

Pericles Among the Intellectuals<sup>1</sup>

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Φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας. These words, put into Pericles' mouth by Thucydides, suggest Pericles' interest in σοφία. Unfortunately the historian gives no other indications of Pericles' involvement with the dynamic intellectual currents of his day.<sup>2</sup> Many modern scholars have attempted to fill this lack. The sophists, according to G. B. Kerferd, "owed much to individual patronage, and above all to the patronage of one man, Pericles. This is something which has not been recognized as fully as it should in accounts of the sophistic movement. Lack of evidence makes it difficult for us to form any clear and reliable judgment about the personality of Pericles. But his intellectualism is not to be doubted."<sup>3</sup> Such an assertion invites reexamination of our admittedly thin evidence, for in fact Pericles' intellectualism was frequently doubted in his own time and subsequently. What exactly was his relation with the intellectual and artistic movements of his time, especially with the sophists? Who were the intellectuals closest to him, and what was his relation to them?

In what follows I will examine Pericles' associations, recorded or imagined, with a number of intellectuals—Protagoras, Parmenides and Zeno, Pythocles, Damon, Anaxagoras, Sophocles, Phidias, and Aspasia. In so doing, I will pay especial attention to the temporal and literary context in which our notices appear. I believe that it is seriously mistaken to make Pericles the central figure of intellectual life at Athens. That view is founded upon an incautious and unskeptical reading of Plutarch's *Pericles*

<sup>1</sup> It is a pleasure to explore again in a volume dedicated to his memory a topic that I discussed several years ago with Fritz Solmsen. Conversations with him always revealed new aspects of old problems.

<sup>2</sup> The speeches Thucydides attributes to Pericles cannot be taken as a direct statement of Pericles. They indicate Thucydides' respect for his intelligence, but give no indication of his training or intellectual milieu. The sophistic figures occasionally employed (as at 2. 40. 1) belong to Thucydides' own style.

<sup>3</sup> G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge 1981) 18. Cf. also F. Schachermeyr, *Perikles* (Stuttgart 1969) 142–49 on Pericles' *Kulturprogramm*, D. Kagan, *Pericles of Athens and the Birth of Democracy* (New York 1991) 171 and 185 on "the intellectualism and rationalism" of Pericles.

and other late sources, and does not sufficiently attend to the tradition of the fifth and fourth centuries. Like Plutarch, I will give particular importance to the statements of contemporaries, despite the obvious bias and even hostility they often show. This reexamination will reveal a Pericles rather different from some standard presentations. Stripped free of the anecdotal rhetoric of later centuries, Pericles emerges as a powerful orator and dynamic politician, but not a participant in the sophistic revolution. Let us start with the evidence for Pericles' contact with the most famous of the sophists.

"Close personal relations existed at least with Protagoras," Victor Ehrenberg writes.<sup>4</sup> The chief evidence comes from an anecdote in Plutarch's *Pericles*. Pericles is said to have spent the whole day with Protagoras, trying to establish who should be held responsible for the accidental death of a participant in the games—the javelin which killed him, the thrower of the javelin, or those managing the games (*Per.* 36. 4–5). The source and value of the story are problematic. It is often considered as contemporary, deriving from Stesimbrotus. Yet Plutarch does not attribute the passage on Pericles' dispute with Protagoras to Stesimbrotus, as he does the immediately following story of Pericles' seduction of Xanthippus' wife.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the story does not fit Stesimbrotus' purposes, as far as we can establish them. Stesimbrotus, a Homeric rhapsode and explicator, tried to show, in his book deriding the politicians Themistocles, Thucydides, and Pericles, the weaknesses in the education and training of these leaders. It would not have been to his advantage to show Pericles debating on an equal footing with Protagoras, the wisest of the sophists. If anything, he would have wished to show Pericles demolished by the brilliance of the expert.<sup>6</sup>

Plato in his dialogue *Protagoras*, written almost five centuries earlier than the *Pericles*, has an illuminating passage which serves as a counterbalance to Plutarch, and warns us not to overinterpret his anecdote. Xanthippus and Paralus, the two sons of Pericles, are discovered by Socrates at the house of Callias, following Protagoras about as he holds forth. But

<sup>4</sup> V. Ehrenberg, *Sophocles and Pericles* (Oxford 1954) 96.

<sup>5</sup> This is the apparent interpretation of Plutarch's discrete and shocked reference to this story at *Per.* 13. 16 and 36. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Note how, in Plato *Prot.* 339a–c, Protagoras' statements on Simonides are meant to leave Socrates reeling and unable to reply. In such a case, one would imagine that Stesimbrotus presented a satirical picture of Xanthippus' report of Pericles' encounter with Protagoras. The source of the account of Xanthippus' quarrel may well be comedy. On Stesimbrotus' pamphlet, see F. Schachermeyr, "Stesimbrotos und seine Schrift über die Staatsmänner," *SAWW* 247, 5 (1965), K. Meister, "Stesimbrotos' Schrift über die athenischen Staatsmänner und ihre historische Bedeutung (*FGH Hist* 107 F 1–11)," *Historia* 27 (1978) 274–94, and H. Strasburger, "Aus den Anfängen der griechischen Memoirenkunst," in *Forma et Subtilitas: Festschrift für Wolfgang Schöne zum 75. Geburtstag* (Berlin 1986) 1–11.

they have not been sent there by Pericles.<sup>7</sup> As Socrates notes, Pericles has neither trained them himself in political wisdom, nor entrusted them to others, but rather “left them to graze for themselves, like free-ranging sheep” (319e–20a). Now they are listening to Protagoras, but soon—the implication is—they will move on. Moreover, Socrates observes, Pericles has also refused to entrust his ward Cleinias to Protagoras: after a brief period in the care of his uncle Ariphron, Pericles has once more put Cleinias in the rather dubious care of his brother Alcibiades (320a–b).<sup>8</sup>

It is clearly Plato’s view that Pericles had no special faith in Protagoras’ teaching, or that of other sophists, but expected that his sons and wards would grow up naturally, with no special training, in the companionship of their older relatives and fellow citizens. How different Pericles is from Callias, who spent a fortune on the sophists! Far from spending money on sophists, Pericles, as Plato reports elsewhere, put his ward Alcibiades in the care of a paedagogue, a certain Zopyrus, a Thracian slave in his household, who had grown too old for other duties (*Alc. I* 122a).<sup>9</sup> Plato’s scorn for Pericles’ attitude toward education is palpable.

If we are to believe Plato, then, Pericles did not think that Protagoras was a good or necessary educator for the young people in his charge. What then of Plutarch’s report that Pericles spent a whole day discussing with Protagoras the case of the contestant in the pentathlon? The story, if true, would be indicative of Pericles’ interest in considering legal problems at length, though not necessarily of his enthusiasm for sophistic disputations. But there is little reason to consider it authentic: A similar case in Antiphon, *Tetralogies* 2, concerns a boy killed by a javelin thrown in a gymnasium. The problem, while undoubtedly the subject of discussion in the fifth century, was also a standard rhetorical challenge concerning responsibility, into which teachers could introduce real names to enhance vividness. By Plutarch’s day, it must have been a common *topos*, like the story of the slave of Pericles, who fell from the roof of the Propylaea while sleep-walking.<sup>10</sup> The story probably belongs to the pedagogical tradition of the rhetorical or philosophical schools, as do several others in the *Pericles*.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Pace Schachermeyr (above, note 3) 148.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also *Meno* 94d: Pericles has trained them in μουσική, ἀγωνία, and τὰλλα . . . ὅσα τέχνης ἔχεται, but not in virtue.

<sup>9</sup> Zopyrus—if it is the same one—apparently became an example in Socratic circles: Phaedo wrote a dialogue named after him, and he was said to have been interested in physiognomy (Diog. Laert. 2. 105; cf. also Cic. *Tusc.* 4. 37. 80; *De fato* 5. 10).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Plut. *Per.* 13; Pliny, *NH* 22. 44; Diog. Laert. 9. 82; Hieronymus fr. 19 Wehrli.

<sup>11</sup> Cf., e.g., the story of Pericles and the eclipse (*Per.* 35. 2), ascribed to the philosophical schools. For Antiphon as a predecessor of the later rhetoricians’ treatment of stasis theory, cf. D. A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge 1983) 17 and 40; for Pericles as an example in declamations, 121. Even if the story goes back to Stesimbrotus, its veracity would hardly be assured, since Stesimbrotus’ anti-Periclean brief led him to report or invent even the story of Pericles’ lust for his daughter-in-law. Jacoby, *FGrHist*

A second ground for connecting Protagoras and Pericles is that Heraclides Ponticus reports that Protagoras went as lawgiver to Thurii.<sup>12</sup> The notice itself is unreliable, since Diodorus speaks at great length of Charondas as the lawgiver who revised the ancient laws of Zaleucus for use at Thurii (12. 11–21). Moreover, we are by no means certain that Pericles played a determining role in the foundation of Thurii and in the appointment of the lawgiver. Of all the sources referring to the founding of the new city, only Plutarch presents Thurii as a Periclean project. The context in Plutarch's *Pericles* does not encourage belief: our notice appears in a list of Athenian initiatives of all sorts (*Per.* 11. 4–6), which Plutarch has assembled to glorify Pericles. The list includes projects which are clearly non-Periclean, such as Tolmides' cleruchy to Naxos.<sup>13</sup> Thurii thus offers no support for a tie between Pericles and Protagoras. Quite simply, we do not know Pericles' role in the foundation of the city, nor in the choice of Protagoras as lawgiver, if indeed he was chosen, nor the motivations Pericles might have had in urging the appointment if he did so.

In sum, Plato assures us that Pericles conspicuously avoided the one service which he might reasonably have entrusted to Protagoras, the training of his own legitimate children, Xanthippus and Paralus. Anecdotes connecting the two men are highly dubious. The silence of the fifth and fourth century sources points to the conclusion that Pericles' circle never included Protagoras.

Nor is this surprising. Although an excellent orator, Pericles had little in common with the sophists. Exactly because of his gifts as a speaker, he did not need to go to them for rhetorical training. By the time the first sophists became active in the 440s, Pericles had been a leading figure in Athenian politics for two decades. In addition, he presented himself to the Athenians as a champion of religious orthodoxy. We cannot pass over casually the fact that he instituted an extraordinarily ambitious and expensive program of sacred buildings, whose manifest purpose was to

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107 F 11 prints the whole passage, but marks with large print 36. 6 as the section actually ascribed by Plutarch to Stesimbrotus. An unauthentic work found in the Plutarchan corpus, the *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, reports that Protagoras praised Pericles' self-control at the funerals of his sons (*Cons. ad Apol.* 118e = *FVS* 80 B 9, cf. also *Val. Max.* 5. 10. ext. 1, *Aelian VH* 9. 6). Even if the anecdote were genuine, it would tell nothing of Protagoras' personal contact with Pericles.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted by *Diog. Laert.* 9. 50.

<sup>13</sup> The seer Lampon, a *mantis* whom Plutarch elsewhere considered a friend and agent of Pericles (*Praec. ger. rep.* 812d), was the chair of the Athenian commission sent to establish the city. But a cross-examination of Lampon by Pericles in a trial for *asebeia* is recorded by Aristotle (*Rhet.* 3, 1419a), which indicates that Lampon at that time was not a friend of Pericles. Plutarch's description of Lampon as Pericles' agent is most probably a deduction from his presence on the Thurii commission. See for a full account of the evidence for the foundation of Thurii D. Kagan, *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca, NY 1969) 154–69, 382–84.

honor the gods of the city. We may find it easier to consider the Parthenon or Propylaea as aesthetic monuments, but the Athenian people, led by Pericles, saw them first of all as dedications to their patron goddess. Moreover, Pericles was willing to make a *casus belli* of the religious sanctions against the Megarians for working land sacred to the Eleusinian goddesses. Protagoras' view of the gods was that "concerning the gods I cannot know either that they exist or do not exist, nor what sort they are in appearance: many things hinder knowing, the obscurity [of the subject] and the brevity of human life."<sup>14</sup> Pericles' public life utterly contradicted that opinion. On the contrary, Pericles devoted a substantial part of his energy and political capital to seeing that Athens honored the gods as they had never been honored before, with buildings, festivals, and processions.

The tenuous evidence for Pericles' contact with Protagoras depends on traditions elaborated after the fourth century. A similar late elaboration also lies behind Plutarch's statement that Pericles heard Parmenides and Zeno when they were at Athens (*Per.* 4. 5). A meeting of the two Eleatics with Pericles would indeed have been chronologically possible, but no other writer suggests any such contact. In this case the argument from silence is especially important: Plato has Socrates refute the notion that Pericles has any real knowledge by showing that he has taught no one. In the course of the argument he notes particularly two men whom he knows to have profited from contact with Zeno. Socrates pointedly omits listing Pericles as a student, although he is the subject of the argument at this point (*Alc.* I 119a).<sup>15</sup> Plutarch or his source has misremembered Plato, and made Pericles one of Zeno's students.<sup>16</sup> There is no other evidence for Pericles' contact with these men.

In fact, neither fifth-century writers nor Plato, our chief source for the sophists and their friends, ever suggests that Pericles had contact with any philosopher except Anaxagoras, or with any sophist at all, unless Damon is included in that category. The comic poets, so hostile to his other friends, say nothing about sophists.<sup>17</sup> This silence is echoed by the other Socratic writers and by Aristotle. Our conclusion must be that Pericles had no interest in the sophists, and gave them no support. The sole exception—and he is in fact not an exception—is Damon, son of Damonides.

<sup>14</sup> H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*<sup>9</sup> II (Berlin 1959) 265 (80 B 4).

<sup>15</sup> Grote's reference to this passage as evidence for Zeno's teaching of Pericles is mistaken (*History of Greece* VIII [London 1869] 145, c. LXVII).

<sup>16</sup> There is no reason to assume another source: such casual errors are not infrequent, even in material Plutarch knows well; cf. e.g. the conflation of the campaigns of Epidaurus and Potidaea at *Per.* 35.

<sup>17</sup> Note that Aristophanes does not mention Pericles in the *Clouds*, except for a political action unrelated to sophistry (*Nub.* 859).

Damon, an undoubted associate of Pericles, is often considered a sophist, but he is a unique representative of the species. First, he was an Athenian, and one prominent enough in political life to be ostracized. Second, there is no record that he received payment for teaching others. He is first mentioned in our literary sources by the comic poet Plato, quoted by Plutarch in the *Pericles*. This poet, writing after Pericles' death, has a character address Damon with these words: "You, as they say, were a Chiron in bringing up Pericles."<sup>18</sup> Clearly the poet suggests that Damon taught or influenced Pericles in some way, as Chiron was said to have done for Achilles and other heroes. Unfortunately the nature of the activity is not specified. Several references from the fourth century supplement this intriguing notice. Plato informs us that Damon was especially expert in music (*Rep.* 3, 400a; 4, 424c), and had been influenced by Prodicus (*Lach.* 197d). According to Plato Damon had an effect on Pericles (*Alc.* I 118c, where he is coupled with Pythocles and Anaxagoras) and on Nicias (*Lach.* 197d). Isocrates, in the 350s, considers him a teacher of Pericles, along with Anaxagoras, and most sensible (φρονιμώτατος) of the Athenians (*Antid.* 235). Finally, the *Athenaion Politeia* tells us that Damonides, the father of Damon, was a political adviser to Pericles, especially in suggesting public payment for jury duty (27. 4), and was ostracized by an annoyed *demos*. An ostrakon apparently dating from the 440s, "Damon Damonidou," indicates that Aristotle or the papyrus text is mistaken, and that not Damonides but his son Damon was ostracized, although the ostrakon which survives was not necessarily cast on the occasion of his ostracism.<sup>19</sup> Then, sometime in the late fourth century, as Wallace has argued, Heraclides Ponticus or another writer composed a philosophical dialogue containing Damon as a character, in which the educative value of

<sup>18</sup> *Per.* 4. 4 = fr. 191 K.: σὺ γὰρ / ὡς φασι Χείρων ἐξέθρεψας Περικλέα. Although Plutarch refers to "comic poets," he probably knew only this one citation. On this fragment, cf. J. Schwarze, *Die Beurteilung des Perikles durch die attische Komödie und ihre historische und historiographische Bedeutung*, Zetemata 51 (Munich 1971) 160–64. Schwarze's attempt to fix a date, however, cannot be accepted.

<sup>19</sup> The ostrakon might have been cast when another person received the "winning" vote. An alternate interpretation of *Ath. Pol.* 27. 4 corrects the *Ath. Pol.*'s Damonides to Damon, and argues that Damon was older than Pericles, being born about 500, adviser to Pericles in the 450s, and ostracized ca. 430; see K. Meister, "Damon, der politische Berater des Perikles," *Rivista storica dell'antichità* 3 (1973) 29–45, P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford 1981) ad loc., and R. W. Wallace, "Damon di Oa ed i suoi successori: un'analisi delle fonti," in *Harmonia Mundi*, ed. R. W. Wallace and B. MacLachlan, *Quaderni Urbinati*, Suppl. 4 (forthcoming) 30–53, at p. 50. This does not seem to take account of the testimony in Plato, *Alc.* I 118c, that Pericles associated particularly with Damon as an old man, and that Damon figures in a play of Plato Comicus, who first began producing plays in the 420s. As Wallace notes (p. 52), the earlier dating would make Damon one of the earliest sophists, if he can be called such, well before Protagoras. This seems highly improbable.

music was discussed.<sup>20</sup> Later notices are not useful in establishing Damon's role as associate of Pericles. Even the rather detailed comments of Plutarch, *Pericles* 4. 1–4 and 9. 2, are derived entirely from the notices in Plato, Aristotle, and Plato the comic poet. The apparent additions, where Plutarch speaks of Damon as a top-notch sophist (ἄκρος σοφιστής) who used the lyre as a shield, are a reworking and elaboration of Plato's description, through the mouth of Protagoras, of how sophists had protected themselves from hostility, and provide no new information.<sup>21</sup>

What then is Damon's position with regard to Pericles? He was considered extremely smart, and was an adviser to Pericles, as his father had been before him. It is quite likely, given the fact that he was ostracized, that he was politically active and belonged to a well-to-do family, with the wealth if not the lineage of other leading figures in mid-fifth-century politics. His Athenian birth and apparently continuous residence in Athens set him off from other sophists, who came from minor cities, traveled through the Greek world to earn money and build their reputation, and considered a profitable stay at Athens a high point of their activity. Damon, according to Plato and later writers, was especially interested in music, in particular the different harmonies and their effects on the psychology or behavior of listeners or performers.<sup>22</sup> If we were to relate his musical interests with any political initiatives of Pericles, we might expect them to be the increase in the number of festivals (Plut. *Per.* 11. 4), the reestablishment of the musical agon in the Panathenaia shortly before 446 (*Per.* 13. 11), and especially the construction of the Odeon (*Per.* 13. 9–10).<sup>23</sup> Such an emphasis on music as a proper activity of government would well fit Damon's interests, and not be different in kind from his father's recommendations regarding jury duty: both initiatives won influence for Pericles by distributing public money to the citizens. It would also explain why Damon might be seen by Pericles' opponents as a dangerous element, worthy of ostracism: his advice would be directly related to Pericles' power in Athens, and to the use of the *phoros* from the Delian league, which was also the basis for the objections against the Periclean

<sup>20</sup> Wallace (previous note) 32–42.

<sup>21</sup> Plato, *Prot.* 339a–e. Wallace (above, note 19) 50, cites also Olympiodorus, *In Alc.* ed. Westerink, 137. 20–38. 11, as furnishing information that Damon taught Pericles the songs "which harmonized the city," but this is simply Olympiodorus' interpretation of the passage in *Alc.* I 118c, filled out with the discussion of Damon in the *Republic*. I disagree with Wallace's assertion (51) that as scientific researcher on human subjects and as political adviser, "Damon fu un sofista tipico." His interests were similar to those of some sophists, but the defining quality of the sophist is not scientific research but teaching to those who will pay.

<sup>22</sup> On Damon as music theorist see W. D. Anderson, *Ethos and Education in Greek Music* (Cambridge, MA 1966) 74–81, Wallace (above, note 19) 44–53.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. F. Schachermeyr, "Damon," in *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben: Festschrift für F. Altheim I* (Berlin 1969) 192–204, at 199–200.

building program. Damon, then, should be seen as an intellectual Athenian, who had given thought to music and its effects, as well as to political actions which would strengthen Pericles' position, not least to those favoring the celebration of musical events in the city.<sup>24</sup> There is no evidence in our sources that he ever taught for money as a professional sophist.

According to Plato, *Alc.* I 118c, Damon was preceded as teacher of Pericles by Pythocles of Ceos, whom the scholiast to the passage identifies as a teacher of the *semnos* style of music and a Pythagorean. Our only other information is Protagoras' assertion in Plato, *Prot.* 316e, that he "hid his sophistry" under the cloak of music.<sup>25</sup> Pericles, like every Athenian gentleman, studied music as a youth; his teacher, it would seem, was Pythocles, someone better known than the ordinary music teacher, as befitted Xanthippus' wealth and social status.

Pericles' contact with Damon raises the question of his personal contacts with other Athenians who might be considered intellectual leaders. Two acquaintances stand out, Sophocles and Phidias. Sophocles and Pericles shared the generalship in 441/40, at the time of the Samian War (Androtion, *FGrHist* 324 F 38; cf. Plut. *Per.* 8. 8). They undoubtedly spoke to each other on this occasion, as on others when the limited social and political world of Athens brought them together.<sup>26</sup> However, we have no way of knowing whether the two men found each other's company congenial, or whether Sophocles ever chose to discuss his poetry or the views expressed in his tragedies, rather than, say, the nature of the Persian threat, the problems of imperial administration (Sophocles had been a *hellenotamias*), or the competitors in the upcoming Olympic games. On the contrary, their contemporary, Ion of Chios, suggests just the opposite. Ion, who reports with delight a dinner conversation with his fellow tragic poet Sophocles, found Pericles' company boorish and arrogant. One suspects that Ion avoided Pericles when he could, and tolerated his presence when he had to (*FGrHist* 392 F 6, F 15). Sophocles may have done the same. Plutarch records an anecdote in which Pericles prudishly tells the poet to keep his eyes to himself, and not on pretty boys (*Per.* 8. 2).<sup>27</sup> The

<sup>24</sup> Although in this discussion it has been presumed that Damonides and Damon were both advisers to Pericles, the force of the present argument does not depend on that assumption. It would be possible for Damon to have advised Pericles both on jury pay and later on musical festivals and building the Odeon, before being ostracized.

<sup>25</sup> Plutarch's citation of Aristotle for Pythocles at *Per.* 4. 1 apparently represents a confusion with the passage from the *Protagoras*, which is paraphrased immediately after.

<sup>26</sup> Note that Sophocles was active in governmental roles: *hellenotamias* in 443/2, perhaps general in the 430s (*Vita Soph.* 9). For the questions concerning Sophocles' civic career, see P. Karavites, "Tradition, Scepticism, and Sophocles' Political Career," *Klio* 58 (1976) 359-65, with earlier bibliography.

<sup>27</sup> Again, this seems a standard story which was ascribed to Pericles and Sophocles for vividness; cf. the other versions in *Arist.* 24. 7 and [Plut.] *Vitae dec. or.* 839a.

story is of dubious value, but does suggest that Sophocles, who at a dinner party chuckled over his successful "generalship" in winning a kiss from a pretty wine-pourer (Ion 392 F 6), would hardly have sought out Pericles' company and subjected himself to such puritanical observations. The feeling was no doubt mutual. Plutarch reports that Pericles, unlike earlier politicians, avoided dinner parties, and concentrated on state business.<sup>28</sup>

A third Athenian with whom Pericles is associated in our literary record is Phidias, sculptor of the Athena Parthenos as well as of earlier statues, the Lemnian Athena and the Athena Promachos. Phidias was undoubtedly known to Pericles. However, when we compare the early notices with the later tradition, it is apparent that these ties have been expanded far beyond what was actually known. In particular, there is no evidence that Phidias ever "managed and oversaw the whole building program," as stated by Plutarch.<sup>29</sup> Nor can we assert that Pericles' involvement with Phidias' trial for embezzlement extended beyond the political realm to personal friendship and a shared artistic vision.

Our first report of Pericles' ties to Phidias comes from certain unnamed comic poets cited by Plutarch: Phidias, according to these anonymous mockers, was furnishing a rendezvous on the Acropolis for Pericles to meet freeborn women.<sup>30</sup> The comic scene exploits the sacrilegious contrast: Phidias working on the statue of the virgin goddess, under whose aegis Pericles is seducing the wives of citizens. In simple terms, Pericles is accused of using the building program for his own (in this case, lecherous) ends. The only other fifth-century notice is in Aristophanes, who has Hermes affirm that Pericles was frightened by the accusations against Phidias, and therefore, to distract his enemies, began the Peloponnesian War (*Peace* 605–11). This reference to Phidias' troubles is confirmed by the decree of Glaucon cited by Plutarch (*Per.* 31. 5) and in the fourth century by Philochorus (*FGrHist* 328 F 121) and perhaps by Ephorus, since it appears in Diodorus.<sup>31</sup> Philochorus has Pericles involved not as a friend but as *epistates*, a public commissioner responsible for the statue. Diodorus mentions Pericles' position as commissioner also, and adds that the prosecution was led by Pericles' enemies, who charged both Phidias and Pericles.

The story of Pericles' friendship with Phidias develops much later, partially as an expansion of Aristophanes' explanation for the war. Plato and the orators are silent on the relationship of the two men. Subsequent

<sup>28</sup> *Per.* 7. 5; cf. W. R. Connor, *The New Politicians of Fifth Century Athens* (Princeton 1971) 121–28.

<sup>29</sup> *Per.* 13. 6.

<sup>30</sup> *Per.* 13. 15. As in the case of Damon, Plutarch uses the plural, but may well be generalizing from a single notice that came to his attention.

<sup>31</sup> Presuming that Diod. 12. 39. 1–2 accurately reflects Ephorus. Diodorus' word for Pericles' position is ἐπιμελητής.

tradition on the trial of Phidias employs no new evidence, and is no more reliable than the stories that Phidias had carved his and Pericles' portraits on Athena's shield, or had died in an Athenian prison.<sup>32</sup> Plutarch's notion that Phidias was overseer of the building program is contrary to all we know of Athenian building practice.<sup>33</sup> Phidias, like Ictinus, Metagenes, and Callicrates, was simply a prominent artist in the execution of the building program. He became especially tied to Pericles because of the fame of his statue and of the trial for embezzlement which threatened Pericles' political position.<sup>34</sup> When a faction attacked a leading artist in the building program, they also threatened Pericles, the chief proponent of the program. Pericles acted to preserve his position, and would have done the same whether Phidias was a friend or an enemy. Politically, it would have been absolutely necessary to take steps to defend himself in this dangerous climate.

Two foreign intellectuals remain to be considered, who in their diverse ways were said by writers of the fifth and fourth centuries to have influenced Pericles. The less well documented relationship was that with Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, the physical philosopher and exponent of mind as an underlying principle in the universe. Our information on Pericles' relation to Anaxagoras begins with Plato and Isocrates.<sup>35</sup> No fifth-century author thought it worth noting. Isocrates in his *Antidosis* (235) mentions Anaxagoras along with Damon as a teacher of Pericles. His information may well derive from Plato, who in the *Phaedrus* (269e-70a), and again in *Alcibiades* I (118c), says that Pericles learned from Anaxagoras. The *Phaedrus* passage is worth quoting for the ironic tone in which it comments both on Pericles' success as an orator and on Anaxagoras' philosophy. Socrates speaks to Phaedrus (269e-70a):

Pericles was probably the most complete orator in regard to rhetoric.—  
What then? [Phaedrus asks]—All the major arts (τέχναι) require

<sup>32</sup> I do not wish to discuss here the host of problems connected with Phidias' trial, or that of Anaxagoras, but merely review the early evidence for Pericles' involvement. For recent work on the two trials, see P. A. Stadter, *A Commentary on Plutarch's Pericles* (Chapel Hill, NC and London 1989) 284-305, on *Per.* 31. 2-32. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Stadter (previous note) 166-67, on *Per.* 13. 6, and W. Ameling, "Plutarch, Pericles 12-14," *Historia* 34 (1985) 47-63, at p. 57.

<sup>34</sup> Diodorus says that Pericles, as *epistates* of the Parthenos statue, also was accused of sharing in Phidias' crime. This may be true.

<sup>35</sup> For accounts of Anaxagoras' life and thought, see G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*<sup>2</sup> (Cambridge 1983) 352-84; M. Schofield, *An Essay on Anaxagoras* (Cambridge 1980); J. Mansfeld, "The Chronology of Anaxagoras' Athenian Period," *Mnemosyne*, ser. 4, 32 (1979) 36-69, 33 (1980) 17-95; D. Sider, *The Fragments of Anaxagoras* (Meisenheim 1981); and L. Woodbury, "Anaxagoras and Athens," *Phoenix* 35 (1981) 295-315. For the later traditions on Anaxagoras, see D. E. Gershenson and D. A. Greenberg, *Anaxagoras and the Birth of Physics* (New York 1964); for his use by Plutarch, J. Hershbell, "Plutarch and Anaxagoras," *ICS* 7 (1982) 141-58.

prattling and abstract talk (ἀδολεσχίας καὶ μετεωρολογίας) about nature. From this seem to come highmindedness and effectiveness. Pericles had this quality, in addition to his talent. I think it was because he had fallen in with (προσπεσών) Anaxagoras, who was like that. So Pericles was filled with talk about the heavens and arrived at the nature of sense and nonsense, of which Anaxagoras spoke a great deal. From this Pericles drew what was profitable for him for the art of speaking.

Plato here does not speak of serious studies of astronomy or physics, but rather of a certain high-sounding and powerful style, full of inflated words, which Pericles picked up after meeting Anaxagoras.<sup>36</sup> Contact with someone like Anaxagoras who concerned himself with abstract matters gave Pericles a loftiness which was most effective in persuading the *demos*. Plato alludes to a feature of Pericles' style which reminded him of Anaxagoras' thinking. He explains this style by contact of some sort, but suggests neither that Pericles was an intimate of Anaxagoras nor that he seriously considered the philosophical or physical questions examined by Anaxagoras. But it is this passage from the *Phaedrus* which Plutarch exploits to paint his vivid picture of Anaxagoras' influence on Pericles, reflected not only in the statesman's political restraint, but even in his gait and posture.<sup>37</sup> Neither Plutarch nor the other authors who enhance and expand Plato's notice in the later tradition add to our knowledge of Pericles' relationship with the philosopher.<sup>38</sup>

A second strand involving Anaxagoras is represented by the stories of Pericles' defense of the philosopher at his trial, or his rescue from prison before or after trial. These may begin as early as Ephorus (cf. Diodorus 12. 39. 2), but become prevalent in the Hellenistic period: Diogenes Laertius 2. 12–14 gives four different versions of Anaxagoras' trial, as reported by four authors. The trial tradition is not helpful in establishing Pericles' relation

<sup>36</sup> Cf. C. J. Rowe, *Plato. Phaedrus* (Warminster 1986) 204–05. We perhaps have an example of this style in a conceit from one of his speeches, reported by Plutarch (*Per.* 8. 9 = Stesimbrotus 107 F 9). "Those who have died for their country," Pericles said, "are like the gods. We cannot see them, but we consider that they do not suffer death on the basis of the honors they receive and the benefits they bestow."

<sup>37</sup> *Per.* 4. 6–6. 3, 8. 1.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. [Dem.] 61 (*Erot.*) 45. 3, Plut. *Them.* 2. 5, Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 1. 32. 6, Libanius, *Or.* 1. 1, Themist. 26, 329c, Olympiodorus, *In Alc.* I, p. 135. The reference in the *Pericles* to Anaxagoras' disinterest in money (16. 7) derives from Plato, *Hipp. Mai.* 283a. The scene of Pericles with the starving Anaxagoras (16. 8–9) seems to be an anecdote developed in the philosophical schools, again on the basis of the contact of the two recorded by Plato. Compare the similar story of Pericles offering to maintain the shoemaker-philosopher Simon, only to be rejected by the freedom-loving sage (Diog. Laert. 2. 123). The anecdote describing the diverse interpretations of the ram prodigy (*Per.* 6) is almost certainly a late invention; among other things, the account of the dissection is impossible. Theophrastus' story of the amulet, found in *Per.* 38. 2, does not seem to indicate any special philosophical influence, merely the intelligence Pericles was noted for.

to Anaxagoras. First, as Dover has noted, the very variety of tales indicates that there was no accurate information about the trial.<sup>39</sup> It is quite possible that the whole trial is an invention of philosophical biography. The second Platonic epistle (311a) noted that the relation of Pericles and Anaxagoras could be assimilated to the standard *topos* of the statesman and his philosophical adviser, connecting such men as Periander and Thales, Croesus and Solon, and Hiero or Pausanias and Simonides.<sup>40</sup> The numerous versions of the trial story concentrate on how Anaxagoras was protected by his powerful student, not on the learning of the student or the political context. The story would be useful to any philosopher dependent on a powerful patron.<sup>41</sup> Only Plutarch supplements this edifying story with new evidence, Diopetithes' decree against atheism (*Per.* 32. 2), but the connection of the fifth-century decree with an attack on Pericles probably is Plutarch's own inference.<sup>42</sup> Second, even if we accept the existence of the trial and Pericles' role in it, the precise political and juridical situation remains unclear. Pericles might, for instance, have protected Anaxagoras as part of his general policy of encouraging metics in Athens,<sup>43</sup> or for political reasons, rather than as a friend. Pericles' defence of Anaxagoras would confirm his acquaintance with the philosopher, but does not reveal his intellectual views or debt to him.

In brief: On the basis of Plato and Isocrates we can argue that in the fourth century Pericles was thought to have had some intellectual contact with Anaxagoras, probably in the area of high-sounding cosmological theories. There is no indication of the period at which this contact took place. Plato's brief and ironic ascription of Pericles' eloquence to Anaxagoras' influence grew into a tradition exemplifying the relation between sage and statesman, the major feature of which became Pericles' role in protecting Anaxagoras from an accusation of atheism.

The other non-Athenian associate of Pericles was the Milesian courtesan, Aspasia. Attic comedy often mocked Pericles' liaison with Aspasia as lustful, uxorious, or a cause of war, but one comic writer of the fifth century, Callias, in his *Pedetai* (*The Men in Fetters*) apparently

<sup>39</sup> K. J. Dover, "The Freedom of the Intellectual in Greek Society," *Talanta* 7 (1975) 24-54, at 27-32.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. also Plut. *Max. cum prin.* 777a. Plutarch's reference in the same work to Socrates' meeting with Pericles at the house of Simon the shoemaker (776b) also reflects the *topos*.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Diog. Laert. 2. 12-14, Plut. *Nic.* 23. 4, Lucian, *Tim.* 10. 11, Olymp. *In Meteor.* 17, *Anth. Pal.* 7. 95. Note also the anecdote encouraging the support of the philosopher at *Per.* 16. 8-9. If the story of a trial developed later, then the notice in Diodorus would not be from Ephorus, but later tradition.

<sup>42</sup> Even Plutarch implies in the same passage (*Per.* 32. 5) that Anaxagoras never came to trial.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. his encouragement of Cephalus to emigrate to Athens, [Plut.] *Vitae dec. or.* 835c. He may have been Anaxagoras' *prostates* (as he apparently was of Aspasia) and thus required to speak on his behalf.

presented their relationship as intellectual. Callias stated that Aspasia was the teacher of Pericles, as Socrates had been of Euripides.<sup>44</sup> This tack was continued by Plato and other Socratic writers, who attributed Pericles' skill at oratory to the coaching of this disreputable female intellectual. In the *Menexenus*, Socrates is able to deliver a funeral oration because he has just had the advantage of the tutoring which previously Aspasia had given to Pericles (*Men.* 235e). Both Aeschines and Antisthenes wrote dialogues featuring Aspasia's relation to Pericles. The former seems to have seen her as a good influence, a teacher of political *arete*, whom Pericles defended when she was put on trial, while the latter apparently took the line of the comic poets, that their relation was lustful, and that Pericles was merely yielding to pleasure. Xenophon has Aspasia teaching Socrates the art of matchmaking (*Mem.* 2. 6. 36, *Oec.* 3. 14), but does not bring in Pericles.<sup>45</sup>

Aspasia's liaison with Pericles is of those we have examined by far the most fully reported in the fifth and fourth centuries. She was associated with Pericles from contemporary writers on; she was admitted to be the mother of Pericles' son and namesake. Comic writers presumed that she influenced Pericles' foreign policy, and in the fifth and fourth centuries she is presented as a powerful intellectual force as well. It is only her sex and her profession which have kept her from being recognized as a major intellectual and cultural influence on Pericles. Or rather, we immediately recognize as comic exaggeration or Platonic irony the notion that a woman might have influenced Pericles, but do not see the same elements at work in the case of Anaxagoras or Damon. Do we have any right to argue that her ideas on persuasion, on art, on foreign policy, or internal politics were any less important to Pericles' than those of Anaxagoras and Damon? Can we rely more on Plato's words in the *Phaedrus* than those in the *Menexenus*? Aspasia did not write a book, like Anaxagoras: but Antisthenes said that Pericles kissed her every day, coming and going.<sup>46</sup> If she was as intelligent as the Socratics suggest, she may have had a major influence on Pericles' thinking with regard to rhetoric, aesthetics, and politics. As Xenophon noted, she would have known a lot about human psychology, which might have been of more practical use to Pericles than all Anaxagoras' talk.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Schwarze (above, note 18) 91–93.

<sup>45</sup> For the fragments of Aeschines, see H. Dittmar, *Aeschines von Sphettos*, *Philologische Untersuchungen* 12 (Berlin 1912), and on the Aspasia, B. Ehlers, *Eine vorplatonische Deutung des sokratischen Eros: Der Dialog Aspasia des Sokratikers Aischines*, *Zetemata* 41 (Munich 1966). For Antisthenes see F. Caizzi, *Antisthenes Fragmenta* (Milan 1966) and G. Giannantoni, *Socraticorum Reliquiae* II (Rome and Florence 1983). The role of Aspasia in Plato's *Menexenus* is at least partially playful, as Plutarch saw (*Per.* 24. 7), but no full explanation has been offered: see W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* IV (Cambridge 1975) 312–23 and the observations of N. Loraux, *The Invention of Athens* (Cambridge, MA and London 1986) 323.

<sup>46</sup> Plut. *Per.* 24. 8, Athen. 13, 589e.

In conclusion, let me review briefly the ancient evidence for Pericles' non-political interests. His contemporaries do not speak of his enlightenment. On the contrary, the poet and belletrist Ion of Chios found him an arrogant boor. The comic poets of the thirties presented him as a lecher, desecrating the Acropolis by his assignations with the wives of prominent Athenians. They mocked his political power and his liaison with Aspasia under a number of mythological guises: Zeus with Hera, Heracles with Omphale or Deianeira, and Paris with Helen. Aspasia's pernicious influence, according to the comedians, led to two wars, against Samos and Sparta. Stesimbrotus reports Pericles' seduction of his daughter-in-law, the wife of Xanthippus. The writers of the last quarter of the fifth century are slightly more favorable. They continue to play on his relationship to Aspasia, but they mention also Phidias and Damon. His extraordinary oratorical power is noted by both comic poets and Thucydides, but only the latter praises as well his judicious control of passion, his honesty, and his foresight. Thucydides, however, is silent on the training which might have prepared him for this role. Rather, the implication of the encomium of Themistocles at 1. 138 seems to be that Pericles, like Themistocles, relied on natural genius.

In the fourth century, Plato associates him with Aspasia, Anaxagoras, Pythoclidides, and Damon, but notes that as a speaker he antedated the *technai* which prescribed rules for rhetoric (*Phdr.* 269a). Isocrates repeats the names of Damon and Anaxagoras; Aeschines and Antisthenes think rather of Aspasia. Ephorus appears to have mentioned Phidias and Anaxagoras. Down through the fourth century, therefore, Pericles is considered a compelling orator and a powerful political leader, but not a man particularly intellectual or given to philosophy. He is not associated with the "new intellectuals" of his day, Euripides and the sophists, nor with Socrates. The intellectual influences on him are three: Damon, the political adviser and theorist of the psychological effects of music; Anaxagoras, the physical philosopher who gave loftiness to his oratory; and Aspasia, who taught him the art of persuasion. Later stories seem to grow from this base, especially from the notices in the comic poets and in Plato. Pericles was not at the center of intellectual life at Athens in the 440s and 430s, and certainly not the patron of the sophists.

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## Strepsiades as a Comic Ixion

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Many readers of Aristophanes' *Clouds* have regarded Strepsiades as a disappointing as well as disappointed hero. Unlike Dicaeopolis, Trygaeus, Peisthetaerus, and Lysistrata, who sweep away all obstacles to their Pgreathearted schemes, Strepsiades goes from helpless to humiliated: from family and money problems, through academic failure, to the final indignity of being beaten and out-argued by his own son. Even his revenge against Socrates has seemed more bitter than triumphant, an inadequate reply to so many failures. In Whitman's influential view, Strepsiades' *πονηρία* was flawed, his ambitions too petty to warrant success. He was just not up to the requirements of a comic hero.<sup>1</sup>

My arguments for raising Strepsiades' grade (and with it, that of the play itself) require time and space not presently available. To read the *Clouds* is not always to see it; and I would suggest that performance brings out Strepsiades' comic strengths—among them, his engaging simple-mindedness, his openness to experience, his resilience, and what we might call his sheer survivability—in ways the unadorned text does not. I would also suggest that Strepsiades, more than most protagonists, exemplifies comedy's gift of enduring frustration, surviving humiliation, persevering through failure to try and try again. "I may have fallen, but I won't just lie there," is his watchword. He is descended not from Achilles or Ajax, who cannot endure indignity, but from Odysseus, who can. He exemplifies, not the self-assertion of the tragic hero transposed to comedy's metaphysical universe, but the even greater strength of *not needing* to be a tragic hero in the first place.

The point may seem obvious, but its application to Strepsiades has mostly been ignored. That is, in part, because his style and fortunes have no obvious tragic counterpart. Dicaeopolis, in the *Acharnians*, is played

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Whitman, *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero* (Cambridge, MA 1964) 119–20. Cf. the recent condemnation of Strepsiades by T. K. Hubbard, "Old Men in the Youthful Plays of Aristophanes," in *Old Age in Greek and Latin Literature*, edd. T. M. Falkner and J. deLuce (Albany 1989) 103: "Whereas the old men of Aristophanes' other plays in this period are all essentially sympathetic characters, despite their flaws and obsessions, Strepsiades is a malign parody of the usual comic hero—stupid rather than clever, socially

against the "miserable Telephus," whose persona he borrows from Euripides' rag-and-mask shop, but whose tragic rhetoric and pathos he ultimately throws off, in Odyssean fashion, to resume his own comic way.<sup>2</sup> Trygaeus, in the *Peace*, takes a loathsome dung-beetle for his paratragic steed, rides to Olympus, and recovers the lovely goddess Peace—as against Euripides' Bellerophon, who tried to ride Pegasus to Olympus and was struck down by Zeus' thunderbolt for his presumption. There is no comparable role-model for Strepsiades. I do have one, less obvious, in mind; but let me prepare the way with two blatantly paratragic passages from the *Clouds*. The first is Strepsiades' lament at 717–22:

ΣΤ. Καὶ πῶς; ὅτε μου  
 φροῦδα τὰ χρήματα, φρούδη χροιά,  
 φρούδη ψυχή, φρούδη δ' ἐμβάς·  
 καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἔτι τοῖσι κακοῖς  
 φρουράς ἄδων  
 ὀλίγου φροῦδος γεγένημαι.

The anaphora, the anapaestic rhythm, the pathetic evocations of φροῦδος are probably derived from Euripides. Rau compares Hecuba's lament at *Hec.* 159–61 (her aged husband is gone, her children are gone—more than she yet realizes), and also Peleus' lament at *Andr.* 1070 [actually, 1078]—his voice is gone, his limbs are gone—as he collapses on learning of his grandson's assassination at Delphi.<sup>3</sup> The two passages have much in common, and Aristophanes may be conflating them intentionally. He enjoys the Euripidean term φροῦδος, savors it, and by the heavy-handed play on φροῦδος/φρουράς, builds it into a brief comic aria whose force might be conveyed by a modern parody to the tune of "Old Man River" (from Jerome Kern's "Showboat"):

Lost my money,  
 I've lost my color,  
 I've lost my spirit,  
 I've lost my sneakers . . .

The tragic possibilities are real enough, for Aristophanes as well as for Euripides. Strepsiades has ventured into the (literally and figuratively) mist-shrouded world of the Phrontisterion, where Socrates guides, or misguides, souls. It is a tricky atmosphere, one in which values and possessions tend to disappear. The absurd juxtapositions, the culmination of the lament's first section in ἐμβάς, bypass high tragic pain. Strepsiades worries more about losing his money and shoes than about losing his soul,

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destructive rather than constructive, and totally unsuccessful in achieving any transcendent vision."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. K. J. Reckford, *Aristophanes' Old-and-New Comedy* (Chapel Hill 1987) 172–86, 194–96.

<sup>3</sup> P. Rau, *Paratragodia*, *Zetemata* 45 (Munich 1967) 190.

and rightly so; he is too earthbound to suffer the alienating enchantment of the philosopher's Siren song, to "vanish" into the invisible world of Socratic abstraction. His problem for now is bedbugs. He is not a tragic hero(ine)—is not Hecuba or even old Peleus, nor meant to be. And that is, despite his discomfort and humiliation, wonderfully reassuring.

Strepsiades' self-laudatory triumph song at *Clouds* 1154–66 is another, more ambitious pastiche of tragic tags and motifs. The opening lines come from a lost *Peleus* of (the scholia say) Euripides; Rau argues persuasively that they come from one of those Sophoclean hyporchemes that raise high, delusive hopes just before the catastrophe.<sup>4</sup> But lines 1165–66,

ΣΤ. ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ, ἔξελθ' οἴκων,  
ἄε σοῦ πατρός,

are certainly taken (as the scholiasts observe) from Euripides' *Hecuba*, as that *mater dolorosa* calls forth her daughter Polyxena to tell her of her fate (171–73):

ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ  
δυστανοτάτας—ἔξελθ' ἔξελθ'  
οἴκων—ἄε ματέρος αὐδάν.

The verbal and musical echoes of tragedy carry, at least implicitly, evocations of pain and loss. Like the brave hopes of Sophocles' hyporchemes, Strepsiades' enjoyment of triumph proves short-lived (even though the catastrophe is deferred until after the two outrageous scenes with the creditors). There may be a further hint that his loss of a son to the new education is comparable, in its way, to Hecuba's demoralizing loss of her daughter (and later, of her son). The themes of demoralization, loss of innocence, and the disappearance of traditional values are prominent and disturbing in *Hecuba*, and they supply a partial backdrop to the *Clouds*, along with the unmediated social and historical changes to which Euripides and Aristophanes (and Thucydides) were alike responding. We should, I think, admire Aristophanes' courage in taking on so much tragedy—the pain of the aging Hecuba or Peleus as they lose their human props and supports, and the underlying pain of an Athens that has been losing its moral and spiritual bearings under pressure of war, suffering, and change. But, still more, we should enjoy the sureness with which Aristophanes transmutes tragic pity and terror into comic laughter and comic reassurance. For Strepsiades never yields to misfortune. He always bounces back. He survives, that is, in ways that Peleus, Hecuba, and the others never can.

Two of the most important things, then, that we can say about Strepsiades are: (1) that he is not a tragic hero(ine) out of Euripides, and (2) that he comes perilously close to being one. Words and phrases, songs and

<sup>4</sup> Rau (previous note) 148–50. Scholia are cited from D. Holwerda and W. J. W. Koster (edd.), *Scholia in Aristophanem* I. 3. 1–2, in *Nubes* (Groningen 1977).

scenes, enforce this point throughout the *Clouds*, much as they will do throughout the *Wasps*, where Philocleon is like and yet unlike a tragic heroine consumed by unrequited love or a defeated tragic hero who must fall upon his sword. But what we miss in the *Clouds*, as in the *Wasps*, is a certifiable tragic foil for our paratragic or "trygic" hero. The suggestion that Strepsiades plays a comic Ixion cannot (because no Ixion-tragedy is extant) fill the gap; but it may help. By reminding us, once more, of what Strepsiades is not, it may add somewhat to our appreciation of what, in vital and comic terms, he is.

The Ixion legend, of uncertain origins,<sup>5</sup> is best known from Pindar's Second Pythian Ode. (1) This version presupposes, but barely alludes to, Ixion's treacherous murder of his father-in-law and his subsequent purification by Zeus himself. (2) As Pindar tells it, Ixion proved ungrateful (much like Tantalus in *Olympian* 1); he conceived a mad passion for Hera, whom he tried to assault. "His hybris roused him to arrogance, blind infatuation and ruin." (3) His sins bore fruit. He lay with a cloud in Hera's shape; their offspring was Kentauros, who sired the hybridic race of centaurs on Magnesian mares. (4) And now Ixion is bound to the four-spoked wheel, on which he forever turns.

Aristophanes may well have known and used *Pythian* 2 (I shall return to the parallels). He may also have been influenced by an Aeschylean trilogy, including *Perrhaebides* and *Ixion*, and perhaps involving the tragic sequence of murder, alienation, forgiveness, new crime, and new punishment. Whether Aeschylus included Zeus' (earlier) seduction of Ixion's wife Dia, who bore Perithous to him, we do not know. Euripides' Ixion, as Plutarch reports, was a "vile and impious" man: The audience was scandalized, "but I didn't remove him from the stage," said Euripides, "before nailing him to the wheel."<sup>6</sup> The story sounds apocryphal, but the scandal was likely enough, to judge from other plays and other reports. In two surviving fragments, Ixion apparently rejects counsels of moderation, asserting his drive for power and fulfillment.<sup>7</sup> Did he justify his criminal behavior later, in familiar rationalizations? "I can't help my nature," he might have said; or else, "that is how Zeus behaved—and how can I, a mortal, be stronger than Zeus?" The Oedipal wishes, thinly disguised, the fear of punishment, and the modern, sophistic arguments by which moral inhibitions are waived: All this would be very Euripidean, and very powerful. I am tempted to claim Euripides' Ixion as a forerunner of

<sup>5</sup> For the development of the Ixion legend and its representations in literature and art, see J. L. Boyce, *Ixion. Origins and Meanings of a Myth* (University of N.C. dissertation: Chapel Hill 1974). Citations by courtesy of the author.

<sup>6</sup> Plut. *De aud. poetis* 19e.

<sup>7</sup> Euripides, frs. 425, 426 in *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, ed. A. Nauck, suppl. by B. Snell (Hildesheim 1964): first a plea against greed (and perhaps tyranny), then a defense of risk-taking for "great results" (including tyranny). The parallel with Eteocles in *Phoen.* is striking.

Pheidippides, who comes very close (in comic terms) to parricide and incest; but unfortunately, there is no evidence either that the play was produced before 423 or that Aristophanes referred to it. We must therefore return to Pindar's cloud-centaur combination, as it evokes the inner nature of Ixion's sin, and as, very differently, it heralds Strepsiadēs' comic enterprise and fall.

For what Pindar emphasizes, what he so emphatically rejects in telling Ixion's story, is vanity. The delusion inflicted on Ixion, of lying with a cloud, at once reflects his crime, punishes it, and bodies forth the sinner's spiritual and psychological state, much as the punishments in Dante's *Inferno*, from drifting on the winds (Paolo and Francesca) to being changed into serpents (the thieves), mirror that loss of human freedom and integrity which, for Dante, results from the increasing compulsions of sin. Ixion's intercourse with a cloud, an image, marks the degrading and unreal essence of ἄρη, blind infatuation and delusion. It focuses our attention on the negative, the sheer emptiness of Ixion's wish and act. Here Pindar draws on many sources in folklore and legend. Gods often deceive mortals with images, in dream or waking vision, on the battlefield or in the bedchamber. Sexual impulses are strangely disguised, and strangely frustrated, from Menelaus' dream-image of Helen in the sad *Agamemnon* ode (414–26) to the nightmare figures of incubus and succubus surviving into modern Greek folklore. As for the monstrous Κένταυρος, Pindar may already have known his derivation in popular etymology from κεντεῖν + αὔραν, to "stab the air."<sup>8</sup> He is the very embodiment of lying with a cloud.

Pindar draws a threefold moral in *Pythian* 2. One should show gratitude to benefactors, realize that the gods bring hopes to accomplishment, and avoid vain thoughts. (The latter are characterized as deceptions, ἀπάται, and also as empty, κενεά. Pindar suggestively links κενεός with κένταυρος, offspring of vanity.)<sup>9</sup> Scholars have debated the ode's more particular applicability to Pindar or Hieron. It may be that, as Finley suggests, Pindar is himself the chief recipient of his own warning to avoid vain thinking, to remain grateful, not resentful.<sup>10</sup> (Was he passed over in

<sup>8</sup> P. Von der Mühl, "Weitere pindarische Notizie," *MH* 25 (1968) 226–29, argues that the *Volksetymologie* κένταυρος < κεντεῖν αὔραν probably formed a bridge between Ixion and the centaurs, influencing the legend's development in the direction inherited by Pindar. Although this smacks of later Hellenistic rationalizing, it suits Pindar's fondness for significant word-play (e.g., κένταυρον 44 / κενεά 61) and Aristophanes' (cf. below, notes 14, 19, 20). Cf. also Sophocles' poetic association of κένταυρος, νεφέλη (here = "net, trap"), and κέντρα in *Trach.* 831–33, 839–40. Later, Euripides will make Pentheus "stab the air" at *Bacch.* 629–32 as he attacks the false image of Bacchus. (There are sexual overtones, here as elsewhere.)

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the companion-poem, *Pythian* 3, where Coronis ἦρατο τῶν ἀπεόντων (20), as many do "who hunt windswept aims, whose hopes are unfulfilled"; she fell into great disaster (29), yet her child Asclepius was preserved and given to the good centaur Chiron to rear.

<sup>10</sup> John H. Finley, Jr., *Pindar and Aeschylus* (Cambridge, MA 1955) 92–98. For a somewhat different reading, cf. R. E. Grimm, "Pindar and the Beast," *CP* 57 (1962) 1–9.

favor of Bacchylides?) Yet the lesson remains general. We are all called to show gratitude and accept mortal limits (the two go together). Success requires restraint, requires acceptance of reality. All genuine achievement, from statecraft to chariot-racing to poetry, must depend on the gods' gifts and the sense and skill with which we embrace those gifts. Anything else is folly.

I return to Strepsiades, who in true comic fashion refuses to accept life's ordinary restraints and limits, such as the payment of debts incurred through his son's horse- and chariot-racing. His first scheme failing, he ventures himself into the Phrontisterion, beholds its wonders, and is initiated shortly by Socrates into the mysterious and delusive realm of celestial matters (τὰ μετέωρα), scientific ideas, and novel deities such as the Clouds (250–59):

- ΣΩ. βούλει τὰ θεῖα πράγματ' εἰδέναι σαφῶς  
 ἅττ' ἐστὶν ὀρθῶς;  
 ΣΤ. Νῆ Δί', εἶπερ ἔστι γε.  
 ΣΩ. Καὶ ξυγγενέσθαι ταῖς Νεφέλαισιν εἰς λόγους,  
 ταῖς ἡμετέραισι δαίμοσιν;  
 ΣΤ. Μάλιστά γε.  
 ΣΩ. Κάθιζε τοίνυν ἐπὶ τὸν ἱερὸν σκίμποδα.  
 ΣΤ. Ἴδου κάθημαι.  
 ΣΩ. Τουτονὶ τοίνυν λαβὲ  
 τὸν στέφανον.  
 ΣΤ. Ἐπὶ τί στέφανον; Οἴμοι, Σώκρατες,  
 ὥσπερ με τὸν Ἀθάμανθ' ὅπως μὴ θύσετε.  
 ΣΩ. Οὐκ, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα πάντα τοὺς τελουμένους  
 ἡμεῖς ποοῦμεν.  
 ΣΤ. Εἶτα δὴ τί κερδανῶ;  
 ΣΩ. Λέγειν γενήσει τρῖμμα, κρόταλον, παιπάλη.

Socrates' *double entendre* at 252 was unintentional. Being much concerned with sex, as with food, Strepsiades joyfully accepts the invitation to "have intercourse" with the Clouds—which may have prompted Socrates to add the qualifying εἰς λόγους ("verbal intercourse, I mean") after a pause.<sup>11</sup> The audience will enjoy his naive, sensual reaction. Soon afterwards, they will be amused by his literal-minded fear of being sacrificed "like Athamas." The allusion, as Dover observes, is on target, for Phryxus and Helle were Athamas' children by his consort Nephele, or Cloud.<sup>12</sup> Strepsiades has his moments. His characteristically associative thinking here lights, most appropriately, on that hero who slept with Cloud and got himself and his family into all kinds of trouble.

After summoning the Clouds, Socrates explains to the puzzled Strepsiades why they look like women (345–55):

<sup>11</sup> Translators usually miss the joke; William Arrowsmith is a happy exception.

<sup>12</sup> *Aristophanes. Clouds*, ed. K. J. Dover (Oxford 1968) 132, 257.

- ΣΩ. Ἀπόκριναί νυν ἄττ' ἄν ἔρωμαι.  
 ΣΤ. Λέγε νυν ταχέως ὅ τι βούλει.  
 ΣΩ. Ἦδη ποτ' ἀναβλέψας εἶδες νεφέλην κενταύρω ὁμοίαν,  
 ἢ παρδάλει ἢ λύκῳ ἢ ταύρῳ;  
 ΣΤ. Νῆ Δί' ἔγωγ'. Εἶτα τί τοῦτο;  
 ΣΩ. Γίνονται πάνθ' ὅ τι βούλονται· κᾶτ' ἦν μὲν ἰδῶσι κομήτην  
 ἄγριόν τινα τῶν λασίων τούτων, οἶόνπερ τὸν Ξενοφάντου,  
 σκάπτουσαι τὴν μανίαν αὐτοῦ κενταύροις ἦκασαν αὐτάς.  
 ΣΤ. Τί γάρ, ἦν ἄρπαγα τῶν δημοσίων κατίδωσι Σίμωνα, τί  
 δρῶσιν;  
 ΣΩ. Ἀποφαίνουσαι τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ λύκοι ἐξαίφνης ἐγένοντο.  
 ΣΤ. Ταῦτ' ἄρα ταῦτα Κλεώνυμον αὐταὶ τὸν ῥίψασπιν χθὲς  
 ἰδοῦσαι,  
 ὅτι δειλότατον τοῦτον ἑώρων, ἔλαφοι διὰ τοῦτ' ἐγένοντο.  
 ΣΩ. Καὶ νῦν γ' ὅτι Κλεισθένη εἶδον, ὄρας, διὰ τοῦτ' ἐγένοντο  
 γυναῖκες.

The passage works on several levels. First, as a metatheatrical joke, for the representation of comic choruses requires theatrical convenience even more than symbolic appropriateness. It is difficult for choreutai to represent clouds "floating in the blue." It is easier to represent clouds who, for their own purposes, present themselves as seductive women—with, most likely, touches of "cloud" about their drapery and headdresses. (Strepsiades' protest earlier that "these have noses," whereas real clouds resemble "spread-out wool," plays on slang terms for the penis and for sexual intercourse, hence reminds us that the real-life choreutai were male. The joke focuses our minds, if not Strepsiades', on disguise and the multiple interpretation of disguise.)<sup>13</sup>

Second, Aristophanes scores extra points by indulging in some old-fashioned εἰκασμός, a primitive form of satire. Its riddling guise invites the audience to play along. Why do the Clouds appear as centaurs? To ridicule some pederast, like Xenophantus' son.<sup>14</sup> Why as wolves (we would say, sharks)? Some embezzler of public funds: Simon, maybe. Why deer? Some coward: Cleonymus, of course. And now Strepsiades, catching on, completes the argument himself (he is quick enough when it comes to personal insults): So why women? The Clouds must have noticed—Cleisthenes.

<sup>13</sup> The argument of C. Brown, "Noses at Aristophanes' *Clouds* 344?" *QUCC* 14 (1983) 87–90, is not really refuted by G. Mastromarco, "Il Naso Delle Nuvole (Aristofane, *Nuvole* 344)," *QUCC* 23 (1986) 121–23; for although the Clouds present themselves basically as human (Mastromarco), Aristophanes cannot resist confusing levels of make-believe further by alluding to the masculinity of the actual choreutai (Brown). On noses and penises, cf. also M. Davies, "The Tickle and Sneeze of Love," *AJA* 86 (1982) 117 and nn. 15, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Dover cites a scholion to Aeschines 1. 52 but fails to follow up the joke, whose point lies in an obscene pun: The compulsive pederast is a κέντροπος, or "butt-fucker": cf. Von der Mühl (above, note 8) 228, with refs., including *Nub.* 350.

And third: Socrates' account suggests an aspect of the Clouds' ever-shifting nature that goes well beyond Socrates' own limited and limiting comprehension.<sup>15</sup> For as they assume various shapes in order to expose, through satiric "likenings," the personality traits and obsessions of particular men, the Clouds resemble nothing so much as—the poets, actors, and choruses of Old Comedy. Like Aristophanes himself, they are experts at indecent exposure. Through taking on disguises, they reveal the shameful truth beneath ordinary appearances. But they are also (again, like the comic poet and his troupe) free agents, mischievous self-willed players. If they assume the likeness of seductive women, they may do so, not just because of the effeminate Cleisthenes, but because of the would-be cheater Strepsiades, whom they visit, in time-honored fashion, with delusion—or for that matter, because of that other cheater, Socrates, who also wrongly believes that he can control the Clouds' comic mimicry, fun, and delusiveness in the service of his own inferior and limited purposes.

Many years ago, venturing a descriptive account of "Aristophanes' Ever-Flowing Clouds," I said that they were (among other things) natural symbols of confusion and deception.<sup>16</sup> Instances of the latter included Hera's seduction of Zeus in *Iliad* 14, where their divine lovemaking is concealed, together with Hera's purposes, in a golden cloud, and Ixion's infatuate intercourse, in *Pythian* 2, with the cloud-image in Hera's shape. Strepsiades misbehaved, or was mistreated, "like a comic Ixion." But his disaster was more a comic ἀπάτη than a tragic ἄτη—more like the comic deception of Zeus than like the tragic infatuation of Pindar's Ixion.

The Strepsiades-Ixion comparison is mentioned in Dover's commentary (we came to it independently), and it is developed by Köhnken in his careful 1980 article on the *Clouds*.<sup>17</sup> Dover uses Ixion and the phantom Helen (especially in Euripides' *Helen*) to illustrate the mythic and poetic linkage of clouds with deception; and Köhnken argues at length for Aristophanes' conscious evocation of *Pythian* 2: The collocation of clouds, women and centaurs, mockery and madness, is strikingly similar. I am not altogether convinced that Aristophanes is alluding to Pindar's version, which we have, rather than to the lost Ixion-tragedies or to the legend generally. I shall, however, argue that the case for Strepsiades as a comic Ixion can be strengthened, by the "intercourse with clouds" joke that I discussed earlier,

<sup>15</sup> On the function and meaning of the cloud chorus, see H.-J. Newiger, *Metapher und Allegorie* (Munich 1957) 50–74; P. Pucci, "Saggio Sulle Nuvole," *Maia* 12 (1960) 31–42; P. Händel, *Formen und Darstellungsweisen in der aristophanischen Komödie* (Heidelberg 1963) 234–38; K. J. Reckford, "Aristophanes' Ever-Flowing Clouds," *Emory Univ. Quarterly* 22 (1967) 222–35; C. P. Segal, "Aristophanes' Cloud-Chorus," *Arethusa* 2 (1969) 143–61; A. Köhnken, "Der Wolken-Chor des Aristophanes," *Hermes* 108 (1980) 154–69; D. Ambrosino, "Nuages et sens. Autour des Nuées d'Aristophane," *Quaderni di Storia* 18 (1983) 3–60.

<sup>16</sup> Reckford (previous note) 231–34.

<sup>17</sup> Dover (above, note 12) lxxviii; Köhnken (above, note 15) 162–63 and, on the likelihood of a conscious Pindaric reminiscence, n. 27.

and also by a concatenation of words and images that are especially prominent in the latter part of the *Clouds*: twisting and turning (στρέφειν and related terms), chariot and wheels, the horse-goad (κέντρον), sexual passion (ἐρῶν, ἐραστής), and lifting someone "up in the air," literally or figuratively (ἐπαίρειν). The combination is striking. It evokes Ixion's punishment, while reminding us, again, that Strepsiades is not Ixion.

In Hellenistic and Roman times, Ixion's wheel became one of the great *Sehenswürdigkeiten* of the underworld, along with Tantalus' feast (or impending rock), Sisyphus' boulder, and Tityus' vulture. Earlier, though, Ixion was depicted as revolving in mid-air.<sup>18</sup> Euripides' Heracles laments that, for his sins, he will be banished from earth and sea, and "will imitate the wheel-driven Ixion in his bonds" (*HF* 1295–98). On a fourth-century Campanian neck-amphora, two winged figures set Ixion's wheel in motion. Are they Aurai, or perhaps Nephelai? In everyday Greek life, the bodies of slaves or criminals undergoing torture were attached to wheel rims (ἐπὶ τροχοῦ στρεβλοῦσθαι), lashed with whips or prodded with goads (κέντρα). Aristophanes often mentions these tortures.<sup>19</sup> But the juxtaposition on the vase of lovely female figures and the mid-air wheel brings us back more particularly to Strepsiades, the "son of Twist."

His name, as many have observed, suits his nature.<sup>20</sup> It also suits the near-Euripidean reversal plot on which he revolves. At the play's beginning we find him twisting and turning in bed, anxious about his debts. His goal is to twist out of debts and lawsuits somehow, like a successful wrestler, or like Odysseus πολύτροπος, the "man of many turns." Socrates and the *Clouds* encourage his day-dreams of becoming a super-successful lawyer and scoundrel—a κέντρον and στρόφις, among other things.<sup>21</sup> He fails, of course. He cannot, any more than others, harness the intellectual and cultural revolution (Δίνοϋς) to his private purposes. The reversal plot makes him a victim, whether of bedbugs on the "mystic cot" (twisting and turning again beneath the bedclothes, in comic counterpoint to the gracefully

<sup>18</sup> Berlin F 3023, listed in A. D. Trendall, *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily* (Oxford 1967) 338, no. 787. On this point, and for the following references to Ixion in myth and art, see Boyce (above, note 5) 33–40, 92–99 and notes.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Pax* 452, *Lys.* 845–46 (and J. Henderson's commentary [Oxford 1987] *ad loc.*), *Ra.* 620, *Pl.* 875.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., among others, B. Marzullo, "Strepsiade," *Maia* 6 (1953) 99–124; Pucci (above, note 15) 15–18. Although the name Strepsiades is not introduced until line 134, I take Aristophanes' uses of στρέφω and related terms at 36, 434, 776, 792 and 1455 as strongly thematic, together, probably, with forms of τρέπω (40, 88, 813, 1263) and τρέφω (927, 1158, 1206, 1208).

<sup>21</sup> Although we might expect an active meaning for κέντρον here (= κεντροτύπος, "one that strikes with the goad"; cf. the scholia), κέντρον normally denotes a low, vicious person: "one that bears the marks of the κέντρον, a rogue that has been put to the torture" (LSJ). The term στρόφις, "a slippery fellow, or twister," is more clearly suited to Strepsiades. Its fuller implications are wonderfully suggested by the French *roué* which Ambrosino (above, note 15) 12 uses of Strepsiades in another connection, at line 260.

dancing chorus), or of his all too sophistically educated, father-beating son. He is more twisted about than twisting. And yet (this is a chief difference to tragedy), Strepsiades retains the clown's basic resiliency, the ability to bounce back from defeat. "I may have fallen [been thrown], but I won't just lie there."

I give, for language, imagery, and tone, the end of the second creditor scene and the beginning of the chorus's little teasing song that precedes the catastrophe (1296–1306):

- ΣΤ. Οὐκ ἀποδιώξει σαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας;  
Φέρε μοι τὸ κέντρον.
- ΔΑ. Ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.
- ΣΤ. Ὑπαγε. Τί μέλλεις; Οὐκ ἔλας, ὃ σαμφόρα;
- ΔΑ. Ταῦτ' οὐχ ὕβρις δῆτ' ἐστίν;
- ΣΤ. Ἄξεις; Ἐφιαλῶ  
κεντῶν ὑπὸ τὸν πρωκτὸν σε τὸν σειραφόρον.  
Φεύγεις; Ἐμελλὸν σ' ἄρα κινήσειν ἐγὼ  
αὐτοῖς τροχοῖς τοῖς σοῖσι καὶ ξυνωρίσιν.
- ΧΟ. Οἷον τὸ πραγμάτων ἐρᾶν φλαύρων· ὁ γὰρ  
γέρων ὄδ' ἐρασθεῖς  
ἀποστερησάι βούλεται  
τὰ χρήμαθ' ἀδανείσατο.

The association of goad (κέντρον), wheels, and passionate love is telling. Strepsiades got into trouble, of course, through Pheidippides' horse- and chariot-racing. He owed twelve mnae to Pasiās for a horse, three to Ameinias for a little chariot and wheels (τροχοῖν 31). Now the second creditor has come, a natural enemy and oppressor, masquerading pathetically as a figure out of Euripidean tragedy, smashed up in a racing accident. Strepsiades sees through the act and the false pathos (much as Dicaeopolis rejected the "desolated" farmer in *Acharnians* 1018–36) and, with splendid appropriateness, he converts his creditor into a racehorse to be driven—away. The comic business with the κέντρον is sexual aggression too, the dramatic equivalent of a simple "Fuck you!"<sup>22</sup> It also links up with the κένταυρος motif earlier and with the chorus' teasing remarks about this "great lover," which are more than a warning, in colloquial terms, not to "like trouble." Strepsiades is a lover at heart, a *senex amator*. Infatuation comes naturally to him, as to Pindar's Ixion, or to Ixion's sister Coronis, who "was in love with the impossible" (ἦρατο τῶν ἀπεόντων, *Pyth.* 3. 20). Should a comic hero desire anything less?

The turning of Strepsiades' wheel of fortune is marked most emphatically at 1452–64:

<sup>22</sup> For κέντρον = phallus, cf. J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (New Haven 1975) 122; for the phallic "sting" of the wasp-chorus, K. J. Reckford, "Catharsis and Dream-Interpretation in Aristophanes' *Wasps*," *TAPA* 107 (1977) 305–07 and n. 22.

- ΣΤ. Ταυτὶ δι' ὑμᾶς, ὦ Νεφέλαι, πέπονθ' ἐγώ,  
 ὑμῖν ἀναθείς ἅπαντα τὰμὰ πράγματα.
- ΧΟ. Αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν σαυτῷ σὺ τούτων αἴτιος,  
 στρέψας σεαυτὸν εἰς πονηρὰ πράγματα.
- ΣΤ. Τί δήτα ταῦτ' οὐ μοι τότε ἠγορεύετε,  
 ἀλλ' ἄνδρ' ἄγροικον καὶ γέροντ' ἐπήρετε;
- ΧΟ. Ἡμεῖς ποοῦμεν ταῦθ' ἐκάστοθ', ὅταν τινὰ  
 γνῶμεν πονηρῶν ὄντ' ἐραστήν πραγμάτων,  
 ἕως ἂν αὐτὸν ἐμβάλωμεν εἰς κακόν,  
 ὅπως ἂν εἰδῆ τοὺς θεοὺς δεδοικέναι.
- ΣΤ. Ὡμοι πονηρὰ γ', ὦ Νεφέλαι, δίκαια δέ·  
 οὐ γάρ μ' ἐχρῆν τὰ χρήμαθ' ἀδανεισάμην  
 ἀποστειρεῖν.

It was, the Clouds insist, Strepsiades' own silly fault. He "twisted" himself into bad trouble. The collocation of words, στρέψας-ἐπήρετε-ἐραστής, balancing the Clouds' earlier warning, once more might recall Ixion as the lustful man caught up in delusion and punished on the airborne wheel. For Strepsiades' "airborne" adventures in the realm of ideas, clouds, and τὰ μετέωρα have belied his passionate hopes, bringing him to reversal, recognition, and punishment, as on the wheel of time. He comes perilously near to becoming an Ixion, a tragic hero, perhaps a Euripidean one. Perilously near: But there are differences, and they are crucial.

For Strepsiades, though humiliated, is not finally hurt. His repentance is comic repentance, in the manner of Verdi's Falstaff: He may speak ruefully, may admit (as beasts often do in Aesop's fables) that "it served me right"; but that is quite enough, and he will move quickly to new resolution and new action: the burning of the Phrontisterion. As for the Clouds' judgment on him, Strepsiades (by now) recognizes teasing, recognizes comic moralizing when he hears it. He insists, quite rightly, that the Clouds' alleged justice was as "naughty" in its way as his own attempt to evade paying his debts. Not only, that is, are the Clouds not representatives of the old morality and religion: They are irresponsible spirits, independent comic agents in their own right, who serve only their own wilful sense of play. (I have compared them elsewhere to Shakespeare's fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.)<sup>23</sup> Although their trickery towards Strepsiades was evoked in part by their observation and comic mimesis of Strepsiades' own tricky nature, and in part by their patronage of Socrates and related intellectual frauds (who may, however, become victims in their turn), still this little ἀπάτη is only one manifestation of their immortal, illusionary, ever-changing playfulness.

Strepsiades, then, is like Ixion—and unlike. The cumulative similarities of word and act, the clouds, centaurs, and turning wheels, lead us finally to appreciate the comic hero's strength in not being, precisely, a

<sup>23</sup> Reckford (above, note 15) 222.

tragic hero. The *Clouds* has painful moments. It flirts with tragedy, even as it parodies it (the second creditor). There are paratragic laments, very close to Euripides. The reversal plot itself is very Euripidean, very close to *Hecuba* and *Andromache*. The audience may have felt the closeness, may have been disturbed by it—and by other serious implications of the *Clouds*. And yet, it is not a tragedy, as Strepsiades is not Ixion. He survives humiliation. He refuses to accept defeat. He is resilient, as clowns and Athenians should be. In the end, he may claim rightful (or wrongful) descent from Odysseus, “man of many turns,” and from Pindar’s victors in the chariot race and the wrestling match. Is it a coincidence, after all, that the champion of *Isthmian 7* (the pankration) is named Strepsiades?<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> This essay is submitted in grateful memory of Friedrich Solmsen, who read Pindar with me in 1978–79 and provided much scholarly counsel over the years. He approved the present thesis *in embruo*, referring me to Von der Mühl, and led me on with sherry, cookies, and encouragement. But I must admit, despite Aristophanic temptations to the contrary, that the responsibility for any subsequent faults is my own.