Between the Dionysia and the Dialogues:
The *agon* between Philosophy and Comedy

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Declaration of Authorship

I David Carroll Preston hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

This thesis presents a comprehensive examination of the relationship between philosophy and comedy in 5th and 4th Century B.C.E. Athens – a project which has been lacking in the scholarship to date. The thesis is divided into two sections, the first of which analyses Plato's use of comedy and the second devoted to a survey of representations of philosophy on the comic stage.

Section One is divided into four chapters which discuss the various techniques through which Plato employs allusions to comedy in his composition of certain characters. I argue that Plato's intention here is to liken these persons to the *alazonic* philosopher of contemporary comedy, thus undermining the credibility of any doctrines they promote.

Section Two seeks to define the type of personality this 'comic philosopher' had and why Plato seemed so concerned with him. This will begin by analysing the portrayal of philosophy and the philosopher in Old Comedy, before advancing to the threshold of the Middle period with a discussion on the *Ecclesiazusae*, and conclude by looking at the philosopher in the fragments of Middle Comedy.

The results will show that although Plato seemed quite anxious about being likened to the philosopher of comedy, such worries may have been unfounded. The philosopher of Old Comedy was certainly an undesirable fellow with selfish, parasitic and subversive tendencies; such qualities, however, are not universal in the genre and diminish when we approach the Middle period, where the philosopher is now depicted more as a haughty pedant devoting his life to trivial endeavours. It will be argued that this is due to the establishment of the first permanent philosophical institutions in Athens, which replaced the methods of the itinerant sophists of the previous century. The exception to this is the case of the Pythagorean, who – due to his reclusive lifestyle – generates the same suspicion as the philosopher of Old Comedy.

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Introduction.

The purpose of this thesis is to present a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between philosophy and comedy in 5th and 4th Century Athens. While the subject has been flirted with in the past with varying degrees of interest, the scholarship lacks a devoted study such as this project endeavours to undertake. Perhaps the fullest previous effort is that of Nightingale (1995) and her discussion of Plato's incorporation of poetry and rhetoric in his dialogues, which contains a chapter examining the complexity of Plato's relationship with comedy.[1] This thesis will agree with her premise that "comedy provided both a model and a target" for Plato,[2] and will seek to expand and develop this point to a degree which Nightingale simply cannot do due to the restraints of her project. As but one example of these restraints, Nightingale argues that Plato "borrows from comedy" in the *Protagoras,* yet she only cites one passage of the dialogue as evidence for this[3] and omits any detailed examination of specific fragments of a play which might further bolster her case.[4] Similarly, Nightingale confines herself to Old Comedy,[5] while this thesis will further the study into Middle Comedy, although she does look at the *Ecclesiazusae*. Here, once again, this thesis will initially agree with her reading, but will go on to present further evidence from the fragments of Old Comedy which might suggest that Plato had more than one comic portrayal of his ideas in mind when he responds to the comic poets in *Republic* V. Nightingale also pays particular attention to comic invective, especially its serious side and its perceived role as a social commentary, and argues (convincingly) that there is similar comic invective and abuse at play in the *Gorgias*.[6] The use of such invective, however, will not be a major priority for this thesis; my project is more concerned with drawing particular attention to certain intertextual relationships which suggest Plato is making direct allusion to a comic motif or trope, rather than highlighting instances where Plato is using comic style in general. The exception to this, however, is Chapter Three, in which I will pick up on Nightingale's assertion that Plato at times seems to "harness…and appropriate [comedy's] voice of criticism", by suggesting that there may be elements of comic caricature in his portrayal of certain individuals. As Nightingale notes, this may at times

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[1] 1995: 172-192.
[2] Nightingale (1995:4), following Clay (1994: 45-6).
[3] 1995: 186.
[4] Nightingale does, however, make a very brief mention of *Kolakes* frr. 157, 158, & 180 on p. 186.
[5] 1995: 173.
[6] *ibid*: 190.

not contain much humour[8] - as we will see in the case of Thrasymachus - but offers a similar critical opinion to comedy.

While Nightingale's work touches on several aspects of this thesis, others have published on particular strands which are to be discussed in individual chapters. Brock (1990), for example, presents a general but limited survey of some of the comic undertones in certain dialogues. More recently, Broackes (2009) has argued for a Socratic origin of line 139 of the *Clouds* and also draws a comparison between the shapeshifting cloud chorus and the transmigration of the soul to body fitting its former life in the *Phaedo*. Conversely, Lee (1973), perhaps rather tenuously, proposes that the entire encounter with the reincarnated Protagoras in the *Theaetetus* – which culminates in Socrates and Theaetetus gazing down at Protagoras with his head sticking up from the earth – may be a reference to a fragment of Epicrates (Fr. 10) in which Plato and a group of students stare down at a gourd and discuss how it should be defined. Less convincing still is Saxonhouse (1978) who argues that Callipolis as outlined in the *Republic* should be read as a parody of Aristophanes' *Birds*. Indeed, the literature concerning the relation between the *Republic* and Aristophanes is rather extensive in comparison with the rest of the subject, mostly due to what will be labelled in the thesis as 'The *Ecclesiazusae*/*Republic* V Dilemma' which arises as a result of the flagrant similarities between the societies proposed in the respective texts. While Tordoff's recent article (2010) has perhaps given the most comprehensive survey of the literature on the subject to date and follows Nightingale (1995) in arguing for the influence of a separate third party – a premise this thesis again will ultimately agree with – others like Strauss (1964) and Bloom (1968) have dubiously sought to establish the position that the *Republic* should be read as based on the *Ecclesiazusae* and nothing further.

If we turn to the discussion of philosophy in Old Comedy, apart from Carey's (2000) admirable but all too brief study, much of the scholarship is perhaps understandably devoted to the *Clouds* with Nussbaum's (1980) reading of the play as an intellectual critique of the Socratic Method still being viewed as a key treatment. Although this thesis will agree with Nussbaum's assertion that there are certain distinctly 'Socratic' elements to be found in the comedy, it will find her description of Aristophanes as an 'intellectual critic' unlikely – at least at this stage in his career – and will highlight similar portrayals of the philosopher from other fragments and comedies of the period

[8] *Ibid*.

which suggest a more uniform portrayal of a 'composite' philosopher. There are, however, certain characteristics of the Aristophanic Socrates which correspond with the Socrates presented by Plato, which may suggest they be viewed as distinctive of the historical Socrates. While Nussbaum would argue these are intentional, genuine, and meant to be recognised as so, this thesis will take the more cautious approach in arguing that while they may indeed be Socratic, they are not as intentional as Nussbaum believes – they may simply figure in the generic characteristics of the stock 'comic philosopher' of the *genre*. The most valuable contributions to this particular area are perhaps Tarrant (1988) and Burnyeat (1977), both of whom argue that these 'touching points' between Aristophanes and Plato are mere coincidence, a position with which this thesis will find itself in respectful disagreement.[9]

When we consider the representation of philosophy in Middle Comedy, we encounter what could be said to be the doldrums of the scholarship, with the fragmentary nature of the genre perhaps being a contributory factor to this. Apart from a chapter entry in Webster's seminal *Studies in Later Greek Comedy* (1953), those with a curiosity for the subject have for the most part been left to scouring the pages of Arnott's exhaustive commentary on the fragments of Alexis (1996), or Hunter's similar study of Eubulus (1983). A recent peak in interest has, however, made some progress in assuaging such curiosity; Olson's chapter on the fragmentary comic philosopher in his *Broken Laughter* (2009) certainly opens the forum for discussion but is in no way comprehensive, and while Papapchrysostomou's recent doctoral thesis *Six Comic Poets* (2008) provides a detailed commentary on the fragments of six poets of Middle Comedy, the focus on philosophical aspects in particular is sadly minimal. Verlag Antike's new series of commentaries on the Middle Comics does prove useful – though Millis' commentary on Anaxandrides (2015) suggests the poet cared little for philosophy as he only refers to it very infrequently. If we add to this Battezzato's recent paper (2012) on the role of the Pythagorean in Middle Comedy, we have practically listed the entire corpus of scholarship one has at their disposal.

With the literature being so scattered and diverse, the intention of this thesis is to offer a contribution to the scholarship in the form of a study specifically dedicated to the relationship between 5/4th Century philosophy and comedy. While much admirable

[9] Here I should clarify that Tarrant is at times quite receptive to theories on these 'touching points'; it is the particular touching point discussed in this thesis where we might disagree.

work has been done recently on literary readings of Plato,[10] this work has in general been more concerned with his incorporation either of various aspects of specific literary genres as a whole or of the dramatic style of the dialogues, and in some cases the relevance of comic drama is given a brief reception. These brief receptions across the scholarship should highlight the importance of my endeavour; this ‘relationship’ between Plato and comic drama is often discussed, but is never given the attention this thesis proposes to place as centre-stage. The thesis largely focuses on comic drama rather than ‘comic’ style in general, in the sense of being ‘witty’, ‘satirical’ or just plain ‘funny’, although Chapter Three is again an exception insofar as it discusses one specific aspect of ‘comic’ style, namely Plato’s use of caricature. Of course such a project can never be exhaustive – especially within the limitations of a doctoral thesis – but I aim to present a review which addresses the interaction between Greek Philosophy – above all Plato[12] – and Greek Comedy. Such a task is best suited to the form of a dialogical examination, in one section examining the representation of comedy in philosophy and in the other the representation of philosophy in comedy. The primary aim of the first section will be to present and discuss numerous instances in the dialogues where it appears Plato is borrowing motifs, structures and parlances from contemporary comedy in an attempt to present certain opponents – usually sophists – as the *alazonic* philosopher of comedy. Plato, it would seem, is using such techniques as an additional weapon to undermine the credibility of his opponents; but what, in particular, was so *bad* about the comic philosopher, and how was it that being likened to one had the capacity to damage one’s reputation? This is a question to be fleshed out in the latter section of the thesis by analysing all available comedies and fragments of the Old and Middle Comedy depicting philosophy or the philosopher in an attempt to determine if there was a general negative persona associated with the stock philosopher in comedy, and if this was an unchanging or a malleable characteristic as the genre developed. Neither should the result of such a study be underestimated, for not only will the evidence presented on Plato’s incorporation of comedy demand we re-evaluate our assessment of such dialogues and Plato’s intentions when composing them, it also calls into question the modern utopian image of 5th and 4th century Athens – her ‘Golden Age’ – where the citizenry engage with and laud the philosophical giants who walk among them; for when attempting to determine the favour in which someone/thing was

[10] Cf. Arieti (1991), Blondell (2002), Coventry (1990), Gill and McCabe (1996), Long (2013), Rutherford (1995).

[12] Academicians and Pythagoreans are admitted to the discussion in Chapter 7, while Xenophon is discussed briefly in Chapter 5.

held in antiquity, comedy serves as an ideal medium in making such an assessment. We must remember that much of ancient comedy was "reactionary rather than innovative"[13] – the comic poets *reflected* public opinion rather than *creating* it – and so if someone is lampooned as a charlatan, pederast, effeminate etc., the poet is taking an already existing perception, exacerbating it, and throwing it back to the public. Thus, when determining how Plato himself was viewed by his contemporaries, comedy serves as a fair yet brutal witness.

Section One, then, will be reserved for Plato's use of comedy. It should here be noted that I choose to focus this section purely on Plato for several reasons. The first, his prolificacy, may be obvious. The second evolves from the first – this being the lack of an intact corpus of any other philosopher of the period with the richness of Plato.[14] The third and most important, however, is this finesse with which Plato composes his work. Dialogues written in the narrative style divulge a plethora of information regarding the dramatic setting, dramatis personae, the various dispositions and demeanours of such a dramatis personae and other such 'stage directions' that are not afforded to us in expositions that come to in the straight-forward dialogue format or the treatise-like style of what survives of Aristotle.[15] It is for this reason that the reader with a familiarity with Plato's use of comedy may be surprised to find how little discussion will be given over to 'usual suspects' like the *Hippias Major* or the *Gorgias*.[16] It is not the case that dialogues such as these have been ignored in researching the thesis, but that I could simply find nothing new or novel to consider from these dialogues beyond merely stating what is immediately obvious – such as highlighting something akin to 'here Plato makes a joke at the expense of Hippias' hubris.'[17] The reason for this lies in the

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[13] Nightingale (1995: 177).

[14] Should the tradition which holds that Aristotle wrote dialogues be proven true (cf. Chroust 1963:27-30&n4), then we may perhaps have more material with which to work. Aristotle's extant work, however, is generally assumed to be esoteric and intended for the 'select few' in his Lyceum rather than written for wider publication (for a summary of the traditions concerning the esoteric and exoteric works of Aristotle see Sharples' superb recent discussion (2007)). Xenophon, incidentally, is referred to occasionally when relevant in the thesis.

[15] By 'narrative style' I refer not only to those dialogues in which the entire event is narrated directly from the speaker to the reader (eg. the *Charmides, Lysis,* and *Republic* in which Socrates is narrator, *Parmenides* (Cephalus), *Symposium* (Apollodorus)) but also to composite cases such as the *Phaedo* (in which Phaedo narrates within a playscript dialogue frame) *Protagoras* and *Euthydemus* (Socrates narrating within a playscript frame). Although not strictly 'narrated', these dialogues contain long, elaborate passages in which the 'narrator' relates a series of events he has experienced to his interlocutor.

[16] For a treatment of certain 'comic' elements in the *Gorgias* see Nightingale (1995: 187-190).

[17] Indeed, the *Hippias Major* has been deemed so humorous that doubts have been raised over its authenticity, with detractors generally raising the challenge that 'Plato could never have been that funny'. For an excellent overview of such opinions, and a catalogue of each joke made in the dialogue, see Woodruff's introduction and commentary (1982). Woodruff, incidentally, concludes with confidence that

fact that these dialogues are not written in the narrative style, but rather open abruptly with two speakers exchanging dialogue. Any new participants to the dialogue are not introduced and enter just as abruptly, to the extent that the reader is unaware of their presence until they speak up.[18] While these dialogues are most certainly humorous, any attempted analysis of the actual comedy within them would ultimately be reduced to isolating and identifying the already transparent 'jokes' within the dialogue, which seems a rather banal endeavour.[19] The narrative dialogues, however, go to great lengths to establish the setting and mood of the dialogue – sometimes, as in the case of the *Protagoras*, taking up to nine Stephanus pages before the actual philosophical discussion begins[20] –and may resume at any time during the dialogue. This in the past has been regarded by some as 'padding' to be disregarded in favour of the more meaty philosophical discussion that follows, but it would seem that to ignore this would be to ignore a part of Plato's intention when composing the dialogue; for such 'padding' allows insight we are not afforded elsewhere, such as how the discussion is being received by those present but silent,[21] the physical dispositions of the participants or their mannerisms.[22]

Section One is divided into four chapters examining the different ways in which Plato employs comedy. Chapter 1 highlights certain techniques used by Plato to load particular characters with *alazoneia*. This involves charging the interlocutor with elements that the contemporary reader would see as typical of the charlatan philosopher they were familiar with from the comic stage: one who indulges in vanity, deception, greed and selfishness. Plato's intention here, it will be argued, is to damage the integrity of the speaker, thus casting doubt on the reliability of any claims they make. This will then lead into Chapter 2, which looks at Comic Motifs. Here we will see how Plato

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the dialogue is authentic and Plato can indeed be 'that funny', a position this section of the thesis will aim to bolster.

[18] In the opening of the *Gorgias*, for example, we are only introduced to Callicles, Chaerephon and Socrates (447a-c). We are not aware of Gorgias' immediate presence until he is addressed by Chaerephon at 447d5, nor are we aware of Polus' presence at all until he interrupts at 448a5.

[19] The exeption here is the *Theaethetus* and Socrates' animated impersonation of Protagoras (160d-170a). Again, however, Socrates diverges from the dialogue format to describe the mannerisms of Protagoras.

[20] *Prot.* 309a-319a4. I deem the beginning of the discussion on the teachability of virtue which commences at 319a4 to be the start of the true philosophical debate. Similar prolonged introductions occur in the *Euthydemus* (271a-275d3, to the point at which Clinias is asked if it is the wise or foolish who learn), the *Theaetetus* (142a-146e5, to the point at which Socrates begins questioning the nature of knowledge) and the *Phaedrus* (227a- 231a1, to the point at which Phaedrus begins to recite Lysias' speech).

[21] One here may think of the patronizing look Socrates tells us Protagoras gives Hippias at *Prot.* 318e2 or the applause received by the sophist's troupe at *Euthyd.* 276b8.

[22] Socrates, for example, tells us Prodicus was still in bed when he arrived at Protagoras' house at *Prot.* 315d2-3, the implications of which are discussed in full in Chapter 3.a.

builds on the *alazonic* foundations he has laid by incorporating various popular motifs from Old and Middle Comedy to further liken certain figures he presents to those of the philosopher in comedy. Such allusion comes in various forms; at times he likens sophistic debate to being outmatched by a devious wrestler who employs several underhanded tricks to trip up his opponent – just as the philosophical institutions in comedy were thought to have preached – while elsewhere the sophist is likened to a magician or wonderworker, which again aligns with the cultish attributes of the philosopher of Old Comedy. This will be followed by Chapter 3, 'Caricature', which discusses the possibility of Plato playing up to comic and popular perceptions as he presents caricatures of various figures in the dialogues. It may seem likely, for example, that Plato is playing up to a perceived 'bull-like' character of Thrasymachus in his presentation of him in *Republic* I, but a close reading of the curious depiction of Prodicus in the *Protagoras* combined with his portrayal in the spurious *Axiochus* and *Eryxias* also strongly suggests Plato is here again alluding to a more obscure ancient tradition, one which viewed Prodicus as a morose, second-rate pessimist. The section will then conclude with Chapter 4 on 'Comic Language' which discusses instances where Plato completes his construction of the *alazon* by employing language which seems idiosyncratic to comedy.

With the analysis of Plato's use of comedy complete, Section Two will commence, which focuses on the reception of the philosopher of the comic stage in an attempt to define this figure whom Plato was so eager to assimilate with his opponents. The first chapter of this section – Chapter 5 – will discuss philosophy and the philosopher in Old Comedy. Initially the chapter will survey the fragments along with the surviving plays of the genre in an attempt to discern a portrait of the 'stock philosopher' of the period. Indeed, it can be established that the depiction of the philosopher of this era is uniform and is one of a character with absolute asocial and subversive tendencies. This is indicative of an audience unfamiliar with and uninterested in the goings on within philosophical circles – thus we have the composite character of Socrates within the *Clouds* spouting a range of pre-Socratic, Pythagorean and sophistic hodgepodge. This is a result of a lack of care on the audience's part in distinguishing between particular schools, and is indicative that all philosophers of the period – be they Socratic, sophist, or scientist – were lumped together and held mutually responsible for any of their perceived wrongdoings by the lay community. Plato is quick to dispel any notions of

Socrates partaking in most of the activities he is accused of by the comedians,[23] such as charging for instruction or teaching rhetoric, but there are certain elements of the comic Socrates that Plato seems anxious to defend, such as claiming expertise in intellectual midwifery, and advocating the principle of non-contradiction and the need for solitary reflection. The latter part of this chapter, then, will be given over to analysing Plato's method in doing this – i.e. defending the particular characteristic that has been parodied by disentangling it from its previous comic incarnation and presenting it in a forum of sober discussion, with an aim of showing the actual benefit of these ideas the comedians were so quick to dismiss as nonsensical. More often than not, such 'defences' are accompanied with a rebuke towards the comic poets for being so rash in choosing material for satire.[24] Here should be explained the subtle but distinct difference between what is being discussed in this chapter and what has been discussed in the previous section: Section One concerns Plato's *incorporating* comic motif for his own benefit, almost like a weapon to use against his rivals. No direct reference to comedy is made, nor is the 'fourth wall' broken. This chapter, however, will examine how Plato *responds* to ideas similar to his which have been lampooned on the comic stage, and will highlight his attempts to give credibility to such ideas which have previously been deemed farcical by the comedians. Plato here is *challenging* the poets on their opinions of his ideas, rather than deflecting these opinions towards his rivals as we see in Section One.

Chapter 6 of Section Two broaches the aforementioned '*Ecclesiazusae/ Republic* V Dilemma'. In *Republic* V, as Socrates outlines some of the more controversial aspects of his Callipolis, he makes frequent references to how 'ridiculous' these conditions might seem, but warns that those who laugh at such progressive thinking 'pluck the unripe fruit of laughter' as they poke fun at that which they know nothing about.[25] Here again, then, it would seem that Plato is chiding those who had previously made fun of ideas like those which he is about to propose, of which the most obvious candidate may

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[23] Cf. *Ap.* 19c.

[24] Here and elsewhere when I use the word 'satire', I refer to it in the sense of its broader modern meaning – ie. using humour, irony, allsuion to comedy, and exaggeration as a device to ridicule a person's faults or follies – rather than some of the narrower definitions of the term (see, for example, Quintillian *Inst. Orat*. X.93-95). Similarly, in the case of 'parody', I simply mean work that uses imitation – such as the characteristic style of an author or a work – for comic effect or ridicule, rather than some of the more conceptual interpretations of the term. (The scholarship here is enormous; for satire cf. Müller (1973), Coffey (1989: 3-24), Clark (1990), Connery & Combe (eds.) (1995), and Hodgart & Connery (2010). For parody cf. especially Genette (1997), but also Rose (1993), Hutcheon (1989) and Dentith (2000)).

[25] *Rep*. 457b1-2. Cf. *Rep.* 452a5, 452b2-3, 452d4.

initially seem to be the *Ecclesiazusae* which also portrays an utopian society, several aspects of which synchronize with that of the *Republic*. It will be argued however, that while Plato certainly is responding to comic depictions of communistic utopias, it is not the *Ecclesiazusae* alone he has in mind; for the particular aspects of his society which he feels are most vulnerable to ridicule are absent in the *Ecclesiazusae*, but do crop up in the fragments of another (lost) contemporary comedy – the *Stratiotides* of Theopompus.

The latter half of this chapter will be given over to investigating a possible shift in general familiarity with philosophy. In the previous era, philosophers in comedy were carelessly daubed with an array of opinions which may have been quite at odds with the actual outlook of the particular philosopher parodied, while their cultish demeanour attests to a public dissuasion towards their art. As we advance past the 390's, however, we can deduce a reduction in this trend as a growing acquaintance with the goings on within philosophical circles can be detected among the general public. This may be in no small part due to the recent establishment of the first permanent philosophical institutions in Athens, and the benefit they offered in rhetorical training which would have been of great use in a society as litigious yet lawyer-less as 4th century Athens.

This increasing familiarity with philosophy is first hinted at by Aristophanes in the conclusion of the *Ecclesiazusae* as he voices his expectations that while those in attendance purely for laughs have enjoyed themselves, the more intellectually minded portion of the audience have had their fill as well.[26] With this in mind, the remainder of this chapter will examine the possibility of whether the *Ecclesiazusae* comes with an inherent and serious critique of contemporary political philosophy.

This trend develops further as we advance further into the 4th century and the period generally ascribed to 'Middle Comedy', which is reserved for Chapter 7. This chapter aims to undertake a survey of the surviving fragments of Middle Comedy in an attempt to determine if we can again establish a 'stock-philosopher' of the period, and if so, how he has changed since his ancestor in Old Comedy. The majority of the surviving references are concerned with either Plato or the Pythagoreans and so will be addressed accordingly in respective chapters. With representations of Plato the departure from the stock-philosopher of Old Comedy is noticeable, as the audience appear to be able to distinguish ideologies and traits that were unique to Plato and the Academy; though

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[26] *Ecc.* 1155.

philosophy is still presented as a dull and asinine endeavour, the amoral and dubious undertones found in the previous century are absent. Remnants of the Old Comic philosopher can, however, be found in the portrayal of the Pythagorean in Middle Comedy, whose reclusive, ascetic way of life made him a sort of 'living stock-philosopher'.

At the end of the thesis an appendix titled 'The Reproduction of Old Comedy in the 4th Century' is included. While not integral to the thesis, the appendix revisits the much debated issue of the afterlife of Old Comedy in the 4th Century. The purpose of this is to provide a pre-emptive response to any questions arising from the tradition that the plays of Old Comedy received only a single production, the implications of which could cast doubt on the likelihood of Plato feeling compelled to incorporate or respond to elements of a comedy which was produced only once and almost half a century previously. Though such a gap would cause complications for the plausibility of my argument, the tradition was put under scrutiny by Taplin with the publication of his *Comic Angels* (1993) – a study of comic scenes on vases in the 5th and 4th centuries. The appendix builds on Taplin's work, also citing epigraphic and textual evidence which strongly suggests the plays of Old Comedy enjoyed a long afterlife and so would have been as recognizable to Plato and his intended readership as the comedy being composed by his contemporaries, or, indeed, the Homeric epics composed centuries previously.

All dates referred to are B.C.E unless otherwise stated. All references to Plato cite Burnet's 1903 OCT edition. All comic fragments follow Kassel-Austin unless otherwise stated.

Section One: Plato's use of Comedy.

Introduction

There was an ancient tradition which held that Gorgias once labelled Plato 'The Archilochus of Athens' on account of the abuse levelled in his dialogues, commenting ὡς καλῶς οἶδε Πλάτων ἰαμβίζειν.[27] Although seemingly strange, Gorgias' attack was not unfounded, as Plato was quite the parodist – a somewhat elusive fact in modernity due to the greater tendency to judge the dialogues purely on philosophical merit.[28] To do this, however, is to let part of Plato's genius slip away, as philosophical rigour is not the only way Plato gets the better of his interlocutors; for the dialogues employ a vast range of motifs from Old and Middle Comedy, aiming to undermine certain opponents – usually sophists – by loading them with idiosyncrasies characteristic of the comic *alazon*, or 'pretender'. This damages the *character* of the speaker, and thus the credibility of their doctrines. Socrates, conversely, plays the part of the comic hero, deflating braggartry and exposing ignorance.

Plato's motives in doing so, however, may not be so vague, for the 4th century saw a marked change in philosophical instruction. Gone now were the itinerant sophists of the fifth century, and for the first time in Athens we have the establishment of permanent philosophical institutions – the Academy, the school of Isocrates,[29] the school of Antisthenes.[30] It will be suggested that due to this new permanent presence, the apprehensiveness of the previous century towards philosophy – which can be detected in the comedies of the period[31] – began to wane, especially as the Athenian public began to see the practical benefits of this art of which they had previously been so suspicious. It must be remembered that 4th Century Athens was a highly litigious but lawyer-less society, and so the benefit of institutions which taught the art of rhetoric and oratory began to be recognised – there was now an establishment where one could go to acquire the skills to impress and persuade an audience of jurors. This was a battle Plato could never win, yet his admonishment of rhetoric could not have helped him entice

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[27] Ath. 505d-e.
[28] There are, of course, exceptions here; cf. Archer-Butler (1856); Brock (1990); Tarrant (1991: 162-164). Hawtrey (1981) also notes several scenes which echo comedy in his commentary on the *Euthydemus*.
[29] *Antidos*. 87-88; 224;226.
[30] Cf. Diodorus of Sicily XV, 76.4; for a general overview on the various institutions emerging during this period cf. Lynch (1972: 47-63). On the date of Isocrates' school cf. Jebb (1893: 8) & Jaeger (1945: 303-304). On Antisthenes cf. DL VI 13 with Sayre (1948) and Dudley (1937: 1-16). For Plato cf. *DL* III 5-7 with Cherniss (1945).
[31] Discussed in full Chapter 5.

prospective students. Thus, Plato reached the lay man through a medium they would surely be familiar with and enjoy – contemporary comedy – in which he casts the purveyors of such instruction, and those who influenced them, as the charlatan philosopher they would know from the comic stage. Plato's sword is double edged; not only do such works stand as an advertisement for the Academy, but they are also effective in denigrating the reputations of his rivals. It is for such readership that elements of certain dialogues can be read, as noted by Archer-Butler, as "far more...genteel comedy than philosophical exposition....nothing less than a *dramatic satire*, of boundless humour and variety, upon the follies of sophistic professors; and assuredly lies much nearer to Aristophanes than to Aristotle."[32]

This section, then, will examine the various techniques employed by Plato when composing such characters and is divided into four chapters, with each building on the last. The first examines his actual construction of such figures – the various methods employed as he loads his opponents with *alazoneia,* showing how Plato portrays certain opponents as being in no way able to fulfil the grand promises they give their students. The second examines Plato's use of comic motifs – his allusion to common trends in comedy that would be recognizable to his intended readership as references to the comic stage. The third goes beyond his use of motifs to pure caricature – rather than merely incorporating motifs, here it will be shown how Plato at times gathers various general perceptions, at times going beyond the comic stage to playing with public rumour and opinion, presenting us with an exaggerated pastiche of the particular person he is satirising. This results in 'larger-than-life' portrayals, akin to what one may be familiar with from modern satirical programmes such as *Bo' Selecta!* The section will conclude by examining how Plato, on top of this, has certain characters use language that is much more akin to bawdy comedy than philosophical discourse.

[32] 1856: 24.

Chapter 1: Creating the *Alazon* - Construction of the Comic Character.

The author of *Tractatus Coislinianus* - an ancient treatise on comedy - describes the *alazon* as one of the three stock characters in comedy, someone who plays the impostor in the face of the buffoonery of the *bomolochos* and the irony of the *eiron*.[34] There is much speculation, however, about the date of the *Tractatus'* composition and the identity of its composer; Cramer – who first printed the *Tractatus* from a tenth century CE manuscript – believed it to be a summary of the supposedly lost *Poetics* II, or at least written by one with access to it,[35] a conclusion which was later endorsed by Bernays.[36] Cooper thinks that the writing "betrays the hand of an industrious and faithful student of Aristotle",[37] and both Rutherford and Starkie also agree that the *Tractatus* alludes to the mythical *Poetics* II.[38] Kayser, however, dates the text to the 1st century BCE,[39] while McMahon argues against the supposition that *Poetics* II even existed.[40] The question of the relation between the *Tractatus* and *Poetics* II, however, is not entirely relevant to this discussion, since – as Cooper notes – what we have in the *Tractatus* is still a fragment or condensation of an Ancient theory of comedy, which might be linked to Aristotle. This 'link' is further suggested by some similarities between the *Tract*atus and the *Nicomachean Ethics*[41] and *Rhetoric*.[42] What can be established here, then, is that by the 1st Century BCE at the latest,[43] we have the *alazon* being known as a stock character in comedy. The attributes of such a character, however, are slightly trickier to determine due to the vagueness of who or what we might describe as an *alazon* or *alazoneia*. Aristotle in the *Nic. Eth.* implies an element of boastfulness in such a character,[44] while Aspasius on the same passage likens the *alazon* to the sophist, who seeks both honour and wealth, with Socrates being compared to the ironical character. Similarly, Isocrates uses the term in relation to sophists and boastfulness,[45] while Xenophon reports that Socrates is said to have discouraged his

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[34] *Tract*. 4.1. On the *Tractatus* in general, see Cooper (1922) & Janko (1984, esp. p 1-42)
[35] 1839-41: 403.
[36] 1853: 561-93.
[37] 1922: 11.
[38] 1905: 433-7 & 1909: xxxviii.
[39] 1906: 44
[40] 1917: 1-46.
[41] Cf. *NE* 1108a-b, in which it is stated that the man who is excessive in wit is a *bomolochos*, while excessive truthfulness in described as *alazoneia*, here akin to boastfulness.
[42] Cf. *Rhet*. 1419b6ff, within a discussion about the superiority of irony tobuffoonery.
[43] This is if we accept Kayser's argument.
[44] 1127a-1128b, also see 1108a-b with fn 41 above.
[45] 13.1, 13.10; 15.75 where he worries his speech might seem boastful or over-confident (ἀλαζονικὸν).

followers from *alazoneia*,[46] and elsewhere defines an *alazon* as one who pretends "that they are richer than they are or braver than they are…those who promise to do what they cannot do, and… that they do this only for the sake of getting something or making some gain".[47] Socrates and Chaerephon are called *alazones* by Pheidippides at *Nu*. 102, while – in a presumably similar vein – Athenaeus quotes a fragment of Hegesander which states that all 'tribes of cooks' are *ἀλαζονικὸν*,[48] which implies a propensity to tell self-elevating (though not necessarily truthful) tales.

MacDowell defines the *alazon* as a 'know-all' irrespective of whatever profession in which the expertise is claimed, stating that "the *alazon* in Old Comedy is a man who holds an official position or professes expertise, which, he claims, makes him superior to other men; he exploits it, normally in speech, to obtain profit, power, or reputation; but what he says is actually false or useless. 'Charlatan' is probably the best translation."[49] He argues for this by showing how in the *Acharnians* the term is solely applied to ambassadors (62f. 87, 109, 135, 370-3, 605), and in the *Knights* to politicians (269, 290, 903,); in the *Birds* and *Pax* the term is used when referring to oracle-mongers and town-planners (*Pax.* 1045, 1069, 1120f; *Av.* 983, 1016), while Aeschylus is called an *alazon* at *Ra.* 908 for deceiving his audience. Most important for this thesis, however, is that in plays which focus on philosophy it seems to be the philosopher of the play himself who is loaded with *alazoneia*; as mentioned above, Socrates and Chaerephon are referred to as *alazones* by Pheidippides. Strepsiades aims to become such an *alazon* (449) before seeing the error of his ways and vows instead to enact revenge on the *alazon*es of the *Phrontisterion*. Similarly, in the *Kolakes*, an unkown character remarks that Protagoras ἀλαζονεύεται...περὶ τῶν μετεώρων (fr.157). Though MacDowell argues that none of the references here provide a clear definition of '*alazon*', the term still "no doubt refers to the use of rhetorical skill to cheat people".[50] MacDowell, then, suggests that the character-type of the *alazon* may not be as strictly defined as, such as Cornford, present it to have been.[51] Citing uses of the term in 4th

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[46] At *Mem*. 1.7.1. with MacDowell (1990: 290). Cf. *Mem.* 1.2.5. where Xenophon equates alazoneia with pretentiousness.

Cyr. 2.2.12. Trans. Miller.

[47] *Cyr.* 2.2.12. Trans. Miller.

[48] Ath. 7.290a – 'ἀλαζονικὸν δ᾽ ἐστὶ πᾶν τὸ τῶν μαγείρων φῦλον.' Here I point to Olson's translation, which reads: "The entire tribe of cooks is full of bullshit".

[49] MacDowell later proposes that *alazon* was originally a term for itinerant trades-men, who travelled from place to place "hawking his wares and cried up their merits in exaggerated form" (1990: 290). Etymologically it could stem from ἀλάομαι. The term 'snake-oil salesman' springs to mind, though we may settle on MacDowell's 'charlatan'.

[50] 1990: 288.

[51] 1917: 133-153.

century law courts and certain passages from Plato, MacDowell argues that "over the course of a century or less the meaning of *alazon* drifted from the more precise 'charlatan' to the more general 'liar'",[52] but yet this element of dishonesty still remains.[53]

Further clarity may be discovered here if we examine some of the scholia on Aristophanes, which serves up some interesting findings in this light. Initially it might seem that Aristophanes is not overly fond of using adjectival terms like ἀλαζονικόν, which perhaps might have seemed too prosaic to him, but then we might recall the discussion on trendy new adjectives ending in *-ikos* at *Eq.* 1375-81. He also uses similar terms which the ancient commentators apparently associated with *alazoneia*. The scholiast on *Ra*. 837b, for example, defines αὐθαδόστομον (presumptuous of speech) as περιττὰ λέγοντα καὶ ἀλαζονικα (in relation to Aeschylus' perceived haughtiness), making the same comment at *Ra.* 1020. Earlier, at *Ra.* 282, ἀλαζονικόν is given as an alternative for γαῦρον, and on 178b ἀλαζών and ἀλαζονικός are given as alternatives for σεμνός,[54] while the scholiast on *Nu.* 363 associates ἀλαζονικόν with Socrates' demeanour.[55] Here then, we can see that the scholiasts treat *alazonic* traits as something akin to haughtiness, which, if we are to agree with MacDowell's assessment of the character, would give us a sketch of a figure who is arrogant yet deceptive and who is motivated solely by personal gain which is achieved through false promises.[56]Although it cannot be said with certainty when such roles became 'stock' characters,[57] it is evident that such 'character types' were recognizable in Old Comedy, and it is these 'types' – especially when presented as philosophers – that I intend to refer to when I speak of the '*alazonic* philosopher'.

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[52] 1990: 291.

[53] Here it might be useful to refer to Theophrastus on the *alazon* (*Characters* 23), in which the *alazon* is presented as one who lies to give the impression that he is of a richer or nobler standing than he really is. Theophrastus gives examples of a man going to a tailor and picking out the most expensive wardrobe, only to find that he has 'forgotten' his wallet at home (23.7), or someone who lives in a rented house and pretends to those who do not know him that he owns it, but intends on selling it as it is too small for entertaining (23.9). What is lacking in Theophratus' *alazon*, however, is the swindling element that we find in other descriptions, such as that of Xenophon or the members of the *Phrontisterion*.

[54] See also the schol. on *Plut*. 275.

[55] See also the schol. on Aesch. *Th*. 387e & 404f where the scholiast gives ἀλαζονικόν as an alternative for ὑπέρφρονα & ὑπέρκομπον.

[56] This might seem to match with Frye's broad definition of the *alazon* as "impostor, boaster, or hypocrite, a man who pretends to be more than he is" (2010: 36). This, however, seems more akin to Theophrastus' definition (above n. 53), and again lacks the element of self-gain through deception.

[57] Since Theophrastus includes the *alazon* in his list of characters, it could be suggested that the character had become a stock figure by the late 4th Century.

In his study of the form and content of comic characters in the 4th century, Webster looks to the *Philebus* (47e-50d) where Plato discusses the psychological reaction of an audience to comedy, and again finds that we laugh at people who think they are richer, more attractive and possessed of more virtue (ἀρετή) than they actually are.[58] While Webster goes on to use this as a tool in his attempts to construct a composite of a contemporary stock comic character, I find myself particularly more drawn to the insight this affords us into Plato's methods when constructing his *own* comic characters. The following chapter aims to examine Plato's techniques in doing just this, focussing on the different fundamental elements that contribute to the *alazoneia* of certain interlocutors. While common traits such as outlandish arrogance and haughtiness may be readily obvious,[59] Plato employs other subtler tactics in assimilating some of Socrates' dialogists to the blowhard, charlatan philosopher of comedy, in an attempt to demonstrate that this teaching they charge so much for is actually only worth as much as the teaching of their comic counterparts. The *coup de grace* to any *alazonic* character, even in modernity, is the exposure of his claims to be nothing but hot air and the reduction of his status to a mere con-artist.[60] Plato homes in on this element, using various tactics to portray what he sees as the knavery of sophistry. Owing to his appearance in two dialogues, it may not surprise that the *alazoneia* of Protagoras is the most developed and dimensional, and his portrayal sees him put forward claims that bolster his credibility to the highest level, but are deflated as his inability to fulfil them sends him crashing back to earth. What is actually revealed is a contradictory, hypocritical character, who will spout anything to win the crowd.

Inherent in this process is Plato's setting the dialogues in the not-too-distant past. Plato's audience, however, would have been quite familiar with each historical character Plato presents, and moreover, would have been aware of the results and veracity of promises or assertions made by them; if history has since proven such promises false, *alazoneia* begins to amount.[61] The *Protagoras* is exemplary of this point. Our expectations of Protagoras are raised right from the beginning, as an extremely excited Hippocrates beats down Socrates' door urging him to come and visit

[58] 1953: 103.
[59] Eg. Hippias boasting of his achievements and wealth at *Hip*. *Maj* 281a-b & 282d-e, or the arrogance of Dionysodorus when contradicted by Socrates at *Euthyd*. 287b etc.
[60] Portraying the intellectual as a fraud is prevalent in comedy – cf. *Nu.* 102; Eup. fr. 157, 386, 395; Antiphanes fr. 67; Aristophon fr. 9; Eubulus. fr. 157.
[61] Dubious promises are typical of the *alazon* – cf. *Nu*. 435, 465; Aristophon fr. 8. See also the duplicitous nature of the flatterers of Eupolis' *Kolakes*, who seem to charm Callias with false compliments and promises with the goal of parting him from his wealth (cf. Eup. *Kolakes*; esp. frr. 162 & 172).

Protagoras – who claims to be the only wise man in Athens.[62] Socrates is dubious as to what exactly Protagoras can teach, but can't quell young Hippocrates' excitement, and so they venture to visit the sophist at the house of Callias – Protagoras' patron and one of the richest men in Athens – to find out what exactly is this art he claims to teach, a question which has now too been built up in the reader's head. After an extended introduction,[63] we are finally allowed to hear the great man speak, as Protagoras responds that it is the art of citizenship he teaches, and that "ᾗ ἂν ἡμέρᾳ ἐμοὶ συγγένῃ, ἀπιέναι οἴκαδε βελτίονι γεγονότι, καὶ ἐν τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ ταὐτὰ ταῦτα· καὶ ἑκάστης ἡμέρας ἀεὶ ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἐπιδιδόναι."[64] This is the very first claim made by Protagoras, though for the contemporary reader alarm bells should already be going off regarding Protagoras' credibility – this owing to the scandal which surrounded Callias' life; for by the time when Plato was composing his dialogues, Callias had gained infamy for squandering his inheritance on flatterers and women, so much so that he supposedly died a pauper.[65] This was combined with a hedonistic and licentious streak,[66] and an ignominious private life which included fathering a child by his wife's daughter.[67] Thus, Protagoras' claim that each day someone associates with him they will leave a better person in affairs including household management (318e6) is very much undermined by the fact that Callias, his patron and therefore intimate friend,[68] so poorly mismanaged his own household.[69] His eventual poverty serves as a very real reminder of the result of a life spent squandering money on sophists – he paid more than anyone to the men who promised everything,[70] yet died with nothing.

The same may be said for certain members of Protagoras' group of followers.[71] This includes Critias (who would become one of the more ruthless members of the Thirty

[62] Cf. Hippocrates' comments at *Prot*. 310d5-6 –'νὴ τοὺς θεούς,' ἔφη, 'ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι γε μόνος ἐστὶ σοφός, ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ ποιεῖ.'
[63] 309a-318a, the importance of which is discussed in Chap. 2.a.
[64] *Prot*. 318a7-9
[65] Lysias *On the Property of Aristophanes* 48.
[66] Ath.5.169a, Ael.*Var. Hist*. 4.16; Ath. 12.536a; Eupolis fr. 161.
[67] Andoc 1.126ff.
[68] Plato is sure to reiterate their relationship at *Tht.* 165a1 – note here how Theodorus is quick to downplay his association with Protagoras by saying he long ago branched away into his own field of geometry. For more on Protagoras' and Callias' connection cf. Ath.5.281b; Diog. 9.50; also cf. *Prot* 348b3-4, where Alcbiades urges Callias to use his influence over Protagoras to convince him to engage in dialectic.
[69] As noted by Wolfsdorf (1998:129).
[70]Cf. *Ap.* 20a3.
[71] Credit for some of the following observations is due to David Wolfsdorf and his wonderfully perceptive article 'The Historical Reader of Plato's *Protagoras*' (1998), which the above point builds upon.

Tyrants),[72] Charmides (who would also become one of the Thirty), Eryximachus (who would be charged with mutilation of the Hermae),[74] and Andron, who would be imprisoned as a debtor to the state,[75] but also whose son Androtion would go on to become a pupil of none other than Isocrates and an acknowledged orator in his own right. Of the two Adeimantuses mentioned (315e4),[76] the son of of Cepis probably died shortly after the dramatic setting of the dialogue,[77] while the son of Leucolophides would go on to bribe Lysander and be impeached by Conon for treachery.[78] It would seem then that these men were also not to turn out the best of men, despite their time spent with Protagoras; for Protagoras will later argue that Athenians do teach their children *areté* (325b7-8), but the fact that many of his associates in the dialogue suffered death, exile or confiscation of property due to their distinctly un-virtuous and un-Athenian behaviour undermines this point – nor did their association with Protagoras succeed in remedying this. By selecting Callias' house as a setting and these specific characters to be present, Plato not only correlates sophistic activity with the corruption of Athens,[79] but also invalidates Protagoras' claims to be a teacher of virtue before he can even begin to defend it. This device is often overlooked by the modern reader, who may understandably not have expertise in late 5th century Athenian social history, but it could not have escaped the notice of the dialogue's intended contemporary readership. If put in a 21st century context, it is almost akin in its blatancy to setting a dialogue circa 1915 and having someone enter the scene followed by a young Josef Stalin, a young Adolf Hitler, a young Heinrich Himmler and a young Benito Mussolini. The character then smugly proclaims that he is the master of imparting virtue and bettering men, while the venue for such a soirée is the residence of a Huntington Hartford-like character.

While it is certainly true that some of the cast appear elsewhere in the dialogues, it is also undeniable that these figures still went on to commit atrocious crimes which Plato seeks to distance himself from. Some, such as Critias, even had close familial ties with Plato. If we look to their appearances in other dialogues, however, it becomes apparent

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[72] Xen. *Hell*. 2.3.2, 15-16,4.1-19; *Mem*. 1.2.12-38; Aristot. *Ath Pol*. 38.1, 39.6; Diod. 14.4,
[74] *Ibid* 1.35.
[75] Dem. 22.33, 56, 68; 24.125.
[76] Here we must note that the pair are described as being the sons of Cepis and Leucolophides, and so neither should be confused with the Adeimantus we remember from the *Republic*, who is described as the son of Ariston and thus Plato's brother (cf. *Rep*. *I* 327a-327b1). For brief biographies based on the available evidence for each of the three Adeimantuses see Nails (2002: 2-5).
[77] Cf. *IG3* 1190.114 with Nails (*ibid*: 3-4).
[78] Xen. *Hell*. 2.1.30,32; Lys. 14.38; Dem. 19.191; Paus. 4.17.3, 10.9.11.
[79] Wolfsdorf (1998: 130). Cf. *Nu.* 1054 where Just accuses Unjust of convincing the youth to abandon the gymnasia in favour of the bath houses.

that Plato did not hold these figures in high regard. Of the cast, the most prevalent to crop up in the dialogues is Phaedrus, who appears in his eponymous dialogue and in the *Symposium*. Though this suggests he may have moved in the same circles as Socrates, his speech in the *Symposium* is the shortest, while in the *Phaedrus* we meet him as a young man obsessed with Lysias, who twice attempts to give a speech in his style, both of which pale in comparison with the speeches given by Socrates in response. Eryximachus also appears in the *Symposium*; nowhere, however, is it suggested that he and Socrates are particularly close companions, but rather simply two people attending the same party. He is portrayed as haughty, appointing himself as master of ceremonies, and as keen to show off his medical expertise. The lasting impression one gets of Eryximachus is that of a snobbish pedant, which Plato exaggerates with his juxtaposition of Eryximachus with the boorish bloated Aristophanes.[80] Similarly, given their involvement with the Thirty Tyrants, Critias and Charmides seem peculiar candidates for a discussion on σωφροσύνη in the *Charmides*. Plato's true opinion of Critias, however, is thinly veiled;[81] at 161b5 the young Charmides has proposed that σωφροσύνη might be doing one's own business. Socrates, baffled, asks where on earth he heard such nonsense from – probably Critias or one of his group, no doubt. Critias responds that Charmides most certainly didn't hear it from him. After Socrates, however, has explained how such a statement is a mere riddle, Charmides concedes that even the person who taught it to him probably didn't know what he was talking about, and ἅμα ταῦτα λέγων ὑπεγέλα τε καὶ εἰς τὸν Κριτίαν ἀπέβλεπεν.[82] One here might also question the presence and role of Alcibiades, who would go on to infamous villainy, yet is constantly depicted as a confidant of Socrates.[83] It may very well be the case that Socrates and Alcibiades had a well-known relationship that Plato could neither deny nor ignore, and so was limited to justifying or playing it down as much as possible; indeed, he oozes boisterousness (*Symp*. 212d-e) that is rather uncouth amongst present company, and is usually kept at arm's length by Socrates. Denyer, however, notes that public opinion on Alcibiades swung back and forth through the decades, and believes

[80] The rather humorous consequences of this juxtaposition are discussed in full in Chapter 3.c. on the caricature of Aristophanes.

[81] A Critias also appears in the late fragmentary dialogue *Critias* which continues the discussion of the *Timaeus*. Although the Critias of this dialogue was initiailly taken to be the same person as the oligrach Critias (cf. Schol. on *Tim.* 20a and Jowett (1871: 526)), this view was first questioned by Burnet (1920: 338) and later Cornford (1937: 1), Welliver (1977: 50-57), David (1984: 38), Labarbe (1990) and Morgan (1998), all of whom contend it is actually the oligarch's grandfather who features in the dialogue.

[82] *Charm*. 162b10-11.

[83] *Symp*. 212d-223c, *Alcibiades* I & II.

that by the mid-4th century, opinion had settled in favour of Alcibiades, viewing him as a 'lovable rogue' type of figure.[84]

The selection, then, of a cast of characters who at the time of the implied setting were of little notoriety, but infamous to a contemporary audience is surely not coincidental. Consider the presence of the sons of Pericles in the dialogue (319e, 328d-e); Socrates' remark about their lack of virtue in comparison with their father seems blatantly offensive considering they were actually in attendance, and has been criticised for its bad form by scholars advocating a sympathetic portrayal of Protagoras in the dialogue.[85] Indeed, it is Protagoras who restores order and amicability by chastising Socrates for his comments, and excuses the sons on account of their youth while assuring them there is hope for them yet (328e). While Protagoras certainly takes the moral high ground, and seems unfailingly understanding, polite and more attractive in the face of Socrates' brash remarks, the eventual fate of the sons contradicts his reassurance. Plutarch, for example, recounts how Xanthippus, among other immoral things typical of his 'prodigal character' which he would go on to do, would build debts in his father's name and slander him in public before eventually dying from plague.[86]

Time has already disproven Protagoras' promises. His claims, although presently pacifying the crowd, never would come to fruition. Socrates, interestingly, although uncouth in his observance, would be proven right. Here we must consider Socrates' commitment to the truth above all else – while Protagoras momentarily appeases the crowd with what is essentially a falsity, Socrates risks admonition in not shying away, and although at risk of being viewed with disdain at the time, would be vindicated in the end.

Plato's aim, then, is to show that while Protagorean argument is convincing, it is essentially epideictic speaking (317c)[87] in which facts are taken on trust and plausibility,[88] whereas philosophy prefers proofs and demonstrations. While Protagoras' teaching wins over a crowd and seems logical, history has proven it has had no effect on the morality or well-being of those who sought it in the dialogue, and the man who speaks such is no more than a crowd pleaser and pretender.

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[84] 2003:xxi.
[85] Cf. Gagarin (1969); Jowett (1953).
[86] *Life of Pericles* 36.
[87] Cf. Arieti and Barrus (2010:49n72).
[88]Cf. Arist. *Rhet.* 1417b.

Historical hindsight, however, is not needed to recognise other contradictory elements of Protagoras' character; some inconsistencies within his portrayal are too obvious to be put down to authorial carelessness and suggest that we are meant to view sophistry as nothing but a dextrous 'bag of arguments',[89] ready to put down whatever question is posed with no actual care or devotion to what is espoused. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Protagoras' great speech in response to the question of how virtue could be taught.[90] This is vital in upholding Protagoras' position, as it offers his explanation as to how all men have the capacity to acquire virtue, but is rooted firmly in traditional Athenian religion – with Epimetheus allocating particular attributes, Prometheus stealing from Athena etc. Protagoras, however, was a known agnostic, and Plato reminds us of this by having Protagoras invoke such agnosticism in his defence in the *Theaetetus*: 'ὦ γενναῖοι παῖδές τε καὶ γέροντες, δημηγορεῖτε συγκαθεζόμενοι, θεούς τε εἰς τὸ μέσον ἄγοντες, οὓς ἐγὼ ἔκ τε τοῦ λέγειν καὶ τοῦ γράφειν περὶ αὐτῶν ὡς εἰσὶν ἢ ὡς οὐκ εἰσίν, ἐξαιρῶ, καὶ ἃ οἱ πολλοὶ ἂν ἀποδέχοιντο ἀκούοντες.'[91] Based on this, it is most certainly peculiar to see Protagoras base the premise of his 'Great Speech' on foundations he himself finds irrelevant. Nonetheless, the speech is given a rapturous applause, leaving one to suspect that all this may just be a mere performance for the benefit of the crowd and not young Hippocrates. This is further suggested towards the end of the dialogue, where, as Denyer notes, Protagoras blatantly contradicts his assertion that οἱ πολλοί make effective teachers (327b) as he nonchalantly agrees that οἱ πολλοί say whatever comes into their heads (353a).[92]

Similar hypocrisy can be found in the more animated incarnation of Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*, where we see a complete departure from his genteel mode of conduct in the *Protagoras*. Here, he makes no allusion towards mutual respectability (166a), handing out personal insults along with his rebuttals (166c6-d1 – ὗς δὲ δὴ καὶ κυνοκεφάλους λέγων οὐ μόνον αὐτὸς ὑηνεῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντας τοῦτο δρᾶν εἰς τὰ συγγράμματά μου ἀναπείθεις). More interesting, however, is the change of heart Protagoras has had towards his preferred style of debate since we previously met him in his eponymous

[89] Cf. *Tht*. 168a.
[90] *Prot*. 320b-328c.
[91] *Tht.* 162d5-e2; this itself, of course, alludes to Protagoras' own famed maxim 'περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω εἰδέναι οὔθ' ὡς εἰσίν, οὔθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσίν: πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ κωλύοντα εἰδέναι, ἥ τ' ἀδηλότης καὶ βραχὺς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. (Prot. Fr. 4=DK80B4). Note here how Protagoras hypocritically accuses Socrates of saying only what is pleasing to the crowd.
[92] 2008: comm. on 353a1.

dialogue - as long speeches are now cast aside in favour of question and answer.[93] It is important to note that Protagoras is not actually 'on-stage' here – the presentation is indirect, with Socrates imagining what Protagoras *would* say. If we are to take Socrates' words as trustworthy, however, then we should take his imagining of Protagoras as realistic. We must also be cautious in dividing the Protagorean portrayals in each dialogue into the distinct categories of 'what Protagoras *did* say' and 'what Protagoras *would* have said,' since we cannot with any certainty ascribe anything in either dialogue to 'what Protagoras *did* say'; we must remember that even in the *Protagoras* where Protagoras is portrayed as alive and well, it is still a semi-fictional account of him, and so what he says must be ascribed to 'what Protagoras *would* have said'. While Socrates' 'impression' of Protagoras is more blatant, we must also remember that the Protagoras of the *Protagoras* is still nothing more than Plato's 'impression' of him. Any *alazoneia* to be found in Socrates' account of Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*, I argue, is due to Plato purposefully inserting it into his account. It is Plato, then, not his Platonic Socrates, that is responsible for such instances.

During his incarnations, Protagoras sets out the following rules to which the discussion must abide; the first concerns mob oratory – the use of arguments relying not on fact but on persuasion and what merely seems plausible to a crowd are to be refrained from (162de).[94] The second rule concerns arguments – if one wishes to respond in this form, then it must be ensured the argument is coherent and connected (167d). The third and most important rule relates to the dialectical method – if one *is* to choose this method, then one must avoid injustice in one's questioning. By these injustices, Protagoras means attempting to trip up your opponent, using certain techniques to emerge victorious from the debate. Instead of this, we must enter not into a debate, which implies competitiveness, but discussion, helping one's opponent each time he slips up, highlighting where he was mistaken and pointing him along the true path (167d-168a). This is much more beneficial than a debate, as progress towards enlightenment is made on both parts throughout the discussion. The practitioner of this method will be sought

[93] Cf. *Prot.* 334d-335b. Here I use the word 'previously' purely in relation to the chronology of the dramatic events of the dialogues; I do not mean to assert that I am arguing that the *Protagoras* preceded *Theaetetus*. Though on pp. 28-29 there will be a brief discussion on the possibility of the *Euthydemus* preceding the *Theaetetus*, the chronology of the dialogues is a perennial question I ultimately wish to avoid.

[94] This would imply then that speeches such as 'The Great Speech' of the *Protagoras* are off limits. Has Protagoras learned his lesson in death?

by men who have heard he can improve them, while the debater will turn his opponents into enemies of philosophy (168b).

These seem to be terms that Socrates will not have trouble adhering to, but are in stark contrast with Protagoras' own behaviour in the *Protagoras*, which saw him veering and using flowery rhetoric to win the crowd. The master of persuasion (178c-179a), it seems, is now spurning his own techniques. With these rules in place the reader may now expect a balanced discussion on the part of Protagoras (162e); but by placing these restraints on Protagoras, Plato ensures Protagoras is playing by his rules – a game he won't win. This will ultimately culminate in Protagoras' greatest fall from grace, having initially being raised to the highest possible stature. Lee highlights that this is the crux of Plato's plan to paint Protagoras a sort of philosophical Oedipus, being guilty of the crimes he accuses others of committing, and thinking himself most virtuous in doing so.[95]

Protagoras' main entrance to the dialogue – the *agon*, as it were, (166a-168c) – is foreshadowed by a number of subtle nuances on Plato's behalf, all of which contribute to Protagoras' apparent scorn on arrival. Looking back to the discussion preceeding his initial brief incarnation, we see Socrates granting Protagoras' request and treating Theaetetus' definition with the scrutiny required by the strict argument demanded by Protagoras. Lee here makes the distinction in the theses presented as to what may be classified as Protagorean and those which are thoughts recently conjured up by Theaetetus.[96] Strictly speaking, 163a-165e only analyses Theaetetus' definition and not that of Protagoras (160d-e). Plato, however, seems to purposefully conflate the two (164d), giving the impression that they are identical and Socrates has been arguing against *both* arguments rather than just that of Theaetetus. This paves the way for the scene in which Socrates chastises himself for the injustice he has been doing to Protagoras, abusing his orphan with no-one to defend it (164e-166a). *No* injustice, however, has yet been done to Protagoras, and if there were one to be found, it would be on Plato's behalf, by claiming to have tackled Protagoras' definition and injuring his orphan at all. Plato could not have been unaware of the distinctiveness of each individual thesis, and so his conflation of them here is quite deliberate with an aim to create the ensuing confusions which are more akin to a comedy. To the reader, however, Socrates' remarks at 168d-e imply that Protagoras' 'orphan' *is* being abused, which

[95] 1974: 237.
[96] 1973: 230 n11&n12.

instils a desire for fair play in the reader; a wish for Protagoras, having suffered such obloquy, to make a return and make his own case. This is what Plato has been building towards; he refrains from having Protagoras, although somewhat subliminally present up to this point, make his presence felt until the last possible moment. This stirs up expectation in the reader, who has been eagerly anticipating Protagoras' arrival.

With swords drawn, 'Protagoras' arrives, and immediately rebukes Socrates for confusing him with Theaetetus, before scornfully clarifying the association. He then dismisses Socrates' criticisms as being off point (166c-d), and haphazardly deals with the implications that do arise from them (166c, 167b – both of which reply to Socrates' previous criticisms from 160c-162a). The input on behalf of Protagoras is to clarify what exactly he means and what is fair game to attack, but makes no valid contribution towards the progression of the discussion; he does not show *how* Socrates has confused his views with Theaetetus, nor does he attempt to show Theaetetus where he has erred. He is of a similar disposition in the last image conjured up by Socrates (171d), when after two strong, fair criticisms have been made against him (168d-171c) Protagoras re-merges from the ground. Again, however, rather than tackle the arguments head on and show his opponents where they are mistaken and how his argument still prevails, he would simply convict Socrates of lying and take to his heels, without even telling us what Socrates had been lying about. Not once does he obey his own rule about mutual contribution and correction for the sake of progress towards a more beneficial debate.[98] Socrates has taken on the role of the *eiron,*[99] stood up against the impostor and played by his rules – predictably, the *alazonic* 'Protagoras' is deflated.

I am aware that while my argument here might be more easily considered in relation to the 'earlier' dialogues, some of the more traditional Platonic scholars might find my case for similar comic elements in the *Theaetetus* more difficult to swallow. The question to be asked concerns the likelihood of Plato's use of such techniques at a later point in his career in a dialogue which is traditionally viewed as quite serious and philosophically rich. My challenge here, then, is to present an argument for an earlier

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[98] Lee (1973) takes this scene, as Socrates and Theaetetus stoop over looking at Protagoras, with his head sticking out from the ground like a plant, saying nothing of use, to recall Protagoras' rather peculiar claim that he found wisdom in plants (167b2). Lee then goes on to suggest that Plato may be reflecting Epicrates fr. 10, which tells of a group of students of the Academy bent over discussing the nature of a gourd. Caution, however, must be taken; in Epicrates the tale of the students is merely mentioned in passing by a speaker relating his experiences in Athens to another character; this would not have the same memorable effect, as say, the students of the *Phrontisterion*, who are actually onstage with their rears in the air. (*Nu.* 193).

[99] On the role of the *eiron* in comedy see Rosen (2014).

date of the composition of the *Theaetetus* than that which is generally accepted – namely ca. 360.[100] There has been something of a peak recently in this kind of scholarship; Sedley's 2003 study of the *Cratylus* argues convincingly that what we have of the dialogue is a later revision of an earlier work, while Thesleff makes a similar case for the *Gorgias*.[101] For my case, however, it is Thesleff's earlier theory of a revised *Theaetetus* which should concern us.

Thesleff's theory takes the remarks of an anonymous ancient commentator, who states that the dialogue was known to have been circulated with an alternative opening beginning with the words, "Boy, bring me the book about Theaetetus"[102] as evidence that the surviving version of the *Theaetetus* is a later revision of an earlier original.[103] With this, he argues that "Plato began writing a reported dialogue in the style of the *Charmides,* yet probably with a frame in the manner of the *Euthydemus*."[104] Thesleff appeals to the tradition that the dialogues were performed,[105] and after several readings of the *Theaetetus* as an exercise in the Academy, Plato found the problems which the dialogue raises sufficiently interesting to be worth re-considering, and so began revising it at a later date.[106] Thesleff does not make much of an attempt to date this earlier version, admitting that any attempt at such an endeavour would be too conjectural, but he does suggest "with reasonable confidence…that it was written soon after the *Charmides*."[107] He then goes on to argue that Theaetetus actually died around 390, and that Plato wrote the initial dialogue 10-15 years later, in which Theaetetus is treated as "a person whom Plato remembers many years later as a young man."[108] Although Thesleff's case might be plausible, it is still highly speculative and based primarily on assumptions. The firmer evidence he requires, however, might be provided by Tarrant in his rather ingenious 2010 article, in which he uses computer analysis of Plato's vocabulary to support a theory of revision of the *Theaetetus* from an earlier narrative into a later dramatic form in the *Theaetetus*. The initial purpose of the analysis was to investigate and compare language use between undoubtedly authentic works and those which may be spurious, but during this, Tarrant states that it became evident that there

[100] Cf. Thesleff (1982: 152 & n129) for a review of the scholarship agreeing on such a date.
[101] 2007 & 2003.
[102] Anon *Tht*. III.28-37, with Bastianini and Sedley (2005).
[103] 1982: 85.
[104] *Ibid*: 153.
[105] On this cf. Ryle (1966, esp. pp. 23-43), Blondell (2002: 23-28) & Charalabopoulos (2012).
[106] 1982: 153
[107] *Ibid*: 154.
[108] *Ibid*: 155.

is "something 'narrative' in the language-mix" of the *Theaetetus*.[109] Tarrant's method is quite complex, but on a basic level might be explained as such:

> Counting each occurrence of a given verb, noun, pronoun, or adjective as a single word (regardless of inflexions), we analysed the most frequent vocabulary items (up to 200) by two different means. Either the commonest words (usually the commonest 100) in the entire group were employed, or else a set of words was chosen in such a way as to exclude those that were only needed by an author for discussion of particular types of subject matter. This would leave the kind of words that were considered to be needed for any type of discussion, including conjunctions, prepositions, particles, pronouns, demonstratives, a few of the commonest verbs such as 'to be' and 'to become', some adverbs, and a very small selection of adjectives (usually those which were the root of common adverbs that had been treated as the same word). These were given the status of 'function-words', and they were usually about half of the commonest 200 words. Certain function-words were clearly needed more in narrative dialogues, such as those employed in expressions indicating a change of speaker, while the particle ὦ that precedes a vocative was employed more in dramatic dialogues. These were deliberately omitted from function-word analyses, and results examined with and without the article owing to its ability to constitute over 10% of the entire vocabulary, and so to have a disproportionate effect on the results.[110]

After comparing blocks of narrative and dramatic dialogues, the initial results showed that, mostly, the computer separates out the narrative and dramatic blocks – which implies that each style has its own distinct word formulae.[111] After putting blocks of the *Theaetetus* through similar tests, it showed "strong affinities" with the narrative dialogues, with the analysis ultimately connecting all 11 submitted 2,000 word blocks of the dialogue to most of the narrative blocks, and with only one other dramatic block having been included in the mix.[112] Tarrant believes that such findings offer two conclusions: either (1) the *Theaetetus* was a dramatic dialogue written over the same period as the narrative dialogues, in that it shows similar linguistic trends to them, or (2) the *Theaetetus* is a revised version of a dialogue that was originally written in narrative form.[113] Tarrant suggests that the analysis shows that in the case of the *Theaetetus* the majority of the text looks to have been written roughly contemporary with the main books of the

[109] Tarrant (2010: 9).
[110] *Ibid*: 2-3
[111] *Ibid*: 6.
[112] *Ibid*: 12.
[113] *Ibid*.

Republic,[114] which Tarrant believes is confirmed by Plato's philosophical coherence at this time:

> the early pages of *Republic* III (392c-398b) make it clear that Plato did think carefully about the virtues and vices of different forms of presentation. Dramatic presentation was mimetic, and the Guardians were in no way supposed to be imitating the imperfections of a whole range of other people (394e). Plato at that time appeared to think that narrative presentation avoided several problems, problems affecting the reader in particular, and the *Republic* itself adopts that mode of presentation throughout. Occasionally this does seem tedious and redundant as the prologue of the *Theaetetus* seems to imply….But the problems disappear entirely when the whole thing is recorded as if it were in the voice of Socrates. It is claimed that the account of the conversation came from Socrates (*Tht. 1*42c8-d1), so that Plato's ideal philosopher controls the narration. It is then claimed that the writer had written for himself a rough reminder (*hypomnêma*) of that account, supplemented by further modification in the light of relaxed recollection….What the statistical analysis has shown is that the whole *Theaetetus* is stylistically closer to the works that employ the mediating voice of Socrates to narrate a conversation than to the shorter works in dramatic form. It cannot prove that it was ever a narrated dialogue, nor indeed can subtle examination of the prologue. But the two together offer a powerful argument in favour of some such theory.[115]

Tarrant's case is strong, though as he admits himself, there may never be altogether sufficient evidence to prove such points concretely and conclusively. What Tarrant does provide, however, is perhaps the most compelling and advanced evidence in support of these arguments to date. The evidence is reasonable and scientific, and most certainly gives much greater credibility to the possibility that dialogues such as the *Theaetetus* were as we have them in fact revised from earlier (narrative) versions. For my case Tarrants's suggestion that the *Theaetetus* was either written contemporaneously with the narrative dialogues or was a revision of a previously narrative work would certainly allow for the presence of comic elements. Either of Tarrant's above conclusions would accommodate this, since both imply an earlier date of composition than the traditional one; one in which we would be more comfortable in accepting that Plato may have been inclined to incorporate comic motifs in his work.

The eristic brothers of the *Euthydemus* share much in common with the Platonic Protagoras; all are undeniably pompous, all share links with Thurii,[116] all claim to teach

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[114] *Ibid*: 15.
[115] *Ibid*: 16.
[116] Cf. *Euthyd.* 271a; D.L *Lives* 9.50. The emphasis on Thurii is not without motive; there appears to have been a common comic theme linking dubious intellectualism to Thurii to which Plato is playing. The Cloud chorus of Aristophanes, for example, are said to 'nourish a great many sophists and diviners from Thurii' (*Nu.*332 – Trans. Henderson).

areté both quickly and efficiently,[117] all show an interest in relativism, and both parties are introduced as leading their own chorus of sycophants.[118] While Protagoras, however, makes some effort towards a discussion on *areté*, the eristic brothers make no real attempt whatsoever, instantly veering far from their initial question – is it the wise or ignorant who learn?[119] – on to a course of readymade sophisms engineered to show off their 'ability'. Socrates conversely, with exaggerated naivety, takes on the role of the *eiron*, praising the sophists' ingenuity with heightened irony.[120] Such naivety on the part of Socrates is necessary for the dialogue to continue; if Socrates had sense early on and called time on the shenanigans of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, this would simply put an early stop to the dialogue and all participants would go their separate ways. Thus it is this naivety that *facilitates* the brothers' egoism and arrogance; by allowing and encouraging them to prattle on well past the point where any other sane person would have told them to get lost, Socrates allows the brothers to expose their own foolishness. It is this same axis on which the humour of *Clouds* is based; the absolute naivety of Strepsiades in the faith he places in Socrates contrasts humorously with Socrates' own outlandish self-belief; had Strepsiades gone to the *Phrontisterion* and immediately realised Socrates to be the mountebank the audience can see he is, he would simply have gone home and we would have no play.

The contribution of the brothers' abundant pomposity and arrogance to their *alazoneia* needs no elaboration – a charlatan, after all, is by his very nature over-confident – but a less obvious contributor is in fact the sophisms themselves, and moreover the completely unfounded pride taken in them by the brothers. Nothing they say is new or original - they are merely tricks that can be learned by anyone.[121] This is best exemplified at 285d – 287b, as Dionysodorus plays what he obviously thinks is the ace up his sleeve, and argues the impossibility of contradiction. The argument proceeds as such:

a) For each thing, there is only one λόγος (meaning, description, argument).[122]
b) When one speaks about a thing, one does so by grasping its λόγος, and thus speaks 'truly' about the thing.

[117] *Euthyd.* 273d; *Prot.* 318a, 319a etc.
[118] *Euthyd.* 273a; *Prot*. 314e-315b.
[119] *Euthyd.* 275d-276d.
[120] *Euthyd.* 271d-272d, 276e, 287b, 301e, 303b.
[121] Plato not too subtly highlights this by mentioning the brothers' previous careers; their foray into sophistry, then, is only a recent endeavour (*Euthyd.* 273c-e).
[122] Indeed, the ambiguity of λόγος is precisely what makes Dionysodorus' argument so hard to pin down.

c) If one fails to grasp the λόγος, one is not actually speaking about the thing, but is misinterpreting it.
d) Thus one is speaking of something that does not exist, and so does not really say anything.[123]
e) Since each thing only has one meaning, one cannot be contradicted, as the interlocutor either grasps the word's meaning and speaks of it truly – in which case both would agree as they speak of the same thing – or fails to grasp the meaning, and so both parties are talking about a different thing.

There seems little doubt that Plato here is satirising Antisthenes,[124] his contemporary rival, who argued that nothing could be described except by the proper account of it – one predicate to one subject.[125] While the argument apparently silences Ctesippus, Socrates smells a rat, and equates the position to the belief that there are no false opinions (286c5). This in turn, hurdles inevitably closer to Protagoras' 'Man the Measure' doctrine which is torn apart in the *Theaetetus* (171a). Interestingly, Plato avoids an in-depth discussion here – an argument refuting the belief that there is only one λόγος for each 'thing' would have crippled Dionysodorus – and when he does land a decisive blow at 287a6-8, he allows the sophists merely to shake it off with an insult[126] and change the subject rather than respond to the attack. One wonders why exactly this is, as surely Plato knew what could topple the sophists' argument. In fact he certainly did, as he twice alludes to conclusions arrived at during the similar discussion in the *Theaetetus*; at 287a6-8 – the aforementioned decisive blow – Socrates asks the same million dollar question as he does Protagoras (*Tht*. 161d4-e2): if, as you say, there are no false opinions, and thus no ignorant men, then what in earth have you come to teach; for if all opinions are true, then surely nobody can teach anyone anything? Indeed, this drives Gifford as far as to claim that "the same argument stated so summarily in the *Euthydemus* is one of the many indications that this dialogue is later than the *Theaetetus"*.[127] Hawtrey[128] strongly disagrees – albeit without any counter argument – but a second more cryptic allusion may perhaps point to some plausibility in Gifford's claim. This occurs as Dionysodorus presents his claim on the impossibility of

[123] Note that here one does not speak falsely, but simply does not speak. This conclusion is presupposed at 284c, which evolves as so: A) when one speaks, one speaks of a thing that is. B) Things that are not do not exist. C) There is nowhere where the things that are not are. D) Speaking involves doing *something*. Thus E) It is impossible to speak of things that are not -when one speaks, one speaks of a thing that is. Euthydemus, it seems, does not allow for the purely conceivable.
[124] Arist. *Top.* 104b20f; cf. *Met.* 1042b32ff; Isoc. *Hel*. 1.
[125] Arist. *Met*. 1042b32ff.
[126] 287b; Dionysodorus calls him a Cronus; cf. *Nu.*929 & pp. 84-66.
[127] 1905: comm. on 287a.
[128] 1983: comm. on 287a8f.

contradiction, to which Socrates quips
"ἀλλὰ τοῦτόν γε τὸν λόγον πολλῶν δὴ καὶ πολλάκις ἀκηκοὼς ἀεὶ θαυμάζω
καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν σφόδρα ἐχρῶντο αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ ἔτι
παλαιότεροι: ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀεὶ θαυμαστός τις δοκεῖ εἶναι καὶ τούς τε ἄλλους ἀνατρέπων
καὶ αὐτὸς αὑτόν".[129]With these last three words –'but itself as well' –Plato *must* be alluding to something. What we have here, I propose, is an 'in-joke' for the Academy members or those familiar with Plato, possibly referring to the already published *Theaetetus*, or indeed more probably, common discourse that would later surface in the *Theaetetus*. For those who would have been aware of such discourse, or perhaps read the *Theaetetus*, Socrates' intentions with this throw-away line could not have been clearer; for the *Euthydemus* serves as an advertisement for the Academy, and is concerned just as much with making the opposition look foolish as it is with eulogizing the Academy, and so is not a place for in-depth philosophical discussion. If Gifford is correct, then the astute Academician, on reading this line, would be reminded of Socrates' humiliation of Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*, and chuckle to himself. Also implicit in Socrates' taunt is that, despite the brothers' repeated assertions to the contrary,[130] there is nothing 'new' or 'original' about their methods – for the same dead horse was being flogged as far back as Protagoras and beyond. For the Antisthenean, this would have struck a nerve, since, as Gillespie sums up, "Socrates is in effect saying 'This new paradox of which you are so proud is only an old and exploded one in a new form"[131] – ie. the argument against contradiction is essentially the same as the old argument against false *speaking*, and your pride in it is completely unwarranted.

From the Antisthenean perspective, a word has a universal meaning no matter who speaks it, thus the versatility of the sophistic technique – the argument will hold no matter who it is said by. This view was very threatening to Plato's occupation, and his stance on the matter is different as he believed that the meaning of a word is inaccessible when taken separately from the one who utters it; thus meaning, utterer and word are all inextricable from each other. His method puts more emphasis on the character of the speaker, and the purpose of the *Euthydemus* is not to show how dialectic trumps eristic, but to highlight the danger of the sophistic prospectus. This technique can make men even as ludicrous as Euthydemus and Dionysodorus *appear* clever – they themselves never actually show any great depth of understanding of their

[129] *Euthyd.* 286c1-4.
[130] 273c etc.
[131] 1913: 487.

own sophisms – when in reality they have just rattled off a list of memorised riddles. They are hardly of admirable character, but their victories only inflate their arrogance. Interestingly, Plato does not 'deflate' their ego; one would expect Socrates to burst their bubble in one fell swoop towards the end of the dialogue, yet the brothers leave with their ego still intact. Though does he need to? The sophists have already proven their ridiculousness in the dialogue; were Socrates to quash them and leave them to scurry away with tails between legs to lick their wounds, the lay reader may assume that such charlatan teachers are taught such a lesson in reality and presume the education profession has been made safe from such men by the 'good teachers' who debunk and expel such quackery. By letting them escape, however, presumably to continue peddling their nonsense to other unsuspecting clients, Plato issues a rather more unnerving message: yes, crooks such as these are still two-a-penny, and so extreme caution must be exercised when seeking the right course of education, lest you fall prey to people like Euthydemus and Dionysodorus.

The accessibility and inanity of the semantics pursued – and taken pride in – by sophists is concisely parodied in the exposition on Simonides in the *Protagoras*.[132] We must remember that the subject meant to be investigated is the unity of virtue (329c5-7), but after the break in conversation, Protagoras takes the discussion back up, and steers the conversation completely off-course to a barely relevant discussion of Simonides, with no other intention but to show off his adeptness in poetry.[133] Protagoras, however, merely takes a prepared argument from his quiver, which strikes Socrates hard (339e1-2). Plato has Socrates carry on with the discussion purely to show how fatuous such conversations are – just as we see in the *Euthydemus* – leading Woodruff to label the charade as "a famous example of Socrates uttering absurdities with a straight face".[134] Socrates then demonstrates the effect this style can have, by mimicking it himself in a speech asserting that the Spartans are preeminent among philosophers (342a-343b). The thesis is at best controversial and at worst ridiculous,[135] but Socrates demonstrates how one can be brought to believe such dubious conclusions by dividing the progression which culminates in such a conclusion into a series of smaller, easier to swallow statements. Eventually, Socrates calls time on the nonsense with the thinly veiled jibe that such subjects are the domain of the 'agora-crowd',[136] who have nothing of their

[132] 339a-348a.
[133] Indeed, he refers to such debates as ἀγῶνα λόγων (335a4).
[134] 1982:187.
[135] On the satirical nature of this piece see Arieti and Barrus (2010:63).
[136] 347c4-5.

own to say, and thus rely on the extraneous voices of poets who cannot be questioned on what they say – for everyone has a different opinion on what a poet may or may not have meant, and they could argue the toss back and forth until the cows come home, but to what benefit at all? All of this merely entails saying what is *persuasive* to a crowd, and may not actually be the truth, but just what is pleasing – the art of rhetoric. As Protagoras' audience explode into applause at *Prot*. 339e3, they are laughable for applauding something so irrelevant and inane, and serve as a reminder for the everyday Athenian about applauding a speech of Isocrates or one his pupils. They have not had their outlook changed or made a decision for the better, but have merely been persuaded by a trickster, of which the only benefit is inflating his wealth and pomposity even more. These men, so Plato, have no original intellect of their own, and so should be chastised rather than applauded. The dangers of such characters are not only elucidated by Plato here and elsewhere,[137] but also by Aristophanes, for it is this exact manner – appealing to the masses on what is probable – that wins Unjust the *agon* of *Clouds*.[138]

1.b) Witchery, Magic, and Beguilement:

Aside from the tendency to make false promises with a haughty demeanour, Plato will in certain cases include elements of witchery, magic and, beguilement when creating the *alazonic* persona of the opponent, elevating him from the already suspicious pedlar of suspect protreptic to a more mystical and numinous plain, as someone who attracts cult-like devotion from their followers, and whose mere words have the power to bewitch and entrance. This is central in building the cultish side of the *alazon*,[139]which entices those whom he hopes to swindle.[140] Such traits can be detected in Protagoras in his eponymous dialogue from the moment we meet him,[141] as he enters leading his band of followers whom he has picked up from various cities on his travels in an ordered dance (315a51-b7). Such a legion blindly following Protagoras renders him as a sort of Pied Piper figure, evident in Plato's likening him to Orpheus, as he κηλῶν τῇ φωνῇ ὥσπερ Ὀρφεύς (315a8-9); for Orpheus' song was said not just to enchant humans, but also

[137] Cf. *Euthyd.* 304*ff*; *Grg*. 453d*ff. Tht*. 172-178.
[138] *Nu.* 1085-1104.
[139] It might here be interesting to note Frye's comments that the *alazon* usually appears in occult scenes in Renaissance drama (1952: 36); cf. Frye (1957: 172).
[140] The obvious comic parallel here is Socrates and his *Phrontisterion* in *Clouds*. For similar behaviour elsewhere in comedy, however, I might also point the reader to Eup. fr. 162 & and my comments on it below at pp. 43 & 65, Eup. fr. 173 and my discussion below at p. 107 and the general discussion on p. 105.
[141] *Prot.* 314e-315b.

trees, plants, birds, fish, wild beasts and rocks[142] – and indeed Socrates tells us the troupe were also 'bewitched' (315b1 – κεκηλημένοι) by his voice. Even Socrates, it seems, is not immune to Protagoras' beguilement, for after hearing Protagoras' 'Great Speech', he too stands spellbound (κεκηλημένος),[143] remaining silent for some time (328d4-5).

Nor are such seductive qualities limited to the *Protagoras*; in the *Theaetetus* Socrates warns Theaetetus against the tactics of those 'nimble fighters' who will render one 'struck with wonder' at their wisdom (165e1 – θαυμάσας), while he tames and bounds them and holds them at an intellectual ransom (165e1-3). Similar motifs are found in the *Euthydemus*; the verb θαυμάζω and its cognates appear sixteen times in the dialogue – thirteen times uttered by Socrates and twelve of these in relation to the sophists. Michelini makes the compelling case that this is to establish a connection in the reader's mind between the sophists and a θαυματοποιός – a magician or wonder maker.[144] This fits with Hawtrey's comments that Dionysodorus' assertions that he can do anything, including somersault over swords or be turned on a wheel (294e2-3), are more akin to the tricks of a performer at a symposium than the method of an educator.[145] With this in mind, let us recall the ludicrousness elicited by Cadmus and Tiresias, two men of a similar elderly age, preparing to engage in similar activities in the *Bacchae* 184*ff;* the fact that Plato may be picking up on a common theme here seems compelling, as external evidence would suggest so, for Isocrates also equates eristic with the tricks of magicians (θαυματοποιίας).[146]

Such 'wondrous' displays are usually followed by an exaggerated response from the audience at the recipient's expense; at *Prot*. 339d10, as Protagoras betters Socrates on poetic discussion and Socrates stands stunned, his followers explode into rapturous applause and clamour. Similarly, at 334c8, Socrates has to wait for the applause for Protagoras' speech on The Advantageous to die down before he can respond. In the *Euthydemus*, the company of the brothers bursts into laughter at poor Cleinias' expense as the sophists walk all over him (276b-d). The amateur Cleinias, however, never had a chance, as Dionysodorus tells us he'll be proved wrong irrespective of his answer, and

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[142] Simon. Fr. 567, Eur. *Bac.* 562-4, *IA* 1211-12.
[143] Note not only the repeated use of κηλέω, but also its negative connotations; LSJ give 'charm, bewitch, beguile', and comment that it is rarely used in a positive sense.
[144] 2000: 517.
[145] 1983: comm on 297d7ff.
[146] *Helen* 7; Sophistic teaching in general is described as the same at *Antidosis* 269.

so he's damned either way.[147] Here, we must wonder if Dionysodorus *himself* even knew the correct answer, or even if there was one. He has, however, *given the impression* that he has mastery of knowledge, which he in fact doesn't, just as a clairvoyant may *give the impression* that they are speaking to the dead, but are not in fact doing so, nor would they know actually how to do so.

In any case, Cleinias has not made a fool of himself altogether, but merely fallen foul of a dirty and inescapable trick that anyone could learn quite swiftly, so why such thunderous laughter? This laughter, in fact, is vital in Plato's denigration of the sophists – a point Michelini has so wonderfully elucidated – for "cheers and applause might greet any demonstration of skill, but laughter seems to belong to the performances of the conjuror, juggler or magician."[148] The brothers then – and by extension Protagoras – are cheered by a crowd dazzled by their 'magic', but Plato wishes to show that someone impressed by such tricks is no better than a grown man applauding a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat. These tricks, Plato implies, can be learned by evil men, with no interests in mind but their own, to give the *appearance* of an educator, while overshadowing those of Socrates, who believes character must be nurtured as a staple part of a long educational process. The comedy of the dialogue makes it clear that Socrates is the better educator, and any sane reader will realise this, whether or not he is victorious, but allowing the dialogue to continue as it does makes the sophists' victory, and those who applaud it, all the more absurd. Indeed, the applause becomes more exaggerated as the dialogue proceeds; at 303b1-2, as the sophists conclude their final argument, their claque laugh and cheer to the skies, until they are at the point of hysteria. The underlying question asked by Plato is which group would one rather belong to – the sophists' claque applauding magic tricks or the sober and understanding populace of the Academy?

There is also a cultish side to such 'enchanting' personalities, which Plato does not attempt to hide; we have seen how Plato tells us Protagoras has charmed young men from various cities into following him along his travels, and Protagoras himself admits he is aware of the dangers of being a 'foreigner who goes into the great cities and persuades the best of the young men to abandon their associations with others, relatives and acquaintances, young and old alike, and to associate with him instead on the

[147] *Euthyd*. 275e2-3.
[148] 2000:517.

grounds that they will be improved by the association'.[149] That this reflects a common wariness of philosophers is doubtless – it is this suspicion that was the catalyst for *Clouds*, a suspicion which Aristophanes exacerbated to the highest possible degree. The introversion of the students of *Clouds* is so extreme they are almost hypnotic;[150] they have also left their families in the hope of bettering themselves with a charismatic but beguiling leader who they refer to in an oracular manner;[151] and are not allowed to spend much time outdoors.[152] This motif of an anti-social, subversive educational institution was still active in Middle Comedy – although with Pythagoreans bearing the brunt of jokes[153]– thus a contemporary audience would have been aware of the sort of character Plato is attempting to portray.

Protagoras defends himself with his point that what he does is all for the good and benefit of the young men, as he will make them better citizens. As we have seen in the previous, however, the contemporary reader would recognise immediately that all the promises he makes about bettering the individuals in the dialogue would never in fact come to fruition, and so his claims about what he can do – and so his character – become about as credible as the claims of Socrates of *Clouds*, or indeed any cult-leader in modernity.[154] Plato sums up this point with a not so ambiguous warning in the *Theaetetus* (161c6-d2); criticising the verbosity of Protagoras' 'Man the Measure' doctrine, he notes what would have happened had Protagoras used any other word, like 'pig' or 'baboon' instead of 'man' – "ἵνα μεγαλοπρεπῶς καὶ πάνυ καταφρονητικῶς ἤρξατο ἡμῖν λέγειν, ἐνδεικνύμενος ὅτι ἡμεῖς μὲν αὐτὸν ὥσπερ θεὸν ἐθαυμάζομεν ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ, ὁ δ᾽ ἄρα ἐτύγχανεν ὢν εἰς φρόνησιν οὐδὲν βελτίων βατράχου γυρίνου, μὴ ὅτι ἄλλου του ἀνθρώπων."

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[149] ὀρθῶς, ἔφη, προμηθῇ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ. ξένον γὰρ ἄνδρα καὶ ἰόντα εἰς πόλεις μεγάλας, καὶ ἐν ταύταις πείθοντα τῶν νέων τοὺς βελτίστους ἀπολείποντας τὰς τῶν ἄλλων συνουσίας, καὶ οἰκείων καὶ ὀθνείων, καὶ πρεσβυτέρων καὶ νεωτέρων, ἑαυτῷ συνεῖναι ὡς βελτίους ἐσομένους διὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ συνουσίαν, χρὴ εὐλαβεῖσθαι τὸν ταῦτα πράττοντα.- *Prot.* 316c5-d2.

[150] Cf. *Nu.*133-221.

[151] 'αὐτός' *Nu.* 219; perhaps Aristophanes here has in mind the manner in which Pythagoreans are said to have referred to their mentor. cf. Revermann (2006: 135).

[152] *Nu.*198.

[153] Cf. Chap.7.e.

[154] This is not particularly required in the *Euthydemus*; the followers' delight in the obvious transparency of the brothers' discourse seems to show that associating with the brothers has already reduced them to idiocy.

Chapter 2: Plato's use of Comic Motifs.

2 a) Scene Setting and Structure

Certain dialogues, such as the *Phaedrus, Protagoras* and *Euthydemus*, are distinctive owing to the length of their introduction and the actual amount of time taken to get to the philosophical 'meat' of the dialogue. Much attention is given by Plato to the detail of dramatic setting – the specific time and place in which the reported conversation took place – as it is to the *dramatis personae* of the piece. Such sections – along with the 'gaps' between exchanges in the middle of dialogues – are mostly unheeded by scholars in favour of the more substantive discussions within, and are treated as almost akin to the Styrofoam padding that protects electrical products – useful, but eventually discarded in favour of the content it bookends. While these sections can indeed at times be philosophically desolate, the care and emphasis used by Plato in establishing such settings should not be overlooked, as it is here where Plato's talents as a parodist are most evident. We must consider that if such scenes had little relevance to the rest of the dialogue, then why were they afforded such consideration by the author? Moreover, if Plato's sole mission was to present a purely philosophical discussion, then why the need for such extended preamble at all?[155] Indeed, it is such scenes where Plato's use of comic motifs prevails more than any other stages of the dialogue, and exemplary of this is the *Protagoras*, where we see Plato use settings and motifs which strongly resonate with comedy. In the dialogue the discussion proper does not commence until 318a1 as they begin to discuss the nature of Protagoras' art, which leaves a lengthy nine Stephanus pages[156] in which Plato establishes a scene and setting – one which his contemporary readership would recognise as reminiscent of comedy, and would so judge the characters they are about to meet accordingly.

These comic motifs are apparent from the outset, as the dialogue opens with two characters discussing the 'Big Plan' that will dictate the action of the piece, which is formulaic of comedy; just as we see Strepsiades and Pheidippides in *Clouds* discussing the pros and cons of enrolling in the *Phrontisterion*, or Dionysus and Xanthias of *Frogs* discussing the feasibility of a trip to the underworld, or Pisthetaerus and Euelpides of *Birds* discussing the possibility of a utopian society away from corrupt Athens, the

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[155] The *Philebus,* for example, has no such delays, with Socrates delving straight into deep discussion with Protarchus immediately at opening. The opening of the *Meno* and *Gorgias* are equally to the point, as is the *Cratylus*. The *Parmenides*, too, is light on such preamble.

[156] *Prot*. 309a-318a.

Protagoras opens with Hippocrates and Socrates planning whether, when and why they should visit Protagoras at Callias' house. There even appears to be some sheer slapstick humour present; Hippocrates barges in on a sleeping Socrates before dawn shouting at him with his loud voice (310b2-3 - τῇ φωνῇ μέγα λέγων) to wake up, while Socrates later, seeking to understand Hippocrates' eagerness to meet Protagoras, wryly asks him if Protagoras has wronged him (310d4 - μῶν τί σε ἀδικεῖ Πρωταγόρας;). As their discussion progresses and Hippocrates bemoans that Protagoras won't give him any of his wisdom, Socrates rather crassly replies that indeed he would– but only if the price was right (310d7-8 - ἂν αὐτῷ διδῷς ἀργύριον καὶ πείθῃς ἐκεῖνον, ποιήσει καὶ σὲ σοφόν), before launching into his rather unabashed dissuading of Hippocrates associating with sophistry.[157]

The very mention of a gathering of sophists at Callias' house, however, should have drawn the attention of the astute contemporary reader, for this setting mirrors that of Eupolis' *Kolakes,*[158] which took first prize at the Dionysia of 421.[159] What survives of the comedy is fragmentary, but we can deduce that it featured Protagoras and[160] the chorus of eponymous Flatterers visiting Callias' house – the same infamous Callias discussed in the previous chapter– while the sort of character Protagoras was presented as can be inferred from the following fragment (fr. 157):

> Ἔνδοθι μέν ἐστι Πρωταγόρας ὁ Τήιος,
> ὃς ἀλαζονεύται μὲν ἀλιτήριος[161]
> περὶ τῶν μετεώρων, τὰ δὲ χαμᾶθεν ἐσθίει.

Protagoras then, as suggested by Storey, was portrayed "as the typical 'comic expert' who is very good at looking out for his own interests."[162] Indeed, such perceived haughtiness and asceticism as a front for beggary was a common motif throughout comedy from the Old to the Middle period,[163] and indeed fr. 162 - as an unnamed speaker cries out "φοροῦσιν, ἁρπάζουσιν ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας τὸ χρυσίον, τἀργύρια

[157] 311b-14c. Indeed, this passage on what Hippocrates should expect from Protagoras could be viewed as philosophically insightful. There is, however, nothing at all profound in the conversation; Socrates merely voices the 'con's' of the plan – the reason *against* going with the proposed action, again common in comedy, Cf. *Nu.* 103f; *Ran* 33f, *Thes*. 80f etc.
[158] Eup. Frr. 157-180. See Storey (2003) for a rounded discussion on the plot and production of the *Kolakes* and the other comedies of Eupolis. On the *Kolakes* cf. Carey (2000); Sidwell (2005); Tylawsky (2002:43-57).
[159] Cf. Eup. Fr. 380, 395; Ameipsias fr. 9
[160] Cf. *Kolakes* Hyp. 1.
[161] Can mean fraud, charlatan, or 'poltergeist'; discussed further in 2.e.
[162] 2011b: 133.
[163]Ath. 218b; Eup. Fr. 157, 158. Fr. 9; Eubulus. Fr. 139; Mnesimachus fr. 1; Aristophon frr. 9, 10, 11; Alexis frr. 196, 201. Cf. Eup. Fr. 380, 395; Ameipsias fr. 9.

πορθεῖται"– may indicate that Protagoras and the troop of flatterers looted Callias' riches as soon as the opportunity arose, this perhaps being the sole intention of their visit.

It is against such a background, then, that Plato sets his *Protagoras*;[164] and upon recalling the eponymous sophist's duplicitous portrayal on stage, the reader already has doubts about the credibility of Protagoras, despite him not even yet being introduced in the dialogue.[165] That Plato was unaware of such blatant comic parallels is highly improbable, especially when we consider that the 'introduction' culminates with a 'door-scene', as Socrates and Hippocrates bang at the door of Callias before being turned away by a eunuch door-keeper.[166] Such scenes are the stock trade of Old Comedy; usually, but not always, occurring at the stage of the play when the characters set out on their mission only to be hindered by a surly doorman who initially refuses them entry – and act as a bridge between the introduction and the main action of the play.[167] Indeed, the scene is among the most comical in the dialogues, and is peppered with comic language, which will be examined in full in Chapter 4, but at present it should suffice to highlight that Socrates and Hippocrates are met with a brusque refusal from the door-keeper, who exclaims "ἔα…σοφισταί τινες: οὐ σχολὴ αὐτῷ" (314d3-4) and promptly slams the door in their face. This initial refusal – with access only being granted after some argument - is standard in comic door scenes – Strepsiades is told to go to hell by the student of the *Phrontisterion,*[168] while in the *Acharnians* Dikaiopolis is repeatedly told by Euripides that he does not 'have the time'.[169]

Once inside the theatricality continues, as we encounter what could best be described as the *parodos* of the dialogue (314e -315b) as we finally meet Protagoras, whom Plato

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[164] On this, cf. Nightingale (1995: 186), who follows von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1929. I: 140), Norwood (1932: 190) and Arieti (1991; ch 7) in arguing that the *Kolakes* offers "an irresistible subtext for a Platonic dialogue…and the subject of this comedy finds a direct parallel in Plato's *Protagoras*".

[165] That Plato would choose to parody Eupolis over Aristophanes should not be surprising. Eupolis was held with the same regard as Aristophanes in his time, enjoying a very credible seven victories from fourteen or fifteen plays, while Cratinus, the apparent master, held nine victories. We are not, however, given a victory total for Aristophanes; we know of four or five victories – some are open to dispute – but we also know of many poor showings, such as the first *Clouds* in 423, which finished third. We must so be cautious in placing Aristophanes on a pedestal, assuming him to have been unrivalled in his time, and face the fact that he was most likely held in the same, or possibly even less, esteem than the other two members of the great Triad of Old Comedy. See Storey (2003: 3f) for further discussion. On the careers of the poets of Old Comedy in general see Harvey and Wilkins (eds.) (2000).

[166] *Prot.* 314d2.

[167] Cf. The Student at *Nu.* 134f; the Servant Bird at *Av.* 60f; Heracles at *Ran*. 38f; the Door Slave at *Ach*. 393 etc.

[167] 315b-c.

[168] *Nu*. 133.

[169] *Ach.* 410,415.

likens to Orpheus – leading a chorus of sophists and admirers who follow him in a dance-like formation around the colonnade:

τούτων δὲ οἳ ὄπισθεν ἠκολούθουν ἐπακούοντες τῶν λεγομένων τὸ μὲν πολὺ ξένοι ἐφαίνοντο—οὓς ἄγει ἐξ ἑκάστων τῶν πόλεων ὁ Πρωταγόρας, δι᾽ ὧν διεξέρχεται, κηλῶν τῇ φωνῇ ὥσπερ Ὀρφεύς, οἱ δὲ κατὰ τὴν φωνὴν ἕπονται κεκηλημένοι— ἦσαν δέ τινες καὶ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἐν τῷ χορῷ. τοῦτον τὸν χορὸν μάλιστα ἔγωγε ἰδὼν ἥσθην, ὡς καλῶς ηὐλαβοῦντο μηδέποτε ἐμποδὼν ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν εἶναι Πρωταγόρου, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸς ἀναστρέφοι καὶ οἱ μετ᾽ ἐκείνου, εὖ πως καὶ ἐν κόσμῳ περιεσχίζοντο οὗτοι οἱ ἐπήκοοι ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν, καὶ ἐν κύκλῳ περιιόντες ἀεὶ εἰς τὸ ὄπισθεν καθίσταντο κάλλιστα.[170]

The intended allusion here is not to be mistaken as Plato twice explicitly describes the group as a χορός (315b2-3). Plato names seven of these members but also mentions a number of strangers, which easily makes up the number for a chorus. Here, the chorus also appears to be split, a technique we also find in Eupolis, which Sidwell comments on. While no surviving fragments suggest whether or not the chorus of *Kolakes* was split, Eupolis certainly split his chors in the *Marikas,* which was produced at the Lenaea of 421 – the same year as the *Kolakes*.[171] This is a cause for optimism for Sidwell, who reasons that "this split χορός [sc. of the *Protagoras*], then, could be designed specifically to recall Eupolidean practice (whether in *Kolakes* itself or not)".[172] Though Sidwell's argument is encouraging, we should be cautious in accepting it too readily, as his case rests on the fact that a split chorus was split symmetrically (as it is in the *Protagoras*), which is not necessarily true – *choroi* were split into opposing factions rather than in the course of a dance.[173] Similar caution must be taken when attempting to establish any concrete inter-textualities between the play and the dialogue. Nightingale – despite her assertion that *Prot.* 315b "clearly alludes to the chorus of *Flatterers* in Eupolis' comedy, and indeed, to his former incarnation as a comic character" – is perhaps rightly careful in stating that "the paucity of extant fragments from the *Flatterers* makes it impossible to analyze Plato's dialogue from an intertextual perspective", and so admits that such conclusions must be necessarily conjectural.[174] Nightingale is correct in her frankness here – such unquestionable conclusions are indeed impossible, and so can only be speculative. We must also consider the objection that contemporary audiences were familiar with other *choroi* and choric formations than the comic *choros* alone, and that these are what might be alluded

[170] *Prot.* 315a3-b4.
[171] Cf. Eup. *Mark*. Frr. 192, 193. See Storey (2003: 198 and 203) for further discussion.
[172] 2005:70.
[173] As is the case in the *Lysistrata*.
[174] 1995: 186-187.

to here. If we can accept, however, that some elements of the *Protagoras* exploit the precedent of the *Kolakes* - in even the broadest sense – then the case becomes slightly less speculative. If we can agree that the setting and aspects of the *dramatis personae* reflect the *Kolakes*, and that the door-scene indicates Plato was influenced by a well-known comic scene-type, it would seem plausible to suggest that Plato had comic drama in mind when composing the introduction to the dialogue. If such scenes are then followed by another scene-type which echoes the dramatic stage, it seems reasonable to assume that Plato used the chorus of comic drama as a model for his chorus in the *Protagoras*, rather than switch to a second model from an alternative genre. As we will see below, some of the mechanics of the 'chorus' of the *Euthydemus* are quite similar to that of the *Thesmophoriazusae*; what this suggests is that certain comic elements of the dialogues may have no single *specific* textual antecedent in mind (*contra* the setting of the *Protagoras* referring specifically to the setting of the *Kolakes*) in which case there may be several antecedent texts in play, such as we see in door-scenes. It may be that the chorus of the *Protagoras* falls into the latter group, with no *direct* single influence, but that Plato borrows from comedy and "uses the comic subtext to create his own "chorus" of sophists as a group of *Flatterers*."[175]

Similar motifs are at play in the setting of the *Euthydemus* at the Lyceum. Such a choice of venue may initially seem quite inconspicuous; Socrates was indeed known to frequent it on occasion,[176] and gymnasia such as this were ideal places to meet the cream of Athenian youth to converse with. To our dismay and disappointment, however, in the *Euthydemus* we find ourselves hard pressed to find a decent soul in the place – apart, of course, from Socrates' party. Overrun with gabbering sophists spouting nonsense and their party of hangers on, one wonders why on earth Plato would have Socrates come to such a place looking for beneficial discourse. Again, however, this particular choice of setting may have played a role in influencing the reader's judgement of the arguments which the characters within the setting will espouse, as certain contemporary comic fragments suggest the Lyceum had gained a reputation for being a favourite haunt for babbling sophists. Antiphanes, a poet of the Middle Comedy and near contemporary of Plato, plays to this perception in a fragment from a play for which the title doesn't survive:

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[175] *Ibid*: 186.
[176] *Lys.* 203a, *Euthyph.* 2a, *Symp.* 223d.

τὸ δὲ τυραννεῖν ἐστιν;
ἢ τί ποτε τὸν σπουδαῖον ἀκολουθεῖν ἐρεῖς
ἐν τῷ Λυκείῳ μετὰ σοφιστῶν, νὴ Δία,
λεπτῶν, ἀσίτων, συκίνων, λέγονθ᾽ ὅτι
τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν, εἴπερ γίνεται,
οὐδ᾽ ἔστι γάρ πω γινόμενον ὃ γίνεται,
οὐτ᾽ εἰ πρότερον ἦν, ἔστιν ὅ γε νῦν γίνεται,
ἔστιν γὰρ οὐκ ὂν οὐδέν ὃ δὲ μὴ γέγονέ πω,
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ἕωσπερ γέγονε, ὅ γε μή γέγονέ πω….
ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ εἶναι γέγονεν εἰ δ᾽ οὐκ ἦν ὅθεν,
πῶς ἐγένετ᾽ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντος; οὐχ οἷόν τε γάρ….
εἰ δ᾽ αὖ ποθέν ποι γέγονεν, οὐκ ἔσται
κηποι δεποτις[177] εἴη, πόθεν γενήσεται
τοὐκ ὂν εἰς οὐκ ὂν εἰς οὐκ ὂν γὰρ οὐ δυνήσεται.....
ταυτὶ δ᾽ ὅ τι ἐστὶν οὐδ᾽ ἂν Ἀπόλλων μάθοι.[178]

The case to be made is that as soon as it is revealed that Socrates has been frequenting with sophists in the Lyceum, the reader should be able to look to recent comedy and envisage how the events may unfold. This is affirmed when we realise Socrates' usual modesty and self–deprecation is exaggerated to the point of senility and naivety – in most part owing to his awareness of his age – in a manner unique to this dialogue. Despite Crito's reservations,[179] he has blind faith in the sophists' palaver, and, despite his repeated claims of incompetency, believes their audacious claims. One may be reminded of Strepsiades, who finds himself in a very similar position in the *Clouds*, but this sort of character was in no way unique to Aristophanes; for the Late Learner,[180] who has enthusiasm for exercises beyond his years,[181] features in Theophrastus' mid 4th Century list of stock characters,[182] which tells us that characters like those of Strepsiades and the Socrates of the *Euthydemus* were still standard fare of contemporary comedy. Inherent in the Late Learner is a trait of naivety and innocence, making him the most akin to the *eiron*, meaning this character cannot get up to much no-good, but may be led astray by another duplicitous character owing to this naivety. By Plato's throwing such a character into an arena associated with prattling sophists, the reader should

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[177] As preserved at Ath. 98f.
[178] Antiphanes fr. 120; Isocrates holds the same opinion (12.18); Alexis fr. 25 reveals that about two decades later the Lyceum was still full of sophists "babbling up and down and every which way".
[179] Crito's reservations here are paramount; his role is neutral, neither the naïf nor the braggart, with a perspective most akin to that of the everyday Athenian. He is wary of the sophists (271b9) and has the sense to see that, despite his protests, Socrates' age will hold him back (272b5-6), hinting at the comedy of errors that will result because of this. Cf. Pheidippides' reluctance to follow his father's advice to enrol in the *phrontisterion* at *Nu*. 100-125, and his concern about mixing traditional views with sophistic quackery at *Nu.* 832f.
[180] Cf. pp. 91-94.
[181] Here we must remember Isocrates' assessment of eristic as a pastime only excusable for young men (*Helen* 6-7*; Antidosis* 263-66), and Callicles' assertion that one who persists in the practise of argumentation is ridiculous, as he is a grown man practising a boy's pursuit (*Grg.* 484c-485d).
[182] *Characters* 27.

already be in no doubt about what to expect and how events will transpire – the tested plot of the meeting between the unwitting student and the *alazonic* philosopher, with Plato's incarnation of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus cast in the part of the latter.

As with the *Protagoras,* the *Euthydemus* also appears to stage a *parodos* after its introduction, with the 'chorus' entering at 273a2. Described as μαθηταί[183] – but really more akin to the sophists' claque[184] – when they are contrasted with the decorum of Cleinias' admirers the scene is given a humorous symmetry. Just as in the *Protagoras*, we are left in little doubt about the fact that it is as a chorus we should define the group, as Plato has them laugh at the sophists' success "ὥσπερ ὑπὸ διδασκάλου **χορὸς** ἀποσημήναντος" (276b8). The theatrical element continues later as Euthydemus has picked back up the discussion and ὥσπερ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ὀρχησταί, διπλᾶ ἔστρεφε τὰ ἐρωτήματα περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ (276d3-4). These movements not only echo those of a comic chorus, who revise their course in the strophe and antistrophe, but – as noted by Gifford[185] – would seem to mirror those of the Chorus Leader of the *Thesmophoriazusae* (982-985):

> ἔξαιρε δὴ προθύμως
> διπλῆν χάριν χορείας.
> παίσωμεν ὦ γυναῖκες οἷάπερ νόμος,
> νηστεύωμεν δὲ πάντως.[186]

The *Thesmophoriasuzae*, however, is not the only comedy reflected by Euthydemus' decadent style; for Plato uses the verb στρέφειν. The knowledgeable reader will recognise this as an antecedent of a similar but more direct denunciation of surreptitious argumentation at *Rep.* 405c, but there is also a case that there may be an allusion to the Strepsiades of the *Clouds*. For Strepsiades also twists and turns (στρέφει), but in his bed at night;[187] he also wishes to 'twist' his way out of debts using underhanded arguments,[188] and welcomes the nickname στρόφις.[189] The implication is thus: the frivolity of Stepsiades' quest to gain benefit from the 'twisting' arguments of the

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[183] 273a2.
[184] Credit for this extremely apt description is due to Hawtrey in his commentary on the line; one could not think of a word more fitting to sum up the guilelessness of the troupe.
[185] 1905: comm. on 276d5.
[186] For evidence that the *Thesmophoriazusae* in particular remained popular in the 4th century see the discussion on the Würzburg Telephus in Appendix I.
[187] *Nu.* 36.
[188] As noted by Dover (1963: xxv).
[189] *Nu.* 450.

Phrontisterion is akin to that of someone naive enough to think types such as Euthydemus and Dionysodorus have anything advantageous to offer.[190]

The structure of comedy demands a role-reversal, in which the tables are turned and the *eiron* begins to trump the *alazon.*[191] There is a semblance of this in the *Protagoras*; at 339e1-2 things aren't looking good for Socrates – he's on the ropes, dazzled by Protagoras' oratory which hits him 'like a punch from a good boxer', and has to call on Prodicus' opinion so he can win time to recuperate, before not only going on to win the argument (347a6), but ultimately the debate, with a complete reversal taking place in the conclusion of the dialogue, as Socrates and Protagoras each end up advocating the point the other had put forward in the beginning (361a*ff*). Socrates wishes to push forward and clear the matter up, yet Protagoras finally shies away, praising Socrates' intellect as he reigns triumphant.

This role-reversal is not so vague in the *Euthydemus*, and Michelini has pin-pointed the exact moment this occurs in the dialogue.[192] At 285c2, Socrates hands himself over to Dionysodorus 'as if he were Medea of Colchis'. In doing this, Socrates tacitly equates himself to Pelias, who was also a naive old man who wished to have the prerogatives of his youth restored by Medea, who – like the sophist brothers of the dialogue – was a charlatan and wonder worker, and could only lead one to their destruction.[193] During the next excursus into myth, however, Socrates has become a changed man; no longer is he akin to silly old Peleus, but now nearer to Herakles (297c1), battling a sort of lady-sophist or σοφιστρία.[194] Just like Herakles, his chances are thin, because for every argument he cuts down, a new one wriggles out. Although he is fighting an uphill battle, the tables are turning, the roles reversed, and Socrates is on his way from zero to hero. Initially, it may seem that by playing the old man at school with two other old men, whose dialectical demands seem to match those of Socrates,[195] Plato may be parodying his own occupation. This, however, was Plato's very point – to distinguish his school from others claiming similar results with similar methods. The lay reader may not

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[190] We may also note that in this passage (276d9) Plato uses the verb ψιθυρίσας, for which the *TLG* gives *Nu*.1008 as the only pre-Platonic citation.

[191] Cf. Crichton (1991-93: 68-69) on rejuvenation in Aristophanes, and Hubbard (1989) on the triumph of the aged protagonist.

[192] 2000: 523.

[193] The 'wondrous' powers of the sophists are discussed in Chap. 2.c.

[194] 297c3; Note the comic formulation of the word; LSJ credit Plato with its coinage. Cf. Chap. 4 on comic language.

[195] Ie. no long speeches, no qualifying terms, etc.

immediately pick out the differences between each type of argument, thus he contrasts an unwitting hero against opponents who are completely incredulous and arrives at an already foregone conclusion.

2. b) Wrestling, Pankratiasts and other Combat Sports.

Before we have even met the brothers of the *Euthydemus*, we can already be certain of one thing pertaining to them – that they are skilled 'verbal wrestlers'. For Socrates in the 'introduction' refers to them twice as παγκρατιασταί (271c8, 272a5) and as fighting in arguments 'no man can stand up to' (ὥστε μηδ᾽ ἂν ἕνα αὐτοῖς οἷόν τ᾽ εἶναι μηδ᾽ ἀντᾶραι – 272a7) - once again influencing our opinion of the brothers before they have even been introduced. Once they do appear, however, Socrates is proved right, for at 277d1-2 he shows his concern for Cleinias' distress in the debate -
ἔτι δὴ ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον καταβαλῶν ὥσπερ πάλαισμα ὥρμα ὁ Εὐθύδημος τὸν νεανίσκον. The third throw in a wrestling competition was the final fall and thus the third throw symbolises victory or defeat. Similarly, Socrates later comments on the tendency of Dionysodorus' arguments to 'trip up' (ἀνατρέπων – 285d13). This obsession with wrestling imagery is certainly peculiar, and it may very well just be down to the fact that Plato simply wishes to align the forceful methods of Euthydemus with the aggressive combat that took place in the Lyceum, the setting of the dialogue.[196] There may, however, be something rather more interesting at play; for there appears to be a tendency in the dialogues to associate sophistry with underhanded or relentless techniques in wrestling or other combative sport. In the *Protagoras*, for example, we find Socrates 'beating back' (336c6- ἐκκρούων) the arguments of Protagoras, while he later likens the effect of Protagoras' oratory to being 'hit by a good boxer' (339e1-2 - καὶ ἐγὼ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον, ὡσπερεὶ ὑπὸ ἀγαθοῦ πύκτου πληγείς), which sends him 'reeling' and causes him to 'black-out' (339e2-3 - ἐσκοτώθην τε καὶ ἰλιγγίασα εἰπόντος αὐτοῦ ταῦτα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπι θορυβησάντων). Perhaps the most stalwart example, however, comes in the form of the exchanges between Theodorus and Socrates in the *Theaeteus*; at 162a4-b8, Theodorus shies away from Socrates' invitation to defend Protagoras' man the measure doctrine:

> **Θεόδωρος**
> ὦ Σώκρατες, φίλος ἀνήρ, ὥσπερ σὺ νυνδὴ εἶπες. οὐκ ἂν οὖν δεξαίμην δι᾽ ἐμοῦ ὁμολογοῦντος ἐλέγχεσθαι Πρωταγόραν, οὐδ᾽ αὖ σοὶ παρὰ δόξαν ἀντιτείνειν.τὸν

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[196] That the Lyceum contained a palaestra is almost certain; cf. Hawtrey (1983: 70).

οὖν Θεαίτητον πάλιν λαβέ·[197] πάντως καὶ νυνδὴ μάλ᾽ ἐμμελῶς σοι ἐφαίνετο ὑπακούειν.

Σωκράτης
ἆρα κἂν εἰς Λακεδαίμονα ἐλθών, ὦ Θεόδωρε, πρὸς τὰς παλαίστρας ἀξιοῖς ἂν ἄλλους θεώμενος γυμνούς, ἐνίους φαύλους, αὐτὸς μὴ ἀντεπιδεικνύναι τὸ εἶδος παραποδυόμενος;

Θεόδωρος
ἀλλὰ τί μὴν δοκεῖς, εἴπερ μέλλοιέν μοι ἐπιτρέψειν καὶ πείσεσθαι; ὥσπερ νῦν οἶμαι ὑμᾶς πείσειν ἐμὲ μὲν ἐᾶν θεᾶσθαι καὶ μὴ ἕλκειν πρὸς τὸ γυμνάσιον σκληρὸν ἤδη ὄντα, τῷ δὲ δὴ νεωτέρῳ τε καὶ ὑγροτέρῳ ὄντι προσπαλαίειν.

The discussion then progresses to the denial of knowledge being perception based on memory, followed by Socrates' spirited impression of Protagoras – in which he describes him as an ἀνὴρ μισθοφόρος ἐν λόγοις[198] – before Theodorus feels he must come to his old friend's aid (169a6-c3):

Θεόδωρος
οὐ ῥᾴδιον, ὦ Σώκρατες, σοὶ παρακαθήμενον μὴ διδόναι λόγον, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ ἄρτι παρελήρησα φάσκων σε ἐπιτρέψειν μοι μὴ ἀποδύεσθαι, καὶ οὐχὶ ἀναγκάσειν καθάπερ Λακεδαιμόνιοι: σὺ δέ μοι δοκεῖς πρὸς τὸν Σκίρωνα μᾶλλον τείνειν. Λακεδαιμόνιοι μὲν γὰρ ἀπιέναι ἢ ἀποδύεσθαι κελεύουσι, σὺ δὲ κατ᾽ Ἀνταῖόν τί μοι μᾶλλον δοκεῖς τὸ δρᾶμα δρᾶν· τὸν γὰρ προσελθόντα οὐκ ἀνίης πρὶν ἂν ἀναγκάσῃς ἀποδύσας ἐν τοῖς λόγοις προσπαλαῖσαι.

Σωκράτης
ἄριστά γε, ὦ Θεόδωρε, τὴν νόσον μου ἀπῄκασας: ἰσχυρικώτερος μέντοι ἐγὼ ἐκείνων. μυρίοι γὰρ ἤδη μοι Ἡρακλέες τε καὶ Θησέες ἐντυχόντες καρτεροὶ πρὸς τὸ λέγειν μάλ᾽ εὖ συγκεκόφασιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον ἀφίσταμαι· οὕτω τις ἔρως δεινὸς ἐνδέδυκε τῆς περὶ ταῦτα γυμνασίας. μὴ οὖν μηδὲ σὺ φθονήσῃς προσανατριψάμενος σαυτόν τε ἅμα καὶ ἐμὲ ὀνῆσαι.

This is perhaps the most unabashed equation between verbal contest and physical combat in the dialogues; Socrates is likened to Antaeus, the mythological figure who forced those who passed by his cave to wrestle him to the death, while Sciron was the legendary highwayman who tricked his victims to wash his feet before kicking them over a cliff into the sea. They were eventually disposed of by Heracles and Theseus respectively, thus Socrates' quip that he has met "many Heracles and Theseus in my time...and they have well battered me".[199] Could such a comment, then, perhaps refer to

[197] Note the forcefulness implicit in λαμβάνω – 'take hold of, grasp, seize' – LSJ.
[198] *Tht*. 165d6.
[199] Trans. by Levett and Burnyeat in Cooper and Hutchinson (eds.) 1997.

the verbal wranglers we have seen in characters such as Euthydemus, Dionysodorus or Protagoras? It must be noted that while Socrates compares himself ironically to famed strongmen, he openly admits his folly in this art – this art being forceful oratory – by conceding that he has been trounced many times by the masters of the art, whose expertise in such techniques compare with the greatness of Heracles and Theseus, while his capability compares only to those who were thought to have such skill, but were walked over by a much more capable opponent.

While this habit of associating sophistic techniques with forceful combative techniques may seem to be nothing more a than convenient simile used by Plato to drum up sympathy and support for Socrates in the face of an aggressive opponent, it seems more than coincidental that Aristophanes also associated such characteristics with sophistry, as some curious similarities are found in the techniques of the *Phrontisterion* of *Clouds* – which suggests the 5th century audience held a similar opinion of the sophists – or, indeed, philosophers in general. The first hint of a perceived correlation between being defeated in argument and being defeated in a wrestling match surfaces rather early in the play at line 126, as Strepsiades, ruffled by Pheidippides' arguments against enrolling in the *Phrontisterion*, retorts that he won't take such a fall lying down (ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐγὼ μέντοι πεσών γε κείσομαι). Here again, then, we have the correlation between being defeated in argument and defeated in a wrestling match (also paired with the 'Late Learner' motif). Whilst Pheidippides was initially repulsed by the idea of acquiring the techniques of the Sophist, just like Ctesippus of the *Euthydemus*, his character undergoes a reversal, leading both to emerge in the latter half of their respective dramas as experts in the same art they had previously admonished, prompting Strepsiades to warn his Creditor that his son had now learned "τὸν ἀκατάβλητον λόγον".[200] Prior to this at line 1047, as Unjust is in the midst of an attack that would not seem out of place in the mouth of Dionysodorus, he exclaims to Just:

ἐπίσχες· εὐθὺς γάρ σ' ἔχω μέσον[201] λαβὼν ἄφυκτον[202]

A similar instance occurs in *Frogs*, produced in 404, in preparation for the *agon*, in which we will see the traditional values of Aeschylus pitted against the new,

[200] *Nu.* 1129: LSJ provide 'not to be thrown down' for ἀκατά-βλητος
[201] 'By the waist'. An adjective specifically associated with the wrestling ring (LSJ). Cf. Ar. *Eq*. 387, *Ach*. 571, *Ra*. 469.
[202] Note Dionysodorus' claim that his arguments are also of the "inescapable sort" (ἄφυκτα ἐρωτᾶν – *Euthd*. 276e3).

'destructive' outlook of Euripides.[203] The chorus anticipate the techniques each will use to defeat his opponent, and once again, devious argument is equated with crooked wrestling technique:

> Μοῦσαι, λεπτολόγους ξυνετὰς φρένας αἳ καθορᾶτε
> ἀνδρῶν γνωμοτύπων, ὅταν εἰς ἔριν ὀξυμερίμνοις
> ἔλθωσι στρεβλοῖσι παλαίσμασιν ἀντιλογοῦντες,
> ἔλθετ᾽ ἐποψόμεναι δύναμιν.
> δεινοτάτοιν στομάτοιν πορίσασθαι
> ῥήματα καὶ παραπρίσματ᾽ ἐπῶν.[204]

The choice of the verb ἀντιλογοῦντες, considered in tandem with the allusion to wrestling, now also piques our interest; for it is known that Protagoras had a work entitled *Antilogika*,[205] and the above passage refers in part to Euripides, who, at least in the eyes of the comedians, had ties to the philosophical scene.[206] Whether the comedians intended to allude to Protagoras himself, or to a perceived subversive movement which drew inspiration from his thought, is debatable, but it seems quite clear that Plato is also playing to this perception when portraying Euthydemus and Dionysodorus as skilled 'verbal wrestlers', or his Protagoras as the 'Heracles' of such argument.

That Protagoras was responsible for all this commotion about combative sport is made all the more intriguing when we consider that Protagoras' famed *Aletheia* was also known by the title *Hoi Kataballontes*.[207] There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this verb – καταβάλλειν – came to be associated with the sort of suspicious underhanded argument that the Athenian public perceived to be promoted by the sophists, with the suspicion itself possibly originating from the title of Protagoras' work. This is evinced in the *Bacchae* of Euripides, as Teiresias and Cadmus are preparing to greet Dionysus, despite the refusal of all others to worship the god. So Teiresias:

> οὐδὲν σοφιζόμεσθα τοῖσι δαίμοσιν.
> πατρίους παραδοχάς, ἅς θ᾽ ὁμήλικας χρόνῳ
> κεκτήμεθ᾽, οὐδεὶς αὐτὰ καταβαλεῖ λόγος,
> οὐδ᾽ εἰ δι᾽ ἄκρων τὸ σοφὸν ηὕρηται φρενῶν.[208]

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[203] Cf. *Ran*. 887ff.
[204] *Ran.* 875-881.
[205] D.L *Lives* 9.8.55; also, see Aristoxenus fr. 67, who accuses Plato of plagiarising most of the *Republic* from this work.
[206] Cf. Ar. fr. 392, Teleclides fr. 14.
[207] Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* VII 60.
[208] *Bac.* 200-204.

The true importance of this passage is revealed when we recall its context; Tiresias and Cadmus serve as a homage to trust and traditional belief in the ancestral Theban gods, and this lifelong belief will not be 'thrown' by some new subversive argument. Interesting is the fact that the 'throwing arguments' are linked not with the 'good' characters of the tragedy, but with those who will ultimately be destroyed at the hands of their assuredness. The perceived association between Protagoras and Euripides is mentioned by Diogenes Laertius, who states that Protagoras read his *Peri Theon* in Euripides' house,[209] while Bernays was the first to suggest that Euripides intended the word καταβαλεῖ to remind his audience of Protagoras' work.[210] The case rests on a blatant chronological error within the play, which can only be explained if Euripides was using the scene as a backdrop for the audience to contemplate contemporary speculations - for Dionysus is a *new* god, and so it is *Pentheus*, and not Dionysus, who is entitled to appeal to tradition. Dionysus' opponents are certainly not atheists,[211] they are merely hesitant in worshiping this man from the mountains as godhead – a reasonable reluctance for one in the dramatic setting of the play – but this brands them as perfidious sceptics to a fifth century audience with 20/20 hindsight, and this is just how Tiresias treats them. Thus Dodds concludes that 203 can only be a reference to the Protagorean sort of agnosticism, and "that Euripides has made Tiresias to speak as a man of the fifth century, I think deliberately: the glaring anachronism can only serve as a warning to the audience that the debate which follows will represent a mid-fifth century controversy transposed into the mythical past".[212] Moreover, Meyer argues that *Hoi Kataballontes* may also have contained Protagoras' *Peri Theon.*[213] Of this essay only the opening lines survive,[214] but the fragment indicates that agnosticism was a topic addressed, if not advocated, in the discussion. Put together, this evinces the fact that Euripides was juxtaposing the views of traditional religion, which were held by the majority of his audience, with the dissenting stream of sophistic thought as epitomized by Protagoras in his *Hoi Kataballontes*. This suspicion of subversion lead to cautious interaction, which in-turn fanned the flames of the opinion that using such 'throwing arguments' to put forward such polemical thought was a technique employed by *all*

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[209] *Lives* 9.8.54.
[210] *Rh. Museum* (1850: 464ff).
[211] As lines 45-46 show.
[212] Dodds (1944: comm. on 200-203).
[213] 1893: 265.
[214] Cf. n. 54 above.

philosophers,[215] which Plato not only rectifies, but uses to his advantage by reinforcing such a stereotype in his opponents.

We must here, however, consider why Plato should be especially indebted to comedy for such terminology, and the objection that both may simply be drawing on shared knowledge of combat sports and sophistic terminology. This would imply that instead of a three-step linear process (i.e. in which [A] The actual person to be parodied → [B] The comics' presentation of him → [C] Plato's presentation of the actual person mixed with elements from the previous comic presentation) we would have two separate two-step processes denotable as [A] the actual person → [B1] The comics' presentation of him; [A] the actual person →[B2] Plato's presentation of him). This would mean that both are drawing independently from a common source - and a shared experience in combat sports - and both are picking up on well-known traits about them. This argument, however, depends on how one gauges Plato's level of familiarity with comedy; if it can be argued that he was unfamiliar with much of the goings on in comedy, and was unaware of the similarity between his portrayal of a character and that character's previous comic incarnation, then there might be a case for the above. This would imply that the similarity between the dialogues and comedy is a coincidence, and the same characteristics are exaggerated out of an ignorance of their previous portrayal. Such ignorance, however, seems unlikely, and if Plato was aware of the similarities to comic drama in his portrayal of Protagoras, this would imply he either plagiarises or intends his audience to recognise the similarity, as it would be peculiar for him to create such recognisable characters otherwise. If Plato *was* to create such language, surely he would be faced with questions of originality and as to why his style was so close to that of comic drama. This argument that both are drawing from the same source is hindered by the fact that, in most cases, the comic material was presented *prior* to Plato's writing period, and enjoyed great popularity, which Plato, again, must have been aware of. If we were to flip the order and have Plato as the intermediary, [216] then there would most certainly be a stronger case for such an argument.

Protagoras and certain other sophists are presented with exaggerated personas in a style common with comic drama. It may certainly be the case that certain sophists became known as 'tough rhetoricians' owing to the names of their works, and this is something which is easily parodied; but *if they did* use terms like 'I threw him for the third fall' or

[215] Thrasymachus had a work entitled *Hyperballontes* (B7).
[216] As will be discussed in relation to the *Ecclesiazusae* in Chapter 6.

'my argument hit him like a punch from a good boxer', is it likely that such terminology would have been familiar among the general public, apart from the select few who could afford to be involved in such circles? This sounds like more of an exaggeration of what a 'tough rhetorician' would say in the eyes of a comic poet, taking such a description literally. It could certainly be argued that Plato invented such terminology himself to poke fun at the sophistic method, but here again we face the problem of similar comic pre-texts which he was either unaware of or completely uninfluenced by. However, as has been said already, concrete solutions to such challenges simply cannot be found, and I can only meet them with reasoned speculation. It is thus up to the reader to decide if Plato, despite being familiar with comedy, either knowingly or unknowingly used such similar motifs to comic drama without in any way being indebted to it.

With this in mind, if we move onto a broader spectrum there is evidence that may suggest that it was not just pugilistic or *pancratiastic* allusions that appeared to influence the make-up of the comic sophist, but also that a wider range of combat sports may also have contributed. If we return to the *agon* of *Clouds*, some similarities can be found between Unjust's style of attack and Plato's perception of how those who adhere to Heracliteanism (and thus Protagoreanism) engage in debate. At *Nu.* 941, Unjust boasts of what's in store for Just:

> τούτῳ δώσω:
> κᾆτ᾽ ἐκ τούτων ὧν ἂν λέξῃ
> **ῥηματίοισιν** καινοῖς αὐτὸν
> καὶ διανοίαις κατατοξεύσω.
> τὸ τελευταῖον δ᾽, ἢν ἀναγρύζῃ,
> τὸ πρόσωπον ἅπαν καὶ τὠφθαλμὼ
> κεντούμενος ὥσπερ ὑπ᾽ ἀνθρηνῶν
> ὑπὸ τῶν γνωμῶν ἀπολεῖται.

Similarly, at *Tht.* 180a2-9, Theodorus complains of the perils of getting into a conversation with a Heraclitean:

ἀλλ᾽ ἄν τινά τι ἔρῃ, ὥσπερ ἐκ φαρέτρας **ῥηματίσκια** αἰνιγματώδη ἀνασπῶντες ἀποτοξεύουσι, κἂν τούτου ζητῇς λόγον λαβεῖν τί εἴρηκεν, ἑτέρῳ πεπλήξῃ καινῶς μετωνομασμένῳ. περανεῖς δὲ οὐδέποτε οὐδὲν πρὸς οὐδένα αὐτῶν· οὐδέ γε ἐκεῖνοι αὐτοὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἀλλ᾽ εὖ πάνυ φυλάττουσι τὸ μηδὲν βέβαιον ἐᾶν εἶναι

The most noticeable parallel is both parties' penchant for verbal archery; Unjust claims he will 'strike down with arrows' (κατατοξεύω) any argument thrown against him, while the Heraclitean plucks a clever phrase from his quiver (φαρέτρα) to shoot off like

an arrow (ἀποτοξεύω), with the result of both shots rendering each respective opponent too bewildered to come up with a response.[217] Even greater attention should be given to Plato's particular choice a double diminutive form here – 'ῥηματίσκιον', or 'teeny-phrasicle' – which, according to the *TLG*, is the recorded use of the term prior to the 1st Century C.E..[218] If we return to the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, we notice that the author defines the diction of comedy as "common low language",[219] and includes the use of diminutives as examples of such language.[220] This is something that is evident from the surviving texts, as the use of diminutives is fairly common in Aristophanes.[221] For our case, let us take ῥημάτιον - the phrase which Plato seems to play with. Apart from being used by Unjust above, it also appears in the door-scene between Euripides and Dikaeopolis at *Ach.* 444 & 447. The similarities between this scene and the door scene of the *Protagoras* have previously been noted, while Euripides' perceived association with the Socratic movement[222] may suggest that the noun ῥημάτιον became associated with underhanded rhetoric. It is also used in relation to Euripides' style at *Pax* 534, by Demosthenes at *Eq*. 216, and by Bdelycleon when describing the habits adored by his father Philocleon at *Ves*. 669. When we weigh all this up and take into account the word's rarity, [223] it would seem likely that Plato was well aware of the connotations this word would carry, and the implications it would impose on any character associated with such terminology. It might here be argued that both are drawing on common sophistic terminology, but it would seem unlikely that a) the sophists would use it themselves since it would seem quite patronising of their own art; and b) if Plato does not intend to be comedic here, it would seem absurd to use language that was recognizable as such.

I will conclude this section with a more speculative point, relating to the passage of the *Theaetetus* discussed above (169a-c), in which Socrates recalls being beaten by many a Herakles and Theseus in his time. Here, we should note that the verb he uses to express the thrashing he got, συγκόπτω ('to thrash soundly' *Tht.* 169b8) – is also used with

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[217] Worth noting here is how Socrates distances himself from such trickery, previously telling Theaetetus he is 'not a bag of arguments' (161b2).
[218] Cf. Numenius fr. 25: 161.
[219] Cf. Cooper (1922: 226).
[220] *Ibid*: 225.
[221]Cf. *Ach*. 404, 475; *Nu.* 223, 237, 746*; Av*. 223. For this trend in later comedy, cf. Cooper (1922: 235-236).
[222] Cf. e.g. Teleclides fr. 41 with p. 106 below.
[223] The *TLG* lists only the above as the pre-Platonic uses of the term. The first post-Platonic use is in a fragment 14 of the New Comic Poet Machon, who gives it as an example of the method of Mania

reference to cock-fighting.[224] Indeed, its isolated use here does not suggest much, but another rather peculiar reference to cock-fighting occurs at 164c4, as Socrates and Theaetetus are in the middle of their '*agon*' with Protagoras. As a satisfactory defence of Protagoras keeps slipping away under scrutiny, Socrates is led to comment "φαινόμεθά μοι ἀλεκτρυόνος ἀγεννοῦς δίκην πρὶν νενικηκέναι ἀποπηδήσαντες ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου ᾄδειν." While references to cock-fighting are quite common in 4th century, they are usually used in relation to *actual physical violence*;[225] it seems rather peculiar here, not just in part due to the environment of gentility and encouragement within the dialogue,[226] but also because it is used in relation to an argument – there has been no actual violence. What we may have here then, is another allusion to the perceived relationship between combative sport and sophistic argument. While this case is indeed more conjectural than those previous, there may yet be something intriguing about this reference here, when we recall the comments of the scholiast at *Nu*. 889, in which he notes that the two *logoi* of the *agon* of *Clouds* were brought on stage in wicker cages dressed as fighting cocks. If this *was* really the case, we may have an instance of Plato satirising a popular association between sophistry and cock fighting, or indeed, cocks in general. The likelihood of the scholiast's claims, however, must first be investigated.

Russo[227] dismisses the scholion outright, on the grounds that *Nu*. 908 indicates that Just would have been presented as an old man, possibly dressed in Athenian military garb from the Persian War era, while Unjust would have been depicted as younger and more exuberant, perhaps a bit of a dandy, while Sommerstein[228] points to *Nu*. 1103 – when Unjust takes off his cloak – as suggesting they took human form. To assume the scholiast is mistaken and to dismiss his comments, however, is perhaps a bit too brusque – surely the comments of someone situated over two millennia closer to the play should be given a fairer reception. Dale agrees, assessing it as "a startling piece of information, unlikely to have been invented".[229] Dover holds a similar, and probably the most attractive opinion on the accuracy of the scholiast;[230] he sincerely believes that the *logoi* were presented as fighting cocks, but this was an element of the *original* production, and not that of the incomplete revision that has come down to us. Dover

[224]Cf. Aesop. 22.44.
[225] Cf. Demosthenes (54.9) where such terminology is used to negatively describe the behaviour of the defendant in an assault case.
[226] Cf. *Tht*. 168a-c
[227] 1962: 171.
[228] 1982: comm. on 889.
[229] 1957: 210.
[230] 1968: lxxxff.

suggests that the original *agon* was unsatisfactory and indeed was completely excised in the revision. As evidence of this, he points to an inconsistency in the lines leading to the *agon,* which very much indicates the scene is unfinished; at 887, just before we are introduced to the *logoi*, Socrates announces that he 'shall not be here' and promptly exits the stage. One cannot but agree with Dover's assessment of this as a fairly transparent excuse to get the actor who played Socrates off-stage in order to change into the costume of one of the *logoi*. One would here expect a choral ode, but the *logoi* are introduced almost immediately after at 889, Strepsiades only delivers one line between Socrates' exit and their subsequent entrance. This could only allow the actor about ten seconds to change costume – an unlikely feat for even the most accomplished of actors. Dover offers the most reasonable explanation to this problem: "The difficulty is removed if we postulate a choral interlude at this point in the first version...evidently its content was unsuitable for the revised version; it was therefore removed, and the revision being incomplete, nothing was substituted."[231] We may then, with Dover, speculate that either a) this vanished interlude referred so clearly to the imminent representation of the *logoi* as cocks that it could not logically be retained once Aristophanes had envisaged an alternate *agon*, or b) although never actually staged as cocks, the words of the chorus of the original *Clouds* used metaphors from cock-fighting to refer to the upcoming contest so frequently that the correlation between it and philosophical discourse had entered common thought. Indeed, there are several other references to cocks throughout the play that Dover overlooks in his argument; the discussion centres on them from 660-70, and two are even brought onstage at 847.

There is also external evidence that may support this premise in the form of a red figure *kalyx* krater dating from the last quarter of the 5th century known as the 'Getty Birds',[232] depicting two figures costumed as birds. Both wear bird masks with impressive beaks and leotards with dot-filled circles. Tail feathers and an erect *phallus* are attached to shorts, and they stand opposite each other in a combative position, pointing and gesticulating as if swapping threats. Between the birds stands a richly-robed *aulos* player. Green[233] suggests that these are two members of the chorus of *Birds*, but Csapo's[234] dating of the vase to around 425 renders the vase too early for the 414 debut

[231] *Ibid.*:lxxxi.
[232] Cf. Taplin (1993: 101-104); Fig. E in Appendix II of this thesis.
[233] 1985: 95 – 118.
[234] 1993: 1-28; Csapo suggests the vase depicts characters from a play we cannot identify, but is ambiguous about *Clouds I.*

of *Birds*. This paves the way for Taplin's proposal[235]– also supported by Storey[236] – that the vase presents the *agon* of the first *Clouds* as described by the scholiast at *Nu*. 889. This does, however, leave us with one nagging question, namely – how did a comment on the original production make it into a manuscript of our version? Dover pre-empts this, postulating that this feature was mentioned somewhere in the lost Socratic literature of the 4th century, just as Plato mentions the scene at *Nu.* 223 in which we see Socrates swinging from a basket.[237] We must also remember that no matter how badly it fares against the revision, or how badly it was received upon its debut, *Clouds I* was still actually *performed*, and thus would have received a much wider audience, and made a much greater impact on society than a manuscript floating about literary circles. If Plato then, was to allude to *Clouds*, it would make sense that he refer to the edition by which it was best known. An *agon* featuring two opposing arguments literally going at it like fighting cocks would certainly make for some memorable theatre,[238] certainly to the degree that the contemporary reader could be reminded of it as Socrates and Theaetetus chase Protagoras' arguments like fighting cocks.[239]

2.c) Torturous Regimes

At *Euthyd*. 285b8-d1 the discussion between Ctesippus and Dionysodorus has reached boiling point. With tempers rising, Socrates interjects to keep the peace and hands himself over as a test subject to be battered by the brothers. What he is expecting as part of his instruction on the road to betterment, however, is quite shocking, as it would seem he envisions the path to enlightenment to be a rather violent one:

εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς
οἱ νέοι φοβεῖσθε, ὥσπερ ἐν Καρὶ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἔστω ὁ κίνδυνος: ὡς ἐγώ, ἐπειδὴ καὶ πρεσβύτης εἰμί, παρακινδυνεύειν ἕτοιμος καὶ παραδίδωμι ἐμαυτὸν Διονυσοδώρῳ

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[235] *Ibid*: 10.
[236] 2011: 450-451.
[237] *Ap.* 19c3. What Dover does not infer is that here we may deduce that this caricature of Socrates was most likely in the original *Clouds*; not only is Plato very unlikely to allude to an unpublished manuscript over a famous (or infamous) stage production, but he also clearly states that this is how Socrates was presented *on stage*. To strengthen his point, however, Dover refers to D.L ii. 28, where a line of Aristophanes from an anonymous play is given (fr. 392).The line, although similar to the revised *Clouds*, is not from it, and is obviously from the original.
[238] Here we must also consider Tarrant's comments in his article (1991) arguing that much of *Clouds* II is substantially different from the original. He notes that much of the humour in *Clouds* relies on it being the first time the play was produced, for the "twists and turns of the plot are never so amusing if one knows they are coming" (1991: 159). Two opposing logoi entering as fighting cocks would surely have been memorable, and thus could not be included in the revision, for the humour in their entranace relies on the element of surprise – two characters dressed as cocks would have been the last thing the audience would have expected – which would simply not have had the same impact the second time around.
[239] Indeed, Socrates also claims they are 'crowing before they have victory over' the argument, just as Inferior seems to do at *Nu*. 941.

τούτῳ ὥσπερ τῇ Μηδείᾳ τῇ Κόλχῳ. ἀπολλύτω με, καὶ εἰ μὲν βούλεται, ἑψέτω, εἰ δ’, ὅτι βούλεται, τοῦτο ποιείτω· μόνον χρηστὸν ἀποφηνάτω.
καὶ ὁ Κτήσιππος, ἐγὼ μέν, ἔφη, καὶ αὐτός, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἕτοιμός εἰμι παρέχειν ἐμαυτὸν τοῖς ξένοις, καὶ ἐὰν βούλωνται δέρειν ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ νῦν δέρουσιν, εἴ μοι ἡ δορὰ μὴ εἰς ἀσκὸν τελευτήσει, ὥσπερ ἡ τοῦ Μαρσύου, ἀλλ’ εἰς ἀρετήν.

Socrates and Ctesippus’ apprehensions, however, are not unfounded, as there seemed to be a belief that teachers of this sort subjected their students to a litany of abuses. Dover has noted the similarities between what Socrates expects from the brothers and what Strepsiades prepares himself for in the *Phrontisterion* at *Nu.*439-442:[274]

νῦν οὖν ἀτεχνῶς ὅ τι βούλονται τουτὶ τοὐμὸν
σῶμ’ αὐτοῖσιν παρέχω, τύπτειν πεινῆν διψῆν
αὐχμεῖν ῥιγῶν ἀσκὸν δείρειν,
εἴπερ τὰ χρέα διαφευξοῦμαι.

Dover is in little doubt that Plato is parodying the *Clouds* passage, but trends such as this are rather prevalent. While one could pass off the references to being cold, hungry and thirsty as a jibe at the perceived ascetic lifestyle of the philosopher, the blatant reference to beatings indicates actual abuse and requires further consideration. Nor is this an isolated occurrence; elsewhere in the *Clouds*, Socrates contemplates ‘beating some sense’ into Strepsiades (δέδοικά σ’ ὦ πρεσβῦτα μὴ πληγῶν δέει – *Nu.*493), while certain fragments of the Middle Comedy suggest the motif was still being used in the 4th Century; the speaker of Aristophon’s *Platon* (fr. 8),[275] presumably Plato himself, promises to make a prospective student ‘thinner than Phillipides’ within three days, while in his *Pythagorean* (fr. 10), a prospective student proudly lists a number of qualities that are indicative of a sustained period of abuse and deprivation:

πρὸς μὲν τὸ πεινῆν ἐσθίειν τε μηδὲ ἓν
νόμιζ’ ὁρᾶν Τιθύμαλλον ἢ Φιλιππίδην.[276]
ὕδωρ δὲ πίνειν βάτραχος, ἀπολαῦσαι θύμων
λαχάνων τε κάμπη, πρὸς τὸ μὴ λοῦσθαι ῥύπος,
ὑπαίθριος χειμῶνα διάγειν κόψιχος,
πνῖγος ὑπομεῖναι καὶ μεσημβρίας λαλεῖν
τέττιξ, ἐλαίῳ μηδὲ χρίεσθαι τὸ πᾶν
κονιορτός, ἀνυπόδητος ὄρθρου περιπατεῖν
γέρανος, καθεύδειν μηδὲ μικρὸν νυκτερίς.

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[274] 1968: comm. on 439-442.
[275] Further discussed below at p. 187.
[276] Just as Cleisthenes is used to epitomise effeminacy in Old Comedy (Aristophanes *Nu.* 335, *Ach.* 117, *Thes.* 574), so is Phillipides in Middle (Aristophon fr. 8; Alexis frr. 2, 93. For New Comedy cf. Menander fr. 266)

If, then, there was a belief that philosophical institutions subjected their pupils to arduous regimes, it would seem it was still ubiquitous at the time of the composition of the *Euthydemus*, and it is to this comic trend that Plato alludes as Socrates and Ctesippus hand themselves over to be tortured by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus; yet another perception Plato wishes to remind the audience of in his portrayal of his rivals.

2.d) Sophists in the Underworld?

After the fanfare announcing the entrance of Protagoras in his eponymous dialogue, we are introduced to Hippias and Prodicus with some rather unusual similes. We first meet Hippias – introduced with a Homeric tag[277] – holding court from a chair (315b9-c2).[278] The scene's brevity, however, must not belie its significance; for Hippias is reported as answering questions 'περὶ φύσεώς τε καὶ τῶν μετεώρων'(315c5). Such discourse was typical of the comic philosopher; the same subjects are taught in the *Phrontisterion,*[279] and Socrates defends his elevated position with 'οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε ἐξηῦρον ὀρθῶς τὰ μετέωρα πράγματα, εἰ μὴ κρεμάσας τὸ νόημα καὶ τὴν φροντίδα λεπτὴν καταμείξας ἐς τὸν ὅμοιον ἀέρα''.[280] Moreover, in Eupolis' *Kolakes*, Protagoras himself is described as 'περί τῶν μετεώρων, τά δὲ χαμᾶθεν ἐσθίε'.[281] This sort of inquiry was not only treated with ridicule, but also suspicion; Plato blamed Aristophanes for leading people to believe Socrates was actually concerned with such matters, which in turn tarnished his reputation and ultimately resulted in his arraignment.[282] Here, it would seem, we have a prime example of "Plato...turning the weapons of comedy against the real sophists, and so distancing Socrates from them".[283]

Prodicus is then introduced with the Homeric 'καὶ Τάνταλόν γε εἰσεῖδον' (315c8),[284] and while such tags are common in Plato, one feels there is more to their presence here than to just "add a touch of epic dignity".[285] The connection between Prodicus and

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[277] *Od.* XI. 601. His Homeric introduction will be duly discussed along with that of Prodicus below at Chap. 3.a.
[278] Here, it may be useful to mention Dover's remarks (1969: comm. on line 630) on the couch scene *Nu.* 630ff. Dover postulates that having taken a seat, the Cloud chorus may then have performed a quasi-ritual dance around Strepsiades and Socrates as the latter begins to 'philosophize'.
[279] *Nu.* 171, 194.
[280] Ibid. 227.
[281] Eup. fr. 157 cf. fr. 386. The philosopher with his head in the clouds but nothing in his stomach is a popular motif; Ar. fr. 691 is of a very similar sentiment to Eupolis. Also cf. Eubulus fr. 137, Aristophon Fr. 9.
[282] *Ap.* 19c.
[283] Brock (1990:46).
[284] Hom. *Od.* 11.582
[285] This being the view of Lamb (1924:114n1).

Tantalos has been a cause of much confusion. Adam and Adam are quite brief, explaining the comparison as a jab at Prodicus because of his physical wretchedness; Denyer, however, is more elaborative:[286]

> Tantalus' punishment was to be surrounded by food and drink that moved away whenever he tried to consume it. The suggestion is that knowledge, which is the nutrition of the soul, will escape us if we try to get it through the intellectual methods of Prodicus that are parodied in 337a1-c4.

While Denyer's assertion is attractive, it seems more of a case of one trying to tie up loose ends in the most convenient way possible – it is a rather large jump for a reader to make, and does not seem something that would instantly come to mind. Bartlett is right in following the trend of not viewing the tags appropriated to Hippias and Prodicus as separate events, but ones which should be assessed collectively. Are we thus faced with an ambivalent play on the descent to Hades in *Odyssey* IX? Bartlett proposes that Callias' house represents Hades, but we are still left to ponder what common ground Callias and a collection of sophists share with the underworld. Bartlett's suggestion that "Callias and Hades enjoy the dubious distinction of having kept company with their respective wives and the mothers of their wives" [287] is attractive but skewed; while Callias almost certainly did keep company with both a daughter and her mother,[288] and it is true also that Plato seems to like playing up Callias' faults,[289] I am not aware of any tradition which held that Hades took Demeter as a bride before or after Persephone. Sidwell has perhaps offered the most beneficial contribution.[290] Suggesting that the allusions to Odysseus' journey to the underworld serve to satirise lost comic parodies of *nekuia*, and, more acutely, the philosopher as a necromancer, Sidwell points to the odd passage at *Birds* 1553f, where Socrates is presented as such:

> πρὸς δὲ τοῖς Σκιάποσιν λίμνη
> τις ἔστ᾽ ἄλουτος οὗ
> ψυχαγωγεῖ Σωκράτης·
> ἔνθα καὶ Πείσανδρος ἦλθε
> δεόμενος ψυχὴν ἰδεῖν ἣ
> ζῶντ᾽ ἐκεῖνον προὔλιπε,
> σφάγι᾽ ἔχων κάμηλον ἀμνόν
> τιν᾽, ἧς λαιμοὺς τεμὼν ὥσπερ
> ποθ᾽ οὑδυσσεὺς ἀπῆλθε,
> κᾆτ᾽ ἀνῆλθ᾽ αὐτῷ κάτωθεν

[286] 2008: comm. on 315d1.
[287] 2004:69.
[288] Cf. Andocides 1.127f.
[289] Cf. *Ap.* 20a.
[290] 2005.

> πρὸς τὸ λαῖτμα τῆς καμήλου
> Χαιρεφῶν ἡ νυκτερίς.

Sommerstein, in his commentary on *Av*. 1555, explains how such conclusions could be jumped to; for the word ψυχή was frequently used by Socrates to mean 'mind' or 'inner self' – that part of the individual whose proper cultivation was in Socrates' view far more important than that of the body. This was not, however, the everyday usage of the word, which invited ridicule based on another meaning of the word – 'spirit'. Thus, at *Nu*. 94 the *Phrontisterion* is known as the abode of the 'clever spirits' (ψυχῶν σοφῶν) and entering it is like descending into a subterranean cave (506-8). Strepsiades is afraid that after completing his instruction, he will come to resemble Chaerephon – a corpse (ἡμιθανής).[291] Sidwell perceptively notes the fact that Strepsiades then asks for a honey-cake (μελιτοῦτταν – 507), as though his venture will involve a downward journey (καταβαίνων – 508).[292] Sidwell, however, begins to blow slightly off course; for he not only goes on to argue that the Homeric tags are inseparable from their respective characters in the dialogue, but also that the passage is based uniformly on a scene from a completely lost and unknown play, a scene in which he imagines "Socrates as necromancer calls forth and interviews the souls of Hippias and Prodicos, the one in the guise of Heracles...the other dressed as Tantalus".[293] The link here is tenuous at best - that Cratinus' *Panoptai* contains the first reference to the sky as a bell-oven,[294] and Eubulus had a play, of which only the title survives, known as *Odysseus* or *Panoptai* (Ὀδυσσεύς ἢ Πανόπται), thus speculating a possible connection between the Odysseus and the word πανόπτης, and so providing a possible source for a pseudo-Odyssean *nekuia.*[295]

Despite his conclusion, Sidwell's initial points – that the Homeric allusions at *Prot.* 315c reflect a comic portrait of the sophist as a necromancer – make for some food for thought. Indeed, there is more evidence which Sidwell seems to overlook, pointing to a different, more intriguing conclusion. For this, one must look back to the *Kolakes*, and in particular fr. 157, in which Protagoras is mentioned:

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[291] A common perception of Chaerephon. Cf. *Av.* 1564 above where he is likened to a bat. This shady impression of the reclusive philosopher was alive and well in Plato's time, cf. Alex. Fr 179.
[292] 2005:70.
[293] 2005:71.
[294] Fr. 167, cf. *Nu.* 95f.
[295] It may be worth highlighting that there is no mention of Socrates in the play.

Ἔνδοθι μέν ἐστι Πρωταγόρας ὁ Τήιος,
ὃς ἀλαζονεύται μὲν ἀλιτήριος
περὶ τῶν μετεώρων, τὰ δὲ χαμᾶθεν ἐσθίει.

What is intriguing here is the labelling of Protagoras as an ἀλιτήριος. The word has been variously interpreted – although almost always with connotations of *alazoneia*; Meineke associates it with implications of impiety, and connects its use here with the agnostic tendencies of Protagorean doctrine[296] and his alleged expulsion from Athens.[297] Pivetti,[298] citing Menander (fr. 746), equates ἀλιτήριος with 'fraud' or 'charlatan' – essentially akin to the use of ἀλαζών:

σφάττει με, λεπτός γίγνού΄ εὐωχούμενος
τά σκώμμαθ' οἷα σοφά καί στρατηγικά·
οἷος δ' ἀλαζών ἐστιν ἀλιτήριος

The intellectual as an *alazon* in the sense of a fraud is prevalent in comedy,[299] and so Pivetti is justified in her assumptions, but in the context of this particular case, I find the suggestion put forward by Storey[300] particularly intriguing – for he shows that an unnoticed use of the word in Andocides provides another explanation. Storey cites a passage from *On the Mysteries*, Andocides' invective against none other than Callias, and one of only a few contemporary non–fictive accounts of the infamous spend-thrift. At 130-131, Andocides reminds the audience of a rumour about Hipponicus, Callias' father, which circulated some time ago when Athens was at the height of her prosperity. For Hipponicus was the one of Athens' wealthiest, but the rumour had it that there was an ἀλιτήριος in his house that was upsetting his balance and tables. Hipponicus thought he was rearing a son, but this son, as it transpired, turned out to be the ἀλιτήριος.

Storey here translates ἀλιτήριος as 'poltergeist', while Edwards, in his earlier translations of Andocides,[301] uses 'evil spirit'. If Storey is correct, and Eupolis is indeed playing with the old notion of a poltergeist in the house of Hipponicus driving it to ruin, then we may see how he has made Protagoras, and his clan of all devouring spongers, take over the role as the next generation of ἀλιτήριοι in the house of Hipponicus. This would also give greater insight to the context of fr. 162 of the play, as an unnamed speaker cries out that 'φοροῦσιν, ἁρπάζουσιν ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας τὸ χρυσίον, τἀργύρια

[296] Prot. Fr. 4.
[297] Cf. Guthrie (1971: 263).
[298] 1982: 251.
[299] Cf. pp. 19-21 above.
[300] 2003:187.
[301] 1995:81.

πορθεῖται.’ Is this Callias bemoaning the curse of his house, the ἀλιτήριος once again ‘upsetting his balance’? If this is so, Plato’s Homeric tags may serve to assimilate the crowd of sophists gathered at Callias’ with a group of ruinous necromancers brought onstage by Eupolis.

Conclusion.

Plato’s approach to his use of comic motifs is a multifaceted one; by using a setting for the *Protagoras* which is identical to that of the *Kolakes*, and having the dialogue progress as one would expect a comedy to, Protagoras has an uphill battle to redeem himself before he even appears in the dialogue. Unfortunately, this is a feat he can never attain – instead of meeting the austere thinker one might expect, we are met with a plethora of peculiar characters dancing about mesmerized by the man from Abdera. The *Theaetetus* and *Euthydemus* show that this is not a characteristic unique to Protagoras, but all those who choose to follow in his sophistic footsteps. As the previous chapter has shown, however, any promises they might make will never materialise, and so the mesmerized followers who believe in their prattle will ultimately end up as laughable as the pupils of similar quacks in comedy.

In addition to presenting figures stocked with idiosyncrasies typical of the general comic *alazon*, Plato seems to exaggerate particular traits that were seen as distinctive of certain familiar persons. This goes beyond the use of common motifs to aggrandizing particular elements that seemed to have been viewed as peculiar to specific persons. This will be discussed in the following chapter in which the portrayals of Prodicus, Thrasymachus and Aristophanes will be examined.

Chapter 3: Plato's use of Caricature.

Introduction.

"The monkey, that caricature of our species"

- Samuel Smiles[302]

In his *History of Caricature*, John Lynch defines caricature as essentially meaning 'loaded-portrait'[303] – derived from the Italian term *caricare* (to charge or load) – where there is an exaggerated or debased likeness or imitation which is naturally ludicrous in order to create a comic or grotesque effect.

Through his use of caricature Plato aims at presenting 'larger than life' individuals, whose personas seem more suited to satire than to non-fictional representation. As a good satirist knows, however, there can never be smoke without fire; the art lies in taking popular preconceptions of well-known individuals and exacerbating them to levels that fall just within the realms of credibility. The difference here from what we have seen previously lies in the fact that rather than merely alluding to previous comic incarnations of the character or those seen as similar to him, Plato seems to give much attention to the particular eccentricities that were seen as distinct to this person. As will be argued, the comedians may have also picked on such foibles and compounded them, but in certain instances it appears Plato looks not only to comedy, but to the wider opinion of these figures in general, as he presents an aggrandized version of them by homing in on specific features that were deemed idiosyncratic to their character, which may indeed at times have been motivated by Plato's own desire for redress. If we look again to the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, we see that comedy is described there as "the imitation of an action that is ludicrous and imperfect",[304] and that one of the techniques used to evoke laughter to 'debase the personages'.[305] Cooper notes that while this could mean "fashioning the personages in the direction of the worthless", it is not always the case, as in some instances, that "the character is distorted, and to some extent lowered, from the truth, yet not painfully so."[306] 'This section will thus examine how Plato uses this technique that is also found in comedy in his own caricatured portrayals of Prodicus, Thrasymachus, and Aristophanes.

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[302] 1859: 245.
[303] 1926: 12.
[304] Trans. Cooper (1922: 224).
[305] *Ibid:* 225.
[306] *Ibid*: 250.

3. a) Prodicus the Proud?

During the *parodos* of the Protagoras, we meet Prodicus under the strangest of circumstances: likened to Tantalus yet 'ἔτι κατέκειτο, ἐγκεκαλυμμένος ἐν κῳδίοις τισὶν καὶ στρώμασιν καὶ μάλα πολλοῖς' (*Prot.* 315d4-5). While possible explanations for the reference to Tantalus have been discussed in the previous chapter, there must be a further reason as to why Prodicus is depicted as being in bed so late. Are we meant to compare Socrates, who rose from his meagre σκίμπους (*Prot.* 310c1) before dawn, with Prodicus - the man who preaches of the nobility of a virtuous life of restraint over the vicious life of over-indulgence,[307] but is still wrapped up in bed long after everyone else has risen? Or are his habits to be contrasted with his Cean heritage – of which he is reminded at 340a – as Ceans were known for their austerity?[308] Indeed, he himself chastises those who 'consume sleep in the best hours of the day',[309] and so is he too, as we will find out about Protagoras, incapable of practising what he preaches? If so, the irony is not lost here, as the bedded Prodicus, famed for his verbal precision, cannot even be understood by Socrates (316a1-2). Sidwell, once again,[310] however, argues that Plato may be borrowing from comedy here. The obvious first point of call here is the scene in which Socrates has Strepsiades philosophize from a flea infested couch at *Nu.* 601*f.* [311]There are, however, minor but important differences: Stepsiades is taught, while Prodicus teaches – or at least presumably leads the discussion – and Strepsiades' ordeal seems a lot more stressful. Sidwell, however, goes on to suggest that the *Clouds* scene in turn parodies a scene from an earlier lost comedy, which played on the popular opinion that Prodicus taught from bed. The tendency to look to *Clouds* to establish a connection with Prodicus in bed is because, as Sidwell points out, this is the only comedy in which a bed features so prominently. We must also remember, however, that this is the only surviving comedy in which philosophy features so prominently; should another resurface it could just as plausibly be discovered that beds or couches were an inherent feature of such comedy. Sidwell is rightly cautious; all it might have taken, he proposes, was for Prodicus at some stage in his career to have given a lecture in bed or

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[307] Xen. *Mem*. 2.1, 21-34.

[308] Phylarchus FGH81 fr. 42 tells us there are no pipe girls or courtesans in the cities of Ceos, while a Cean inscription of the 5th Century contains laws to prevent extravagance at funerals (IG XII.v 593).

[309] Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.30.

[310] 2005.

[311] Note the word used in *Clouds* is σκίμποδος, both for the family beds and the 'philosophy couch' (274,709), the same as Socrates' bed at *Prot.* 310c, and not nearly as luxurious as Prodicus' bed.

sitting down for the rumours to spread –"did you hear that sophist from Ceos gives lectures in bed?"[312]

While Sidwell's point could be credible – Prodicus may indeed have appeared in a bed in a comedy – it is ultimately based on insufficient evidence. Moreover, I would propose an alternative suggestion as to why Prodicus is presented as being in bed so late. Certain elements of the dialogue give the impression of Prodicus as a pedantic yet unfortunate individual – and one who has a prouder opinion of himself than he in fact should. If this is the case, the reason for the bedded Prodicus might become easier to decipher: having slept in too late, the proud pedant is disturbed from his slumbers, yet he couldn't be seen to turn away guests who have come to speak with him – and so the ludicrous situation unfolds as he tries to entertain them from his bed. This does not require the pre-existing comic scene which Sidwell seeks to find, as it would imply that Plato here turns his hand to the comic's trade and creates his own character based on contemporary perceptions of Prodicus.

If we return to the *Protagoras,* it becomes apparent that the dialogue does not solely aim to lampoon Protagoras – as Hippias and Prodicus also get their share of the whip. Protagoras certainly comes off as the most important of the three, with Hippias second, and Prodicus third. This ranking is also reflected by the positions taken by the characters as they are introduced; Protagoras dominantly stands (314e3), leading a vast array of followers (six plus a large number of unnamed strangers), Hippias sits (315c1) holding court to a smaller assembly (three plus a 'a number of foreigners and citizens'), while Prodicus is lying prostrate entertaining a notably smaller crowd (four plus some others who 'seemed' to be there). This is also the order in which they are introduced, and the order in which Socrates had earlier referred to them (314c1). If there was such a perceived order of preference, Plato was aware of it, as there are numerous instances where Prodicus' professional inadequacies are humorously scrutinized, and aspects of his character suggest that he might have felt slightly overlooked for a man of his standing. His first major contribution to the dialogue comes at 337a-c, as the debate on the preference of long speeches or short questions is heating up with either faction promoting their preferred style.[313] Hippias interjects, and proposes they find a middle

[312] 2005: 75.
[313] Ie. Protagoras, Callias, Protagoras and company on one side with Socrates, Alcibiades, and – presumably – Hippocrates on the other.

ground (336d-e), before Prodicus chimes in with what has perhaps become his most defining – although not very relevant – epidexis (337a2-c4):

δοκεῖς λέγειν, ὦ Κριτία: χρὴ γὰρ τοὺς ἐν τοιοῖσδε λόγοις παραγιγνομένους κοινοὺς μὲν εἶναι ἀμφοῖν τοῖν διαλεγομένοιν ἀκροατάς, ἴσους δὲ μή—ἔστιν γὰρ οὐ ταὐτόν: κοινῇ μὲν γὰρ ἀκοῦσαι δεῖ ἀμφοτέρων, μὴ ἴσον δὲ νεῖμαι ἑκατέρῳ, ἀλλὰ τῷ μὲν σοφωτέρῳ πλέον, τῷ δὲ ἀμαθεστέρῳ ἔλαττον. ἐγὼ μὲν καὶ αὐτός, ὦ Πρωταγόρα τε καὶ Σώκρατες, ἀξιῶ ὑμᾶς συγχωρεῖν καὶ ἀλλήλοις περὶ τῶν λόγων ἀμφισβητεῖν μέν, ἐρίζειν δὲ μή—ἀμφισβητοῦσι μὲν γὰρ καὶ δι᾽ εὔνοιαν οἱ φίλοι τοῖς φίλοις, ἐρίζουσιν δὲ οἱ διάφοροί τε καὶ ἐχθροὶ ἀλλήλοις—καὶ οὕτως ἂν καλλίστη ἡμῖν ἡ συνουσία γίγνοιτο· ὑμεῖς τε γὰρ οἱ λέγοντες μάλιστ᾽ ἂν οὕτως ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν εὐδοκιμοῖτε καὶ οὐκ ἐπαινοῖσθε—εὐδοκιμεῖν μὲν γὰρ ἔστιν παρὰ ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν ἀκουόντων ἄνευ ἀπάτης, ἐπαινεῖσθαι δὲ ἐν λόγῳ πολλάκις παρὰ δόξαν ψευδομένων— ἡμεῖς τ᾽ αὖ οἱ ἀκούοντες μάλιστ᾽ ἂν οὕτως εὐφραινοίμεθα, οὐχ ἡδοίμεσθα—εὐφραίνεσθαι μὲν γὰρ ἔστιν μανθάνοντά τι καὶ φρονήσεως μεταλαμβάνοντα αὐτῇ τῇ διανοίᾳ, ἥδεσθαι δὲ ἐσθίοντά τι ἢ ἄλλο ἡδὺ πάσχοντα αὐτῷ τῷ σώματι.

Prodicus' commentary is needlessly protracted, especially if his true intentions were merely to offer honest advice – for he only actually makes two points: a) speakers should be listened to impartially and b) speakers should debate and not bicker. His excursus into the precision of words is off-topic, unwarranted and uninvited. This is signified by the others' reaction; he is politely acknowledged for his input and then promptly ignored (337c8), mainly because it was of absolutely no benefit to the discussion at hand – namely the choice of long speeches or question and answer as the preferred style. The impression we get is of one frustrated at being ignored thus far and wanting to give his two cents – and to show off what he can do while doing it. It should also be remembered that garrulity (ἀδολεσχία) is a common character trait in comedy, and is listed as a staple device of comic poets by the *Tractatus Coislinianus*.[314] If Plato, then, is here trying to give an accurate, unbiased account of Prodicus, rather than satirise what he believes to be his banal endeavours, he either fails miserably or we have grossly overestimated the talents of Prodicus, as his needless digression into his own art can only portray him as someone bragging about an essentially mundane skill.[315]

Whether Prodicus' concluding distinction between εὐφραίνω and ἥδομαι (337c1) serves to remind us of his parable of the Choice of Heracles is purely speculative, but there are other allusions to the parable in the dialogue, which also imply Prodicus' lack of

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[314] Cf. e.g. the 'philosophy' of the *Phrontisterion*, the chorus at *Wasps* 333-9, with Cooper (1922: 231).

[315] Here, again, we are reminded of the *Laches*; Laches is frustrated by Nicias' differentiating between the characteristics of various professions and those of the brave man (195c-196d). Socrates reminds Laches that Nicias has been taught be Damon, a pupil of Prodicus, (197d1-3) to which Laches responds "καὶ γὰρ πρέπει, ὦ Σώκρατες, σοφιστῇ τὰ τοιαῦτα μᾶλλον κομψεύεσθαι ἢ ἀνδρὶ ὃν ἡ πόλις ἀξιοῖ αὐτῆς προεστάναι." (197d6-7).

originality. At 340c-d, Socrates, arguing that it is difficult to *be* noble rather than to *become* noble, notes how Prodicus would distinguish between εἶναι and γενέσθαι. Socrates then proposes that Prodicus and 'many others' would agree with the words of Hesiod:

> τὴν μέν τοι κακότητα καὶ ἰλαδὸν ἔστιν ἑλέσθαι
> ῥηιδίως: λείη μὲν ὁδός, μάλα δ᾽ ἐγγύθι ναίει:
> τῆς δ᾽ ἀρετῆς ἱδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν
> ἀθάνατοι·[316]

Upon hearing this, Prodicus begins to applaud (ἐπήνεσεν - 340d4),[317] oblivious to the blow Socrates has dealt him; for these 'many others' include Epicharmus' maxim,[318] while Socrates later quotes the old Spartan saying 'μηδὲν ἄγαν'[319]– nothing in excess – both of which, along with Hesiod, advocate a life of restraint, abstention and endurance as the path to true happiness. Plato's point is that Prodicus' noted parable for which he is so famous is in no way original, but the epitome of a sophist trick of , as Guthrie phrases, "conveying elementary moral commonplaces through the easily absorbed medium of a fable about one of the most popular figures of legend".[320] Grote argues that by employing such tactics, Plato "reaffirms his opinion at *Rep*. 493a that the so-called wisdom of the sophists boils down to a rehash of the conventional wisdom of the crowd",[321] and that the sophist is no more than a pretender. Prodicus, however, is too proud to notice this.

Prodicus' shortcomings are further exposed in the discussion of Simonides. Being both a Cean and an expert on words, Prodicus should be the prime candidate for a discussion on Simonides, himself a Cean, and so Socrates invites him to his aid (340a). The first question posed to him asks if there is a difference between εἶναι and γενέσθαι, to which one hardly need be a linguist to answer. Later, however, when asked about the Cean dialect (341c-d), and what he supposes Simonides' intentions were, Prodicus completely misses the target with his absurd answer – that Simonides is censuring Pittacus on his distinction of words, as, being a Lesbian, Pittacus would have been brought up speaking a foreign language. Protagoras immediately blows Prodicus out of

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[316] *WD*. 288-9.
[317] Here again we may note the use of applause to commend a sophistic display; Socrates, by indulging Protagoras in a debate on semantics, is ironically playing at being sophist (cf. Lamb (1927: comm on 343c)), an irony which apparently escapes Prodicus.
[318] DK 84 B 2, quoted along with Prodicus' fable at Xen. *Mem*. 2.1.20-34.
[319] 343b3.
[320] Guthrie (1971: 274)
[321] Grote (1888) VII 57.

the water, essentially telling him he is talking nonsense. Interestingly here, Socrates comes to Prodicus' rescue, assuring Protagoras that Prodicus was just 'testing' him. Indeed, it is instances such as this that lead Denyer to suggest that Prodicus and Socrates are in some sort of cahoots. He sees similar collusion at 341c2, implying that Prodicus purposefully answers that 'hard' means 'bad' in the Cean dialect, and also at 358b2, as Prodicus laughs when Socrates asks to leave aside his previous distinction between the pleasant and the enjoyable (cf. 337c1), despite this reinforcing the message that Prodicus' talents aren't much use to anyone. Cahoots, however, is possibly too strong a word. Prodicus has a certain likability, his eagerness to get involved and be respected, but his failing to do so can even elicit a certain fondness, maybe akin to how one would feel about Victor Meldrew. One would certainly not want to see him destroyed; in comparison with Protagoras, Hippias, or Dionysodorus, he is by far the most harmless and least hubristic, even if still a complete nonsense peddler. Out of all the sophists in the corpus he is treated the best, but he is *still* a sophist. What is certainly plausible, as hinted at by Denyer, is that Plato may still have had a soft spot for him.

3. b): Thrasymachus the Terrible?

In her study of Plato's interaction with various literary genres, Nightingale highlights the 'serious' side of comedy, noting that certain elements of comedy do not necessarily have to be funny or contain much humour, in order to still harness a "voice of criticism".[322] Here Nightingale points to aspects such as the *parabasis*, or scenes which appear to more as a social commentary – such as Aristophanes' attacks on Cleon – and ascribes similar comic invective to Plato's portrayal of Callicles in the *Gorgias*. It is in examining such portrayals that Nightingale's point becomes clearer; there is nothing exactly 'humorous' or 'funny' about Plato's Callicles, yet there is something in his exaggerated demeanour and responses that is so relatable to comic invective. We find similar exaggerated features in the brash demeanour of Thrasymachus of Chalcedon in *Republic* I – a charcterisation for which he is perhaps remembered more in modernity than for anything he actually produced himself. Here we see Plato take a well-known law-court speaker and cast him as a belligerent bully. In the dialogue, he is quite ferocious, with shouts and insults being thrown at will, and I will suggest that Plato bases this on Thrasymachus' reputation as a cut-throat, no-nonsense speaker who was known for ferociousness in argument. In his portrayal, Plato takes this pugnacious

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[322] 1995: 190.

reputation and applies it not just to Thrasymachus' style of argument but to his *entire* persona.

Evidence from contemporary comedy suggests that the 'ferocity' of Thrasymachus' style of argument came to epitomise the law-court scene. Aristophanes in his first play, *Banqueters*, has a son (Speaker A) attempt to defend the rhetoricians to his father (Speaker B): A) τί δ'ὑποτεκμαίρη[323] καὶ κακῶς ἄνδρας λέγεις καλοκἀγαθίαν ἀσκοῦντας; B) οἴμ', ὦ Θρασύμαχε, τίς τοῦτο τῶν ξυνηγόρων τερατεύται; (fr. 205: 6-10).[324] This too is reflected in certain language used in *Rep*. I; as Thrasymachus rebukes Socrates for his reluctance to define justice, Socrates responds with 'τί ἀξιοῖς παθεῖν;' (337d2). Adam notes that here and in what follows is a play on the judicial formula 'παθεῖν ἢ ἀποτεῖσαι', "where παθεῖν refers to δεσμός φυγή θάνατος ἀτιμία, and ἀποτεῖσαι to fines. In a δίκη τιμητός, the defendant if found guilty would be asked in the words τί ἀξιοῖς παθεῖν καὶ ἀποτεῖσαι to propose an alternative penalty to that demanded by the accuser; after which it was the duty of the judges finally to assess (τιμᾶν) the penalty".[325] Interestingly, Thrasymachus responds to this with a request for payment, which also follows the formula – 'πρὸς τῷ μαθεῖν καὶ ἀπότεισον ἀργύριον' (337d6-7) – leading Adam to comment that "Plato no doubt satirizes (somewhat crudely, it must be allowed) the avarice of Thrasymachus and his class, in contrast with whom Socrates has no money, because his conversations are gratis."[326] We may also point to Quincey's observations, who notes that when cornered by Socrates, Thrasymachus resorts to "evasive declamation, insinuation, and abuse, all parts of the stock-in-trade of the professional pleader."[327] Other evidence for the actual character of Thrasymachus beyond Plato is thin, but what survives still points to his dominance in law-court oratory. With regard to the 'temper' and 'abusive' nature which Plato presents, there is nothing which totally verifies this for the 'real' Thrasymachus, yet we might still look to two anecdotes given in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; In a discussion of etymological puns, Aristotle quotes Herodicus as labelling Thrasymachus as 'always bold in fight' (ἀεὶ θρασύμαχος εἶ – 1400b29). While this alone is hardly substantive – as Quincey notes, *schema etymologicum* is legion in Greek, with the name often being father to the

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[323] A *hapax legomenon*.
[324] Also worth noting the boy's comments earlier in the fragment that his words will 'trip up' his father - A) Ἦ μὴν ἴσως σὺ καταπλιγήσει τῶι χρόνωι. –B) Τὸ καταπλιγήσει τοῦτο παρὰ τῶν ῥητόρων, Ar. Fr. 205: 3-4.
[325] Adam (1902: comm on 377d).
[326] *Ibid*.
[327] 1981:308.

thought[328]– we must also consider another anecdote from the *Rhetoric* which may give further insight into Thrasymachus' temperament. At 1413a6, Aristotle records a simile coined by Thrasymachus comparing Niceratus to Philoctetes: Niceratus, who, when beaten in a recitation competition by Pratys, went about unwashed and unkempt, was compared by Thrasymachus to a Philoctetes stung by Pratys. Quincey here takes Niceratus to be the son of the Athenian general Nicias, and thus he would have been an amateur in the competition, whereas Pratys was a professional. Niceratus' only offence then – apart from losing the competition – was to be unkempt as a result of it. While Quincey labels Thrasymachus' comments as "ill-tempered and rude", it may perhaps be slightly too rash to claim that only Thrasymachus could have been brash enough to record such a slander and thus was Aristotle's direct source.[329]

Here we should also consider the testimony of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Isac.* 20), who records that Thrasymachus boasted in one or more of his books that forensic speaking was fearful or sharp-witted (δεινός) and most powerful (κρατιστος), while Plutarch (*Mor.* VIII. 49) states that Thrasymachus had a book still available in his age under the title *Hyperballontes*, which could be seen as an attempt to trump the *Kataballontes* of Protagoras. What we can tentatively pick up on here, then, is a popular opinion of Thrasymachus as a highly competitive orator who is ruthlessly bold in argument and a big name on the law-court circuit. Such a reputation may actually have worked in Thrasymachus' favour in professional terms and proved quite lucrative – who wouldn't want the mighty Thrasymachus, master of argument, fighting their corner in a court case? For Plato this was dangerous, and so he sought to exploit and expand these characteristics to give the impression that Thrasymachus was not only vicious in the law-court, but also in his everyday life. Even his entrance to the dialogue is fierce, shattering the previously amiable environment (*Rep*. 336b1-6):

> καὶ ὁ Θρασύμαχος πολλάκις μὲν καὶ διαλεγομένων ἡμῶν μεταξὺ ὥρμα ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τοῦ λόγου, ἔπειτα ὑπὸ τῶν παρακαθημένων διεκωλύετο βουλομένων διακοῦσαι τὸν λόγον· ὡς δὲ διεπαυσάμεθα καὶ ἐγὼ ταῦτ᾽ εἶπον, οὐκέτι ἡσυχίαν ἦγεν, ἀλλὰ συστρέψας ἑαυτὸν ὥσπερ θηρίον ἧκεν ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς ὡς διαρπασόμενος.

It should first be noted that here again it is the narrative style of the dialogue that allows us an insight to the countenance of Thrasymachus before he has even said a word; for while all others were listening intently Thrasymachus was repeatedly attempting to

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[328] 1981: 307.
[329] As does Quincey (*Ibid*.).

interrupt. The impression we get is one of impertinence, but his entrance to the dialogue is fuelled by frustration with the quality of argument so far. Though dialectic has the propensity to make one angry,[330] this usually only occurs after engagement with the interlocutor. Thrasymachus, however, enters while already angry and so his fury can only continue to grow and fuel his arrogance throughout the encounter, which makes his downfall all the greater at the end.

Thrasymachus' vehement, argumentative style is compared to that of a beast (ἀλλὰ συστρέψας ἑαυτὸν ὥσπερ θηρίον ἧκεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὡς διαρπασόμενος (336b5-6), a wolf (336d6), a lion (341c2) and a serpent (358b3) with aggressiveness that causes Socrates to tremble (ὑποτρέμω – 336e2). This combative imagery is unlike that which was previously discussed in relation to other sophists,[331] where combative similes are used to merely imply underhand argument.[332] Unlike Hippias, Euthydemus, Prodicus or Dionysodorus who mistake Socratic Irony and Socrates' praise of them as genuine,[333] Thrasymachus sees through Socrates' feigned modesty when Socrates concedes that such discussions are better suited to 'clever fellows' like Thrasymachus (337a1). Thrasymachus instead realises exactly what Socrates is getting at, laughs sarcastically (σαρδάνιος – 337a3), and exclaims ''ὦ Ἡράκλεις,...αὕτη 'κείνη ἡ εἰωθυῖα εἰρωνεία Σωκράτους' (337a4). Emlyn-Jones here notes that Thrasymachus is clearly using the words in the sense of deliberate deceit or "shamming ignorance" which is common in Aristophanes.[334] Socrates, however, keeps up the façade, admitting that Thrasymachus rumbled his attempts at irony because he is so clever (σοφός).[335] Since Thrasymachus has already pulled Socrates up on his shenanigans it is suggested that the irony here is not only meant to be transparent to the reader, but also to the *dramatis personae* assembled at Cephalus' house (327a-328b). Such repeated attempts to make a fool out of Thrasymachus can only have further fuelled his anger; when Socrates further presses him to give his definition of justice, Thrasymachus responds with 'ἡδὺς γὰρ εἶ' ('you are vastly entertaining' – 337d6, Trans. Adam), which Adam labels as a "mock-

[330] Cf. *Ap*. 21c.
[331] Cf. Chap. 2.b.
[332] Like his sophistic bretheren, Thrasymachus also throws (ἔλαβον -344d3) theories, but he then attempts to leave ὥσπερ βαλανεὺς ἡμῶν καταντλήσας κατὰ τῶν ὤτων ἀθρόον καὶ πολὺν τὸν λόγον (344d1). Bath attendants are equated with prostitutes by Aristophanes at *Knights* 1402.
[333] Cf. *Euthyd*. 275e, 285b; *Hipp. Maj*. 281b-d, 298b-c, etc.
[334] 2007: comm on 337a5. Cf. *Ves*. 169-74; *Av*. 1208-111; *Nu*. 444-51.
[335] For negative connotations of σοφός cf. Eur. *Bacc*. 335. Also note earlier Simonides is described as σοφός (335e8-10), yet he will still be banished from Callipolis in books II and III as he does not deal in knowledge.

compliment" on the simplicity of Socrates.[336] Thrasymachus then, however, makes a request that sets him apart in arrogance from any other sophist in the dialogues – he requests payment for his participation in the discussion (ἀλλὰ πρὸς τῷ μαθεῖν καὶ ἀπότεισον ἀργύριον – 337d6-7). Although Hippias, Gorgias, Prodicus and Protagoras all charge for tuition, and indeed some even in private conversations,[337] none have had the audacity to seek a fee for their opinion in an informal discussion – this is akin to a doctor at a dinner party seeking payment for giving advice to another attendee who is feeling unwell. While this may be seen as a mere allusion to Thrasymachus' career in the law-courts, Glaucon's promise to form a consortium to pay the fee certainly suggests that his request was meant to be taken at face value. Indeed, such φιλαργυρία seems to have been a common trait in perceptions of Thrasymachus;[338] Plato mentions him in the *Phaedrus,* along with Lysias, as willing to impart their knowledge only to those who bring them 'gifts as if they were kings' (οἳ ἂν δωροφορεῖν αὐτοῖς ὡς βασιλεῦσιν ἐθέλωσιν – 266c4-5), while similar rapacity can be detected in a fragment of the Middle Comic poet Ephippos (fr. 14) which describes a student 'ἔπειτ᾽ ἀναστὰς εὔστοχος νεανίας τῶν ἐξ Ἀκαδημίας τις ὑποπλατωνικὸς Βρυσωνοθρασυμαχειοληψικερμάτων, πληγεὶς ἀνάγκῃ ληψιλογομίσθῳ τέχνῃ συνών τις…'.[339] Thrasymachus, then, may have been viewed as a particularly avaricious character – even for a sophist – by the general populace, an indelicacy of his personality which Plato is glad to embellish by having him request payment for giving his opinion in an otherwise friendly debate.[340]

Such behaviour must be considered in tandem with Thrasymachus's status in the dialogue, which essentially is that of a foreigner in Athens and a guest in the house of Cephalus and Polemarchus. Despite this, he furiously bursts into a conversation between Polemarchus, his host, and Socrates, a good friend of the household, calling them both simpletons and Socrates a stinker, a sniveller and a pettifogger (336b3-5), all of which give the impression of an angry, slanderous, and conceited personality.[341]

[336] 1902: comm on 337d.
[337] *Hipp. Maj.* 282b-d. Socrates, however, at least on one occasion claims to have paid to attend Prodicus' cheapest lecture – his 'one-drachma course' (*Crat*. 384b3-4).
[338] A trait noted by Quincey (1981:302).
[339] This fragment is discussed in greater detail below at p.191. Here, however, it should mainly be noted for the rapacious qualities it assigns to Thrasymachus.
[340] Whether Ephippos reference to Thraysmachus' money-grabbing tendencies is due his portrayal in the *Republic* or the same general opinion which Plato plays up to is hard to determine. Edmonds (1957) very roughly dates the fragment to ca. 390, an implausibly early date for the completion of the *Republic*.
[341] Adapted from Quincey (1981).

Thrasymachus' argument in the *Republic* boils down to the argument that justice is the advantage of the stronger (338c) – while Socrates' definition of justice only serves to protect the weak from being dominated by the strong, which, so Thrasymachus, prevents a natural consequence of nature. Whether or not Thrasymachus actually supported such reasoning – or indeed if he supported any[342]- is unknowable, but Callicles' similar standpoint in the *Gorgias* suggests such discourse seemed popular among the sophists.[343] Why is Thrasymachus, then, used as the mouthpiece for such a position in the *Republic*? He certainly is the biggest, brashest and most boisterous opponent in the dialogue, but I can only agree with Dillon and Gergel's suggestion that for Plato such a character makes a perfect candidate for "that combative and bombastic propounder of the 'might is right' theory' for his *Republic*".[344] Thrasymachus' character echoes the character of the political system he supports, and his defeat in the dialogue is an important analogy as to how his system is fallible, as it shows in the end that might is *not* right; the thunderous and wealthy Thrasymachus is ultimately torn to pieces by the poor and meek Socrates. Nor are Thrasymachus' animal transformations coincidental – for though he enters bellowing like a wild beast, terrifying Socrates and Polemarchus (336b-e), his role concludes with him being likened to a snake (358b3) as he slithers into the background where he will remain for the rest of the dialogue. Though there is nothing particularly humorous in the whole encounter, Thrasymachus' rude and patronising responses correspond to those which would be given by the *alazon* of a comedy, while his defeat and crash-landing back to reality serve as the most delicious deflation of *alazonic* ignorance.

3. c): Aristophanes the Ass?

For many who read the *Symposium* today, Aristophanes is often remembered as the hero of the piece; his inability to speak initially owing to the ramifications of his overindulgences may be read as a scoff towards the grandiosity of some of the other speakers, yet he still manages to stand and give what initially appears to be one of the finest and most inventive orations of the dialogue. Indeed, for someone who Plato regarded as tacitly responsible for the condemnation of Socrates, Aristophanes appears to receive a surprisingly sympathetic portrayal; for the *Clouds* saw Aristophanes subject Socrates to immeasurable ridicule by placing him centre-stage at the Dionysia as a

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[342] *Phaedr*. 267c-d suggests he employed the standard sophistic trick of being able to speak in a masterly way on a range of topics, rousing the crowd into a frenzy, only to charm them back into acquiescence.
[343] Cf. Antiphon the Sophist fr. 1.
[344] 2003:206.

cultish sophist, which Plato saw as instrumental in damaging the reputation of Socrates and his school of thought.[396] Philosophy was a rich man's endeavour,[397] and while those who knew Socrates may have perhaps seen through Aristophanes' villain, to the masses of everyday Athenians who were unfamiliar, impartial and sometimes wary of such a topic, the fate of Socrates' public image was sealed. Within this comic demographic Socrates never stood a chance; pulled out of his quaint philosophical bubble, he is held for up scrutiny by a group he could never please.

The following section, then, will discuss how in the *Symposium* Plato seeks to remind Aristophanes of the power his pen can yield by gently rebuking him through his own caricature of the comic poet. By taking him out of the comfort zone of his own profession and landing him in the company of the intelligentsia, it is now Plato's turn to hold Aristophanes up for scrutiny amongst his own peers. We now see Aristophanes in an environment from which *he* cannot emerge victorious – the γελωτοποιός amongst some of the most respected experts of the day. In doing so Plato writes his own comedy – yet this time it is Aristophanes and not Socrates who will be the source of laughter, as he plays the buffoon of the piece. Since Aristophanes presented debasing situations with crude and lascivious characters, it might be reasonable to assume that the general public assumed such coarseness to be reflective of its author's actual personality – the promoter of baseness must himself be base. To think this, however, would be false logic, akin to thinking that Homer was as great a soldier as those he depicted, or that Euripides was as tragic as his heroes, or, indeed, that Roddy Doyle is as unrefined as the characters in his novels. Plato, however, is happy to purposefully confound the traits of Aristophanes' characters with those of Aristophanes himself, and thus presents a man as sophisticated as those he brings on stage. While Aristophanes may certainly have been somewhat of a wit or joker, given his popularity and status it is also reasonable to assume that he was able to hold his own among high-society. What Plato presents us with then in his caricature of Aristophanes is not Aristophanes himself, but 'Aristophanes' if he were a character in an Aristophanes play.

Apart from his speech, Aristophanes is most memorable in the *Symposium* for the bout of hiccoughs he suffers before his turn to speak, resulting in his request that Eryximachus either cure him or take his place (185c-e). The intention of these hiccoughs has long been a matter of conjecture; Plochmann, for example, attempts to

[396] Cf. *Ap*. 19c.
[397] Cf. *Ap*. 19e-20b; *Euthyd*. 272a. *Hipp. Maj.* 282b-d; Antiph. fr. 33; Ephippos fr. 14.

relate the hiccoughs with the disharmony of the diaphragm which divides the two lower parts of the soul at *Tim*. 70a.[398] The link here, however, is rather tenuous, and asks a lot of the reader to make such a connection. Moreover, as Clay notes,[399] we have no evidence to suggest that Plato connected hiccoughs with the diaphragm. Others, such as Stephens, Sydenham, Wolf and Shwegler all proposed the hiccoughs were intended to reflect the "indelicate ingredients of [Aristophanes'] speech".[400] Aristophanes, however, has yet to even make his speech, and to propose that once he begins his speech about bisected bisexual humans seeking each other's half, the reader's mind would immediately hark back to his earlier bout of hiccoughs stretches the boundaries of plausibility. Nor should we assume the hiccoughs were merely a device to allow Eryximachus to speak before Aristophanes;[401] this is a constructed work of fiction and so, as Guthrie notes, Plato could have simply "altered the table plan".[402]

The modern scholarship seems to needlessly shy away from the most obvious conclusion in search of loftier alternatives; this obvious conclusion is that which was arrived at by the ancients;[403]namely that by depicting Aristophanes as hungover and suffering from a bout of hiccoughs after indulging himself, Plato simply wants to ridicule the poet by portraying him as a rather unrefined individual – for what other personality trait could Apollodorus refer to when he puts Aristophanes' hiccoughs down to the fact that 'he'd probably stuffed himself (πλησμονή) again'?[404] Such comments denote the mood as humorous, but the laughs are at the expense of Aristophanes' character. To fully appreciate the humour implied, we must remind ourselves of the list of remedies Eryximachus prescribed to Aristophanes to cure his ailment (*Sym.* 185d6-e3):

ἐν ᾧ δ᾽ ἂν ἐγὼ λέγω, ἐὰν μέν σοι ἐθέλῃ ἀπνευστὶ ἔχοντι πολὺν χρόνον παύεσθαι ἡ λύγξ: εἰ δὲ μή, ὕδατι ἀνακογχυλίασον. εἰ δ᾽ ἄρα πάνυ ἰσχυρά ἐστιν, ἀναλαβών τι τοιοῦτον οἵῳ κινήσαις ἂν τὴν ῥῖνα, πτάρε: καὶ ἐὰν τοῦτο ποιήσῃς ἅπαξ ἢ δίς, καὶ εἰ πάνυ ἰσχυρά ἐστι, παύσεται.

Quite a litany of cures it would seem, the effectiveness of which Aristophanes informs us after Eryximachus' speech (*Sym*. 189a1-6):

[398] 1963: 10.
[399] 1975: 279 n8.
[400] All referenced in Bury (1932: xxii).
[401] On this see Hoffman (1941).
[402] 1975: 382 n2.
[403] Ath. 187C; Olymp. *VP* 3.
[404] *Sym.* 185c6 – Trans. Nehamas and Woodruff.

ἐκδεξάμενον οὖν ἔφη εἰπεῖν τὸν Ἀριστοφάνη ὅτι καὶ μάλ᾽ ἐπαύσατο, οὐ μέντοι πρίν γε τὸν πταρμὸν προσενεχθῆναι αὐτῇ, ὥστε με θαυμάζειν εἰ τὸ κόσμιον τοῦ σώματος ἐπιθυμεῖ τοιούτων ψόφων καὶ γαργαλισμῶν, οἷον καὶ ὁ πταρμός ἐστιν· πάνυ γὰρ εὐθὺς ἐπαύσατο, ἐπειδὴ αὐτῷ τὸν πταρμὸν προσήνεγκα.

Aristophanes, then, had first resorted to holding his breath for sustained periods, then gargling water or other liquids, before finally being cured by inducing a sneezing fit from tickling his nose with a feather. The effect this display had on the ambience of the symposium could only be off-putting, and is perhaps most lively illustrated by Clay: "What all this means is while Eryximachus is delivering us of his pompous and profound description of Eros, his unfortunate neighbour is hiccoughing, gasping, gargling, wheezing, snorting and sneezing".[405] While Clay's animated description of the episode cannot but bring a smirk to one's face, his sympathies may be slightly misguided; he interprets the intention of Aristophanes' hiccoughs as a counteraction to deflate the pomposity of Eryximachus, and thus follows the tradition which holds that Plato is parodying Eryximachus as the archetypal pedant expert.[406] Clay certainly has a point; the juxtaposition *is* funny, one figure attempting to speak with authority and confidence while his neighbour hiccoughs and belches due to his over-indulgence. The admiration Aristophanes' forthrightness seems to elicit in Clay, however, may be imprudent;[407] for if there is a caricature of Eryximachus at play[408] – and that Aristophanes' bodily functions serve as a whimsical reaction to this – we must note that Aristophanes' hiccoughs could not just have come upon him the moment before he or Eryximachus were about to speak, but rather would have been constant and, more importantly, obvious, throughout the previous speeches of Phaedrus and Pausanias, only then to be followed by a full on display of gasping, gurgling, tickling and sneezing during Eryximachus' speech . This reveals a more boorish element of Aristophanes' character - the group had earlier decided to shun alcohol for the night and dismissed the

[405] 1975: 43.

[406] Cf. Gildersleeve (1909), von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1929; 361-367); for opinions opposing this see Osler (1905; 24) and Edelstein (1945).

[407] Clay argues that we have a sympathetic portrayal of Aristophanes on the grounds that he gives "one of the most important speeches in the *Symposium*" (1975:242), basing his assertion on the fact that Diotima later refers to his speech (205d) and Aristophanes himself recognises himself in it (212c3). Clay, however, is misguided here, as Diotima refers to the speech in a derogatory manner.

[408] The temperment of the 'doctor' of comedy proves a tricky animal to pin down; while Cornford in his survey of stock masks for Old Comedy lists one as that of the 'Learned Doctor or Pedant' (1917:175) and Crates (fr. 45) has a rather solemn doctor attepmting to draw blood, Epicrates (fr. 10) contrarily has a rather coarse doctor pass wind on Plato's head (cf. Chap. 7.b.). In the 4th century, both Alexis (fr. 117) and Diphilus (fr. 98) have a doctor boast about the efficiency of his trade. In the New Comedy, however, the doctor has developed into more of a quack-type character, who hoodwinks his patients into paying inflated prices for basic remedies by giving them luxurious sounding names (Cf. Men. *Aspis* 430-465, Alex. fr. 146). For doctor scenes in Roman Comedy cf. Fantham (2011: 27-31).

flute girl (176e6-8) in favour of a night of sober, intellectual praise of Eros, but while all parties attempt to listen intently to the speaker, they are repeatedly distracted by the churns and gurgles of Aristophanes. Such uncouthness has no place in such a cultured environment. The sceptical reader might here raise the issue that since Aristophanes' hiccoughs and belches are not mentioned prior to the speeches' beginning, the reader is only aware of the distraction they might have caused retrospectively, and this holds little-to-no comedy value. I certainly grant that the maximum comic effect could only be achieved if one actually witnesses Aristophanes' disruptions in real-time, and so here I refer to the tradition which holds that the dialogues were performed. That the dialogues were recounted by a single reader should be evident from the slave's recounting of the meeting between Socrates and Theaetetus in the introduction to the latter's eponymous dialogue, but this argument has been furthered to suggest that the dialogues were actually *acted out* in the Academy.[409] If this were the case, then Aristophanes' interruptions should have been instantly obvious each time they occurred.[410] While the evidence for such performance is admittedly speculative, in any case Aristophanes' hiccoughs, whether intended to be presented physically or retrospectively, should inform us of the type of character which Plato intends to present Aristophanes to be, namely, the indelicate merry-andrew who is inattentive to initially sober environment and the intellectual discussion going on around him.

The buffoonery of Aristophanes reaches its pinnacle as he rises to make his speech (189a-193d). Eryximachus is wary; Aristophanes' previous comments about orderly love calling for the 'sounds and itchings that constitute a sneeze' (189a4) fundamentally imply that he is not taking the situation very seriously at all. Eryximachus warns him "ὠγαθέ, φάναι, Ἀριστόφανες, ὅρα τί ποιεῖς. γελωτοποιεῖς μέλλων λέγειν, καὶ φύλακά με

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[409] Perhaps the most famous proponent of this theory is Ryle (1966: esp. pp. 23-44), who goes as far to suppose that it was standard for Plato to play the role of Socrates, with the absence of Socrates in the later dialogues implying the fact that Plato was no longer physically able to assume the part due to his increasing age. Blondell (2002: 23-28) allows for smaller 'dramatic' performances of the more simple 'play script' dialogues. More recently, the argument has been presented by Charalabopoulos (2012) – albeit with varying degrees of plausibility.

[410] While Blondell allows for the performance of certain dialogues, she explicitly states that it is "unlikely that anyone would compose a narrated dialogue, especially one with the complex narrative structure of the *Symposium* or *Parmenides*, to be staged as a drama in which different speakers adopt different roles" (2002: 24). Such an assumption, however, would implicitly render many of the dialogues which are so rich in dramatic or comic elements un-performable. Moreover, as Blondell herself notes, however, such a problem is easily remedied once the narrator is removed; Blondell then cites Rush Rehm's 1992 production in Atlanta, GA, and also Leo Aylen and Jonathan Miller's 1965 film version *The Drinking Party* as successful examples of this (2002: 24 n70) to which I might also add James Runcie's recent 2014 production at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, UK.

τοῦ λόγου ἀναγκάζεις γίγνεσθαι τοῦ σεαυτοῦ, ἐάν τι γελοῖον εἴπῃς, ἐξόν σοι ἐν εἰρήνῃ λέγειν" (189a6-b2).[411] Indeed, Aristophanes responds that he does not mind if he says something absurd or amusing (γέλοιος) but is fearful he might say something ridiculous (καταγέλαστος).[412] Despite this, however, Dover argues that he still does - describing the speech as belonging to the "lower level of sophistication".[413] Assessing Dover's reasoning might be made easier after a brief reminder of the speech's content: Aristophanes begins by telling Pausanias and Eryximachus they have missed the point completely, but he will now explain the power of Eros and asks for his teaching to be passed on to everyone else (198c-d). He explains that long ago, there were three sexes: male, female and androgynous (189d7-e5). These humans were completely round, consisting of four hands, four legs, two faces, four ears and two sets of genitalia (the 'male' sex having two sets of male genitalia, 'female' two of the female set and the 'androgynous' one of each), and cartwheeled about rapidly (189e6-190a7). Such was the strength of this race that after an attempted coup on the gods, Zeus cut them in two to limit their power. If they still refused to be peaceful Zeus would cut them in half again, so that the human race would be reduced to hopping around on one leg (190b5-190e1). He then goes on to explain how certain anatomical features, such as the navel and breasts are a result of the wound from the incision and serve to remind us of the gods' wrath (190e2-191a5). Each human, however, longs to embrace its missing half - those men who were the result of an 'all-male' parting seek out other men, while those from a female parting seek out women. The 'lecherous' (φιλογύνης) men and women who chase after the opposite sex are the result of an androgynous parting. (191d6-192a1). Those of the all-male orientated youth who desire to lie with older men are the best as they are most manly in nature, because they are brave and bold and cherish what is like themselves, and it is such boys who succeed best in politics, and will themselves in turn engage in pederastic relationships when they reach middle age (192a2-b1). When someone, then, meets their other half, they become struck by love, and become inseparable even for a moment, as they are most akin to their natural state, and their supreme wish would be to be rejoined as one again; love is thus our desire for wholeness, to be complete (192d1-193a1). Aristophanes then strikes a more cautious

[411] Eryximachus' authority here is often mistaken as an indicator of his pomposity; Dover, however, notes that the election of a συμποσίαρχος was common at such banquets (cf. Xen. *Anab*. 6.1.30). Although no one is formally elected here, Eryximachus – perhaps due to his pomposity – seems to elect himself, even reinforcing his authority again at 214a-e after the drunken arrival of Alcibiades. Cf. Dover (1980: 11).
[412] 189b5-7.
[413] 1980: 44.

note, reminding us again of the gods' willingness to halve us again should we be disrespectful, resulting in us walking about like figures in bas-relief (193b2-7). He concludes on a more jovial note, urging us to praise the gods in the hope that one day they will restore us to our original nature (193d1-7).

The tale is novel to the modern reader – it gives that 'warm and fuzzy feeling' inside – but to the original Athenian readership it would have appeared wholly unoriginal; Dover notes several elements of the speech which are typical of stories akin to old wives' tales and labels it as "unsophisticated folklore",[414] citing a catalogue of similar folklore tales with similar themes on the origin of sexual love or the origin of the human race.[415] Also present is the traditional warning contained in most folklore; just as Aristophanes warns us to respect the gods lest we be destroyed, so too does Aesop,[416] who, in anger with a ferryman, warns him that Charybdis' first burst exposed the mountains, its second the islands and plains, and with its last will suck down all the water (thus either denying him his trade, or worse, sucking the ferryman down along with the water).

The speech still remains popular among modern readers, but the major question we must ask is as such: does, would, or could anybody view this story as an actual intellectual effort to describe Eros? Or even a misguided attempt at one? This is the exact same problem Aristophanes' speech faced from the Athenian readership – a pleasant story but totally incredible; Phaedrus cites heavyweights Parmenides, Hesiod and the 6th century logographer Acusilaus to support his claim that Eros is the oldest of the gods.[417] Pausanias uses his legal expertise to explain his point that there is a 'good' and 'bad' Eros, showing how Athenian law distinguishes between the two (183a-185b). Eryximachus then uses his medical knowledge to explain the different types of love within the body. All previous speeches then, have been based upon credible, academic foundations. Aristophanes' oration does not have such foundations; his argument is easily destroyed once the point is made that if our ancestors *were* bisected through the middle, and the individuals at the time sought their other half, why should we still do the same? This could only happen should we ourselves be the immediate product of the

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[414] 1966: 45.
[415] *Ibid.*: 42-44. Dover lists several example examples from Spanish and French folktales, yet for a modern example with similar traditional/mythological origins we only need to think of stories about the stork delivering babies.
[416] At Arist. *Meteor*. 356b 9-17, as noted by Dover (1966:43).
[417] 178b-c.

bisection. Indeed, Dover notes that such "gay indifference" towards the distinction between individuals is characteristic of such folklore tales such as 'how the leopard got his spots'.[418] Dover's conclusions here, however, are perhaps misguided. Aristophanes' reliance on established tropes should not be as damning as Dover implies; this was common in tragedy – unless we argue that Sophocles created the myth of Oedipus and Euripides the story of Medea – but here the skill and artistry lies in manipulating the material to give it sufficient novelty. This is also common in comedy – one need look no further than the *Thesmophriazusae* for evidence of this – and this is also what we see at play in Aristophanes' speech. Ever the comedian, Aristophanes is applying similar fantasy to his myth on the nature of Eros as we might see one of his characters do. While his speech may seem to lack the academic depth of those of his fellow symposiasts, to tax him overly with ignorance would be unfair as his speech is what is meant to be – a comic fantasy – and akin to one that we expect from a character in a comedy. If it seems incredulous in comparison with the others, it is because it is *meant* to be.

Eisner notes that the pederastic love praised by the speakers was limited to the upper echelons of Athenian society.[419] The masses – ie. Aristophanes' audience – were unfamiliar with such ideas and balked at them, and so Aristophanes has no experience in speaking in this type of forum. Thus Aristophanes knows he is out of his depth, which he admits as he warns his speech might seem absurd (189b5-7). Indeed, jokes there seem to be; his assertion that those boys who are in pederastic relationships go on to become eminent in politics seems quite absurd and out of place (192a1-b2); it may be the case that young men submitted to performing sexual acts as a means of gaining favour and progressing in political circles, but to assume it is the actual sexual act that is indicative of one's potential is very naive. It would seem Aristophanes here is attempting remind us of his better moments, as this joke about buggery being a sure-fire way into politics prevails in his comedies; in *Clouds* we see Unjust ask Just where he thinks the best speakers come from, to which Just concedes "ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων."[420] A similar joke occurs at *Ecc*. 112-3, as Praxagora comments that those in the best position

[418] 1966: 66.
[419] 1979: 418.
[420] *Nu.* 1090.

for public speaking are those who are made love to most often, and so being women, they should be in prime position.[421]

Later there comes a quite more blatant allusion to the comedies; as Aristophanes concludes his speech he turns to Eryximachus and asks: "καὶ μή μοι ὑπολάβῃ Ἐρυξίμαχος, κωμῳδῶν τὸν λόγον, ὡς Παυσανίαν καὶ Ἀγάθωνα λέγω—ἴσως μὲν γὰρ καὶ οὗτοι τούτων τυγχάνουσιν ὄντες καί εἰσιν ἀμφότεροι τὴν φύσιν ἄρρενες"(193b6-c1). The implication that Aristophanes is *not* making a comedy and is *not* pointing it at Agathon who in the end is *probably* male is not very subtle. The elephant in the room here is of course Aristophanes' scathing portrayal of Agathon as an effeminate cross-dresser in the *Thesmophriazusae.*[422] If this Aristophanes' apology it doesn't seem too heartfelt. If the allusion, however, was an attempt to elicit laughter or banter from the group we see a curious pattern develop – for later we will hear Alcibiades quote fondly from the *Clouds.*[423] Here, then, are two men, Agathon and Socrates, socialising jovially with a man who wrote two comedies that lambasted each of them. By having Aristophanes jestingly allude to the *Thesmophoriasuzae* whilst in the company of Agathon, and Alcibiades quote fondly from *Clouds*, Plato may here seek to remind us that the plays were merely just joshing between friends, and not to be taken seriously. Due to the relatively small size of Athens in comparison with modern societies, it must be remembered that it would not be as peculiar to feature or be mentioned in a comedy as it would in modernity. Sommerstein, in his article on 'How to avoid being a *komodoumenos*' estimates that depending on one's profession there would exist a 31-61% chance of them featuring in a comedy in the late 5th century,[424] and concludes that "virtually anyone in the public eye could expect to become a target of comic satire."[425] Anyone, thus, who came away with a negative perception of the characters on stage has misconstrued the situation, as neither the author, nor his subjects, took it seriously.

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[421] Plato Comicus makes a similar joke in fr. 202.5: κεκολλόπευκας· τοιυαροῦν ῥήτωρ ἔσῃ. "You've been buggered, that means you're going to be a politician" – Trans. Storey.

[422] Here, we have an anachronism; the setting of the dialogue is universally dated to Agathon's victory at the Lenaea of 416; The *Thesmophoriazusae*, however, was not first produced until 411. Plato is also anachronistic when he has Alcibiades quote *Clouds* later in the dialogue (212a-c); Alcibiades says that when he saw Socrates at the battle of Delium, he remembered Aristophanes' description of him at *Nu.* 362. The battle of Delium, however, occurred in 424, while the first *Clouds* was not produced until a year later at the Dionysia of 423.

[423] *Sym.* 221b5.

[424] Sommerstein (1996: 327-331).

[425] *Ibid*: 331.

Despite this, Plato does not let Aristophanes completely off the hook, and indeed seeks some poetic justice to remind Aristophanes of the power of the pen. Aristophanes is well remembered and recognised in modernity for his discourse on these four-limbed people being cut in two, but as Eisner notes,[427] these are words Aristophanes himself would never bring himself to utter. It must be remembered that, far from eulogizing pederasty and debasing heterosexuality, Aristophanes' comedies are a paean to the traditional Athenian household – most of the heroes have spouses, or at least lust after the opposite sex. Conversely, as we have seen with Agathon, effeminacy is pilloried. There is no way, then, that Aristophanes would publicly support the homoerotic subject of his speech, yet many would assume he did just this purely because of his oration in the *Symposium*. While it may be noted that just as Aristophanes created a false profile of Socrates, so too did Plato with Aristophanes, the similarities of their techniques in doing so must also be highlighted. For both took well known attributes of the person in question – Aristophanes' perceived bombasticisism and Socrates' peculiar lifestyle – and blew them up, but also added their own elements to create a rather unbecoming caricature.

[427] 1979: 18-19.

Chapter 4: Plato's use of Comic Language.

In combination with enlivening certain characters with the use of motifs and caricature, Plato bolsters their comicality by having them use language his contemporary audience would have recognised as more suited to the comic stage than philosophical exposition. It must be remembered that dialogues such as the *Euthydemus* and *Protagoras* present themselves as philosophical discussions, and thus one would expect the language in such a work to suit accordingly. It is rather surprising, then, to find characters using language that ranges from the overly-dramatic to the down-right bawdy; for several 'scenes' in the dialogues employ language that would seem almost to be directly lifted from comedy. Such cases can loosely be classed as fitting into the following categories: Door Scenes, Portentous Language, The Late Learner and Threats or Insults, and so will be discussed accordingly.

4. a) Door Scenes:

Perhaps the best example of Plato's fusion of comic motifs and language occurs at *Prot.* 314c-d, the culmination of the introduction of the dialogue, which was discussed briefly at various stages in Chapters 1-3. In what may be one of the most comic scenes of the entire corpus,[428] we see Socrates and Hipponicus banging on the door of Callias before being turned away by a eunuch doorman. The scene itself, however, has never been put under the scrutiny it warrants, but once done so reveals itself to be even more reflective of comedy than is already apparent – it has previously been discussed how the 'door-keeper scene' is a stock trait of comedy, usually, but not always, occurring at the stage of the play when the characters set out on their mission, only to be hindered by a surly doorman.[429] At 314d3-e2, however, the comedy is heightened as Socrates knocks and is met by the impudent doorkeeper who uses some rather peculiar language:

'**ἔα,**' ἔφη, 'σοφισταί τινες: **οὐ σχολὴ αὐτῷ**:' καὶ ἅμα ἀμφοῖν τοῖν χεροῖν τὴν θύραν πάνυ προθύμως ὡς οἷός τ' ἦν ἐπήραξεν. καὶ ἡμεῖς πάλιν ἐκρούομεν, καὶ ὃς ἐγκεκλῃμένης τῆς θύρας ἀποκρινόμενος εἶπεν, '**ὦ ἄνθρωποι,**' ἔφη, 'οὐκ ἀκηκόατε ὅτι **οὐ σχολὴ αὐτῷ**;' 'ἀλλ' ὠγαθέ,' ἔφην ἐγώ, 'οὔτε παρὰ Καλλίαν ἥκομεν οὔτε σοφισταί ἐσμεν. ἀλλὰ θάρρει: Πρωταγόραν γάρ τοι δεόμενοι ἰδεῖν ἤλθομεν: εἰσάγγειλον οὖν.' μόγις οὖν ποτε ἡμῖν ἄνθρωπος ἀνέῳξεν τὴν θύραν.

The doorkeeper's initial exclamation – ἔα (perhaps best translated as 'What's this?' or 'Hullo!') – is a typical dramatic expression of surprise; it is normally reserved for

[428] Indeed, Brock (1990:47) notes this as the only passage in the dialogue that reflects comedy.
[429] Cf. pp. 44-45 above.

characters expressing such emotion in tragedy or comedy,[430] so much so, in fact, that the first uses of it in prose are the example above, *Euthyd*. 302c2 – where Socrates expresses his exasperation at Dionysodorus' mad-cap eristic – and at *Charm*. 163e6 & 166d9.[431] The eunuch then refers to αὐτός – 'himself' – not being at leisure. While αὐτός may simply refer to the 'master' of the house – i.e. Callias – we must recall the usage of the word by the student of the *Phrontisterion* in referring to his master in the more oracular sense as Socrates arrives at *Nu*. 219,[432] in which case it seems to refer more to an omniscient leader than the head of a household.[433] This may well in turn pun on the Pythagorean phrase 'αὐτός ἔφα'[434] – used by students of Pythagoreanism when quoting doctrines allegedly spoken by their master, akin to a modern priest concluding a biblical reading with "this is the word of The Lord". We must be cautious, however, in proposing that it is to the mysticism of the Pythagoreans that Plato also alludes, as the link is rather tenuous. More intriguing, however, is not only the fact that Socrates and Hippocrates are initially refused entrance, a staple of the stock scene, but the exact phrasing used by Plato in the Eunuch's denial: οὐ σχολὴ αὐτῷ, 'he's not at leisure'. While σχολή is not an uncommon noun, it should be noted that it is used in comic door-scenes when refusing access,[435] thus hindering the action of the play; Dikaiopolis, for example, receives a similar rejection from Euripides after failing with his doorman at *Ach*. 405*ff*.

Δικαιόπολις
ἀλλ' ὅμως:
οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἀπέλθοιμ', ἀλλὰ κόψω τὴν θύραν.
Εὐριπίδη, Εὐριπίδιον,
ὑπάκουσον, εἴπερ πώποτ' ἀνθρώπων τινί:
Δικαιόπολις καλεῖ σε Χολλῄδης, ἐγώ.

Εὐριπίδης
ἀλλ' **οὐ σχολή**.

Δικαιόπολις
ἀλλ' ἐκκυκλήθητ'.

[430] Cf. Aesch. *Pr*. 300, 688; Eur. *Hip*. 323, *Hec*. 501, 1116, *Med*. 1005; Soph. *OC* .1477. Ar. *Av*. 327, 1496, *Thes*. 699. *Plt*. 824, *Pax* 960, *Nu*.1259, Ezek. *Exag*. 90. In each case it is used to express shock or surprise.
[431] The next recorded non-dramatic use of the term in the *TLG* is not until the New Testament (Luke 4.34)
[432] Cf. Dover *ad loc*.
[433] Cf. Revermann (2006: 135).
[434] D. L. 8.22.
[435] The *TLG* gives *Acharnians* as the first direct uses of οὐ σχολή. The phrase also appears in Middle and New Comedy (cf. Alex. frr. 163 (with p. 143 below) and Men. *Dysk*. 196, although in these cases the door-scene is absent and had perhaps vanished completely from comedies of this era). Aristotle also uses the phrase in a much more literal sense when discussing the leisure-time of slaves at *Pol*. 1134a21.

Εὐριπίδης
ἀλλ᾽ ἀδύνατον.

Δικαιόπολις
ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως.

Εὐριπίδης
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκκυκλήσομαι: καταβαίνειν δ᾽ **οὐ σχολή.**

Similarly, when the Student of the *Phrontisterion* tires of Strepsiades, he tells him to call Socrates himself, dismissing him with 'οὐ γάρ μοι σχολή.'[436] The prevalence of door scenes in Old Comedy combined with the use of οὐ σχολή in the door scenes of the *Protagoras* , *Acharnians* and *Clouds* points to the possibility that οὐ σχολή may have been a standard rebuttal in door scenes from non-surviving comedy. Storey[437] suspects Plato's door scene is not without its precedents – but this leads him not only to imply that this precedent must have originated in Eupolis' *Kolakes*, but also to suggest that fr.157 may be an extract from such a scene; while his proposal is interesting – it is after all quite plausible the *Kolakes* contained a door scene – it would not be reasonable to rush to ascribe to it one of the scant few remaining fragments of the play.[438] The door-keeper also seems to be of the opinion that he is of a much higher social standing than that to which he actually belongs, as he addresses his guests with 'ὦ ἄνθρωποι'. Denyer[439] notes that this mode of address was how the gods addressed human beings[440] and how legislators addressed subjects,[441] highlighting that 'ὦ ἄνδρες' would be more polite. This brusqueness, however, may be to the delight of his master, as simply by having a eunuch in his house, Callias gives an impression of expensive, oriental luxury – exacerbated by the fact that Callias has him do such a mundane and low job as door keeping.[442]

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[436] *Nu*. 220.
[437] 2003:184-185.
[438] Storey's interests are piqued by the first line of fragment 157: "Ἔνδοθι μέν ἐστι Πρωταγόρας ὁ Τήιος". He cites Tylawsky (2002: 44 -7) in stressing the fact that both here and in Plato, Protagoras is 'inside'. While I see this as trivial at best, Tylawsky sees this as a sign of Protagoras' 'indolence and insolence' and his power over Callias. Storey is, perhaps rightly, more cautious; he also makes the more plausible suggestion that the fragment belongs to an exposition in the prologue in which the basic situation is outlined.
[439] 2008: comm. on 314d5.
[440] *Clit.* 407b1; *Symp.* 192d4; *Ap.* 23b2.
[441] *Crat.* 408b1.
[442] Denyer (2008:comm. on 314c7).

4. b) Portentous Language:

The above instance of Plato associating rather lofty language with those amongst sophistic circles is not unique; in the *Euthydemus* we see Socrates use archaic, almost epic, exhortations when addressing the eristic brothers: he asks the Sophists to be 'propitious' (ἵλεω εἶτον – 273e6),[443] compares them to the mythical Egyptian sophist Proteus and prays them to reveal their wisdom (288b7), greets each new boast with prayerful exclamations,[444] and makes epic allusions (288c1-2). Ctesippus is of a similar disposition as he bursts onto the scene at *Euthyd*. 283e. He begins with the appellation 'ὦ ξένε Θούριε,' (283e2) which builds an expectation of formality, only to be followed by crudity.[445] Neither is this the sole occurrence of Ctesippus using such a formal mode of address with such brazen irony towards the brothers; at 288a-b he employs the language of prayer, which uses as many titles as possible,[446] poking fun at the Sophists' ambiguous itinerancy and the non-consistency of their beliefs –'ὦ ἄνδρες Θούριοι εἴτε Χῖοι εἴθ᾽ ὁπόθεν καὶ ὅπῃ χαίρετον ὀνομαζόμενοι: ὡς οὐδὲν ὑμῖν μέλει τοῦ παραληρεῖν'(288a8-b2).

The purpose of such language is twofold; not only does such a laudatory address stir up anticipation in the reader regarding what we are about to hear from someone deserving such solemnity – and indeed makes the reader laugh as he falls on his face – but the contrast between the naivety of Socrates and the outlandish hubris of the sophists also maximises the absurdity of the situation. Indeed, Aristophanes has Strepsiades use such elevated language to describe the Clouds of the *Phrontisterion* (*Nu.* 358-64):

Χορός
χαῖρ᾽ ὦ πρεσβῦτα παλαιογενὲς θηρατὰ λόγων φιλομούσων,
σύ τε λεπτοτάτων λήρων ἱερεῦ, φράζε πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὅ τι χρῄζεις:
οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλῳ γ᾽ ὑπακούσαιμεν τῶν νῦν μετεωροσοφιστῶν
πλὴν ἢ Προδίκῳ, τῷ μὲν σοφίας καὶ γνώμης οὕνεκα, σοὶ δέ,

[443] ἵλαος is common among the archaic poets (cf. Hom *Il.* 1.583, 9.639, 19.178; HH. *In Cerem* 204, *In Vestam* 10; Hes. *WD*. 340; Archil. frr. 23.10, 94.2, 108.2, Pind. *Olymp.* 3.34, *Pyth*. 12.4) and the tragedians (Aesch. *Eum*. 1039, Fr. 168.25; Eur. *IT*. 271, *Hel*. 1007, 1074; Soph. *Aj*. 1009, *El.* 655, 1376, *Trach*. 763, *OC*. 44, 1480). Herodotus uses it when describing Thracian and Aeginetan sacrificial practices (4.94.11 & 6.91.6). *TLG* lists a fragment from Phrynichus' *Revellers* (fr. 16) as the first comic use of the word. The play possibly dates from between 420-410 and the subject may have been centred on a drunken parody of the Eleusinian Mysteries (cf. Storey, 2007c: 54-55). Aristophanes also uses it at *Thes*. 1148 during the mock-cultic choral interlude.
[444] ὦ πρός θεῶν; ὠ πρός Δίος etc.
[445] That such debasement of formal address is prevalent in comedy goes without saying; however, for Aristophanes' use of such a motif in the debunking of pseudo-intellectualism, see Strepsiades' greeting to Socrates at *Nu.* 223, his greeting to the Clouds at 293, and compliment to Socrates at 1150.
[446] Cf. Hawtrey *ad loc.*

ὅτι βρενθύει τ᾽ ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς καὶ τὠφθαλμὼ παραβάλλεις,
κἀνυπόδητος κακὰ πόλλ᾽ ἀνέχει κἀφ᾽ ἡμῖν σεμνοπροσωπεῖς.

Στρεψιάδης
ὦ γῆ τοῦ φθέγματος, ὡς ἱερὸν καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ **τερατῶδες.**

The passage sees Strepsiades fall hook, line and sinker for the meretricious charms of the *Phrontisterion*, just as we see Socrates do with the sophists in the *Euthydemus*. More interesting, however, is Plato's use of the same word τερατῶδες – meaning 'prodigious' or 'portentous' (LSJ) – to describe Euthydemus' wisdom at 296e2. This particular choice of adjective is rather unusual in its rarity; *TLG* shows its only prior recorded uses before *Clouds* to have been a single use by Acusilaus[447] a single use in the Hippocratic corpus[448], a single use by Ctesius,[449] and that it is Plato's only use of the word.[451] Is Plato, then, equating the motives of the brothers with those of the comic Socrates in an attempt to warn people of the (exaggerated) dangers of enrolling in the schools of his rivals? Indeed, Plato earlier uses ἵλαος to similarly describe Dionysodorus' wisdom at 273e6. This suggests that Plato was well aware of the peculiarities in choosing a word like τερατῶδες, and that the choice was deliberate. That Plato was unaware of the connotations the word may carry is highly improbable, for he most certainly knew the passage, as it is this very scene he has Alcibiades quote fondly from as he describes Socrates at *Symp.* 221b1-4:

Λάχητος τῷ ἔμφρων εἶναι: ἔπειτα ἔμοιγ᾽ ἐδόκει, ὦ Ἀριστόφανες, τὸ σὸν δὴ τοῦτο, καὶ ἐκεῖ διαπορεύεσθαι ὥσπερ καὶ ἐνθάδε, "βρενθυόμενος καὶ τὠφθαλμὼ παραβάλλων".

4. c) The 'Late Learner':

At *Euthyd.* 272c2-6, Socrates tells Crito of a recent embarrassing venture in which he attempted to learn the harp under Konnos alongside a group of much younger boys. His inability to keep up with the younger students, however, made him a laughing stock and left Konnos in disgrace, leading the students to christen him the 'γεροντοδιδάσκαλον'(272c5) – 'The Old Man's Teacher'. The word is a hapax legomenon and noticeably comic in its construction; this habit of smashing two words of distinctly different meaning together to create a new unique word is standard fare of Old Comedy. The most notable example, perhaps, is that of Kratinos in his *Pytine* (fr.

[447] Fr. 6.3. For Plato's knowledge of Acusilaus cf. *Symp*. 178b.
[448] Section I, line 10. The dating of the corpus, however, is highly conjectural, and it might indeed be argued to proceed *Clouds*.
[449] Fr. 11c.3.
[451] It is also used once by Isocrates in praise of Agamemnon at 12.77.6.

342) where he accuses Aristophanes of εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων – 'Euripidaristophanizing' – in the sense that Aristophanes chastises the style of Euripides, but also simultaneously plagiarises it. In a similar formulation, Ephippos (fr. 14) describes the manner of speech of a young Academician as Βρυσωνοθρασυμαχειοληψικερμάτων.[452] Such a word formation, then, suggests that Plato here is attempting to play at being a comic poet. Indeed, both Konnos and Socrates did feature together in Ameipsias' fragmentary *Konnos*, which pipped the original *Clouds* to second place in 423, and in which a chorus of *phrontistai* poked fun at Socrates about his ragged dress and ascetic lifestyle (Fr. 9). Alternatively, could one conjecturally cite Ameipsias as the source for the notion of a γεροντοδιδάσκαλον, possibly in reference to Konnos himself,[453] or another lost play on a similar topic by another poet, which Plato is echoing?[454] Although Konnos certainly had a comic reputation for being a dim-witted curmudgeon,[455] not much more can be said with any certainty regarding the plotline of the *Konnos*.[456] It must also be noted that 'The Late Learner' became a stock character at least by the beginning of New Comedy (c320), for he has his place amongst Theophrastus' list of stock characters, [457] yet the origin of this type can be detected as far back as Strepsiades, whose advanced age is made much of in *Clouds* – especially in reference to his inability to grasp the school's teaching.[458] The role is reprised by Socrates in the *Euthydemus*; from the outset he is eager to enrol with the brothers, but is apprehensive throughout that his age might cause problems.[459] These predictions are proven true, for as the dialogue progresses he is not at all made to feel at ease over his age by the eristic brothers; he is called a 'Cronus' by Dionysodorus (287b3) when he fails to 'grasp' his argument. This sense of associating new avant-garde thinking with a younger indecorous generation of upstarts and pitted against 'old

[452] Nor should we forget Aristophanes' coining of the longest word in Ancient Greek in the finale of the *Assemblywomen* (1170-75) - λοπαδοτεμαχοσελαχογαλεοκρανιολειψανοδριμυποτριμματοσιλφιοκαραβο-μελιτοκατακεχυμενοκιχλεπικοσσυφοφαττοπεριστεραλεκτρυονοπτοκεφαλλιοκιγκλοπελειολαγῳοσιραιο-βαφητραγανοπτερύγων – "a dish compounded of all kinds of dainties, fish, flesh, fowl, and sauces" (LSJ).
[453] Konnos was presented as on the verge of senility the previous year in Ar. *Eq.* 534.
[454] It is likely that Konnos also appeared in Eupolis' *Goats*; cf. Storey (2003)
[455] Cf. Ar. *Eq.* 530-55, *Ves.* 765 with scholia; *comm. adesp.* 93.
[456] Hawtrey (1983: comm on 295d6) suggests that Konnos' frustrations with Socrates in the *Euthydemus* serve to echo those of Aristophanes' Socrates with Strepsiades in the *Clouds* (e.g. *Nu*. 790). Here, however, it seems Hawtrey may jump too hastily to the most convenient and available conclusion; Plato had a vast range of comedy from which to incorporate, nor was *Clouds* exclusive in featuring Socrates (Cf. Chap. 5.a), and so there is no reason as to why Plato would allude only to *Clouds*. For a broader discussion of the *Konnos* cf. Carey (2000).
[457] For the period in which Theophrastus flourished see Dorandi (1999: 52-53).
[458] Cf. *Nu.* 128, 358, 398, 493, 790 etc.
[459] Cf. *Euthyd.* 272b5-c7, 287b2-c2.

fashioned' traditional values is also present in comedy; Just is also twice called a 'Cronus' by the Unjust Argument of the *Phrontisterion,*[460] while Dover champions the victory of the austere morality of Aeschylus over the avant-garde outlook of Euripides in *Frogs* as "a victory of stern antique virtues over decadence".[461]

Since, however, an exact comic pretext for γεροντοδιδάσκαλον cannot be established, it might be argued that there is a non-comic influence here, since it was not just the comics who were responsible for the coining of derisive compounds.[462] On this point, however, Tarrant puts forward quite a reasonable and well-thought out case for a solid link between Socrates as the γεροντοδιδάσκαλος and 5th century comedy.[463] Tarrant follows Hawtrey in saying that it sounds like a comic coinage, both because of its length and that it would fit comfortably into anapaestic or dactylic metre.[464] Though admitting that we can only speculate on the relationship between Socrates and Connus in the latter's eponymous play, he states that "we can be assured that the scene had plenty of comic potential….Socrates had a reputation for asking seemingly uncouth, naïve, or ridiculous questions, and for seeking clarifications which no ordinary person would have sought…[T]here would have been great comic potential for humorous misunderstandings between Socrates and Connus, misunderstandings partly due to Socrates having been unable or unwilling to adapt to the language of the sophisticated music master."[465] If we consider the *Konnos* in relation to the *Clouds*, we can see the motif of role of the Late Learner figures in the play, but here with the roles reversed: Socrates is now the instructor who must have to suffer the late learner, instead of being the insufferable student as he might have been in the *Konnos*.[466]

What we must remember here, however, is that both plays - which share the common element of featuring Socrates in some sort of educational capacity – were presented in the same year at the same festival. Noting this, Tarrant is right to consider whether something caused Socrates "to attract considerable attention of late, and it must have been something to do with mature age studies". The short answer – so says Tarrant – is

[460] *Nu*. 929 & 1070. For a case that Plato here and elsewhere alludes to the orginal *Clouds* rather than the extant revision, cf. Tarrant (1991: 165-166).
[461] 1993: 227.
[462] Cf. e.g. Hipponax fr. 8.
[463] 1996: 112-120.
[464] Tarrant (1996: 112).
[465] Tarrant (1996: 113-114).
[466] Tarrant here points to the scholiast on *Nu*. 876, who shows some "dim awareness" of the role of the Late Learner (1996: 115n24).

that he was actually studying with Connus.[467] The longer answer, however, involves the *Laches* and its rough dramatic date of 420.[468] Here we meet a Socrates who was extremely popular with the young men of Athens, in a place where most of them go to find virtue – but if he really spent his time where the youth pursued the learning and practice of virtue, then he would surely be found *where they studied*.[469] Plato even seems to confirm this with tacit response to such comic presentations,[470] as he has Socrates state that anyone – young or old – should seek to cure their ignorance at any cost, regardless if "they laugh at us because at an old age we still think it is right to learn from a teacher".[471]

4. d) Insults and Warnings:

While Socrates' language in the *Euthydemus* may echo that of the naïf, Ctesippus is nobody's fool; he disarms the brothers with quips typical of scenes of conflict in comedy. As he initially jumps to Clinias' defence from the sophists'claim that he wished him dead, Ctesippus spouts the colloquialism 'σοὶ εἰς κεφαλήν' (283e3) – loosely translating as 'better on your head (than mine)'[472] – which is popular with Aristophanes, who uses the phrase at least 3 times.[473] It is the particular episodes of the plays in which the quip is used, however, that should pique interest; for it is twice used in dispelling 'unwelcome guests' – characters whose motives conflict with the desired outcome of the hero's endeavours.[474] In the *Plutus* (526), it is used by Chremylos in the half-agon with Poverty, while in *Pax* it is spoken by Trygeus in his attempts to shoo away the free-loading oracle monger Hierocles. Rather tellingly, both 'villains' are soon beaten and chased offstage,[475] presumably much to the delight of the audience. Ctesippus then continues with another piece of comic parlance, ὅτι μαθών – 'getting it into your head' (283e3),[476] which he reiterates during the climax of his assault at 299a2. This colloquialism is another staple of Aristophanes when portraying encounters between the hero and unwelcome guests – it is the last thing heard from Dikaiopolis

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[467] *Ibid*: 115
[468] *Ibid*.
[469] *Ibid*.
[470] A point which is to be discussed in full in Chs. 5 & 6.
[471] *Lach*. 201b2-3. Cf. Tarrant (1996:117).
[472] The phrase, however, carries a more vindictive sentiment; Sprague translates it as 'go perish yourself', while Lamb has 'ill-betide you'.
[473] *Plut.* 526, 651; *Pax*. 1063.
[474] E.g. The Creditors of *Clouds,* The Poet, Oracle Seller, The Statute Seller, and The Inspector of *Birds*, The Informer of *Wealth*, The Magistrate of the *Lysistrata,* etc.
[475] It is also spoken by the slave Carion to his mistress at *Plut.* 650; here it is used in the sense that he will tell her the story from head to toe. The Mistress, however, still misinterprets his words as an insult.
[476] Saunders' translation (2005).

before the Informer is chased off stage at *Ach.* 826, and also from Lysistrata before the Magistrate is overcome at *Lys*. 599.[477] The prevalence of such phrases in what survives of Aristophanes suggests these expressions were typical of such scenes, and should have been indicative to the contemporary reader of the *Euthydemus* as to how they should view the scene, cheering on Ctesippus in his disposal of such unsavoury characters as one would cheer on Dikaiopolis or Chremylos.

Euthydemus then asks if it is possible to lie (283e7); Ctesippus, however, unlike Socrates who has answered in an affable manner conducive to the progression of the discussion, retorts with the same phrase to indicate his bewilderment at their suggestion as Strepsiades does to Socrates at *Nu*. 660– 'yes', he replies, 'εἰ μὴ μαίνομαί'[478] (283e8) – 'if I'm not raving'. The phrase is used elsewhere in Aristophanes, and signifies the blatantly obvious – in the *Thesmophoriazusae* (470) it is used by the Inlaw to bolster and solidify his (feigned) claim that the deplorability of Euripides is agreed upon *universally,* not just by the women. Plato, through Ctesippus, here implies that by denying a belief so universally held, we should approach the clap trap machinations of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus with the same caution as we would the discourse of the *Phrontisterion*.[479]

Despite his comic turn of phrase, Ctesippus is relatively well behaved in his first interruption (283e-288b) in comparison with his second and third (293e- 294e, 298b-303b). If there had been any facade to humour the sophists previously, it has now been dropped. Any answers he gives are laden with sarcasm aimed to expose the brothers' inanity. From 298b, the dialogue spirals into something described quite accurately by Archer-Butler as "more akin to Aristophanes than Aristotle",[480] with Ctesippus lobbing back insults and comments irrelevant to the questions asked of him. The comedy reaches a climax at 298e4 where it is implied that Ctesippus beats his father – a crime regarded as particularly base by Athenian law and a very slanderous statement to make.[481] Rather than rise to the bait and fly off the handle as he did previously (283e),

[477] Also see *Nu*. 340 & *Ves*. 251.
[478] While the use of μαίνομαι by itself is, for obvious reasons, quite common in tragedy (cf. Eur. *Med.* 873, *IA*. 389 fr. 11.3, 42b.3; Soph. *Trach*. 446) it is the particular use in the idiom above that seems to be unique to comedy. *TLG* records the next use of the phrase to be in Philostratus (*Vita Apollonii* II.5)
[479] Cf. *Prot*. 349e, where Protagoras also uses the same expression in reaction to Socrates' question on the 'goodness' of courage.
[480] 1856: 24.
[481] Cf. Lysias 10.

he simply retorts with a line which could have been taken straight from a comedy[482] - πολὺ μέντοι...δικαιότερον τὸν ὑμέτερον πατέρ᾽ ἂν τύπτοιμι, *ὅτι μαθὼν* σοφοὺς ὑεῖς οὕτως ἔφυσεν (299a1-2). Also worth noting is Ctesippus' veiled threat of violence; for a character to threaten another that is getting on their nerves with a thrashing is standard in Aristophanic comedy,[483] but is also characteristic of the anonymous Questioner of the *Hippias Major*.[484]

It may be argued that Ctesippus' expressions are merely taken from a certain class of colloquial Athenian vernacular, in an attempt by Plato to emphasize his ungracious character – thus if Socrates is the *eiron,* Ctesippus is the *bomolochos* – or that the presence of certain words in both the dialogues and comedy could simply be put down to coincidence. I would urge the reader, however, to consider the above evidence in tandem with what has been discussed in the previous chapters. Had this chapter been a stand-alone piece, then the case for coincidence or for colloquial sources would certainly hold good weight. It is only when we remember that this chapter should be used to supplement the previous ones, and that such words are being used in scenes and instances already ripe with comic motifs – be it a door-scene or an eiron blowing up his opponent's *alazoneia* – that the case becomes credible. Though words like τερατώδης were certainly used in serious contexts, as is evident in Aristotle,[485] their use in relation to obviously ridiculous characters suggests that Plato is here using the word in the same sense as its comic incarnation; it would seem rather peculiar of him seriously to employ such portentous language against such nonsensical opponents as the brothers of the *Euthydemus* or the Eunuch door-man of the *Protagoras*.

That the other less 'sonorous' phrases discussed in this chapter originated in common low speech rather than comedy may well be the case, but their popularity with the comic poets is evident. Indeed, most bawdy comedy in the modern era takes its cue conspicuously from vernacular speech; quotes from *Monty Python*'s famous 'Four

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[482] Despite incessant searching, I have not been able to uncover any intertextuality between this scene and a surviving comedy. The obvious initial candidate would be the episode at *Nu*. 1135ff where Pheidippides, fresh from his brainwashing in the *Phrontisterion*, beats up Strepsiades because he had criticised his recital of Euripides. Establishing any link beyond coincidence, however, is tenuous at best, and it could merely be the case that this was simply a convenient general charge to lay against someone when attacking their credibility

[483] E.g. *Nu.* 593,1295, *Av*. 1401,1467, *Ves*. 1330. etc.

[484] *Hip. Maj.* 292a; Gorgias is also said to have delivered a jocular threat in response to an impudent question (DK 82A 24).

[485] Cf. *EE.* 1231a4, *Poet*. 1453b9, *De Gen.* 770a19, 770b8, 772a36, 773a8, *Hist. An.* 544b21, 562b2, 575b13, 584b9, *De Mir*. 841b16, 843a2. Similarly, Plato also uses ἵλαος in a serious context (cf. *Phaed*. 95a5, 117b3, *Tht*. 168b3, *Rep.* 427b8, 496e2, 566e3, *Tim*. 71d1, *Leg.* 679a9, 664c8, 712b5, 736c4, 747e5, 792a8, 792b7, 792d2, 803e2, 910b3, 923b7, 924a6).

Yorkshiremen' sketch are instantly recognizable, yet the scene is still greatly indebted to common Yorkshire expressions. So too does the Vicky Pollard character of *Little Britain* owe much to the provincialisms of Bristolian youth culture, and similarly we may consider Derek Trotter – the central character of *Only Fools and Horses* – whose now eternally memorable catch-phrases were gathered from the market traders on the streets of South London. Thus, everyday speech does crossover into common comedy, but does so at the concession of becoming a parody of itself. Once again, if someone was to utter 'lovely jubbly' in conversation, it is Dell Trotter who springs to mind rather than a generic Peckham market trader.[488] That Plato didn't notice the comic overtones of his language is highly improbable, even more so when we consider that it is reserved for characters who are already as ridiculous as those in a comedy and in some similarly comic situations.

Section One: Conclusion.

This section has examined the various methods through which Plato uses comedy. Should such instances be limited to a few isolated occurrences, there could be grounds to argue that such instances are mere coincidence. The previous chapters, however, have brought forth evidence for numerous comic undertones permeating certain dialogues, be they in the form of structure and setting, motifs, caricature or language. This demands we revaluate our approach in assessing Plato's motives when composing such dialogues, for his intentions in sending up real-life figures to the point of parody should be taken into consideration. Such elements are not cohesive with the aim of an author who wishes to present an exposition to be appraised purely on its philosophical content; if this were the case, why the need for such intricate structure at all? It becomes evident that Plato has a secondary ambition, this being the denigration of those whose school of thought he deemed threatening to his own, which he achieves by depicting these persons as the humbug philosopher who is readily recognisable from the comic stage. This serves as a warning to those tempted by the sophistic rhetoric Plato found so disconcerting, but simultaneously lauds his own school as the diamond in the rough – the only institution promoting truth and virtue amid a sea of charlatanism. Neither did

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[488] To this one might point out that *Only Fools and Horses* aired over several series with re-runs still showing today, compared with the limited 'airtime' the plays of comedy would have received – and so while it is inevitable that phrases such as 'Lovely Jubbly' would eventually enter the public's vocabulary, my argument is not so strong in relation to the quips of Ancient Comedy. This of course, is undeniable, but I might point the sceptical reader towards the appendix of my thesis which presents evidence suggesting that the plays of Old Comedy remained popular and were reproduced well into the 4th century, which would allow the genre's language to remain recognizable

such motives go un-detected in antiquity – a fact evinced by Gorgias' reported likening of Plato's 'satires' to Archilochus.[489]

But who was this comic bogey-man to whom Plato was so eager to liken his opponents? Could being linked to such a character really be so detrimental to one's reputation? If so, how? And did such comic stereotypes remain unchanged throughout the 4th century, surviving the so-called 'departure' from Old Comedy to Middle Comedy, or can changes be detected which in turn mirror a change in audience taste? These are questions to be fleshed out in the following section, which will examine the portrayal of philosophy and the philosopher on the comic stage in the eras we generally we ascribe to Old and Middle Comedy. It will be shown that throughout the Old Comic period, the comic philosopher's portrayal is uniform: he is dissentious, vain, vapid, and wholly not to be trusted. Be he scientist, sophist or Socratic, he is tarred with the same brush as those who may indeed be his opponents and his depiction as the subversive charlatan is invariable. What we have is a 'ready-made' philosopher to which all the author need add is the name. As we progress past the 390's, however, such harsh receptions begin to soften; the perfidious elements begin to subside, and we begin to see philosophers being lampooned for ideas that were distinctly their own. The reason for such changes, as will be argued, was in no small part due to the establishment of permanent philosophical institutions in Athens.

[489] Ath. 505d6-e4. Cf. p. 17 above.

Section Two: The Portrayal of Philosophy in Comedy.

Introduction.

The previous section discussed the various techniques employed by Plato to liken certain interlocutors to the philosopher of the comic stage. This section will develop the previous discussion by conversely focusing on these comic portrayals to which Plato was alluding. This will take the form of an analysis of the portrayals of the philosopher – and indeed philosophy itself –in the periods generally defined as 'Old' and 'Middle' Comedy. The objective will be to see if it is possible to define a stock character/s associated with the philosopher during this period. His perceived demeanour is paramount, as if negative opinions of such characters can be determined it becomes clearer why Plato intends to 'pass the buck', as it were, to his rival schools, and in doing so detach himself from any such chicanery. The Section is divided into three chapters which will discuss the period chronologically; Chapter 5 will focus on philosophy and the philosopher in Old Comedy, looking beyond the *Clouds* to the fragments of the *genre* seeking to establish whether the *alazonic* philosopher presented by Aristophanes is consistent elsewhere or is merely a novel creation of the comic. Indeed, it seems that the case for a consistent stock character prevails, as the fragments suggest the Socrates of the *Clouds*' comic colleagues shared much in common with Aristophanes' offering – all being unworldly, untrustworthy fellows who spout an array of hodgepodge philosophy. This in turn reflects an audience uninterested – and indeed wary of – the proceedings within philosophical circles.

When discussing philosophical elements in comedies performed in the decades before Plato began writing, we are also offered an opportunity to examine how Plato *responds* to such depictions; while the previous section focussed on how Plato used the tools of comedy to his own advantage by weaving various motifs into his dialogues, here it will be discussed how Plato *reacts* to and *defends* certain allegations lodged by comedy, specifically towards Socrates. Perhaps most famously, for example, at *Ap*. 19c3-4 Plato is quick to dispel any notions about Socrates swinging about in the air discussing the skies that may have become associated with him through the *Clouds*,[490] while he 'corrects' Aristophanes by deeming semantical discussions on words – similar to the one depicted at *Nu*. 659 – as more the domain of Prodicus than Socrates.[491] There are

[490] *Cf. Nu*. 218, 225.
[491] Cf. *Euthyd.* 227e4; *Prot*. 337a1-c4, 341a1-c1.

some attributes of the *Clouds* Socrates, however – such as an interest in Intellectual Midwifery and The Principle of Non-Contradiction – which Plato is quite eager to defend rather than reject. What we have here, then, is Plato *responding* to certain accusations of comedy and defending a satirised concept's validity, while chastising the comedians for being so brash. This is a discussion to be fleshed out in full in the remainder of Chapter 5 examining possible allusions to Socratic Midwifery, the Principle of Non-Contradiction and what appears to be some 'Socratic' language used by Strepsiades and the students of the *Phrontisterion.*

Chapter 6 will continue in a similar vein, this time in relation to the similarities between the *Ecclesiazusae* and *Republic* V. Indeed, this is a subject that has drawn immense scholarly interest, with various 'solutions' ranging from the plausible to the outright unconventional being put forward. The perennial issue is the original source of the material being discussed; some, such as Nightingale (1995) and Tordoff (2007) argue for an independent third party as a source, while others following Strauss (1964) and Bloom (1968) argue that Plato is guying Aristophanes in constructing his own philosophical satire. This chapter, however, will argue that while there are 'touching points' between the two, certain elements of *Republic* V are absent from the society of the *Ecclesiazusae* yet crop up in other lost fragmentary comedies, such as Theopompus' *Stratiotides.* Taking the frequent references to comedy in *Rep*. V into account, it will be argued that Plato here again is *acknowledging* the previous comic incarnations of the ideas he is about to present and defending them to those who may have mistaken them as farcical.

As we progress into the period of Middle Comedy, however, we can detect a gradual change in audience tastes – gone now is the uniform dubious and duplicitous opinion of the philosopher, as the establishment of the first permanent philosophical institutions in Athens around this period helped assuage such suspicions. Such changes can be detected as early as the *Ecclesiazusae*, in which a clever inherent critique of Utopianism can be found, the discussion of which is the remainder of Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 will examine this emerging trend further into the Middle Comedy period. The vast majority of references to comedy in the fragments are concerned with either Plato and the Academicians or the Pythagoreans, and so the chapter is divided as such, with sections examining the portrayal of Platonic ideas, the depiction of Plato and the Academicians' physical appearance and a discussion of how Platonic discourse on Eros would actually become embraced by the comic poets themselves. It will be shown that

audiences can now certainly distinguish ideas and behaviour deemed typical of Plato himself and no other. The *alazonic* features still remain, but have subsided greatly. Philosophy is still lambasted as a banal endeavour, and the man who promotes it a vain dullard, but the deceitful and asocial elements have vanished.

Such elements do, however, survive in the form of the comic Pythagorean which is discussed in Chapter 7.e. Rugged, ascetic and anti-social, he is the most akin to his Old Comic ancestor. It will be shown, however, that through their reclusive and abstemious way of life, combined with their peculiar doctrines, the Pythagoreans make themselves walking targets – a sort of ‘living stock-philosopher.’

Chapter 5: Philosophy and the Philosopher in the Old Comedy.

5.a) General Overview:

When considering the characteristics of the philosopher of Old Comedy, the Socrates of Aristophanes' *Clouds* may come to mind as a typical example; vain, verbose and of dubious morality, he fits the role of the *alazon* perfectly – barely recognizable as the Socrates we know from the dialogues, he seems more of a 'jumbled portrait of the fifth-century sophist-scientist'[492] than a promoter of Socratic methodology. Though this could be labelled as the 'traditional' view of the play,[493] it has been contested in the past, perhaps most memorably by Nussbaum, who ultimately reads Aristophanes' depiction as an accurate presentation of Socrates at an earlier stage in his career and as an intellectual criticism[494] of his teaching.[495] *Clouds* then, so Nussbaum, is a "very serious play by a serious intellectual dramatist"[496] which presents Socrates as an oppenent of traditional values and a promoter of alternative educational methods, and aligns Socratic thought with the 'Anti-Right' argument[497]– in oppostion to the 'Right' which was the education most adult males received. Nussbaum sees the 'Anti-Right' argument as akin to Socrates' teaching due to the similarities between their 'elenctic' teaching methods, while the 'criticism' of the play is aimed at the inadequacy and lack of positive doctrines arising from these methods – ie. in both the 'Anti-Right''s argument of *Clouds* and those of the early 'Socratic' dialogues.[498]

Although certainly a unique analysis, Nussbaum's reading of the play is not without its faults; as Storey notes,[499] she tends to read the play as a homogenous piece of work and does not take in to account that it is an unfinished revision.[500] Since the speech of Unjust has been substantially revised, this must be allowed for.[501] Moreover, if Nussbaum is correct in her assertion that Aristophanes is accurate in his portrayal of Socrates, then the *Clouds* Socrates' distinctly sophistic or pre-Socratic musings would

[492] Nussbaum (1980: 46).
[493] Cf. Dover (1968: xxxv-lvii), Storey in Meineck (1998), Konstan (2011).
[494] On Aristophanes as the 'intellectual critic' see Ober on the *Ecclesiazusae* (1998: 49, 126). Indeed, it will be argued in Chapter 6 that by the time the *Ecclesiazusae* was produced, the contemporary audience – or at least a portion of them – were now receptive to comedies critiquing philosophical theories.
[495] 1980: 46 n8. Also see Gelzer (1958) and Erbse (1954).
[496] Storey (1983: 178).
[497] Nussbaum's title for the Ἄδικος Λόγος of the play. I prefer 'Just' and 'Unjust'.
[498] Nussbaum cites the *Gorgias, Euthyphro, Lysis, Laches, Charmides* and *Protagoras* as examples. (*Ibid*).
[499] Storey (1983: 178).
[500] Cf. Dover (1968: lxxx-xcviii) with Tarrant (1991), who convincingly argues that the original (423) version of *Clouds* was distinctly different from the extant play.
[501] Cf. Dover (*ibid*: xcvi).

not make sense – consider, for example, if Aeschylus in the *agon* of *Frogs*, while defending his craft, was to spew forth a plethora of quotes from a range of tragedians which we are to assume to be his own. This, however, is not the case; while Aristophanes certainly exaggerates Aeschylus' style in the dialogue, it is still instantly recognizable as Aeschylean. Nussbaum focusses mainly on the *agon*, and views the teaching scenes (627-803) as a digression, but endeavours to explain away the sophistic elements of the *Clouds* Socrates as a criticism of his thought which "anticipates the main lines along which Plato, in the *Republic*, modifies the Socratic program of moral education".[502] While I agree with Nussbaum in arguing that some decidedly 'Socratic' elements can be found in the play,[503] that their presence is intended to be seen as serious and subjected to serious intellectual examination assumes an audience with an implausibly high level of expertise in Socratic philosophy. It seems more likely the case that the Socratic elements are the result of Aristophanes' harvesting material from a wide range of philosophical sources – if we can detect Pythagorean,[504] Anaxagorean,[505] Protagorean[506] and Prodican[507] elements in the *Clouds* Socrates, is it so strange that we should also find elements of him influenced by his local namesake?

Finally, Nussbaum seems to treat *Clouds* as an isolated case, and shows "less understanding of comedy…than do scholars whose views [she] seeks to counter",[508] for her points are nullified if she extends her research to similar comedies beyond the *Clouds*, where this 'genus' philosopher character also persists. Indeed, out of the nine surviving plays of Old Comedy,[509]only *Clouds* deals with the philosopher and philosophical instruction in detail, but should we let this make us assume that the comic Socrates was typical of the philosopher of Old Comedy? What has survived intact represents only a small percentage of a varied genre that spanned almost half a century, and for a more complete picture we must look to the fragments of Old Comedy in search of similar instances parodying philosophy or the philosopher.

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[502] 1980: 50.
[503] Cf. Chap. 5.b, 5.c, 5.d & 5.e below.
[504] *Nu.* 217.
[505] *Nu.* 375, 1281.
[506] *Nu.* 99, 331-34.
[507] *Nu.* 659f.
[508] Ussher (1983: 168).
[509] Due to the time of their production, the reduction of the role of the chorus and novel firsts such as the introduction of the sub-plot, I classify the last two plays of Aristophanes – the *Ecclesiazusae* and *Plutus* – as Middle Comedy.

Initially what is most striking from such an examination is the apparent scarcity of fragments that identifiably mock our subject and the amount of material we can actually work with. Part of the difficulty comes from trying to 'match' statements from one fragmentary genre to another fragmentary genre; the surviving work of all philosophers before Plato is sparse – and a considerable portion of what we do know comes from Plato's skewed presentation of them – so identifying a quip without any target source is tentative. The similar study of Middle Comedy to be presented in Chapter 7, for example, is less ambiguous as we have the entire corpus of Plato to use as a reference in assessing what the comic poet is alluding to, whereas the scattered remnants of the 5th Century leave us no such advantage with Old Comedy. Another factor we must consider is the itinerant nature of thinkers of the 5th Century – all bar Socrates came from areas outside Athens and travelled around Greece plying their trade.[510] It would not be until they visited Athens and made a significant impact that a comic poet could feel confident in writing a winning plot centring on such a figure.[511] This, however, does not point to complete ignorance of the non-Athenians; while mentions of Socrates are perhaps the most prevalent, the difference level is only marginal,[512] with Prodicus and Protagoras getting their share of the whip. The comic poets won favour by summarizing popular opinion and reflecting it back to the public and the fragments ultimately agree with the portrayal of Socrates in *Clouds* in depicting the philosopher as a wholly untrustworthy and dubious individual which in turn is indicative of the suspicion with which he was viewed by Athenian society. We should not, however, take this dislike as a reason for the lack of reference to philosopers in the fragments – it is always more cautious to count the randomness of survival as just as likely a suspect in cases such as this.

With this in mind let us address the relevant fragments in an attempt to somewhat glean a profile of the philosopher of Old Comedy. First, let us revisit the *Kolakes* of Eupolis,[513] presented at the Dionysia of 421 in which Protagoras and a chorus of flatterers descend upon Callias' house. Fr. 157 is a clear indicator of how Eupolis wants us to view Protagoras, as the speaker describes him as an ἀλαζών and an ἀλιτήριος interested περὶ τῶν μετεώρων. τὰ μετέωρα is of course the subject also investigated by Socrates at *Nu.* 194 and 225. Whether works like *Peri Theon* may have led the lay

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[510] Protagoras of Abdera, Hippias of Elis, Gorgias of Leontini, Prodicus of Ceos etc.
[511] Indeed, Storey believes the *Kolakes* was inspired by a recent visit from Protagoras (2003: 157).
[512] Cf. The scholiast (Ald) at *Nu*. 96 who states that although Eupolis rarely mentioned Socrates, he still attacked him more than Aristophanes did in his entire *Clouds*. For surviving Eupolis fragments metioning Socrates see frr. 386 & 395 with Olson (2014) *ad loc* and the discussion overleaf.
[513] Previously discussed at pp. 33-35, 56-57, 81.

public to connect this with Protagoras studying 'things in the sky' or whether he is merely being conflated with the pre-Socratics is unknowable; more interesting is that Socrates is tarred with exactly the same brush, suggesting that an interest περὶ τῶν μετεώρων appears to be a standard element of the comic pastiche of a philosopher. As one might deduce from the title, flattery and flatterers play a major role in the comedy; fr. 172 has a character boast of his skills in flattery, such as approaching his host in the market place and laughing the hardest at his jokes to win an invitation to a feast. Fragment 165 lists the supper bill as 100 drachmae and a mina for 'wine for the flatterers'. Fragment 166 has a speaker refer to another character guzzling 'bravely', while fr. 162 has a character exclaim "...φοροῦσιν, ἁρπάζουσιν ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας τὸ χρυσίον, τἀργύρια πορθεῖται". This sycophantic trait, however, is not unique to the *Kolakes*; Ameipsias in his *Konnos* presents a similar chorus, this time labelled *Phrontistai*, who jeer at Socrates for not joining them in flattery (κολακεύω). Neither is Socrates immune from such accusations; an unattributed fragment of Eupolis (fr. 395) has Socrates distract his companions by singing and pilfer the wine decanter as he is passed it at a banquet – "δεξάμενος δὲ Σωκράτης τὴν ἐπιδέξι'<ᾄδων> Στησιχόρου πρὸς τὴν λύραν[514] οἰνοχόην ἔκλεψεν".[515] The flatterer, then, appears to be an ancestor of the parasite. We must note, however, that this perception of the philosopher as a flatterer may have credible roots; for although Socrates famously never charged for his instruction, he was still paid in kind by way of hospitality. Despite not asking for money, he is still presumably given food, drink and a bed for the night from those in whose house the discussion takes place. The *Symposium*, for example, sees Socrates stay up until dawn drinking Agathon's wine; also, considering the sheer length of the *Republic*, we may assume Socrates was fed and watered by Cephalus and so forth. To the wider public, then, Socrates is viewed as a man who earns no living, but goes to the houses of prominent Athenians, engaging them in polite intelligent discussion and being given a free meal or what-not in return. Given that Socrates was perhaps the most recognizable philosopher in Athens, it becomes easier to discern how the association between philosophy and flattery could be made.

[514] For Socrates and his alleged attempts to play the *kithara* cf. the discussion on the 'Late Learner' above on. pp. 91-94.

[515] Berg (1838: 352-3) assigns this this to the *Kolakes* on account of the meter being the same as in fr. 172. Olson (2014: 157) appears to agree, stating that as "the topic there is dinner parties and how flatterers behave at them, it is not difficult to imagine that these verses were part of a similar discussion elsewhere in the *Kolakes* parabasis of symposia and other forms of bad behaviour at them."

The characters in the choruses of the *Konnos* and the *Kolakes*, however are not restricted to what one would define as a 'philosopher' in modernity; although Chaerephon is listed as one of Eupolis' flatterers (fr. 180) so too is the tragedian Melanthios (fr. 178). Plato Comicus also had a play titled *Sophistai* which includes the lyre player Bacchylides (fr. 149), while Aristophanes defines diviners, medical examiners and composers of dithyrambic choruses as being nourished by the Clouds (*Nu.* 331-334). Eupolis elsewhere labels a rhapsode as a sophist (fr. 483). None of the *phrontistai* of the *Konnos* are named by Ameipsias.[516] Should we believe then, as suggested by Carey, that the philosopher is not presented as a "unique and threatening phenomenon", but merely just "poured into a predetermined mould" - a readymade bad-guy of sorts - used to lambast the "non-productive intellectuals who aspire to influence in society"?[517] Indeed, the philosopher is occasionally labelled as an ἀδολέσχης (idle-talker),[518] and we need look no further than the *Frogs* to recognise similarities in the *alazoneia* of Aristophanes' Euripides and Socrates; like Socrates, we see Euripides used as a scapegoat to represent a movement that advocated new and peculiar ways of thinking: both are accused of worshipping strange gods over the traditional deities[519] and emptying the gymnasia of young men who now spend their time talking nonsense.[520] Euripides is also listed as part of the curriculum of the *Phrontisterion*.[521] Nor is Aristophanes unique in making such a connection; a fragment of Teleclides[522] declares that 'Μνησίλοχός ἐστ΄ ἐκεῖνος (ὅς) φρύγει τι δρᾶμα καινὸν Εὐριπίδῃ, καὶ Σωκράτης τὰ φρύγαν΄ ὑποτίθησιν',[523] and mentions 'Εὐριπίδης σωκρατογόμφους'.[524]

We must consider, however, that it is only *certain* artisans from other fields that are lumped together with the philosopher; while Euripides is lambasted in the *Frogs*, his fellow tragedians Aeschylus and Sophocles are praised,[525] and while Plato Comicus presumably ridicules Bacchylides,[526] Simonides is seen as a pinnacle of Athenian values at *Nu.* 1355. The experts associated with philosophy, then, are those who are seen to

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[516] Athenaeus tells us, however, that Protagoras was not included in the chorus (368c).
[517] 2000:421.
[518] Of Socrates – Eup fr. 385, Ar. *Nu.* 1480, 1485; of Prodicus – Ar. Fr. 506; of Plato – Alex. fr. 185. For a detailed survey of the various occurances of ἀδολέσχην see Olson (2014: 133-134). For the use of ἀδολέσχην in the original *Clouds* see Tarrant (1991:164-165).
[519] *Nu*. 246; *Ran*. 888.
[520] *Nu.* 1053; *Ran*. 1070.
[521] *Nu.* 1370, 1377.
[522] Fr. 41.
[523] Mnesilochos was Euripides' father in law (*Vit Eur*. 5; cf. Olson 2007: 238).
[524] Fr. 42. See also Aristophanes fr. 392.
[525] Also at *Nu.* 1365.
[526] Fr. 149.

take part in the scene known as 'New Learning' - those who shun the older traditions in favour of a more avant-garde approach to their genre. The avant-garde thought of the philosopher, however, was seen to have no counterpart in the older traditional system; for every 'avant-garde' tragedian such as Euripides there was a traditional counterpart such as Sophocles, and thus the reputation of the tragedian itself can be salvaged – it is only the percentage of practitioners who associate themselves with the 'New Learning' movement who invite suspicion. In the case of someone like Socrates or Protagoras, however, the lay person could not see a 'traditional' precedent or counterpart to their art and so it would seem that this art epitomised this 'New Learning' movement. It was engagement or association with philosophy or the philosopher, then, which tarred the artisan with the brush of 'New Learning' – a particular artisan is lumped with the philosopher but never *vice versa*. This is adequately exemplified with Euripides; the *Suda* (3695ε) tells us that he studied rhetoric under Prodicus, ethics under Socrates and was also a pupil of Anaxagoras, while Diogenes Laertius mentions that it was in Euripides' house where Protagoras first read his *Peri Theon* aloud (IX.54).

The 'non-productive intellectual', then, does not seem to be what invites the ridicule towards those labelled as *sophistai* or *phrontistai*, as their entire comic persona exudes elements of subversion that border on cultism – they do not worship traditional gods and also con their patrons whilst promising them access to a higher realm of knowledge. *Kolakes* fr. 173 typifies this as a speaker expounds "φημὶ δὲ βροτοῖσι πολὺ πλεῖστα παρέχειν ἐγὼ καὶ πολὺ μέγιστ᾽ ἀγαθά. ταῦτα δ᾽ ἀποδείξομεν"; while it can't be definitively concluded who the speaker and addressee are, it seems reasonable to assume that the speaker is either Protagoras or one of his company addressing Callias or a member of his household. When we combine this with the almost hypnotic-like state of the reclusive students of the *Phrontisterion* and the reverence in which they hold their leader we can see how the comic philosopher and his followers could be likened to something like the scientologist in modernity, and this is certainly a more damning portrait than the 'non-productive intellectual' suggested by Carey. If we recall the discussion in Chapter 2.e on the description of Protagoras as an ἀλιτήριος at *Kolakes* fr. 157, it will be remembered the word has been translated as 'fraud', 'charlatan' or the more ominous 'poltergeist', alluding to Andocides' use of the word in an old tale that Hipponicus – Callias' father – had an ἀλιτήριος in his house that would upset his finances.[527] If this is the case, then, Eupolis may cleverly play on the story by portraying

[527] Andoc. 1.130-1; cf. Storey (2003: 185-187) and the previous discussion in Chap. 2.e.

Protagoras as the ἀλιτήριος that would bring his family's fortune to ruin. A similar wickedness is ascribed to Gorgias by Aristophanes at *Av*. 1701-3, where he is epitomised as the sort of villainous ἐγγλωττογάστωρ that has reduced Athens to the society Euelpides and Peisthetaerus wish to escape.[528] Sommerstein[529] translates ἐγγλωττογάστωρ as 'Tongue-to-Belly Man', noting the play on ἐγχειρογάστωρ – 'Hand-to-Belly Man' – which is usually used to describe men who use their hands to fill their stomachs. The term ἐγχειρογάστωρ and its variants seems to have especially applied to the Cyclopes,[530] leading Sommerstein to suggest that Aristophanes is depicting the ἐγγλωττογάστωρ as parallel in wickedness to the Cyclopes - again subtly reinforcing the parasitic tendencies of the comic philosopher.

The comic philosopher, then, was a type that one should wish to distance themselves from. Plato's relationship with the comic philosopher, however, is strange; while he will gladly incorporate comic motifs from some instances, he fulminates against the comic poet and his philosopher in others. Despite being a character one should clearly disassociate with, it would seem that Plato is happy to take certain elements of the comic philosopher and incorporate them in the make-up of his philosopher, with the aim of creating an association between Socrates' sophistic opponents and the *alazon* of the comic stage. This is Plato's method of 'correcting' the comedians – by loading his opponents with the various idiosyncrasies distinctive of the comic philosopher and so the connection is made between the two by the reader. Socrates, conversely, is exonerated of such charges as he challenges the sophists on their positions. Plato elsewhere vehemently denies that Socrates ever engaged in the activities exploited by his comic counterpart in *Clouds*; in the *Apology* Socrates repudiates any claims that he was interested περὶ τῶν μετεώρων,[531] taught how to make the weaker argument stronger,[532] or investigated what was beneath the earth.[533] Plato is adamant that, far from worshipping the Clouds, Socrates had full faith in the traditional Athenian deities.[534] Nor would Socrates exploit rhetoric to achieve sinister means in the law

[528] Cf. *Ves*. 423 where Gorgias' son Philippus is mentioned as being deservedly beaten in court.
[529] 1987: 308 comm. on 1965-6.
[530] Strabo 8.6.11 schol. Eur. *Or.* 965, as listed in Sommerstein (*ibid.*).
[531] *Ap.* 18b8, 19b5-6; *Nu.* 194-225. Hippias is also presented as talking about τῶν μετεώρων at *Prot.* 15b.
[532] *Ap.*18b10. 19b6-c1; *Nu*. 98-99, 112-116.
[533] *Ap*. 18b9, 19b5; *Nu*. 186-188.
[534] *Ap*. 24a ; *Nu*. 263f.

courts by teaching how 'to make the weak argument strong'[535] but in actuality was completely unfamiliar with the courts, and is open in his abhorrence of rhetoric.[536]

There are, however, certain elements of the Socrates of *Clouds* which Plato chooses to embrace and defend rather than deny. This leads to the questioning of Plato's exact motives in doing so – why risk the danger of embracing a technique or ideology that had such potential destructiveness to the reputation of his school? Why does he dismiss some potentially damaging comic attributes as mere hearsay, but then concede to Socrates having others? It would seem that the most plausible solution and what will be argued in the remainder of this chapter – is that these may have been *actual* attributes of the *historical* Socrates, with Aristophanes and Plato *both* drawing inspiration from the same individual. I am aware of the controversy of such claims and the banality of any attempts to make inroads in attempting to solve the 'Socratic Question'.[537] Such an investigation is not my intention here. My approach in this chapter is speculative yet reasoned: if it can be determined that both Plato and the comics attribute 'X' to Socrates, and this in both cases this 'X' is relatively unique to Socrates among portrayals of his contemporaries, then we have a case to suggest that *at least Plato* saw 'X' as distinctive of Socrates; his portrayal of Socrates with this same 'X' as ascribed to him by the comic poets would suggest that there is some element in 'X' of the historical Socrates, since it is attributed to him by two separate sources with conflicting viewpoints in different generations. The argument in opposition to this is that such cases are coincidental, or that we have misinterpreted 'X' on both occasions; in both instances 'X' was intended to refer to different things. For example, take the case of intellectual midwifery which will be discussed below. Here it will be suggested that a line in *Clouds* in which a student 'miscarrying' an idea alludes to the same image of the 'intellectual midwife' that Socrates famously describes in the *Theaetetus.* This controversy lies in the fact that 'Socratic Midwifery' is generally accepted to be a Platonic invention, and would be impossible to have been known publicly in the late 5th century. Thus, the line in *Clouds* is merely coincidental and intended to allude to something else, so any attempts to link it with the *Tht.* are misguided. My challenge in meeting such objections, then, is two-fold. First, I must make a case suggesting that when the comic poets allude to 'X' in relation to Socrates in a comedy, they are referring to the same 'X' that will later resurface in the Platonic Socrates. There are several ways I will approach this, but

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[535] *Ap*..18b10. 19b6-c1; *Nu*. 98-99, 112-116.
[536] *Ap*. 17b5, 17d5, *Tht.* 171e-180b; *Euthyd.* 304d*ff.*
[537] Cf. e.g. Vlastos (1991)

it will mainly involve assessing the credibility of alternative proposed ‘targets’ at which ‘X’ may be directed, and in some cases finding other evidence within the play which also link ‘X’ with its Platonic descendant. The second obstacle will be to question the legitimacy of ‘X’ being purely Platonic – which is admittedly tricky work – but for the most part will take the form of looking at historical precedents of ‘X’ being either prior to Plato or external to his work, precedents which may have influenced Socrates along with himself. My supposition that Plato was aware of ‘X’’s previous comic incarnation is supplemented by the fact that, more often than not, the presentation of such ideas in the dialogues are accompanied by a rebuke of those who previously laughed at them. It will be suggested that while Aristophanes lambasts certain ideas to the point of grotesqueness and pure absurdity, Plato must ‘pick up the pieces’, as it were, and now has the task of disentangling the original idea from its crude comic encapsulation and presenting it under the light of sober scrutiny for which it was originally intended. Only in this environment can the actual meaning and benefit of the discourse be realised, and such instances in the dialogues are usually accompanied by a chastisement of the comic poets, as an admonishment for laughing at that which they simply do not understand. If a case for the above can be put forward, then, it is my reasoning that it should raise a worthy challenge to the objectors.

5.b) - Intellectual Midwifery:

Perhaps the most debated of these ‘points of contact’ – as Dover labels them[538] – is what appears to be an allusion in *Clouds* to Socrates’ metaphorical claims of ‘intellectual midwifery’ in the *Theaetetus*. The exchange occurs at *Nu*. 135f, as Strepsiades bangs on the door of the *Phrontisterion* and is met by a surly student:

Μαθητής
βάλλ᾽ ἐς κόρακας: τίς ἐσθ᾽ ὁ κόψας τὴν θύραν;

Στρεψιάδης
Φείδωνος υἱὸς Στρεψιάδης Κικυννόθεν.

Μαθητής
ἀμαθής γε νὴ Δί᾽ ὅστις οὑτωσὶ σφόδρα
ἀπεριμερίμνως τὴν θύραν λελάκτικας
καὶ φροντίδ᾽ ἐξήμβλωκας ἐξηυρημένην.

This peculiar comment gives the impression of a strange sort of intellectual process taught by the *Phrontisterion*, but also bears a striking resemblance to the role Plato’s

[538] 1968: xliii.

Socrates plays in helping young men formulate their ideas in the *Theaetetus.* Socrates, himself barren of wisdom, or so he claims, plays the role of a midwife in helping young men pregnant with knowledge to deliver their idea in full health without any blemishes or defects:

Σωκράτης

εἶτα, ὦ καταγέλαστε, οὐκ ἀκήκοας ὡς ἐγώ εἰμι ὑὸς μαίας μάλα γενναίας τε καὶ βλοσυρᾶς, Φαιναρέτης;

Θεαίτητος
ἤδη τοῦτό γε ἤκουσα.

Σωκράτης
ἆρα καὶ ὅτι ἐπιτηδεύω τὴν αὐτὴν τέχνην ἀκήκοας;

Θεαίτητος
οὐδαμῶς. ….

Σωκράτης
τῇ δέ γ᾽ ἐμῇ τέχνῃ τῆς μαιεύσεως τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ὑπάρχει ὅσα ἐκείναις, διαφέρει δὲ τῷ τε ἄνδρας ἀλλὰ μὴ γυναῖκας μαιεύεσθαι καὶ τῷ τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν τικτούσας ἐπισκοπεῖν ἀλλὰ μὴ τὰ σώματα. μέγιστον δὲ τοῦτ᾽ ἔνι τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ τέχνῃ, βασανίζειν δυνατὸν εἶναι παντὶ τρόπῳ πότερον εἴδωλον καὶ ψεῦδος ἀποτίκτει τοῦ νέου ἡ διάνοια ἢ γόνιμόν τε καὶ ἀληθές...[539]

Despite the similarities between what is implied by the Student's remarks and the activity we see in the *Theaetetus*, the scholarly trend has generally been quite dubious in speculating on a link between the two; we have only two very opposing conclusions – a) Aristophanes and his audience were either so familiar with Socratic ideology that it took a mere word in a throwaway line for an audience to recognise it, or b) this is sheer coincidence, Aristophanes never intended the line to allude to Socrates or any particular philosophical trend, and Plato invented the analogy himself as a teaching aid. This section will attempt to answer questions raised by the advocates of the latter premise, and to reconcile it with the former, arguing that it is entirely more likely that here we have both Aristophanes and Plato reacting to the same source. It shall also be proposed that when recreating the midwifery metaphor in the *Theaetetus*, Plato had to consider the implications created by this line and another scene which may also allude to the metaphor in *Clouds*. This entailed demonstrating that the method is purely metaphorical and presenting it in a sober situation among intelligent counterparts. Any risk of miscarriage, we are told, is purely symbolic of giving an answer that is not wholly

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[539] *Tht.* 149a-150b – here edited for brevity. Also note: 157c-d, 160e, 184a-b and 210b-d.

truthful. Moreover, Plato asserts that the only people susceptible to miscarrying are those who have a reputation for stupidity or have ignored Socrates' teaching.[540]

Perhaps the strongest dissenter against the case is Burnyeat,[541] who argues that the 'Socratic Midwifery' we see in the *Theaetetus* is purely a Platonic invention, and the 'unknown methods' Socrates speaks of at 149a7 serve as 'signposts' for the reader that what is about to be discussed is Platonic and not Socratic – anything that Theaetetus is already aware of is Socratic, while that which he isn't aware of, including Socrates' activities as a midwife, is Plato's own. Any connection between this and the *Clouds* is pure coincidence. Tomin,[542] however, disagrees, pointing to other instances in the dialogues suggesting that these secrets were indeed Socratic. Burnyeat proposes that Socrates' claim that his mother was called Phaenarete is a Platonic invention, the meaning of her name – 'She who brings virtue to light'- being just too convenient to be believable. Tomin, however, refers to the *Alcibiades* I where Phaenarete is mentioned again (131e4). The dialogue is of disputed authorship, and if it is the case that it is spurious, it would seem we have an independent source verifying the name of Socrates' mother, while if it is genuine, there is no obvious motive in the dialogue for Plato to lie about Phaenarete's name. Tomin's argument, however, is not exactly water-tight; if *Alcibiades I* is spurious, it is almost certainly by an imitator attempting to follow the Platonic tradition, and thus unlikely to deviate from supposed 'historical facts' given elsewhere. To say, however, that Plato constructed this metaphor whilst unaware of the *Clouds* reference is rather shaky ground – Plato certainly knew the play extremely well, apparently owning a copy,[543] and so would be very unlikely to overlook the similarity.

Tarrant[544] takes a more levelled stance; he again argues for coincidence, but allows that Plato may have constructed the metaphor to rectify a grotesque opinion of Socrates generated by the line. While initially seemingly attractive, the premise of this discussion would suggest otherwise; if what the student said was non-Socratic, then surely Plato would deal with it as he did other non-Socratic allusions and outrightly refute that Socrates ever made such claims. This would seem a more plausible solution than attempting to justify something that Socrates never actually said. We must also here

[540] *Tht*. 150b5-151d6
[541] 1977: 7-16.
[542] 1987: 97-102.
[543] On the ancient tradition that Plato slept with a copy of Aristophanes under his pillow (Olympiodoros, *Commentary on Plato's* Alcibiades, 2.65-9, Ar. T 53a) and that he sent a copy of Aristophanes' plays to Dionysius to educate him on the Athenian constitution (Ar. T 1. 42-45), cf. Riginos (1976: 174-178).
[544] 1988: 116-122.

consider the possibility of the supposed profession of Socrates' mother as a midwife being the source of the joke. This may well have been a well-known fact, and thereby Socrates may have been associated with midwifery. There is still, however, the large jump between the processes of 'normal midwifery' and 'intellectual midwifery'. It might even be said that Socrates became known as an 'intellectual midwife' due to his reputation as a sophist and his mother's reputation as a midwife. This is certainly plausible, and might almost fit in the sense that 'Socrates was known as intellectual midwife both in the late 5th century and by Plato', yet there is one niggling issue – and this is why Plato doesn't just dismiss it as meaningless gossip as he does other charges laid against Socrates. Whether or not Socrates as an 'intellectual midwife' was Socrates' own metaphor, or something bestowed on him by the public due to his being the sophistic son of a midwife, it appears to be a reputation he embraced and identified with, since Plato seems to 'verify' this aspect of his teaching in the *Theaetetus*. If Socrates was not fond of such a reputation – such as he wasn't fond about being called a sophist – it seems reasonable to assume Plato would have strived to disassociate him from the term in the dialogues.

Tarrant also argues, again quite reasonably, that if this were a genuine allusion to such a recognisable Socratic practice capable of generating laughter at a mere mention, why waste such good material on a throwaway line? Surely, if it were so well known it would be saved and given a more ample presentation or at least crop up again in the play. Could just one line really have caused such a hullabaloo that Plato felt compelled to rectify it over half a century later? Indeed, Tarrant proposes that, if Aristophanes had Intellectual Midwifery in mind, there is a much more suitable scene in the play in which it could be presented – the 'couch scene', as Strepsiades attempts to philosophize beneath the blankets (720ff). Rightly seeing a missed opportunity for a midwifery joke, Tarrant perhaps rather hastily concludes that *Nu.* 137 is simply a typically burlesque entrance of comedy, using unexpected, shock-inducing language that the general public might associate with the goings on within any philosophical school.[545] In this very 'couch scene', however, Tarrant may very well have overlooked what could indeed be

[545] 1988: 120; Tarrant also argues that, unlike Socratic midwifery, the idea is not actually aborted but discovered. The reference is to miscarriage, not midwifery. The discoverer is also not the Student, but Chaerephon, leading him to comment that "if Aristophanes had alluded to Socratic Midwifery at 137, then he had obscured the allusion in the same line and failed miserably to follow through with it". While this is most certainly true, this is to put far too much faith in the philosophical expertise of Aristophanes and his audience, and their care for accuracy. To discredit this as non-Socratic on grounds of inaccuracy in this one instance would then also seem to imply that the philosophy of the rest of the play should be water-tight.

another, much more obvious allusion to Intellectual Midwifery – for here Aristophanes may present the role of an Intellectual Midwife in a purely physical manner, by taking it literally and applying a metaphorical method to a real-life situation. We should be particularly concerned with the happenings between 730-762, as Socrates is helping the prone but struggling Strepsiades along with his idea on the verge of discovery. Strepsiades is under the covers; Socrates is helping 'induce' a delivery. Strepsiades, like a woman about to give birth, goes through what in this context could best be described as 'intellectual' labour pains (οἴμοι τάλας - 742), while Socrates, using his knowledge of the formation and delivery of ideas, shouts encouragement:

> μή νυν περὶ σαυτὸν εἷλλε τὴν γνώμην ἀεί,
> ἀλλ᾽ ἀποχάλα τὴν φροντίδ᾽ ἐς τὸν ἀέρα
> λινόδετον ὥσπερ μηλολόνθην τοῦ ποδός.
>
> - *Nu.* 759-61

> ἔχ᾽ ἀτρέμα: κἂν ἀπορῇς τι τῶν νοημάτων,
> ἀφεὶς ἄπελθε, καὶ κατὰ τὴν γνώμην πάλιν
> κίνησον αὖθις αὐτὸ καὶ ζυγώθρισον.
>
> - *Nu.* 743 -45

This frantic scene shares many characteristics with that of a woman going into labour: the position of the characters, one under severe duress, the other shouting encouragement, while 761 might be an allusion to the intellectual umbilical cord. The tone and urgency all match that of a labour, especially when one considers the dramatics that would have been added by the actors,. Should Socrates have said something like "Be sure not to constrict your airways by sitting up too far! Stop fidgeting and relax, it will be much easier!" we would have a full scale mock-labour on our hands. Rather than do this, however, Aristophanes substitutes such phrases of a midwife, replacing them with pseudo-intellectual jargon on the mechanics of thought, describing the idea from its formation and trying to procure it safely; Socrates is doing exactly the same things to help Strepsiades deliver his idea as a midwife would a baby. While line 137 may allude to Socratic Midwifery, 730-762 can be read as a demonstration of an Intellectual Midwife in action, showing how ludicrous the idea seems to be, for is it not a scene like this that initially comes to mind when Socrates claims that 'my midwifery has all the standard features, except that I practise it on men instead of women, and supervise the labour of their minds not their bodies' (*Tht.* 150b7-c2)?

Dover[546] finds himself in a position similar to Tarrant; he cannot envisage an audience being so well-acquainted with Socratic terminology that Aristophanes could allude to it with one word without any enlargement. Just as does Tarrant, Dover asks why we do not find similar allusions throughout the play,[547] before questioning the fact that if this metaphor was so well known as to draw laughter from a single throwaway line, why did Plato then neglect this in his earlier dialogues – including the *Apology* – and only exploit it at a relatively late date in one dialogue alone? Dover finds we stretch the gap of plausibility too far, and puts it down to coincidence, suggesting that the term 'miscarry' is simply appropriate to having an intellectual process disturbed by a loud noise.

Dover, however, apparently bases his critique on the assumption that Aristophanes had *intended* the allusion to be recognizable as distinctly Socratic. This, however, may very well not be the case. Aristophanes is drawing from a vast range of pop-philosophy; he indiscriminately and carelessly loads Socrates with elements distinct to various different intellectuals from each end of the philosophical spectrum, without any consideration for accuracy. It may be the case he simply didn't care for such accuracy – he didn't expect his audience to be experts in philosophy, but in this wanton pillaging of various ideas that circle around the 'typical' philosopher, it is entirely possible, if not probable, that he also took ideas attributable to the historical Socrates and, intentionally or not, included them in his caricature of the contemporary intellectual. Indeed, surely a claim to be an Intellectual Midwife would be peculiar enough to enter public consciousness. Plato, in turn, noticing such terminology to be Socratic, felt compelled to vindicate it in the dialogues.

Also inherent in Dover's criticism is the implication that line 137 couldn't and didn't create a lasting impression; otherwise Plato would have dealt with it at an earlier opportunity. While an argument for an earlier date for the composition of the *Theaetetus* has already been presented in Chapter 1, we must also consider Taylor's observations,[548] and actually think about the idea that has been 'miscarried'; Socrates and Chaerephon were discussing how many feet a flea could jump and had created a

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[546] 1968:xlii-xliii
[547] Dover here is slightly ambiguous in his phrasing; it is not quite clear if by 'similar references' he means references specifically to midwifery or references to Socratic ideology in general. If he means the former, we have seen in the above paragraph how this is not the case. In the case of the latter, this chapter aims to bring other such instances to light.
[548] 1911: 148ff.

device to facilitate this, which, as Taylor observes, is the solution of a mathematical problem from the study known as περὶ φύσεως ἱστορία, the very subject which Socrates tells us in the *Phaedo* that he was interested in in early life.[549]

Perhaps the most compelling evidence, however, that this particular 'miscarried' idea about the length of a flea's jump proved to have been more memorable than Dover is prepared to concede is the frequently overlooked fact that Xenophon also directly refers to it in his *Symposium.* This takes place as the Syracusan, dismayed at the conversation repeatedly blowing off course, begins to poke fun at Socrates:

τοιούτων δὲ λόγων ὄντων ὡς ἑώρα ὁ Συρακόσιος τῶν μὲν αὑτοῦ ἐπιδειγμάτων ἀμελοῦντας, ἀλλήλοις δὲ ἡδομένους, φθονῶν τῷ Σωκράτει εἶπεν: ἆρα σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὁ φροντιστὴς ἐπικαλούμενος; οὐκοῦν κάλλιον, ἔφη, ἢ εἰ ἀφρόντιστος ἐκαλούμην. εἰ μή γε ἐδόκεις τῶν μετεώρων φροντιστὴς εἶναι. οἶσθα οὖν, ἔφη ὁ Σωκράτης, μετεωρότερόν τι τῶν θεῶν; ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μὰ Δί᾽, ἔφη, οὐ τούτων σε λέγουσιν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀνωφελεστάτων. οὐκοῦν καὶ οὕτως ἄν, ἔφη, θεῶν ἐπιμελοίμην: ἄνωθεν μέν γε ὕοντες ὠφελοῦσιν, ἄνωθεν δὲ φῶς παρέχουσιν. εἰ δὲ ψυχρὰ λέγω, σὺ αἴτιος, ἔφη, πράγματά μοι παρέχων. ταῦτα μέν, ἔφη, ἔα: ἀλλ᾽ εἰπέ μοι πόσους ψύλλα πόδας ἐμοῦ ἀπέχει. ταῦτα γάρ σέ φασι γεωμετρεῖν.[550]

It would seem the Syracusan remembers the scene quite well. Xenophon sets the dialogue in 421 – two years after the production of *Clouds*, so it would have been recent. Aside from reminding us of the flea-feet passage in *Clouds*, the Syracusan also alludes to the scene in *Clouds* which has the Student and Strepsiades play at being geometers, but as does the Syracusan, they get confused between actual art and the word's etymology:

Στρεψιάδης
τουτὶ δὲ τί;

Μαθητής
γεωμετρία.

Στρεψιάδης
τοῦτ᾽ οὖν τί ἐστι χρήσιμον;

Μαθητής
γῆν ἀναμετρῆσαι.

Στρεψιάδης
πότερα τὴν κληρουχικήν;

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[549] We again, however, must be cautious, as this again only shows that Socrates was *perceived* to engage in such activity – Plato, it would seem, explains in the *Phaedo* that this was merely down to the curiosity of youth, and Socrates left behind such activity in later life to explore what he felt were more important matters.

[550] Xen. *Symp.* 6.6-8.

Μαθητής
οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὴν σύμπασαν.

What is most important here is that by explicitly alluding to the scene in which the student 'miscarries' an idea about measuring flea feet, decades after the play was written – and presumably after Plato's *Symposium*[551] – Xenophon completely undermines Dover's assumption that the scene did not make as big a splash as some may think. If this were the case, why would Xenophon have alluded to an obscure scene of a play he doesn't mention by name and expect his readership to recognise the reference? It would in fact appear to be the opposite – the scene was so well known that Plato had to address it.

The general consensus on the failure of *Clouds I* in 423 is derived from Hypothesis II (Dover),[552] which states that having lost to Cratinus and Ameipsias, Aristophanes felt hard done by and revised the *Clouds*, but had even worse luck with the second version and could not get it produced. Inherent in the Hypothesis, however, is the strength of the competition Aristophanes faced that year, a year in which three of the most terrific plays the competition had thus far seen were presented. It was in this year that Cratinus, in an unprecedented move, had come out of retirement to present his masterpiece *Pytine* – a response to Aristophanes' taunts in *Knights* the previous year - which was lauded as the most successful and innovative comedy ever produced; a title it retained for decades,[553] while Ameipsias took second prize with another intellectual comedy, the *Konnos* with its chorus of *Phrontistai*. When we take into consideration the quality of what Aristophanes contended with, finishing third may have been no major indicator of the quality or popularity of *Clouds*. This is substantiated by an anecdote of Aelian, in which he claims *Clouds* was actually the audience's favourite and "…this play, *The Clouds*, was thought to be very agreeable entertainment and they applauded the poet. They shouted that he should win the prize, and they told the judges to put Aristophanes, and no one else at the top of their list. This is the story of the play".[554] Although Aelian is writing much later (2nd Cent. CE), there does seem to be a sentiment that Aristophanes had suffered an injustice; we must remember that the winner of the competition was decided not by the audience but by the judges (ἀγωνοθέται). While perhaps not the

[551] Cf. Dover (1965) but also Thesleff (1978).
[552] The Hypothesis, however, is flawed; it gives the intended date for the production of the revision as in the Archonship of Ameinias (423/22) – the year following the first production. *Nu.* 553, however, makes direct reference to Eupolis' *Marikas,* which was produced at the Lenea of 421, which shows the revised *Clouds* could not logically have been written until after this date.
[553] Cf. Rosen and Luppe's separate chapters in Harvey & Wilkins (eds.) (2000).
[554] *VH*. 2.13 – Trans. Wilson.

audience favourite, as Aelian asserts, it may certainly have been well received, only being trumped by a master emerging from retirement, or finished last solely on technical or stylistic grounds. This may explain what Storey refers to as the 'curious matter of the Lenea of 422',[555] in which Aristophanes presented not one but two plays – *Wasps* placing second and *Proagon* (produced by Philonides) placing first. Although Aristophanes' previous failure may have prevented him from entering that year's Dionysia,[556] the fact that he was permitted, and could find funding, to enter two plays,[557] both of which were complete successes, is not indicative of an author who only months earlier was a complete failure, but more of a poet unjustly deprived of his due. While Aristophanes' chastisement of the audience in the parabasis may be indicative of their lack of appreciation of the original performance,[558] Major notes such chastisement is not unique, but is rather habitual of Old Comedy, to the point where it is almost formulaic.[559] A parabasis, after all, must still play for laughs, and not lean towards negativity, leading Marshall to comment that "within these formulaic conventions of chastising the audience, Aristophanes got good mileage out of the result of the dramatic competition of 423, and thus returned to it in at least two parabases."[560] *Clouds*, then, may not have been as poorly received and remembered as initially thought, a fact further supported not only by Plato's frequent references to it, but also by the allusion made to it by Xenophon.

That line 137 was liable to have an effect on the Socratic reputation is further indicated by Plato's vehemence in defending it – a vehemence which may stem from the origin of the line being closely related to the Socratic circle, if not to Socrates himself. But is there also a hint of Plato playing to the comedians? The student comments that the content of what he was about to miscarry is a secret, and 'only students may know such things', yet he goes on to immediately divulge the secrets of the *Phrontisterion*. Whether this 'secrecy' has anything to do with the unfamiliar nature of this doctrine mentioned at *Tht.* 149a7 is debatable, as is how 'secret' these doctrines really were,

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[555] 2003: 281-92.

[556] That the loser of the Dionysia was not permitted to enter the following year's competition is suggested from a statement by Eratosthenes regarding Plato Comicus: "He was successful for so long as he produced plays for other poets, but when he first produced his own play *Staff Bearers* he placed fourth and was shunted back to the Lenaean contest" (Plato test. 7 K-A; here translated by Henderson, 1998: 215 n2).

[557] This was no inexpensive endeavour; the speaker of Lysias (21.iff) claims a comic *choregia* cost him 1,600 drachmae in 403/2.

[558] *Nu.* 518-527.

[559] 2006: 138-43.

[560] 2012: 68. The second parabasis Marshall refers to here is *Ves.* 1042-1046.

since both the Student of *Clouds* and Plato's Socrates divulge the 'secret' quite casually. What concerns our discussion, however, are Socrates' comments to Theaetetus at 155e3-6; just as the two are about to delve deeply into discussion, Socrates asks Theaetetus to 'ἄθρει δὴ περισκοπῶν μή τις τῶν ἀμυήτων ἐπακούῃ. εἰσὶν δὲ οὗτοι οἱ οὐδὲν ἄλλο οἰόμενοι εἶναι ἢ οὗ ἂν δύνωνται ἀπρὶξ τοῖν χεροῖν λαβέσθαι, πράξεις δὲ καὶ γενέσεις καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἀόρατον οὐκ ἀποδεχόμενοι ὡς ἐν οὐσίας μέρει.' Socrates' depiction of the uninitiated in Plato seems to match that of those of the enemies of the *Phrontisterion*, those who are unable to comprehend the abstract. Plato's underlying mission must then outline the benefits of understanding such thoughts; it is the 'initiated' that are ultimately painted as the fools of the piece in *Clouds*, practising this 'invisible' art. Plato must show that it is actually the 'uninitiated' who are the fools and his response very much echoes the chastisement of the comic poets in *Republic* V*;* they are accused of being 'uncouth' and 'unsophisticated'(156a), unable to comprehend beyond what they can see in front of them. Is this a direct jab at the comic poets or is it directed more towards those with a general indisposition towards philosophy? Whatever the case, Plato asserts that it is those unable to accept his teachings who are the ignorant, uncultured and obstinate (156a). This attack on the 'uninitiated' seems quite out of place. Such chastisement serves no real purpose in the dialogue and could easily be excised without any damage done to the philosophical progression of the work. The motives for such an attack – from both literary and philosophical perspectives – seem quite unclear and without definitive reason. Clarity, I suggest, is however attained when we consider the ideas being discussed in the passage in tandem with similar comic portrayals of such ideas. If this is the case, it is important in providing an otherwise unafforded insight into Plato's demeanour. By this I mean the fact that he breaks off from a serious but relaxed discussion, to strike out at those who, he feels, have wronged or belittled him or his school of thought.

This rebuke, combined with its association with an ideology that bears such strong similarity to one parodied by the comedians, pushes the boundaries of coincidence too far when faced with a more plausible solution: Plato is presenting an idea that was lambasted at least once by the comedians, and possibly again through a memorable physical manifestation of the method in the bed scene of *Clouds*, in which the idea is belittled to the point of grotesque inanity, and this perception could not be ignored when introducing the method in the dialogues. Plato not only must take the idea and present it

in its intended environment, but also reproach those who may have taken the comic incarnation as a faithful portrayal.

5. c) The Principle of Non-Contradiction:

At *Nu.* 1170ff Pheidippides emerges from his instruction in the *Phrontisterion.* Pale, negative and argumentative, he is armed with a plethora of new-found arguments set to save his father's skin. Anxious yet eager, Strepsiades enquires as to how he shall fend off the creditors coming to collect the debts his son has run up on horses. Pheidippides asks what exactly his father is so afraid of, to which Strepsiades responds 'the Old and New day' (τὴν ἕνην τε καὶ νέαν – *Nu.* 1178). The 'Old and New day' signified the last day of the month in the Attic calendar[561] – 'Old' representing culmination of the present month (or moon) and 'New' heralding the beginning of the coming month – and was also the day on which debts were collected. Pheidippides, apparently now ignorant of everyday social norms, resorts to questioning the very possibility of such a day, and goes on to invoke what could be a Socratic principle to bolster his argument: how can a day be both old and new at the same time? For this is as absurd as:

> εἰ μή περ γ᾽ ἅμα
> αὑτὴ γένοιτ᾽ ἂν γραῦς τε καὶ νέα γυνή. [562]

The relevance of Pheidippides' analogy has previously escaped the notice of scholars, but in this section its importance will be highlighted by arguing that owing to its overwhelming similarity to an Aristotelian law of thought which was previously formulated by Plato, Aristophanes may again here be taking influence from genuine Socratic ideology. The principle in question is that of Non-Contradiction (hereafter PNC), formulated by Aristotle but tracing back to Plato's Socrates and perhaps even the Pre-Socratics. Aristotle formulates the principle many times and with different particulars in the *Metaphysics*;[563] but for our purpose we need only state the fundamental conception, which deals with properties in general rather than particular properties relevant to certain things (e.g. motion and rest, being and not being). Aristotle states:

> τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ ἅμα ὑπάρχειν τε καὶ μὴ ὑπάρχειν ἀδύνατον
> τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτό.

[561] For an in-depth discussion on the further peculiarities of this and the Athenian calendar in general, cf. Mikalson (1975).
[562] *Nu*. 1183-4.
[563] *Meta.*1005*b*26-27, 1006*a*3-4, 1006*b*33-34, and the example given here, 1005*b*19-20.

The principle expresses the impossibility of one and the same thing both having and not having the same property at the same time; i.e. it is impossible for a sheet of paper both to be white and not be white at the same time and in the same respect. Pheidippides' comments incidentally serve as an ideal example of the principle; for if a woman is young she cannot *not* be young at the same time.

In *Republic IV*, Plato puts forward a very similar theory on non-contradiction; Socrates states:

> δῆλον ὅτι ταὐτὸν τἀναντία ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν κατὰ ταὐτόν
> γε καὶ πρὸς ταὐτὸν οὐκ ἐθελήσει ἅμα.[564]

This is widely regarded as the first definite formulation of the principle,[565] as its similarities are striking; Plato explicitly uses the term 'opposite' (ἐναντίος), which corresponds to the example given by Pheidippides. Moreover, Plato has also added the 'qualifiers' that are essential to the principle that are also used by Aristotle, these qualifiers being "in the same part of itself, in relation to the same thing and in the same respect (ἅμα)". These specify exactly to what the principle applies; as if they are excised we merely have 'the same thing will not be willing to undergo opposites'. Things to which the PNC applies must be unitary; objects like a spinning top can be both in motion and at rest at the same time. This, however, is because a spinning top is not a single unitary thing; while its circumference may be in motion and its axis at rest, both are separable parts in different places; a chessboard can be both white and not white, but it cannot be argued that it is both white and not white at the same square of the chessboard at the same time, a stipulation introduced by the qualifiers. These qualifiers are not only used by Plato, but are also apparently taught to the students of the *Phrontisterion* – "εἰ μή πέρ γ' **ἅμα** αὑτὴ γένοιτ' ἂν γραῦς τε καὶ νέα γυνή" (Of course not. I mean that's like saying that a single woman could be both a young girl and an old woman at *the same time.*)"

That the source of Pheidippides' remarks is particularly Socratic, rather than reflective of a general supposition or trend in contemporary sophistic discourse, is evinced by the lack of support for the principle outside the Socratics, who indeed seem to be somewhat unique in advocating the PNC. Pinpointing the origins of the principle, however, is a

[564] *Rep*. 436b9-10.
[565]Cf. Adam on *Rep* 436b, who comments that this is "the earliest explicit statement in Greek literature on the maxim of Contradiction". Elsewhere in the dialogues, rudimentary formulations can be found; cf. *Phaed*. 102e-103d, as Socrates and Cebes agree that nothing can become its opposite. Also see *Soph*. 230b which is below at pp. 116-18.

tricky business; Hamilton, for example, is convinced Plato was key in its development, noting that "the Principle of Non-Contradiction...can be traced back to Plato, by whom (it was) enounced and frequently applied, though it was not until long after that (it) obtained a distinctive appellation."[566] By 'frequently applied', Hamilton is also referring to the instances in the *Phaedo* (102e-103d) and the *Sophist* (230b, 252d); here, however, the references to the principle are rather more ambiguous – and certainly are not as clearly 'enounced' as Hamilton would suggest. Grote is similarly sceptical, though his assertion that the principle was first "enunciated, denominated, and distinctly explained by Aristotle and no one before him"[567] implies that Plato himself was unaware of the full implications of the principle. Indeed, he seems to think just that; citing the Principle of Excluded Middle, Grote argues that for a correct formulation of PNC, there must be a *clear* distinction between Contrary Opposites and Contradictory Opposites.[568] That Plato's formulation of the PNC is rudimentary compared to the comprehensiveness of the Aristotelian account is undeniable – and it could indeed be the case that being young is not necessarily a Contradictory Opposite of being old but a Contradictory one – yet it certainly does not imply that Plato was unaware of the PNC or the consequences of it. A woman, for example may not be young or old but be middle aged; she still could not, however, be both young and middle aged – or young and 'not young' at the same time, and so Pheidippides' 'argument' is still 'valid'. Adam[569] also proposes that Plato may have been compelled to formulate the principle in response to Heracliteanism, the fluxism of which could be taken as a negation of the principle. Certainly, the lack of expansion of such a complex principle in the dialogues is rather puzzling; while Aristotle goes to great lengths across different works to explain its intricacies, in Plato the principle is brought up in discussion to strengthen an argument but then shied away from. It is never fully outlined or explored, and its validity is taken automatically as

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[566] 1861: 87-91.
[567] 1873: 140-41nB.
[568]Contrary opposites – A and E propositions on the Aristotelian square of opposites (*De Int.* 6-7) - are propositions which cannot both be true, but the falsity of one does *not* verify the other; they can *both* be false. The statements 'all men are white' and 'no men are white' cannot both be true, but if we take 'all men are white' to be false, this does not imply the truth of the statement 'no men are white', as it may be the case that *some* men are white. A Contradictory Opposite, however, *does* imply the falsity of its corresponding proposition, as it does not allow for such intermediaries between opposites. The propositions 'She is sitting' and 'She is not sitting', cannot both be true, but the truth of one automatically negates the other, or vice versa; if 'She is not sitting' is true, then 'She is sitting' is false, as there is no intermediary that could accommodate a compromise. She is either sitting, or she is not (*Meta.* 1011b20-27). Thus, we must accept one proposition and deny the other. It is this deeper engagement which leads Grote (1873:141) to argue that the principle is only fully expounded by Aristotle, and not "averted to, or at least never broadly set out, by Plato".
[569] 1902: comm. on 436b.

obvious.[570] It seems that Plato almost expected his readership to *already* be familiar with the PNC or more that consequences of denying it were obvious; so much so in fact that he did not feel the need to elaborate on its necessity, nor overly explain it in the dialogues. This suggests two situations – a) the PNC was a common topic at the time and thus not distinctly Socratic or b) the PNC was a common topic *amongst the Socratics*. In response to a) we must consider the lack of evidence to support this, but more decisively, that at least one contemporary of Socrates rather seemed to *oppose* the PNC, a point to be discussed shortly. In the case of b) however, there remains a possibility that the PNC may have had earlier, even Eleatic, roots preceding Socrates. Mourelatos, for example, argues that it has its roots in Parmenides and his discourse on what-is and what-is-not,[571] while Zeno in the *Parmenides* explains that the purpose of his book is to show the absurd consequences in postulating the 'Many', i.e. the fact that what is postulated will have contradictory properties.[572] Plato, however, writes of Parmenides with veneration, and sees him as a figure to be admired.[573] Parmenides, then, may have had a direct influence on Socrates, who then picked up on and developed his thought, inasmuch as it would become commonly accepted within the Socratic circle. While I am aware that to credit Socrates with ideas generally attributed to Plato is rather controversial, here I must point to the *Sophist*, where Plato shows how the elenctic method is inherently linked with the PNC:[574]

διερωτῶσιν ὧν ἂν οἴηταί τίς τι πέρι λέγειν λέγων μηδέν: εἶθ᾽ ἅτε πλανωμένων τὰς δόξας ῥᾳδίως ἐξετάζουσι, καὶ συνάγοντες δὴ τοῖς λόγοις εἰς ταὐτὸν τιθέασι παρ᾽ ἀλλήλας, τιθέντες δὲ ἐπιδεικνύουσιν αὐτὰς αὑταῖς ἅμα περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὰ αὐτὰ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ἐναντίας. οἱ δ᾽ ὁρῶντες ἑαυτοῖς μὲν χαλεπαίνουσι, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους ἡμεροῦνται, καὶ τούτῳ δὴ τῷ τρόπῳ τῶν περὶ αὑτοὺς μεγάλων καὶ σκληρῶν δοξῶν ἀπαλλάττονται πασῶν τε ἀπαλλαγῶν ἀκούειν τε ἡδίστην καὶ τῷ πάσχοντι βεβαιότατα γιγνομένην.

Here, then, the strength of the elenctic method is shown in terms of the PNC, with the *aporia* that arises from the elenchus being shown to be a direct result of violation of the principle. To use a random example, let us examine Cephalus' effort to define justice in *Republic* I:[576]

Premise: Justice is repaying one's debts (A = F).

[570]Cf. *Rep.* 437b; an unnamed friend of Cebes raises a slight objection at *Phaed.*103a5-10, but this is more to do with his dissatisfaction with the direction the argument seems to be taking; Socrates, however, soon sets him straight and they agree on the PNC.
[571] 1974: 206.
[572] *Parm*. 128d. Credit here is due to Harold Tarrant for observing this in his comments on the pre-viva version of this thesis.
[573] Cf. *Tht*. 183e-184a; *Soph*. 241d, 242a.
[574] *Soph*. 230b3-c4.
[576] 331b-d.

> I have lent you my weapons but suffer a fit of madness and demand my weapons. This, however, would not be just as I could go on a murderous rampage. In this case, then, it is *not* just to repay one's debts (-A = F).
>
> Thus, paying one's debts is both just and not just (F = A & -A).
>
> Justice, however, cannot also be 'not justice' (A ≠ -A).
>
> Conclusion: Justice cannot be repaying one's debts (A ≠ F).

In the *Sophist* Plato reiterates the importance of the elenchus; it causes the recipient to grow frustrated but culminates in them ridding themselves of their previous pretensions to knowledge, and now becoming finally receptive to beneficial discourse, akin to the removal of a tumour, which allows for the road to recovery in a patient (230c-d). We are then told that the elenchus is the principal form of catharsis, purging one's soul of the impediments responsible for ignorance, while those who do not experience it live their lives in a way that is ugly and uneducated (230d3-231a10):

Ξένος
τί δέ; τοὺς ταύτῃ χρωμένους τῇ τέχνῃ τίνας φήσομεν;
ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ φοβοῦμαι σοφιστὰς φάναι.

Θεαίτητος
τί δή;

Ξένος
μὴ μεῖζον αὐτοῖς προσάπτωμεν γέρας.

Θεαίτητος
ἀλλὰ μὴν προσέοικέ γε τοιούτῳ τινὶ τὰ νῦν εἰρημένα.

Ξένος
καὶ γὰρ κυνὶ λύκος, ἀγριώτατον ἡμερωτάτῳ. τὸν δὲ ἀσφαλῆ δεῖ πάντων μάλιστα περὶ τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀεὶ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν φυλακήν· ὀλισθηρότατον γὰρ τὸ γένος. ὅμως δὲ ἔστω: οὐ γὰρ περὶ σμικρῶν ὅρων τὴν ἀμφισβήτησιν οἴομαι γενήσεσθαι τότε ὁπόταν ἱκανῶς φυλάττωσιν.

What is perhaps most peculiar is the rather exaggerated upbraiding of the sophist; the previous five processes of *diairesis* have resulted in the interlocutors specifying particular attributes that may be deemed characteristic of the sophist,[577] yet here Plato seems very reluctant to grant to the sophist this concession. Furthermore, Plato in almost the same breath hesitantly grants refutation as a skill of the sophist, or at least one that the sophist *appears* to have, before spending the next four Stephanus pages intimating that any knowledge a sophist may claim to have is all mere trickery.[578] Plato's aim here is confusing; is the elenctic method that of the 'true philosopher', the sophist or both?

[577] *Soph.* 223b, 224, 226e.
[578]*Soph.* 231c-235d.

Indeed, he recalls Socrates' use of the method in the *Apology*, in which it was used to expose the ignorance of those who thought themselves wise.[579] Similarly in the *Meno* (80e1-82b1), Socrates memorably highlights the difference between Meno's *seemingly* elenctic argument and his own, to which Meno poses the old sophistic conundrum of how someone could learn something they do not already know – a seemingly aporetic question.[580] Socrates, however, dismisses Meno's reasoning as a mere debater's argument (ὁρᾷς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις – 80e1-2), having dismantled it with the true Socratic Method (79b6-d6) and reduced Meno to a state of *aporia* (79e7-80b7).

What Plato seems prepared to admit is that while some so-called philosophers may *appear* to dabble in the elenctic method, and *appear* to put it to good use, only the true philosopher knows it truly and employs it correctly with the selfless intent to purge the recipient's soul of ignorance. This is the difference between elenctic and eristic argumentation; the sophist is a jack-of-all-trades claiming mastery of many arts with the sole intention of lining his pockets, while the only concern of the philosopher should be the improvement of his student's soul. Pheidippides' comments about the Old and New Day could just as easily have come from the mouths of Euthydemus or Dionysodorus in the *Euthydemus*, and so Plato may have been compelled to rescue this doctrine from ridicule. If we return to the passage of the *Sophist* given above, we see how Plato likens the sophist to a wild wolf;[581] but earlier he classifies man in general as the 'tame' variety of animal.[582] The sophist then, is a wild animal with a bag of tricks who can be easily mistaken for the real philosopher; while arguments like refuting the Old and New Day on the grounds of contradiction may *appear* to be the discourse of the Socratics, they are actually, so Plato, the subject of the sophist who himself also only *appears* to be knowledgeable. While the true philosopher invokes the PNC to define a logical argument, others – just like the philosopher of the stage – haphazardly pick it from their bag of arguments as a tool merely to momentarily baffle an opponent and claim victory in an argument.

If we look again to the *Theaetetus*,[583] we again see how Socrates – or at least Plato – was aware of the implications of Non-Contradiction; Theaetetus is initially committed to Protagoras' view that knowledge is nothing but perception, his 'Man the Measure'

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[579] *Ap.* 21b-e.
[580] Cf. *Euthyd.* 277d-276c.
[581] *Soph.* 231a6.
[582] *Soph.* 222c1.
[583] The following summary is influenced in part by Gottlieb (2007).

doctrine (152a), since he agrees that a wind could be perceived as warm by one and cold by another, something that would initially refute the principle since the same wind is both warm and not warm (152b). Plato goes on to argue that if we follow Protagoras then we must commit to the view that nothing is anything in itself (since we can only know of an object what we perceive of it), which leads to a retreat to an extreme version of fluxism; in order to accommodate these opposing positions, we must allow that the wind is *both* cold *and* hot. This, however, violates the PNC, and Socrates presents other matters that have conflicting appearances, which in turn implies a world of flux in which everything is 'changing and flowing' (182c). It follows then (182d) that if everything is constantly changing we cannot know or describe anything, since everything is permanently altering. If everything is constantly moving and changing we cannot truly perceive anything, as it will be changing as we perceive it, and so perception becomes the same as 'non-perception'; and if knowledge is perception it follows that knowledge is the same as 'non-knowledge' (182e). This results in a world where everything is 'so and not so', a world which violates the PNC. Socrates then goes on to show how people who hold this theory must create a different language, since nothing in our vocabulary can describe what is in flux (183b). In Aristotle's model of the PNC, he employs this conclusion about the ability of language to grasp specific phenomena. The PNC forms the basis not only for our way of speaking, but our way of thinking:[584]

> A: Only if the PNC is true of things, can we think and speak about them.
>
> B: We think and speak about things
>
> Conclusion: the PNC is true of things.

Since the Platonic Protagoras speaks and thinks about perception, both the Platonic Socrates' and Aristotle's refutations can be seen to be largely similar, requiring a proposition identical with or analogous to the Principle of Non-Contradiction. Protagoras speaks of proposition B without agreeing that proposition A is true – he believes that we cannot speak or think of things *themselves*, only of what we perceive of them. Plato sees this as an untenable position given that he believes himself able to speak and think about perceptions.

Plato further refutes the Protagorean position with his 'exquisite argument' stating that if *all* appearances and beliefs are true, then it follows that should someone hold the

[584] The following formula is given by Politis (2004:158).

belief that Protagoras' views are wrong and then this must be a true belief, given that *all* appearances and beliefs are true.[585] Put succinctly, if Socrates thinks Protagoras is wrong, yet Protagoras thinks himself right, then Protagoras is both right-and-wrong and the same time. Protagoras allows for this, and hence advoctes a position opposing the PNC. Aristotle's refutation of Protagoras is reminiscent of this:

> ἔστι δ᾽ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς δόξης καὶ ὁ Πρωταγόρου λόγος, καὶ ἀνάγκη ὁμοίως αὐτοὺς ἄμφω ἢ εἶναι ἢ μὴ εἶναι· εἴτε γὰρ τὰ δοκοῦντα πάντα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ καὶ τὰ φαινόμενα, ἀνάγκη εἶναι πάντα ἅμα ἀληθῆ καὶ ψευδῆ.[586]

Aristotle's opponent to the PNC and the Platonic Protagoras both assert the same conclusion, that we cannot know things in themselves, only what we perceive of them, and so would disagree with premise B above, arguing that we *cannot* think or speak about things, only the appearance of them generated by our perceptive faculties.[587] Thus, Protagoras' views conflict with the PNC, making him, or anyone under his influence, an unlikely source for Pheidippides' quip.

It is due to this opposing nature of their positions, and Socrates' admiration for previous Eleatic theories based on the same principle, that I suggest that it is more likely that Aristophanes is drawing from contemporary ideology that was distinctive of either Socrates himself or at least the Socratic Circle rather than sophistry, when he has Pheidippides cite the PNC. It might still be argued that Aristophanes draws from contemporary 'philosophy' in general, but, as I have suggested above, promoting the PNC would seem counter-productive for the sophists and their enterprise. Neither do I suggest that Socrates was the founder of such a thought, but merely that he was heavily influenced by it and it became integral to his – and thus Plato's – philosophy.

If this is plausible – that the sophists didn't engage in refutation of the PNC – this gives to yet another point of interest, in that it highlights Aristophanes' disregard for accuracy

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[585] Cf. *Tht.*171a-d.

[586] *Meta.* IV.5, 1009a5-9.

[587] Plato, however, is rather unfair in his treatment of Protagoras in that he does not give a full representation of his position. Barnes (1979: 547) asks if Protagoras "knowingly and cheerfully" denied the law of non-Contradiction, pointing out that the statement 'contradiction is impossible' does *not* assert that a proposition and its contradictory can both be true at the same time; it is to assert the perfectly good thesis that 'you cannot contradict me'. Whether intentional or not, Plato hides this fact rather well; for against his 'exquisite argument' Protagoras would further develop his maxim by adding 'relativising qualifiers', reformulating 'all beliefs are true' to 'all beliefs are true-for-me'. Thus, while it may be *true-for-me* that all beliefs are true, it can still be 'true-for-you that all beliefs are not *true-for-you'*. These statements are not contradictory, nor does the negation of one affirm the truth of the other, but are rather two separate, distinct statements. This position is still far from immune to scrutiny: Aristotle lodges criticisms, but further discussion is no longer relevant to the task at hand. Cf. *Meta.* IV. 5-6. For a detailed discussion on Protagoras' available responses in the *Theaetetus* see Lee (1973).

in his parodying of contemporary thought – for Strepsiades initially enrols in the *Phrontisterion* in the hope of making the 'weak' argument 'strong'; a distinctly Protagorean endeavour. Protagoras maintained that on any matter there were opposing *logoi,*[588] and his speciality was to instruct how 'to make the weaker (or inferior) logos stronger (or superior)';[589] Pheidippides, however, emerges spouting the PNC, which could not be further at odds with the former school of thought. Indeed, Aristotle goes on to recall how these sophistic tactics would 'disgust' his fellow men, but there can be little doubt that this technique of Protagoras greatly influenced Aristophanes in his construction of the *Phrontisterion* – an institution whose mission statement includes teaching one how to make the ἥττων λόγος trump the κρείττων λόγος.[590] That each 'thing' may have such opposing attributes is allowed by the relativist stance Protagoras takes – elucidated by his 'Man the Measure' maxim.[591] Moreover, it is in *direct* conflict with the PNC in any of Plato or Aristotle's formulations, which uniformly state that no thing can have opposing attributes at the same time, place, etc. Aristotle specifically names Protagoras as a detractor of the PNC,[592] yet in the *Phrontisterion* Pheidippides seems to learn arguments distinctive of Protagoras, only to employ arguments, such as the PNC, which question the credibility of the very arguments the institution prides itself on. This is almost impossible; no institution could plausibly advocate two such opposing stances. Whether Aristophanes himself knew the irreconcilability of the teaching of the *Phrontisterion* is unanswerable. That he meant this as a tongue-in-cheek reference to the farcicality of the institution – in that it is so ludicrous it doesn't even understand what it teaches – is doubtful, putting far too much faith in the philosophical expertise of the lay public of the period. If Aristophanes *did* recognise the error – unlikely as it was at this stage in his career[593] – he certainly didn't care; this is a play lambasting the risibility of philosophy, and what better way to demonstrate this than by having a character apply such seemingly inane principles as a means to achieve ends in the everyday world.

This may have posed a genuine threat to the reputation of the Socratics; for if Pheidippides is alluding to a Socratic formulation of the PNC, not only would the general public see Socrates on stage propagating such apparently nonsensical and

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[588] *DL* 9.51.
[589] Arist. *Rhet 1402a23–5:* καὶ τὸ τὸν ἥττω δὲ λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν.
[590] *Nu.* 113-4 etc.
[591] *Theat*. 151e, Sextus *Against the Mathematicians* VII.60
[592] *Meta.* 10009a5-9, quoted above.
[593]The *Ecclesiasuzae*, produced almost three decades later, however, shows a much deeper engagement with philosophical thought and will be discussed in the following chapter.

nugatory ideas, but also in everyday life, seemingly verifying the accusations of the play. The *Clouds* applies the metaphysical to the physical world, but the public may have seen in Pheidippides' employment of the PNC to escape the family's creditors a literal demonstration of the perceived impracticality of such thought. Confusion, then, must only have been heightened if Socrates was seen spouting similar doctrines in the *agora*. Plato may have been aware of the damage this was liable to cause; it may not be a coincidence that its most complete formulation can be found in the *Republic*, alongside his most sustained chastisement of the comic poets. Plato warns that what they discuss may be great material for the 'wits' to turn into poetry (452b6-c1), but begs the comedians to not be silly and to take the matter seriously (452c5). He labels those who scoff at what they don't understand as philodoxists who 'pluck the unripe fruit of knowledge' (457b2) and, through their misunderstanding of the subject, expose it to ridicule. These comments are interspersed between the discussion of gender equality in book V, which itself echoes certain elements of the *Ecclesiazusae* and other comedy, and will form the basis of Chapter 6.[594]

5. d) - "Alone, by itself..."[603]

At *Nu.*188f, as Strepsiades gains further access to the *Phrontisterion*, he espies a number of students engaging in some rather peculiar behaviour. Bemused, he turns to the student-cum-tour guide and enquires as follows:

> **Στρεψιάδης**
> βολβοὺς ἄρα
> ζητοῦσι. μή νυν τουτογὶ φροντίζετε·
> ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδ᾽ ἵν᾽ εἰσὶ μεγάλοι καὶ καλοί.
> τί γὰρ οἵδε δρῶσιν οἱ σφόδρ᾽ ἐγκεκυφότες;
>
> **Μαθητής**
> οὗτοι δ᾽ ἐρεβοδιφῶσιν ὑπὸ τὸν Τάρταρον.
>
> **Στρεψιάδης**
> *τί δῆθ᾽ ὁ πρωκτὸς ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν βλέπει;*
>
> **Μαθητής**
> *αὐτὸς καθ᾽ αὑτὸν ἀστρονομεῖν διδάσκεται.*

In his recent article, Justin Broackes has highlighted the significance of the two italicised lines (*Nu.* 193-4), and points to how every translator has obscured the meaning

[594] Cf. pp. 156-157.
[603]This section is greatly inspired by Broackes (2009), who provides the basis for much of the evidence.

of line 194, which may be an allusion to distinctive terminology that later resurfaces in Plato's dialogues.

At first glance, the passage is rather bamboozling, which has perhaps led translators to take some liberty for the sake of clarity; for Strepsaides' initial question concerns a group – "What are **these** people who are peering at the ground doing" (*Nu.*191 – τί γὰρ **οἵδε δρῶσιν οἱ σφόδρ' ἐγκεκυφότες**;). The Student replies that *they* (Nu. 192 – **ἐρεβοδιφῶσιν)** are searching for what is below the ground. Strepsiades then switches to the singular and asks "What about the anus pointed at the heavens?" (*Nu.*193 – **ὁ πρωκτὸς** ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν **βλέπει**;), to which the student responds αὐτὸς καθ᾽ αὑτὸν ἀστρονομεῖν διδάσκεται. It is this last line that has puzzled translators for over two centuries; Roche translates it as "Yes, independently studying the stars"; Sommerstein has "It's learning astronomy on its own account". Webb's translation is probably closer to the mark with "Studying, on its own, astronomy". Henderson puts it as "Learning astronomy on its own", while Meineck – with the bravado that is typical of his translation – has "They are simultaneously studying ARSE-stronomy".

Broackes, however, has rightly shown the literal translation of line 194 from the Greek to be "*Alone, by itself*, it is learning to do astronomy" (2009:46). This section will argue that this line parodies terms that are distinctive of Platonic philosophy. Aristophanes, it seems, has taken a piece of Socratic terminology, and again presented it in a physical context in what could be perceived as a demonstrative fashion. The line is spoken by the student while explaining the odd activities undertaken in the *Phrontisterion* to a bewildered Strepsiades. The situation on stage is ludicrous; a collection of pasty young men attempting to learn such obscure things with their heads to the ground and their rears stretched up towards the sky. By depicting such a scene, Aristophanes is not only once more ridiculing the study of philosophy, but also may insinuate that Socrates is a pederast – the latter to be discussed in due course. The damage this one line was prone to create could quite easily be overlooked, but the risk it posed to the reputation of Socrates seems to have been recognised by Plato, who uses the expression in the *Phaedo*, regarding a matter which only those truly enlightened from ignorance could comprehend: the separation of the forms from the everyday world, and separation of the soul from the body.

The phrase αὐτὸς καθ᾽ αὑτὸν is especially prominent in the *Phaedo*, as in the following passage[604] which, perhaps predictably, discusses the immortality of the soul and how its freedom can only be attained through engagement with philosophy:

ὅπερ οὖν λέγω, γιγνώσκουσιν οἱ φιλομαθεῖς ὅτι οὕτω παραλαβοῦσα ἡ φιλοσοφία ἔχουσαν αὐτῶν τὴν ψυχὴν ἠρέμα παραμυθεῖται καὶ λύειν ἐπιχειρεῖ, ἐνδεικνυμένη ὅτι ἀπάτης μὲν μεστὴ ἡ διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων σκέψις, ἀπάτης δὲ ἡ διὰ τῶν ὤτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αἰσθήσεων, πείθουσα δὲ ἐκ τούτων μὲν ἀναχωρεῖν, ὅσον μὴ ἀνάγκη αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι, αὐτὴν δὲ εἰς αὑτὴν συλλέγεσθαι καὶ ἁθροίζεσθαι παρακελευομένη, πιστεύειν δὲ μηδενὶ ἄλλῳ ἀλλ᾽ ἢ αὐτὴν αὑτῇ, ὅτι ἂν νοήσῃ αὐτὴ καθ᾽ αὑτὴν αὐτὸ καθ᾽ αὑτὸ τῶν ὄντων· ὅτι δ᾽ ἂν δι᾽ ἄλλων σκοπῇ ἐν ἄλλοις ὂν ἄλλο, μηδὲν ἡγεῖσθαι ἀληθές· εἶναι δὲ τὸ μὲν τοιοῦτον αἰσθητόν τε καὶ ὁρατόν, ὃ δὲ αὐτὴ ὁρᾷ νοητόν τε καὶ ἀιδές. ταύτῃ οὖν τῇ λύσει οὐκ οἰομένη δεῖν ἐναντιοῦσθαι ἡ τοῦ ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλοσόφου ψυχὴ οὕτως ἀπέχεται τῶν ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ λυπῶν καὶ φόβων καθ᾽ ὅσον δύναται, λογιζομένη ὅτι, ἐπειδάν τις σφόδρα ἡσθῇ ἢ φοβηθῇ ἢ λυπηθῇ ἢ ἐπιθυμήσῃ, οὐδὲν τοσοῦτον κακὸν ἔπαθεν ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν ὧν ἄν τις οἰηθείη, οἷον ἢ νοσήσας ἤ τι ἀναλώσας διὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας, ἀλλ᾽ ὃ πάντων μέγιστόν τε κακῶν καὶ ἔσχατόν ἐστι, τοῦτο πάσχει καὶ οὐ λογίζεται αὐτό.[605]

The phrase is also used in abundance during the so called 'short argument' against the thesis that knowledge is perception in the *Theaetetus*,[606] as Socrates shows that while some aspects of knowledge may be gleaned from perception, other vital aspects such as judgement and ability to differentiate are not taken from perception, but are done by the mind *alone by itself*:[607]

Θεαίτητος
ἀλλὰ μὰ Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔγωγε οὐκ ἂν ἔχοιμι εἰπεῖν, πλήν γ᾽ ὅτι μοι δοκεῖ τὴν ἀρχὴν οὐδ᾽ εἶναι τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν τούτοις ὄργανον ἴδιον ὥσπερ ἐκείνοις, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὴ δι᾽ αὑτῆς ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ κοινά μοι φαίνεται περὶ πάντων ἐπισκοπεῖν.

Σωκράτης
καλὸς γὰρ εἶ, ὦ Θεαίτητε, καὶ οὐχ, ὡς ἔλεγε Θεόδωρος, αἰσχρός· ὁ γὰρ καλῶς λέγων καλός τε καὶ ἀγαθός. πρὸς δὲ τῷ καλῷ εὖ ἐποίησάς με μάλα συχνοῦ λόγου ἀπαλλάξας, εἰ φαίνεταί σοι τὰ μὲν αὐτὴ δι᾽ αὑτῆς ἡ ψυχὴ ἐπισκοπεῖν, τὰ δὲ διὰ τῶν τοῦ σώματος δυνάμεων. τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν ὃ καὶ αὐτῷ μοι ἐδόκει, ἐβουλόμην δὲ καὶ σοὶ δόξαι.

The phrase itself is not strictly philosophical as there are certain uses of it in other genres:[608] it can be found in Sophocles (*Ajax* 906, *Elec.* 285), and in Euripides (*Ion* 610),[609] and the question may be raised of it being used in *Clouds* nonchalantly, just as it is at *Rep.* 604a3 where Socrates, discussing governance of emotion, asks πότερον

[604] The phrase not only occurs here, but is prevalent throughout the dialogue either referring to the soul or the forms. Cf. *Phaedo* 64c6, 65c7, 66a1, 79d4, 81c1.
[605] *Phaed.* 83a1-c3
[606] *Tht*. 184b-187a.
[607] *Tht.* 185d6-e9
[608] Cf. Hippocrates *On Ancient Medicine,* 15. It is unlikely, however, that this is the source of Aristophanes' parody as the phrase is only mentioned twice and in relation to disease (Broackes 2009:56).
[609] As noted by Broackes (2009:55)

μᾶλλον αὐτὸν οἴει τῇ λύπῃ μαχεῖσθαί τε καὶ ἀντιτείνειν, ὅταν ὁρᾶται ὑπὸ τῶν ὁμοίων, ἢ ὅταν ἐν ἐρημίᾳ μόνος **αὐτὸς καθ' αὑτὸν** γίγνηται; Here, the phrase seems to imply its literal context – being physically alone by oneself. – yet this does not resonate with the *Clouds* line in any way. Moreover, *Nu.*194 does not seem to make sense; here we must remember the context of the line – the singular 'itself' (αὐτός) is directed towards a *group* of people (ἐρεβοδιφῶσιν), and so the term doesn't make sense unless it refers to something singular. Indeed, Broackes is satisfied that the singular αὐτός refers to Socratic ideology; it can't have been Plato, who was only a child at the time, leading Broackes to assert that the reference is "external evidence (whether ultimately persuasive or not) of a Socratic interest not just in natural science, but also in some kind of special epistemology of withdrawal from the everyday world in order to acquire learning about distant things – something that goes beyond what Aristotle described as 'ethical matters', and something that might easily be combined (whether or not it actually was in the 420's) with metaphysical doctrines on the separation of the soul and forms."[610]

Although controversial, Broackes' comments on a Socratic origin for the terminology prove quite difficult to contradict beyond mere speculation. If it is the case that the origin is Socratic, we can then understand the importance for Plato to present Socrates' philosophical use of the phrase in a better light, as the effects of the line in *Clouds* could be damaging on many levels; for when Plato uses the phrase in the *Phaedo* it is used in purely existential terms, but Aristophanes has again interpreted, or at least presented, the phrase in a physical context and applied it to a situation concerning the material world. While Plato argues that true enlightenment can only be achieved by withdrawing from the perceptual world and allowing the mind to cognize *alone by itself*, Aristophanes depicts this in a literal demonstrative fashion; he refers to students of the *Phrontisterion* as 'clever souls' (ψυχῶν σοφῶν τοῦτ' ἐστὶ φροντιστήριον – *Nu.* 94) having *withdrawn* from the exterior world to seek knowledge *alone by themselves*. In the *Theaetetus* Socrates claims that true knowledge cannot be attained through perception alone, and can ultimately only be achieved by the mind cognizing *alone by itself*, which is exactly what the students are doing – several cognizing souls withdrawing from the world and cognizing together *alone by themselves*.

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[610] 2009:52. On the possibility of an early Socratic interest in natural science see the discussion of Anaxagoras below at pp. 123-124.

We can also assume that the scene was memorable when we recall why exactly the students studying *alone by themselves* are doing so with one ear to the ground; they are doing so, says the student, ‘to know what lies beneath the Earth’ (187) while using their rear end *alone by itself* simultaneously to study astronomy (194) – forging an impression of Socratic studies which Plato goes to great lengths to refute. Indeed, the question again rises as to whether or not the audience or Aristophanes recognised the line as specifically Socratic, if indeed it even is. Again, however, it is more likely neither really cared, and attributed all such things to the realm of ‘those silly things these philosophers prattle on about’. In any case, these lines did have an enormous effect; we may recall Socrates’ accusers at *Ap.* 19c alleging he had been‘studying things in the sky and below the Earth’[611] – an activity, Aristophanes suggests, that is done *alone by oneself.* We must also note that here again that Plato chooses to deny or distance himself from a Socratic interest in astronomy or geology, but chooses to embrace and defend the terminology used in the scene – a hint, perhaps, that there may be grounds to at least one part of Broackes’ claim.

Since the line played a role in the condemnation of Socrates, Plato approaches it with caution, and not only shows that the line’s true significance could not be further from the claims made by comedy, but also takes care to have Socrates mention it in a philosophical context in dialogues set in his last days. In doing this, in the *Phaedo* especially, Plato rebuts Aristophanes’ claim of it being obscure ‘magic’ of no benefit in the real world by illustrating how it helps liberate the soul when approaching death, and so brings calm. This, so Plato, should surely be of benefit to anyone, and not just the prattle of an arrogant charlatan.

Further implications arise when we consider Dover’s commentary on the line.[612] While Plato later uses the terminology to conjure up a higher notion of thought, a gateway to which is provided by the metaphorical ‘eye of the soul’(*Phaedo* 83b5-6),[613] Dover highlights that the noun used in *Clouds* is πρωκτός – meaning *anus* and not *buttocks* – and also notes the superficial resemblance between the anus and the eye.[614] By having the students learn through the eye of their anus and not their soul, Aristophanes not only belittles the theory to the level of vulgarity - the anus ascends to splendidly isolated contemplation instead of the mind - but also supposes something more sinister; the

[611]*Ap.* 19c. Cf. *Rep*. 527d where Plato again reminds of Socrates’ disinterest in astronomy.
[612] 1968:121.
[613] Cf. Broackes (2009:51).
[614]Thus Meineck’s clever play on ‘astronomy’ in his adaptation of the line (1998:22).

image of students with their rear ends in the air and anuses open not only satirises contemporary astronomy, but also has overtones of pederasty. If we take this with the depiction of the hypnotic students it again shows the influence this situation could have, with such a cultish scene fuelling rumours of Socrates corrupting the youth.[615]

While Plato defends Socrates against the charge of corruption in the *Apology*, he is careful elsewhere to address the suggestion of pederasty raised by line 194. The issue for Plato is not the act of pederasty in itself as such, but rather the lack of control over such desires, and he goes to great effort to highlight Socrates' moderation in such situations, praising his apparent self-control in such relationships in depicting him as a chaste lover of boys, favouring the emotional company of bright young men over sexual gratification.[616] In the *Theaetetus* Socrates embraces the eponymous character, despite his ugly appearance.[617] More telling, however, is Plato going as far as having the Athenian in *Laws* deride such relationships and suggest imposing restrictions on them.[618] If indeed the 'students scene' of *Clouds* reflects a comic perception of the philosopher as a pederast or sexual deviant, then Plato goes to great lengths to exclude himself from such a clique, favouring the company of young men purely for their company alone. He does, however, have the last laugh; in the *Symposium* it is his caricature of Aristophanes who has the pederastic tendencies with his speech praising the union between man and boy as most noble[619] – which appears all the more fervent when juxtaposed with the chastity of Socrates' relationship with Alcibiades.

Anaxagorean or Pythagorean influences?

Αὐτὸς καθ' αὑτὸν is also used by Anaxagoras, who states 'τὰ μὲν ἄλλα παντὸς μοῖραν μετέχει¸ νοῦς δέ ἐστιν ἄπειρον καὶ αὐτοκρατὲς καὶ μέμεικται οὐδενὶ χρήματι¸ ἀλλὰ μόνος αὐτὸς ἐπ΄ ἐωυτοῦ ἐστιν.'[620] His use of the term piques curiosity due to Plato mentioning Socrates' fondness for Anaxagorean philosophy as a youth in the *Phaedo*.[621] Although Socrates would ultimately deviate from the school[622] it is clear from the

[615] Cf. *Ap.* 24b
[616] This is not to say Socrates was not sexually aroused by young men, as we see at *Charm.* 155d, but that he had the control to restrain such feelings.
[617] *Tht.* 143e5.
[618] *Leg.* 836b*f.*
[619] *Symp*. 189a*f.* Cf. Chap. 3.c.
[620] Fr. B12 D-K.
[621] *Phaed*. 97b-98c.
[622] Cf. *Phaedr.* 270a.

Apology[623] that the methods of Anaxagoras parodied in the *Clouds*[624] came to be associated with Socrates. This association may not be without truth – Diogenes Laertius cites Aristoxenus and Alexander of Miletus in stating that Anaxagoras taught both Socrates' teacher Archelaus and Socrates himself.[625]

This possible Anaxagorean influence raises more questions when we consider what may be a parody of Anaxagoras' cause of thunder[626] given by Socrates at line 377:

> Ὅταν ἐμπλησθῶσ' ὕδατος πολλοῦ κἀναγκασθῶσι
> φέρεσθαι, κατακρημνάμεναι πλήρεις ὄμβρου δι' ἀνάγκην, εἶτα
> βαρεῖαι εἰς ἀλλήλας ἐμπίπτουσαι ῥήγνυνται καὶ παταγοῦσιν.

More interesting is Strepsiades' interpretation, which again acts as an attempted demonstration of the philosophical applied to the real world – he likens it to when he has filled himself up with too much soup which then rolls about in his stomach causing explosive flatulence.[627] In the *Phaedo,* Plato echoes the language of both the Aristophanic Socrates and Anaxagoras, applying it in a more spiritual context. The theme of something *rolling about* being *filled* with a relevant matter causing disturbance can be found in Anaxagoras' and Aristophanes' theories on thunder, but is adapted by Plato in an attempt to describe the release of the soul; when the deceased's spirit is weighed down or *filled* with excess material it wanders tombs and graves causing discord.[628] Plato states that the soul is 'rolling about' in utter ignorance when trapped in the body, the effects of which cause constant bodily demands to 'fill up' the soul with desires and longing which ultimately cause war, fighting, clamour and disturbance.[629] If we compare this with Strepsiades' attempted understanding of the theory, we see some similarities; the remains of the excess soup he eats are 'rolling about' in his stomach causing 'disturbance', but rather than result in war or clamour, the excess matter within Strepsiades causes explosive flatulence – the end result indicating the general consensus of such discourse.[630]

This alone, however, would hardly seem to be a matter so important that Plato would have to attend to it in one his most important dialogues. If we consider the broader plot

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[623] *Ap.* 26d. Note that here Plato denies any great resemblance between Socrates and Anaxagoras' methods.
[624] Cf *Nu.* 375, 407.
[625] *Life of Socrates* III; *Life of Archelaus* I.
[626] *Life of Anaxagoras* IV.
[627] *Nu.* 387-392.
[628] *Phaed.* 64c-67b, 78b-82d.
[629] *Phaed.* 66a, 66d, 79c.
[630] Cf. Epicrates fr. 10 in which Plato's teaching is also met with flatulence by a Sicilian doctor which is discussed below at pp. 157-160.

of the play, however, the possible impact of the parody of what would surface in Plato's theory of the corrupt soul becomes apparent. If we return to the depiction of the students of the *Phrontisterion* as souls retreating from the world to study *alone by themselves*, attempting to rid themselves of the ignorance that is typical of the outside world through the release of philosophy, it is obvious that Strepsiades is the polar opposite. Strepsiades, at least from a philosophical perspective, is a soul *rolling about* in total ignorance, the epitome of what the students are trying to escape. According to Plato, a soul such as Strepsiades' will never attain enlightenment, yet as the play progresses Strepsiades becomes the hero; when he burns the *Phrontisterion* with everyone inside,[631] the audience are presumably on his side, agreeing with his actions – the arrogant, verbose sophist gets his come-uppance from someone inclined towards the traditional way of thinking. Although obviously a dim-wit, Strepsiades attempts to engage with and understand Socrates in the first half of the play, showing how even someone as stupid as this country bumpkin can expose the perceived absurdity of the ideas parodied. From lines 739-888 Strepsiades applies what he learns from Socrates to situations concerning everyday life: he will hire a witch to capture and imprison the moon, thus preventing the arrival of the old and new day on which debts are paid, a day signified by the moon. Socrates is encouraging, yet the problems exposed by Strepsiades are obvious: even if he could find a witch to do so, it hardly follows that the Athenian economy would fall to turmoil rather than designate a different day for debt collection.[632] Socrates, however, fails to notice this, which reaffirms the idea that philosophers are lost in irrelevant matters concerning the skies, and have no idea of the actual workings of the world. Towards the end of the play (1456*ff*), Strepsiades himself finally realises the faults of the *Phrontisterion*, sees the light, and does the city a favour by destroying it. Rather than attaining enlightenment from the *Phrontisterion* and philosophy, Strepsiades only does so when he disassociates from it, and this is the message given to the audience of the play. When creating the image of the soul burdened with matter rolling about causing discord, Plato, then, again is careful to show with clarity how souls like these or that of Strepsiades will never in fact reach true enlightenment, and reasserts that this can only be done through thoughtful engagement with, and reflection upon, the philosophy he puts forward.

[631] *Nu.* 1490.
[632] Cf. O'Regan (1992:85).

Striking similarities also exist between the morphing Cloud Chorus of Aristophanes and the reincarnated souls of Plato.[633] The Clouds of the play take on the form of whatever animal corresponds to the character of the person they want to expose: if it is a shaggy man they turn into a centaur, if it is a thief they turn into a wolf, if a coward they turn into a deer and, indeed, if they see Cleisthenes they turn into women.[634] If we compare this with the account of the transmigration of the soul given in the *Phaedo*, we see some interesting comparisons arising; Plato states that reincarnated souls take on a body appropriate to the type of soul (81e); gluttons and leeches take on the bodies of donkeys, while the unjust, the tyrannical and the thief will take on the bodies of wolves, hawks and kites (82a) and those who have lived a virtuous life but are strangers to philosophy will take on the bodies of 'social creatures' like bees and ants (82b).

Is this just popular wisdom, or do we have another parody of a theory resurfacing in Plato? Ascribing a somewhat Platonic theory of the soul to a pre-Platonic Socrates could be seen as misguided. Indeed, both may be drawing from a previous Orphic or Pythagorean source – the idea of the transmigration of human souls into animal bodies is a well attested Pythoagorean doctrine (D.L 8.36; Hdt. 2. 123).[635] Rowe also notes the 'Pythagorean' influences on main interlocutors of the dialogue, Simmias and Cebes, both of whom come from Thebes – a centre of Pythagoreanism (*HGP* 1. 179) – and that both have 'been with' the Pythagorean Philolaus.[636] Aristotle too assumes a direct Pythagorean influence on at least some of Plato's work,[637] while Burnet takes 85d3 of the *Phaedo* (ἤ λόγου θείου τινός) as referring "to the Orphic and Pythagorean doctrine of the soul.[638] Rowe rightly notes, however, that the Pythagorean would never welcome the theory of the Forms as his own, arguing that it "fits better with the evidence, and suits the dramatic situation just as well, to treat [Simmias and Cebes] merely as young [men] passionate about argument."[639]

Whether or not there is a Pythagorean influence here – and whether it is to the 'Pythagorean' model of the transmigration of the soul rather than the 'Socratic' to which the *Clouds* allude – is not particularly relevant for my case. The point is that Plato identified this as something he deemed typical of his school and so sought to

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[633] Cf. Broackes (2009:57).
[634] *Nu*. 347-55.
[635] Cf. Rowe (1993: 194-195).
[636] *Ibid*: 115-116.
[637] *Meta*. 987a30.
[638] 1911: 85.
[639] *Ibid*. 116.

defend it. The joke is not particularly damaging; if anything it simply reiterates the absurdity of the *Phrontisterion* by having their 'gods' do such things. Plato, however, depicts this metaphor in a situation that implies a moral lesson; if you live a bad life you will compensate for it after death, taking on the form of an animal corresponding to your way of life – δῆλα δὴ καὶ τἆλλα ᾗ ἂν ἕκαστα ἴοι κατὰ τὰς αὐτῶν ὁμοιότητας τῆς μελέτης (82a7-8). A virtuous life will ensure the soul taking on the body of timid sociable creatures like bees and ants, whereas a licentious life will result in the reincarnation to a wild animal. This lesson teaches its listeners to live a good life, which will then be repaid in the life after death. This calibre of life is conducive and necessary for any society to thrive and function in harmony, and so if taken on board, is of use in the real world, despite the comedians' accusations. Indeed, it may be due to this that Plato, at the beginning of the discussion on the transmigratory nature of the soul in the *Phaedo,* has Socrates assert 'οὔκουν γ' ἂν οἶμαι…εἰπεῖν τινα νῦν ἀκούσαντα, οὐδ' εἰ κωμῳδοποιὸς εἴη, ὡς ἀδολεσχῶ[640] καὶ οὐ περὶ προσηκόντων τοὺς λόγους ποιοῦμαι.'[641] This, of course, is not to suggest that the sole reason for writing the *Phaedo* was to respond to comic burlesques of such ideas, but that Plato – here about to embark on describing his magnificent theory of the soul's immortality – takes the opportunity once again to strike out at the comic poets by showing them just how wrong they got it. Once again, the rebuke seems out of place – a reference to the comedians in what should be one of the most serious dialogues seems peculiar – and could easily be excised without affecting the philosophy, and so must serve some purpose.

A trace of morality, however, also seems to underlie the Clouds; the conclusion reveals the Clouds not to be the vicious beings we had assumed, but entities that expose bad traits in people – at *Nu.* 1454-1461 they reveal that Strepsiades' new found sufferings were planned as a lesson for him for seeking the twisted path of vice and not respecting the gods. The message suggested is also a disincentive to be a bad person, lest the Clouds come to expose you; if you act in a cowardly way, they will metamorphose into deer to reveal your shortcomings. What effect this would have on the general public or how seriously it was meant to be taken is questionable, as it would seem that the only people who would be aware of the exposition would be the students of the *Phrontisterion* – and their opinion is hardly held in high regard. What is clear however,

[640] Cf. n. 518 above.
[641] *Phd.* 70b10-c2.

is the Clouds' message: do not insult the gods by involving yourself with such subversive trickery.

The similarities between the Clouds and Plato's souls could be down to common knowledge, although popular thought has no place in a comedy parodying thought on the fringes of society, nor in dialogues which ultimately advocate obscure thought. There is plausible conjecture to suggest that here we have two varying interpretations of a common source, one which makes a mockery of its theory on the afterlife, the other defending it. Perhaps one is a deliberate parody of a seemingly absurd theory of morality, while the other is depicting what the theory actually intends to put forward. Whatever the case, Plato attempts to override any slanders made on the theory by making a claim Aristophanes does not: only those who practise philosophy may join the gods when they depart from life (*Phaed.* 82c). In this assertion, Plato not only advocates Socratic thought as the route to enlightenment, but also rubbishes any prior perceptions of Socratic witchery or atheism.[642]

5.e) – Wings for the Soul?

Following the discussion of the transmigration of the soul, it may of benefit to briefly discuss the rather ambiguous comment made by Strepsiades just after meeting the 'heavenly Clouds' (οὐράνιαι Νεφέλαι – *Nu.* 316) at *N*u. 319:

ταῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἀκούσασ᾽ αὐτῶν τὸ φθέγμ᾽ ἡ ψυχή μου πεπότηται...

Translations of the line have differed over the past two centuries; Sommerstein infers that the Clouds' voices have caused Strepsiades' soul to "have taken wing"; the more archaic Hickie has Strepsiades' soul 'flutter' at their sound, while in Meineck's most recent translation Strepsiades' "spirit has soared at the sound of their voices". Webb has Strepsiades exclaim "my spirit is stirred". Perhaps most accurate is Henderson in his Loeb edition, translating the line as "So that's why my soul has taken flight at the sound of their voices?" while I interpret it as "So that's why upon hearing their voices my soul flies hither and thither...?"

The idea of certain philosophical doctrines causing one's soul to 'fly away' or 'take flight' should have previously attracted the interest of scholars, yet its apparent significance has

[642] It is also worth noting that Plato places this claim in the same passages that contain "alone by itself..." a phrase distinctive of the scene in *Clouds* which implies Socrates is an atheist.

not been noted by any commentator thus far.[643] The notion of one's soul flying away is embedded in discourse on death as far back as Homer – where at life's end the *psyche* leaves the body and flies away on its journey to Hades[644] – while Anaximenes held that after death the soul drifted upwards to join the atmosphere.[645] Similarly, Diogenes of Apollonia held that the soul departed to join the air.[646] Arnott[647] notes that these theories co-existed with folk beliefs in a home of the dead above the αἰθήρ,[648] which were doubtlessly confused by ordinary Athenians. It might easily be said that such theories, or an amalgamation of them, may well be the source of the quip, and it could also be suggested that both the image of the flying soul, and the use of 'fly' to express a state of excitement/apprehension were too common to be heard as a reference to philosophical ideas.[649] Perhaps here we just have a confused jab at what may have been a general non-Socratic thought, unconnected to Plato's own views of the transmigration of the soul.

To this, however, we must also consider the previously noted Pythagorean influences on Plato, and here we should also recall the early pages of the Derveni papyrus, in which Orphic worshippers[650] sacrifice bird offerings to the spirits *because they are souls*, or are at least that caged birds were equated with a soul 'caged' in the human body.[651] Socrates also compares himself with a singing swan at *Phd.* 84e, while other smaller winged creatures are prominent in *Clouds* such as the μηλολόνθη, and the ἐμπίς at 160.[652] Whilst on the subject of winged creatures, we should also remember Chaerephon's – a member of Socrates' inner circle – nickname as the 'Bat'.[653] These references may suggest that the idea of the soul as a winged creature was not foreign to Socratic thought. However, in the dialogues Plato speaks of the soul as 'departing' rather than 'flying away'.[654]

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[643] Dover, Sommerstein, Storey, Mitchell and Merry all seem to overlook the line, not commenting on it at all. Starkie undermines the force of the line by translating πεπότηται as 'is giddy', while Graves suggests the Clouds have lifted Strepsiades to an 'airy realm'.
[644] *Il.* 16.855 Cf. *Il.* 9.408, 23.100; *Od.* 11.65.
[645] Fr. 2 D-K.
[646] Fr. 4 D-K 2.60f.
[647] 1996: comm. on fr. 163.
[648] Epicharmus frr. 245, 265; Eur. *Suppl.* 531ff, 1139ff, *Or* 1086f, fr. 971.
[649] Eg. *Av.* 1439-50.
[650] On the Orphic influences on Platonic thought cf. p.137 above.
[651] Cf. Betegh (2007: 75-78) & Bernabé (2014).
[652] Credit for these observations are due to Harold Tarrant in his observations on the pre-viva form of this thesis.
[653] *Av.* 1552-1564.
[654] Eg. ἀπέρχεται (*Phd.* 81a5); ἐκβῆναι (*Rep.* 10.614b8).

Indeed, there is no such instance in the dialogues in which Plato specifically mentions the soul 'flying away', but rather that it 'departs'.[655] At the end of the *Republic,* we are given a rudimentary lesson in reincarnation in the Myth of Er.[656] While the tale is notable for its notion of punishment and reward after death, it has little bearing on the *Clouds* line save that the soul has departed somewhere – although where exactly is not made specific. A little more may be ascertained from the *Phaedo*, as Socrates concludes his first argument on the immortality of the soul; for if the soul when leaving the body is pure and drags nothing bodily with it:

οὐκοῦν οὕτω μὲν ἔχουσα εἰς τὸ ὅμοιον αὐτῇ τὸ ἀιδὲς ἀπέρχεται, τὸ θεῖόν τε καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ φρόνιμον, οἷ ἀφικομένῃ ὑπάρχει αὐτῇ εὐδαίμονι εἶναι, πλάνης καὶ ἀνοίας καὶ φόβων καὶ ἀγρίων ἐρώτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων κακῶν τῶν ἀνθρωπείων ἀπηλλαγμένῃ, ὥσπερ δὲ λέγεται κατὰ τῶν μεμυημένων, ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον μετὰ θεῶν διάγουσα; οὕτω φῶμεν, ὦ Κέβης, ἢ ἄλλως;[657]

Here, the destination is previously specified as Hades. More important, however, is that the only method to purify one's soul for such a journey is through the practise of philosophy; those who fail become souls who wander around in total ignorance; those people who care for nothing but food, drink and sex, and avoid that which can only be grasped by philosophy.[658] Such a person is a character profile of Strepsiades – the soul wandering about in total ignorance, unable to grasp what is in front of him. Strepsiades, however, still wants a slice of the pie; he has heard this will save him, but is not sure how. He has heard of the type of discussion that goes on inside the *Phrontisterion,*[659] and as soon as he hears the Clouds experiences a placebo effect, thinking the voices are already taking effect in lifting him out of his ignorance towards enlightenment, despite still being too benighted to realise what the actual 'enlightenment' should be.

Again, however, the soul does not explicitly fly away, especially not with the blatancy we see in Homer or the pre-Socratics. The *Phaedrus,* however, may give some credence to our case in the form of the Winged Charioteer analogy. At *Phaedr*. 246a*f*, Socrates describes the soul as an entity consisting of a charioteer with two winged horses; one of a good stock and beautiful, the other the opposite and deviant, while the Gods drive chariots led entirely by those of good stock. As long as its wings are in perfect condition, the mortal soul flies high with the universe its dominion. The wings, being

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[655] Eg. ἀπέρχεται (*Phd.* 81a5); ἐκβῆναι (*Rep.* 10.614b8).
[656] *Rep*. 614c*ff.*
[657] *Phaed*. 81a4-10.
[658] *Ibid*. 81a-d.
[659] *Nu*. 95-98 indicates that even before he has enrolled Strepsiades is aware of some of the teachings of the *Phrontisterion*.

able to lift things up to the sphere of the gods, are akin to the divine, and thus are nourished by such things as beauty, wisdom, goodness, etc. Things like Foulness and Ugliness, on the contrary, cause these wings to shed, sending the charioteer to Earth who then wanders until it lights on something solid where it settles and takes on an earthly body. This combination is a 'living thing' or mortal.

While in heaven, Zeus leads a procession of the Gods in his chariot around the environs of heaven, which the souls follow, but struggle due to the imbalance in the prowess of their horses. When the highest point of heaven is reached, what is to be beheld is indescribable – Pure Knowledge. On the way around this realm, the gods also behold Self Control and Knowledge, and return to heaven. For the rest however, their view is skewed by their uncooperative horse, which culminates in it losing its wings and descending into a fall to back to Earth; the immortal souls closest behind the gods manage to control their horses enough to get just barely a rounded view of reality. Others see some of reality, but miss the rest, while the rest of the procession miss out entirely due to the clamour with the bad horses, and leave without being initiated. Any soul who has caught sight of one true thing is granted another circuit, until eventually all souls fall back to Earth. Once on Earth for the first time, the soul who has seen most of 'Reality' will incarnate as a philosopher, while others incarnate as kings, statesmen, doctors, prophets, poets, manual labourers, sophists, and tyrants in order. Souls who have seen none of Reality are not permitted to take the human form due to their inability to understand general forms. Of the above, those who lead a just life will reincarnate in a better form in the next, while those who favour injustice will be demoted. Generally the wings do not return until the ten thousandth year, except for the practitioner of philosophy, who, if he chooses such a life three times over, departs after three thousand years. That is why the philosopher's mind grows wings (πτερόω – *Phaedr*. 249a4); his memory is emblazoned with a view of true reality, and yearns to behold it again – διὸ δὴ δικαίως μόνη πτεροῦται ἡ τοῦ φιλοσόφου διάνοια· πρὸς γὰρ ἐκείνοις ἀεί ἐστιν μνήμῃ κατὰ δύναμιν, πρὸς οἷσπερ θεὸς ὢν θεῖός ἐστιν (*Phaedr*. 249c6-8). Similarly, when one sees a beautiful person, one is reminded of the true form of beauty, and one's soul flutters and takes wing (ἀναπέτομαι, 249d6), longing for the sky but unable to rise up.

Such an analogy certainly makes for memorable listening, but could such thought be what Strepsiades is thinking of when he says his soul has taken flight? Indeed, this could mean identifying this long-winded winged myth as Socratic. Given the prevalence

of allusion to pre-Socratic and sophistic references in the *Clouds*, it may seem more plausible to attribute Strepsiades' comment to that group, and dismiss the admittedly speculative evidence above as mere mitigation in a tenuous case. There is, however, a fragment of the Middle Comedy which, when considered in tandem with the case above, strongly suggests there was at least a general perception that the Socratics dealt in such belief, which in turn was picked up on and exacerbated by the comedians. The fragment comes from Alexis (fr. 163), and dates to at least the third quarter of the 4th Century,[660] as a speaker expresses his bemusement at a character's experiences:

σῶμα μὲν ὁμοῦ τὸ θνητὸν αὖον ἐγένετο,
τὸ δ' ἀθάνατον ἐξῇξε πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα
β.ταῦτ' οὐ σχολὴ Πλάτωνος;

The fragment post-dates *Clouds* by at least 70 years,[661] yet we essentially have the same joke concerning confusion over obscure teachings about the soul flying upwards and away – this time specifically directed at Plato. While Strepsiades' comments in *Clouds* are fairly innocuous on their own, the fact that Alexis was comfortable enough make such a similar quip in a throwaway line suggests this may have been a common comic parlance, possibly helped by the recent publication of the *Phaedrus.* If, then, we are to believe anything we know of Socrates, it would seem reasonable to link him in some way with such thought, since it appears that it both influenced him and is ascribed to him by Plato, who may very well develop the idea in the way that only Plato could. Owing to this, I suggest that Plato also responds in the *Phaedrus* to those who have made fun of such ideas previously, ideas – more importantly – associated with Socrates which Plato himself gained influence from. This is not to say that Socrates was the originator of such ideas, but rather that he subscribed to and promoted them, and that they became 'distinctive' due to his familiar presence in the agora. Plato in turn picked up such ideas and so wished to defend them from the 'vulgarity' of the many.

It may seem absurd to think that Plato would have been bothered about the jibe in *Clouds*, but a rather elaborate complaint in the *Phaedrus* may be better understood if we consider that Plato is reacting to a comic undermining of the ideas presented, for at *Phaedr*. 249c4-e1, he explains and defends his art to the point of aligning himself with the epitome of perfection and divinity while in the same breath deriding those who disagree or misunderstand him:

[660] This being the period when Alexis began to flourish; cf. Arnott (1996: 3-31)
[661] The fragment is discussed further on pp. 172-173.

διὸ δὴ δικαίως μόνη πτεροῦται ἡ τοῦ φιλοσόφου διάνοια· πρὸς γὰρ ἐκείνοις ἀεί ἐστιν μνήμῃ κατὰ δύναμιν, πρὸς οἷσπερ θεὸς ὢν θεῖός ἐστιν. τοῖς δὲ δὴ τοιούτοις ἀνὴρ ὑπομνήμασιν ὀρθῶς χρώμενος, τελέους ἀεὶ τελετὰς τελούμενος, τέλεος ὄντως μόνος γίγνεται: ἐξιστάμενος δὲ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων σπουδασμάτων καὶ πρὸς τῷ θείῳ γιγνόμενος, **νουθετεῖται μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν ὡς παρακινῶν**, ἐνθουσιάζων δὲ λέληθεν τοὺς πολλούς. ἔστι δὴ οὖν δεῦρο ὁ πᾶς ἥκων λόγος περὶ τῆς τετάρτης μανίας—ἣν ὅταν τὸ τῇδέ τις ὁρῶν κάλλος, τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἀναμιμνῃσκόμενος, πτερῶταί τε καὶ ἀναπτερούμενος προθυμούμενος ἀναπτέσθαι, ἀδυνατῶν δέ, ὄρνιθος δίκην βλέπων ἄνω, τῶν κάτω δὲ ἀμελῶν, αἰτίαν ἔχει ὡς μανικῶς διακείμενος.

The 'vulgar' here may be said to be anyone who jokes about Platonic discourse, or listens to it. Who, however, is 'rebuking' Plato or his school who holds such sway? Are we to think that Plato cared much about the misinformed opinion of some men on the street? This wouldn't seem to be the case; those with the power to 'rebuke' Plato enough to garner widespread attention and influence public opinion *en masse* - which the orators, the politicians, etc. simply couldn't - could only be the comic poets due to their 'universal voice'.

Plato may be speaking out of frustration or pique at the lack of understanding of his ideas, but if it is the case that Plato is explaining and defending his ideas from the taunts of comedy, it shows, at least in the case of the Alexis fragment, that he was unsuccessful. Neither, however, should it be assumed that Plato wrote the *Phaedrus* and the Charioteer analogy solely to rebut the comics, or that if the comics had never poked fun there would be no *Phaedrus*/Charioteer analogy. More so it seems that when Plato saw it fit to present the Charioteer, he took the opportunity also to defend his imagery from previous negative perceptions of it generated by comedy.

5.f) Conclusion:

The purpose of this chapter has been twofold: the primary aim was to present as thorough an analysis of the portrayal of the comic philosopher during the Old Comic period as the surviving material from the genre would allow. This in turn presented the opportunity to examine how Plato reacts and responds to certain portrayals of ideologies he felt resonated with those he would himself promote. The analysis of the comic philosopher of the period reveals him to be a shady character at best: one with unscrupulous tendencies verging on the socially destructive. Moreover, this depiction is uniform, with the satirised individual used as a mouth-piece to convey a mix of half-baked anti-social doctrines, none of which need even be distinctive of him. Where we have instances in which certain satirised concepts seemingly align with those later presented in the dialogues, it has been shown how Plato takes it upon himself to

'rescue' these ideas from any negative conceptions formed about them through their previous comic incarnation. In such cases Plato takes the lampooned idea, presents it in a sober forum and explains its actual benefit, often accompanying this defence with a rebuke against the comedians – and those who laughed along with them – for so grossly misinterpreting such thought. This has been argued above in reference to comic depictions of Intellectual Midwifery, the PNC, 'Socratic' terminology and the notion of the Winged Soul.

What the portrayal of the philosopher and Plato's responses both indicate, then, is a 5th Century audience with little interest in distinguishing one group of philosophers from another – all are tarred with the same brush. Any perceived benefit to be gained from philosophical instruction is wholly dismissed; the philosopher is never given a chance to defend his art as his entire profession is ridiculed as totally destructive and fatuous.

As we advance towards the threshold of Middle Comedy, however, changes can be detected. The first major transmutation from the previous opinions of indifference can be detected as early as the debut of the *Ecclesiazusae*, in which discourses on utopianism are given a noticeably fairer hearing. Accordingly, the following chapter will be given over to a discussion of the consequences of the play with regard to what has been presented in this chapter, as it will be shown how Plato appears to save his most vitriolic tirades against the poets for defending ideas parodied in comedies such as the *Ecclesiazusae*. Plato's wrath here, however, may not be unfounded, as it will be shown how the *Ecclesiazusae* departs from the previous dismissive attitude towards philosophy by containing an inherent, valid criticism of the notion of a socialist state.

Chapter 6: Changing Perceptions? The *Ecclesiazusae/ Republic* dilemma.

6. a) Background:

In the previous chapter we have seen how Plato adamantly defends certain ideas parodied on the comic stage. Plato's most unabashed rebuff of the comic poets, however, can be found in *Republic* V; nowhere else is his impatience with the comedians so evident, nor is his consciousness of the apparent delicacy of the ideas he is about to discuss. As he outlines the outlines the conditions for his Callipolis, Plato interjects with defensive comments, warning that ἐπείπερ ὡρμήσαμεν λέγειν, οὐ φοβητέον τὰ τῶν χαριέντων σκώμματα, ὅσα καὶ οἷα ἂν εἴποιεν εἰς τὴν τοιαύτην μεταβολὴν γενομένην (*Rep*. 452b6-8), and later cautions that one who makes fun of such ideas 'ἀτελῆ" τοῦ γελοίου "σοφίας δρέπων καρπόν", οὐδὲν οἶδεν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐφ' ᾧ γελᾷ οὐδ' ὅτι πράττει΄ (*Rep*. 457b2-3). Plato, it seems, has a score to settle, but with who and why?

The most likely target of these remarks is usually thought to be Aristophanes, and more specifically his *Ecclesiazusae.* The play is one of only two plays surviving wholly intact from the period generally ascribed to Middle Comedy, and is early or even transitional, dating to c391,[662] but the differences from Old Comedy that are generally used to characterize Middle Comedy are present: the scaling down of the *parodos* – in which in this case the chorus exit rather than enter – combined with the reduction of the *agon* to a half-*agon* (571-709) and the total lack of *parabasis* or integrated choral songs lead to a significant reduction in the role of the chorus. The play is set amid the gloom of post-war Athens, where we are introduced to the heroine, Praxagora, ruminating on a solution to cure Athens' woes. Her plan is to gather the women of Athens before dawn, infiltrate parliament and hand power over to the women, who will impose a new social regime. The comedy is most notable, however, for the resemblance the society Praxagora proposes bears to certain aspects of the Callipolis of Plato's *Republic*; for the plot examines the feasibility of a society that proposes common possession of material goods, women and children (635-50) and the introduction of common meals (715-16), all of which resurface in what the modern political theorist might describe as the 'communistic' society outlined in the dialogue.[663] Further points of contact between the

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[662] Edmonds (1957:640). Cf. Sommerstein (2007: 1-7) for a thorough discussion on the date of the play's staging.
[663] Cf. *Rep*. 372b-c, 416d3-7, 417a6-7, 420a4-5, 442d10-443a7, 457c10-d3, 464d7-465b1, 493d6.

dialogue and the comedy occur, the total of which are concisely listed by Sommerstein:[664]

1. Private property is abolished (*Rep*. 416d; *Ecc*. 590-610).

2. The abolition of private property will in turn eliminate quarrels over material gains, thus leading to the demise of litigation. (*Rep*. 464d; *Ecc*. 655-661).

3. There are to be no private dwellings or stores (*Rep*. 416d; *Ecc*. 675).

4. Dining will take place in communal halls (*Rep*. 416e; *Ecc*. 675-688).

5. Maintenance will be provided by those of the lower status. (*Rep*. 416e, 436b, 464c; *Ecc*. 651-652).

6. At the communal feasts songs will be sung to honour an individual's bravery while cowards will be prevented from attending (*Rep*. 468a; *Ecc*. 678-680).

7. Marriage is abolished in place of community of women (*Rep*. 457c, *Ecc*. 614-615).

8. No parents are to know their child or vice versa (*Rep*. 457d; *Ecc*. 635-636).

9. This will lead to each person respecting each member of the older generation as his/her own parent (*Rep*. 461e; *Ecc*. 636-637).

10. Any two guardians/citizens will regard each other as close kin (*Rep*. 436c-e; *Ecc*. 638-650).

11. There will be no violence from the younger generations against the older as the younger will respect all of the older generation as their own parent. If such an attack was to occur, the victim's other 'children' would come to his aid (*Rep*. 465a-b; *Ecc*. 641-643).

While the societies do also differ in certain respects,[665] the similarities between certain elements of the 'utopias' are simply too numerous to dismiss as coincidence, and attempts to explain the 'dilemma' of the relationship between the two have occupied

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[664] 1998:14-15.

[665] Dettenhofer (1999:98) notes that while Aristophanes presents a complete role reversal by putting the women in charge, Plato merely calls for gender equality. With regards to sexual communism, the *Ecclesiazusae* presents this as a gratuitous free-for-all, whereas Plato supports something more akin to selective breeding, with participants in a couple being handpicked to ensure a 'union of the best'.

scholars for over 200 years with opinions ultimately settling in three opposing camps:[666] A) Aristophanes is satirising the *Republic*, B) Plato is reusing Aristophanes' material (with the further implication that this society is not meant to be taken seriously)[667] or C) Both Aristophanes and Plato are working from an external lost common source/sources.

This chapter will offer some fresh discussion regarding the dilemma, presenting new evidence which strongly supports premise C – that both are working from a lost common source/s, and also that it is these common sources which Plato has in mind when he chastises the 'wits' for poking fun at his ideas. While the progression of Aristophanes' philosophical postion – this being his criticism of utopianism in the *Ecclesiazusae* – shall be discussed in the second part of this chapter, it is important that the nature of this 'relationship' between the comedy and the dialogue is firmly established before we progress further; for if there is to be a discussion of one criticising the other's ideas, it must first be established from whom these ideas originated and if they are sincere in their proposal.

6.b) Strauss, Socrates or *Stratiotides*: Is Callipolis a Revolutionary Republic or a Crazy Caricature?

Of the premises listed above, A and B have been given a rather surprising level of support. In this section, however, evidence shall be presented which should debunk these positions while arguing that premise C is the most plausible solution. Further to this, it shall be argued that while Plato once again reacts to previous comic depictions of certain ideas being presented, it is not only the *Ecclesiazusae* he has in mind.

Initially, premise A – that Aristophanes is satirising the *Republic* – may seem the most comfortable solution. This, however, is simply highly improbable; for it is most unlikely that Plato would have already completed his *Republic* in time for it to have become read widely enough for the *Ecclesiazusae* to be recognised as a satire of Plato's Callipolis. Given the length of the *Republic*, and realistic consideration as to the actual length of time it would take to compose such a work, this premise would imply that the *Republic*

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[666] The scholarship here is enormous; for a recent comprehensive overview see Tordoff (2007 with notes). For a review of the opinions of 18th and 19th centuries see Adam (1900: 345-355).

[667] Here I omit Sommerstein, who takes the *Ecclesiazusae* to be the "common source". He differs from the Straussians in arguing that although Aristophanes was Plato's main influence for Book V, he intended the project to be taken seriously, stating that "rather than making comic mockery of a serious project, [Plato was] making serious use of a project first conceived for comic purposes" (1998: 17). Here we must question the feasibility of Aristophanes alone being capable of coming up with a society capable of evolving into Plato's Callipolis. Moreover, the evidence presented below at p. 152 outlining an earlier recording of instances of communal property and women completely undermines Sommerstein's proposal.

was among the first of Plato's dialogues, which he would have had to have begun composing around 395 to become familiar enough to be parodied by 391. Teichmüller[668] offers the proposal that only books I-V were composed pre-*Ecclesiazusae*. Here again, however, we are faced with the conundrum of Plato completing half a work only to return to it decades later, which, although feasible, seems more an attempt to adapt facts to suit one's position rather than a tenable position reached through an examination of the facts. Nor is Plato mentioned by name in the comedy; Berg justifies this with the explanation that the later comedies of Aristophanes rarely launch personal attacks; [669] this, however, is contradicted within the *Ecclesiazusae* itself, as Epicurus, Leucolaphas and Aristyllus are all lampooned in quick succession (644-655). Nor was it the habit of the middle comedians not to name their targets; Plato himself was a target of jibes from several of the Middle Comedians.[670] While it may be argued that there is no definitive evidence to refute this position, an advocate would have to argue that there remains the small chance that by the late 390's Plato had written at least half of his *Republic* which had become widely read enough for a sizable portion of an audience in 392 to be receptive to a parody of it; a tenuous position, especially when faced with more probable situations.

What then of premise B – that Book V is inspired by Aristophanes? Despite initially seeming rather chimerical, the argument has gained surprisingly large support. First theorized by Strauss[671] before being championed by Bloom[672] and others such as Saxonhouse,[673] whilst recently being reinforced by Sommerstein,[674] the position holds that the *Ecclesiazusae* was the primary source for Plato's proposals in Book V. Citing Aristotle's comment that Plato was the first to seriously formulate the ideas found in the *Republic*[675] along with the sheer implausibility of Plato – who elsewhere shows considerable familiarity with Aristophanes – being unaware of the many similarities between his society and that of the *Ecclesiazusae*, the premise asserts that the outlandish suggestions of Book V are in fact meant to come across as just as outlandish as they

[668] 1881: 15ff.
[669] Cf. Adam (1900: 353).
[670] Cf. Chap. 7.b & 7.d.
[671] 1964.
[672] 1968, 1977.
[673] 1978.
[674] 1998:15f.
[675] *Pol.* 1266a34-36. The Straussian, then, seems to take Aristotle's comment to mean that Plato's formation was the first 'serious' attempt, discounting Aristophanes' crude creation.

seem, and Plato himself never meant them to be construed seriously. This 'Straussian' premise is of vital importance to this thesis, and must be thoroughly dealt with; for the Straussian implies that the presence of comic elements undermines the genuineness of anything discussed. Indeed, we have seen in Section One how this is certainly true elsewhere as Plato takes inspiration from comedy to present Socrates' opponents as the *alazon* - as he surely does with Thasymachus in *Republic* I – but this should not be viewed as universal. Plato can be *both* comic *and* serious at the same time; while he is playful in his caricature of Thrasymachus in *Republic* I, it shall be shown that in *Republic* V he is doubtlessly serious.

According to Bloom, and in the same vein later Saxonhouse,[676] Plato introduces the discussion of communism only to show the dangers of pursuing the ideal of justice and other theoretical constructs to their logical conclusions – which is indeed, as will be argued below, what Aristophanes does in the *Ecclesiazusae*. The *Republic*, therefore, is a satire on Utopianism, and communism was merely a fantastic invention of Aristophanes who created the idea in the *Ecclesiazusae* to parody democracy; the conceit was then borrowed by Plato who made it the subject of his own fantastic comedy – the *Republic.*[677] Bloom is adamant – and rightly so – that the dialogue's dramatic context is as valuable as its philosophical, but to misconstrue references to comedy as out and out parody is utterly naïve. If Book V *is* the fantastic parody Bloom conceives it to be, he is hard-pressed to find some obviously 'funny' moments one would expect from such a work; his most valiant attempt is to remind us of the manifestation of physical signs of sexual attraction between the mixed-sex guardians when exercising together which would make good material for low-brow wits,[678] but this is hardly a joke that instantly springs to mind when reading *Rep*. 452a-c. The foundation of Bloom's arguments, however, rests not on the fact of the particulars of the ideal state being absurd, but on the sole premise that the institutional structures of the ideal state are so absurd that Plato *himself* could not have possibly taken them seriously.

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[676] Saxonhouse homes in on the "unusually heavy concentration of animal imagery" which "seems to undercut the ostensible perfection of Socrates' city and illustrates rather its connections to the comic world of Aristophanes, whose comedy *Birds* offers the model to which the *Republic* is built…Ultimately the *Republic* suggests the notion of social justice is laughable and fit for the comic stage" (1978: 888). Saxonhouse here, however, may mistake analogy for metaphor; although the language at 459e1-3 does strongly echo that of stock breeding, her relation of this to the animal imagery used to describe Thrasymachus in Book I is tentative. Since it has never been properly tested in human terms before, in Book V Plato merely explains the benefits of selective breeding in terms we are most familiar with – that of breeding the best horses, hounds, etc. In Book I, however, the imagery puns on the etymology of Thrasymachus' name and his reported persona. (Cf. Chap. 3.b).
[677] This summary of the Straussian perspective is in part paraphrased from that of Dawson (1992:69).
[678] 1977: 324.

Indeed, they initially seem absurd, a point which Plato concedes,[679] but this does not at all imply he found them incredible; on the contrary his tirade against the 'wits' who 'pluck the unripe fruit of laughter' by 'poking fun at what they don't understand'[680] would seem to suggest otherwise. Such an adamant defence and pleading for a fair hearing of such ideas leads one to believe that if there *is* irony at play here, it is hidden rather well.

Similarly, one is at a loss to explain the review of the previous day's discussion at the start of the *Timaeus*[681] if we are meant to view them purely as shenanigans; why would Plato feel the need to repeat his big joke at the start of an unrelated work, unless that work be shenanigans too? Indeed, we may also look to Aristotle, who – although in complete disagreement with Plato's utopia – *still* at least took it seriously.[682] If Plato was indeed merely being satirical, it stretches the limits of plausibility that Aristotle himself did not recognise this in his own mentor, but Bloom could over two millennia later.

Much more could be said against the 'Straussian' or 'Bloomian' perspective[683] – such as the likelihood of Aristophanes having the philosophical capacity to create a state worthy of evolving into Plato's Callipolis; Plato's motives in choosing this particular comedy,[684] or the fact that we must ignore some fairly compelling evidence suggesting these theories existed before Aristophanes, which is discussed in the next paragraph. Perhaps, however, the last words on the matter should be left to Dawson, who notes that in asserting that Aristophanes created communism in his *Ecclesiazusae* "we are asked to believe that fourth century Athenians had never heard of such a thing as a serious communistic theory, yet were receptive to satirical treatments of it".[685]

We now come to premise C – that both Plato and Aristophanes are inspired by lost common sources.[686] This supposes that an independent third party/parties influenced

[679] As is made clear by *Rep.* 452a-453a.
[680] *Rep.* 457a-b.
[681] *Tim*. 17c-19c.
[682] Cf. Mayhew (1997).
[683] Cf. Hall (1977), Klosko (1986).
[684] If he were to parody Utopianism, *Birds* would be a more suitable candidate. On *Birds* and the *Republic* see Saxonhouse (1978), n.490 above.
[685] 1992: 70.
[686] Here I omit the premise of separatists such as Halliwell (1993:225), who sees the similarities as mostly coincidental. Aristophanes, so Halliwell, was unlikely to have been prevalent in Plato's mind, if present at all when composing Book V. The reasoning here is the question of Plato being aware of a play produced some time in the region of 20 years previously. Halliwell estimates that around 170 comedies would have been produced in the interim, and doubts that the *Ecclesiazusae* would have remained pressing for Plato, the feasibility of which is discussed in the Appendix to this thesis. Halliwell does concede, however that

Aristophanes. Plato, it shall be argued, upon formulating the ideas in the *Republic* was aware of their previous comic incarnation and their vulnerability towards ridicule, and was compelled to pre-emptively defend his discourse to those who would equate his doctrine to that which they had seen on the comic stage. The first obstacle in asserting this position is Aristotle's comment that Plato was the first to formulate the ideas found in the *Republic*.[687] Adam, however, argues that Aristotle meant Plato was the authority, not exclusive, for he certainly does "exclude the fantastic creations of comedy from his survey".[688] The particular elements Aristotle denotes as Platonic are, however, only two; the community of women and children and common meals for women,[689] while he notes that other elements such as the community of property were common, first being introduced by Phaleas of Chalcedon. There, is, however, irrefutable evidence of previous discussions on the community of women and children; Herodotus, writing long before Plato in his *Histories*, talks of the habits of the Agathyrsi:

Ἀγάθυρσοι δὲ ἁβρότατοι ἀνδρῶν εἰσὶ καὶ χρυσοφόροι τὰ μάλιστα, ἐπίκοινον δὲ τῶν γυναικῶν τὴν μῖξιν ποιεῦνται, ἵνα κασίγνητοί τε ἀλλήλων ἔωσι καὶ οἰκήιοι ἐόντες πάντες μήτε φθόνῳ μήτε ἔχθεϊ χρέωνται ἐς ἀλλήλους.[690]

Now, whether or not these *were* the actual practices of the Agathyrsi is irrelevant; what matters is the fact that Herodotus was *aware* of such practices in the previous century – even to the extent of recognising the social harmony they aimed to achieve from them, which in turn completely undermines any claim that either Aristophanes or Plato were unique or the first in promoting the community of wives and children. Moreover, as Hall notes, for Aristophanes' satire to have had a point, others must have recommended such ideas quite seriously.[691] To speculate on the identity of this 'common source' is akin to a snark hunt; though one may tentatively speculate that such ideas may have been common discourse amongst philosophical circles of the late 5th century.[692]

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although "nothing in *Rep.* 5 proves he did have [*Ecc.* in mind]…the book's repeated references to laughter show that P. is aware of the *general* potential for comedy in the materials of his argument, not that he is alluding to any play from the comic stage…but certainly alludes to popular topics of humour about women and relations between the sexes." (*ibid)*. Here I agree with Halliwell on Plato being aware of the potential comicality of his views, but disagree that he does not have the comic stage in mind.

[687] *Pol.* 1266a34-36.

[688] Adam (1900: 346).

[689] οὐδεὶς γὰρ οὔτε τὴν περὶ τὰ τέκνα κοινότητα καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἄλλος κεκαινοτόμηκεν, οὔτε περὶ τὰ συσσίτια τῶν γυναικῶν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἄρχονται μᾶλλον. (*Pol.* 1266a34-36).

[690] *Hist.* IV. 104.

[691] Hall (1977: 300).

[692] It may here be worth noting Diogenes Laertius (3.37) who cites Aristoxenus's claim that "nearly all" of the *Republic* could be found in Protagoras' *Antilogika*. This, however, may simply point to the prevalence of such discussions – influence may be mistaken for plagiarism. Cf. pp. 190-193 below. On speculating a link between the *Antilogika* and "barbarian sexual communism" cf. Dawson (1992: 20-21).

One cannot disagree, however, with the Straussian in pointing to a comic subtext of *Republic* V, and that this cannot be overlooked or ignored when assessing the dialogue. Bloom is indeed commendable for arguing that those who deny the presence of comic motifs can only be limited to those "with a desire to quibble"[693] pointing out that a purely philosophical reading of the dialogue is to obey the misguided tradition that "Professor Plato must talk only to his fellow professors. My response is that we should look where Plato tells us to look and not where we think we should look."[694]Indeed these comic and theatrical elements are many; Socrates introduces his proposals for women as the 'female drama'[695] – which certainly implies a theatrical undertone – while Saxonhouse records at least twenty uses of some form of γέλοιος within the thirty Stephanus pages of Book V. Similarly, at 473e-474a, Socrates' proposal of philosopher rulers is met by Glaucon with a response typical of comedy – the threat of physical violence;[696]in Attic comedy those supporting views that disagreed with that of the hero – and so indeed the general public[697] – are routinely met with threatened or actual violence.

One finds themselves in disagreement with the Straussian, however, on classifying the 'touching points' as comic elements. While Socrates speaks repeatedly of his proposals being met with laughter,[698] this is not an indicator that we should laugh along with Plato. Far from being a parody of a comic fantasy, Plato acknowledges that what he proposes is susceptible to ridicule, but clearly wants it to be taken seriously. The only thing 'comic' about the proposals is their previous mistreatment at the hands of the comedians from which Plato is desperate to separate them by asking the reader not to evaluate his theories in terms of the immediate physical world. As Socrates opens his discussion on the equality of the sexes, he admits it 'would incite much ridicule if it were carried out in practice as we've described.'[699] We are then told of his plans for

[693] 1977: 324.
[694] *Ibid*.
[695]μετὰ ἀνδρεῖον δρᾶμα παντελῶς διαπερανθὲν τὸ γυναικεῖον αὖ περαίνειν. (*Rep*. 451c1-3).
[696] Cf. the anonymous Questioner's threat to Socrates if he were to give him Hippias's most recent definition of τὸ καλόν at *Hip. Maj*. 292a4. In comedy cf. esp. *Plut*. 612, (p. 150 & 553 below); also *Plut*. 929; *Av*. 990, 1029, 1043, 1462; *Nu*.1295, *Ves*. 1411, 1435.
[697] This, of course, is based on the assumption that the comic poet wished his audience to relate with and support his protagonist – a standard feature of Old Comedy (Strepsiades of *Clouds*, Dikaiopolis of *Acharnians*, Agoracritus of *Knights,* Bdelycleon of *Wasps*, Lysistrata, etc.). The Middle, however, is less straight forward; Praxagora can hardly be deemed as the voice of the people in *Ecc*., whilst other surviving titles of the Middle suggest the central characters were more the object of ridicule than inspiration (Cf. Aristophon *Platon* fr. 8; *Pythagoristes* frr. 10, 11, 12; also both Alexis (frr. 196, 197, 198) and the Younger Cratinus (fr.6) each had a *Pythagorizousae* and a *Tarantinoi*). Cf. Chap. 7.e.
[698] *Rep.* 450a-b, 451a1, 452b3, 452b3, 452d5, 452e6, 457b.
[699] *Rep*. 452a5. Trans. Grube.

men and women exercising in the palestra,[700] and how this too would seem ridiculous (γέλοιος)[701]if immediately put into practice. Whilst the thought of young women exercising alongside wrinkly old men and *vice versa* may seem ludicrous,[702] Socrates tells Glaucon they must not fear the jokes the wits may make of such proposals,[703] before issuing his plea: πορευτέον πρὸς τὸ τραχὺ τοῦ νόμου, δεηθεῖσίν τε τούτων μὴ τὰ αὑτῶν πράττειν ἀλλὰ σπουδάζειν, καὶ ὑπομνήσασιν ὅτι οὐ πολὺς χρόνος ἐξ οὗ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐδόκει αἰσχρὰ εἶναι καὶ γελοῖα ἅπερ νῦν τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν βαρβάρων, γυμνοὺς ἄνδρας ὁρᾶσθαι.[704] Socrates then defends his proposal by arguing that practice has proven it is best to strip while exercising, and what was previously perceived as ridiculous faded away in place of what was proven best. Thus, those who ridicule such practices mistakenly ridicule what is best, when in fact conversely the only concepts that should be ridiculed are the base or foolish.[705] After conceding his proposal's liability to mockery, Socrates gives an extended explanation of the benefits of such a rationale[706] to satisfy those 'who wish the opportunity to question us – whether in jest (φιλοπαίγμων) or in earnest (σπουδαστικός)'.[707]

Upon its conclusion, the discussion is then summed up with another rebuke against those who would poke fun at such ideas; Socrates has 'proven' that naked women doing physical training is for the sake of what is the best,[708] and the man who laughs at such habits simply does not understand what he laughs at.[709]

If such ideas then were meant to be tongue-in-cheek satire Plato goes to great lengths to disguise it. Rather more plausible here is that Plato is responding to previous depictions the 'wits' have made of the ideas he is about to propose. He knows his ideas would make good food for the comic poets – as indeed they did – and takes the opportunity to disentangle the theory from its formulation in its comic counterpart and present it in its intended forum of sober philosophical discussion. The allusions to the comic poets imply that Plato wishes to bring to mind their handling of the ideas he is about to present, but his sole motive is to show how the comedians got it *wrong*. As Nightingale

[700] *Rep*. 452a6-d1.
[701] *Rep*. 452a7.
[702] *Rep*. 452a7-b2.
[703] οὐ φοβητέον τὰ τῶν χαριέντων σκώμματα. (*Rep*. 452b6-7).
[704] *Rep*. 452c4-9.
[705] *Rep*. 452d2-e1.
[706] *Rep*. 453a4-457a6.
[707] *Rep*. 452e5-6. Trans. Grube.
[708] *Rep*. 457b1.
[709] Cf. pp. 156-157 above.

notes, Plato "provides instructions for handling the material", which requires the reader to meditate on the true nature of the ridiculous; Plato shows how his ideas are in fact worthwhile, and the poets are "thus both criticised and corrected."[710] Thus, any references to 'female drama' or laughter do indeed serve to stir up memories in the reader's mind of previous pasquinades of such theories, but only so Plato can turn the tide of invective upon their instigators.

Two major points, however, may be raised to challenge this position. The first is that if Plato's intentions were to chastise Aristophanes' adulteration of philosophical discourse, why doesn't he mention him by name as he does in the *Apology*?[711] The second is the issue of the absence of any depiction or mention of women and men exercising together in the *Ecclesiazusae*. Several attempts have been made to explain away these criticisms; on the former Tordoff proposes that "by the time (Plato) was completing the *Republic*, Aristophanes was already dead and there was little to gain by having Socrates name him and immortalize the author of the comic mockery he was concerned to guard".[712]Similarly Saxonhouse supposes Plato "overcomes Aristophanes by ignoring him".[713] On the absence of men and women communally exercising, Adam, who holds premise A, excuses this on the grounds that a parody of a concept does not have to contain every element of the concept parodied – "The primary object of Aristophanic comedy, when all is said and done, was to amuse and the accurate and complete recapitulation of Plato's ideas would not only be slavish and pedantic, but also less amusing than a partial and distorted view".[714] These arguments, however, all presuppose a unidirectional progression: Aristophanes has only Plato in mind and/or vice versa; for it is just as likely that Plato is not reacting solely to Aristophanes, but to other lost similar political satires. A closer examination of the precise elements of his society of which Plato is most defensive, then, may give a better indication as to why Aristophanes isn't singled out, and may also explain the absence of communal exercise in the *Ecclesiazusae*.

As has been discussed, Plato begins his censuring of the comic poets by warning that what he is about to propose is likely to incite ridicule (452a7). He describes men and

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[710] 1995: 175.
[711] *Ap.* 19c3.
[712] 2007: 244. Here I am inclined to question how Tordoff arrived at the conclusion that Aristophanes was dead before Plato started composing the *Republic*, since we have no conclusive dates for either event.
[713] 1978: 291; Cf. Bloom (1968: 380-382).
[714] 1900: 352.

women training naked in the palestra (452a11-b2). He then warns that we mustn't fear the jokes the wits will make about these changes in music, poetry, physical training, but most of all *in bearing arms and riding horses*. (452b7-c1). He immediately begs the wits not to be silly and to be serious for once (452c4-5) before spending half a Stephanus page defending the idea of women and men exercising naked (452c5-e4). He then explains he must explore whether such practices would be possible or not to answer those who question it *either in jest or in earnest* (452e5-453a4), and the next four Stephanus pages are given over to a discussion on the benefit of women and men training together (453b-457a). Concluding that the guardians should all strip for exercise as they'll have virtue instead of clothes, Plato ends this discussion with his most stinging comment about those who make fun of such ideas as picking the unripe fruit of laughter (457a5-457b3), so concluding his most blatant invective against those who have made light of his thought. It seems Plato was quite bitter over a recent comic portrayal of his theory of communal gymnasia, but *what* portrayal is this? It simply cannot be just the *Ecclesiazusae* – nowhere in the play do we have anything akin to this – no jokes about women training naked, nor women reciting poetry, nor women on horseback or carrying arms.[716] Moreover, we must remember that Plato, in his berating, refers not to a *single* poet, but at least two – οὐ φοβητέον τὰ τῶν χαριέντων σκώμματα, ὅσα καὶ οἷα ἂν **εἴποιεν εἰς τὴν τοιαύτην μεταβολὴν γενομένην καὶ περὶ τὰ γυμνάσια** (*Rep*.452b6-8) δεηθεῖσίν τε τούτων μὴ **τὰ αὑτῶν πράττειν** ἀλλὰ σπουδάζειν (*Rep*. 452c5-6). Halliwell, however, does not link this to any specific comedy or comedies, but to "broader features of vulgar humour, whether inside or outside the theatre."[717] Halliwell here makes a valid point; Plato may not be directing his comments towards the comedians specifically, but to the more immature part of the Athenian populace who might (with relative ease) see the opportunity to make vulgar jokes about naked men and women training together rather than taking the proposal seriously. There are certain speculative arguments one could put against this: one could question as to how 'laughable' the average Athenian might have found this – certainly it might have seemed preposterous, even absurd, but was it preposterous enough on the whole to elicit abject laughter? If this was the case, then what people found laughable was the comic's stock-in-trade, and so even then the comedians would have been the ringleaders in making such mockeries. Such responses, however, are too conjectural. My reasoning in suggesting that Plato has comic poetry's 'appropriation' of his school's ideas in mind is

[716] There, is however, a small skit concerning women on horseback at *Lys*.676-678
[717] 1993: 225.

the fact that in his rebuke he himself 'appropriates' a poet's maxim which also criticises philosophy for his own benefit to the same effect, which serves as a warning that the improper handling of delicate material – such as poetry or philosophy – runs the risk of jeopardising its value and meaning. This is done by his accusing those who laugh at him of 'pluck(ing) the unripe fruit of laughter',[718] a play on Pindar fr. 194 (Bowra), which talks of those who 'pluck the unripe fruit of wisdom'. The impact of Pindar's adage is reduced, once 'knowledge' is replaced by 'laughter', and the original 'moralising' of the line is obscured, just as philosophy is made the object of bathos when treated by comedy. Moreover, if directed at the general impercipient layman rather than the dramatist, the clever play on Pindar would seem wasted and out of place. In chastising the poets for 'mishandling' his art, I suggest that Plato purposely 'mishandles' theirs in return.

If, the *Ecclesiazusae,* then, was not the only comedy in Plato's mind here, the *Stratiotides* of Theopompus Comicus serves as an excellent candidate as another.[719] Theopompus, described by Storey as "more than a minor player in the later years of Old Comedy",[720] had a career spanning c410-c380,[721] reportedly staging 21 plays[722] with one victory in the late 400's.[723] The play in question – *Stratiotides* - is un-datable but its three surviving fragments – along with its title - strongly suggest the play centred on women joining the men in the ranks; fr. 55 has a women worried about drinking from a military canteen exclaim ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂν κώθωνος ἐκ στρεψαύχενος πίοιμι τὸν τράχηλον ἀνακεκλασμένη; which Storey describes as "a nice mixture of the bibulous nature of women and the hardships of military life".[724] Fr. 56 has a man arguing that his household will benefit from the extra two obols a day brought in by his wife's military pay, while fr. 57 has a speaker commenting that ἡ Θρασυμάχου <δ᾽> ὑμῶν γυνὴ καλῶς ἐπιστατήσει.[725] In the *Ecclesiazusae*, we do not have equality of the sexes as much as

[718] *Rep*. 475b.
[719] A point noted, but never expanded upon, by Sommerstein - who first mentions the play as another example of a gyno-centric comedy (1998: 10), before proposing a possible similarity to Book V in a brief footnote (1998: 17n74) – and by Tordoff who merely cites Sommerstein (2007: 245).`
[720] 2011c: 314.
[721] *Ibid*. Storey notes references to Leotrophides, Laespodias, and Acestor (frr. 25, 40 & 61) show him active in the early 410's while later references to Peron and Callistratus (1, 17, & 31) place him as late as after 380. He also refers to Plato (fr. 16), cf. p. 175 below.
[722] *Suda*. Test 1.
[723] *IG* II2 2325.68. Cf. Olson (2007: 417).
[724] 2011: 345
[725] This most likely not the Thrasymachus we know from the *Republic*, but a play on the etymology of the name, the joke being that the woman who could tame a man with a name like Thrasymachus (Bold Fighter) would make a good general. Similar plays on etymology are used at *Thes*. 802-10 (Storey: 2011: 346).

we do a role reversal – the women take power and the men become the underlings. *Stratiotides*, however, with its women soldiers bringing their share of income to the household budget, seems to suggest a more equal balance between the sexes.[726] Similarly, fr. 55 strongly implies there were scenes in which the women soldiers partook in military training or activities, and I would suggest that it is scenes like this Plato refers to when he fears the idea of women on horseback and bearing arms might provoke laughter. This also suggests there were separate sources independent of both Plato and Aristophanes contemplating the equality of the sexes in physical and military terms, to which Theopompus seems to respond, and that we should not assume Aristophanes and Theopompus were alone in composing such satire. Thus, when Plato alludes to the 'wits', he alludes not only to Aristophanes, but also to others who have made similar mockeries of elements of his ideal society.

Why then, should Plato be so conscious of the consequences of comic portrayals of the society he will propose? Indeed, Socrates tells us he himself does not fear any laughter his proposals may incite,[727] and at any rate a comedy like the *Ecclesiazusae* is not anywhere near as damaging to the Socratic school as a comedy like *Clouds*.[728] The *Ecclesiazusae*, however, provides a much more damning critique of the philosopher than the *Clouds*. The *Clouds* sees a belligerent bumpkin attempt to learn a hodgepodge mess of pseudo-philosophical theory as a means to escape his debts. Any semblance of reason is thrown out as the metaphysical is employed as a solution to a physical problem – a recipe bound to result in disaster. As we shall see in the in the following section, the *Ecclesiazusae,* however, gives philosophy a fair hearing, and puts a theory to its intended use as a social remedy, and the events that unfold can all be seen as logical consequences of the implementation of such a regime. The underlying message of the *Ecclesiazusae* is that communistic theory works well in the ideal, but if put in practice human nature will interfere and prevent this ideal from ever coming to fruition. To the lay Athenian, this renders such discourse pointless and philosophy consequently once again becomes an inane endeavour. Could Aristophanes, however, really have had the sagacity to evolve from his previous dismissiveness of philosophical theories to a level of engagement with such concepts that rendered him capable of launching such a

[726] The pay of two obols, however, seems quite meagre, which may suggest the women earned less than the men. Thucydides, for example, states the pay rate of soldiers and sailors in 412/411 was 3 obols or half a drachma per day (VII. 45. 24), while the hoplites at Potidaea received a drachma per day for their services (III.17). On the jury pay and its increases between 450 and 425, see Markle (2004).
[727] *Rep.* 451a1.
[728] Cf. *Apology* 19c.

critique? Indeed, a closer reading of the *Ecclesiazusae* would suggest just this. Such receptiveness, however, should not be mistaken for acceptance; although now a more lucid understanding of the theories themselves is detectable, it is still accompanied by sense of bewilderment as to how any of this could be of any benefit.

6.c) A Critique of Communism in the *Ecclesiazusae*?

When questioning the validity of Plato's wrath against plays such as the *Ecclesiaszusae* or the *Stratiotides*, the main question we must ask is the true intent of the authors when composing such comedies, and how they expected their parodies to be viewed. Since the *Stratiotides* is fragmentary, this is an answer we may never get from Theopompus – but we can certainly attempt to determine what Aristophanes has in mind when he has Praxagora propose her communistic regime as the solution to the dire political situation in Athens. We are surely being served up some food for thought, but are we meant to view the regime as a plausible alternative to contemporary democracy or as the sort of mad-cap society that only a parliament of women would be doltish enough to introduce? The scholarly trend on the issue is varied; Halliwell wavers more towards the latter stating that "Aristophanes invites his audience to contemplate a solution which has the supreme populist merit of pleasuring everyone at no one's expense, and which stems from the only group of Athenians independent of existent political affiliations: women. A quintessential comic dream...both in its escape from, and its wry reminders of, the constraints of reality".[729] Webster takes an opposing stance in proposing that Aristophanes is not unsympathetic towards Plato's teaching, and would not object should the play inspire the reader to find out more about Plato's ideas (or, indeed, whoever was responsible).[730] Ussher holds the more neutral position that Aristophanes neither condemns nor is in any way serious about the creed and is not concerned to comment on it,[731] but a lack of authorial opinion does not seem to agree with the Chorus Leader's reminder at 1155 that while some may have been in attendance purely for laughter, the intellectuals present also had their share of entertainment. The argument of this section locates itself somewhere in the middle of the above opposing premises; for it will be argued that while Aristophanes is indeed now presenting common intellectual discourse that he wishes to be taken seriously, it is not the communism proposed by

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[729] 1997:153-154.
[730] 1953:34-35.
[731] 1973:xxix-xxx. This view is rather *too* safe. It would also imply that regime was imposed purely as a means to introduce the following scenes (730-833, 877-1111, 1153-80), rather than these scenes evolving *out* of and being contingent on the proposal.

Praxagora that he wants considered, but the implicit *criticism* and *fallibility* of such a society that can be found within the play. Reality here gets a rather better reception than in earlier Aristophanic plays, where it is something to be avoided. This may signify a change in audience taste; the decline of the role of the chorus marks a departure from the fantasy and exuberance of Old Comedy towards a more reality-based and narrowly focussed style of social drama.[732]Moreover, we shall see that the faults arising from Praxagora's society may also be a cause of concern for one upholding the validity of certain similar arguments that later resurface in the *Republic*, where Plato presents his model of the theories previously satirised by Aristophanes. This would not only denote an audience already familiar enough with philosophical trends to recognise the parody of a current topical idea or ideas, but also that there was at least a part of the audience astute enough to actually engage with a *critique* of such an idea. For such a critique to be viable, a departure from fantasy towards a semblance of reality is not only unavoidable, but required.

If there is an anti-communistic sentiment in the play to be detected, we must first examine the regime's enforcers – the women; for if the play retains the misogynistic tendencies that are part of Aristophanic comedy's stock repertoire, it becomes easier to deduce how we are meant to view any idea proposed by a woman. The fact that the women were elected only because it was the one thing the assembly had not tried (457) certainly indicates a reluctance to hand over power, and Ussher sees this as an expression of a general sense of disillusionment that *any* change is for the better. [733] The comic stereotype of women's lack of self-control concerning food and alcohol prevails at 14-15 and 134,[734] and a lack of any type of forethought is taken as almost standard behaviour in the rehearsal scene, as Woman A reveals her plans to hitch up her cloak so she can knit in the assembly (88-93), doubly exposing herself as a woman, while Woman B swears by feminine deities (156). Praxagora herself is not immune from such ignorance (128), and, as Halliwell notes,[735] is also foolishly contradictory, complaining first about the Athenian devotion to innovation as opposed to women's natural conservatism (214-228), but later boasting of her own unprecedented and radical innovation (577-585). Similarly, having previously bemoaned the contemporary

[732] As observed by Halliwell (1997: 146).
[733] 1973:139 n457.
[734] Cf. *Lys.* 6; *Thes.* 733–764.
[735] 1997:153.

reliance on assembly pay (185-188, 206-208),[736] she imposes a regime that actually goes further by making free economic provision for everyone.

The reader is thus left with the impression that Praxagora, the now apparent head of state, is either so foolish she doesn't realise she contradicts herself, or – perhaps a more sinister alternative – that the naive behaviour of Praxagora and the women as they play the fool when amongst men (540-560) is a mere front; when alone a more deceptive side motivated by self-gratification appears (5-18, 234-239, 504-515), and so the imposition of such a utopian society is either the choice of a fool or one with ulterior motives. Indeed, once in power, any naivety is cast away and the faults of the system are uncovered – this being that while an idea may seem appealing in theory, its benefit must always be considered in relation to human practicality. As Praxagora outlines her plans for the community of women, Blepyros asks a surprisingly valid question – won't everybody just want to fornicate with the prettiest (615-616)? Ussher[737] notes that this question apparently did not occur to Plato when constructing his similar society – although he does refer to the 'union of the best' at *Rep.*459d7-e3 and breeding restrictions (*Rep* 460c3-e2), these restrictions on intercourse directly contradict the premise that women who "are to belong *in common to all* the men" (τὰς γυναῖκας ταύτας τῶν ἀνδρῶν τούτων **πάντων πάσας** - *Rep.* 457c10). If Plato is to uphold this, he must allow for and address the problem posed by Blepyros. Indeed, while Praxagora's solution to give priority to the undesirables may be seen as a burlesque of a theory of selective breeding,[738] it is no doubt in part a concoction of Aristophanes in an effort to show the farcicality and consequences of a system in which everyone gets a fair equal share carried out to its *full* extent. The scene in which the Old Women kidnap the Youth (877*f*) exemplifies the problems in attempting to ensure equality for all when faced with natural human desire and inclination; before he is allowed to lie with his beloved maiden he must first satisfy the old hags. What was initially thought of as free access to sex for all has now imploded into constraint to have sex with ugly old crones. Free choice is *ipso facto* demolished. While the solution *is* as ridiculous as it is intended to be, surely it seems no more inhumane or preposterous than any other solution that could be thought of, which again implies the sheer inanity of the proposed society.

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[736] A similar complaint is made by Plato during his criticism of democratic Athens at *Rep.* 557e.
[737] 1973:161n615-616.
[738] *Ibid*. n617-618.

Consider now the scene in which Chremes gathers up his possessions to contribute to the state's kitty, all to the bemusement of the shocked Dissident Neighbour (730-833).[739] Is this neighbour, however, really to be viewed as a dissident? Should he not rather be viewed as the sanest man amongst the cast, or at least the most akin to the everyday Athenian? Indeed, he is greedy, but surely so is every Athenian (otherwise the joke that likens the Athenians to the statues of Gods with outstretched hands awaiting a gift at 779 has no substance). He does not want to give away his possessions, but is eager to get the meal announced at 734; in other words, he wants to have his cake and eat it (772), a trait not just characteristic of the everyday 4th Century Athenian, but typical of the everyday man even in modernity. His role as a doubting Thomas in the face of the joviality of Chremes does dampen the spirits of an initially cheery scene and create a negative impression; but his reservations are certainly not unfounded. His reluctance to jump head first into such a drastic regime (770,790) is directly influenced by his recent experience of the fickleness of the populace's decisions in previous similar circumstances (796, 823-827).

Ussher argues the Neighbour's opposition serves mainly as a foil to exemplify the loyalty of Chremes, which in turn implies that Chremes is an admirable character.[740] We must, however, remind ourselves of the regime to which Chremes is being loyal; while his naivety is endearing, he is blindly putting his trust – and life savings – into a society apparently run by sex mad women, which could be abandoned in the not at all too distant future if similar situations in the recent past are anything to go by (814-831). The folly of his naivety is exposed when he doesn't have a response to the Neighbour's logical warning that the regime could collapse and all his possessions be sold (805). Admirable also is the trust he puts in his fellow man to do as he does for the good of society (771-774), and indeed such trust is needed in each and every citizen if a society like Praxagora's is to work. Unfortunately, however, reality dictates otherwise and such mutual trust, although desirable, is very hard come by in any society. In the *Plutus*, the last surviving play of Aristophanes produced only a few years later in 388, we see an Athens driven by the desire for wealth above all else; people, we are told, will eventually have their fill of bread, cake, music and even sex and honour, but the desire for wealth is unlimited and insatiable (130-200). This is not limited to the evil or unjust – Chremylos, the hero of the piece, values wealth over his only son (241). It is this

[739] This is Sommerstein's interpretation of the character in his translation of the text. The Greek simply has 'ANHP'.
[740] *Ibid*.: 180-181 & n746-756.

desire Praxagora's society ignores; while the poor will be sustained (607-609), she overlooks the fact that just because a man is sustained he does not still aspire to or dream of a wealthier future beyond having enough to satisfy his current appetite. [741] While all other pleasures will come in unlimited supply, these will eventually become tiresome and replaced by the desire for something new and better, but Praxagora prohibits the one thing Athenians will never tire or have their fill of – general wealth[742] – in an effort to curb crime. Prohibition, however, does not remedy desire, and the Neighbour of the *Ecclesiazusae* is aware of this; not only does he distrust his fellow citizens in going along with the plan (772, 801), he also implies that he is probably not the only one who distrusts everyone else.

Moreover, the confrontation between the Neighbour and Chremes ends irresolutely - the opponent is sent off unscathed and without being refuted by the events of the play or Chremes' arguments. Elsewhere in Aristophanes such dissenting behaviour towards the ambition of a main character is met with abuse and the dissident is beaten off stage, leading one to assume some credibility in the Neighbour's complaint. Nor must we think too much about the fact that the feast still goes ahead in the end – this is comedy, this is festivity, and so the tone of the play's ending must align with the conviviality of the festive spirit. If the poet wants his play to be remembered with jocundity he simply cannot end his play with the collapse of society and a destitute cast, but while the Chorus Leader uses the jubilation of the imminent feast as a perfect time to canvas for the judge's approval (1554ff), the attentive spectator is left wondering that while this is all very nice indeed, how long could a society like this, with feasts of such grandiosity, be *plausibly* sustainable before cracks start to show and resources deplete?

While he is not an attractive character, the fact is that many citizens of Athens were just like the Neighbour, but his presence reminds us that while a society similar to the one proposed by Praxagora may be attractive with regard to the idea pushed to its extremities in a purely theoretical world, human interference overrides and prevents the culmination of such a concept in its pure ideal. It is this same interference that complicates theories of sexual communism; and the rape of the youth between 877-1111 is Aristophanes' depiction of the consequences of an attempt to resolve this issue

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[741] In the *Plutus*, Poverty defends her position by stating that although Chremylos and Blepsydemos have nothing to spare, they have enough to get by (*Plut.* 551) - an existence one could envisage Praxagora's society assimilating once its inaugural festivities die down. Tellingly, Poverty is run off the stage (619).
[742] Indeed, wealth is commodity Athenians apparently would not be likely to share in the first place (*Plu.* 237-241, 342, 827).

and align it with human nature. This line of criticism is one Plato himself evidently had difficulty dealing with when it came to formulating his own model of the theory, as he concedes that is through such human fallibility that his own philosophically ruled city will degenerate; the rulers' reasoning is governed by sense perception, and so mistakes in ensuring the correct sexual unions will inevitably occur from mathematical error (*Rep.* 547a-d). By admitting this, Plato is symbolically expressing the idea that no ideal can be fully realised – as did Aristophanes previously – so when he begs the poets to take the society he is about to propose seriously at *Rep.* 452b-c, is he aware of the criticism of such theories lodged by Aristophanes? We have previously seen how Plato elsewhere voices his frustration at the 'uninitiated'- οἱ οὐδὲν ἄλλο οἰόμενοι εἶναι ἢ οὗ ἂν δύνωνται ἀπρὶξ τοῖν χεροῖν λαβέσθαι, πράξεις δὲ καὶ γενέσεις καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἀόρατον οὐκ ἀποδεχόμενοι ὡς ἐν οὐσίας μέρει.[743] This urge to consider things purely in the abstract, however, is exactly what the *Ecclesiazusae* refuses to do. Aristophanes does indeed take the idea seriously and gives it the consideration it warrants, but does so in regard to practicality in the physical world, the only sense which would be of use or interest to the general Athenian public. Plato admits what he proposes would look ridiculous at present (*Rep.* 452b4-5), but seeks validation on a theoretical level from a public which still appeared to have little inclination towards the abstract. Democratic Athens, for the most part, was a mutually beneficial society; the more one contributed, the greater rewards one could reap. One's standing in such a society is directly relatable to one's contribution towards the fuel of the society – one who funded a trireme or chorus was thus held in high regard - and while there was always a need for a blacksmith, baker, vase painter etc. to maintain the upkeep of Athenian society, little use or benefit was seen in the philosopher who spent his days pondering inane topics far-removed from everyday life. The prominent message in the dialogues is the benefit such activities can offer one's wellbeing, and perhaps this was Plato's offering to the general public; but this was a public who still saw little use in his product and so must have only heightened his embitterment.

6 .d) Conclusion.

By the end of the 390's, then, we see a marked departure from the cultish suspicions of philosophy from the previous decade. Instead, we can detect an emergence of a public who, although still dubious about the subject as a whole, are certainly receptive to

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[743] *Tht.* 155e4-7.

philosophical discourse. In the *Ecclesiazusae*, we are told of a new 'intellectual' (οἱ σοφοί) portion of the audience who prefer more stimulating plotlines,[744] while evidence from fragmentary plays such as the *Stratiotides* suggests Aristophanes was not alone in composing such burlesques of political theory. At times, we can detect something beyond this new 'familiarity' – an audience actually receptive to criticisms of philosophical theory. The *Ecclesiazusae* is not an isolated incident in this case – in the following chapter it will be shown how later audiences would also be receptive to similar comic critiques which questioned the validity of Plato's theory of the Good and Pythagorean ideas of metempsychosis.

Despite the marked increase in familiarity with the subject, general hesitation towards its embracement remains. The cause of this increase in familiarity may be aligned with the increase of permanent philosophical institutions being established in Athens around this period; in the 5th Century teachers of philosophy – apart from Socrates, who famously never wrote anything down – were nomadic sophists, who travelled from city to city plying their trade. This breeds suspicions of mysticism – an image of a Rasputin-like figure who comes to town, teaches strange doctrines for a high fee and departs before most have realised what is going on. By the early 4th century, however, we see a departure from this attitude owing to a number of schools opening their doors around this time – the Academy, the school of Isocrates, the school of Antisthenes etc.[745] Philosophical discourse was now a permanent feature in Athens, and took place in the open public as a society as litigious as Athens realised the benefits of the skills in rhetoric offered by these teachers. This openness dispels any of the elements of shadiness that were previously associated with such teachings, and as we progress further into the 4th century we shall see how this openness steadily influences a growing familiarity with teachings and habits distinctive of particular schools.

[744] *Ecc.* 1155 – τοῖς σοφοῖς μὲν τῶν σοφῶν μεμνημένοις κρίνειν ἐμέ.
[745] Cf. n. 17 above.

Chapter 7: From Alexis to Aristocles – Philosophy and the Philosopher in the Fragments of Middle Comedy.

7.a) – Introduction:

In the previous chapter it was noted how it is possible to detect a change in certain attitudes towards philosophy in the earlier years of the 4th Century; it has been shown in Chapter 5 how in the 5th century the comic attitude towards philosophy was generally one of flippancy and hostility, with various avant-garde ideologies being lumped together and misconstrued as the doctrines of a religious and moralistic dissident.[746] Little relevance is attached to the correct attribution of traits to a particular philosopher, which not only reflects a lay community unfamiliar with and uninterested in the philosophical scene, but also indicates a sense of wariness arising from this unfamiliarity. In the case of the later *Ecclesiazusae,* however, we have seen how such unfamiliarity dissolves into a willingness to give a particular philosophical theory a fair hearing, albeit that the conclusion of this hearing is ultimately negative. The questions to be explored in this chapter, then, are if this trend develops as we advance further into the 4th Century? Can a continuing acquaintanceship with or acceptance of philosophy and/or the philosopher be detected? Do the surviving fragments indicate an audience becoming increasingly aware of the proceedings of philosophical circles? The answers, simply put, are yes and yes to the first two questions and sometimes to the third, for it must be remembered that there was no specific 'turning point' in the 4th Century when the style of Old Comedy fell out of fashion in favour of the Middle;[747] rather that the Old 'style' remained popular while a new trend emerged and ran parallel until the newer

[746] Cf. *Nu*. 367 ff, 1000-1005.

[747] While the validity of the term 'Middle Comedy' has been variously contested (Fielitz (1866); Csapo (2000); Konstantakos (2000); Sidwell (2000); Tordoff (2007)), this is not of great concern to this study. My focus is on the evolution of the reception of philosophy in comedy, which happens to take us into 4th century comedy. What concerns my project is the possibility of a changing perception of the philosopher in the 4th century which is reflected on the comic stage. Thus, questions of certain 4th century fragments being technically more akin to Old or New Comedy will not be addressed beyond what is relevant, nor will conjectures on features 'distinctive' of Middle Comedy. There will be several instances where we see Old Comic motifs at play in the 4th century which will be duly discussed in relation to such stock motifs surviving alongside emerging new ones, but no argument as to whether the fragment itself should be ascribed to the style of Old, Middle or New Comedy – my concern is that the fragment was written in the 4th century, irrespective of the genre it falls into. This being said, the period I discuss dates loosely from the early 390's to the late 320's, the time generally ascribed to 'Middle Comedy'. At times I refer to the period generally as '4th Century comedy' to avoid repetition, but do not mean to include 'New Comedy' in this label. For a sense of chronology, I have given rough dates for the fragments where possible – mostly based on Edmonds (1957&1959) and Arnott (1996) – on which I do not elaborate due to the constraints of this thesis but have referenced further scholarship should the reader wish to investigate for themselves.

would eventually 'supersede' the older trend. Thus the comedians were free to pick and choose from old and new motifs at will; they may employ a punchy new joke poking fun at a distinctive piece of Platonic terminology, but could also use the old motifs to ensure a guaranteed laugh. Neither is this limited to the fringes of the Middle period, as we see certain comedians hark back to older stereotypes well into the mid-4th century. This being said, a general picture of the philosopher can still be sketched: although he remains an alazonic character, the subversive element fades away and we can also most certainly discern a familiarity with ideas that were recognised as distinct to certain philosophical schools. This does not, however, imply the audience were in any way experts – one does not have to be a psychologist to understand a joke about Freud – and indeed the general sense of bafflement by the subject still prevails; but for a comic poet to able to expect his audience to understand a joke about something like Plato's Good shows the gradual growing influence of philosophy on the Athenian social backdrop. Gone is the dissentious, asocial charlatan we see in Old Comedy and the general suspicion that such a caricature reflects - which may in turn align with the establishment of permanent philosophical institutions in Athens in the 4th Century which allowed uninterrupted instruction in a central location.[748] The art of discourse was certainly necessary in a highly litigious but lawyer-less society such as Athens, and the founding of permanent institutions in a way allowed, as Poulakos notes, "the art that the sophists had imported as a novelty [to enter] the mainstream culture."[749] This eliminates the suspicion of dissentious activity bred by the more insular and discontinuous environment of the previous century's discussions, which leads to a gradual reduction in such stereotypes being presented. By 'insular environment' I do not mean to imply that philosophical discussions of the 5th Century only took place in cloistered establishments such as the *Phrontisterion* of *Clouds*. Rather, I refer to the private or exclusive surroundings in which such discussions took place. In comparison with the 4th Century, the vast amount of philosophical instruction was imparted by itinerant sophists who travelled from city to city charging copious amounts of money for their teaching. As is seen in the *Protagoras*, a well-known sophist's arrival in town is greeted with great pomp from those within his circle, while Protagoras himself admits that being a "foreigner who goes into great cities and tries to persuade the best of the young men in them to abandon their associations with others, relatives and acquaintances, young and

[748] I.e. the schools of Isocrates (*Antidos*. 87-88; 224;226), Antisthenes (*D.L* VI. 13) and Plato's Academy (D.L III.7;III.29). Cf. n. 30 above.
[749] 2004:74.

old alike and to associate with him instead”[750] is viewed with suspicion. With students paying such high fees, it would be expected that ‘lessons’ would take place in a classroom-like environment rather than in public – perhaps in the home of a patron – so that only students would be privy to the knowledge for which they paid so much. Due to the itinerant nature of the sophist his instruction was fitful, and so there lay difficulty in forging a lasting positive impression of himself; instead he was viewed as one who visited a city for a period, and charged the youth extortionate amounts of money in return for teaching them peculiar doctrines that flouted tradition before setting off to the next city. Similar opinions in modernity are formed about the likes of faith-healers, psychics or ‘the secret to get-rich-quick’ speakers who travel the world selling out venues parting their followers from their money. The only long term-fixture in Athens, of course, was Socrates who famously wandered the streets of Athens bedraggled and barefoot confusing the populace with dialectic, never had a school nor claimed to be a teacher or possess knowledge.[751] If one considers this from the vantage point of a lay Athenian, it is not difficult to see why they may not have paid much heed to anything he said, viewing him more as insane than enlightened.

The growing familiarity which is detectable in the 4th century, however, does not signify a general embracement of philosophy; while the hostility begins to diminish, the confusion as to the benefit of any such discourse still prevails. Only when the comic poet finds a use for the philosophers’ trade – namely discussions on the nature of Eros – is the whip spared and softening attitudes evolve into acceptance. Yet the rancour of Old Comedy still survives, but is reserved almost exclusively for the Pythagorean, as his privacy and peculiar lifestyle generates the same charge of *alazoneia* that his comic ancestors were charged with in the 5th century. Such introversion - and absence from society in favour of leading what was perceived as such a squalid lifestyle - in the face of the boisterousness of comedy leads to him being implicated as a real-life enemy of the comic enterprise.

Although the reception of philosophy in Attic Comedy has gained scholarly attention for what it can reveal regarding contemporary opinions of the philosopher and his teaching, the vast majority of such scholarship confines itself to the study of the conflated philosopher of Old Comedy. Much less is the attention given to similar

[750] *Prot.* 316c-d – Trans. Lombardo and Bell.
[751] Cf. *Tht.* 157c-d; *Ap.* 21b-d; *Symp.* 221b.

studies in Middle Comedy – indeed, the fragmentary state of the genre can serve as a deterrent in attempting an assessment of the reception of philosophical discourse and practise in the period. The fragments, however, show philosophical parody was alive more than ever, but our inability to construct a concrete plotline for the majority of these plays, and in some cases to even identify the fragment's speaker or context, have caused a general disinclination towards examining this subject with the rigour to which we subject Old Comedy. The lack of extensive scholarship is unfortunate; while the work on Old Comedy is warranted by what it reveals regarding the public opinion of the greats of the 5th Century, little heed has been paid to the next generation - the 'golden age' of philosophy. It is within this period that modern luminaries such as Plato and Aristotle are active, but there has been little discussion as to how such figures, who are held with such high regard in modernity, were actually received by the general public in their own time. Indeed, it is references to Plato, the Academy and the Pythagoreans that are by far the most prevalent. There are twenty or so surviving references to Plato – making him the most singled out philosopher in the fragments.[752] This chapter will base its investigation accordingly: the fragments concerning Plato can roughly be divided into two categories – those which refer to his or the Academy's ideas and teachings, and those which comment on the appearance or demeanour of Plato and the Academician – and so will be discussed in this order before concluding with the rather contrary portrayal of the Pythagorean in the fragments.

7.b) – The ideas of Plato and the Academy in the fragments of Middle Comedy.

We may start then with a rather amusing passage from Epicrates (fr. 10), in which a traveller, presumably returning from Athens, relates tales of his journey to a companion:

α. τί Πλάτων
καὶ Σπεύσιππος καὶ Μενέδημος;
πρὸς τίσι νυνὶ διατρίβουσιν;
ποία φροντίς, ποῖος δὲ λόγος
διερευνᾶται παρὰ τούτοισιν; 5
τάδε μοι πινυτῶς, εἴ τι κατειδὼς
ἥκεις, λέξον, πρὸς Γᾶς ...

[752] We should, however, be cautious in taking Plato's ubiquity in the fragments as an indicator of his dominance or popularity in the philosophical scene of the 4th century. When working with a fragmentary area such as Middle Comedy, it must always be kept in mind that less than ten percent of the complete genre survives, and, more importantly, the fragments we have were specifically selected by later anthologists for inclusion in their works. Thus, the majority of the fragments concerning Plato are preserved in either Diogenes Laertius or Athenaeus, both of whom are writing in the 3rd century C.E – almost 600 years after the plays were produced. The prevalence of anecdotes concerning Plato then, may simply be due to his lasting popularity into the 3rd Century C.E, and the availability of material relating to him facilitated by this.

β. ἀλλ᾽ οἶδα λέγειν περὶ τῶνδε σαφῶς:
Παναθηναίοις γὰρ ἰδὼν ἀγέλην
μειρακίων ... 10
ἐν γυμνασίοις Ἀκαδημείας
ἤκουσα λόγων ἀφάτων, ἀτόπων,
περὶ γὰρ φύσεως ἀφοριζόμενοι
διεχώριζον ζῴων τε βίον
δένδρων τε φύσιν λαχάνων τε γένη. 15
κᾆτ᾽ ἐν τούτοις τὴν κολοκύντην
ἐξήταζον τίνος ἐστὶ γένους.
α. καὶ τί ποτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὡρίσαντο καί τίνος γένους
εἶναι τὸ φυτόν; δήλωσον, εἰ κάτοισθά τι.
β. πρώτιστα μὲν οὖν πάντες ἄναυδοι 20
τότ᾽ ἐπέστησαν καὶ κύψαντες
χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον διεφρόντιζον.
κᾆτ᾽ ἐξαίφνης, ἔτι κυπτόντων
καὶ ζητούντων τῶν μειρακίων,
λάχανόν τις ἔφη στρογγύλον εἶναι, 25
ποίαν δ᾽ ἄλλος, δένδρον δ᾽ ἕτερος,
ταῦτα δ᾽ ἀκούων ἰατρός τις
Σικελᾶς ἀπὸ γᾶς
κατέπαρδ᾽ αὐτῶν ὡς ληρούντων.
α. ἦ που δεινῶς ὠργίσθησαν χλευάζεσθαὶ τ᾽ ἐβόησαν; 30
τὸ γὰρ ἐν λέσχαις ταῖσδε τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν ἀπρεπές ...
β. οὐδ᾽ ἐμέλησεν τοῖς μειρακίοις.
ὁ Πλάτων δὲ παρὼν καὶ μάλα πρᾴως,
οὐδὲν ὀρινθείς, ἐπέταξ᾽ αὐτοῖς
πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὴν κολοκύντην 35
ἀφορίζεσθαι τίνος ἐστὶ γένους,
οἱ δὲ διῄρουν.[753]

It should first be highlighted that this passage is exemplary in showing how the Middle Comedians were free to employ the staple motifs of Old Comedy as they felt; for although dating to around the mid-4th century,[754] elements typical of Aristophanes still prevail - the group of students stooped over (κύψαντες) earnestly studying the ground reminds us of the pupils of the *Phrontisterion* at *Clouds* 191-92, although the undertones of pederasty insinuated by the *Clouds* scene are notably absent here.[755] While Aristophanes has Socrates' pupils do so in an effort to postulate the goings on beneath the Earth, Epicrates has Plato's students ponder trivial definitions.[756] The butt

[753] For an interesting, although speculative, case that Plato in turn parodies this fragment in the *Theaetetus,* see Lee (1973).
[754] Plato is depicted as alive and well, so we must date the passage to before 348/7 (cf. Nails, 2002: 248). The Menedemus mentioned cannot be Menedemus of Eretria, who was born in 345/4 (cf. Dorandi, 1999: 52), and thus could not logically be depicted as partaking in discussion with a living Plato and Speusippus (d. 339/338; cf. Dorandi 1999:50). Epicrates himself flourished between 376-348 (cf. Meinecke on the fragment).
[755] Cf. pp. 133-134 above.
[756] Also present in *Clouds*; cf. 659ff.

of each joke, however, remains the same – this being the inanity of spending so much time researching such apparently irrelevant matters, while also having the audacity to maintain such a smug demeanour in doing so. Indeed, Plato's solemnity and undeterred devotion juxtaposed with the behaviour of the Sicilian doctor could initially perhaps be read as a nod to Plato's commitment to his cause in the face of such buffoonery. One must remember, however, that this is comedy, and comedy (both Old and Middle) lambasts such time wasted pondering such trivial matters.[757] Olson, then, rightly argues that "the real point of the passage as a whole is that a loud and well-aimed fart is exactly the right response to the ridiculous deliberations that go on in Plato's school."[758] There is little evidence for the Academy engaging with natural history;[759] this may be due to the non-survival of evidence suggesting so, or again simply the influence of Old Comedy's tendency to confound the thoughts of various philosophical schools – similar to what we will see in Aristophon fr. 8.[760] We must not, however, let this hinder us in considering how this fragment also takes influence from newer trends, and the insight it allows to contemporary practise which is not afforded to us elsewhere; for example, the passage strongly suggests that the Academicians held discussions out in the open in full view of the lay community[761] and not behind closed doors, unlike what we see in Old Comedy.[762]This open setting does not generate the same secrecy as something like the mysterious *Phrontisterion*, and thus deviates from the elements of suspicion found in Old Comedy.[763]

It is such outdoor activity that may explain how the lay person could have become acquainted with the Platonic terminology and vocabulary which Epicrates uses in the passage; e.g. διερευνᾶται – 'is examined, investigated' (*Phd.* 78a5, *Tht.* 168e6), ἀφορίζεσθαι, – 'as they were drawing distinctions, offering definitions' (e.g. *Chrm*

[757] Aris. *Nu.* 146ff; Alex. fr. 147.
[758] Olson (2007: 242).
[759] Although, it was, at least at one stage apparently, of interest to Socrates, cf. *Phd* 96a-d.
[760] Cf. p. 175 below.
[761] Ie. ἐν γυμνασίοις Ἀκαδημείας; ἐν λέσχαις ταῖσδε. Cf. Dillon (2002: 14).
[762] Eup. fr. 157; Ar. *Clouds* 130ff.
[763] That Plato held discussions out in the open is also suggested by an anecdote in Aelian on the dissension between Plato and Aristotle (*VH*. 3.19) in which Plato - feeling injuriously done by by Aristotle - retired from his *walk outside* (ἀποστὰς ὁ Πλάτων τοῦ ἔξω περιπάτου), and returned to his private quarters. Xenocrates then arrived and enquired as to Plato's whereabouts, fearing he may be sick. He was told that the offended Plato was now philosophising in private. Now, while Dillon is certainly right in labelling the story as "gossipy, biased and tendentious" he also sees "no reason to disbelieve at least the essential accuracy" (2002:3-4). The fact that Xenocrates came *expecting* to find Plato holding court in public, and his *bemusement* that he wasn't, so much so that he feared Plato had been taken ill, strongly suggests that Plato normally held discussions in the open air, and it is this habit Aelian focusses on to lend controversy to his story – that Plato was *so* offended by Aristotle that he resorted to forgoing his usual practise, choosing instead to philosophize in private.

173e9), ἀγέλην – 'herd', used a number of times by Plato for a group of people (*Plt.* 275a1, 276c8, *Leg.*794a8), which leads Dillon to comment:[764]

> Comedy this may be, but it can also be seen as a valuable glimpse of real life by an eye‐witness…He is also acquainted with the technical terminology (*aphorizein, genos, diairein*). What he portrays the students as doing is trying to fix on a starting‐point for a 'division', or *diairesis*, which would lead to a properly scientific definition, identifying all the differentiae of the particular species within a given genus to which the pumpkin belongs—and thus the suggestions 'grass', 'tree', while comical enough, are not entirely crazy, despite the strictures of the Sicilian doctor. In short, it is not unreasonable to credit Epicrates with knowing something of what he is portraying, and expecting his audience to have similar knowledge….The chief message we may derive from [the fragment] is that the proceedings of the school were conducted in the public domain, where, in principle at least, they may be observed by passers-by.

Since we can ascribe this fragment to at least some years before the early 340's with reasonable confidence,[765] we may tentatively say that by the mid-350's, if not indeed earlier, we appear to have a general public familiar enough with Platonic doctrine to recognise and understand not only a parody of the Academy's activities, but also the satirical use of certain Platonic terminology in such a burlesque.

Does such, familiarity, then, permeate the fragments elsewhere, or is Epicrates merely a red herring in a sea of indifference? Several other fragments do in fact indicate this apparent accessibility of Plato's thought; rather than taking the form of a scene or passage as we have seen with Epicrates, however, these more commonly appear to come in the shape of a throwaway line – which by its definition does not require much reflection on for the humour to become apparent. We may recall the following exchange – discussed in Chapter 5.e.[766] – badinaging Plato's theory of the soul by Alexis in his *Olympiodoros* (fr. 163), which dates to the mid-4th Century:[767]

> α.σῶμα μὲν ὁμοῦ τὸ θνητὸν αὗον ἐγένετο,
> τὸ δ᾽ ἀθάνατον ἐξῇξε πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα
> β.ταῦτ᾽ οὐ σχολὴ Πλάτωνος;

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[764] Dillon (2002: 8, 4).
[765] Cf. n. 566 above.
[766] Cf. p. 139.
[767] Edmonds (1959: 645) dates this fragment to 341. I find myself inclined to place it slightly earlier - mainly as it appears to refer to Plato as still living. Alexis was born c375, winning his first victory in the 350's, so in any case it would date to quite early in his career.

While the idea of one's soul flying away upon death has roots as far back as Homer and was also developed by the pre-Socratics,[768] and though Plato dismisses these folk beliefs in the *Phaedo*[769] it is not difficult to imagine his own view on the soul's immortality and liberation from the body at death[770] being confounded with them by a lay person, especially when expressed as memorably as in the myth of the heavenly charioteer in the *Phaedrus*.[771] While Arnott questions if Alexis himself knew or understood the difference between Plato's real views and those attributed to him in the fragment,[772] this should not be of great concern as the fragment suggests that while the audience were in no way experts of Platonic philosophy – which could hardly be expected of any audience – they were still sufficiently conversant with current topics of the Academy, such as the immortality of the soul, to recognise the connection in mere one-liners such as this. This familiarity, however, again comes with a sense of bafflement; the younger Cratinus (fr. 10), in a similar one-liner ascribed to the early 340's,[773] has a speaker express his confusion at Plato's theory of the soul:

α.ἄνθρωπος εἶ δηλονότι καὶ ψυχὴν ἔχεις
β. κατὰ τὸν Πλάτων᾽ οὐκ οἶδα , ὑπονοῶ δ᾽ ἔχειν.

While this fragment initially intrigues due to its apparent reference to Plato's theory of the soul, there may be something even more tantalizing at play in the words spoken by the second speaker – "With Plato, I don't know, but I suspect so". The speaker can't be alluding to a Platonic doctrine of the soul which made him doubt he possesses one and saying that this is what is making him unsure – as this would imply Plato preached the non-existence of the soul. Is he then just merely expressing his confusion at the loftiness of Plato's discourse, or does "κατὰ τὸν Πλάτων᾽ *οὐκ οἶδα*" hint at a rather clever play on words alluding to Plato's view of knowledge? And if this is the case, to which particular *aspect* of the view? When told he has a soul, the speaker expresses his doubt in relation to Plato; since it was generally known that Plato believed in the soul – as

[768] Cf. pp. 139-140.
[769] *Phaed.* 77d-e
[770] *Phaedr*. 245c; *Phd* 64c.
[771] *Phaed*r. 246b.
[772] 1996: 477-8.The vast amount of philosophical material in his surviving fragments, especially frr.20, 234 and 235, strongly suggests Alexis was certainly philosophically *au fait*. His lack of exactness and generalisation is to cater for an audience familiar with but not experts in the subject.
[773] Edmonds (1959: 644). Dating the younger Cratinus is a rather tricky endeavour; very little biographical information survives, which is further hampered by the fact that many of his fragments are mistakenly attributed to the elder Cratinus.

shown by Alexis fr. 163 above – it would not make sense that the doubt the speaker expresses is in particular relation to him having a soul, but rather to doubt in general.

Two candidates for a possible source come to mind; the first - and perhaps most obvious – is Socrates' famed disavowal of knowledge – the 'ἓν οἶδα ὅτι οὐδὲν οἶδα' maxim. While it does not appear as succinctly in the dialogues, it is perhaps most robustly outlined, and best remembered, from the *Apology:*[774]

πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν δ᾽ οὖν ἀπιὼν ἐλογιζόμην ὅτι τούτου μὲν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐγὼ σοφώτερός εἰμι: κινδυνεύει μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν οὐδέτερος οὐδὲν καλὸν κἀγαθὸν εἰδέναι, ἀλλ᾽ οὗτος μὲν οἴεταί τι εἰδέναι οὐκ εἰδώς, ἐγὼ δέ, ὥσπερ οὖν οὐκ οἶδα, οὐδὲ οἴομαι· ἔοικα γοῦν τούτου γε σμικρῷ τινι αὐτῷ τούτῳ σοφώτερος εἶναι, ὅτι ἃ μὴ οἶδα οὐδὲ οἴομαι εἰδέναι.

Socrates then, perhaps rather facetiously, claims he only knows one thing – that he knows nothing. Could this assuredness of ignorance be to what Cratinus' character alludes to when he says he *doesn't know*? The second possibility is the more general view that emerges in the middle dialogues, in which Plato proposes that only the Forms can be truly known, with the physical world being governed by reflections of the Forms or *doxa.* Thus, when the speaker says that according to Plato he doesn't know, he may imply his supposed doubts about the legitimacy of knowledge in the purely physical world. This, however, would require a level not just of familiarity with, but *knowledge* of – if not even expertise in – Platonic doctrine by the audience to recognise such an allusion. For Plato outlines this rather complex theory over several different dialogues,[775] and so for an audience to relate Cratinus' quip to the Forms, we would have to expect them to have extensively read many of the dialogues, including, to name but a few, the *Republic,* the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist* - a degree of virtuosity which we could hardly assume of a lay audience. Indeed, even undergraduate philosophy students still have trouble initially comprehending the Forms, and so although it is perfectly plausible that Plato may have discussed the theory in public, one may say that this would still not be sufficient to instil the fairly solid idea of the Forms in the public mind-set that such a joke would require. More plausible, perhaps, is the former proposal – that we have a jibe at the disavowal of knowledge. Such a maxim is more easily digestible to the non-philosopher, and, moreover, it is not too difficult to see how an adage so easy to regurgitate could take flight in gossip circles – "Oh yes, I've heard

[774] *Ap.* 21d2-8. For a complete account of all the variations of the maxim in the dialogues and a discussion of how literally we must take Socrates' words, cf. Vlastos (1985).
[775] *Phaed*. 73a-80b, 439b-440c; *Rep*. 472a-483a; 500a-520a, 589a-599b; *Phaedr.* 248b-250a; *Parm*. 129a-135c; *Soph.* 246b-248c, 251a-259c; *Tim*. 27b-52a.

of that Plato fellow – isn't he that philosopher that keeps saying he doesn't know anything?!" Indeed, while a misconstrued interpretation of the Forms could ultimately lead to a similar conclusion, it would still require an unlikely amount of deduction from the layman to arrive at such a conclusion in the first place.

With this in mind, however, we must consider the following fragment of Theopompus (fr. 16), which again seems to hint at public awareness of some rather complex Platonic doctrine:

> ἓν γάρ ἐστιν οὐδε ἕν,
> τώ δέ δύο μόλις ἓν ἐστιν, ὥς φησιν Πλάτων.

Edmonds dates the fragment either to c400[776] or c379,[777] but the specific reference to Plato would imply a date a) after Socrates' death and b) after Plato had set up his Academy and become known enough for such a reference to be recognised in a comedy and would so suggest the latter date. Indeed, while the *Suda* labels Theopompus as an Old Comic, and despite the fact that he was victorious in the late 410's,[778] there is no reason to limit his career to the early 390's; the fragment alludes to what can only be Platonic doctrine that has had the time to penetrate the minds of the Athenian populace. The reference here is distinct, and both Edmonds[779] and Olson[780] go as far as specifying *Phaedo* 96e6-7b7 as the source:

πόρρω που, ἔφη, νὴ Δία ἐμὲ εἶναι τοῦ οἴεσθαι περὶ τούτων του τὴν αἰτίαν εἰδέναι, ὅς γε οὐκ ἀποδέχομαι ἐμαυτοῦ οὐδὲ ὡς ἐπειδὰν ἑνί τις προσθῇ ἕν, ἢ τὸ ἓν ᾧ προσετέθη δύο γέγονεν, ἢ τὸ προστεθέν, ἢ τὸ προστεθὲν καὶ ᾧ προσετέθη διὰ τὴν πρόσθεσιν τοῦ ἑτέρου τῷ ἑτέρῳ δύο ἐγένετο· θαυμάζω γὰρ εἰ ὅτε μὲν ἑκάτερον αὐτῶν χωρὶς ἀλλήλων ἦν, ἓν ἄρα ἑκάτερον ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἤστην τότε δύο, ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐπλησίασαν ἀλλήλοις, αὕτη ἄρα αἰτία αὐτοῖς ἐγένετο τοῦ δύο γενέσθαι, ἡ σύνοδος τοῦ πλησίον ἀλλήλων τεθῆναι. οὐδέ γε ὡς ἐάν τις ἓν διασχίσῃ, δύναμαι ἔτι πείθεσθαι ὡς αὕτη αὖ αἰτία γέγονεν, ἡ σχίσις, τοῦ δύο γεγονέναι: ἐναντία γὰρ γίγνεται ἢ τότε αἰτία τοῦ δύο γίγνεσθαι. τότε μὲν γὰρ ὅτι συνήγετο πλησίον ἀλλήλων καὶ προσετίθετο ἕτερον ἑτέρῳ, νῦν δ᾽ ὅτι ἀπάγεται καὶ χωρίζεται ἕτερον ἀφ᾽ ἑτέρου. οὐδέ γε δι᾽ ὅτι ἓν γίγνεται ὡς ἐπίσταμαι, ἔτι πείθω ἐμαυτόν, οὐδ᾽ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἑνὶ λόγῳ δι᾽ ὅτι γίγνεται ἢ ἀπόλλυται ἢ ἔστι, κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον τῆς μεθόδου, ἀλλά τιν᾽ ἄλλον τρόπον αὐτὸς εἰκῇ φύρω, τοῦτον δὲ οὐδαμῇ προσίεμαι.

While the touching points between the two passages are quite apparent, the niggling problem here is that both Edmonds and Olson allude to a specific passage, which in turn

[776] 1959: 640.
[777] 1957: 852nb.
[778] IG ii 2325. 68
[779] 1957: 855.
[780] 2007: 447 comm. on F8.

once again assumes that the audience have read the *Phaedo* so closely that they can be expected to instantly recall this specific passage with the mere mention of Plato believing that one is two and two is one. While this is what may first spring to Olson's mind, we must remember that Olson is a professor of Classics, something the average person in 4th century Athens certainly wasn't. His highlighting the similarities between the Theopompus fragment and the *Phaedo* passage is certainly commendable and demonstrative of his expertise in the field, but this expertise, by definition, is unique, and cannot be expected of the everyday man at a comedy production.[781]

So from where, then, is Theopompus drawing his material? I would again argue that the source is not specific to one particular dialogue, and may stem from familiarity with general discourse that was known to occur amongst Plato and his companions. At the risk of seeming rather contradictory, here I would label as the source of Theopompus' quip the discussions on monism and pluralism akin to what we find in the *Parmenides* 129c3-d6:

εἰ δ᾽ ἐμὲ ἕν τις ἀποδείξει ὄντα καὶ πολλά, τί θαυμαστόν, λέγων, ὅταν μὲν βούληται πολλὰ ἀποφῆναι, ὡς ἕτερα μὲν τὰ ἐπὶ δεξιά μού ἐστιν, ἕτερα δὲ τὰ ἐπ᾽ ἀριστερά, καὶ ἕτερα μὲν τὰ πρόσθεν, ἕτερα δὲ τὰ ὄπισθεν, καὶ ἄνω καὶ κάτω ὡσαύτως—πλήθους γὰρ οἶμαι μετέχω—ὅταν δὲ ἕν, ἐρεῖ ὡς ἑπτὰ ἡμῶν ὄντων εἷς ἐγώ εἰμι ἄνθρωπος μετέχων καὶ τοῦ ἑνός· ὥστε ἀληθῆ ἀποφαίνει ἀμφότερα. ἐὰν οὖν τις τοιαῦτα ἐπιχειρῇ πολλὰ καὶ ἓν ταὐτὸν ἀποφαίνειν, λίθους καὶ ξύλα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, τὶ φήσομεν αὐτὸν πολλὰ καὶ ἓν ἀποδεικνύναι, οὐ τὸ ἓν πολλὰ οὐδὲ τὰ πολλὰ ἕν, οὐδέ τι θαυμαστὸν λέγειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἅπερ ἂν πάντες ὁμολογοῖμεν·

Or similarly at *Philebus* 14d-e:

σὺ μέν, ὦ Πρώταρχε, εἴρηκας τὰ δεδημευμένα τῶν θαυμαστῶν περὶ τὸ ἓν καὶ πολλά, συγκεχωρημένα δὲ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ὑπὸ πάντων ἤδη μὴ δεῖν τῶν τοιούτων ἅπτεσθαι, παιδαριώδη καὶ ῥᾴδια καὶ σφόδρα τοῖς λόγοις ἐμπόδια ὑπολαμβανόντων γίγνεσθαι, ἐπεὶ μηδὲ τὰ τοιάδε, ὅταν τις ἑκάστου τὰ μέλη τε καὶ ἅμα μέρη διελὼν τῷ λόγῳ, πάντα ταῦτα τὸ ἓν ἐκεῖνο εἶναι διομολογησάμενος, ἐλέγχῃ καταγελῶν ὅτι τέρατα διηνάγκασται φάναι, τό τε ἓν ὡς πολλά ἐστι καὶ ἄπειρα, καὶ τὰ πολλὰ ὡς ἓν μόνον.

Now, as the notion of an audience astute enough to easily grasp such thought, or being familiar enough to recall with ease a passage from such an enigmatic dialogue has already been dismissed, I do not wish to be misconstrued as contradicting myself. My argument *does not* suppose the audience *understood* or *cared* about subjects like pluralism or monism, but that they were familiar with phrases and terminology associated with it – such as we have seen with *diairesis* in Epicrates (fr. 10). Arguments

[781] On the apparent incomprehensibleness of the *Phaedo* to the general public, we may recall Diogenes Laertius (3.37), who cites Favorinus (fr. 52 Mensching) as stating that when Plato read the *Phaedo* for the first time, only Aristotle remained – the rest of the audience departed.

against monism would (at least from a Platonic perspective) have been inseparable from discussions on Zeno and Parmenides, and so it is certainly plausible to imagine that debates on such subjects would be integral to the Academy, as any young student would surely be expected to become proficient in such an area. It is a passing perspective of such discussions, and perhaps lessons, that constitutes the outsider's knowledge of the discussion. It is not that the contemporary Athenian hears Theopompus' joke and thinks "Two is one, and then one isn't two?...Oh yes, I remember – that's how Socrates debunked Zeno in the *Parmenides*!", rather he thinks "Oh yes, that is the sort of clap-trap I always hear Plato and his gang chattering on about". It may simply be the case that the joke is influenced by both of the discussions from the *Parmenides* and the *Phaedo*, which, despite having different subjects, share discourses on unity and plurality – a relatively common theme in the dialogues and one easily recognizable. The point we must find remarkable is that although such discussions were viewed as 'clap-trap', such 'clap-trap' could still be recognised as distinctly 'Platonic clap-trap'.

We see similar attitudes at play again in Amphis (fr.6), where a speaker – most likely a slave[782] – expresses his confusion about Plato's good:

> α.τὸ δ᾽ ἀγαθὸν ὅ τι ποτ᾽ ἐστίν, οὗ σὺ τυγχάνειν μέλλεις διὰ ταύτην, ἧττον οἶδα τοῦτ᾽ ἐγώ, ὦ δέσποτ᾽, ἢ τὸ Πλάτωνος ἀγαθόν. β.πρόσεχε δή.

Although a mere slave, even he is familiar with Plato's Good, but is so confused by it he uses it to epitomise bewilderment. Papachrysostomou[783] reminds us how the fragment once again suggests that, contrary to the dominant modern scholarly consensus that lectures on the Good took place within the walls of the Academy in front of disciples only, there must have been at least one occasion where Plato ventured outside to give a public lecture to warrant such a lasting impression. Papachrysostomou substantiates this with an anecdote of Aristoxenus,[784] telling of those who came to Plato's lecture 'On the Good' expecting a discussion of human good, but left soon after discovering the true content of the 'good' to be deliberated.[785] Gaiser[786] adds that if the lecture was given within the Academy, Plato's pupils would have understood it and not have been as confused to the degree mentioned by Aristoxenus, while Themistius gives the Piraeus as the exact location.[787] The point here is not that everybody left, but that members of the

[782] Due to his addressing the other speaker as ὦ δέσποτε.
[783] 2008: 41.
[784] *Harm.* 30-31,
[785] Cf. Riginos (1976: 124).
[786] 1980: 9.
[787] *Or.* 21.245c-d. Cf. Riginos (1976: 125).

lay community were willing to attend in the first place. The reason they left is even more telling – they expected a lesson which would immediately benefit them in their everyday life, but were apparently bored stiff by the content.

Indeed, the lecture appears to have had quite an impact; Alexis, in his *Milcon* (fr. 98), has a speaker try to apply what he has heard from Plato to the culinary arts:

> ἐγὼ φησιν ... κἂν μὴ παραθῶσι θερμά, τἀγαθὸν Πλάτων
> ἁπανταχοῦ φησ᾽ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι, μανθάνεις;
> τὸ δ᾽ ἡδὺ πάντως ἡδὺ κἀκεῖ κἀνθάδε.

The speaker's argument is that according to Plato, the good is always good and the pleasant always pleasant in all circumstances. Therefore good food will still be good in all its states, hot or cold. The speaker then, appears to follow the older trend of applying the metaphysical (in this case the Form of the Good) to the everyday world; but does this belie something more intriguing? Of all the comic poets Alexis appears to have been best acquainted with contemporary philosophy and his borrowing from contemporary discussions on Eros for his romantic comedies certainly suggests he was quite familiar with dialogues such as the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*,[788] and so it is unlikely he couldn't properly comprehend Plato's good. Initially, the speaker seems to have the basic gist of the immutability of the good, but bungles as he tries to apply it to food. We are, not, however, to laugh at the pretentiousness of the speaker in his misconstruing of the good, but at the perceived impracticality of the philosopher. Alexis here issues a challenge to Plato; in saying that the Good is good everywhere, he does not distort Plato's position; what he does do is to try to apply it to the practical world to see if it holds – surely, if good is always good, then good food will always too be good food – a good cake baked today, by this logic, should still be as good in 5 years time. The resulting paradox exemplifies the absurdity with which philosophy was viewed, and its complete lack of importance in the practical world – the only world of concern to the 4th Century Athenian. The humour then, as Arnott notes, "is in the weakness of the logic that the reference is intended to bolster".[789] Just as Aristophanes lodges a legitimate challenge to the notion of socialist utopianism, so too does Alexis with plausibility of the idea of an immutable Good.[790]

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[788] Cf. 'Eros in the 340's' below.
[789] 1996: 258 comm. on 93.2-3.
[790] Indeed, finding such faults in philosophical dogma seems to be something Alexis has quite the knack for – his similar critiques of Pythagoreanism are discussed below in Chap. 7.e.

The frequency of occasions where Plato's thought is singled out for ridicule suggests a marked departure in the public attitude towards philosophy from the previous era; while Alexis' challenge to Plato suggests that certain audience members were receptive to critiques of such ideology, Platonic philosophy is still presented as a pointless endeavour. A notable change, however, can be detected in the 340's with the emergence of romantic plot-lines, for which the comedians found themselves calling on the philosophers for advice.

7. c) Eros in the 340's:

Certain fragments from the mid to early 4th century reflect a notable increase in comedy's interest in contemporary discourse on the nature of Eros. These 'proto-Menandrian' plays seem to consist of an early form of the plotline typical of New and Roman Comedy: boy meets/desires girl, an obstacle/problem arises preventing boy and girl being together, the boy sets about sets about removing/solving the problem, does so either through his own ingenuity or *deus ex machina,* and so they all live happily ever after. The ancestors of such a plotline emerged in the 340's – or so is suggested by certain fragments – in which a character eulogizes the nature of Eros. These fragments may come from the opening scenes of the play as the protagonist describes his desperate romantic predicament.

Although surviving contemporary discussions on the nature of Eros are limited,[791] the fragments affirm it was a popular topic among the philosophical and lay communities alike,[792] and so one should be cautious in supposing Plato to be the sole influence on such allusions in comedy. One such example is the laborious life of the lover outlined by the speaker of Alexis' *Traumatias* (fr. 236), roughly datable to 345-20:[793]

> οὐχί φησι τοὺς ἐρῶντας ζῆν πόνοις;
> οὓς δεῖ γε πρῶτον μὲν στρατευτικωτάτους
> εἶναι πονεῖν τε δυναμένους τοῖς σώμασιν
> μάλιστα προσεδρεύειν τ᾽ ἀρίστους τῷ πόθῳ,
> ποιητικούς, ἰταμούς, προθύμους, εὐπόρους
> ἐν τοῖς ἀπόροις, βλέποντας ἀθλιωτάτους.

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[791] Cf. Plat. *Phaedr, Symp*; Xen. *Symp*, *Cyr.* 5.1; Dem. 61.
[792] Eryximachus at *Symp*. 177a-c, however, implies the subject as being unpopular with authors and poets. The dialogue, however, would suggest otherwise; we must remember that Plato himself is writing about it.
[793] Webster (1953: 22).

Webster[794] likens the experience of the speaker to the harsh life endured by Eros outlined in the *Symposium*,[795] but unlike Alexis fr. 245 (discussed below) where the allusion is more specific, the link here is rather tenuous – primarily based on the fact that both instances describe a hard life for Love and the lover. If the work of one or more philosophers *is* actually influencing the poet, it is just as plausible to assume another non-surviving or obscure work with the same basis as Plato is the source here; for as Alexis tells us in his *Apokoptomenos* (fr. 20), Eros was a hot topic among sophists:

> λέγεται γὰρ λόγος
> ὑπὸ τῶν σοφιστῶν[796] μὴ πέτεσθαι τὸν θεὸν
> τὸν Ἔρωτα, τοὺς δ᾿ ἐρῶντας· αἰτίαν δ᾿ ἔχειν
> ἐκεῖνον ἄλλως, ἠγνοηκότας τοὺς
> γραφεῖς ἔχοντα πτέρυγας αὐτὸν ζωγραφεῖν.

While the depiction of the winged lover bears similarity to the comparison between the erotic sensation and flight in the *Phaedrus,*[797] we must take note here that Alexis acknowledges this as the *general consensus* among the sophists (1-2), and so apparently not uniquely Platonic. It is also implicit here that he may be generalizing, as it seems unlikely that all schools agreed absolutely; rather they probably differed slightly in their interpretation, and Alexis summarizes the general opinion for the sake of brevity. More important, however, is that the fragment actually *supports* the philosopher's art, citing him as a better authority on Eros than the painter. This criticism of art is certainly curious, and appears again in fr. 245, a fragment which perhaps best exemplifies the new found interest in erotic discourse, and is aptly entitled *Phaidros*:[798]

> πορευομένῳ δ᾿ ἐκ Πειραιῶς ὑπὸ τῶν κακῶν
> καὶ τῆς ἀπορίας φιλοσοφεῖν ἐπῆλθέ μοι.
> καί μοι δοκοῦσιν ἀγνοεῖν οἱ ζωγράφοι

[794] 1953: 54.
[795] 203c-d.
[796] Here I use the translation 'sophists' rather than the broader 'experts' or 'pundits'. My reasoning for this is that the 'expert' here is one which should loosely be defined as a 'philosopher'. We are told it is not the artists who are the 'sophists' in the fragment, so they are not the 'experts'. Antiphanes (fr. 120:3-4) certainly uses the term in relation to philosophers when he speaks of 'hungry sophists' in the Lyceum'. In the case of poets or tragedians there still seems to be a distinction; Machon, for example, has a character address Euripides with the more specific "ὦ ποιητά μοι…" (402 Gow = Ath. X.III 582c), which implies a perceived division between the arts. For this case, it is my inclination to suggest it is only the above groups that might be putting forward serious intellectual discourses on love who might be classed as 'experts' in the subject, and since it is neither the poets or the artists, it is reasonable to assume the term refers to the philosopher-sophist.
[797] 251-256.
[798] Roughly ascribable to the late 340's onwards. cf Arnott (1996: 692).

τὸν Ἔρωτα, συντομώτατον δ᾽ εἰπεῖν, ὅσοι
τοῦ δαίμονος τούτου ποιοῦσιν εἰκόνας, 5
ἐστὶν γὰρ οὔτε θῆλυς οὔτ᾽ ἄρσην, πάλιν
οὔτε θεὸς οὔτ᾽ ἄνθρωπος, οὔτ᾽ ἀβέλτερος
οὔτ᾽ αὖθις ἔμφρων, ἀλλὰ συνενηνεγμένος
πανταχόθεν, ἑνὶ τύπῳ τε πόλλ᾽ εἴδη φέρων,
ἡ τόλμα μὲν γὰρ ἀνδρός, ἡ <δὲ> δειλία 10
γυναικός, ἡ δ᾽ ἄνοια μανίας, ὁ δὲ λόγος
φρονοῦντος, ἡ σφοδρότης δὲ θηρός, ὁ δὲ πόνος
ἀδάμαντος, ἡ φιλοτιμία δὲ δαίμονος.
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐγώ, μὰ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν καὶ θεούς,
οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅ τι ἐστίν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἔχει γέ τι 15
τοιοῦτον, ἐγγὺς τ᾽ εἰμὶ τοῦ νοήματος.

Analysis of this fragment reveals a level of engagement with apparently Platonic discourse like nothing we have previously seen. Spengel[799] was the first to observe the striking similarities between the speaker's concept of the opposing natures of Eros (6-8) and part of Diotima's account of Eros as:

οὔτε ὡς ἀθάνατος πέφυκεν οὔτε ὡς θνητός, ἀλλὰ τοτὲ μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας θάλλει τε καὶ ζῇ, ὅταν εὐπορήσῃ, τοτὲ δὲ ἀποθνῄσκει, πάλιν δὲ ἀναβιώσκεται διὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς φύσιν, τὸ δὲποριζόμενον ἀεὶ ὑπεκρεῖ, ὥστε οὔτε Ἔρως ποτὲ οὔτε πλουτεῖ, σοφίας τε αὖ καὶ ἀμαθίας ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν.[800]

While this concept of love as an amalgamation of opposing forces may reflect a general philosophical trend rather than something distinctly Platonic, it is worth noting other comparisons between the fragment and the speeches of the *Symposium*: the speaker proposes that love is neither male nor female (6), which is curiously the same point that Aristophanes bases his speech on,[801] while both the Speaker and the Phaedrus of the *Symposium* praise the φιλοτιμία of Eros.[802] Bergk [803] suggests that due to the historical Phaedrus' position as the first speaker in the *Symposium*, and as an aspiring love essayist in his eponymous dialogue, perhaps he is the speaker of the passage,[804]and his opening laments refer to the confiscation of his property in 415.[805] Meineke[806] opposes this on two grounds; a) the cause of lamentation seems to be romance rather than politics, and b) the historical Phaedrus would not have been fresh enough in the mind of

799 1828: 125.
800 *Symp* 203d-e.
801 *Symp* 189c*ff.*
802 *Symp*. 178d.
803 1835: 132.
804 As does Webster (1953:54).
805 *IG* i. 4.22.229*ff*,; Lysias 19. 15; Andocides 1.15.
806 1839-57: 1.381*ff.*

the public to feature him in a comedy. Meineke's assertion that the character's woes are to do with his love life rather than his political life is certainly plausible – due to the similarities between the passage and New Comedy about to be discussed – but his assumption that the events of Phaedrus' life would not be fresh in the public mind is flawed: Arnott[807] points out that this ignores the fact that Plato's *Phaedrus* was probably published much more recently and if it was this Phaedrus being depicted, the audience would have had their memory "refreshed by the publication". Meineke and Arnott, however, both overlook the fact that depicting figures from a past generation was frequently done by authors of this period – including Antisthenes,[808] Xenophon and Plato himself. In doing so, the writer presumably assumes his readership will be familiar with the characters he is portraying. Moreover, Arnott's proposal that the recently published *Phaedrus* would renew familiarity comes with the implication that for this to be true the dialogue would have had to have been read by the vast majority, if not all, of the audience to grasp the plot of the play – which would suppose an implausibly drastic, and recent, change in the general popularity of the dialogues which would have led to Plato exploding into the mainstream.[809]

This, of course, is improbable. Rather, one finds themselves looking ahead to New Comedy, and wondering again if here we find a precursor. The opening reference to the journey from the Piraeus is akin to many entry monologues characteristic of New Comedy,[810] while the speaker's musings on Eros lead one to agree with Breitenbach[811] that he has been unlucky in love, and this love affair will play a major role in the story of the play. It has been discussed how plots revolving around a love-struck young man attempting to win his beloved form the basis of the standard plot of New Comedy, and one cannot help but question that if the *Phaidros* followed a similar plotline, this would explain the reception given to philosophical discourse on Eros in the fragment. The passage is once again distinctive for being in no way critical of the philosopher – if anything it is a criticism of art, using philosophical points to bolster the argument implying that it is the philosopher who truly knows about Eros.

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[807] 1996: 693.
[808] Cf. Ath. 220c-e.
[809] The name Phaedrus may also have become synonymous with a love-struck or carousing young man, just as Romeo has in modernity, perhaps in part due to his presence in the dialogues, or even a previous comedy. Terence features such a character called Phaedrus in his *Andria.*
[810] Plautus *Amph.* 153ff, *Capt*. 768ff, *Merc* 111ff, *Most*.348ff *Stich*. 274ff; Terence *Eun*. 292ff.
[811] 1908: 90-94.

Here we should consider Amphis fr. 15, in which a speaker states he does not believe that when someone has a lover who is in the prime of his youth they can prize his character over his appearance and be truly moderate. The speaker concludes by saying he believes this as much as he does that when a poor man is helpful to the wealthy, he does so out of goodness and seeks nothing in return. Papachrysostomou[812] draws similarities to certain passages of Plato which hold character values higher than beauty[813] along with a link between love and poverty,[814] and suggests this fragment responds critically to such assumptions. Indeed, this is attractive, especially considering the trend of Middle Comedy to scrutinize philosophical theory under the harsh logistics of reality, and its general championing of hedonism over restraint. There may, however, be an alternative considering what has been proposed above – while the speaker may be responding to Plato, he may not be doing so *directly*, but perhaps to another character, a love-struck youth who has just espoused such doctrine. His embitterment and distrust, both in the possibility of blind love and human generosity would then be typical of the *dyskolos* of New Comedy.[815]

The speeches of the *Symposium* could be viewed as 'nonsensical' or as 'useless' like the rest of Plato's teaching, but there is an inherent difference in them; not only do they praise love – something everybody can relate to – but do it so imaginatively that it serves as a lesson to the story-teller. The dialogue is among the most light-hearted of the corpus, and leaves the reader with a sense of sanguinity, both of which are goals of the writer of a romantic comedy. The same can be said for the *Phaedrus*, with its tranquil but playful opening and the memorable anecdote of the winged charioteer. This leads one to propose that the poet has 'borrowed' contemporary philosophical material to give greater depth to his characters' emotions; if some of the audience recognised the allusions, good for them, while if some mistook them as the poet's own creativity or attempt to mimic a current philosophical trend, then all the better for his own credibility as a poet.

The fact that no character quotes directly from Plato, or a contemporary, in the surviving Middle Comedy suggests philosophy was not highly read – certainly not to the degree of familiarity of something like tragedy, which was abundantly quoted and

[812] 2008: 64.
[813] Cf. *Symp*. 182d, 183d; *Leg* 837b-c.
[814] Cf. *Symp*.203c-d.
[815]Cf. Men. *Dysk.* 481,etc.

parodied by the Old Comedians. As Papachrysostomou notes,[816] however, the frequency of allusions to Plato's Good and theory of the soul, and contemporary ideas on Eros imply that such jibes found appeal and response from an audience acquainted with Platonic theory, even if in a popularized form. Moreover, the diverging trend from Old Comedy is devoid of the subversive ideologies we find in its predecessor, most likely owing to the prominence of the Academy in everyday Athens. This prominent 'presence' is further suggested by the amount of fragments which make direct reference to the demeanour and appearance of either Plato himself or the Academicians in general. Important here is that the spectator need not actually engage with philosophical doctrine itself, but how they associate the very appearance of a philosopher with a distinct school. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Plato is presented as a vain dullard; more curious, however, is the image of the assiduously clean Academician with an audacious fashion sense which is frequently referred to by poets.

7. d) The Character of Plato and the Academy in the Fragments of Middle Comedy.

When addressing comedy in the *Laws*, Plato distinguishes two different types of lampoon - those of the jovial type made in good fun and those which 'do so with passion and in earnest'.[817] Chapters 5 & 6 have how discussed Plato's harsh critique of the comics in the *Republic* and the *Theaetetus* may respond to previous comic depictions of certain ideas discussed in each dialogue, but are these comic poets also the target of the complaint in *Laws*? If this is the case Plato may himself be accused of being overdramatic – *Laws* is assumed to be his last dialogue, which would imply Plato still carried a grudge against poets long dead. This conclusion, however, assumes that the Old Comedies were no longer in production in the 4th century, the validity of which is sufficiently contested in the Appendix to this thesis. So while Plato's apparent vendetta against the poets of Old Comedy could have lasted until his final years, we must also consider whether attacks on Plato himself from contemporary poets may have influenced his lasting opinion on comedy, and so must examine whether the fragments of 4th century comedy reveal a negative stereotype of Plato himself as the older comedies did Socrates.

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[816] 2008: Introduction to Amphis fr. 15.
[817] *Laws* 936a1-5.

An examination of the fragments, then, suggests that if Plato's embitterment is personal it may seem rather exaggerated, for his character is not attacked in Middle Comedy with the 'passion and earnest' described in the *Laws,* as the surviving lampoons in the fragments are notably less severe.[818] This section aims to evince this with an examination of how the character of Plato himself and the Academicians was received in the period. We shall see that while possessing qualities of the ἀλαζών, Plato gets off much more lightly than the philosopher of Old Comedy; while depicted as vain, dull and full of hot air, he is essentially harmless and in no way as socially destructive as Aristophanes' Socrates or the sophists of Eupolis' *Kolakes.* The Academician receives a similar treatment, essentially depicted as one who cares more about what people think he knows than what he actually does know. Although paling in comparison with the vehemence of Old Comedy, the Middle Comedians still, however, do lodge allegations that Plato may have been concerned about, as accusations of political aspirations and plagiarism found in certain fragments carry the potential to have done substantial damage to the reputation of the Academy.

Indeed, *personal* attacks directed at Plato himself are quite rare; although such invective was typical of Old Comedy,[819] evidence for the same in Middle Comedy is mainly reserved for the Pythagoreans.[820] From what we can glean from the fragments, Plato's persona was perceived to be akin to that of the introvert wiseacre. One such surviving reference comes from Amphis (fr. 13) who taunts Plato for his sullen demeanour:

> ὦ Πλάτων, ὡς οὐδὲν οἶσθα πλὴν σκυθρωπάζειν μόνον,
> ὥσπερ κοχλίας σεμνῶς ἐπηρκὼς τὰς ὀφρῦς.

The statement takes the form of a direct address to Plato, suggesting he had a speaking part in the play, or at least appeared on stage. As Papachrysostomou notes in her commentary on the fragment, the raising of eyebrows was a sign of haughtiness and sullen mood in antiquity.[821] The accusation of knowing only how to raise his eyebrows may imply that Plato knows nothing else and is nothing beyond his arrogant appearance. It is hard to determine whether this habit of eyebrow raising was considered distinctive of Plato alone, as two fragments of Menander referring to philosophers as "οἳ τάς ὀφρῢς αἴροντες" suggest that this would become a stock characteristic of the

[818] Socrates is not mentioned in the fragments of Middle Comedy.
[819] Cf. Chap. 5.a; Ameipsias fr. 9; Eupolis frr. 386 & 395; Callias fr. 15; Teleclides fr.41.
[820] Cf. Chap. 7.e.
[821] Cf. Ar. *Eq.* 631, *Lys.* 7-8, *Plut.* 756 (all with scholia); Antiphanes fr. 217.

philosopher in New Comedy[822] if it had not already been in the Middle. Such solemnity, however, is also parodied by Epicrates (fr.10) – discussed above at 7.b – in which a Sicilian doctor passes wind on Plato. The failure of Plato or the students to react or respond to this like a normal person would[823] is indicative of a sense of superiority over what could be deemed as 'normal' behaviour. Similarly, Alexis' *Meropis* (fr. 151), has a woman exclaim:

> εἰς καιρὸν ἥκεις: ὡς ἔγωγ᾽ ἀπορουμένη ἄνω κάτω τε περιπατοῦσ᾽
> ὥσπερ Πλάτων σοφὸν οὐδὲν εὕρηκ᾽, ἀλλὰ κοπιῶ τὰ σκέλη.

We again have difficulty, however, in identifying pacing back and forth as a habit seen to be distinctive of Plato and not one of philosophers in general. While no other fragments point to other philosophers doing so, Arnott observes that this is also the only surviving fragment referencing Plato with this habit; [824] Plato also describes it as a custom of Protagoras,[825] and the Peripatetics would earn their name from the same routine. Someone pacing up and down while thinking is not uncommon, and so it is certainly not unlikely that Plato may have done this, but caution should be exercised when considering whether this was thought to have been typical of Plato – the joke has the same substance if the speaker were to say she had been pacing 'back and forth like a philosopher', but this then leads to the question of why Alexis specifically names Plato and not another contemporary as the one who paces back and forth. To this, we must also consider a tradition held by at least the Neo-Platonists which held that Plato walked while lecturing as a form of exercise in order to have a sound body that would not interfere with his energy.[826] More intriguing, perhaps, is the speaker's use of ἀπορέω; the woman, then, has reached a state of ἀπορία in her battle with her mysterious predicament – a term associated with the process of dialectical enquiry Plato attributes to Socrates in what are generally classed as the 'early' or 'aporetic' dialogues.[827] The speaker, then, has found herself in a state of perplexity similar to that which she has seen in Plato or his students, and has been pacing up and down like she has seen Plato

[822] Fr. 39K and 418K.
[823] As indicated by speaker A (19-20).
[824] Arnott (1996: 446 comm. on 1-3).
[825] Plat. *Prot.* 314e4.
[826] Riginos (1976: 126-127) cites Ammonius, Philoponus and Elias amongst others in her detailed discussion of the anecdote.
[827] Ie. the dialogues in which Socrates famously reduces his interlocutors to a state of ἀπορία by forcing them to support contradictory conclusions; perhaps the most memorable instance of this is Socrates's description of the process at *Men*. 84a-c.

also do in a fruitless attempt to solve her dilemma, which leads one to tentatively suggest that pacing back and forth was a habit Plato was known for.[828]

These passages, however, while giving good insight into the comic construction of Plato's demeanour and habits, surrender little information regarding his physical appearance, and for this we must look elsewhere, where certain fragments present the Academician as a scrupulously clean, fashionable individual. The 'decadent' philosopher remains elusive in Old Comedy; while we may be quick to assume that the grubbiness of Aristophanes' Socrates was the standard characteristic of any philosopher of Old Comedy, we must remember that the philosopher chorus of Ameipsias' *Konnos* (fr. 9) chastise Socrates for the same characteristic, implying they were of a slightly more refined persuasion. Facing this we must again consider the *Kolakes* of Eupolis, in which a number of philosophers, such as Protagoras and Chaerephon,[829] are included in the titular chorus of sycophantic flatterers who eventually ransack the house of Callias. With Middle Comedy the philosopher evolves into much more distinct and opposing presentations, mainly portraying two schools – the Academy and the Pythagoreans.[830] The unwashed ascetic stereotype survives and is reserved mainly for the Pythagoreans, although one fragment from Aristophon's *Platon* (fr. 8) seems to draw from the older motifs as a speaker – perhaps Plato himself – exclaims:

α ἐν ἡμέραις τρισὶ
ἰσχνότερον αὐτὸν ἀποφανῶ Φιλιππίδου.β.ποιεῖς
οὕτως ἐν ἡμέραις ὀλίγαις νεκρούς;[831]

Since Plato is the titular character of the play, it seems reasonable to assume that his caricature had an important speaking part in the play. Given the contemporary popularity of plays with titles focussing on novices entering educational institutions,[832] it could be assumed that the play focuses on an unwitting student enrolling in the Academy, with the comedy coming from the debacle that ensues – much akin to what we have in the *Clouds*. 'Plato' here promises to make the student "thinner than Phillipides" within three days, a demeanour which matches the pallor of the students of

[828] In a similar vein, Plato's apparent love of eating figs and olives is also well attested. Cf. Anaxandrides' *Theseus* fr. 21 K-A with Millis (2015) *ad loc*; D.L. *Vit. Diog.*
[829] Chaerephon's pasty and unkempt appearance is also referenced at *Nu*. 105.
[830] This, perhaps, is to generalise slightly; Bato fr. 6, for example refers to the asceticism of an unspecified group of philosophers.
[831] Cf. pp. 60-62 above.
[832] Alexis had a *Pythagorizousa* (frr. 196,197,198), presumably concerning the exploits of a woman attempting to engage with the Pythagoreans, as did the younger Cratinus (fr. 6). Alexis (frr. 219, 220,221, 222,223), Antiphanes (fr. 225) and Cratinus (fr. 7) all had a *Tarantinoi*. Aristophon had a *Pythagorist* (fr. 10).

the *Phrontisterion* who complain of having had no dinner[833] or the starving flatterers of Eupolis' chorus. Here we also have the implicit promise of swift results, something Plato deems typical of sophists such as Euthydemus, Dionysodorus and Protagoras.[834]

This deprived description of the Academician, however, is unique among the surviving fragments, and so its correlation to the actual appearance of the Academician or Plato must be viewed with caution. The remainder of the surviving portrayals depict the Academy as meticulously clean, highly fashionable, and perhaps, rather curiously, driven by political ambition. Antiphanes describes the archetypal Academician in his *Antaeus* (fr.33):

> α. ὦ τάν, κατανοεῖς τίς ποτ᾽ ἐστὶν οὑτοσὶ ὁ γέρων
> β. ἀπὸ τῆς μὲν ὄψεως Ἑλληνικὸς
> λευκὴ χλανίς, φαιὸς χιτωνίσκος καλός,
> πιλίδιον ἁπαλόν, εὔρυθμος βακτηρία,
> βαυκὶς τρυφῶσα-τί μακρὰ δεῖ λέγειν; ὅλως
> αὐτὴν ὁρᾶν γὰρ τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν δοκῶ.

The passage dates to c 360,[835] but Ephippos (fr. 14; discussed overleaf) gives a similar description as early as the 380's. Antiphanes refers to an old man, while Ephippos portrays a youth, suggesting all members dressed in such a dapper manner, and it was not just reserved for the elders or luminaries of the Academy. The fact that two different poets at two different times refer to the Academicians in this manner not only suggests they did in fact maintain such a sleek appearance, but also, according to Antiphanes, that this appearance came to epitomize the Academy over all else, as this sleek appearance is deemed ὅλως αὐτὴν ὁρᾶν γὰρ τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν.[836] Indeed, it is this reputation that Alexis may hint at in a rather ambiguous fragment from the *Ancylion* (fr.1) - datable to the 350's – 347.[837]

> λέγεις περὶ ὧν οὐκ οἶσθα: συγγενοῦ τρέχων
> Πλάτωνι καὶ γνώσῃ λίτρον καὶ κρόμμυον.

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[833] Cf. *Nu*. 175; The student then goes on to nonsensically explain how to remedy their hunger Socrates sprinkled ash over the table, bent a skewer and stole a cloak from the Palaestra (*Nu.* 177-179).
[834] *Euthd*. 273d5-7; *Prot.* 318a4-318b2.
[835] Edmonds (1957: 643).
[836] Interesting, then, is the lack of such reference in Epicrates fr. 10.
[837] Arnott (1996: 10).

The combination of soap and onions is rather obscure; there is no surviving evidence to suggest it may have been a colloquial idiom akin to something like 'chalk and cheese'. The only contemporary expression bearing the slightest resemblance is χύτραν ποικίλλειν[838] –'to decorate small pots/jugs' - which refers to engaging in a pointless activity. While it may be tempting to contemplate the existence of a similar colloquialism that compared an asinine endeavour to washing onions with soap – here used to imply Plato's expertise in such matters – this can only be limited to the realm of speculation. If, however, Alexis is quoting some unknown idiom, then there may be a clever play on words if we consider Arnott's proposal that the connection between soap and Plato is the Academy's association with cleanliness; in his commentary on the line, Arnott is more exact in his interpretation of λίτρον, translating it not as 'soap', but as 'carbonate of soda' (sodium carbonate).[839] While soap has a more general use in the sense that it can be used to wash one's clothes, body, hair, etc, sodium carbonate is more specifically used as a stain remover and whitening aid, and would not be used as soap as it can be hazardous when in direct content with skin. Arnott[840] suggests that the mention of λίτρον is hinting at the fastidious cleanliness that made the Academy so distinguishable, presumably in relation to their more ascetic counterparts. The reference to the onion, however, still remains ambiguous if it is not part of an expression; Arnott[841] makes a rather tenuous connection between this and the vegetarian diet proposed by Plato at *Rep.* II.372a-d; since onions are not mentioned specifically in the dialogue, however, not only does this require the audience to have expert knowledge of the *Republic,* but also requires several stages of deduction on the audience's part to understand the allusion, which is simply not feasible in fast-moving comedy. Moreover, while it could be a restrictive diet that will result in the incumbent student of Plato in Aristophon (fr. 8, discussed above) becoming 'thinner than Phillipides', nowhere else are the Academicians lampooned for a restricted or vegetarian diet, a fate almost uniformly reserved for the Pythagoreans.[842] This would lead one to conjecture that

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[838] Scholia on Aristoph. *Ran*. 186,18.
[839] λίτρον – an older form of νίτρον – is used once by Plato at *Timaeus* 60d8 to describe the saline composite of earth, oil and water. One here struggles to find a link between this and the Alexis fragment – the relation to onions is still vague, and it would also again require the audience to have expert knowledge of the *Timaeus* to recall one particular word from the dialogue.
[840] Arnott (1996: 50)
[841] *Ibid.*
[842] Mnesimachus fr. 1; Antiphanes frr. 133, 158, Aristophon frr. 9, 10; cf. Chap. 7.e.

if λίτρον does refer to the elegance of the Academy, and is not a component of an idiom, perhaps it is being contrasted with the sparseness of the Pythagorean lifestyle, and the 'difference' the character will learn from Plato is exactly this distinction; in frequenting with Plato he will learn the correct way to keep himself clean and presentable – by favouring soap over a life of asceticism.

The fact that the Academicians are portrayed as among the most lavishly dressed in Athens should not surprise when we consider that members were of the Athenian elite; the poorer demographic did not have the time or wealth to spend their days philosophising. Plato himself, despite being only in his twenties at the trial of Socrates, volunteered as part of a triumvirate to put up bail of a rather princely thirty *minae*, indicative of his privileged background.[843] Prospective students of the sophists of the 5th Century paid handsomely,[844]and while Socrates did not directly charge for his instruction, he was still paid in kind by means of being entertained in the houses of the upper echelons of society. All of this implies philosophy was a pursuit of the moneyed class willing to pay for the experience, and there is no reason to suspect a change in the 4th century; the eagerness of the speaker in Aristophon fr. 8 to recruit certainly implies he has something to gain from agreement.

The following passage of Ephippos (fr. 14) affirms the Academician as a well to do young man by depicting him holding court in the assembly. The fashionable image is again highlighted, but the fragment is also remarkable not only for depicting the Academicians as politically ambitious, something Plato eschews in the dialogues,[845] but also for its allegations of plagiarism within the Academy:

ἔπειτ᾽ ἀναστὰς εὔστοχος νεανίας
τῶν ἐξ Ἀκαδημίας τις ὑποπλατωνικὸς
Βρυσωνοθρασυμαχειοληψικερμάτων,
πληγεὶς ἀνάγκῃ ληψιλογομίσθῳ τέχνῃ
συνών τις, οὐκ ἄσκεπτα δυνάμενος λέγειν,
εὖ μὲν μαχαίρᾳ ξύστ᾽ ἔχων τριχώματα,
εὖ δ᾽ ὑποκαθιεὶς ἄτομα πώγωνος βάθη,
εὖ δ᾽ ἐν πεδίλῳ πόδα τιθεὶς ἐπισφύρων
κνήμης ἱμάντων ἰσομέτροις ἑλίγμασιν,
ὄγκῳ τε χλανίδος εὖ τεθωρακισμένος,
σχῆμ᾽ ἀξιόχρεων ἐπικαθεὶς βακτηρίᾳ,

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[843] *Ap.* 38b.
[844] Plat. *Prot.* 310d-e328b, *Hip. Maj.* 281b-c, 282b-e., *Ap.* 20b etc.
[845] *Tht.* 172c-177b; *Euthd.* 304d-306d, *Rep.* 488a-489b, 557b-569c; *Plt.* 296-298c.

ἀλλότριον, οὐκ οἰκεῖον, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ,
ἔλεξεν ἄνδρες τῆς Ἀθηναίων χθονός.

The fragment dates to c380,[846] and is notable in that Ephippos may allude to a perception that the Academy plagiarised its material from rival schools. Using eristic for personal profit was also one of the charges falsely laid against Socrates and his pupils in *Clouds,*[847] so do we merely have a rehash of such a conflation? For this we must look to other contemporary sources in search of similar allegations; indeed Aristoxenus[848]declares that most of the *Republic* can be found in Protagoras' now lost *Antilogika,*[849] Timon is said to have crowned Plato 'the great forger';[850] Theopompus of Chios, in his *Against Plato's School*,[851] claims that not only are the majority of Plato's dialogues full of lies, but most are also actually by other authors. Theopompus lists both Aristippus and Antisthenes as those plagiarised, but, interestingly, he also includes the Megarian Bryson of Heraclea, whom Ephippos also mentions as a candidate for the source of the Academy's teachings. It would seem then that Ephippos' allegation is not without parallels, and that the other association with Thrasymachus – who we know from *Republic I* – aligns with an ancient belief that the Academy appropriated corpora of their rivals, as Aristoxenus suggests it did with Protagoras. While none of this, of course, is concrete evidence that Plato was in fact a plagiarist – the influence of a predecessor could easily have been mistaken for plagiarism – it most certainly suggests there was a definite ancient opinion that perceived him as so, an opinion to which Ephippos plays.[852] This is quite remarkable, as it reveals that by the early 4th century we have an audience relatively in tune with the gossip of or about philosophical circles to a degree where a jab at the Academy's apparent appropriation of others' thought within their own discourse was instantly recognizable.

Although Ephippos' depiction is completely at odds with Plato's own presentation of his doctrine, what Plato says about his school and opponents in the dialogues

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[846] Edmonds (1957: 671).
[847] Webster (1953:52).
[848] Fr. 67.
[849] Protagoras also had a work entitled *Politeia* (D. L. IX. 55), which may have been another possible candidate.
[850] Ath. XI. 505a.
[851] *FGrH* 115 F259.
[852] We should also note that the formulation Βρυσωνοθρασυμαχειοληψικερμάτων is pure Old Comedy (cf. pp. 91-94 above); which may suggest Ephippos is applying Old Comedy's habit of hurling wild accusations at anyone in the philosophical demographic. The elder Cratinos (fr. 342), however, uses a similar phrase - εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων – also to accuse Aristophanes of plagiarism. Ephippos may have been serious in his accusation, but used Cratinos' old technique for added comic value.

should always be approached with caution, as a look beyond the Platonic corpus to other ancient sources again provides a more balanced assessment of Ephippos' accuracy in portraying the Academy as politically ambitious. Indeed there is evidence to suggest the Academicians did not exactly practise what the dialogues preached - Carystius of Pergamum[853] claims Plato took active part in Philip of Macedon initially taking control of his Kingship by sending Euphraeus of Oreus to Perdiccas to convince him to give Philip control of some territory. Many students of the Academy also went on to become notorious for their tyrannical ambitions; Athenaeus[854] reminds us of the fate of Callippus and Dion, both students of Plato,[855] who invaded Syracuse in the 350's.[856] Callippus, seeing Dion seize power, accepted a bribe to assassinate Dion and took power himself, before he too was murdered by his own comrades.[857] Demochares[858] in his speech supporting Sophocles' expulsion of philosophers from Athens in the late 4th century, tells of another Academician, Euaion of Lampsacus,[859] who loaned his native land money and took the acropolis as surety; when the city failed to repay him on time he began to display tyrannical aspirations, until he was finally expelled when his fellow countrymen joined forces and rallied against him. Then there is Chaeron of Pellene, a student of Plato who went on to become a cruel tyrant of his fatherland, not only by driving the best citizens into exile, but then giving the slaves their masters' property and wives.[860] Athenaeus attributes such behaviour to the influence of "the lovely *Republic* and the lawless *Laws",*[861]commenting that not much has changed in the archetypal Academician, who still maintains a prominent facade through illicitly found wealth.

Whether or not the Academy advocated or condoned such underhand activity is unanswerable but improbable; but the evidence for certain students going on to commit political atrocities is hard to overlook. This may well have had nothing to do with Plato's teaching, and more to do with the individual's innate unassuageable greed; but the coincidence of the volume of such individuals coming from an institution that

[853] Fr. 1.
[854]XI. 508e.
[855] Plu. *Dio* 17.1-5, D.L. 3.46.
[856] Cf. Olson (2006-2009: 487 n473).
[857] Plut. *Dio*. 54.
[858] fr. I.1 Baiter-Sauppe.
[859] Cf. D.L. 3. 46.
[860] Dillon (2002: 14).
[861] XI. 509b. Trans. Olson.

openly promotes the need for a complete overhaul of the contemporary system may have stirred rumour amongst the masses. We must also note that the elitist background of the Academy could only encourage the notion that they would naturally be politically ambitious.

Ephippos combines three characteristics – ambition, gentility and unoriginality - to create an image of superficiality disguising lack of substance. The passage is relatively early, and while this depiction of the philosopher as the pretender is nothing new, it is interesting to see how in cases like this the poets have already begun to create different distinct types of pretender by incorporating a well-known feature of the party in question – which in the Academician's case is his fashion sense– and proposing it serves as an arrogant guise to cover his shortcomings as he attempts to promote himself in the Assembly.

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7. e) Asininity and *Alazoneia*: the Pythagorean in the Fragments of Middle Comedy:

The general opinion we may extract from the fragments previously discussed in this chapter is that while philosophy is harmless, it is essentially a pointless endeavour, of which the benefits or purpose cannot be fathomed by the lay-community. The antipathy of Old Comedy, however, does survive but is reserved for the Pythagorean, as his privacy and peculiar lifestyle generates the same type of *alazoneia* as the comic philosopher of the 5th century. Such introversion – and absence from society in favour of leading such a squalid lifestyle – in the face of the boisterousness of comedy leads to him being implicated as an enemy of the comic enterprise; for just as Socrates is in Aristophanes, Eupolis and Ameipsias, the Pythagoreans are universally depicted as unwashed,[862] and as assuming a pretentious front to cover their inadequacies.[863]

Pythagoreans are not mentioned in fifth century comedy, but their ascetic lifestyle and perceived abstention from meat and wine render them objects not only of repeated ridicule, but also of scrutiny in the fourth century. Along with Plato and the Academicians, it is they who feature most prominently in the surviving fragments. Moreover, if we are to look for an incarnation of the philosopher of Old Comedy, it is in depictions of the Pythagoreans that we find the old standard motifs. In contrast with the

[862] Mnesimachus fr. 1; Arstiphon frr. 9, 10, 11; Alexis frr. 196, 201, Cf. Eubulus fr. 139. For Old Comedy see Eupolis frr, 157, 380, 395.

[863] Aristophon fr. 9; Alexis fr. 10.

case of Plato, the majority of Pythagorean parodies reflect a lesser extent of audience familiarity with the school's teaching – most of the fragments attack their more obvious peculiar lifestyle and appearance. References to ideology are notably rare, and can be just as indistinct as the 5th century; Cratinos (fr. 7) apparently looks back to the nondescript pop-Sophistry of *Clouds,*[864] accusing the Pythagoreans of testing their novices' vocabulary by trying to puzzle them with antitheses, digressions, balances and sublimities. Alexis (fr. 223.7-8) is similarly ambiguous when he describes Pythagorean discourse as λόγοι λεπτοὶ διεσμιλευμέναι τε φροντίδες – a charge conveniently applicable to any philosophical school.

The comparative lack of substantial allusion to Pythagorean teaching is understandable, for unlike Plato, who apparently gave public lectures and taught in the open or contemporary sophists who practiced eristic in the Lyceum,[865] the Pythagoreans were vehemently insular - maintaining no public presence beyond the physical to the point of extreme anti-sociability. The Pythagoreans, according to Iamblichus,[866] were forbidden to use public baths to avoid ritual impurity;[867] at Kroton, novices were required to take a five year vow of silence to gain maturity in their speech[868], while it was also advised that they should avoid public roads and not laugh uncontrollably.[869] Although accounts regarding the actual extent of their vegetarianism vary,[870] they certainly obeyed a restrictive diet prohibiting the consumption of at least certain animals and led a reclusive lifestyle which excluded them from attending social events such as symposia, the Assembly[871] and - more importantly – the theatre. This estrangement from the social function of society corresponds with the lack of references to Pythagorean teaching in the fragments; it is not necessarily a disinclination towards or lack of interest in Pythagorean material, but rather the relative inaccessibility of such material to the general public. As opposed to giving open public lectures like Plato, the Pythagoreans limited their discussions to their own detached groups on the fringes of society. Such social detachment makes them prime targets as the outsider of comedy, while their

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[864] 660ff, 1223f.; Cf. Eupolis fr. 386.
[865] Cf. Alexis 25; Antiphanes fr. 122, discussed previously at pp. 35-36.
[866] *Vit. Pyth.* 18.83.
[867] Although this does not necessarily mean they were dirty; there are testimonies to their cleanliness at Diog. Laert 8.19 and Iamblichus *Vit Pyth*. 21.97.
[868] *Ibid* 17.72.
[869] Iamblichus *Protr.* 21, 26, 28; Porphyry *Vit. Pyth* 42.
[870] Gellius *Noct. Att.* 4.11, states Pythagoras ate young goats and pigs; Aris. Fr. 195 says such abstention was limited to certain animals, and certain parts of the animal, fr.194; conversely cf. Porph. *Vit Pyth*71; Strabo 15.1.65.
[871] Due to the ceremonial slaughter of a pig signifying the beginning of proceedings.

privacy raised similar suspicion to that with which the philosopher is met in Old Comedy. This results in the majority of Pythagorean parodies focussing on their peculiar lifestyle and appearance, though the apparent reason or goal for adopting aspects of such a lifestyle is sometimes mentioned, with such instances often explaining the odd behaviour as that of a haughty parasite.[872]

There is sufficient evidence, however, to suggest that there was at least one particular aspect of Pythagorean doctrine that the Athenian lay public were certainly aware of – the apparent reasoning of the Pythagorean in abstaining from meat. Such abstention was tied to the Pythagorean belief in *metempsychosi*s, through which the soul of an animal could reincarnate in human form, and *vice versa.*[873] Pythagorean dietary restrictions thus arose from the fear of eating anything alive or with a soul, and so animals and certain plants must be avoided as they may contain that which has the capacity of *being*; for an animal could have the soul of a departed friend[874] or a soul with the potential to become human. Fascinating it is then that it appears the audience of the mid-4th century were aware of such reasoning; indeed, it was a popular source of comedy – Alexis in his *Attis* (fr. 27) has a character return from market proclaiming:

ὁ πρῶτος εἰπὼν ὅτι σοφιστὴς οὐδὲ εἷς
ἔμψυχον οὐδὲν ἐσθίει σοφός τις ἦν.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἥκω νῦν ἀγοράσας οὐδὲ ἓν
ἔμψυχον· ἰχθῦς ἐπριάμην τεθνηκότας
μεγάλους, κρεᾴδι᾽ ἀρνὸς ἑφθὰ πίονος, 5
οὐ ζῶντος· οὐχ οἷόν τε γάρ. τί ἄλλο; ναί,
ἡπάτιον ὀπτὸν προσέλαβον. τούτων ἐὰν
δείξῃ τις ἢ φωνήν τι ἢ ψυχὴν ἔχον,
ἀδικεῖν ὁμολογῶ καὶ παραβαίνειν τὸν νόμον.
ἐπὶ τούτοις οὖν ἔασον ἡμᾶς δειπνεῖν. 10

That the Pythagorean is labelled as a σοφιστής should not be of our concern[875] – Arnott comments that σοφιστής here is used merely to denote a non-conformist thinker, a ‘wise’ man,[876] while Kock on the fragment notes that this might lead us to assume the contemporary public believed all sophists to be vegetarians.[877] Indeed, the joke seemed

[872] Aristophon fr. 9, cf. Alexis 220.
[873] Cf. Burkert (1972: 120-122, 133).
[874] Cf. Xenophanes fr. B7.
[875] On this cf. fn. 796 above. Here I take the reference to be towards the Pythagoreans due to the dietary elements mentioned in the fragment. That Alexis was aware of such dietary habits being specifically Pythagorean is suggested by the next fragment.
[876] 1996: comm on fr. 27.
[877] For a case for this see pp. 201-202 below.

popular, as it is repeated by Alexis, who uses it again in his *Tarantinoi* (fr. 223), and in this instance the jibe is aimed directly at the Pythagoreans:

α .οἱ πυθαγορίζοντες γάρ, ὡς ἀκούομεν, 1
οὔτ᾽ ὄψον ἐσθίουσιν οὔτ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ οὐδὲ ἓν
ἔμψυχον, οἶνὸν τ᾽ οὐχὶ πίνουσιν μόνοι.
β. Ἐπιχαρίδης μέντοι κύνας κατεσθίει,
τῶν Πυθαγορείων εἷς.[878] α. ἀποκτείνας γέ που· 5
οὐκ ἔτι γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἔμψυχον.

πυθαγορισμοὶ[879] καὶ λόγοι
λεπτοὶ διεσμιλευμέναι τε φροντίδες
τρέφουσ᾽ ἐκείνους, τὰ δὲ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν τάδε·
ἄρτος καθαρὸς εἷς ἑκατέρῳ, ποτήριον 10
ὕδατος· τοσαῦτα ταῦτα. β. δεσμωτηρίου
λέγεις δίαιταν πάντες οὕτως οἱ σοφοὶ
διάγουσι καὶ τοιαῦτα κακοπαθοῦσί που;
α. τρυφῶσιν οὗτοι πρὸς ἑτέρους, ἆρ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὅτι
Μελανιππίδης ἑταῖρός ἐστι καὶ Φάων 15
καὶ Φυρόμαχος καὶ Φᾶνος, οἳ δι᾽ ἡμέρας
δειπνοῦσι πέμπτης ἀλφίτων κοτύλην μίαν;

While lines 7-16 are typical in equating the Pythagorean lifestyle with abject poverty,[880] the fragment is remarkable in that Alexis again highlights the same nagging inconsistency in the Pythagoreans' apparent motives for their selective diet: if the animal is already dead; its soul has *already* transmigrated, presumably to be reincarnated as a more desirable form. The fear of eating that which one day was or may in future be human no longer poses a problem, as the only part of it with the potential of becoming so has departed, and so, therefore, is there really any point in such abstention? Ridiculous as the speaker's comments may seem, inherent in them is some inescapable logic – if the animal is dead, it can't have a soul, so tell us exactly why is it you refrain from eating it? Although the critics' notion of *metempsychosis* may be skewed at best

[878] Eating dogs was not common at the time in Athens (although cf. Aris. *Eq.* 1398-9). Nor is the passage alluding to some delicacy Epicharides thinks he has discovered; he eats dogs as he cannot afford anything better and will simply eat anything he can to survive. The joke is common in Middle Comedy (cf. Aristophon fr. 9) in that the Pythagoreans hide their poverty behind a veil of a restricted diet, but in reality so bad is their hunger they will consume anything they can lay their hands on. Epicharides is mentioned again in Alexis fr. 248 as having bankrupted himself. Thus he associates with the hungry Pythagoreans. For a similar depiction of Socrates in Old Comedy cf. Eup. frr. 386 & 395.
[879] A *hapax legomenon,* 'Pythagorisms', or as, Olson translates 'odd Pythagorean terms for things'. (2007: 244).
[880] Melanippides, Phaon and Phanus are otherwise unknown. There are several fragments parodying the Pythagoreans' asceticism and diet as a front for abject poverty; Aristophon (fr. 9) wagers that if given a bowl of meat or fish, a Pythagorean would eat it along with his fingers – and if proved wrong he is willing to be hanged ten times. Antiphanes (fr. 158) has several Pythagoreans in a ravine eating sea orach and collecting other nasty foods in leather bags. Alexis (fr. 202) has a female Pythagorean initiate drink a 'loving cup' (Arnott, 1996: 585) of boiling water instead of wine.

through ignorance, and though indeed the Pythagorean may have an explanation for such a predicament in his arsenal, it was this logic in the criticism that governed the Athenian populace; a logic that would be hard to over-rule with the πυθαγορισμοί described by Alexis. This can only in turn have exacerbated the negative opinions of the Pythagorean – shunning social norms to follow what was apparently such an easily debunked lifestyle. That the joke was well received is suggested by multiple factors – a) Alexis uses it twice; had it fallen flat initially it would not make sense for him to re-use it, b) both fragments were deemed meritorious and memorable enough for inclusion by Athenaeus in his *Deipnosophistae*[881] and c) Diogenes Laertius appropriates the joke centuries later in one of his own epigrams, as he asks the 'sage Pythagoras' what it is like to taste food when it is still alive – for surely when meat is 'boiled roasted' and 'well salted' it can hardly 'be called living'.[882] The popularity of the joke, then, reflects an audience not only familiar with Pythagorean *metempsychosis*, but also receptive to criticisms of it.

A similar joke may again occur in Antiphanes (fr. 226):

τὸ δεῖπνόν ἐστι μᾶζα κεχαρακωμένη 1
ἀχύροις, πρὸς εὐτέλειαν ἐξωπλισμένη,
καὶ βολβὸς εἷς τις καὶ παροψίδες τινές,
σόγχος τις ἢ μύκης τις ἢ τοιαῦθ᾽ ἃ δὴ
δίδωσιν ἡμῖν ὁ τόπος ἄθλι᾽ ἀθλίοις. 5
τοιοῦτος ὁ βίος, ἀπύρετος, φλέγμ᾽ οὐκ ἔχων.[883]
οὐδεὶς κρέως παρόντος ἐσθίει θύμον,
οὐδ᾽ οἱ δοκοῦντες πυθαγορίζειν.

τίς γὰρ οἶδ᾽ ἡμῶν τὸ μέλλον ὅ τι παθεῖν
πέπρωθ᾽ ἑκάστῳ τῶν φίλων; ταχὺ δὴ λαβὼν 10
ὄπτα μύκητας πρινίνους τουσδὶ δύο.

Leigh[884] here notes that there may be a pun on θύμον (herb) and θυμός (spirit/soul/heart) which would be θυμόν in the accusative singular. This would change the meaning of the line to 'Nobody eats their heart when there's meat on the table' which Leigh takes to mean 'Nobody is miserable when there's meat on the table'. To describe 'eating one's heart' as a metaphor for misery dates back as far as

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[881] *Ath.* 9.386c & 4. 161b-c respectively.
[882] *Anth. Pal.* 7.121=Diog. Laert.8.44; whether Diogenes expected his readership to be familiar with the joke in Athenaeus, however, is a different question.
[883] Kock here marks a change of speaker while Meineke begins a new separate fragment. Though I usually follow Meineke, here I endorse Kock's interpretation.
[884] 2004: 287-283.

Homer.[885]Leigh here on the fragment then takes θύμον to refer literally to a *physical* heart; Iamblichus informs us that while only the strictest of Pythagoreans adhered to the strict vegetarian diet, those 'less pure' were still required to abstain from eating certain objects such as heart.[886] Leigh[887] here suggests that it is this dietary requirement that Antiphanes is alluding to, and the line could be interpreted as 'Nobody eats their heart (ie. is miserable) when there's meat on the table, not even those who make out they are Pythagoreans'. If this is the intended pun here, however, it is flimsy and its meaning is ambiguous – is it a jab at the perceived melancholia of the Pythagoreans resulting from their poverty-induced sparse diet or is it a play on the eating of the actual heart of whatever animal is being served for dinner? Surely the pun would make more sense in the opposite – "*Everybody* eats their heart when there's meat on the table, *even those who make out they are Pythagoreans*".

This ambiguity leads me to disagree with Leigh's interpretation of θυμός as 'heart' in the literal physical sense.[888] If we, however, substitute 'heart' with the usual of θυμός as 'spirit/soul'[889] the case for Antiphanes employing some clever word-play to allude to Pythagorean practises is strengthened. Indeed, such a rendering of θυμός would alter the meaning of the line thematically to something we are more familiar with – a critique of *metempsychosis*. For in this case the line would read 'Nobody eats his spirit when there's meat on the table, not even the Pythagoreans'. The proposition that one does *not* eat a soul if one eats meat is a direct challenge to the Pythagorean belief, and would draw from the same source of humour that we have seen in the two similar Alexis fragments. Such an interpretation would give greater clarity to the lines 9-10; the lines are separated in Athenaeus with 'καὶ προελθών', so it is impossible to say with certainty if it is the same speaker, or how long after lines 7-8 they were spoken.[890] One could speculate, however, that if lines 7-8 are an allusion to the Pythagorean theories on the fate of the soul after death, lines 9-10 again refer to this. Interestingly, the speaker is mainly concerned with the fate of their friends (τῶν φίλων) rather than humans in general, and the avoidance by Pythagoreans of eating animals or subjecting them to

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[885] Cf. *Il.* 6.202, *Od.* 143.
[886] Iamb. *Vit. Pyth.* 107-109; Diog Laert. 8.9; Gell. 4.11.11. On Pythagoras not associating with hunters see Porph. *Vit. Pyth.* 7/ Eudoxus fr.36.
[887] 2004: 282.
[888] 2004:282.
[889] As indeed Leigh does initially (*ibid*: 281).
[890] Kock separates the fragments due to this (226-227K).

unnecessary abuse was – or was at least perceived to be – heavily indebted to the fact that the animal may contain the departed soul of a friend or loved one.[891]

The response however, could be read both as a critique of the belief, offering a supplementary point to bolster the initial statement, or a defence of the belief by a Pythagorean sympathizer. For the statement 'τίς γὰρ οἶδ' ἡμῶν τὸ μέλλον ὅ τι παθεῖν πέπρωθ' ἑκάστῳ τῶν φίλων' could be put in the mouth of a detractor, essentially asking "who are you, Mr. Pythagorist, to tell us you know what the fate of our friends will be". Just as likely, however, it could be the reasoning of a defender, arguing "who can tell at all what the fate of our friends will be? All due caution is best exercised." The lines are followed by a suggestion that they quickly roast two mushrooms, leading one to tentatively propose that it is indeed a Pythagorean who is defending his dietary habits.[892]

Another possible allusion to *metempsychosis* occurs in a fragment of Aristophon's *Pythagorist* (Πυθαγοριστής) (fr. 10). The play is one of a number with Pythagorean-related titles,[893] indicating the popularity of the Pythagorean as a target of the period. The -ιστής ending suggests a dabbler or newcomer to the sect, while Arnott[894] notes it is normally applied in comedy to beggarly ascetics.[895] Papachrysostomou[896] proposes that the instruction of the titular novice would form the plot of the play, as we have seen in the *Platon*. There is nothing obvious to doubt about this, as other traits of Old Comedy – such as the willingness to undergo ardous regimes to excel[897] – permeate the passage.

πρὸς μὲν τὸ πεινῆν ἐσθίειν τε μηδὲ ἓν
νόμιζ' ὁρᾶν Τιθύμαλλον ἢ Φιλιππίδην.[898]
ὕδωρ δὲ πίνειν βάτραχος, ἀπολαῦσαι θύμων
λαχάνων τε κάμπη, πρὸς τὸ μὴ λοῦσθαι ῥύπος,
ὑπαίθριος χειμῶνα διάγειν κόψιχος, 5
πνῖγος ὑπομεῖναι καὶ μεσημβρίας λαλεῖν
τέττιξ, ἐλαίῳ μηδὲ χρίεσθαι τὸ πᾶν
κονιορτός, ἀνυπόδητος ὄρθρου περιπατεῖν
γέρανος, καθεύδειν μηδὲ μικρὸν νυκτερίς.

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[891] Cf. Xenophanes B7; Eudoxus fr. 36.
[892] Leigh, interestingly, signs off his paper with the proposal that the Pythagorean, through his poverty, has no other option but to 'eat up his soul' (*ibid*: 283).
[893] Cf. n. 643.
[894] 1996: 582.
[895] *Cf.* Aristophon fr.9; Theoc. 14,5.
[896] 2009: Introduction to Aristophon frr. 9-12.
[897] Cf. Chap. 2.d.
[898] Cf. n. 179.

Papachrysostomou[899] makes the plausible suggestion that the use of animals, birds and insects as a metaphor to satirise the Pythagoreans may be another veiled mockery of metempsychosis, going on to suggest the intended joke may be the implication that the only way the Pythagoreans could come to resemble such creatures would be not through metempsychosis, but their foolish habits of vegetarianism, excessive water consumption etc. Indeed, this would have to presume a general knowledge of the concept indicated by the Alexis fragments above, but Papachrysostomou's suggestion seems rather farfetched; Aristophon seemed to be a stickler for formulae and stock motifs; a parasite in his *Iatros* (fr. 5) uses the exact same method to describe what kind of guest he is – if there's a feast he's first to arrive. If someone drinks too much and needs to be thrown out, he's an Argive wrestler. If someone attacks the house, he's a battering ram and so forth. Several stock motifs from Old Comedy are also used, which are discussed in the next paragraph. First, however, we must consider the following fragment from the same play of Aristophon (fr. 12), which is unique in its presentation of a grim portrait of the Pythagorean after death:

ἔφη καταβὰς ἐς τὴν δίαιταν τῶν κάτω
ἰδεῖν ἑκάστους, διαφέρειν δὲ πάμπολυ
τοὺς Πυθαγοριστὰς τῶν νεκρῶν·
μόνοισι γὰρ τούτοισι τὸν Πλούτωνα συσσιτεῖν ἔφη
δι᾽ εὐσέβειαν.β. δυσχερῆ θεὸν λέγεις, 5
εἰ τοῖς ῥύπου μεστοῖσιν ἥδεται ξυνών .....

ἐσθίουσί τε λάχανά τε καὶ πίνουσιν ἐπὶ τούτοις ὕδωρ:
φθεῖρας δὲ καὶ τρίβωνατήν τ᾽ ἀλουσίαν
οὐδεὶς ἂν ὑπομείνειε τῶν ἑτέρων.

This passage could be read as sympathetic to the Pythagoreans, reaping the rewards for their piety by finally getting their communion with the Gods. In reality, however, the message is that, even in death, the Pythagoreans are still too proud to drop their ascetic facade and consume something other than water or vegetables, while Olson[900] translates ἑκάστους as "each group of philosophers", implying the Pythagoreans kept to themselves even in the underworld. While their asceticism may have drawn Pluto to them, it is not for this reason that it is they alone who dine at his table, but the fact that no-one else *wants* to join them on account of their filth, which only Pluto, Lord of the Underworld could tolerate.

[899] 2008: 132 comm. on 9c.
[900] 2007: 247 comm. on F11:2.

If Papachrysostomou is in fact correct in her assumption that the previous fragment (fr. 10) parodies the farfetchedness of the Pythagorean belief in metempsychosis, this passage leads to a bitter sting. For the play has rubbished the theory's credibility by having the Pythagoreans, who would have expected reincarnation or to feast with the gods, sitting alone in Hades, living the same miserable existence they did while alive on earth.

Fragment 10, however, and its possible Old Comic influences, require further attention. Olson[901] notes the conditions the student is willing to endure are remarkably similar to those the *Phrontisterion* will impose on Strepsiades at *Nu.* 414-419 and 439-456, which also include stress, deprivation, cold, abstention from wine and standing for hours.[902] Moreover, if the transmigratory aspect of metempsychosis is what Aristophon is alluding to, it is worth highlighting the similar aspects of the morphing Cloud chorus taking the shape of a being that epitomises the character of the person they see at *Nu.* 347-55. It has previously been discussed in how Broackes[903] likens this with the Pythagorean theory of reincarnation in the *Phaedo,*[904] where each type of soul will take on a body that corresponds to its nature. The Socrates of *Clouds* is also loaded with Orphic and Pythagorean elements, while Grote[905] suggests that the burning of the *Phrontisterion* was inspired by, and meant to reminisce, the recent burning of the Pythagoreans' meeting place at Kroton, which is indicative of the view in which society held such a group. If this is true, Aristophanes is using traits typical of the Pythagorean to bolster the effect of his *alazonic* Socrates. This is not just limited to comedy; in the following passage, Euripides has Theseus lay similar charges against Hippolytus,[906]indicating that accusations of vegetarianism and Orphism were common at the time in the denigration of someone whose behaviour is deemed beyond the norms of society:

> ἤδη νυν αὔχει καὶ δι᾽ ἀψύχου βορᾶς
> σίτοις καπήλευ᾽ Ὀρφέα τ᾽ ἄνακτ᾽ ἔχων
> βάκχευε πολλῶν γραμμάτων τιμῶν καπνούς·

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[901] *Ibid.*
[902] Here we must recall Pl. *Euth.* 285c-d; Socrates and Ctesippus are willing to undergo similar duress when handing themselves over to Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. We must also recall the emaciation promised by Plato to a student in Aristophon's *Platon* (fr.8). This would suggest that Plato either has one of the scenes above in mind or draws on a general contemporary comic trend of accusing philosophers of subjecting their students to abusive regimes.
[903] 2009: 57. Cf. p. 137 above.
[904] *Phd.* 81e-82b.
[905] 1851: 552 n2.
[906] Eur. *Hip*. 951-957.

ἐπεί γ᾽ ἐλήφθης. τοὺς δὲ τοιούτους ἐγὼ
φεύγειν προφωνῶ πᾶσι· θηρεύουσι γὰρ
σεμνοῖς λόγοισιν, αἰσχρὰ μηχανώμενοι.

Theseus' claim interests us as he is not just lumping together antisocial philosophical activities such as Orphism and atheism, but also any harmless but abnormal practises – such as a vegetarian diet – as he paints Hippolytus as a sociopathic monster. The sentiment is that if one engages in one peculiar activity, one is liable to bear the brunt of a tirade of accusations in which the only linking factor between each charge is the fact that each is contrary to general practise – unusual dietary habits and questionable religious activity are tarred with the same brush as an inclination to rape one's stepmother – with the implication being that if you indulge in one you will indulge in the others.[907] Abnormalities such as vegetarianism, although fairly innocuous on their own, are magnified by the suspicious activity, and so become suspicious themselves. Although Aristophanes does not specifically depict Socrates as a vegetarian,[908] there is some evidence to suggest vegetarianism became typical not only of the Pythagorean, but also of the 'generic' philosopher in Middle Comedy.

If we look back to Alexis fr. 27, we find that the man who has advised the character to abstain from eating meat is not referred to as a Pythagorean, but as a σοφιστής.[909] If it is the case that Alexis intends to refer not solely to the Pythagorean, but to the 'sophist' in general, then he may be conflating vegetarianism with sophistry and portraying a generic philosopher, lumping him together with generic characteristics that amount to *alazoneia* which now include vegetarianism, indicated by the vehemence with which such a diet is received in the *Hippolytus,* and indeed possibly the real-life practises of the Pythagoreans. The fragments suggest that Alexis was somewhat well-versed with philosophy and more than capable of distinguishing between the sophists and others when he wanted to – but if it is the generic philosopher who is referred to in the passage, then two points are worth noting: the first that, despite his familiarity with contemporary philosophy, Alexis freely employed the stock old comic philosopher as late as the mid to late 4th century, and this still received a positive response; the second being that the theory of metempsychosis alluded to in the fragment had entered public knowledge as a general philosophical theory rather than something distinctly Pythagorean. In view of the privacy of the Pythagoreans, this would better explain the

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[907] Note how Aristophanes does this with Euripides and Socrates; both are accused of corrupting the youth and worshipping strange gods. Cf. *Nu.* 367ff, 916-917, 1000-1005 with *Bat*. 888, 1069.
[908] The *Phrontisterion*, does, however, require abstention from wine, Cf. *Nu.* 417.
[909] Cf. fnn. 796 & 875 above.

audience's ability to recognise and respond to such material; but if traits such as vegetarianism and Orphism did come to be stock *alazonic* characteristics, then when creating the comic Pythagorean, there was no need to *create* such characteristics, for in reality the Pythagoreans already engaged in such activities, blurring the line between comic philosopher and real life Pythagorean, making the Pythagorean the *alazon* not only of the comic stage, but of everyday life.[910] While a comic attaches such characteristics to ensure his character is despised, the Pythagorean naturally already has such characteristics and thus would have no place in society even if he should want one.

The similarities between the philosopher of Old Comedy and the comic Pythagorean may not then be based on the poets borrowing an old stereotype, but may actually reflect a reality that was coincidentally quite similar. While the privacy of the Pythagoreans could lead one to assume a public opinion of subversiveness like that which permeates Old Comedy,[911] the intent of the fragments seems somewhat less insidious, with a decline in the seditionary accusations of Old Comedy. If anything, the sense is more one of derisive disbelief in anyone having legitimate motives for such peculiarity. Unlike Plato, whose discourse on Eros will become accepted by the poets, Pythagoreans are never given a chance in comedy, but this is because they never present the opportunity to be given such a chance. Such severe lifestyles were at extreme odds with the joviality of comedy. Pythagorean devotion promised the reward of eternal happiness and satisfaction. 4th Century comedy, however, takes a much more grounded approach, accepting the shortness of life and the lack of anything thereafter. This life, that which is in front of us now, is all there is to existence, and so it must be grasped with both hands and enjoyed while it can – thus Alexis' cry in his aptly titled *Tarantinoi* (fr.222)

ἆρ᾽ οὐκ οἶσθ᾽ ὅτι
τὸ καλούμενον ζῆν τοῦτο διατριβῆς χάριν

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[910] Hence the difficulty of isolating the target of Eubulus fr. 139, which attacks an unnamed group for having unwashed feet, sleeping in the streets and having parasitic tendencies such as stealing casserole dishes full of fish. When cited at Ath. 3.113f , it is directed towards a Cynic, but Athenaeus does not mention if the Cynics were the original target. While they may well have been, the difficulty lies in the resemblance to the perceived activities of the Pythagoreans and also the philosopher of Old Comedy, who is also depicted as stealing food (Eup. fr. 395). The apparent scruffy appearance agrees with other cotemporary parodies of Pythagoreans- but Hunter on the fragment (1984: 248) discounts this on the basis that Pythagoreans are famed in comedy for their vegetarianism, and so would not be depicted stealing a dish full of fish. This reading, however, overlooks comedy's tendency to accuse Pythagoreans of using vegetarianism as a front for their abject poverty, and is contradicted by Aristophon's comments (fr. 9) that if offered a plate of fish a Pythagorean would devour it "along with his fingers". It may be the case, however, that the Cynics were the intended target, their minimalist lifestyle warranting them to inherit the *alazoneia* typical of the Pythagorean or stock philosopher.

[911] Cf. *Nu.* 885ff; *Bat.* 888ff.

> ὄνομ᾽ ἐστίν, ὑποκόρισμα τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης
> μοίρας; ἐγὼ γάρ, εἰ μὲν εὖ τις ἢ κακῶς
> φήσει με κρίνειν, οὐκ ἔχοιμ᾽ ἄν σοι φράσαι·
> ἔγνωκα δ᾽ οὖν οὕτως ἐπισκοπούμενος
> εἶναι μανιώδη πάντα τἀνθρώπων ὅλως,
> ἀποδημίας δὲ τυγχάνειν ἡμᾶς ἀεὶ
> τοὺς ζῶντας, ὥσπερ εἰς πανήγυρίν τινα
> ἀφειμένους ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ σκότους
> εἰς τὴν διατριβὴν εἰς τὸ φῶς τε τοῦθ᾽ ὃ δὴ
> ὁρῶμεν. ὃς δ᾽ ἂν πλεῖστα γελάσῃ καὶ πίῃ
> καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀντιλάβηται τὸν χρόνον
> τοῦτον ὃν ἀφεῖται, καὶ Τύχης ἐράνου τινός,
> πανηγυρίσας ἥδιστ᾽ ἀπῆλθεν οἴκαδε.

Hedonistic glorifications such as this are frequent; Amphis (fr. 33) prefers drinkers to philosophers, as they act impulsively and disregard consequences rather than subject everything to detailed examination; Phileratus, son of Aristophanes, (fr. 13) chastises those who live miserably despite having the means to afford a better lifestyle, also staging an *agon* between a hedonist and an assumedly pious opponent (frr. 6, 7).[912] Burkert[913] notes that Pythagorean abstinence was initially reserved for preparation for the sacred meal in the mysteries of Demeter and Dionysus, but the *akousmata* of Pythagoras were eventually applied not only to festivals, but to everyday life. The Pythagorean now lives every day as though he were preparing for initiation at Eleusis or for incubation at Asclepius' temple, as Burkert explains: "Their aim was to make the whole of life a service of God; every day was to be lived like Good Friday. The dangerous area of arbitrary human choice and of carefree joy in living was narrowed as much as possible."[914] This transforms everyday life into a festive time, but one at odds with the festivity aimed at by comedy. As Battezzato argues:[915]

> [This motivates the poets to] portray Pythagoreans not simply as funny characters, as the butt of satire, but as the very opposite of the comic enterprise. Comedy is about role reversal and the carnivalesque, and often ends with a celebration (e.g. a wedding, a sacrifice, a feast). Pythagoreans renounce meat and luxury for a life of ostentatious frugality. However, a Pythagorean is not simply a killjoy, reviled for his 'Puritanism.' A Pythagorean is the converse of the comic hero: he aims at creating a different kind of festive discourse. An important tenet of ancient philosophy (and of Pythagorean philosophy in particular) is that

[912] *Cf.* Amphis fr.8
[913] 1972: 182, 190-191.
[914] *Ibid*: 191.
[915] 2012: 2.

> only philosophers are capable of obtaining true happiness. The happiness of Pythagorean philosophers is a competitor to the comic discourse.[916]

The perceived threat from piety to the boisterousness of comedy has its roots in Old Comedy; in response to criticisms that he was becoming overly fond of wine, Cratinos (fr. 203) quips ὕδωρ δέ πίνων οὐδεν ἂν τέκοις σοφόν. While Plato is highly critical of comedy, he and his Academicians were still recognizable as intermingling members of society. Thus he is not treated with the acrimony afforded to the Pythagoreans; the apparent openness in which he practised dispelled any suspicion as his ideas became relatively well known. While portrayed as a nonsense-peddler, his nonsense was essentially harmless, and so gets off reasonably lightly considering how vicious comedy can be. The reclusiveness of the Pythagoreans, conversely, creates suspicion, as people generally suspect or fear the unknown. While people can see Plato's apparently ludicrous attempts to 'pursue happiness' out in the open, the Pythagorean does so in private, leaving the public to only guess what such pursuits will entail. This creates a separation, creating a group of outsiders with questionable pursuits that oppose the mainstream, and so the boundaries between the historical Pythagorean and the Socrates of the *Phrontisterion* become blurred. In either case, speculating on the activities of such groups was the comic poet's *forte.*

[916] Indeed, the absence of the Pythagoreans from the theatre could only have heightened this; while the vast majority enjoy the festivities, the Pythagorean scorns this in favour of his squalid life. From his knowledge of comedy, drama and performance we may infer that Plato probably attended, while there are various sources confirming Socrates' presence. Cf. Musonius 54.12; Plut. *De Lib.* 14.

Conclusions and Looking Forward:

The preceding study has been far from exhaustive. Though it has been argued in Chapters 1-4 that Plato gets the better of certain opponents by loading them with motifs recognizable to the contemporary reader as typical of the comic stage, and in Chapter 5 that he reacts with vehement defence to parodies of ideas he felt resonated with his own school, it is most certainly the case that there may be further instances of Plato either guying or reacting to comedy which I have simply overlooked while researching this project. I do, however, hope that this offering to the scholarship may encourage others with similar enthusiasm for the subject to pursue further research in the field. This is important as every fresh observation which highlights instances where Plato again seems to be incorporating or responding to the antics of comedy brings further attention to the multi-faceted richness of the dialogues, dispelling the stifled notions that the dialogues are to be read purely as philosophical expositions and that "Professor Plato writes only for his fellow professors."[917] Similarly, although the study on comedy's portrayal of philosophy has considered every fragment I'm aware of which refers to comedy in the Old and Middle Comedy periods, this too should not impede any future scholarship in the field. It has been shown that although Plato was eager to assimilate his rivals to the philosopher of comedy, as the 5th century gives way into the 4th century a gradual change in public opinions of philosophy can be detected: misgivings inspired by the insular, itinerant fey philosopher begin to subside owing to the increasing permanent presence of philosophy within Athens, which in turn breeds a sort of familiarity with particular doctrine ascribable to particular schools – with actual suasions towards philosophy being alluded to by certain comedians through their rather clever critiques of particular ideas.

It was has also been noted in Chapter 7 that as we advance towards the threshold of New Comedy, we can detect a marked change in comic attitudes towards philosophy in relation to discourses on Eros. Here, far from being chastised as an idle chatterer, the philosopher is regarded as having the best authority on the subject. The question remains, however, as to whether or not this emerging favourable opinion persists as we cross over into New Comedy, a question I would urge the curious scholar to pursue, as the little research I have undertaken on the topic – which is summarised in the 'Looking Forward' section below – suggests it has the capacity to become quite a fruitful and exciting study. The comics seem to embrace philosophy when the philosopher

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[917] Bloom (1977: 324).

conversely seems to embrace their enterprise: though he might shame the philosopher when he disagrees with him, when the comic wants to promote love, he harkens to and lauds the philosopher for his expert disquisitions on love. The comic, then, when in agreement with the philosopher, is quick to acknowledge his expertise.

Looking Forward:

If we look forward to New Comedy, we can certainly detect a successor of this convention of praising philosophy during a period in which a philosopher emerges who advocates – or was at least perceived to advocate – not only love, but pure hedonistic pleasure: Epicurus. After returning to Athens and setting up his Garden in 306, Epicurus' presence started to feature in comedies of the period; and, in complete contrast to what we have seen with Socrates, Protagoras, Plato or the Pythagoreans, he is exalted for his beliefs, for example in Hegesippus fr.2:

> Ἐπίκουρος ὁ σοφὸς ἀξιώσαντός τινος
> εἰπεῖν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὅτι ποτ᾽ ἐστὶ τἀγαθὸν
> ὃ διὰ τέλους ζητοῦσιν, εἶπεν ἡδονήν.
> β. εὖ γ', ὦ κράτιστ᾽ ἄνθρωπε καὶ σοφώτατε:
> τοῦ γὰρ μασᾶσθαι κρεῖττον οὐκ ἔστ᾽ οὐδὲ ἓν
> ἀγαθὸν A. πρόσεστιν ἡδονῇ γὰρ τἀγαθόν.

What is striking here is that unlike the speaker of Amphis fr. 6,[918] who hasn't the slightest notion of Plato's good, this character is immediately able to rattle off a relatively accurate description of Epicurean belief. Remarkable too here is that we still have comedy exaggerate in its depiction, but the sentiment is meant as admirable; for the speaker of the fragment seems to be delighting in the life of hedonistic feasting and imbibing, although this is not in fact the life of the Epicurean, who seeks pleasure from tranquillity in life and the absence of pain. More akin to reality, perhaps, is Bato (fr.3) as he equates Epicureanism to reclining with a lover with two pouches of Lesbian wine:

> ἐξὸν γυναῖκ᾽ ἔχοντα κατακεῖσθαι καλὴν
> καὶ Λεσβίου χυτρῖδε λαμβάνειν δύο·
> ὁ φρόνιμος οὗτός· ἐστι, τοῦτο τἀγαθόν.
> Ἐπίκουρος ἔλεγε ταῦθ᾽ ἃ νῦν ἐγὼ λέγω.
> εἰ τοῦτον ἔζων πάντες ὃν ἐγὼ ζῶ βίον,
> οὔτ ἄτοπος ἦν ἄν οὔτε μοιχὸς οὐδε εἷς.

[918] Cf. p. 177.

Epicurus, however, also engaged in ontological and scientific pursuits which would otherwise be dubbed asinine or suspicious - but comedy overlooks this as it now has a man of great intelligence who seemingly affirms the comic enterprise. Epicurus' opinion is taken as authoritative because comedy agrees with what he suggests. In essence, this suggests that the formula in assessing how a philosopher may have been received on the comic stage is to measure the likelihood of his ideas and lifestyle being met with public approval. We have seen that Plato, although now regarded as one of the founders of Western thought, was held in little esteem owing to the impracticality of his philosophy, while his devotion to such impracticality created an opinion of arrogance. The Pythagoreans, owing to their peculiar lifestyle and refusal to conform to social norms, similarly were perceived as outsiders. Comedy's willingness to take the philosophers' authority on some matters certainly implies they may have been regarded as wise, but their decision to waste their wisdom on matters perceived as so trivial instead of putting it better use could have only furthered public bewilderment.

Indeed, this favouring seems in no way to be universal or to extend to other philosophers, as the stereotypes we have in Middle Comedy still survive; Menander, for example, once again refers to philosophers as οἱ τὰς ὀφρῦς αἴροντες (frr. 39 & 460). Here, the philosopher isn't even directly mentioned; the term 'eyebrow-raiser' has become a byword for the profession and it is assumable that it was obvious to the audience to whom the poet was referring, while the latter fragment chastises the philosopher for claiming that thinking can interfere with the natural processes of the world. Similarly, in the *Epitrepontes* (1091-1109), Onesimos gives a burlesque of the *daimon* as the guardian of the soul and the idea that good cannot cause evil, both of which can be found in the *Republic* (619c-620d, 379c),[919] while Furley cites Epicharmus as another possible influence on the passage, noting that such instances of putting 'popular philosophy' in the mouths of slaves when chiding their masters are common.[920] Conversely, Gomme and Sandbach[921] argue Menander is picking up on the Epicurean idea that if the gods concerned themselves with human beings their lives would be laborious,[922] also noting that the identification of this *daimon* with a man's own character is as old as Heraclitus.[923] Interesting too is Gomme and Sandbach's observation on how Onesimos' philosophy will not stand up as he has confused two

[919] Cf. Webster (1950:196-197).
[920] 2009: 248. Cf. Men. *Dis Ex.* Fr. 4; com. adesp. 1027.
[921] 1973: 378 comm. on 1091ff.
[922] Cf. Cic. *ND* i.52.
[923] Cf. fr. 119.

separate ideas: a) a man's character brings him good will or ill-fortune, b) man has in him a guardian spirit which will reward good deeds but punish offences.[924] This piques interest as it makes one wonder if Menander here *purposefully* conflates the two for comic effect; does he make Onesimos purposely confuse the two in an attempt to further baffle Smikrenes, or is his confusion between the two meant to remind us that, despite his cunning, he is still an uneducated slave? Such discussion, is of course merely conjectural in the absence of a full study – it may simply be the case that due to the increasing popularity of philosophy in this era, there was a greater variety of topics being discussed in and around Athens which had a greater capacity to impact upon – and indeed further confuse – the public mind-set.

To conclude, the *agon* between Philosophy and Comedy is a complex one, with both sides guilty of wanton inconsistency and employing underhand tactics. Though Plato is quick to chastise the comic poets as ignoramuses who make fun of what they don't understand, he has no qualms in appropriating the very techniques he rails against in composing his own satires and sending up those he deems a threat to himself. While he vehemently denies certain allegations of comedy and reminds us of how damaging such accusations can be,[925] he seems perfectly happy to deflect these charges and use them as weapons to inflict the same character assassination on figures within his own profession, which seems rather unscrupulous.[926] Yet, either through chance or circumstance, Plato seems to have been successful in his mission; for outside of those with an expertise in the subject, figures like Protagoras, Hippias, Gorgias, Thrasymachus and even Aristophanes are now best remembered – or indeed misremembered – for Plato's depictions of them rather than for their own corpora of work. Indeed it could be asked if Plato was aware of this and his hypocrisy was intentional; if Plato criticises such comic stereotypes yet blatantly employs them himself, are we meant to view Plato as a comic himself, and accordingly asses his 'comic' portrayals of certain philosophers with the caution he urges us to use when judging other comic portrayals of these philosophers? Such a case, however, would imply that Plato is actually 'double-bluffing', and imply a 'post-structuralist' aspect of

[924] *Ibid.*
[925] *Ap.* 18c7-19d9.
[926] Cf. *Ap.* 19e3-4; Section One of the thesis.

the dialogues which would require a post-modernist dimension I do not think we could plausibly expect of a 4th century philosophical work.

It seems more the case that Plato's motives were to have his own school taken seriously. His satirising rival schools as the comic philosopher was an attempt to affirm certain preconceptions of philosophy while at the same time exonerating his own school from such behaviour by having Socrates play the comic hero in the face of a ludicrous opponent typical of comedy. Plato's main aim and plea to the comedians was to have his works given serious contemplation, a chance he feels he was never given by comedy. While we have seen this to be true of the Old Comedians,[927] it is certainly the case that his subject was given a fair hearing by the Middle Comedians, which we have seen in Aristophanes' critique of utopianism in the *Ecclesiazusae*[928] and Alexis' considerations on the practicality of Plato's Good.[929] The fair hearing, however, still resulted in a negative outcome, something Plato mistook for sheer ignorance, as he apparently couldn't fathom how one could dismiss his discussions once subjected to reason. His pleading, however, to the Athenian majority to try to comprehend beyond what they could grasp with their hands and contemplate the metaphysical makes about as much sense as issuing the same plea to a simple farmer who relies on his land for his livelihood. These were people pre-occupied with and reliant on their practical professions, and anything which couldn't aid such practicality was deemed impractical. Practicality was found, for example, in sophistry, as it improved a citizen's ability to speak in front of the assembly, something Plato was keen to equate with the machinations of the comic philosopher, and indeed it seems apparent from Ephippos fr. 10 that Plato was not the person to seek out for such instruction. Plato overlooks the fact that although he lived a life of leisure which allowed him to devote himself to metaphysical study, this was not an option for the majority of Athenians, despite Plato's attempts to persuade them otherwise.

On the side of Comedy, should we blame her for her inconsistencies regarding her varied depictions of philosophy, or is this merely the result of her pandering to the fickle audience she aimed to please? Again, she must take the vantage point of the lay Athenian, for that is whom she must satisfy, and while she is perhaps brash in her representations – and even her critiques – of philosophy, this is what the layman wanted

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[927] Cf. Chap. 5.
[928] Cf. Chap. 6.
[929] Cf. Chap. 7.

to see. We cannot, for example, imagine characters like Dikaiopolis or Strepsiades being in anyway philosophically inclined– it would ruin their naïve charm – yet these become the heroes of their respective pieces. They are men of simple means and minds to whom the 'abstract' is – quite literally – abstract. What the comic hero *can* comprehend and *does* feel, however, are base emotions such as love and bibulous pleasure; while Alexis in one instance will have his characters make fun of abstract concepts, in another they will laud the philosophers' ability to account for love so lucidly and memorably. On one hand they will scold the Pythagoreans for their puritanical lifestyle, while on the other they will later glorify Epicurus as he seems to endorse the festive atmosphere comedy wishes to promote. It may perhaps be concluded then, that it is not Comedy herself who is responsible for the harsh representation of philosophy on the comic stage – nor is it her who Plato should take issue with – but the general public of Athens herself, for it was they, and not the poets, who formed this opinion of the philosopher. Is was stated in the Introduction to this thesis,[930] the opinion of Old and Middle Comedy was *reflective*, not *innovative*; the poets themselves did not decide whom to lionize or whom to vilify – this was the remit of the public, and the job of the poet was to merely exacerbate such opinion and reflect it back to the audience. Similar is the case with modern satire; take for example George Bush Jr, former president of the United States, who is viewed by many as a rather oafish and childish individual considering the position of power he held, and is thus parodied as such.[931] The writers of such satires may indeed not harbour any personal dislike for Bush, but such a presentation of him will raise a laugh. Nor is it their job to defend him; while it is most likely the case that Bush isn't the bumbling cretin comedy presents him to be – his family and acquaintances would testify to this – this is not the Bush the greater public knows. It must be remembered that with figures such as Bush, the public only has *limited* exposure to him – the man we see giving statements at press conferences on the television – and it is during this limited exposure that we see him make various gaffes and thus deem them typical of his overall character, though they might not actually be typical of the man himself. Indeed, Bush attended Yale for his undergraduate studies, obtaining a B.A in History with a 3.9 G.P.A, then going on to earn an M.B.A from

[930] Cf. p. 11.
[931] Cf. the animated sitcom *Family Guy* season 4 episode 4 'Don't make me over', season 4 episode 17 'The Fat Guy Strangler', season 5 episode 4 'Saving Private Brian', season 9 episode 2 'Excellence in Broadcasting'; the stop-motion animated television series *Robot Chicken* season 3 spisode 4 entitled 'Tapping a Hero'. On film, cf. *Scary Movie 4* (2006); *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* (2008), *Transformers* (2007).

Harvard Business School, before becoming (and remaining) the only U.S. president with such a degree. These, however, are lesser known traits of Bush's character and don't figure in comic composites of him. If we are presented with an erudite figure wearing a turtle-neck, smoking a pipe and perusing *The Journal of Modern History*, it would be quite difficult to decipher that it is to Bush that the satirist is alluding. Yet this is exactly what a comic could compose– a lampoon of the arrogant president with the M.B.A from Harvard constantly reminding everyone of this – but this would be meaningless as nobody would know what this is alluding to; though Bush is not as stupid as people make him out to be by a long chalk, this is what the general public think of him (be it rightly or wrongly) and so it is the comic's job merely to *play* to these expectations, but not to *form* them. The public, however, in its defence, can only judge or form an opinion on what it is exposed to.

Consider this then, in an ancient context, and we will see that in fact not much has changed over the previous millennia: in the 5th century we have these strange sophists coming from abroad enchanting the youth with disruptive and insular conversations before stealing away again, or that madman Socrates who we see prowling the agora in rags ready to pounce on anyone who is unfortunate enough to give him a second look with his maniacal chatter. This is all the public *knew* of philosophers at the time. They were not aware of the productive discourses promoted by the sophists or Socrates as they simply never experienced them, and so dismissed it as quackery having never had the chance to truly 'know' it – much like the Romans did with early Christianity.[932] Similarly, in the 4th Century, the Athenians are exposed to Plato and his students' musings on the irrelevant with what was perceived as an ill-gotten authority. Though they obtained a certain familiarity, they would never experience the true intentions of these musings, perhaps because their socio-economic position in society required they spend their time working to sustain themselves rather than laze about in the sun discussing *diairesis*. Though the wealthier classes could see the benefit of the Academy's teaching and could perhaps provide answers to the criticisms or bafflement of the comic stage, this didn't matter to the comic poets – who may indeed have been philosophically inclined themselves – since they were in the minority, and the comedians had to satisfy the majority who shared this bafflement of the point of these men getting together to discuss the mundane. They knew, however, no more of these

[932] Cf. Pliny the Younger. *Ep.* 96.

men than what they had experienced, thus limiting the comedians' options when composing a joke. The comedians may have known that the sophists, Socrates, Plato and the Pythagoreans were all perfectly sane, reasonable and intelligent individuals through acquaintance with them, but the public did not. Should we then blame the comedians for their dispiriting representation of philosophy, or the public themselves for forming such an opinion in the first place? While their ignorance of the subject can be excused on the grounds that they simply did not have the leisure to become as acquainted with the subject as Plato would have preferred, this was an excuse Plato deemed invalid asserting that such an unreflective life was not worth living,[933] although from comedy we can tell that this fell on deaf ears. Philosophers, to put it succinctly, were for the birds.

[933] Cf. *Ap*. 38a4.

Appendix I: A case for the reproduction of Old Comedy in the 4th Century.

"We lack evidence that any Aristophanes play was performed after its author's lifetime, and I shall be surprised if evidence to that effect ever presents itself."[934]

So the words of Kenneth Dover in summing up the long held tradition that the plays of Old Comedy rarely, if ever, received a reproduction. The purpose of this appendix then, it could be said, would be to raise Dover's eyebrows. In numerous chapters this thesis has argued that Plato incorporates language and motifs from Old Comedy when constructing his dialogues, and these are elements he expects his readership to be familiar with. A common obstacle in arguing for such a case, however, is the distance between Old Comedy and the time Plato begins writing; if the plays of Old Comedy were no longer being performed with their popularity giving way to the more sophisticated styles of Middle and New Comedy, it may not be plausible to assume a general familiarity with a genre that has fallen into obscurity – could we expect a modern young man in his twenties to be familiar with television shows of the 1960's that are no longer in popular rotation? Rather than address the issue at the various stages where it arises in the thesis, the evidence for the plays of Old Comedy remaining popular beyond their lifetime is best presented in toto and appended here for the reader to consult should they feel inclined.

Despite the fact that eleven[935] of Aristophanes' plays survive to this day[936] and the fact that Plato twice makes direct reference to the *Clouds,*[937] up until relatively recently[938] the overwhelming consensus has held that the plays of Old Comedy received only one production. Such a conclusion is influenced by a number of factors – perhaps the most well-known being that Aristophanes' *Frogs* was unique in being given the special honour of a second production the following year.[939] Other factors include the highly satirical nature of Old Comedy which focusses on events and figures distinct to a certain time period within Athens which would render a play, as Taplin states, "too ephemeral to be reperformed after its first occasion, even at Athens, let alone elsewhere"[940] – much like someone in their late teens today watching an episode of the weekly satirical

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[934] Dover (1988: 199).
[935] Indeed, if we are to be strict in our definition of 'Old Comedy', we might further reduce this amount to nine. Cf. n. 342
[936] This indeed from a larger collection in antiquity from which both Athenaeus and Diogenes Laertius prolifically quote in the third century C.E
[937] *Ap.* 19c3; *Symp*. 221b3-4.
[938] Webster (1948) was perhaps the earliest to make a credible case against the tradition of non-reproduction.
[939] Hypothesis to *Frogs* 1c.
[940] 1993: 3.

news program *Have I Got News for You* from 1985. Hartwig[941] has been the most recent to support this position, citing what he perceives to be a shift in audience taste to something more sophisticated – taking Aristotle's comments at *N.E.* 1128a22 regarding audiences honing their tastes as indicative that the bawdiness and vitriol of Old Comedy was giving way to the more innuendo-based style of the Middle and New comedy.[942] He also takes Aristotle's apparent lack of interest in the Old Comedians beyond historical purposes – along with the absence of monuments honouring the triad of Old Comedy in comparison with their tragic counterparts cropping up until "much later on"[943] – as indicative that Old Comedy received little interest in the fourth century.[944]

Indeed, evidence to contradict the tradition is sparse and lies in areas as diverse as philosophy to pottery. While a single instance suggesting a reperformance could be argued as coincidental and discarded, a survey from different fields builds a catalogue of evidence that certainly questions what may be a conclusion too hastily arrived at. Perhaps the best evidence is the tangible, and for this we must look to comic vases from 4th century Greek-Italy.

1. Evidence from 4th Century Italian Vases.

The general tendency has been to attribute scenes from these vases to local Italian farces, sometimes in the face of some compelling evidence to the contrary. This dates to the mid-19th century, fuelled by the presupposition that Old Comedy never left Athens and so just simply couldn't appear in a vase in a foreign colony fifty years later. Pickard-Cambridge typifies this tradition, adamantly discarding any link between Attic Comedy and Italian vases on the basis that it is "very improbable that plays of Old Comedy were ever acted in Magna Graecia, or even outside of Athens at all."[945] His disagreement is a common one – this being that the plays would be unintelligible elsewhere. Certain vases, however, seem to cast plausible doubt over this judgement; Magna Graecia was, after all, a *Greek* colony with a suasion towards *Greek* culture. This in turn leads to another predictable disagreement – how could a comedy performed once in Athens fifty years previously remain in the memories of a foreign colony? Particular vases, however, so strongly resemble familiar scenes of Old Comedy that the

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[941] 2014: 211-215.
[942] *Ibid*: 212-214.
[943] *Ibid*: 214-215.
[944] Hartwig, however, does not completely rule out any performance of Old Comedy, but asserts that it was performed much 'less eagerly' than that of the Middle or New (2014: 211).
[945] 1927:268.

only credible position is to concede that at least some of the plays enjoyed a long performance afterlife, even reaching areas as far as Apulia.

Perhaps the strongest candidate for a South Italian vase depicting the Greek Old Comedy, then, is the 'Würzburg *Telephos*' (Fig. A). Trendall ascribes it to the Schiller Painter,[946] and thus we may assume it is post c380. The scene is at first intriguing; a suppliant is shown on an altar with a drawn sword in one hand and a wineskin in the other as a female character approaches him with a bowl. As the name given to the vase may suggest, the scene could be recognised as a reference to the Telephos myth. The *Telephos* was staged by Euripides in 438, and went on to become one of his most popular plays. Aristophanes, however, memorably parodies the hostage scene of the play in the *Thesmophoriazusae*[947] and it will be argued that it is this exact scene the Würzburg Vase depicts.

The myth was popular outside of Euripides; Csapo[948] attributes tragedies which could have dealt with incidents in Argos leading to Telephos' healing to Aeschylus, Sophocles, Cleophon and Moschion, while parodies of the same incidents may have appeared in a satyr play by Sophocles, the Sicilian Deinolochus and one by Rhinthon of Taras. For chronological considerations, however, we can discount Moschion and Rhinthon influencing the Würzburg Telephos as the vase most likely predates their careers, while the ascription of a satyr play to Sophocles is highly doubtful.[949] Moreover, only Euripides and Aristophanes are known to have included a hostage scene. Indeed, there are several correspondences between the vase and the scene at *Thes*. 685f where Euripides' kinsman is revealed and seizes what he believes to be the baby of one of the women. He then removes the child's *himation*, which then reveals the 'child' to actually be a wineskin. The 'child's' mother Mika, nonetheless distressed, pleads for the concession to catch her 'baby's' 'blood' and approaches the kinsman with a bowl. Even more distinct, as Taplin notes,[950] are the peculiar 'feet' at the end of the wineskin. They are certainly a rather unusual addition, and without the *Thesmophoriazusae* we would be at quite a loss to determine what these actually are; clarity is given when we consult the text:

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[946] Cf. Trendall (1978:64*ff*).
[947] 685f.
[948] 1986: 379n2
[949] Cf. Sutton (1974:107-43).
[950] 1993; also picked up by Csapo (1986:381)

τουτὶ τί ἔστιν; ἀσκὸς ἐγένεθ᾽ ἡ κόρη
οἴνου πλέως καὶ ταῦτα Περσικὰς ἔχων.

- *Thes*. 733-4

These 'Persian Booties' must be what are portrayed at the end of the wineskin; they are the only imaginable item that can make sense of the scene. Nor can we imagine that wineskins wearing slippers were a notable feature of many other plays, and so the case for the *Thesmophoriazusae* being depicted grows ever more credible. While Taplin, Csapo and I are in agreement on this, doubt still remains over such a conclusion,[951] with the main detractor being Kossatz-Diessman, who first published the vase.[952] While noting the similarities between the hostage scene in Aristophanes and the painting, she ultimately dismisses any concrete connection on account of the headband – what she describes a *Königsbinde* (regal headband) – worn by the kneeling figure:

> "Da das Weinschlauchmotiv so gut zu Aristophanes passt, wäre man versucht, hier eine unmittelbare Illustration der Thesmophoriazusen anzunehmen. Jedoch spricht allein schon die Königsbinde im Haar des Mannes dafür, dass hier nicht die bei Aristophanes gezeigte Alltagszene, sondern der Mythos gemeint ist."[953]

Kossatz-Diessman goes on to conclude that the scene depicts a local mythological travesty based on the *Telephus* of Euripides, but allows that some elements may be influenced by Aristophanes' parody. Such outright dismissal, however, based on such a small apparent inconsistency is perhaps overzealous. Taplin offers the rather lacklustre response that a head-band on a comic vase can signify party going;[954] Csapo[955] is more grounded, pointing out that if this *was* a depiction of the myth as presented by Euripides, then such a headband is totally inconsistent; for we know enough about the *Telephos* to be sure that Telephos disguised himself in rags, and so surely such a head-band would not be a fitting adornment. In addition to this, Csapo makes a good case that the Kinsman in the *Thesmophoriazusae* may indeed have worn such a band in the hostage scene, pointing to lines 257-60 where Agathon offers the Kinsman his κεφαλὴ περίθετος ('wrap for the head'), which he wears at night as part of his disguise. He is

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[951] Trendall notes this is an "amusing parody of the story of Telephos and Orestes" (1978:65) but falls short of specifically linking the two – instead citing the *Thesmophariazusae* as an example of what such burlesques were like.
[952] 1980.
[953] 1980: 289f.
[954] 1993:39.
[955] 1986: 382-3

still wearing this after the hostage scene as he describes himself as 'ἐν κροκωτοῖς καὶ μίτραις' ('in yellow dress and headband').[956]

Detractors are faced with yet another problem; if this is a comic vase, then where is the suppliant's phallus? Its pervasiveness on other contemporary vases leads us to expect we should find one here, yet we are left looking. Taplin explains succinctly:

> The best answer must be that the actor is wearing a woman's dress over it; and his rumpled hose indicates that he has a male costume beneath the female....This leads back to the *Thesmophoriazousai,* where Euripides' relative is clothed in a *krokotos* lent by Agathon (252-6). When his sex is exposed by the women, it is clear that his feminine outfit is not taken away as it is referred to later at 851, 939-45 and 1220.[957]

It seems then that our painter of the Würzburg *Telephos* had an eye for detail – the head-band, the booties, the female costume – through which we may further speculate on other details, namely what appears to be stubble on Telephos' face. Are we to see this as reflective of the earlier scene in which the Kinsman shaves off his beard?[958] Is Csapo right in suggesting the mirror in the background remains from the dressing up scene at 233ff[959] or does it serve merely to reflect the general feminine ambience one would expect at the Thesmophoria? Such attention to detail, however, has also been used in arguing against the vase depicting Aristophanes' scene; Austin and Olson[960] question the absence of other elements that make up the scene in the *Thesmophoriasuzae*, such as the brushwood that surrounds the altar, the statue of Apollo, the servant and the effeminate shoes worn by the Kinsman. We must remember, however, that the painter only had a limited amount of space to portray an easily recognizable scene. The aforementioned elements of the scene are secondary and incidental to the major memorable elements that must take precedence – if one were to ask someone who had recently seen a performance of the *Thesmophoriasuzae* to what they best remembered about the scene, it is much more likely they would recall the cross-dressing man threatening a Persian-booted wine-skin than a statue of Apollo or a servant who barely speaks. With limited space, such additions would impact on the clarity of the scene; Csapo also notes that the brushwood would obscure the altar – a vital component in understanding the scene – commenting that while not every element

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[956] *Thes.* 941; Tolle-Kastbein (1977: 23f) shows a 5th century *mitra* to be a headband about 40-50cm in width, used for tying the hair.
[957] 1993:38.
[958] *Thes*. 221-32.Presumably the bearded mask would be replaced by a shaven one (Taplin, 1993:40).
[959] 1986: 40.
[960] 2004: lxxvi-lxxvii.

of the scene is represented on the vase "it does, however, demonstrate that vase painters were less interested in accurately documenting every detail of a performance than in producing an attractive, clear and recognizable image."[961]

In any case, the Würzburg *Telephos* is one instance in which there are too many 'matches' that are distinct to one particular comedy to plausibly argue that it portrays another. The scene presents a number of bizarre elements that can only be made sense of when referenced with the scene as portrayed in the text of Aristophanes, and it is unlikely that another comedy could have shared so many common elements; thus it lies in the hands of the sceptics to bring forth a more satisfactory conclusion. With this we should feel safe to conclude that the Würzburg *Telephos* is one case of an identifiable play of the Old Comedy being produced as far away as Italy over thirty years after its original production. Is this, however, a unique case? With the Würzburg *Telephos* suggesting that such a trend exists more candidates come to light.

Less certain, for example, can we be about what is depicted on an Apulian bell-krater discovered in Naples in 1847 which has since been lost and possibly destroyed in the war.[962] Known as the 'Berlin Herakles' (Fig. B), Neugebauer dates the vase to c400.[963] Trendall,[964] followed by Taplin[965] however, dates it later, to 375-350. When compared to finer pieces like the Würzburg Telephos, the painting ranks low on the scale of artistic merit which – combined with its poor state of preservation – makes any attempt to identify what it portrays all the more arduous. Nonetheless, we can be clear on a general narrative – an actor dressed as Herakles approaches a door or gate followed by a mounted servant weighed down with baggage on a bindle. Both figures appear to be stage-naked and while there is a stage phallus, it is unusually small.[966] The scene might bring to mind the introduction of *Frogs*, where Dionysus, disguised as Herakles, approaches the door of Herakles with his slave Xanthias in tow carrying large amounts of baggage on a mule.[967] We must be cautious, however, not to make the mistake of rushing to pin this to scene to a play from what is just the small fraction of what we

[961] 2010: 54.
[962] Taplin (1993: 45 n37).
[963] 1932: 141.
[964] 1967:29.
[965] 1993: 45 & 112.
[966] Also noted by Heydemann and Taplin (1993:47).
[967] *Ra.* 1-48; the similitude was first noted by Panofka (1849: 17-20), who was also the first to describe and illustrate the vase.

know of the comedy of the period – for it may just as easily allude to a scene from a lost comedy from the Old or Middle period.

Webster allows for the possibility that the scene may 'reminisce' the opening of *Frogs,*[968] but his scepticism is hinted at through his questioning of the painter's failure to clearly establish that the Herakles figure is Dionysus *dressed* as Herakles rather than Herakles himself.[969] To this, however, I agree with Taplin's assertion that the vase in question is clearly of inferior quality; as with all products, quality is highly variable, usually in accordance with the amount spent on it, and here we obviously have a vase from the 'cheaper' end of the spectrum. Trendall is more optimistic but cautious – commenting in his brief note on the vase that it is "perhaps to be connected with *Frogs* of Aristophanes."[970] Pickard-Cambridge is completely dismissive of any link between the scene and *Frogs*, asserting that – like all vases of the period – it depicts a scene from 'Menandrean Comedy'. A major flaw in this hypothesis, however – apart from the inconsistencies in dating[971] – is the decidedly Old Comic phallic costume worn by at least one of the actors, which had been abandoned by the New Comedy.[972] Pickard-Cambridge is aware of this, but his explanation – that this may due to the influence of Peloponnesian burlesques – lacks plausibility[973] in the face of more credible premises; namely that here we have a play of the Old Comedy being depicted, and this play *may* indeed be *Frogs*. Taplin, for example, notes some correspondences[974] – both Dionysus of *Frogs* and Herakles of the vase carry the club and lion skin[975] – although this would be typical of any depiction of Herakles. Similarly speculative is that both beat upon the

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[968] 1948:21.

[969] Bieber (1961:133) is of a similar opinion; although she notes that the mounted figure is a servant and probably making *phortika* – porters' jokes – like Xanthias in *Frogs*, she is not prepared to attribute the scene to *Frogs* due to the lack of clarity on Herakles' disguise.

[970] 1967:29.

[971] Pickard-Cambridge's point here leaves one slightly confused; although he never specifically uses the term 'New Comedy', he labels the comedy as of the 'Menandrean type' and later, when faced with the dilemma of the actor's phallic costume, admits this trend had died out by 'New Comedy'. It seems then Pickard-Cambridge is certainly attempting to ascribe this scene to a play of the New Comedy. This, however, is obviously anachronistic; unless there was a mistake in his dating of the vase, he must certainly have been aware the *latest* the vase could be dated to is c350 (cf. Neugebauer (1932:141; Trendall (1967:29). Menander, however, was not born until 342, and did not produce his first play until 322/1 (*Prolegomena de Comoedia 3;* for the life of Menander see Clark (1906)). Thus, whatever the scene depicts, it certainly cannot be from New or Menandrean Comedy.

[972] We may here be concerned about the unusually small phallus. This, however, may simply be down to a low level of competency on behalf of the painter; as mentioned above, in quality terms the craftsmanship is certainly lacklustre.

[973] 1927:169; Pickard-Cambridge admits that "any further inference is perhaps hazardous", but points to the prominence of Herakles in early Dorian burlesques.

[974] 1993:45.

[975] *Ra.* 46,47, 483, 495.

door.[976]More substantial, however, is the posture of the slave, for in both scenes the slave is depicted as struggling with his burden as the pole presses down against his neck.[977] Similarly, in both instances it is the slave who carries the burden, and not the donkey. This leads Taplin[978] to add that surely there couldn't have been too many plays in which Herakles leads a slave with baggage over his shoulder rather than simply placing it on the donkey. Moreover, in response to the questions raised about the lack of clarity of the identity of the Herakles figure, Taplin suggests a rather fanciful – yet plausible – answer, which ties up any loose ends one may have; for the Herakles figure is stage naked; neither the *krokotos* nor the *kothornos* mentioned at *Ra.* 45-7 can be seen, and for some reason his lion skin billows out from his extended left arm. While Taplin's assertion that the absence of the *krokotos* and the *kothornos* may be the result of the obvious amateurism of the painter may not be quite sufficient, his proposal that the lion skin billows behind exactly to show this character is a faux Heracles is indeed more intriguing. Ultimately I find myself in alignment with Taplin and Panofka, and cautiously ascribe the scene to *Frogs*, for in instances such this I cannot help recall the advice once given to me by Prof. Chris Carey: apply Ockham's razor; think of the most obvious and plausible conclusion, and in the vast majority of scenarios this conclusion is probably the case. So we must just do this – there is nothing in the scholia of *Frogs* to suggest Aristophanes was using a common motif in his introduction, or mimicking another poet. *Frogs* was a *tour de force* for Aristophanes, placing first in 405 and apparently given the unique distinction of an official re-performance the following year, perhaps ultimately resulting in a decree passed in honour of Aristophanes.[979] The play then, was no-small fry. Nor was its content at the same risk of becoming out-dated as the more 'politics-centred' plays – the works of the great triad of 5th century tragedy certainly remained popular, and so then should a comedy satirising their styles. We should not let the particular peculiarities about this vase alone – by which I mean the nakedness of 'Herakles' and the smaller phallus – let us think otherwise. Indeed, such peculiarities may simply reflect unique traits of a distinct, local, more recent performance.

[976] *Ra.* 38-9.
[977] *Ra.* 8, 19-20, etc.
[978] 1963:46.
[979] Ar. Test. 1.35-39 K-A. Kaibel *in PCG* iii (2) 2 believes the testimonium is actually based upon the decree itself. Although we do not know the wording of the decree, Sommerstein makes an admirable attempt at imagining its substance (1996:21). While we cannot be sure of the precise date of the reproduction, the summer of 404 is the most agreed upon (cf. Sommerstein, 1996:21-22 & 148 – 151 and Dover, 1993:35-36).

Another interesting but peculiar candidate is a bell-krater known as 'The New York Goose Vase' (Fig. C)[980] which is most likely from Taras, dated by Trendall to c400[981] - well within the lifetime of Aristophanes - and attributed to the Tarporley painter.[982] In the top left corner we see an old woman, apparently officiating – or at least overseeing – the events transpiring below. Beside her are a dead goose and a basket containing two kids. In the centre, we have an old man, stage naked, on tip-toes with his hands clasped above his head. To his right an ugly youth, also stage naked, holds a stick in perhaps a threatening manner[983]. Due to the outlandish costumes it is doubtlessly a comedy, and since it dates to around 400, we can safely label it as a play of Old Comedy, and one which will again crop up in vases in the 370's.[984] Remarkably – and uniquely for a comic vase – lines of dialogue are transcribed next to the characters serving as speech-bubble of sorts. The dialogue – notably in Attic Greek[985] – however, does not initially afford us much more insight. The Old Woman proclaims ΕΓΩΠΑΡ|-ΕΞΩ – ('I shall hand...over'). What exactly she is going to hand over remains vague,[986] but it seems most probable the subject is the man, although what she will hand him over to/for is still a matter of conjecture – though one would assume it is for some sort of unsavoury treatment. This is evinced by the Old Man's exclamation: ΚΑΤΕΔΗΣΑΝΩΤΩΧΕΙΡΕ (κατέδης΄ἂνω τῶ χεῖρε – 'He/she has bound my hands above me'). No rope or binding mechanism, however, is visible - has the Old Woman cast a spell on him?[987] Or is this the work of the youth?[988] The youth's words are even more intriguing; he vociferates

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[980] New York Metropolitan Museum of Art cat. no. 24.97.104.

[981] 1967: 54.

[982] So Trendall (*ibid)*. The Tarporley painter was the leading figure in early 4th century Apulian vase painting, so called because of a vase - now housed in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, William Randolph Hearst Collection (cat. no. 50.8.29) – that was once owned by the Hon. Marshall Brooks in Tarporley, Chesire. He pioneered what is known as the Plain Style, focussing on Dionysiac and genre scenes. In their recent article, however, Denoyelle and Silvestrelli (2013) question the universal acceptance of Trendall's ascription, and argue it is more stylistically suited to the contemporary Lucian Dolon Painter.

[983] There is also a figure on the top left beside the word ΤΡΑΓΟΙΔΟΣ. Neither, however, have anything to do with the scene and so will not be discussed. For more on this figure cf. Taplin (1993: 62)

[984] See the discussion on Fig. D below.

[985] The museum card accompanying the vase in New York takes this as indicator that the vase was made in Athens then taken to Italy. This is a rather hasty judgement – several Apulian vases have the names of characters in Attic Greek etched on them; cf. 'Phrynis and Pyronides' (Salerno, Museo Provinciale, Cat. no. Pc 1812); 'Rape by Kassandra' (Rome, Villa Giulia Cat. no. 50279); Kreon and the Sphinx (Taranto Ragusa coll. 74); 'The Milan Cake Eaters' (Milan, Museo Civico Archeologico. AO. 9. 284); 'Choregoi' (New York, Fleischman col F93).

[986] Cf Billig (1980: 81) for five possibilities.

[987] Beazley (1952: 193) notes that καταδέω/κατάδεσιs is the proper term for 'putting under a spell'. Colvin, following, Beazley, suggests the mysterious word spoken by the youth could be part of a magic spell.

[988] Colvin (2000: 295) assumes he is referring to the Youth, rather astutely noting that the Old Man is looking in the Youth's direction as he says it.

NOPAPETTEBΛO – 'Norraretteblo' – which appears to be Double-Dutch, a foreign language, or Pidgin Greek. Numerous attempts have been made to make sense of the young man's words; no doubt they are intended to imply foreign roots, just as we see with Pseudoartabas in the *Acharnians.*[989] Beazley notes that "Characters in Aristophanes may speak (1) dialect Greek, or (2) pidgin Greek, or (3) a foreign language or (4) make noises that sound like a foreign language. This seems to be either (3) or (4)".[990] One may tentatively conjecture that action of the scene centres on the central figure having committed a crime and receiving his punishment. The crime is severe - theft is a popular suggestion.[991] I dare to be more precise - based on evidence from another vase (Fig. D) to be discussed shortly - and argue that while a theft may have occurred, the aggravating factor was the demise of the goose, who played an important role in the play. The Youth, then, may be the typical 'barbarian policeman'.[992] Recent developments support this; in their highly commendable 2012 project *Making Sense of Nonsense Inscriptions Associated with Amazonians and Scythians on Greek Vases*, Saunders, Colarusso and Mayor revisited the New York Goose Vase to re-examine NOPAPETTEBΛO. Their findings are ingenious - they noticed that phonotactics of the word are recognizable as the sound patterns of an ancient form of Circassian.[993] Through meticulous analysis of each sound in the word,[994] they concluded that the character is speaking in his native tongue, and saying something akin to "that sneak thief steals from them over there". Ancient Circassian was indeed spoken in ancient Scythia, in the Black Sea-Transcaucasus region,[995] leading them to conclude:

> "This translation of a "meaningless" inscription on an ancient vase, emerging from obscurity after more than 2,000 years, is an example of how our methodology can yield positive outcomes. The cryptic utterance not only is appropriate to the 'trial' scene, but it also confirms that the actor is indeed portraying a Scythian policeman. It suggests that a foreign phrase uttered in a theatrical performance travelled beyond Athens, and further, that

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[989] *Ach.* 100 "ἰαρταμὰν ἐξάρξαν ἀπισσόνα σάτρα", also see the broken Greek of the Scythian Archer in the *Thesmophoriazousai*. On the language of foreigners in Old Comedy in general cf. Colvin (2000).

[990] 1952: 194.

[991] The museum card suggests both men are thieves conspiring to steal the women's belongings, and describes the Youth as an athlete, presumably due to his staff and nakedness. Colvin cites the general consensus that the Old Man has stolen the goods on the right.

[992] Beazley (*Ibid.)* notes that his rough stubble and disorganized hair, combined with his non-Greek speech, establish him as a barbarian, a "foreign policeman or the like".

[993] 2012: 14.

[994] 2012: 14-15.

[995] Saunders, Colarusso and Mayor (2012: 1).

> an Apulian audience might have recognised it as pertinent to the Scythian policeman's identity"[996]

The New York Goose Vase then most likely reflects a scene like we see in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, as a Scythian policeman plods in, with barely intelligible speech and takes a character who's been naughty away for his just deserts – much like the standard 'Irish Cop' character of older American comedies. In addition to this, it suggests that such motifs of Old Comedy were recognised as far away as Apulia. And so we have a Greek play, with Greek motifs surfacing in Apulia around 400. But that particular plays *remained* popular, and received *repeated* productions, is suggested by another vase, also Apulian but dating later to c370,[997] known as the 'Boston Goose Vase' (Fig. D).[998] Here, we meet the same two characters from the New York vase – the Old Man and the Youth – at a different stage of the play. The Old Man pours liquid from an *aryballus* into his hand while the Youth again strikes a threatening pose, his arm outstretched, leaning on the same staff gesticulating at the Old Man. That we may ascertain beyond reasonable doubt that this is the same play is the depiction once again of the goose and two kids in the right hand corner – it is beyond probability that these three animals should feature so prominently in two separate plays. The fact that the goose played a prominent role is suggested by its appearance on two separate vases. Furthermore, it must be noted that on this vase, the goose is alive, while on the New York vase it is most certainly dead. This not only shows that the Boston scene precedes the New York scene, but also allows us to ask if the goose's demise was a pivotal point in the play's plot, perhaps resulting in the debacle we see in the latter scene.[999] This, of course, is based on nothing more than speculation – we may never know anything beyond the plot aside from that it featured a goose – but what is important for our case is that we have two vases with such similar iconography, by two separate painters depicting the same play thirty years apart from each other. Unless it can be shown that the vases depict separate plays, or even that Trendall erred in his dating, the evidence strongly suggests that a play produced before 400 was still in public memory thirty years later, and the most logical vehicle for this can only be through reproduction.

[996] *Ibid*: 16.

[997] Trendall (1982: 99) attributes it to the McDaniel Painter – named after a vase in McDaniel College at Harvard – whom he dates 'around 370'.

[998] Boston Museum of Fine Arts cat. no. 69. 695.

[999] No fragments or scholia indicate the role of a goose or geese in any play.

A remarkable point of the vases is that they are all scene-specific – like a snapshot of a play in modern theatre – and were designed to evoke the memory of a popular scene. The clients who commissioned these vases obviously thoroughly enjoyed these plays and wanted a reminder. I recently saw a coffee mug on which was a picture of a young John Cleese with his leg outstretched in an odd position. Underneath was emblazoned THE MINISTRY OF SILLY WALKS – a reference to his famous Monty Python sketch. Despite a lapse of almost two and a half millennia, the motive behind buying such a mug remains the same as in antiquity; one looks at it, and indeed if one is in company so does their companion, and chuckles at the memory of a classic scene from a classic comedy. In antiquity such vases would have been used when entertaining, and the frontispiece was no doubt intended as a conversation point, as one would laugh along with one's guests reminiscing on the particular comedy, and so keeping the memory of it alive.

The vases, however, are limited only to Magna Graecia, with none surviving from 4th century Athens herself. This has lead Andrew Hartwig to recently suggest that although the Old Comedy may have enjoyed a revival in Italy, this was limited to Italy alone with no such afterlife in Athens in which the Middle and New Comedy were now the audience favourites. While he readily accepts that the vases discussed above can only depict scenes from Old Comedy, he categorises this as a strictly local phenomenon; although the invective of Old Comedy satirising the 'glory days' of Athens could "open old wounds" in an Athenian forum, Hartwig believes such topical comedies could be viewed with impartiality in the Greek West.[1000] Apparently with the Würzburg Telephos and the Berlin Herakles in mind, Hartwig also makes the generalisation that since tragedy remained popular in the West, so too would comedies satirising such tragedies, before citing some possible paratragedies of Epicharmus and Deinolochus[1001] as indicative of an Italian paratragic tradition of sorts that a play like the *Thesmophoriazusae* rather conveniently fits into. This, however, is pure conjecture; while other Epicharmean titles also hint at paratragic plotlines[1002], is this enough to suggest we are to say that the reproduction of Old Comedy in Italy was limited solely to 'paratragedy'? Hartwig is also rather clumsy in his argument; he makes the case for Old Comedy becoming obscure in the 4th century by highlighting how popular 5th Century tragedy remained in Athens in comparison with the scant surviving contemporary

[1000] 2014: 213.
[1001] *Persai* and *Komoidotragoida* respectively.
[1002] *Philoctetes, Trojan Men, Sirens, Sphinx*.

references to the Old Comedians (2014: 214-215). If tragedy, however, remained popular in Athens as it did in Magna Graecia, then why wouldn't parodies of tragedy remain popular in Athens as they did in Magna Graecia? In any case, if one is to persist in discarding the evidence given by the vases as relevant only to Italy, we must look elsewhere for evidence suggesting the reproduction of Old Comedy in Athens.

2. Epigraphic Evidence.

First, then, we must turn our attention to some epigraphic evidence in the form of two inscriptions from choragic monuments in rural Attica, which strongly suggest that Old Comedy was not limited to single performances at the City Dionysia or the Lenaia. The first, and perhaps the more questionable of the two, comes from Halai Aixonides on the south-west coast of Athens (*IG* ii2 3091) which is usually dated to c380 commemorating a previous production by a local choragus.[1003]Among the victorious 'directors' listed on the monument are Cratinus with his *Boukoloi*, Sophocles with his *Telephia*, Ecphantides with *Peirai* and Timotheos with *Alkmeon*. With such big names on the bill,[1004] the inscription has usually been taken to commemorate a previous victory in the city by a local choragus, as it was assumed that poets of such status would see such rural festivals as beneath themselves.[1005] The inscription also lists single choregoi which was the standard practice in the City Dionysia, while the festivals in the demes usually used two.[1006] Csapo is more optimistic; noting that there is no reference to the City Dionysia in the inscription, he asks are we to expect a demesman to read the inscription and, like us, assume that the production must have taken place in the city as no poet of this standard would bother with his little deme? Seeing this as unlikely, Csapo then argues that the festival did actually place in the deme and the victors listed did indeed venture south to direct their plays.[1007] Ghiron-Bistagne allows for the festival to have taken place in Halai Aixonides, but dismisses the suggestion that poets were directors in the physical sense as "outlandish".[1008] In fact any of these three conclusions

[1003] Storey is perhaps the most recent to assert this, calling it "a record of past successes" (2011: 275); Wilson goes as far as to suggest it may even have been erected by descendants of the choregoi in the deme (2004:248).
[1004] On Sophocles' *Telepheia* see Sienkewicz (1976). Cratinus was regarded as the master of his craft in the 5th Century, winning almost triple the amount of competitions as Aristophanes and double those of Eupolis; for a good overview of his career see Bakola (2010). Six fragments of *Boukoloi* – the play listed here - survive (fr. 17-22), but do not give any clue as to the date or place of the original production. For Epichantides and Timotheus see Csapo (2010: 92 with notes).
[1005] Cf. Wilson (2000: 248).
[1006] *Ibid.*
[1007] 2010: 92-93.
[1008] 1976:133.

help our case; if the inscription merely recalls a victory from over half a century earlier,[1009] then it may be said with certainty that the plays of Old Comedy still remained in public memory. Alternatively, if we agree with Csapo in saying that the poets did venture to produce their plays in the rural demes, this strongly suggests the reproduction of older plays as it does not seem plausible that the poets would compose one-off new plays to be performed at such a small festival.[1010] Thirdly, if Ghiron-Bistagne is correct then our case is proven – the plays of Old Comedy were being reproduced in different areas by regional directors. If she is right then we are not restricted to speculating on a date for the festival within the poets' lifetime as they did not have to appear at it; it may just as plausibly record a more recent production after the poets' deaths.

More information comes in the form of an inscription from the base of a monument found in Eleusis (*IG* I 3 970), 16 kilometres North-West of Athens which states Aristophanes 'was director' of the winning comedy and Sophocles 'was director' of the winning tragedy. Anaxandrides and Gnathis are listed as *synchoregoi* and the winning plays remain nameless. As Csapo rightly notes,[1011] the verb used in the inscription for 'was director' is ἐδίδασκεν which means more than simply 'was poet', and denotes the physical roles taken by Aristophanes and Sophocles as directors of the chorus through which they would be present at the production. Once again assuming that the Dionysia of Eleusis was not an event big enough for such heavyweights, the inscription was generally taken to reflect a win at the City Dionysia by a local *choregos* on a monument in the local theatre.[1012] The 1943 publication of a new fragment of the *Fasti*, however, allowed Capps[1013] to challenge this position, for the fragment records only one instance of *synchoregoi* financing the City Dionysia. The scholiast to *Frogs*, however, cites Aristotle as evidence for its being during the archonship of Callias (405-404).[1014] Sophocles, however, died in 406[1015] and could not have been part of this event. We may similarly exclude the Lenaia as there is no evidence at all for *synchoregia* there. The previously mentioned prevalence of *synchoregia* at the Rural Dionysia, however, has

[1009] Cratinus' last play was *Pytine* at the Dionysia of 423, in which he famously came out of retirement to compete with Aristophanes; cf. Luppe (2000).
[1010] Cf. Aristophanes' parody of a Rural Dionysia in the *Acharnians,* which certainly suggests this is not a festival that he would go to the effort of writing a new play for.
[1011] 2010: 91.
[1012] Perhaps most recently by Wilson (2010), who gives a summary of the previous trend.
[1013] 1943: 5-8; Also see Pickard-Cambridge (1968: 48, 87, 102).
[1014] Aristotle fr. 630 Rose.
[1015] Nor could it refer to the younger Sophocles as he was not active until at least 401, as noted by Csapo following Capps (2010: 91).

lead to the eventual acceptance that *IG* I 3 970 refers to the Dionysia of Eleusis.[1016] Here again we are faced with two alternatives, neither of which are unfavourable to our position; either the plays of Old Comedy were being reperformed in Eleusis by independent directors, or Aristophanes himself ventured north to direct one of his own plays – both of which point to the plays of Old Comedy having an afterlife.

The inscriptions, however, do not offer much evidence as to the length of such an afterlife, or if it lasted into the 4th Century. For this we turn to contemporary texts in search of references that allow us to deduce with some level of confidence that Old Comedy still enjoyed popularity.

3. Textual Evidence.

Indeed the first case of textual evidence so strongly supports this that it should be enough to close the case; Plato, in his *Symposium*, has Alcibiades fondly recall Aristophanes' caricature of Socrates as he describes his demeanour at the Battle of Delium: ἔπειτα ἔμοιγ' ἐδόκει, ὦ Ἀριστόφανες, τὸ σὸν δὴ τοῦτο, καὶ ἐκεῖ διαπορεύεσθαι ὥσπερ καὶ ἐνθάδε, "βρενθυόμενος καὶ τὠφθαλμὼ παραβάλλων"[1017]. The line Alcibiades quotes is spoken by the chorus at *Nu.* 362, also to describe Socrates: σοὶ δέ, ὅτι **βρενθύει τ' ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς καὶ τὠφθαλμὼ παραβάλλεις,** κἀνυπόδητος κακὰ πόλλ' ἀνέχει κἀφ' ἡμῖν σεμνοπροσωπεῖς. Plato, then, has remembered a single line of the play, and obviously expects his readership to as well. If *Clouds*, however, was never reproduced after finishing third in the Dionysia in 423 – when Plato was about 5 years old – how conceivable is it that he was able to recall this single line? Moreover, if we take the mid-380's as the earliest date for the composition of the *Symposium*, how conceivable is it that Plato expected his readership to recall a line from the sole performance of a play nearly 40 years previously?

A similar instance occurs in Xenophon's *Symposium*[1018] – discussed previously at p. 105 – as the Syracusan, dismayed at the conversation repeatedly blowing off course, begins to poke fun at Socrates:

> τοιούτων δὲ λόγων ὄντων ὡς ἑώρα ὁ Συρακόσιος τῶν μὲν αὑτοῦ ἐπιδειγμάτων ἀμελοῦντας, ἀλλήλοις δὲ ἡδομένους, φθονῶν τῷ Σωκράτει

[1016] Pickard-Cambridge (1968: 47-48); Ghiron-Bistagne (1976: 92-3); Whitehead (1986: 217); Makres (1994: 350-1).
[1017] *Symp*. 221b1-4.
[1018] VI: 6-8.

> εἶπεν: ἆρα σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὁ **φροντιστὴς**[1019] ἐπικαλούμενος; οὐκοῦν κάλλιον, ἔφη, ἢ εἰ ἀφρόντιστος ἐκαλούμην. εἰ μή γε ἐδόκεις **τῶν μετεώρων**[1020] φροντιστὴς εἶναι. οἶσθα οὖν, ἔφη ὁ Σωκράτης, μετεωρότερόν τι τῶν θεῶν; ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μὰ Δί᾽, ἔφη, οὐ τούτων σε λέγουσιν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀνωφελεστάτων. οὐκοῦν καὶ οὕτως ἄν, ἔφη, θεῶν ἐπιμελοίμην· ἄνωθεν μέν γε ὕοντες ὠφελοῦσιν, ἄνωθεν δὲ φῶς παρέχουσιν. εἰ δὲ ψυχρὰ λέγω, σὺ αἴτιος, ἔφη, πράγματά μοι παρέχων. ταῦτα μέν, ἔφη, ἔα· ἀλλ᾽ εἰπέ **μοι πόσους ψύλλα πόδας ἐμοῦ ἀπέχει. ταῦτα γάρ σέ φασι γεωμετρεῖν**[1021].

It is certain that Xenophon must have the *Clouds* in mind here and it would seem the Syracusan remembers the play quite well. Although Xenophon sets his *Symposium* in 421 – two years after the production of *Clouds* – it is generally assumed he composed his dialogue after Plato's, possibly in the 370's.[1022] Yet he still remembers details even as minute as Socrates and Chaerephon studying the length of a flea's jump, along with Socrates being labelled as a φροντιστὴς who studies things in the sky. The Syracusan also alludes to the scene in *Clouds* which has the Student and Strepsiades play at geometers, but as does the Syracusan, they get confused between actual art and the word's etymology:

Στρεψιάδης

τουτὶ δὲ τί;

Μαθητής

γεωμετρία.

Στρεψιάδης

τοῦτ᾽ οὖν τί ἐστι χρήσιμον;

Μαθητής

γῆν ἀναμετρῆσαι.

Στρεψιάδης

πότερα τὴν κληρουχικήν;

Μαθητής

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὴν σύμπασαν.

[1019] *Nu*. 94,101, 153, 215.
[1020] *Nu*. 228, 333, 360, 1284.
[1021] *Nu*. 145.
[1022] Cf. Dover (1965), but also Thesleff (1978).

Once again we find ourselves asking if *Clouds* was not being reproduced, why would Xenophon allude to an obscure scene of a play he doesn't mention by name and expect his readership to recognise the reference? Although fiction, the dialogue must remain in the realms of plausibility, and so it must have been logical that the Syracusan could have seen the play; but we must ask how this was so? Had word of the play travelled to Syracuse? Whatever the case, Xenophon's *Symposium* strongly indicates that the *Clouds* remained topical at least in Socratic circles into the mid-4th Century. Xenophon, however, wrote for a more intellectual class than Aristophanes, and so could expect his readership to be well read, and thus familiar with the *Clouds.* It could then be charged that although interest in the plays of Old Comedy survived into the 4th Century, it did so only in the form of script-reading rather than full-blown performances. This has the propensity to weaken our position, as familiarity with the plays may have been limited only to literary circles rather than the wider public. That book-reading was popular in the 4th century, however, is suggested by the Middle Comic poet Ophelion (fr. 3), who includes a βιβλίον Πλάτωνος ἐμβρόντητον in a list of ingredients for a soup; nor should we forget the opening of *Frogs* (46-48) where Dionysus mentions he had recently been reading Euripides' *Andromeda.* Moreover, Marshall[1023] has recently observed that when Plato refers to the *Clouds* in the *Apology* he says the audience themselves have *seen* Socrates on stage in 'that comedy of Aristophanes' (ταῦτα γὰρ **ἑωρᾶτε** καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀριστοφάνους κωμῳδίᾳ -19c2-3). This implies then that any negativity about Socrates was generated by actually *seeing* Socrates on stage swinging about in a basket rather than merely reading it from a text. It is clear that Plato still felt the comedy played a major role in influencing the negative opinion of Socrates, but would this have still been possible after such a length of time since the play's production? Between 423 and 399 there would have been around 150 comedies between the Dionysia and the Lenaia, and so is it really plausible that out of this number of plays, a play that finished last was still so fresh in contemporary minds a quarter of a century later?[1024] This is surely indicative of a more recent performance. Although the didascalic records only showed one entry for *Clouds*, Marshall raises the point that several plays of Old Comedy circulated in two versions under the same title (Aristophanes' *Clouds, Aeolosicon, Thesmophoriazusae, Peace*, and *Wealth*, Diocles' *Thyestes*, Magnes' *Dionysus*, and Eupolis' *Autolycus*).[1025] All of these plays – bar *Wealth* – however, are only attested to once in the didascalic

[1023] 2012: 65.
[1024] For a case that *Clouds* was well-received despite its placing in the competition cf. Storey (2003a) and Major (2006).
[1025] 2012:55-68.

records, yet Storey[1026]– basing his argument on Galen[1027]– is certain that Eupolis' *Autolycus* was performed twice. Similarly, it is undisputed that *Frogs* was reproduced,[1028] although we are not certain when or where. Marshall grapples with the lack of entry in the didascalic records for any of these versions of the plays, yet the solution may be much more simple – surely a poet would be prevented from entering the same play twice in the competition, just as a director could not enter the same film in the Cannes Film Festival within a gap of a few years.[1029] Marshall goes on to propose a quite plausible conclusion – the reproduction of plays in a less formal, non-competitive format – much akin to amateur dramatic groups or fringe theatre in modernity. Could the revisions – such as the reference to Eupolis' *Marikas* in *Clouds*[1030] then be an attempt to 'update' the plays to make them more relevant to an audience at the time of revision? It makes no sense for a playwright to begin a revision he knows will never see the stage. While the revised *Clouds* itself is incomplete and unperformable due to certain theatrical impracticalities within the text,[1031] it may be the case that it was the original that was reproduced. Although the true purpose for the revisions is ultimately unknowable,[1032] we must remember that the restraints of competitive performance would not apply to informal productions. Under these circumstances then, the revised *Clouds* could be performed with additional actors.

Though it cannot be confirmed with certainty, it seems more likely than not that the plays of Old Comedy enjoyed an after-life into the 4th century. The argument against this premise seems to rely solely on tradition and assumption, for there is actually no compelling evidence to support it beyond doubting how such topical plays could endure

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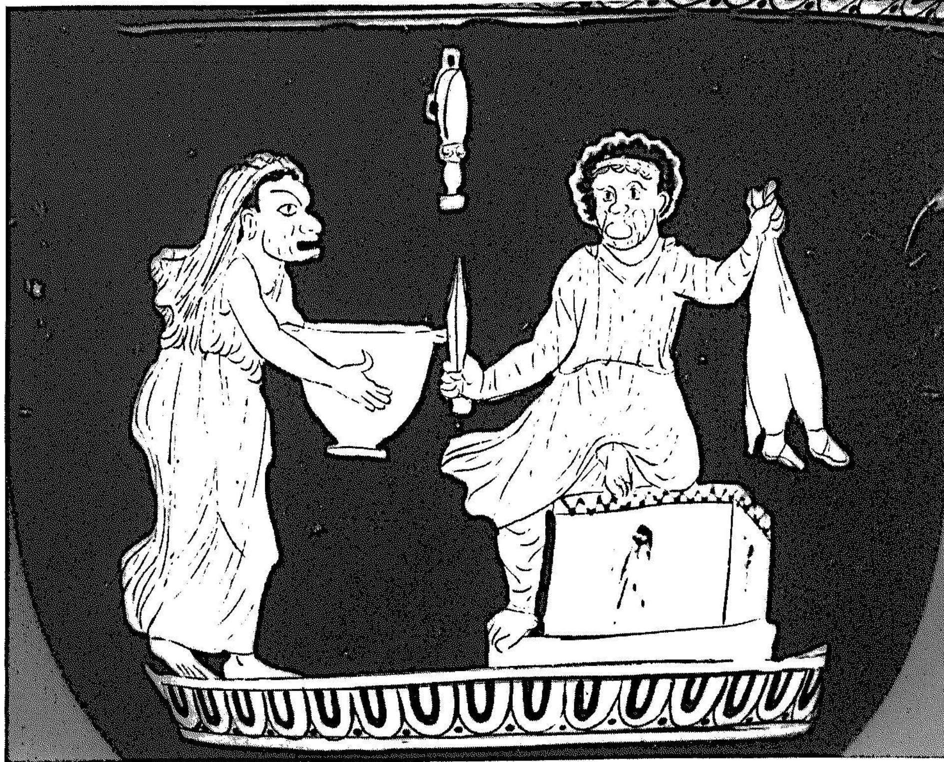
[1026] 2003: 83.
[1027] *Commentary on Hippocrates' 'On Regimen in Acute Diseases':* 1.4.
[1028] The Hypothesis for the play cites Aristotle's student Dicaearchus as the source for this.
[1029] The exception here is Aristophanes' *Plutus*. The first performance of *Plutus*, however, was in 408, while the extant version was produced by his son Araros in 388. While nothing survives of the original, it could not plausibly share much in common with the revision; not only had much changed in Athens over the past 20 years, so had the entire genre of comedy, with Old giving way to the Middle, the latter of which *Plutus II* is certainly a part. This is exemplified by the reduction of the role of the chorus and the decrease in invective against prominent figures, both staples of Old Comedy and techniques the original would have most certainly heavily relied on.
[1030] *Nu.* 553; The *Marikas* was produced in 421, and so could not belong to the original of 423.
[1031] At *Nu.* 886 Socrates excuses himself with the rather weak 'I'll be elsewhere' and runs off stage. This is presumably due to the fact that the actor playing Socrates would have also played the Inferior Argument and needed to change costume, but the gap of 5 lines between Socrates' exit and Inferior's entrance would not have been enough time for even the most seasoned actor to do so. Dover (1968: comm. on 553) suggests that here we are missing a choral interlude, which would solve this problem.
[1032] Marshall is steadfast in her assertion that the revision was meant for production, and rather tenuously equates this to the 'bad quartos' of Shakespeare, where even in the age of the printing press there circulated substandard un-stageable copies of Shakespeare's plays. This, however, implies that there may have been several different versions of *Clouds* circulating, an interesting but unknowable proprosal.

beyond the particular place and time they were initially produced. Such a position is further weakened when evidence for the contrary is reviewed, which, although conjectural at times, does in fact present a stronger case and forces us to reconsider this ‘traditional’ view.

Appendix II: Catalogue of vases listed.

Fig. A: The Würzburg *Telephos* (Taplin 11.4; Martin von Wagner Museum der Universität Wurzburg, H 5697



(Picture Credit: Taplin, 1993)

Date: c370

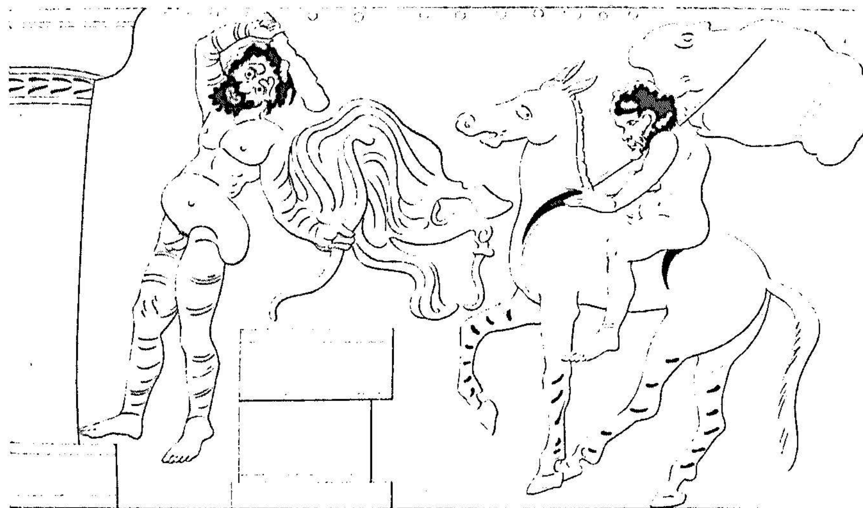
Origin: Southern Italy

Depicts: Most likely Aristophanes' parody of Euripides' *Telephos* in his *Thesmophoriazousai* (688ff).

Text: None.

Fig. B: The Berlin Herakles (Taplin 13.7; Formerly Berlin, Staatliche Museen F3046, since destroyed or plundered)

(Picture Credit: Taplin, 1993)



7 Berlin Herakles

(Picture Credit: Taplin, 1993)

Date: 375-350.

Origin: Apulia, Southern Italy.

Depicts: The introduction of Aristophanes' *Frogs*?

Text: None.

Fig. C: New York Goose Play (Taplin 10.2; New York Metropolitan Museum of Art 24. 97. 104)

(Picture Credit: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Date: c.400

Origin: Most likely Taranto, Southern Italy

Depicts: Specific scene from an unknown Attic comedy of the Old Period.

Text: Old Woman on left – ΕΓΩΠΑΡ|-ΕΞΩ (I shall hand...over)

Young man on right – ΝΟΡΑΡΕΤΤΕΒΛΟ (Untranslatable Double Dutch/ possibly Ancient Circassian meaning "That sneak thief steals from over there")

Old Man in Centre- ΚΑΤΕΔΗΣΑΝΩΤΩΧΕΙΡΕ - κατέδηςˊἂνω τῶ χεῖρε (He/she has bound my hands above me)

Fig. D: The Boston Goose Play (Taplin 11.3; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 69.695)

(Picture Credit: Boston Museum of Fine Arts)

Date: c370

Origin: Apulia, Southern Italy

Depicts: Most likely a different scene from the same play depicted in Fig. C above. Note the goose is now dead, so we must be glimpsing at a latter point of the play.

Text: None

Fig E: 'Getty Birds' (Taplin 24.28; J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu)

(Picture Credit: The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu)

Date: c425-400.

Origin: Attic.

Depicts: A scene from Old Comedy, perhaps *Birds* or the *agon* of *Clouds I*.

Text: None.

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