon is characterized substantially by his speaking (137):<sup>26</sup>

ἄρπαξ, κεκράκτης Κυκλοβόρου φωνὴν ἔχων

A thief, a shrieker, with the voice of roaring Cycloborus.

When Cleon's successor, the Sausage-Seller, arrives, Demosthenes describes his future as a decidedly antidemocratic leader (164–67):

τούτων ἀπάντων αὐτὸς ἀρχέλας ἔσει,  
καὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς καὶ τῶν λιμένων καὶ τῆς Πυκνός·  
βουλὴν πατήσεις καὶ στρατηγούς κλαστάσεις,  
δήσεις φυλάξεις, ἐν πρυτανείῳ λαικάσει.

You will be the "Commander of the People" for all of them,  
over the Agora, the harbors and the Pnyx.

You'll smash the Council! You'll cut down the generals!

You'll lock 'em up! You'll jail 'em! You'll suck cock in the Prytaneum!

26. There may be vestiges of allusions to Cleon's oratory earlier in the play. In 103, he is licking, λείξας, a common metaphor for embezzlement but also an easy pun on forms of λέγω (λείξας/λέξας). In 115 he farts and snores, πέρδεται καὶ ρέγκεται, sometimes a metaphor for oratory; cf. Major (2002). On the terms here, cf. the entry for the tongue in the Appendix.

Succeeding Cleon means continuing the status quo, only more so. This status quo, with Cleon flattering and deceiving the Demos, while he keeps any other deliberative input at bay, points the way to monarchy and tyranny. Aristophanes reinforces the undemocratic direction in tone and content. The unique form ἀρχέλας means “commander of the host,” but Aristophanes has just used τὰς στίχας . . . τὰς τῶνδε τῶν λαῶν, “the rows of this host” (163), to refer to the spectators of the play in the theater, so the title here more likely is just picking up on λαῶν to say that he will be ruler of the assembly present.<sup>27</sup> The reference to abusing the Council and imprisoning people emphasizes the antidemocratic nature of the power described, since the oath for the Council specifically forbade imprisoning Athenians (Dem. 24.14). Adding the Prytaneum to this sequence, when Cleon had just recently been granted seating and meals there, associates his privileges with aristocratic monarchy rather than with democratic reward.

The conversation soon turns to the credentials of the rising star. Here a crucial new term makes its earliest appearance (191–93):

ἡ δημαγωγία γὰρ οὐ πρὸς μουσικοῦ  
 ἔτ' ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ χρηστοῦ τοὺς τρόπους,  
 ἀλλ' εἰς ἀμαθῆ βδελυρόν.

Leadership of the Demos doesn't belong to the educated  
 man anymore or one beneficial in his manner,  
 but instead to the ignorant and disgusting.<sup>28</sup>

After working through the details of an oracle, Demosthenes echoes the sentiment (217–19):

τὰ δ' ἄλλα σοι πρόσεστι δημαγωγικά,  
 φωνὴ μιὰρά, γέγονας κακῶς, ἀγοραῖος εἶ·  
 ἔχεις ἅπαντα πρὸς πολιτείαν ἃ δεῖ.

You have the rest of what it takes to lead the Demos:

27. Raaflaub (2003, 80) observes that the political associations of ἀρχή at this time are positive compared to those of tyranny, but the non-Attic contraction to –α throws the word into a different register; see, for example, Aeschylus, *Persians* 297, where it is used by the Persian Queen of Persian leaders.

28. N. G. Wilson 2007a, 42 rightly obelizes line 193, and I have no better solution to offer, but, if his suspicion is right that a line has dropped out here, nothing suggests that an addition would alter the connotation of the key term under discussion here, δημαγωγία.

a polluted voice, bad family, a background in the Agora.  
 You have everything necessary for civic life.

It seems that *δημαγωγία* and related terms are new at this time, in fact being attested for the first time in these two passages.<sup>29</sup> The term does not surface in Aristophanes again until *Frogs*, nearly twenty years later, where it is linked to the unpleasant Archdemus (419). The only other instances in Greek comedy provide little help. First is someone who is “worthy to be a demagogue” at Eupolis fr. 99.23 from *Demes*. The identity of this demagogue here and in the following lines remain the subject of much debate and uncertainty.<sup>30</sup> The other instance is far from certain. Adesp. fr. 1094 consists of two strips of papyri containing the middle of some thirty-five lines, not enough to allow for continuous sense. The words that survive point to political content (repeated use of *πολίτης*, *δῆμος*, etc.). Line 4 begins *]αγωγός*, and *δημ]αγωγός* seems a reasonable restoration. This would be the only attested use of this exact noun in Old Comedy, but, in fact, it is not certain that this fragment comes from comedy at all.<sup>31</sup>

The two instances in *Knights* do not come loaded with the negative connotation that the word later acquires of “demagoguery.” Rather, the appearances seem to expect that the terms are neutral or even slightly positive and that Aristophanes is redefining them in a sharply negative way. The development from and contrast with *ἀρχέλας* earlier is also significant. The two terms are parallel in one sense (*ἀρχ-* and *-αγω* indicating leadership; *λαός* and *δῆμος* indicating the communal body they lead). Aristophanes sets up *ἀρχέλας* as distinctly lofty and antidemocratic, which can then suggest an aristocratic leadership. The cynical definition of *δημαγωγία* is still operating in the context of antidemocratic leadership, but it additionally removes any possibility of aristocracy.

Thus Aristophanes further denigrates Cleon’s influence. Pericles’ aristocratic arrogance was bad enough for democracy, but Cleon has all the bad traits and represents nothing more than an ever-spiraling kakocracy. Such is the outcome in the absence of democratic deliberative process. Until Demos finally makes a meaningful judgment, *Knights* steams ahead in pursuit of the painfully logical ramifications of Cleon’s influence. The Knights, good and noble citizens who hate Cleon, along with the spectators, and even the gods will support the Sausage-Seller out of opposition to Cleon (225–29). Such

29. See Connor (1971, 109–10) for the history of *δημαγωγός* in the politics of Athens in the last third of the fifth century.

30. Storey (2003, 149–60).

31. Gigante (1957), but Austin notes in PCG that the extant text suits trochaic tetrameters, leaving the possibility open for the text to belong to comedy.

support seems paradoxical until one realizes Aristophanes' underlying thesis: the only remedy for kakocracy is to restore the process. Without restoring the judgment and integrity of the deliberative process, overthrowing Cleon or any other poor leader will just result in even worse leadership, because that is all the current dysfunctional system permits. More than permitting the downward spiral, the current situation promotes and accelerates the ruin of Athens.

The outsized *agon* that consumes much of the play from this point onward is devoted to dramatizing this point. Currently the system leads to ever-worsening leadership; only an alert Demos will stop the cycle. When the moment comes, it more than stops the cycle; it completely reverts Demos and Athens to the mighty city that repelled the Persians and amassed an empire without suffering the tyranny of Pericles.

Once Cleon (nominally as the Paphlagonian) and the chorus of Knights arrive on stage (235–72), sparring in violence, flattery and deception dominates the debate between the Sausage-Seller and Cleon. Distorted public language forms an intrinsic part of the problem.<sup>32</sup> A number of comments address speaking, oratory and their role in the democratic process. One exchange confirms Cleon using shrieks and shouts to lead the city (the Sausage-Seller asks: καὶ κέκραγας, ὥσπερ αἰεὶ τὴν πόλιν καταστρέφεις; “So you shriek, as you always do when you tear the city down?” and Cleon responds: ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ σε τῆ βοῆ . . . , “I’ll use my shouting . . . ,” 274–75; cf. the same threat at καταβοήσομαι βοῶν σε, 286, and the entry in the Appendix). Demosthenes adds a comment that Cleon represents a decline even from Pericles (οὐ Περικλέης οὐκ ἠξιώθη πώποτε, “Even Pericles never deserved this,” 283).<sup>33</sup> Another exchange indicates that deliberation will not be allowed to rise even to a verbal level (294–95):

ΠΑ.

διαφορήσω σ’ εἴ τι γρύξει.

ΑΛ.

κοπροφορήσω σ’ εἰ λαλήσεις.<sup>34</sup>

32. See Simmons (2012) for more on the terminology Aristophanes uses to characterize Cleon here.

33. On the points of contact between references to Cleon’s honor in *Knights* and inscriptional evidence, see Rhodes (2010, 160).

34. Wilson (2007a, 45) follows Blaydes’ emendation to λακήσει here in place of λαλήσεις, saying: “I prefer to see in the text a more vigorous term that can be traded as an insult.” As a principle, this is fine, but it does not suit the context here, where the verb should be parallel to γρύξει in the previous line. Moreover, λακάω is not attested with reference to aggressive or insulting behavior in Aristophanes. In line 167 above, it is part of the Sausage-Seller’s imagined luxurious life in the Prytaneum, and at *Tb.* 57, it is something Agathon enjoys doing. The point here should be that, if

PAPHLAGONIAN

I'll plunder you, if you just gurgle.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll shit you under, if you babble.

Cleon's nonverbal shrieking replaces even any vocalizing aimed toward deliberation. The chorus provides a vivid image, amplifying Cleon to a supersized monster over the Greek world (303–12):

ὦ μιαρὲ καὶ βδελυρὲ κρᾶκτα,<sup>35</sup> τοῦ σοῦ θράσους  
 πᾶσα μὲν γῆ πλέα, πᾶσα δ' ἐκκλησία,  
 καὶ τέλη καὶ γραφαὶ καὶ δικαστήρι,' ὦ  
 βορβοροτάραξι καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἅπασαν ἡμῶν ἀνατετυρβακῶς,  
 ὅστις ἡμῶν τὰς Ἀθήνας ἐκκεκώφωκας βοῶν.

You polluted, disgusting shrieker, with your boldness  
 the whole earth is full, the entire Assembly,  
 the taxes, the lawsuits, the courts.  
 Mudthrasher, you've churned our whole city into chaos.  
 You've made Athens deaf from your shouting!

They continue shortly, inverting a crucial bit of political terminology (324–25):

ἄρα δῆτ' οὐκ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐδήλους ἀναίδειαν, ἥπερ μόνη  
 προστατεῖ ρητόρων;

From the start, didn't you show shamelessness,  
 The only "Protector of the Politicians"?

Given that Cleon earlier was swatting *rhetores* away from Demos, it seems odd that here it is a problem for them to be protected or that Cleon might be party to shielding them. The key to the chorus's charge, however, is the perversion of the title, which should be *προστάτης τοῦ δήμου*, "protector of the Demos." W. R. Connor argues that the term was fresh in the 420s and

---

Cleon even tries to engage in his normal blabber, the Sausage-Seller will stop him. Accordingly, I have retained the MSS reading here.

35. See Parker (1997, 160–63) for the metrical problems here with the MSS's καὶ (κε)κράκτα, for which Meineke's κρᾶκτα is an imperfect emendation. Depending on the depth of the corruption here, it is possible that the -κρα- root is itself corrupt, which would affect my reading slightly, but no satisfactory solution is available.

one a leader like Cleon could use to suggest he was more devoted to the city than to his circle of friends, as an aristocrat was prone to be, but the term nonetheless nervously has associations that such a “protector” could leap for monarchy or tyranny.<sup>36</sup> If Cleon used the term positively of himself, as seems likely, Aristophanes has reason not to use it, or rather to use it only in a negative form. Having the Knights make this charge and making them criticize the lack of a προστάτης τοῦ δήμου also draws support for the Demos from an aristocratic class. This is shrewd, for it gives the Knights more than a personal motivation for objecting to Cleon, and thus Aristophanes depicts an allegiance between the Knights and the mass Demos but does so without denigrating their nobility or elite status. Once again, then, Aristophanes embeds the idea that restoring the authority of the Demos is the goal, while Cleon is an impediment to such restoration.

In lieu of προστάτης τοῦ δήμου, tainted by its association with Cleon, Aristophanes seems to prefer a more venerable variation on it, the ἐπίτροπος τοῦ δήμου, “trustee of the people,” implying that a leader should be a trusted administrator of the will of the Demos.<sup>37</sup> The Sausage-Seller is amazed at the idea that he might undertake such a responsibility (212), and the phrase anchors the mock solemnity of the prophecy that the Sausage-Seller will one day guide the city (427). Later in the play, Demos for the first time threatens to discharge Cleon, saying he will no longer be the Demos’ steward (ταμίας, 948), and Cleon, now in the presence of Demos and hoping to conceal his true ambitions, tries to hold onto the position by using the same subservient language (εἰ μή μ’ ἑάσεις ἐπιτροπεύειν, 949).<sup>38</sup>

But earlier in the play, as the *agon* mounts, the Knights raise the stakes still more with their next charge against Cleon (326–27):

ἧ σὺ πιστεύων ἀμέργεις τῶν ξένων τοὺς καρπίμους,  
πρῶτος ὧν· ὁ δ’ Ἴπποδάμου λείβεται θεώμενος.

Trusting in that shamelessness, you milk the fruitful of the foreigners,  
You, “Number One,” while the son of Hippodamus<sup>39</sup> is left watching.

36. Connor (1971, 110–15).

37. Connor (1971, 127 n. 68). Thrasymachus (85 B1 DK) uses the term favorably when referring to the good government of Athens by its elders in the past. Cf. the praise of the past rule of Athens by the chorus at *Knights* 565–80. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.8.1408b25 has children cry out that a freedman will choose Cleon as his ἐπίτροπος. In the Council, there was the presiding but limited office of ἐπιστάτης τῶν πρυτάνεων (*Arist. Ath. Pol.* 44.1); cf. Rhodes (1972, 23–24).

38. Cf. *Peace* 648, where the city misses its ἐπίτροπος.

39. N. G. Wilson finds the metrical responson here and the identification of Hippodamus problematic (2007a, 45–46), but Sommerstein (1980, 47–48) makes a convincing case for the identification.

Several strands are woven together here, each belonging to broader ideological preferences Aristophanes trumpets more explicitly in other passages. First, the son of Hippodamus, Archeptolemus, is elsewhere in the play cited for proposing peace with the Spartans (794). In addition, although Archeptolemus was of non-Athenian extraction (for this and probably for lobbying efforts on behalf of other foreigners, he is linked to them here), he was a rare case of a foreigner holding citizenship in Athens. As Aristophanes does regularly, he expects that advice and deliberation from an inclusive body, including the voices of non-Athenians, are beneficial to Athens.<sup>40</sup> Finally, Archeptolemus is marginalized as a spectator, the recurring metaphor of an individual who is present but plays no meaningful role in policy deliberations, although here prevented against his will. Having tacitly lamented the absence of the authority of the Demos and implied the need for more inclusive deliberation, the chorus can cheer the only option left, the Sausage-Seller as the new leader. “Show us how worthless a decent upbringing is” (νῦν δεῖξον ὡς οὐδὲν λέγει τὸ σωφρόνως τραφῆναι, 332), they comment sardonically.<sup>41</sup> The Sausage-Seller and Cleon in turn spar for the right to speak and over the ability to do so (335–43). Cleon offers a dismissive image of someone trying to participate in the deliberative process (344–50):

ἰδοὺ λέγειν. καλῶς γ' ἂν οὖν σὺ πρᾶγμα προσπεσόν σοι  
 ὠμοσπάρακτον παραλαβὼν μεταχειρίσαιο χρηστῶς.  
 ἀλλ' οἴσθ' ὅπερ πεπονθέναι δοκεῖς; ὅπερ τὸ πλῆθος.  
 εἴ που δικίδιον εἶπας εὔ κατὰ ξένου μετοίκου,  
 τὴν νύκτα θρυλῶν καὶ λαλῶν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς σεαυτῶ,  
 ὕδωρ τε πίνων κάπιδεικνὺς τοὺς φίλους τ' ἀνιῶν  
 ᾧου δυνατὸς εἶναι λέγειν. ᾧ μῶρε, τῆς ἀνοίας.

Look at that “speaking”! It’d be just great if some issue fell to you.  
 You’d get it all torn up and raw and treat it just fine!  
 You know what I think happened to you? What happens to the masses.  
 If you do a good job speaking for some little case sometime against a  
 resident foreigner,  
 chattering all night and blathering to yourself in the streets,

40. Cf. Chapter 5 on *Lysistrata* for a more extended example of this principle. Sommerstein (1980, 48) also notes that Archeptolemus is a rare politician whose actions elicit sympathy from Aristophanes, the others being Demosthenes (whom even Sommerstein acknowledges seems to have been a democrat, if anything) and possibly Thrasybulus.

41. On the aristocratic associations of σωφρόνων, see Neil (1901, 204), Dover (1974, 56–60, 66–69, 119–21) and Papageorgiou (2004a).

drinking water, rehearsing, annoying your friends,  
you think you're capable of giving a speech! You moron! What an idea!

The passage provides a rare vivid image of a speaker preparing, and also a rare acknowledgment of the craft and preparation involved. Aristophanes also laces it with antidemocratic expressions. Rather than δῆμος, Cleon uses πλῆθος, consistent with an oligarch's view of the Demos.<sup>42</sup> He describes a minor case against a *metic*, when the chorus has just recently established and defended the role of foreigners in advising Athens.<sup>43</sup> In general, Cleon dismisses the ability of anyone to speak meaningfully on public policy, a right central to the democracy and one defended by Aristophanes (e.g., *Ach.* 557–65) and enshrined in the twin democratic principles of *parrhesia* and *isegoria*.<sup>44</sup> The Sausage-Seller responds to this image by denigrating the substance of Cleon's own oratory and reiterating the antidemocratic result (351–52):

τί δαί σὺ πίνων τὴν πόλιν πεποίηκας, ὥστε νυνὶ  
ὑπὸ σοῦ μονωτάτου κατεγλωττισμένην σιωπᾶν;

So what do you drink to handle the city and make it so that now  
It's silent from being tongued down by your singularity?

A silent city means the democratic deliberative process is not taking place, the only noise coming from Cleon, and his weapon of choice, the tongue, regularly indicates poor or troublesome language.<sup>45</sup> To outdo Cleon, the Sausage-Seller boasts he will use his throat instead to dominate the *rhetores* (λαρυγγιῶ τοὺς ῥήτορας, 358).

So far the contested space for deliberation is the Pnyx and the occasion the Assembly. In *Acharnians*, the Prytaneis from the Council received criticism for their apathy toward the business of the Assembly, but the Council itself was never mentioned. In *Knights*, the rivalry between Cleon and the Sausage-Seller now expands beyond the Assembly. "I'll jump on the Council and stir it by force" (ἐγὼ δ' ἐπεισηδῶν γε τὴν βουλὴν βίᾳ κυκίσω, 363), promises Cleon as part of his assurance he will dominate the city more than the Sausage-Seller can (cf. the promise at 166 that the Sausage-

42. Connor (1971, 203); Reinders (2001, 39–55).

43. Whitehead (1977, 39–41) surveys Old Comedy's references to metics, limited as they are, and finds them, on balance, benevolent.

44. On these terms, see Raaffaub (1980, 11–23).

45. See Chapter 2 and the Appendix.



Seller will dominate the Council). In the midst of ever-mounting threats of physical domination from the Sausage-Seller, Cleon claims protection in his control of the Council (395–96):

οὐ δέδοιχ' ὑμᾶς, ἕως ἂν ζῆ τὸ βουλευτήριον  
καὶ τὸ τοῦ Δήμου πρόσωπον μακκοᾶ καθήμενον.

I'm not afraid of you as long as the Council House lives  
And the face of the Demos sits booby-faced.

Cleon has now laid claim to two of the three democratic institutions where the Demos is supposed to promulgate its will, the Council and Assembly. After more sparring, Cleon again invokes the Council as the *agon* is about to move there (475–79):

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αὐτίκα μάλ' ἐς βουλὴν ἰὼν  
ὑμῶν ἀπάντων τὰς ξυνωμοσίας ἐρῶ,  
καὶ τὰς ξυνόδους τὰς νυκτερινὰς τὰς ἐπὶ τῇ πόλει,  
καὶ πάνθ' ἃ Μήδοις καὶ βασιλεῖ ξυνόμνυτε,  
καὶ τὰς Βοιωτῶν ταῦτα συντυρούμενα.

Right now I'll go to the Council!  
I'll tell them about all y'all's conspiracies,  
the nighttime meetings against the city,  
and everything you swore to the Persians and their King,  
and being thick in cheese<sup>46</sup> with the Boeotians!

As the Sausage-Seller and Cleon leave the stage to resume their conflict at the Council itself, the chorus of Knights devotes part of its *parabasis* to praise of their ancestors for their military glory on behalf of Athens (565–80). They add specifically that the generals of old would never have stooped to asking Cleon's father for state maintenance in the Prytaneum. In addition to attacking Cleon's privilege yet again, they set up the image of the glorious ancestors who will be invoked at the end of the play when Demos is restored and rejuvenated.<sup>47</sup>

46. Pollux 6.130; among many phrases Pollux lists to provoke the Demos (πρὸς τὸν θορυβοῦντα τὸ δημόσιον), he objects to this metaphor when Demosthenes uses it (19.295), as here, to indicate sedition.

47. See Edmunds (1987a 253–56 = 1987b, 39–41) and Hubbard (1991, 78–83) for more detailed analyses of the ideological dynamics in this section.

Meanwhile, the contest before the Council might inspire hope that some substantial deliberation will ensue. The Demos is absent from the proceedings, however, and the Prytaneis behave very much as they did at the Assembly in *Acharnians*: responsive only to deception and flattery, taken in more by show than by discussion and deliberation. Within the Sausage-Seller's report of the meeting are some important characterizations of speaking and oratory. When Cleon arrives, he is letting loose with thundering words, reminiscent of the negative portrayal of Pericles as an arrogant, domineering Olympian (ὁ δ' ἄρ' ἔνδον ἑλασίβροντ' ἀναρρηγνύς ἔπη, 626). It is no surprise that, in order to outdo Cleon, the Sausage-Seller prays for boldness (θράσος, 637; cf. the chorus's image of Cleon's θράσος filling the world at 304) and a tongue (637; cf. 352 of Cleon using his tongue to subdue Athens, Chapter 2 and the Appendix). For his first utterance, the Sausage-Seller shrieks (ἀνέκραγον, 642; cf. 137, 274 and 303 of Cleon). He wins the Council's attention, not with policy or discussion, but by deception in the form of good news about cheap sardines. The Council responds by gaping (ἐεχλήνεσαν, 651), just as the *parabasis* of *Acharnians* described the Athenians doing in response to flattery (635). Like the Prytaneis at the Assembly in *Acharnians*, the members of the Council are more interested in trivialities and corruption, so when Cleon desperately tries to regain the attention of the Council by saying a Spartan ambassador comes to seek a peace treaty, the members remain fixated on the sardines and make their own shriek this time, for the Prytaneis to adjourn the meeting (ἐεκεκράγεσαν, 674). By these means, supplemented by tossing in a bribe of coriander to season to sardines, the Sausage-Seller declares victory. It is a victory over the Council as much as it is over Cleon.

Cleon returns unfazed, and more sparring ensues as the competition staggers toward the next phase of the *agon*. Cleon swears he will ruin the Sausage-Seller, invoking the honorary seating he enjoys because of his victory at Pylos (702). The Sausage-Seller retorts (703–4):

ἰδοῦ προεδρίαν· οἶον ὄψομαί σ' ἐγὼ  
ἐκ τῆς προεδρίας ἔσχατον θεώμενον.

Privileged seating! I look forward to seeing you  
out of the front row and watching from the back!

In response to Cleon enjoying the sort of seats even the Prytaneis scramble for and being a leading participant in activities, the Sausage-Seller inverts both privileges by sending him to the back and making him a spectator,

a nonparticipant. The citation of Cleon's privileges, again mentioning the Prytaneum in a few lines (709), heightens the distance between Cleon and the humble service and victory of the Knights' ancestors celebrated in the *parabasis*. Immediately, the rivalry turns to the Demos (710–23). After the keenly felt absence of the Demos and the consequences of the absence of his judgment, this section of the battle promises to be the climax. Whoever holds sway over the Demos undeniably holds the power.

When Demos emerges, both rivals immediately engage in the flattery that has so far proven effective in place of deliberation. Familiar characterizations of the broken deliberative process recur here, from the shouting (728) typical of Cleon to Cleon's claim he is being bullied by the younger generation (731). Cleon calls for a meeting of the Assembly so Demos can judge his most devoted lover: Cleon or the Sausage-Seller. Translocation is again an issue. In *Acharnians* the deliberations of the Assembly at the Pnyx were dysfunctional, but deliberations could occur outside of it, such as at Dicaeopolis' home. The Sausage-Seller indicates the same dynamic holds now. The collective judgment of the Demos is operative at home but not on the Pnyx (752–55):

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ὡς ἀπόλωλ'. ὁ γὰρ γέρων  
οἴκοι μὲν ἀνδρῶν ἐστὶ δεξιώτατος,  
ὅταν δ' ἐπὶ ταυτησὶ καθῆται τῆς πέτρας,  
κέχηεν ὥσπερ ἐμποδίζων ἰσχάδας.

Oh poor me! I'm dead. The old man  
At home is the smartest man around,  
But when he's sitting on that rock there,  
He gapes<sup>48</sup> like he's mashing dried figs.

The discursive debate that follows on the Pnyx fails as substantive deliberation and reiterates the established cancers on the political process.<sup>49</sup> Cleon brags of the violent and distorted public service by which he dominates the Council (774–76). In response, the Sausage-Seller reminds Demos how he won victory at Marathon, which should have provided better material

48. "Gaping" is a repeated metaphor for lack of meaningful participation in the deliberative process. See *Ach.* 635, 651 above; and *Kn.* 1119 and *Wasps* 695 and 1007 below.

49. Rhodes (2010) details the points of contact between this scene and documentary evidence for the procedures of the Assembly, establishing both that Aristophanes was familiar with the actual proceedings of the Assembly and that the scene reflects events there. Cf. Chapter 5 and Haldane (1965) for an even more detailed example from *Thesmophoriazusae*.

for tongues now (782). Cleon keeps any overtures for peace away from the Demos (794–96). Out of jealousy, Cleon investigates the activities of assholes to prevent active ones from generating *rhetores* (878–80). Conversation with a pressed olive leads to clearer thinking than do the corrupt proceedings on the Pnyx (805–8).

On the other hand, a few lines begin to reveal the true principles of success, as Aristophanes depicts them, which consistently refer to the glory days of Athens' ascendancy as the democracy that repelled the Persians and built an empire, featuring the heroes of the pre-Periclean age. When the Sausage-Seller invokes the martial prowess of Marathon and Salamis, the Demos asks if he belongs to the family of the tyrant killer Harmodius (781–86). While tyranny and monarchy are the enemies of democracy, for the Demos to rule all of Greece is a positive and laudable goal (797–801). Both Cleon and the Sausage-Seller agree on Themistocles as a figure who benefited Athens greatly (812–19).<sup>50</sup>

After the contest in oracles comes to a draw (997–1108), Demos declares that he will hand the reins of the Pnyx over to whichever of them can do more for him (ὁπότερος ἂν σφῶν εὔ με μᾶλλον ἂν ποιῆ, / τούτω παραδώσω τῆς Πυκνὸς τὰς ἡνίας, 1108–9). As a setup for this last round in the contest, Aristophanes reinforces some basic vocabulary for the popular political order. The chorus of Knights addresses the Demos, making explicit that the absolute power of the Demos is a good thing (1111–14):

ὦ Δῆμε, καλήν γ' ἔχεις ἀρχήν, ὅτε πάντες ἄνθρωποι δεδίασί σ'  
ὥσπερ ἄνδρα τύραννον.

Demos, your rule is glorious when all people fear you like a tyrant.

The problem is not the rule of the Demos, only the obstructions to the Demos' good judgment (1115–20):

ἀλλ' εὐπαράγωγος εἶ,  
θωπευόμενός τε χαίρεις κάξαπατώμενος,  
πρὸς τόν τε λέγοντ' αἰεὶ  
κέχηνας· ὁ νοῦς δέ σου  
παρῶν ἀποδημεῖ.

But you tend to lose your way,

50. Cf. the discussion of Braun (2000) in Chapter 4.

when you enjoy being flattered  
and deceived.  
You always gape when someone is speaking,  
away from home when you are right there.

The deception, flattery and gaping are familiar motifs by this point, and the closing words pick up the metaphor of translocation. The pun on the word Demos (ἀπο-δη-εῖ) reinforces the idea that the judgment of the Demos is missing from the location where productive deliberation is supposed to take place. For the first time, however, Aristophanes turns the tide by dramatizing the will of the Demos as superior to the “protector of the Demos” who seems to be in power (1121–30):

νοῦς οὐκ ἔνι ταῖς κόμαις  
ύμῶν, ὅτε μ' οὐ φρονεῖν  
νομίζετ'· ἐγὼ δ' ἐκὼν  
ταῦτ' ἠλιθιάζω.  
αὐτός τε γὰρ ἥδομαι  
βρύλλων τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν,  
κλέπτοντά τε βούλομαι  
τρέφειν ἓνα προστάτην  
τοῦτον δ,' ὅταν ἦ πλέως,  
ἄρας ἐπάταξα.

You've lost the brains under your hair  
if you don't recognize I'm sane. I willingly  
act stupidly like this.  
Because I like  
crying for my daily sustenance  
and I want to fatten up the thief,  
that singular “Protector.”  
And when he's full,  
I'll sacrifice him on the altar.

Commentators have rightly found this sudden assertion surprising, because Demos has not hinted at this awareness previously, and because Demos will again have to shake off his doldrums later in the play, but they have missed how the statement is crucial and logical in the resolution to the problem Aristophanes has presented.<sup>51</sup> Repeatedly, in different ways, Aristophanes has

51. Reinders (2001, 170–92) reviews the problem and concludes, like many scholars, that Aris-

stated and dramatized that the only means to Athens' prosperity is rule by the judgment of the Demos via the deliberative processes of the democracy. He has been paving the way for the play's conclusion where the rejuvenated Demos will restore Athens' pre-Periclean, pre-demagogic, pre-"Protector" glory. At some point, the Demos needs to participate and lead by rendering his judgment, so Aristophanes simply has Demos assert his awareness and leadership. It may not be fine dramatic construction, but it is ideologically consistent and logical. Next, the second half of the exchange reinforces the idea and the vocabulary. The chorus of Knights praises the shrewdness of Demos with a pun (πυκνότης, 1132, punning on πυκνίτης, the mock demotic from line 42) and alludes to the title of προστάτης τοῦ δήμου, which Demos had invoked, but here they praise his fattening up of supposed public servants (as if they were literally slaves of the Demos) on the Pnyx (δημοσίους τρέφεις/ἐν τῇ πυκνί, 1136–37). Demos then again asserts his awareness of the politicians' larceny and that he will use audits to force return of their ill-gotten gains (1145–50).

For the next stage of the *agon*, even when Demos does not make explicit his awareness of the flattery of the competitors, every line is consistent with being delivered ironically, sardonically and knowingly. As the *agon* resumes, Cleon and the Sausage-Seller engage in a contest of flattery (1151–1208).<sup>52</sup> After a series of spiraling offers, Demos resets the decision for the final time (1209–10):

τῶ δῆτ' ἂν ὑμᾶς χρησάμενος τεκμηρίῳ  
δόξαίμι κρίνειν τοῖς θεαταῖσιν σοφῶς;

So now, what evidence seems best to the spectators for me to use to judge you wisely?

For the first time in either *Acharnians* or *Knights*, all the elements are together for proper and successful deliberation. There are spectators to the speeches, but now the Demos will render wise judgment on the Pnyx. In rapid succession, Demos investigates what each suitor holds back in his basket for himself (1211–25), ignores Cleon's defense that he stole for the good of the city (1226–29), and the oracle about Cleon's downfall is confirmed (1230–52). The Sausage-Seller takes the crown from Cleon, but the real

---

tophanes voices serious criticism of the Demos but mutes and calibrates it.

52. Note that at 1196–98 the Sausage-Seller distracts Cleon by imagining some foreign ambassadors are nearby, ready for robbing, again playing on Cleon's propensity for abusing, rather than capitalizing on, the contributions of foreigners in the deliberative process.

climax is the assertion of, and subservience to, Demos and his judgment. The Sausage-Seller explains his role this way (1261–63):

καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ σ', ὦ Δῆμε, θεραπεύσω καλῶς,  
ὥσθ' ὁμολογεῖν σε μηδέν' ἀνθρώπων ἐμοῦ  
ἰδεῖν ἀμείνω τῆ Κεχηναίων πόλει.

But now I will serve you well, Demos,  
so you can agree that you have never seen anyone  
better for the city of Gawkers.

Aristophanes shifts the vocabulary now. Rather than flatter (θωπεύω, e.g., *Ach.* 635–39; *Kn.* 48, 1116), the Sausage-Seller will serve the Demos (θεραπεύσω, which Cleon laid sole claim to doing at 59 and 799), but with the crucial difference that the Demos' judgment is the ultimate arbiter, even if the Athenians are still, satirically, the same passive gawkers at the Assembly.

The final scene in the play displays the thoroughly positive results from the restoration of Demos' judgment to the deliberative process. The Demos is now the peer of Aristides and Miltiades of the old days of Marathon (1325, 1334).<sup>53</sup> Athens can now be violet-crowned without flattery (ἰοστέφανοι, 1329). Monarchy or tyranny in an individual is to be fought and resisted, but tyrant, monarch and king are welcome attributes of Demos ruling Greece (τύραννον, 1114; τὸν τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὑμῖν καὶ τῆς γῆς τῆσδε μόναρχον, 1330; ὦ βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων, 1333).<sup>54</sup>

Because the language of public discourse was the primary sign of the dysfunctional deliberative system, it is the first item to distinguish the newly rejuvenated and restored Demos from his former failures. In response to Demos' initial inquiry about how he used to behave, Agoracritus explains with a by-now familiar image of flattery (1340–44):

πρῶτον μὲν, ὅπότ' εἴποι τις ἐν τ' ἡκκλησίᾳ,  
“ὦ Δῆμ', ἐραστής εἰμι σὸς φιλῶ τέ σε  
καὶ κήδομαί σου καὶ προβουλεύω μόνος,”  
τούτοις ὅποτε χρήσαιτό τις προοιμίῳ,  
ἀνωρτάλιζες κάκερουτίας.

First, whenever anyone in the Assembly said,

53. On such invocations generally, see Rhodes (2011a).

54. The view presented here generally agrees with those of Henderson (2003, esp. 168) and Kallet (2003). For a contrary view (that Demos as Tyrannos is pejorative), see Raafaub (2003).

“Demos! I’m your lover and I love you,  
and I’m the only one who worries and makes your proposals!”  
Whenever someone used these types of greetings [*prooimia*],  
you’d flap your wings and shake your horns.

Agoracritus goes on to reprise the issues of deception (1345, 1357) and deafness to reason (1347–48), familiar from earlier passages in the play and in *Acharnians*. Now, under the rejuvenated Demos, *rhetoires* and *synegoroi* will no longer ply their deceitful ways, not because they will be blocked from speaking, but because Demos will render sensible judgment on them (1350–63). A series of policy reforms follows (1364–95). One specifically addresses the shifty talk of young provocateurs (1375–80):

τὰ μειράκια ταυτί λέγω τὰν τῶ μύρῳ,  
ἃ τοιαδὶ στωμύλλεται καθήμενα  
“σοφὸς γ’ ὁ Φαίαξ δεξιῶς τ’ οὐκ ἀπέθανεν.  
συνερτικὸς γὰρ ἐστὶ καὶ περαντικὸς,  
καὶ γνωμοτυπικὸς καὶ σαφῆς καὶ κρουστικὸς,  
καταληπτικὸς τ’ ἄριστα τοῦ θορυβητικοῦ.”

I mean those punks there in the myrrh,  
who sit and mouth off like this:  
“That really wise Phaeax avoids death so cleverly.  
Because he’s cooperative, conclusive,  
idea-impressitive, clear, strikitive,  
and most repressative of the provocative.”

Little is known of Phaeax,<sup>55</sup> but the repeated application of the termination -ικός is typical of comedy’s method for dealing with unorthodox language. While the termination is an established and productive one in Greek, most authors apply it to inanimate or abstract nouns, while comedy applies such words derogatorily of people.<sup>56</sup> The next few lines further illustrate how the language of the Demos differs from that of uppity, elite young speakers (1381–83):

Ἄλ.  
οὐκουν καταδακτυλικὸς σὺ τοῦ λαλητικοῦ;

55. On Phaeax, see Eupolis fr. 2 and 116; cf. Storey (2003, 73) and the entry in the Appendix. On λαλοὶ young men among the myrrh, see also Pherecrates fr. 70.

56. Pepler (1910).



ΔΗΜ.

μὰ Δί' ἄλλ' ἀναγκάσω κυνηγετεῖν ἐγὼ  
τούτους ἅπαντας, παυσαμένους ψηφισμάτων.

AGORACRITUS

So you're going to be fingerative up their talkative?

DEMOS

No, I'll make them go hunting  
and keep them all from their propositions.

Finally, Demos welcomes in the Thirty-Year Peace Treaties, quite the opposite of Cleon keeping peace offers out of reach of deliberation, and terms which, in *Acharnians*, Dicaeopolis could negotiate only outside the Assembly. Where Dicaeopolis reaped the benefits of his peace negotiations individually, now the collective Demos will take them to the entire countryside (1394). A democratic deliberative process, clear speaking, and widespread peace: such are the benefits of the Demos asserting its proper judgment in the Assembly. And finally, in the last lines of the script as we have it, there is a final translocation: Cleon will be relegated to outside the city's gates in view of the foreigners he once tried to mutilate (1407–8).

### GOING TO THE SOURCE: LANGUAGE AND SCHOOLING IN THE *CLOUDS*

Aristophanes devoted at least a fair share of the plays of the first five years of his career to the nature and purpose of civic language, especially in the deliberative process.<sup>57</sup> It is logical enough, then, that he should focus a play on the anterior processes that promoted such language and prepared speakers for deliberative occasions. Aristophanes lays claim to novelty in his play on the topic, *Clouds*, though not specifically for exploring language education. A number of plays from the same few years that seem to involve teachers

57. *Banqueters* of 427 certainly explored the issue (fr. 205). *Babylonians* of 426 may well have, but the fragments are too scanty and unclear to determine this. *Merchant Ships* cites the prosecutor Euathlos (fr. 424) and could come from this period. *Farmers*, which also seems to belong to these years, mentions Gorgias and Philippus (fr. 118). A bit of dialogue (fr. 101) reveals that singing (ᾄδειν) can mean a poor defense in court. Cf. Polyzelus fr. 13, “but a voice neither too bitter (τρυγερούς) or too sweet,” which seems to have more to do with drama than with rhetoric. See Hall (2006, 328–35) on τρύξι in drama.

and students could suggest that education was in vogue as a topic among comic playwrights in the late 420s.<sup>58</sup>

The revised history of early rhetoric has meant reconfiguring the context of language training in fifth-century Athens.<sup>59</sup> First, the new history makes clear that there was no institutionalized training in formal speaking, whether called ῥητορική or not, nor was there an expectation or requirement of such training for elite public life.<sup>60</sup> Because of the lack of a more traditional aristocratic education, knowing art and letters (μουσική and γράμματα) was an issue, as it is for the Sausage-Seller in *Knights* (188–89), but adding the new wave of rational, clever speech techniques was a prompt for comic ridicule, not a reflection of the new expected or required training. In this sense, the depiction of Socrates' Phrontisterion in *Clouds* can be deceptive. It is a home and location for Socrates and his esoteric followers, but it is not an institution, any more than is the house of Callias, sponsor of itinerant intellectuals stopping over in Athens, in Eupolis' *Kolakes* or Plato's *Protagoras*. Typical instead is the specialized διδάσκαλος, such as Prodamus (Eupolis fr. 17 from *Aiges*; cf. the metaphor of the *grammatodidaskalon* at Eupolis fr. 192.13–15) or the unidentified διδάσκαλος in Aristophanes' *Banqueters* (fr. 206, 225). In the fourth century comedy will reflect recognized stereotypes of students of philosophical schools such as the Pythagoreans or Cynics, and institutions like the Academy and Lyceum.<sup>61</sup> In the meantime there are enough individual thinkers and teachers to form a chorus in Amipsias' *Konnos* (fr. 11), but the institutions where the emerging rhetoric appears on the comic stage remain those of the political arena. In *Clouds* in particular, Aristophanes explores language training en route to his full-fledged satire of the court system in *Wasps* of the following year.

While Aristophanes' claims to novelty should be interpreted with caution, some aspects of the creative novelty of *Clouds* have been underappreciated by scholars, especially when it comes to "rhetorical" language.<sup>62</sup> Already in *Knights* Aristophanes engaged in transforming terms for politically prominent speakers, with an end toward redefining them as ethically desirable or undesirable.<sup>63</sup> He engages in the same process in *Clouds* but on a larger

58. On Eupolis' *Aiges*, *Clouds*, and comedies about education at this time, see Storey (2003, 67–74).

59. Schiappa (2003, 157–71).

60. Morgan (2007, 304–8).

61. Olson (2007, 238–51).

62. See Major (2006) on Aristophanes' claims to novelty, among other things, in the revised portion of *Clouds*' parabasis (518–62). Cf. Platter (2007, 84–107) and Biles (2011, 167–210).

63. See discussion above of *prostates*, *epitropos*, etc.

scale and so thoroughly that it can seem as though he is straightforwardly dramatizing or reflecting established usage, when in fact he is reconstituting terminology and reevaluating people involved in the exploration of, and training in, language use.

Aristophanes' depiction of Socrates and the Sophists in *Clouds* is almost always treated as ancillary evidence for a characterization of the Older Sophists derived primarily from other sources, mostly Plato. Even in studies sympathetic to the Sophists' projects, the dynamic transformation in the play is underappreciated.<sup>64</sup> Since an overwhelming majority of the testimony about the Older Sophists derives from sources a generation later at the earliest, there is little to provide precise cultural context for the impact of the Sophists in the late 420s. Still, this is not sufficient reason to consider Aristophanes' depiction primarily as a mirror of popular perception or even of a widespread one. In fact, the internal dynamic of the play suggests that Aristophanes was working against a less hostile perception of them. At the very least, we should, with the benefit of hindsight, realize that *Clouds* is the earliest extant example of the perspective that the Sophists engaged in morally destructive projects.

In general, of course, Aristophanes is rarely restrained or subtle when introducing the ethical character of his targets. When his protagonist Strepsiades initially describes the activity of the residents of the "Thinkery of Wise Souls" (ψυχῶν σοφῶν τοῦτ' . . . φροντιστήριον, 94), he does not refrain from including the moral dynamic of their vocation (97–99):

οὔτοι διδάσκουσ', ἀργύριον ἦν τις διδῶ,  
λέγοντα νικᾶν καὶ δίκαια κᾶδικα.

They teach, if you give them money,  
how to win by speaking both justly and unjustly.

No teachers in Athens at the time, of course, baldly claimed to teach the ability to obtain victory by unjust means if a disciple spoke as taught, any more than Cleon would claim to be a successful thief (as his character does in *Knights*) or than real-world Prytaneis would fall victim to the blunt flattery and deception their stage counterparts do in *Acharnians* and *Knights*. Aristophanes is taking the trouble to spell out their moral deprav-

64. Cf. the Introduction, 7–18. For recent attempts to distinguish Socrates in *Clouds* from other sources, see Patzer (1994), Noël (2000) and Cavallero (2007). Mitscherling (2003) makes a rather too blunt attempt to recover Aristophanes' culpability for Socrates' trial. Whitehorne (2002) explores Aristophanes' visual representation of intellectuals.

ity, because he is engaged in persuasive characterization rather than using an established stereotype.<sup>65</sup> Only after the initial mold is set does Aristophanes permit debate. The ensuing dialogue between Strepsiades and Pheidippides contrasts these devious thinkers in terms of their respectability. Strepsiades tries to insist on their fundamental nobility and venerability (μεριμνοφροντισται καλοί τε κάγαθοί, 101). Pheidippides immediately identifies them as quite the opposite (πονηροί γ', . . . κακοδαίμων, 102–4), specifying them as verbal con artists (ἀλαζόνας, 102)<sup>66</sup> and naming names (Chaerephon and Socrates, 104).

Aristophanes stacks the deck in the same way when he introduces the primary intellectual project to be analyzed in the play. When Strepsiades insists his son go for an education at the Phrontisterion, he explains what he is to learn (112–18):

εἶναι παρ' αὐτοῖς φασιν ἄμφω τῷ λόγῳ,  
 τὸν κρείττον', ὅστις ἐστί, καὶ τὸν ἥττονα.  
 τούτοιον τὸν ἕτερον τοῖν λόγοι, τὸν ἥττονα,  
 νικᾶν λέγοντά φασι τὰδικώτερα.  
 ἦν οὖν μάθησ μοι τὸν ἄδικον τοῦτον λόγον,  
 ἃ νῦν ὀφείλω διὰ σέ, τούτων τῶν χρεῶν  
 οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοίην οὐδ' ἂν ὀβολὸν οὐδενί.

They say that both *logoi* are in there with them,  
 the stronger, no matter what that is, and the lesser.  
 This other of the two *logoi*, the lesser,  
 they say wins by speaking more unjustly.  
 If you'll learn this unjust *logos* for me,  
 then these debts I owe now because of you,  
 I wouldn't have to pay back an obol to anyone.

Aristophanes does not assume the spectators know what these *kreitton* and *hetton logoi* are, and does not so much explain them as define them. He does not provide a positive, or even neutral, definition that will then be revealed as masking an undesirable reality later in the play.<sup>67</sup> He quite forcefully

65. Of course, Aristophanes is otherwise willing to let characters show unforeseen characteristics, as he does with Demos in *Knights* and the chorus in *Clouds*. Compare the dynamic change Aristophanes engages in to transform Euripides into a villain in *Frogs* (see Chapter 6).

66. Cf. MacDowell (1990).

67. The use of φασι in 112 and 115 does not require that these are standard definitions in Athens at the time. Rather it sets up the fantastic fable quality of the *logoi* to come (cf. a similar use at *Kn.* 1300).

equates the *hetton logos* with injustice. This insistence makes sense insofar as Aristophanes needs to emphasize the immorality, because he cannot take for granted that the audience will recognize it. Strepsiades' statement unequivocally states that the two *logoi* are *kreitton* and *hetton* and then defines the *hetton logos* as unjust (only by implication is *kreitton logos* just, as no *logos* is described as just anywhere in the play).<sup>68</sup> That Aristophanes is defining the two *logoi* in terms of justice is crucial to what he is doing, yet the significance of it has been underplayed since antiquity, under the influence of a tradition hostile to the Sophists, which takes it as axiomatic that the idea of binary *logoi* is ethically perverse. The referent for these two *logoi* is certainly Protagoras' concept of binary *logoi*, but no source of the fifth century or earlier, except Aristophanes, treats *kreitton* and *hetton* as morally superior and inferior.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, *Clouds* features the earliest characterization of either of the two *logoi* as explicitly unjust. Such is the power of Aristophanes' characterization and its congruence with the later criticisms of Protagoras' idea by Plato, Aristotle and others that the novel dynamic in *Clouds* is overshadowed.

Indeed, the *logoi* in Strepsiades' introduction, and the personifications who come on stage for the *agon* later in the play, have been characterized ever since antiquity in moral terms. The scholarly equipment with the script (the hypotheses, scholia, etc.) refers to the two *logoi* in the *agon* as *Dikaios* and *Adikos Logos*, although the characters refer to each other explicitly only as *Kreitton* and *Hetton*.<sup>70</sup> Although a scholar like Kenneth J. Dover acknowledges the names *Dikaios* and *Adikos* do not go back to Aristophanes, he still translates their names in morally evaluative terms, "Right" and "Wrong." Translations of their names routinely work on this analogy, the most popular being "Better" and "Worse" Arguments, which frontloads Aristophanes' conclusion rather than reflecting the dynamic process by which Aristophanes takes the neutral terms and transforms them into moral adversaries.

While it is impossible to be certain that Aristophanes is the first or crucial figure to reinvent Protagoras' opposing *logoi* as moral adversaries, the

68. Cf. Euripides fr. 189 and 206 (*Antiope*) and *Suppliant Women* 487 for nearly contemporary deployment of these terms on stage. Cf. Chapter 6 for dating *Antiope* to the 420s rather than after 411.

69. Schiappa (2003, 103–10). Aristophanes also subtly implies that the *logoi* are mutually exclusive as well as opposed to each other. Whereas Protagoras seems to envision accounts of the same experience and bolstering one *logos* to the status of the other, Aristophanes begins with the embedded premise that the two represent opposite and irreconcilable descriptions of an objective (making it easy to conclude that one is true and one is false).

70. Limited scholia (Σ<sup>RVE</sup> 889) are the only external ancient texts to call them *Kreitton* and *Hetton*. See Dover (1968, lvii–viii).

mechanism and steps he takes to facilitate the transformation are clear and recognizable. Aristophanes uses a distinctive literary technique to effect his translation of opposing *logoi*, from names that are devoid of moral terminology into a value-laden vision of subversion. This technique, first documented in detail by Hans-Joachim Newiger, consists of a three-stage series of transformations through metaphors.<sup>71</sup> First comes a commonplace expression containing a latent metaphor. Next, the metaphor takes concrete form on stage. Finally, the concrete form emerges in a new form that defines it ethically in the comic world. The classic example comes from *Acharnians*, in the sequence during which Dicaeopolis secures a peace with the Spartans. The key word here is *spondai*, simultaneously “libations” and “peace treaty.”<sup>72</sup> This is the word containing the latent metaphor. Dicaeopolis sends Amphitheos to pursue terms with the Spartans, and he returns with the requested *spondai* (129–34, 175–86). Now the transformation into concrete form takes place, for Amphitheos has brought the *spondai* in the literal form of libations, that is, three samples of wine, each one representing a treaty of a certain number of years. Dicaeopolis tastes each sample and describes it with a mix of descriptions appropriate for the wine and for life under a peace treaty for the specified period of time (187–99). Dicaeopolis settles on the thirty-year *spondai* and then proceeds to usher in the third phase. Dicaeopolis settles in at his home in the country and uses the *spondai* as libations to celebrate the rural Dionysia (201–2). Now Aristophanes has the *spondai* right where he wants them. From an object of wrangling military negotiations, the *spondai* have become part of a morally desirable, peaceful, rural celebration.

The *logoi* in *Clouds* pass through these same three stages. The early conversation between Strespsiades and Pheidippides introduces the *logoi*, with the latent metaphor and moral coloring, but the transformation to concrete form and full moral explication comes later. When Socrates accepts the young Pheidippides as a student in place of the boy’s befuddled father, he announces that Pheidippides will learn his lessons directly from two *logoi* (886). What Socrates means by this statement remains unclear until two characters step out onto the stage to initiate the play’s formal *agon*. These two characters promptly introduce themselves to each other, and to the spectators, as Kreitton Logos and Hetton Logos (894). These introductions fit into a dynamic process running through the play, a process through which Aristophanes begins with *logoi* as little more than the colloquial equivalent of

71. Newiger (1957, esp. 119–22); cf. Edmunds (1980, 4).

72. On the dynamics of the stage properties used in this transformation and throughout *Acharnians*, see English (2007).

speeches or arguments, moves on to the concept of paired *logoi* as mutually opposing experiences—the basic concept associated with Protagoras—and during the course of the *agon* transforms the *logoi* into rival competitors for cultural supremacy. In doing so, Aristophanes charges that the basis for the novel language of the early Sophists is ethically deviant and a gateway to political subversion.

Further explication of Aristophanes' transformation requires looking back at Protagoras' concept of the two *logoi* and then following the path Aristophanes takes to set up and manipulate the concept in *Clouds*. Crucial again here is the work of Thomas Cole and Edward Schiappa, which reevaluates rhetoric as practiced and taught by the Sophists in the fifth century.<sup>73</sup> Both believe that rhetoric in the hands of the early Sophists was fundamentally a different pursuit from the formal discipline of *rhetorike* developed and refined in the hands of Plato, Aristotle and others during the course of the fourth century. Schiappa in particular groups this instruction with the philosophical speculation of the Sophists under the banner of inquiry into the fundamental concept of *logos*, *logos* as the object of thought and an elusive implement for communication. *Logos* in this environment, then, is not a static item but a point at which to begin framing questions and constructing definitions.

In this context, when Protagoras explains his philosophical system of the fundamental dichotomies of experience in the universe, he expresses it in terms of *logoi*. Schiappa has analyzed the details of several of Protagoras' key precepts and shown how later interpreters have colored, usually negatively, the essence of Protagoras' original statements. Two famous and notorious sayings of Protagoras especially concern us here. The first is the so-called "Two-*Logoi* fragment" (δύο λόγους εἶναι περὶ παντὸς πράγματος, fr. 80B6a). Scholars have often taken this as a statement applying to rhetoric, translating it to the effect that it is possible to debate both sides of any issue. Schiappa makes the case that the fragment is not fundamentally a statement about principles of debating, but a declaration about the relationship between the direct experience of external reality and the human capacity to communicate something about that reality. For every *pragma*, every experience, says Protagoras, there lie two *logoi*, attempts to communicate something about that *pragma* or experience, and these two *logoi* are mutually opposed to each other.<sup>74</sup>

73. See the Introduction, 1–12. For broad readings of *Clouds* with attention to the dynamics of *logos*, see O'Regan (1992) and Freyberg (2008, 11–54). For an application of Bakhtinian dialogics to the play, see Platter (2007, 42–62).

74. Schiappa (2003, 98–100).

Another fragment builds on this very model. This is the “Stronger and Weaker” *logoi* fragment (τὸ τὸν ἥττω δὲ λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν τοῦτ’ ἔστιν, fr. 80B6b). This is the fragment sometimes translated as “making the weaker argument appear the stronger” or the like. Protagoras speaks of making a *kreitton logos* into a *hetton logos*. As Schiappa again illustrates, this statement has a long history of pejorative interpretation when restricted to principles of rhetoric or debate. In this tradition, the saying refers to making a deficient argument prevail over a more sound argument. Without this negative overlay, the fragment again is a statement about the nature of experience. As Schiappa summarizes, the fragment advocates “the substitution of a preferred (but weaker) *logos* for a less preferable (but temporarily dominant) *logos* of the same experience.”<sup>75</sup>

Protagoras thus does not advocate the promotion of a deficient, inferior, or unethical procedure at the expense of a superior action. But at least as early as Aristotle, Protagoras has suffered the charge that he advocates the devious use of inferior reasoning. In fifth-century comedy, Protagoras also was the object of mockery, such as when Eupolis caricatures him as a philosopher of humbug (fr. 157, from *Kolakes*).<sup>76</sup> Aristophanes takes Protagoras to task on a much grander scale. He manipulates and, as he sees it, exposes Protagoras’ concepts of paired and opposing *logoi*, specifically the *kreitton* and *hetton*. After the resolution of the *agon*, the product of this training, Pheidippides, uses an ἀκατάβλητος λόγος, an “un-knock-downable *logos*” (1229), probably with reference to Protagoras’ own Καταβάλλοντες Λόγοι, “Knock-down *Logoi*” (80 B1 DK).<sup>77</sup> In *Clouds* generally, Aristophanes charges Protagoras with being ethically irresponsible, much as later tradition does. Aristophanes makes his charges by framing questions and constructing definitions of *logos* in ways that evoke Protagoras, but he goes on to dramatize undesirable consequences resulting from Protagoras’ concepts.

In this way, the three-stage transformation of *logoi* in *Clouds* is a progressive exposé of Protagoras’ concepts of *kreitton logos* and *hetton logos*. The two *logoi* first appear in the script when Strepsiades characterizes them as just

75. Schiappa (2003, 113).

76. For the treatment of Protagoras and other intellectuals in Eupolis’ *Kolakes*, see Storey (2003, 192–97).

77. Sutton (1987, 137–39) and Gallego (2005–6) recognize the *Logoi* as deriving from Protagoras’ binary *logoi*, but Gallego tends to treat Protagoras’ concept as flawed and thus exposed by Aristophanes, and neither sees Aristophanes’ treatment as a new dynamic. Papageorgiou (2004b) argues that the moral dimension of the two *Logoi* is derived from Prodicus’ parable of Virtue and Vice. He might be right that Aristophanes is conflating Prodicus’ metaphor here, but the explicit, primary target is Protagoras.



and unjust (112–18). The unsophisticated Strepsiades mentions the *logoi* explicitly and by name but treats them more like “arguments” or “speeches.” He vaguely gives them speaking ability and, more significantly, introduces a strong moral flavor by equating *hetton logos* with “an *unjust* argument.” Strepsiades again mentions the two *logoi* when he meets Socrates, asking to learn the *logos* that never pays debts (245). So far the idea of *logoi* refers at most to a technique of debate, if an underhanded one. The mention of the paired *logoi* has the capacity to refer to the more broad-based sophistic concept of antithetical accounts of experience, but this identification takes the stage only later.

Further on in the play, when Pheidippides is entering Socrates’ school, Strepsiades reviews the idea of the *logoi*. He asks Socrates to teach Pheidippides the two *logoi*, *kreitton* and *hetton*, or at least *hetton*, he says, the one that speaks injustice and trips up the *kreitton logos* (882–85):

ὅπως δ’ ἐκείνω τῷ λόγῳ μαθήσεται,  
τὸν κρείττον’, ὅστις ἐστί, καὶ τὸν ἥττονα,  
ὃς τᾶδिका λέγων ἀνατρέπει τὸν κρείττονα

Just so he learns those two *logoi*,  
the Stronger, no matter what it is, and the Lesser,  
which speaks unjustly and trips up the Stronger one.

In response, Socrates ushers in the next transformation, that of the *logoi* into concrete form. Socrates declares that Pheidippides will learn directly from the *logoi* themselves, and promptly the two *logoi* walk out on stage, in as concrete and physical a form as the wine in the *spondai* metaphor.

The two newly personified *logoi* identify each other explicitly as *Kreitton Logos* and *Hetton Logos* (894; cf. 1338).<sup>78</sup> Despite all of Socrates’ humbug so far in the play, it is only at this point that Aristophanes begins to demonstrate how education at the Phrontisterion, in the form of *Hetton Logos*, imbues its students with qualities of moral decadence. The *Logoi* are now far more than the debating techniques Strepsiades was seeking earlier. They become entire life experiences and incarnations of cultural perspectives. Just as Protagoras’ conception of *logoi* embraces more than simply words, Aristophanes’ conception expands to cover not just legal wrangling, but also a physical form and a model for responding to experience of the world. But Aristophanes finds the experiences encapsulated in the *Kreitton* and *Hetton*

78. Schiappa (2003, 110–13).

*Logos* quite different from those proposed by Protagoras. True to their identities as mutually opposing *logoi*, the two characters argue, counterargue, and contradict one another. As the *agon* proceeds, *Hetton Logos* stands revealed as a shameless pervert, a clown, a parricide and an adulterer. He openly preaches decadence and perversion. Where Protagoras speaks of changing a *hetton logos* into a *kreitton logos*, Aristophanes has *Hetton* overwhelm *Kreitton*. *Hetton* persuades *Kreitton Logos*, the upholder of Athens' glorious past, that Athens is indeed already composed of deviants (1088–1101).<sup>79</sup> In a sense, *Kreitton* does become *Hetton* (ἡττήμεθ' . . . , 1102–4) as he strips off his clothes and races out into the spectators to join his soon-to-be fellow perverts. This extended characterization goes beyond comic caricature. Aristophanes has recast Protagoras' notion of battling *logoi* entirely in the morally evaluative terms of the comic stage. A statement of the abstract principle of cosmic dynamics becomes a declaration of political and cultural values.

With this transformation complete, one more transformation is necessary, one that plays out the dramatic consequences of the cultural threat. Pheidippides, after his training with *Hetton Logos*, dramatizes this transformation. Strepsiades has Socrates confirm that Pheidippides learned the very *logos* that had been on stage. It soon becomes evident what a change to *hetton logos* really means. Pheidippides is capable of warding off debts, but he also listens to Euripides and righteously beats up his own father (1172–1201, 1321–1439). At the climax of the play, Pheidippides patently invokes the *hetton logos* (1444–45) to argue that beating his own mother is proper, the final outrage that leads Strepsiades to repent and burn Socrates' Phrontisterion to the ground.

With these developments, Aristophanes brings a stinging indictment. Protagoras' definition of the *logoi* may not be predicated on assigning ethical weight to one or the other of contradictory accounts of the world. The Sophists may provide instruction as a practical matter or as an intellectual pursuit. The comic stage, however, colors all human activity in terms of ethical and moral values. Make no mistake, warns Aristophanes, these *logoi* will lead to personal depravity and cultural subversion.

In the next century, Plato and Aristotle have similar anxieties about the practice and teaching of rhetorical ploys. Progressively they work to separate

---

79. Papageorgiou (2004a) emphasizes that *Kreitton* here stands up for aristocratic restraint, objecting to Dover's thesis that the character's sexual obsessions undercut his position. The sexual politics of the scene are surely not so simple as Papageorgiou attempts to make them, and he leaves little explanation for how or why *Hetton* dominates.

the tools of rhetoric from its distasteful moral baggage, and eventually these efforts culminate in the focalized discipline of *rhetorike*, which Aristotle can dissect, albeit with ambivalent concerns about its ethically undesirable side effects.

The critique presented in *Clouds* is therefore important both because it offers a rare explicit characterization of sophistic rhetoric from a contemporary source, and because it preserves one of the earliest criticisms of the very principles that eventually allowed classical rhetoric to emerge as an important discipline in its own right. Although the philosophical underpinnings and craft of rhetoric would change and become more complex, Aristophanes had already isolated the ethical conundrum that would haunt future philosophers and orators alike.

The series of transformations by metaphor does not override Aristophanes' other techniques for orienting education in language within the civic space of Athens, but one such technique is deployed in delayed fashion compared to other plays. Unlike in *Acharnians* and *Knights*, Aristophanes does not emphasize any translocation with respect to the proper venue for the debate between the two *logoi*. The location is nominally near Socrates' Phrontisterion, and initially, when the chorus sets the parameters of the debate, they do not point to any potential impact for public deliberation but characterize it as for the benefit of Pheidippides (934–38):

παύσασθε μάχης καὶ λοιδορίας.  
 ἀλλ' ἐπίδειξαι σύ τε τοὺς προτέρους  
 ἄττ' ἐδίδασκες, σύ τε τὴν καινὴν  
 παιδευσιν, ὅπως ἂν ἀκούσας σφῶν  
 ἀντιλεγόντων κρίνας φοιτᾷ.

Stop fighting and wrangling.<sup>80</sup>  
 Instead, you describe what you taught  
 in the old days, and you the new  
 education, so that he can hear both of you  
 debating and then decide to join.

In response, Hetton Logos declares he will overwhelm Kreitton Logos and leave him in helpless silence, a goal cited also by Dicaeopolis in *Acharnians* and the rivals in *Knights*, but here not yet applied to Athens more broadly (941–49):

80. On λοιδορία, see the Appendix.

κᾶτ' ἐκ τούτων ὧν ἂν λέξη  
 ῥηματίοισιν καινοῖς αὐτὸν  
 καὶ διανοαῖς κατατοξεύσω,  
 τὸ τελευταῖον δ', ἦν ἀναγρύζη,  
 τὸ πρόσωπον ἅπαν καὶ τῶφθαλμῶ  
 κεντούμενος ὥσπερ ὑπ' ἀνθρηνῶν  
 ὑπὸ τῶν γνωμῶν ἀπολεῖται.

And then from what he says  
 with new phrases and ideas  
 I shoot him down.  
 In the end, if he makes so much as a grunt,  
 his whole face and eyes  
 will be like he was stung by hornets,  
 he'll die from the thoughts.

Aggressive as this description is, zero-sum debate is not undesirable in Aristophanes' conception of deliberation. He does not wish such debate short-circuited, but he trusts the judgment of the Demos and has no compunction about drumming out inferior and destructive ideas, in the appropriate place.<sup>81</sup> The chorus indeed announces the stakes and gives a favorable introduction to Kreitton Logos, but they do not disparage Hetton Logos' methods or goal (950–60):

νῦν δείξετον τῶ πισύνω  
 τοῖς περιδεξίοισιν  
 λόγοισι καὶ φροντίσι καὶ  
 γνωμοτύποις μερίμναις,  
 λέγων ἀμείνων πότερος  
 φανήσεται. νῦν γὰρ ἅπασ  
 ἐνθάδε κίνδυνος ἀνεῖται σοφίας,  
 ἧς πέρι τοῖς ἑμοῖς φίλοις  
 ἐστὶν ἀγὼν μέγιστος.  
 ἀλλ' ὧ πολλοῖς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἤθεσι χρηστοῖς στεφανώσας,  
 ῥῆξον φωνὴν ἧτινι χαίρεις καὶ τὴν σαυτοῦ φύσιν εἰπέ.

Now both of them will rely on their roundly clever  
 speeches and thoughts and meticulous thought-strikes

81. Plato, *Prot.* 319b–c takes it as standard practice that the Athenian Assembly shouts down the testimony of some advisers.

and show which one can show off the better speech. For all wisdom is at stake here.

For that, my friends, is what this contest is ultimately about.

But, you who crowned our ancestors with valuable character, speak your voice, rejoice in it, and tell of your own nature.

The chorus gives a positive introduction to Kreiton Logos, invoking Athens' glorious ancestors and calling on him to use his φωνή, "voice," rather than his γλῶττα, "tongue" (cf. Chapter 2 and the Appendix). At the climax of the debate, however, Aristophanes elides the judging of the debate in the theater with the spectators' identity as the Demos in the Athenian democracy. When Hetton Logos is making his case that taking it up the ass is nothing bad (1085), he refers to those who play a leading role in the public deliberative process (συνηγοροῦσιν, 1089; δημηγοροῦσι, 1093) and the bulk of the spectators in the theater (τῶν θεατῶν ὀπότεροι πλείους, 1095–6). When Kreiton Logos concedes that these are all deviants (εὐρυπρώκτους, 1098) and runs to join them, the reason Aristophanes leaves the location general becomes evident. He wants to dramatize the effect and impact of the education on the deliberative process but without actually making it take place in the proper prescribed locations of the Assembly, Council or courts. Indeed, as it is, the revelation applies to any or all of them, but Aristophanes does not have to subject the Demos to the results directly.<sup>82</sup> Rather he shows the cause-and-effect dynamic and, at the fiery conclusion of the play, the proper location and action to be taken to prevent the undesirable results.

The subsequent debate between Pheidippides and Strepsiades gradually unleashes the consequences of Hetton Logos in ever-widening civic arenas.<sup>83</sup> This debate begins, like the contest between the Logoi, and despite Strepsiades' disbelief, as a healthy exchange, even if Pheidippides, like Hetton Logos, is bold in his prediction (1335–44). As the contest proceeds, however, Aristophanes pushes the consequences of Hetton Logos beyond domestic disputes. The chorus expects the younger generation in their babble (λαλῶν) will be energized in their abuse of their elders (1391–96), a contrast that implicitly parallels the young prosecutors who abuse older men (*Ach.* 676–702; *Wasps*). Pheidippides makes explicit how the energized younger generation can overhaul the political arena (1421–24):

82. See Roselli (2011, 19–62, esp. 31–32) for a strong analysis of the dynamic of Old Comedy in engaging and managing spectators.

83. For a detailed analysis of the way the terminology in this scene develops from that earlier in the play, see Kloss (2001, 116–31).

οὐκ οὖν ἀνὴρ ὁ τὸν νόμον θεῖς τοῦτον ἦν τὸ πρῶτον,  
 ὡσπερ σὺ κάγω, καὶ λέγων ἐπειθε τοὺς παλαιούς;  
 ἦττόν τι δῆτ' ἔξεστι κάμοι καινὸν αὖ τὸ λοιπὸν  
 θεῖναι νόμον τοῖς υἱέσιν, τοὺς πατέρας ἀντιτύπτει;

Wasn't it a man who made this law in the first place,  
 just like you or me, and spoke to persuade people in the old days?  
 Is it somehow less possible for me in the future  
 to make a new law for sons so they can beat up their fathers?

Strepsiades responds to these arguments and concedes the justice of them. Using language loaded with terms of moral evaluation, he concedes (1437–39):<sup>84</sup>

ἐμοὶ μὲν, ὦνδρες ἡλικες, δοκεῖ λέγειν δίκαια,  
 κάμοιγε συγχωρεῖν δοκεῖ τούτοισι τὰπεικῆ·  
 κλάειν γὰρ ἡμᾶς εἰκός ἐστ', ἦν μὴ δίκαια δρώμεν.

Gentlemen of my generation, it seems to me he speaks justly,  
 and it seems to me right to agree with what is fair:  
 it's fair that we should suffer if we commit a wrong.

Crucial here is that Strepsiades respects the deliberative process as long as it adheres to justice, even when he loses an argument and can suffer for his loss. Implicitly, it is as if, once again, the *logos* Pheidippides uses were not morally loaded, whether “worse,” “bad” or “injust,” but merely *hetton*, “lesser,” and so Strepsiades submits to it. It is only when Pheidippides goes on to make a manifestly unjust claim, explicitly relying on *hetton logos* to do so, that the consequences become unacceptable for civic life. At this crucial juncture Aristophanes emphasizes that that *Hetton Logos* is the instrument that leads Strepsiades to change his mind (1444–51):

ΦΕ.  
 τί δ' ἦν ἔχων τὸν ἦττω  
 λόγον σε νικήσω λέγων  
 τὴν μητέρ' ὡς τύπτειν χρεών;

84. Editors have repeatedly noted the weakness of these lines, but N. G. Wilson goes too far in deleting them, for there is no plausible explanation for their addition by a later hand (unlike actors' interpolations in tragic scripts, and it cannot be based on a gloss). Among the more likely explanations are that it belongs elsewhere or that it is a consequence of the partially revised state of the script.

ΣΤ.

Τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἦ, ταῦτ' ἦν ποιῆς,  
οὐδέν σε κωλύσει σεαυτὸν ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τὸ βάραθρον  
μετὰ Σωκράτους  
καὶ τὸν λόγον τὸν ἤττω;

ΡΗΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΕΣ

What if I use the *hetton*  
*logos* to defeat you by saying  
I must beat my mother?

ΣΤΡΕΠΣΙΑΔΕΣ

The only thing that will happen if you do that  
is I'll throw you into the pit  
with Socrates  
and the Hetton Logos.

To reset the deliberative process, Strepsiades takes Hermes on as an adviser in the deliberative process, rather than Hetton Logos (1478–85):

ἀλλ', ὦ φίλ' Ἑρμῆ, μηδαμῶς θύμαινέ μοι,  
μηδέ μ' ἐπιτρίψης, ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχε  
ἐμοῦ παρανοήσαντος ἀδολεσχία  
καὶ μοι γενοῦ ξύμβουλος, εἴτ' αὐτοὺς γραφὴν  
διωκᾶθω γραψάμενος, εἴθ' ὅ τι σοι δοκεῖ.  
ὀρθῶς παραινεῖς οὐκ ἔων δικορραφεῖν  
ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστ' ἐμπιμπράναι τὴν οἰκίαν  
τῶν ἀδολεσχῶν.

My beloved Hermes, don't be angry with me,  
and don't crush me. Instead forgive  
me my insane actions because of their blather.  
And be my adviser about what you judge best.  
You rightly recommend that I not stitch together a lawsuit,  
but as soon as possible set fire to the home  
of the blatherers.

In a way, Strepsiades stays true to the deliberative process by taking the advice of divine counsel, a culturally established, traditional and venerable way to come to judgment about the well-being of Athens. Furthermore, the debates in the play have taken place outside the civic areas for political delib-

eration, but the results threaten the processes in those areas, so Strepsiades and Aristophanes proceed to an extrapolitical solution to remove completely the source of the threat: physical destruction of the Phrontisterion.

## A DAY IN COURT: THE DELIBERATIVE PROCESS IN WASPS

Aristophanes focused on the Assembly and Council in his first plays but also touched on the functioning of the courts in democratic Athens. In *Wasps* he puts the courts at the center of his focus but couches his analysis repeatedly in terms of the broader needs of democratic deliberation and in contrast to the needs of the Assembly and Council. Although *Acharnians*, *Knights* and *Clouds* focus on other arenas for public deliberation, each references the functioning of the courts. The elderly chorus of *Acharnians* sounds what is the most prevalent complaint (679–80, 685–86):

οἵτινες γέροντας ἄνδρας ἐμβαλόντες ἐς γραφὰς  
 ὑπὸ νεανίσκων ἔατε καταγελαῖσθαι ῥητόρων,  
 . . .  
 ὁ δέ, νεανίας ἐαυτῷ σπουδάσας ξυνηγορεῖν,  
 ἐς τάχος παίει ξυνάπτων στρογγύλοις τοῖς ῥήμασιν

You throw old men into lawsuits  
 to be ridiculed by young *rhetores* . . .  
 The young man, eager to be the *synegoros* against him,  
 knocks him to the wall and beats him with rounded words.

In comedy generally, as in this passage, there seems to be little difference between a ῥήτωρ and a συνήγορος.<sup>85</sup> A fragment of *Banqueters* mentions both ῥήτορες and συνήγοροι, without any indication that they are meaningfully different groups (Aristophanes fr. 205.6–9; cf. Chapter 2).

85. See Connor (1971, 108–19) for the history of ῥήτωρ and related terms in the politics of Athens in the last third of the fifth century. For a similar account of συνήγορος, see Carter (1985, 120–25). The position of συνήγορος changed in the coming years, but a fragment from the third century suggests their reputation only worsened (Philemo Jr. fr. 3 dub.):

μόνον δ' ἰατρῷ τοῦτο καὶ συνηγόρῳ  
 ἔξεστιν, ἀποκτείνειν μέν, ἀποθνήσκειν δὲ μή.

It's possible only for a doctor and a *synegoros*  
 to commit murder and not die for it.



More often than ῥήτωρ, however, a *συνήγορος* appears to refer to young, aggressive prosecutors, a group likely, as comedy depicts them, to use the new dubious style of speaking to achieve their ends.<sup>86</sup> One more fragment assumes the idea (Aristophanes fr. 424):<sup>87</sup>

ἔστι τις πονηρὸς ἡμῖν τοξότης συνήγορος  
ὥσπερ Εὐαθλος παρ' ὑμῖν τοῖς νέοις.

We have a rascal archer prosecutor,  
like you young ones have Euathlos.

The drive of young prosecutors against their venerable elders is not the only pernicious influence on the courts. The chorus of *Knights* cites the impact of Cleon among experienced prosecutors and the resulting turmoil in the courts and the city (973–84):<sup>88</sup>

ἦδιστον φάος ἡμέρας  
ἔσται τοῖσι παροῦσι καὶ  
τοῖσι δεῦρ' ἀφικνουμένοις,  
ἦν Κλέων ἀπόληται.  
καίτοι πρεσβυτέρων τινῶν  
οἴων ἀργαλεωπάτων  
ἐν τῷ δείγματι τῶν δικῶν  
ἦκουσ' ἀντιλεγόντων,  
ὡς εἰ μὴ 'γένεθ' οὗτος ἐν  
τῇ πόλει μέγας, οὐκ ἂν ἦσθην  
σκεύη δύο χρησίμω,  
δοῖδουξ οὐδὲ τορύνη.

For those here and traveling to here,  
the light of day will be sweetest  
if Cleon is destroyed.  
Although some old men,  
of the most painful sort,

86. This is not a rule, however. *Knights* 1358–61 uses *συνήγορος* where otherwise ῥήτωρ more often appears.

87. The fragment comes from *Merchant Ships*, which is usually, but not securely, dated to the year or two before *Wasps*. Euathlos is also named by the chorus of *Acharnians* as a young, vicious prosecutor (703–4).

88. Buis (2005) explores the role of aggressive litigiousness in *Knights* more broadly.

in the Lawsuit Bazaar,  
 I heard them talking back and forth,  
 that if the man hadn't become  
 so important in the city, there wouldn't be  
 two useful tools:  
 the pestle and ladle.

Cleon is thus means for stirring up troublesome forensic activity in the courts. Accordingly, when Cleon is at bay and Demos is restored to his proper judgment, Agoracritus announces the rejuvenated Demos by first calling for quiet in the courts (1316–18):

εὐφημεῖν χρή καὶ στόμα κλῆειν καὶ μαρτυριῶν ἀπέχεσθαι,  
 καὶ τὰ δικαστήρια συγκλῆειν οἷς ἡ πόλις ἤδε γέγηθεν,  
 ἐπὶ καιναῖσιν δ' εὐτυχίαισιν παιωνίζειν τὸ θέατρον.

It is required to maintain silence, close mouths and refrain from testimony,  
 to close up the courts, which the city enjoys,  
 and for the spectators to sing for new good fortune!

Closure of the courts and celebration by the spectators in a legitimate way summarize the goals of Aristophanes' last two plays of the 420s: *Wasps* and *Peace*.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, all the basic principles laid out in the brief statements in *Acharnians* and *Knights* play out on a large scale in *Wasps*: the abuse of elders by the young, the manipulation of the courts by Cleon, and the apparent lack of any significant role of the courts when the judgment of the Demos and the deliberative process are restored.

Aristophanes uses the prologue of *Wasps* to make the transition from his dramatizations of the Assembly to his upcoming analysis of the courts. The slave Sosias has a riddling dream that refers to the Assembly. The dream is a big, important one for the ship of state, says Sosias (28–29). He describes a whale presiding over sheep on the Pnyx (31–36), and once Xanthias interprets the monster as Cleon, Sosias adds Cleon's supporter Theorus as well as the lisping Alcibiades to the picture (42–45). With this oblique reminder of Aristophanes' past treatment of these issues, Xanthias immediately turns to explicating the current play to the spectators (54), although he says that Cleon will not be the subject of another slicing attack (62–63). It turns out,

89. Carrière (2004) argues that *Wasps* continues themes of education, politics and *nomos* vs. *phusis* from *Clouds*.

of course, that the issue this time is addiction to jury service. The problem is immediately set up as a conflict between the elderly Philocleon and his son Bdelycleon, and Aristophanes waits (other than the punning names on Cleon) until the *parodos* to broaden the political issues at stake.

After some shenanigans involving Philocleon trying to escape from his house, the chorus of elderly jurors arrives to rescue their besieged comrade. At this point, Aristophanes weaves in the political issues he will develop as the play unfolds. First, the chorus mentions their eagerness for a trial wherein Cleon will prosecute Laches, who was an opponent of Cleon as well as linked to the peace process, whereby Aristophanes foreshadows the trial he will put on stage later in the play. Aristophanes is more nuanced now in his manipulation of political terminology. He again obliquely refers to, but avoids, Cleon's epithet of προστάτης, "protector," by using κηδεμών of him instead (242). Thus the chorus simultaneously refers to him positively (as they should in character, since they are his supporters) but undercuts him as well, as they will do more than once. A short time later, in dialogue with Philocleon, the chorus disparagingly refers to Bdelycleon as Δημολογκλέων (342), which on the one hand invokes Cleon as a "demagogue," not necessarily a negative term at this time, but also distorts the title.

When analyzing the dysfunction of the Assembly and Council in *Acharnians* and *Knights*, Aristophanes dramatized a faith in the deliberative process: if the Demos asserts its proper judgment in the processes in these venues, success and prosperity will result. He does not assert comparable faith in the courts. The problems with the courts in *Wasps* are the same as those he pointed out in earlier passages: aggressive prosecutors and Cleon using lawsuits to his own end, but whereas with the Assembly and Council, deliberation translocated elsewhere is successful and the Demos rendering its judgment in these institutions rectifies them, the best court seems to be no court at all.<sup>90</sup> The chorus of Wasps complains simply that Bdelycleon objects to trials at all (409–14):

... Κλέωνι ταῦτ' ἀγγέλλετε,  
καὶ κελεύετ' αὐτὸν ἦκειν  
ὡς ἐπ' ἄνδρα μισόπολιν  
ὄντα κάπολούμενον, ὅτι

90. Hansen (1978) demonstrates that the Demos was identified with the authority of the Assembly but not readily with that of the *dikasterion*, so perhaps the perspective in Aristophanes' plays reflects a viewpoint that the sovereignty of the Demos resides primarily in the Assembly and Council, while the Demos' role in the courts could be reckoned as something apart.

τόνδε λόγον ἐσφέρει,  
μὴ δικάζειν δίκας.

. . . report this to Cleon,  
and tell him to come,  
to face a man who hates the city  
and who's going to die, because  
he's introducing this argument  
not to judge cases!

When Bdelycleon arrives, he takes on the chorus as if he were already fighting Cleon. He asks them not to shout (Cleon's regular *modus operandi* in *Knights*) but to listen to the issue at stake (415). The chorus responds with shouting and charges of tyranny, as they invoke the city and Theorus again, as an ally of Cleon (417–19; cf. 42–43 for Theorus). This latest charge raises an issue Bdelycleon will address explicitly later in the play, but also marks another difference from Aristophanes' analysis of the Assembly and Council. In the context of the democratic process in those institutions, tyranny was not inherently a problem; it just had to be the political tyranny of the Athenian Demos. The chorus's hollow cries of generic tyranny ignore this possibility and put the problem in a separate category from the logjam in the other institutions. When the chorus repeats the charges of tyranny and monarchy a little later (463–70), Bdelycleon makes explicit that they are just shouting rather than deliberating and reaching reconciliation (471–72):

ἔσθ' ὅπως ἄνευ μάχης καὶ τῆς κατοξείας βοῆς  
ἐς λόγους ἔλθοιμεν ἀλλήλοισι καὶ διαλλαγάς;

Isn't there some way we can enter into dialogue and reconciliation with  
each other,  
without the fighting and shrilled-out shouting?

After the chorus invokes the charge of tyranny yet a third time, Bdelycleon makes clear that invoking tyranny is inimical to the deliberative process, and the problem of tyranny is not a part of Athens' greatness (488–90):

ὡς ἄπανθ' ὑμῖν τυραννίς ἐστι καὶ ξυνωμόται,  
ἦν τε μείζον ἦν τ' ἔλαττον πρᾶγμα τις κατηγορή,  
ἧς ἐγὼ οὐκ ἤκουσα τοῦνομ' οὐδὲ πεντήκοντ' ἐτῶν.

All you have is “tyranny” and “conspiracy,”  
 if anyone criticizes any issue big or small.  
 I hadn’t *heard* the word in fifty years!

Aristophanes refers to a past where the Athenians cast out the tyrants, and in the fifty years or so that followed, Athens grew into a rightly successful empire, but other than the Demos holding its rightful place as ruler of an Athenian empire, the charge of tyranny is meaningless and an obstacle to the proper deliberative process.<sup>91</sup> Aristophanes next layers on the issue of class, which becomes increasingly important in his plays.<sup>92</sup> Bdelycleon says he wants his father to live an aristocratic life (βίον γενναῖον, 506) but gets labeled a tyrant for the attempt. He puts Philocleon’s lot as a juror on the same level as slavery (517). To set up the *agon*, Bdelycleon frames the issue in terms of what Philocleon gets from the empire out of this arrangement (520), setting up the basic antinomy: slavery vs. king of the world, where rightly members of the Athenian Demos should be rulers.<sup>93</sup> Lawsuits and courts really have no intrinsic role in this scenario. In practice, according to Aristophanes, courts only provide occasions for destructive self-serving individuals to enslave the Demos against its own interest.

Accordingly it makes sense that the ensuing *agon* debates mostly not the court system or tyranny, but whether Philocleon is in fact a king or not. There is no question that being king is good, only whether Philocleon as a representative of the Demos is in fact one. This is consistent with Aristophanes’ support of a dominant Demos: the Demos should be a monarch, tyrant, king, whatever, and control Athens, Greece, and Athens’ entire empire. The details of the court proceedings are all secondary to this commitment.

To highlight and make explicit the arguments in what follows, Aristophanes has Bdelycleon interrupt Philocleon’s argument in order to highlight six crucial issues in his exposé:<sup>94</sup>

91. Aristophanes’ characterizations of the threat of tyranny differ significantly in 411 and later, under the shadow of the oligarchic coup. See Chapters 5–6.

92. See Reinders (2001, 28–71) for a survey of the term δῆμος and related class terms in Greek literature as a context for Aristophanes’ use.

93. The analysis by Brock (2009) of the principles that guided the empire provides a useful historical backdrop for this scene. He argues that the Athenians, other things being equal, preferred democracy, but pragmatism (according to three principles: capacity to interfere, money and security) guided policy more than ideology.

94. Papageorgiou (2004c) finds Bdelycleon’s techniques in the *agon* comparable to rhetorical manipulation found in oratorical texts and concludes that a sinister ambiguity permeates his presentation. Papageorgiou’s reasoning requires that a substantial portion of the spectators, and perhaps Aristophanes himself, must find Bdelycleon’s mathematical calculations disarming and disagree with

1. The powerful supplicate the juror (559).
2. Jurors can mock wealth (576).
3. Jurors are not audited (587–88).
4. The Council and Demos hand difficult cases over to jurors (590–91).
5. No one wins with the Demos without reducing the jurors' workload (594–95).
6. Cleon guards them (596ff).

Each one of these points represents an obstacle to Aristophanes' preferred goal of the Demos deliberating, deciding and guiding Athens to peace, prosperity and control of its empire.

1. Supplication of the juror sidetracks the normal deliberative process.
2. The mocking of wealth turns out to be inverted and hollow, as Bdelycleon shows shortly.
3. The lack of accountability of jurors bypasses the process generally, and auditing is an important prerogative of the Demos in holding leaders accountable (see *Knights* 1145–50, where Demos will use auditing to rein in misbehaving leaders).
4. The Assembly and Council are actually abdicating their duties by sending cases to the courts.
5. Meanwhile, jurors place self-indulgent restrictions on proper proposals to the Assembly.
6. Finally, Cleon gets to wield undue influence and cloud the judgment of the masses (*plethos*).

Bdelycleon's interjections and follow-up arguments pertain more to the deliberative and political process generally than to the operation of the courts and juror behavior. After establishing that jury pay amounts to a paltry percentage of the income of the empire, Bdelycleon explains where the money goes and why (666–71):

ἐς τούτους τοὺς “οὐχὶ προδώσω τὸν Ἀθηναίων κολοσυρτόν,  
ἀλλὰ μαχοῦμαι περὶ τοῦ πλήθους αἰεί.” σὺ γὰρ, ὦ πάτερ, αὐτοὺς  
ἄρχειν αἰρεῖ σαυτοῦ τούτοις τοῖς ῥηματίοις περιπεφθείς.  
κἄθ' οὔτοι μὲν δωροδοκοῦσιν κατὰ πεντήκοντα τάλαντα

---

them. But there is no compelling reason to believe that they should have done so. Bdelycleon is not a character without ambiguity, of course, but there is nothing in the script to indicate that what he says in the debate is transparently weak, false, or cynically manipulative.

ἀπὸ τῶν πόλεων ἐπαπειλοῦντες τοιαυτὶ κἀναφοβοῦντες,  
 “δῶσετε τὸν φόρον, ἢ βροντήσας τὴν πόλιν ὑμῶν ἀνατρέψω.”

[The money goes] to those “I won’t betray the rabble,  
 but I’ll always fight for the masses” people. Because you, father,  
 choose them to rule you, since you’ve been cooked up by their catchphrases.  
 And then these same men take bribes on the order of fifty talents  
 from the subject cities, making threats like this and frightening you with  
 “Give up the tribute, or I’ll thunder and knock down your city!”

Once again Aristophanes invokes, but twists, the language of Cleon in his role of protector of the Demos. With the thundering, his speech resembles the arrogant language of Pericles in his Zeus-like caricature from comedy.

Bdelycleon, and Aristophanes, maintain the argument in the *agon* in terms of the type of deliberation more in keeping with the Assembly and Council than the courts. Bdelycleon characterizes Philocleon as “gaping” (χασκάζεις, 695) uselessly as a juror, a metaphor Aristophanes uses repeatedly of useless spectators at the Assembly. Philocleon and his comrades are encircled by “Demos-izing” speakers (δημιζόντων, 699). Bdelycleon concludes with more general attacks on the administration of the Athenian empire at the expense of poor jurors, with again no particular comments on activity in the courts in particular. Even so, on these grounds, Philocleon and the chorus concede that Bdelycleon’s reasoning is persuasive (743–49).

Now a full-scale translocation of the courts takes place (758ff). The translocation itself is not surprising, since Aristophanes had pointedly translocated the political process before, in *Acharnians* and *Knights*, and once again the translocation moves the process from its normal public space to the domestic realm. The translocation in *Wasps* differs in meaningful ways, however. First, the translocation is only a concession by Bdelycleon that the process continue at all (761–66). Philocleon has submitted himself to Bdelycleon’s will and begs only that he be able to be a juror somehow. Unlike other translocations, where the deliberative process of the Assembly and Council is desirable and will have positive effects even when translocated, here the new trial process is a grudging concession, and there is no pressure anywhere in the play to have trials resume in the public courts. After the makeshift courtroom is set up, the chorus praises Bdelycleon’s support of the Demos, in terms of this being the new and proper established system (885–90):

ἔννευχόμεσθα ταῦτά σοι κἀπάδομεν

νέαισιν ἀρχαῖς ἔνεκα τῶν προλελεγμένων.  
 εὖνοι γάρ ἐσμεν ἐξ οὔ  
 τὸν δῆμον ἠσθόμεσθά σου  
 φιλοῦντος ὡς οὐδεὶς ἀνὴρ  
 τῶν γε νεωτέρων.

We pray with you and sing for you  
 for this new start, because of what you have stated.  
 For we are on your side since  
 we sense that you love the Demos  
 like no man  
 of the younger generation.

Thus the chorus declares resolution to one significant problem in the functioning of the courts: aggressive young prosecutors preying on the elderly. The solution is to stop these types of cases entirely, with not even a worry about the lack of court activity. Bdelycleon is pursuing prosperity for the Demos. The other major source of dysfunction in the courts is Cleon's drive to use lawsuits against his enemies, which the dramatization of Philocleon's domestic court will address. In the enactment of this court, Philocleon's persistence in convicting the defendant dramatizes again the dysfunction of the court system and the solution becomes simple trickery to force an acquittal. As with removing young prosecutors, once this solution has been reached (even by deceit and compulsion), the problem is solved. The remainder of the play moves on to other issues, and there is no suggestion that court cases will or should continue. They simply are not a factor.

The proceedings of the mock trial itself have provided the most persistent example for scholars who insist that the formal divisions of canonical rhetorical theory were operative in Aristophanes. Two speeches are at issue, the prosecution by the dog, a barely disguised Cleon (907–30), and Bdelycleon's defense on behalf of Labes, a barely disguised Laches, the opponent of Cleon cited earlier in the play (950–79; cf. 240 for the earlier reference to Laches). Both speeches are interrupted by other characters on stage, so the divisions identified do not reflect continuous line numbering. Murphy divides the prosecution speech as follows:<sup>95</sup>

---

95. Murphy (1938, 105–6). On the comic technique of interrupted speech (though not in this scene in particular), see Kloss (2001, 189–203).



1. Προοίμιον, 907–9
2. Διήγεις, 910–14, statement of the crime.
3. Πίστεις, 915–16, “If criminals give me no share of their loot, I cannot benefit you jurors.”
4. Ἐπίλογος, 922–30, a direct attack on the defendant and a demand for strict punishment

Sousa e Silva cites the speeches for various devices but not necessarily an overall scheme, but Hubbard updates Murphy’s scheme:<sup>96</sup>

1. Προοίμιον, 907–9, summary of the charge and formulaic address to the jurors
2. Διήγεις, 910–14, narration of the event
3. Πίστεις, 915–25, proofs, consisting of the prosecutor’s self-described value as a citizen and an attack on the defendant’s character and earlier behavior, which are consistent with the present crime
4. Ἐπίλογος, 927–30, reiteration of the prosecutor’s plea for conviction and warning of future consequences of acquittal

As with Diceapolis’ speech in *Acharnians*, these divisions do not hold up under scrutiny. Both Murphy and Hubbard consider this the προοίμιον (907–9):

τῆς μὲν γραφῆς ἠκούσαθ’ ἦν ἐγραψάμην  
 ἄνδρες δικασταὶ τουτονί. δεινότατα γὰρ  
 ἔργων δέδρακε κάμῃ καὶ τὸ ῥυππαπαῖ.

You have the indictment that I entered  
 here, gentlemen of the jury. The most frightful  
 of deeds he committed against me and the “yo-ho”!

This is admittedly the beginning of a speech, but nothing makes it conform especially to the requirements of a classical προοίμιον. Indeed, of the two sentences, the second sentence could just as easily, but no more helpfully, be construed as part of a narrative, since it says the defendant committed an act. The narrative itself is minimal, but if Murphy or Hubbard moved the second sentence to the narrative, the *prooimion* would be reduced to a verse and a half. Even under Murphy’s and Hubbard’s division, the διήγεις, ever

96. Sousa e Silva (1987–88, 64–68); Hubbard (2007, 500–501); cf. Harriott (1986, 37–43).

the most ephemeral section of precanonical oratory, is even shorter than the προίμιον (910–11):<sup>97</sup>

ἀποδρὰς γὰρ ἐς τὴν γωνίαν τυρὸν πολὺν  
κατεσικέλιξε κἀνέπλητ' ἐν τῷ σκότῳ—

For he ran off to the corner, and Sicilied  
off with a great cheese, and stuffed himself in the dark.

Murphy's section of proofs consists of this couplet (915–16):

καίτοι τίς ὑμᾶς εὔ ποιεῖν δυνήσεται,  
ἦν μὴ τι κάμοί τις προβάλλῃ, τῷ κυνί:

And so who will be able to take care of you,  
unless someone tosses something to me, your dog?

Hubbard would add four more lines to this (922–25, i.e., those following the interruptions by Philocleon and Bdelycleon):

μὴ νυν ἀφῆτέ γ' αὐτόν, ὡς ὄντ' αὔ πολὺ  
κυνῶν ἀπάντων ἄνδρα μονοφαγίστατον,  
ὅστις περιπλεύσας τὴν θυεῖαν ἐν κύκλῳ  
ἐκ τῶν πόλεων τὸ σκῆρον ἐξεδήδοκεν.

Don't let him go now, since by far he is  
the most solitary-eating man of all dogs,  
who sailed the kitchen island in a circle  
and ate the rind off the cities.

Murphy and Hubbard reasonably split on assigning these lines. Murphy sees that Cleon is making a summary call and command to the jury.<sup>98</sup> Hubbard prefers to add this to the list of proofs. Were this sentence a few lines earlier,

97. Both Murphy and Hubbard paper over the minimal narrative in different ways. Each lists the section as covering lines 910–14, but line 912 to the middle of line 914 is an interruption by Philocleon. Hubbard further disguises the weakness of this section by presenting Cleon's speech (without Philocleon's interjections) in four parts, as if the parts corresponded to the canonical divisions he claims, but the first section, in Hubbard's own scheme, covers both the *prooimion* and *diegesis* and totals five continuous lines.

98. Murphy is in fact reluctant to label anything "proofs" at all, since the facts are admitted by both sides, and thinks βεβαίωσις, "confirmation," is a better characterization of this section.

however, they could just as easily assign it to the narrative, since it tells part of Labes' criminal activity. This sort of mix of narrative and argumentation is exactly what characterizes precanonical oratory, however.

After yet another interruption by Philocleon,<sup>99</sup> Murphy and Hubbard agree on the ἐπίλογος (927–30):

πρὸς ταῦτα τοῦτον κολάσατ'—οὐ γὰρ ἂν ποτε  
 τρέφειν δύναιτ' ἂν μία λόχη κλέπτα δύο—  
 ἵνα μὴ κεκλάγω διὰ κενῆς ἄλλως ἐγώ·  
 ἔαν δὲ μή, τὸ λοιπὸν οὐ κεκλάγομαι.

Accordingly, punish him! For a single bush  
 could never nourish two thieves,  
 so I won't be barking to no end.  
 But otherwise, I won't bark in the future.

Much like Dicaeopolis' speech in *Acharnians*, the speech here is more a cascading parody. Where Dicaeopolis' speech began and ended with direct tragic parody and sandwiched a pastiche of arguments in between, the speeches in *Wasps* consist of opening and closing lines knocking off court speeches, and probably Cleon's style in particular, with a heap of punning claims (which are themselves further interrupted by Philocleon) placed in between. Bdelycleon's defense speech has even less organization. After two lines of speaking (950–51), Philocleon again interrupts, and the two engage in dialogue (952–61), followed immediately by Bdelycleon calling up the cheese grater to testify (962–66). After a few lines calling for pity (967–72), the lines that Murphy and Hubbard cite as the end of Bdelycleon's speech in fact consist of his calling up the defendant's puppies (975–79). In response to this display, Philocleon begs Bdelycleon to stop, which he does, without adding to or concluding his speech (980–81).

The remainder of the scene consists of dialogue and debate between Philocleon and Bdelycleon about the verdict (982–89). Eventually, Bdelycleon tricks Philocleon into acquitting (990–94), and this forces another moment of desperation and reliance on Bdelycleon (995–1002). As he did after his successful speech about the false qualities of a juror's life, the son quickly announces the next activity in his father's life (1003–7):

99. Both Murphy and Hubbard gloss over these interruptions, but continuous speech making on a much larger scale is amply testified in drama. Cf. the discussion of *Thesmophoriazuse* in Chapter 5.

καὶ μηδὲν ἀγανάκτει γ'. ἐγὼ γάρ σ', ὦ πάτερ,  
 θρέψω καλῶς, ἄγων μετ' ἑμαυτοῦ πανταχοῖ,  
 ἐπὶ δεῖπνον, ἐς ξυμπόσιον, ἐπὶ θεωρίαν,  
 ὥσθ' ἡδέως διάγειν σε τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον  
 κούκ ἐγχανεῖται σ' ἑξαπατῶν Ὑπέρβολος.

Don't worry about anything. Father, I'm going to  
 take good care of you, take you everywhere with me:  
 to dinner, to parties, to shows,  
 so you'll lead a sweet life in the future,  
 and Hyperbolus won't trick and gape at you.

Scholars have wondered at times about the ensuing scenes wherein Bdelycleon attempts to groom his father for sophisticated life, but the progression is consistent with Aristophanes' political ideology.<sup>100</sup> In *Acharnians*, once Dicaeopolis found a way to make the deliberative process work, albeit outside the Pnyx, he enjoys success and prosperity. In *Knights*, when Demos regains control of the deliberative process in the Assembly, Athens enjoys success and prosperity. In *Clouds*, when Strepsiades has identified and neutralized the growing threat to the democracy, the play is over. Now in *Wasps*, the two reasons the courts obstruct the democracy, aggressive young prosecutors and the suits directed by Cleon against his enemies, are removed, so Philocleon can enjoy success and prosperity. Certainly by implication the Demos will receive full proper benefits from the administration of empire now, but the play does not dwell on that. Bdelycleon wants his father to join elite life, but success and prosperity for Philocleon really consist of food, drink, sex and the pleasure of the freedom to act as he wishes. That the elite life is not a desirable path for the Demos is confirmed in passing by Cleon's presence at an elite symposium (1220–24), but Bdelycleon, who has been loyal and a boon to his father in freeing him from two sets of evils, does not come in for censure for this attempt. The Demos is simply in for better pleasure than the hypocritical, stuffy and mismatched environment of the symposium. Bdelycleon's final project is a failure, but one with no losses or criticism. The chorus also makes clear, in their ode celebrating their waspishness, that the success and prosperity at the end of the play is analogous to the success of Athens and her empire in the "good old days" (1106–21).

100. Reinders (2001, 207–12) reviews political readings of the play. McGlew (2004) expresses a similar idea when he recognizes that *Wasps* problematizes the mechanisms of persuasion in public democratic institutions, but finds that Philocleon is restored to an unappealing political animal at the end, while I think Philocleon's failure to function in elite life is celebratory.

## BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME: *PEACE*

In *Wasps*, after Philocleon has conceded that the juror's life does not bring the benefits he thought and he has been bamboozled into rendering a judgment of acquittal, his son Bdelycleon offers him a new life (1003–7, quoted above).

The last episodes of *Wasps* make a mockery of Philocleon participating in banquets and symposia, but Bdelycleon's promise serves as a template for Aristophanes' play of the next year, *Peace*. Where *Clouds* and *Wasps* each have a darkness and even cynicism (neither expresses as much faith in the restoration of Athens as do *Acharnians* and *Knights*), as scholars have noted, with Athens buoyed by the death of Cleon and nearing treaty with Sparta, *Peace* is lyrical and giddy by comparison.<sup>101</sup> Aristophanes also takes the occasion to recapitulate his ideological stance on the war and the democracy's role in it, as well as make good on a promise that deliberation restored to its proper location means success and prosperity for Athens.

To this end, once *Peace* herself has been put on stage after an elaborate rescue, Aristophanes has Hermes discourse on the trajectory of the war and the future of Athens. This narrative may justly receive criticism as naïve or distorted, and the asides by Trygaeus and the chorus indicate it was unorthodox at the time (615–18), but it is a legitimate summary of Aristophanes' ideology as it pertains to the war, the functioning of the Athenian democracy and the path to future prosperity. Hermes begins with Phidias' troubles prompting Pericles' need to do something to divert the bite of the Demos (605–8). Aristophanes thus invokes again the negative portrayal of Pericles from comedy. Given that all extant testimony from comedy from this date and earlier attacks Pericles as a manipulative and capricious ruler placing his own needs above those of Athens, it is not surprising that Aristophanes maintains this stance toward Pericles. Pericles' use of the Megarian decree and fanning the flames of war with Sparta conflicts with Thucydides' favorable report of him, but it is a natural extension of comedy's take on the dominance of Pericles in Athens (cf. Chapter 2).

As Hermes continues to tell it, while the war destabilized the Athenian empire, corruption affected all sides and the destruction of crops inflamed farmers to the cause (619–31), orators (λέγοντες) in Athens fueled the war's momentum (632–37):

---

101. Harriott (1986, 119–38); Reckford (1987, 3–52, 93–104).

κάνθάδ' ὡς ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν ξυνῆλθεν οὐργάτης λεῶς,  
 τὸν τρόπον πωλούμενος τὸν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐμάνθανεν,  
 ἀλλ' ἅτ' ὦν ἄνευ γιγάρτων καὶ φιλῶν τὰς ἰσχάδας  
 ἔβλεπεν πρὸς τοὺς λέγοντας· οἱ δὲ γιγνώσκοντες εὔ  
 τοὺς πένητας ἀσθενοῦντας κάποροῦντας ἀλφίτων,  
 τήνδε μὲν δικροῖς ἐώθουν τήν θεὸν κεκράγμασιν.

And then when working people gathered from the fields,  
 they didn't understand that they were being sold out the same way.  
 They just didn't have raisins and loved their figs,  
 so they looked to the orators: They understood that  
 the poor were weak and lacked barley grain,  
 so they shoved this goddess [Peace] away with forked shrieks.

While other comic references to politicians and public speakers refer to *rhetores* and such, who in practice plied their trade by delivering speeches, this is the only reference in Aristophanes to this group explicitly as λέγοντες, “speakers.”<sup>102</sup> Even so, Aristophanes says nothing about the tricks of language, organization of speeches or their mechanics in any way, merely that they are manipulating the desperate poor and spreading corruption (635–47). The point man for this activity is, of course, Cleon, indicated by the shrieking (637) and then alluded to as a tanner (647). Central to the story, however, must remain the deliberative process, and Aristophanes has Peace, speaking through Hermes, express particular anger on this topic (659). Peace was denied three times when she made herself available after the events at Pylos (665–67), it is reported. As such, there was a complete failure of the deliberative process, and Trygaeus admits that this was wrong, blaming the influence of Cleon (668–69). Since Cleon is dead, Peace asks who now controls the Pnyx (680). Upon hearing it is Hyperbolus, she turns away in disgust (681–84), disapproving of this “protector” of the Demos (προστάτην, 684), the mantle that Cleon wore and which Aristophanes has alluded to in distorted form several times.<sup>103</sup> Trygaeus responds that the Demos is merely seeking an ἐπίτροπος, the more venerable and positive term, and uses Hyperbolus only as a temporary measure (just as Demos says he does with such leaders at *Knights* 1127–30). “We shall be better at deliberating” (εὐβουλότεροι γενησόμεθα, 689), Trygaeus assures Peace, and after his return to earth, he does consider Hyperbolus dismissed (922 and

102. Other instances do not refer to public speakers. Only *Kn.* 1118 uses the participle of λέγω of someone speaking in a political context, but it does not refer to a class of speakers.

103. Cf. discussion of this title above, 70–72.

1319). With this assurance, Peace goes on to ask about playwrights rather than politics (694–705; cf. Chapter 6).

With this questioning finished, Hermes turns to the tasks that will enact the benefits of Peace. Trygaeus receives the personification of the harvest (Ὀπώρα) for his sexual and digestive satisfaction (706–12). The other task is to take *Theoria* to the Council (713–18). “*Theoria*” seems to refer primarily to public spectacles (so scholia), although it can also refer to a delegation, but the key point here is that full restoration of peace means the Council will engage in its deliberative and administrative functions, but now focused on happy occasions for the Demos to participate in.<sup>104</sup> After the *parabasis*, Trygaeus arrives back on Earth, and, once he has explained his mission, his first act is indeed to return *Theoria* to the Council.

Here, once again, Aristophanes engages in an act of translocation, but for the first time he is not transferring deliberative activity *away* from its proper public institution and location but restoring deliberation *to* it. Such a restoration, like all proper deliberation, leads to success and prosperity, and Trygaeus enumerates explicitly and at length the many pleasures, sexual and otherwise, that will ensue upon *Theoria*’s return to the Council (894–908).

To dramatize this particular translocation, Aristophanes engages in unique staging.<sup>105</sup> Whereas previously he had transformed the space in the Theater of Dionysus into the Pnyx while the Assembly was being held (*Ach.*, *Kn.*), or turned the stage into a domestic version of a public court (*Wasps*), the actions of the Council had only been reported (*Kn.*). This time, rather than put the Council on stage, Aristophanes capitalizes on the fact that the theater includes the seating of the *Bouletikon*, where the real-life Prytaneis are seated. Trygaeus delivers the personified *Theoria* directly to the Prytaneis (887, 905). In a crucial way, then, the run of plays from *Acharnians* to *Peace* happens to form a unit, for *Acharnians* begins with the stage version of the Prytaneis being incompetent and corrupt at the Assembly, ignoring or refusing peace and its benefits, and *Peace* celebrates the real-life Prytaneis happily accepting peace and its responsibility for the prosperity of the Demos.

## CONCLUSION

The comedies of the late 420s continue the vestiges of patterns and perspectives visible in the fragments of earlier comedies. The formal terminology

104. *Theoria* also appears in the list of activities to which Bdelycleon plans to take Philocleon, confirming its role in the happy life of the Demos (*Wasps* 1005).

105. Cassio (1985).

and rules for structuring speeches are still not yet in evidence. Rather, comic playwrights continue to satirize prominent individuals who use unorthodox language in the public arena and to combat the phenomenon with their own creative, comic discourse. The survival of complete scripts allows a much broader and deeper analysis of how Aristophanes tackled the issue. His plays reflect an abiding faith in deliberation presided over by a sovereign Demos, and his concern with language is focused on whether it facilitates or hinders the deliberative process and the ability of the Demos to render sound judgment. Aristophanes' faith in the deliberative process is such that he has his protagonist Diceapolis in *Acharnians* still use the deliberative process, but translocated outside a dysfunctional Assembly, and garner astounding prosperity. In *Knights*, both the Council and the Assembly are crippled by Cleon's abuse of the deliberative process. Aristophanes' support of the Demos is so strong, however, that when Demos resumes proper judgment, Athens returns to its glory days of empire, with Demos as sovereign, before prominent individuals like Pericles or Cleon used their vigorous speech making to abuse the Demos. In *Clouds*, Aristophanes turns to the mechanisms that generate such speakers, focusing on Protagoras' model of binary *logoi* in particular. The play emerges as the earliest-known example of the charge that the scientific exploration of language blossoming at the time was in fact a movement toward cultural decadence. This time the protagonist does not translocate the deliberative process but cuts the phenomenon at the root by burning down the Phrontisterion wherein a deviant *logos* could otherwise corrupt the future generations of Athens. Having dramatized the deliberative processes in the Athenian Assembly and Council in *Acharnians* and *Knights*, Aristophanes next focuses on the courts in *Wasps*. The familiar patterns continue with regard to the details of language (no canonical strictures but continued comic satire of unorthodoxy), but Aristophanes expresses no vision for a corrected system of court trials. Whereas the Assembly and Council should continue to operate under the prudent guidance of the Demos, the best courts seem to be no courts at all. Finally, in *Peace*, Aristophanes returns the deliberative process, figuratively and literally, to the Athenian Council, and the city will prosper.

Aristophanes' five extant comedies from 425 to 421 provide the most thorough record of dramatic output for any five-year period in the whole of antiquity. The arc of these five comedies, from the war-torn dysfunctional Assembly that begins *Acharnians* to the restoration of prosperity to the members of the Council seated in the theater at the end of *Peace*, cannot be replicated anywhere else. Perhaps even if comparable plays survived for another five-year period, such an arc would never occur again anyway. After



the performance of *Peace* in 421, the Peace of Nicias was signed, and, as it happens, our knowledge of both the history and the dramatic output of Athens plummets for the next several years. When more detailed sources emerge again, the twin specters of the Sicilian expedition and oligarchic revolution change the rules of public discourse. The pathway to these changes is the subject of the next chapter.