THE CREATION OF NEW REALITIES:

THEOGONIES, COSMOGRAPHIES, AND A REDEFINITION OF CUSTOMS

IN ARISTOPHANES' *BIRDS*, *CLOUDS*, AND *PEACE*

by

HOLLY LAINE MAGGIORE

(Under the Direction of CHARLES PLATTER)

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I show how Aristophanes creates new realities in his plays, the *Birds*, *Clouds*, and *Peace*, by presenting a new theogony, a new cosmography, and new customs for the characters in the plays. In all three of these plays, the characters attempt to solve a problem, discover the traditional, Olympian gods are unable to help, and so rely on their own abilities. They discount the Olympian gods, create their own gods (a new theogony), and therefore they change the boundaries between mortals and divine. Their new gods are closer to mortals physically and they now commune directly with one another. Aristophanes reorders the structure of the world (a new cosmography) through the new gods. Finally, new customs are established in these new worlds which overturn the old customs, though not always for the better.

INDEX WORDS: Theogony, New Gods, Rhetoric, Cosmography, Boundaries, Customs, Aristophanes, Birds, Clouds, Peace, Old Comedy

THE CREATION OF NEW REALITIES:

THEOGONIES, COSMOGRAPHIES, AND A REDEFINITION OF CUSTOMS

IN ARISTOPHANES' *BIRDS*, *CLOUDS*, AND *PEACE*

by

HOLLY LAINE MAGGIORE

BA, Pennsylvania State University, 2012

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2016

THE CREATION OF NEW REALITIES:

THEOGONIES, COSMOGRAPHIES, AND A REDEFINITION OF CUSTOMS

IN ARISTOPHANES' *BIRDS*, *CLOUDS*, AND *PEACE*

by

HOLLY LAINE MAGGIORE

Major Professor:	Charles Platter
Committee:	Christine Albright
	Benjamin Wolkow

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee, Dr. Platter, Dr. Albright, and Dr. Wolkow, for their wonderful feedback and dedicated help in the writing of this thesis; my fellow graduate students, especially Alison and Hannah, for their encouragement; and my family and my fiancé Sean for supporting me throughout this process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION

Aristophanes uses the fantastic in his comedies as a way to establish an escape for his audience from the mundane sufferings of their world.[1] But how does Aristophanes do this? In Aristophanes' extant plays, three of them, *Birds*, *Clouds*, and *Peace*, involve the characters discounting the traditional gods, inventing new gods to take their place, and reorganizing their world in terms of human limitations, the closeness between mortals and divine, and the customs and laws of their world. Aristophanes poses a new theogony which in turns affects the cosmography and therefore customs or laws of the established world. Through his reinterpretation of these three areas, Aristophanes not only provides a new reality for his characters, but is able to pose a complete escape for his audience. It is not sufficient to just change one of these three categories, as there would be too much familiarity with the old world. Instead, Aristophanes incorporates contemporary Athenian and Greek concerns (such as the Peloponnesian War, the rise of rhetoric for the purpose of persuasion and deception, and the questioning of divinities) into his reordered world so his audience can recognize these concerns within the constructs of a different reality. In analyzing how a new world and reality are created by and for the characters in these plays, I will begin with the strongest case rather than the earliest play performed. Since *Birds* has the most drastic change in the three areas above (gods, boundaries, and customs), I will use it to establish how Aristophanes constructs his new realities.

[1]Many scholars, past and recent, have noted how Aristophanes uses this idea of fantasy for comedic effects, to show a world that ought to be ridiculous and absurd, and as a means of escape. I, however, am interested in his plays as a story in of itself, rather than the play as a comedy. In the play, how does this new reality come about? What is changed, and what is the effect of this change?

I will then use this method for *Clouds* and *Peace* to show that these three plays should be taken together as representative of how Aristophanes reimagines the worlds in the considered plays.

As mentioned above, in order to create a new reality three areas of the world undergo a change and are redefined – the gods (a new theogony), the physical boundaries between human limitations and the divine (a new cosmography), and the customs. These three areas are related to and affect one another. When the gods are changed, mortals are often brought closer to the divine – the bridge that separates them becomes shorter – and so they are able to travel beyond their limits (to the sky) or have access to divine knowledge. The new gods also tend to have certain customs that they value over the old customs, which are often traditionally Athenian, and which the characters in the plays adopt. Kurke discusses the link between these areas in a way that seems very much part of human nature. The link between the vertical axis (mortals' relationship with the divine and their ancestors) and the horizontal axis (mortals' relationship with each other) of the world influences the way people perceive themselves in relation to others – namely barbaric or civilized. Kurke uses the anthropological model of Mary Helms who

> "defines a category of activities of 'skilled crafting' that act to create or transform objects or energies in the world; to impose order from chaos; and to mediate between 'civilization' and some real 'outside' whether this was conceived as the other world of the divine, the realm of wild nature, or that of distant peoples and places as themselves endowed with magical energies. An important point for Helm's argument is the assimilation or identification of the vertical and horizontal axes of distance such that distant people 'out there' are analogous to the representing culture's gods and ancestors."[2]

Kurke and Helms both suggest a connection between a society's perceived gods, world view, and cultural practice (or their customs). All three regions are a part of one's concept of his or her world and when one changes the others follow suit to form a new reality.

[2] Kurke 2011, 99.

I am first going to discuss the three areas (theogony, cosmography, and customs) that undergo a change in Aristophanes' *Birds*, *Clouds*, and *Peace*, and how they influence one another. I will then briefly explain my three chapters and summarize how the protagonists in the plays create a new reality in each. The main questions that I'm concerned with are how the characters within the plays see their world, physically and morally, and what they want from their gods. What do the changes Aristophanes poses reveal about contemporary concerns? And finally, do humans actually have the ability to create a new, better reality?

I. Theogony

In all three of the plays considered in this thesis, Aristophanes explores a world in which the Olympian gods are absent. In *Birds* and *Clouds*, both the birds and Clouds, who are the new gods, can be physically seen, and the Olympians are overthrown or reduced to natural phenomena respectively. In *Peace*, the Olympians are completely absent and have abandoned mortals and so they are replaced with the goddess Peace. The realities of the new worlds in these plays are ones without the Olympian gods who, in the play, are not seen and therefore not part of the world. The characters, instead, prefer gods that are present in their lives and can be active on earth. This change in gods also affects the realm of mortals and how they will live their lives. With this change of the gods, the first step of the new reality, there is often a new theogony for both mortals and gods to legitimize the new divinities.

Why does Aristophanes have his Athenian characters question their gods though? One explanation is the increase interest in rhetoric during the 5th century BCE in Athens, and its power to persuade. Though rhetoric has been around since the time of Homer with characters such as Odysseus, during this time, it seems to have undergone a revitalization and now is seen

often as a means for one to accomplish his own interests through persuasion, not always the interests of the state. At the heart of this innovation is the power of speech and how it can be manipulated. Speech, force, and persuasion are all closely tied together, and Euripides, in his *Hecuba*, even calls Persuasion a tyrant (814-9). The main protagonists of Aristophanes' plays are characters skilled in rhetoric, who take charge in establishing these new gods, and thus they show the growing power of human intellect. The characters use their power of speech to solve their problems, showing they barely need the new gods they have created.[3] Peisetaerus persuades the birds that they are indeed divine, they have a right to rule, and that they should build a new city in the sky; Socrates uses the Stronger and Weaker Arguments (the λόγω) as the basis of his education; and Trygaeus persuades Hermes to essentially give up his status[4] and to help him restore peace, the concept and sole goddess, to the world.

However, the ability to persuade for one's own interests is not always received positively in the play by the characters or in contemporary Athens by traditional citizens. Since *Clouds* is the earliest of the three plays considered, (performed in 423 BCE)[5] it portrays characters who use rhetoric deceptively or for their own interests in a more negative light than *Birds* (414 BCE) and *Peace* (421 BCE). Major notes that "*Clouds* in fact is our earliest example of transforming an idea of the sophists [the λόγω] from one morally neutral to one morally threatening."[6] Trygaeus, in *Peace*, is a generally positive character (since he is restoring peace to the world and acting in the interests of the state) despite his persuasive nature. Though Trygaeus uses rhetoric for the benefit of the Greeks in the play, the statue of Peace still expresses concern about, and anger at

[3] O'Reagan 1992, 128: "Aristophanes' usual fantasy gives words primacy over mundane reality."
[4] The introduction of these new gods, birds, Clouds, and Peace, are also indicative of succession myths as seen in Hesiod's *Theogony*, but this concept will not be addressed in the interest of length of this thesis.
[5] Though we have the rewritten version of *Clouds* (418 BCE), it is unlikely that there would be a drastic change in the characterization of Socrates.
[6] Major 2013, 20.

(*Peace*, 659), the rhetoric used in the democracy and in the deliberation process by the *demos*, rather than a single individual (such as Trygaeus) or demagogue.[7] Finally, Peisetaerus, in *Birds*, does bring about a good life for the other mortals in the play through his use of rhetoric despite his status as a tyrant by the end. Aristophanes utilizes rhetoric and the power of speech to show how much one man can accomplish on his own, without divine help, but also the dangers of such self-reliance.

The creation of new gods would not have been an uncommon concept to the audience due to the influx of new, foreign cults into Athens during this time. Gods and goddesses such as Sabazius and Bendis from Thrace attract more interest due to their exoticism.[8] Mortals, beginning in the 6th century BCE, are also seeking a closeness to their gods more and more, [9] and they seem to want them involved in their lives, rather than aloof on Olympus. In order to solve human problems, the gods need to be more present, or actually present, in mortal affairs. Jameson notes that when an individual or group feels the traditional gods cannot help their personal interests, they tend to change the religion and adopt new or foreign cults – they seek a god or gods than *can* help them.[10] Such a concern would be particularly prevalent during times of war since it questions why must mortals suffer if the gods are supposed to be on their side.[11] Because Aristophanes was writing a comedy, the audience would expect him to make fun of the gods and Greek religion, since both were commonplace in society:

> "To the Greeks, gods were part of the world, just as much as women, birds, slaves, Akharnians, frogs, politicians, and all the other creatures who appear in Aristophanes' plays. They were powerful, but not omnipotent,

[7] Ibid., 110-1.
[8] Reckford 1987, 18.
[9] Llyod-Jones 1973, 164.
[10] Jameson 2014, 234.
[11] Maddocks 2004, 27 notes this idea in connection to later comedies, but it does seem to apply to Aristophanes because of the Peloponnesian War.

> and not necessarily good, and so it was quite reasonable, in appropriate cases, to make fun of them, as of anyone else, in a comedy."[12]

The ability for comedy to make fun of the gods coincides with the focus on rhetoric and the individual. The Greeks are questioning their world, gods included. But would they have expected Aristophanes to nearly discount them completely? Aristophanes seems to pick up on the ambiguous public thought about new gods and how mortals should interact with them. His characters often begin in a state of madness,[13] as described by those around them, which implies that to question the gods is bad, or at least not accepted by all.

II. Cosmography

Aristophanes is by no means doing something out of the ordinary when (re)constructing his world. Since the ancient Greeks would have no way of seeing the earth from a high enough viewpoint to understand its form, they had to use their mind instead of a map to construct their world.[14] Aristophanes is merely doing the same thing – imagining his world within the plays to provide a new reality for the characters. Therefore, the characters are able to interact with their surroundings in a markedly different way than in real life. For this reason, I use the term cosmography rather than cosmogony based off of Brague's definition of the two terms:

> "Par **cosmographie**, j'entends une description du monde, des parties qui le composent, de la structure qui en fait une totalité unifiée. Par **cosmogonie**, j'entends un récit de la cosmogénèse, c'est-à-dire de la façon dont le monde en son etat actuel est venu à l'être à partir d'états antérieurs, dont l'un peut être considéré comme étant primitif."[15]

[12] MacDowell 1995, 18.
[13] See Prauscella 2013, 319-342 for the role 'madness' plays in the city.
[14] Romm 1992, 9 adds that with a lack of fact, "they employ other means available – theory, myth and fantasy – to define and depict the space in which they dwell."
[15] Brague 2015, 291.

Aristophanes creates new cosmographies in these three plays – that is, he reorganizes the order of the world and reimagines its structure. He is not so much concerned with how the world came to be (cosmogony), but what actually composes the world and how it is ordered (cosmography). But how does this change the reality for the characters? Brague again provides the answer: "Tous trois [cosmography, cosmogony, and cosmology] supposent qu'il existe quelque chose comme un *kosmos,* à savoir une realité englobante constituant une totalité, et une totalité ordonnée."[16] Since Aristophanes is changing the *kosmos*, which involves ordering one's world and reality and are the boundaries and order of the world, he is thus changing the reality.

The change in the vertical axes of the world, or the relationship between mortals and the divine, is a part of the reordering of the *kosmos*. The change influences how the characters interact with their surroundings. In *Birds*, Peisetaerus is able to fly into the sky and live with the now divine birds; in *Clouds*, Socrates merges with the middle air to learn divine matters; and in *Peace*, Trygaeus ascends to Olympus on a beetle. All three of these characters embark on a journey that ends up testing their human limitations. In discussing one stage of a sage's journey in ancient Greece, Kurke notes that

> "Theōria makes manifest for the Greeks what Helms claims is true for traditional cultures in general: space is never a neutral category. Instead certain outside places are conceptualized from the center as the meeting point of a spatial axis of distance with the vertical axis of gods and ancestors. Theōria for the Greeks is precisely marked travel to such potent points of convergence."[17]

We see such convergence in Cloud-cuckoo-land in *Birds* where mortals and divine interact with each other; Socrates' school in *Clouds* where he and the students consult middle-air matters; and

[16] Ibid., 292.
[17] Kurke 2011, 113-4.

Trygaeus' journey to Olympus in *Peace*. The wish that the gods could be closer and more involved in mortal lives is answered through this closing of the gap of gods and men.

This travelling beyond one's means, however, is something that is often punished in tragedy, but in comedy leads to the (near) success of the protagonists. Traditionally, Greek authors warn their audience about trying to extend their boundaries. Alkman, for instance, states "let no one of men fly to heaven" (fr. 16)[18]; and Hesiod in his *Works and Days* notes that "the home is better, since the outside is harmful" (365). Pindar also uses the Pillars of Herakles (a physical boundary of the world beyond which traditionally lies the Isles of the Blessed and therefore something that mortals should not cross) as a metaphor or symbol of a limit for the human condition.[19] To go beyond one's limits is to perform divine actions, not human ones. Despite Alkman's warning, the Greeks didn't seem to have a clear concept on their vertical limits. They knew that Ocean (Ὠκεανός) was their horizontal limit (for travels North, South, East, and West),[20] but what about their vertical? Where exactly is "heaven"? The actions of Peisetaerus, Socrates and Strepsiades, and Trygaeus seem to explore this question.

III. Customs

Since the reordering of the world is centered on the rhetorical skills of the protagonists, the overturning of the customs that follow the new gods and new boundaries tend to be indicative of such values. In the case of the birds, their customs are more violent due to the fact that they are animals. The Clouds also suggest more violent customs since they advocate the λόγω (the Stronger and Weaker Arguments) and Pheidippides, Strepsiades' son, uses the weaker argument

[18] All translations are my own.
[19] Romm 1992, 18.
[20] Cf. Romm 1992.

to prove he should beat up his father. *Peace*, however, differs in that the goddess Peace symbolizes the return of peace and the old customs to the world as well as an overthrow of the new customs under the rule of War. Throughout the plays of Aristophanes, there is also continual tension between the old and the new as the opposition applies to customs as well as generations. In general, the old generation and customs are viewed more positively than the new which is often portrayed as threatening to society. Indeed, Strepsiades in *Clouds* and Trygaeus in *Peace* value the old customs over the new, whereas Peisetaerus in *Birds* seems to welcome the new. The gods in *Clouds* and *Birds* also encourage the overthrow of the old ways and for mortals to accept their new, better customs.

The customs of the world in the plays change because the gods and relationship between mortals and divine have done so as well. Much of what the new gods promise in the "Theogony" section of each chapter, as they try to convince mortals to accept their divinity, become the customs the protagonists later adopt. In *Birds*, Peisetaerus welcomes the new customs of the birds in his new city, Cloud-cuckoo-land, and establishes them as the set laws for his new reality. Since his mission was to find a better city to live in, he shuns all traditionally Athenian customs in order to keep Cloud-cuckoo-land different. He also shows he takes on the violent nature of the birds when he welcomes those who beat up their father and even hits visiting professions who threaten to make his city another Athens. Strepsiades, in *Clouds*, shows that he cannot understand and adopt the customs of Socrates, the Clouds, and the school due to his age. He continually fails to comprehend their ways, and his forgetfulness leads to his inability to learn the λόγω. Since Strepsiades represents the old customs, he is not expected to succeed. He never fully recognizes the Clouds as goddess and therefore does not change his reality to that of Socrates. His son, however, who is of the new, younger generation eventually does accept the customs of

Socrates' world when he persuades by the Weaker Argument. Finally, in *Peace*, Trygaeus overthrows the new customs and restores the old when he exchanges War for Peace. He recognizes her as the true goddess for mortals and therefore when he brings her back to earth, he also restores all her benefits and customs including farming and theatre-going.

IV. The Plays

My chapters are organized by play, rather than the above concepts – the new theogony, cosmography, and customs. In each chapter, I analyze how these concepts are changed by the protagonists and how Aristophanes utilizes the change of gods, boundaries, and customs in the plays. Chapter 1 is on Aristophanes' *Birds* where Peisetaerus creates the birds as new gods through his use of rhetoric. He persuades both the birds and mortals that the birds are indeed older than the Olympian gods and therefore should rule in their stead. The birds use what Peisetaerus has told them to advocate a better life for mortals under their rule – namely, they will be more involved in human affairs. Peisetaerus then has the birds build a new city in the sky for them, and him, to dwell. Since he can now live with the new gods, the boundaries between mortal and divine have closed and he begins to take charge. In his new reality, Peisetaerus has established the gods and his world (Cloud-cuckoo-land) and finalizes it with the customs of the birds.

In *Clouds* (Chapter 2), Strepsiades encounters a new reality in contrast to his when he journeys to Socrates' school. In Strepsiades' world, he worships the Olympian gods, does not commune with them in person, and has traditional values and customs. Socrates, however, worships the Clouds, Tongue, and Chaos as his gods, converses with them, and accesses their knowledge through the middle-air. He also has customs indicative of the Weaker Argument and

rhetoric in general. Socrates has a closer relationship with his gods than Strepsiades since he summons the Clouds, the chorus, to their presence. He also hangs in mid-air to learn what he calls "middle-air matters". Socrates then passes on his acquired divine knowledge to his students who are part of his reality (and not Strepsiades') since they remain at the school. When Strepsiades tries to learn the ways of the new reality, he cannot grasp their gods (or discount completely the Olympians), their knowledge, or their ways. After Strepsiades fails to change his reality and solve his debt problem, his son Pheidippides learns the Weaker Argument and does change his own reality. Pheidippides recognizes the new gods under Socrates, therefore gains access to their knowledge, and changes his customs to that of Socrates' world.

In Chapter 3, *Peace,* Trygaeus journeys to Olympus to restore peace (as the concept) to his world. He travels beyond mortal limits and merges with the divine but only because the Olympian gods have left. The traditional gods no longer want to be involved in human life, therefore Trygaeus considers Peace as his new goddess. He introduces her back to the rest of the world to overthrow War, as a god, and so end the war in Greece. Trygaeus also closes the gap between mortals and gods due to his ability to physically bring a goddess, Peace, from Olympus and to earth (although she is a statue in the play). Through his retrieval of Peace, Trygaeus also changes the customs of his world to their original state before the war. The change in reality for Trygaeus' world is from that of war to that of peace. The overthrow of customs is most prevalent with the professions Trygaeus encounters. Those who made weapons and armor flourished when War was in charge whereas the farmers suffered. With Peace restored, farmers once again can till their fields, but the weapon-smiths go out of business. Trygaeus attempts to reconcile these two realities by repurposing the war equipment, but is unable to do so much like Strepsiades tried to combine his reality with Socrates' in *Clouds*.

Lenience must be given, however, to this change in realities due to the fact Aristophanes is writing comedies, and therefore, his plays should not be taken too seriously. Though most of the actions of the characters are meant to be humorous, the parodies on real life problems are still genuine issues to the Greek audience. They experience a momentary release from this seriousness of the word, but their problems are ever present. Aristophanes addresses modern concerns by showing such issues through absurd or ridiculous manners, but the serious undertone goes beyond the humorous aspects and ties into the actual story. Aristophanes questions the effect of birds as gods, which in of itself is funny, but then what else needs to change? He reorders the *kosmos* to adapt the world to the new gods with the creation of Cloud-cuckoo-land in *Birds*. This process would be unrealistic to the audience, and therefore part of the humor, but the plays show how human limitations may not be as bounded as one may think.

The idea of overturning a certain order is characteristic to both Aristophanes and the genre of Comedy. Cloud-cuckoo-land becomes another Athens at the end of *Birds*, which is what Peisetaerus was avoiding; Strepsiades burns down Socrates' school in *Clouds* and thus destroys the other reality; and the threat of war remains ever present in *Peace* despite Trygaeus' restoration of Peace to the world. Despite these facts, the three plays all involve a change in gods, a reordering of the world's boundaries and human limits, and customs. The characters create or encounter a world different than their own in which the Olympian gods are not present or overthrown, and mortals can now reach the limits of the gods. In the following chapters I hope to show that in *Birds*, *Clouds*, and *Peace* Aristophanes has his characters create a new reality in the same fashion by questioning the gods and human limitations. In the end, I think Aristophanes is showing his audience how much one man, one person, can accomplish in the constructs of the plays, and wants to encourage them to do the same in the real world.

CHAPTER 1

BIRDS

In *Birds*, Aristophanes creates a new reality for mortals under the rule of the birds through a redefinition of the gods, the physical world, and its customs. The characters reimagine the hierarchy of the Olympian gods and establish the birds as the new kings[21] of the gods who can be more involved physically in world and thus promise mortals a more pleasant life. Once the new rulers of the world have been established, the physical boundaries are then re-evaluated and changed. Under the order of the birds, the human realm becomes closer to the divine, and the Olympians are cut off from mortals by Cloud-cuckoo-land. Because Cloud-cuckoo-land lies between the human and original divine world, there is a shift in the physical boundaries. Cloud-cuckoo-land becomes the new Athens and is closer to both the earth (therefore mortals) and to Olympus. Since the bridge between the human and the divine has been moved in the text, and a new order of gods has been established, all order has been thrown into confusion.[22] Therefore, what used to be considered civilized or right becomes uncivilized or wrong, and vice versa, resulting in a change of customs and laws when Peisetaerus adopts the violent customs of the birds.

[21] In this thesis, I use the term 'kings' generally as the ruler in charge. It is important to note that tyranny emerges within the play, mainly through Peisetaerus, since the term 'king' has a significant role throughout Greek history. See Starr 1961 on the development of the term *basileus* and how it compares to the tyrant.

[22] Henderson 2000, 4: "There is plenty of topical satire, but all of it is incidental to a fantasy that soars above the world's particulars to a conjured realm, where the most familiar hierarchies of empirical reality – earth and sky, nature and culture, polis and wilds, humans, animals, and gods – are blurred, reordered, or even abolished, and whose hero attains power surpassing even that of the gods."

The entire creation of this new world and reality is brought to fruition by one man, Peisetaerus, who represents the contemporary Athenian citizen through his ambition and rhetorical skills. Euelpides does not play as great of a role as Peisetaerus in convincing the birds to become the supreme divinities and to build their new city. He eventually even disappears from the play entirely. Through the portrayal of Peisetaerus, Aristophanes parodies late 5th century thought in this play, a period in which the Athenians in particular were analyzing and scrutinizing everything, especially questioning the gods and mortal customs.[23] Throughout the play, Aristophanes explores a world in which the Olympian gods have been replaced by birds, and mortals, represented by Peisetaerus, can now travel beyond their human limitations to become nearly divine themselves.

In part one of this chapter, Peisetaerus convinces and establishes the birds as the new kings of both men and the other gods. Peisetaerus, a mortal, represents a current trend in Athens, which favors human innovation and knowledge over the divine. Through Peisetaerus, Aristophanes also addresses contemporary concerns and feelings in Athens such as the power (and potential danger) of rhetoric; the rise of cults and interest in new or foreign gods; the threat to democracy through demagogue and tyrant figures; and the effects of the Peloponnesian war on Athenian citizens. Peisetaerus uses his Athenian skills of persuasion to convince the birds they are gods, should build a city, and take over worship from the Olympian gods. In order to establish the birds fully as the new gods, however, Peisetaerus has to first place them in the mythic tradition by using Hesiod and Aesop. The final step in legitimizing the birds as the new gods is to argue why they are better than the Olympian gods. What can the birds offer in order to gain the support and worship of men? Peisetaerus informs the birds first on what they can offer

[23] Adkins 1972, 107.

mortals, and the birds themselves present similar promises after their theogony. In general, the birds guarantee a blissful life, their involvement and aid in human affairs, and, most importantly, pity (which the Olympian gods could never offer). Encouraged by Peisetaerus, the birds advocate a kind of a new golden age for men under their rule.

The promises the birds make to mortals in section one is dependent upon the establishment of their new city in the sky, Cloud-cuckoo-land (section two). In order for the birds to be as involved in human life as possible, they need to be close to the earth, which is shown through their colonization of the *aither*, a region of 'air' lower than the home of the Olympians, *ouranos*. Both the fact that the home of the new gods is closer to earth than Olympus, and that humans and the gods (the birds) can mingle in the city, shift the boundaries between mortals and the divine. Where mortals can and cannot go changes, as well for the gods. The birds also build a wall around Cloud-cuckoo-land not only to prevent the savor of sacrifice from reaching the Olympians but also to keep the other gods out. When these boundaries are shifted, the distinction between civilized and barbaric is also changed. Cloud-cuckoo-land becomes the epitome of civilization to the characters in the play while Athens, which held that position formerly, is pushed to the less civilized realm. Just as the further one gets away from Athens, the more barbaric the land, so the same holds true for Cloud-cuckoo-land as the characters begin to see Athens as less civilized. Peisetaerus again has an involved role in the city's planning and construction, as it was his idea from the beginning. Cloud-cuckoo-land gradually becomes a city for humans (namely Peisetaerus) more-so than for birds. Peisetaerus takes advantage of his role in first establishing the birds as gods, then constructing a city in which *he* can live under the pretense that it is for the birds.

In section three, the characters in the play must also redefine the customs and laws in the newly established Cloud-cuckoo-land under the rule of the birds in order to finalize the creation of a new reality. The birds initially present their customs before Cloud-cuckoo-land is established and advocate a barbaric and violent way of life. The violent nature of the birds is eagerly welcomed by Peisetaerus, and he is quick to give up Athenian customs for the ease of life under the birds. Following the theogony, the chorus of birds re-emphasizes the life, laws, and customs mortals can expect under their rule. Peisetaerus, who now seems to have taken control of Cloud-cuckoo-land, even turns away typical Athenian professions and values when a poet, lawgiver, and *meton*, among others, visit the city. Despite all these efforts *not* to be Athens, Cloud-cuckoo-land is gradually transformed into a recreation of Athens. Peisetaerus and Euelpides remain the same as Athenians, and so does Cloud-cuckoo-land in the end. When Peisetaerus marries Basilea, who embodies Athenian values and characteristics as well as the power and authority to rule via Zeus, he firmly places Cloud-cuckoo-land in the human realm. Peisetaerus' marriage to Basilea only adds to the authority he has gained, as he now has a 'queen' or 'princess' to carry on his legacy. The city is now clearly a place for mortals, and the importance and rule of the birds is pushed out.

I. Birds as Kings of the Gods

Peisetaerus and Euelpides, the protagonists of *Birds*, discount Athens and her gods and establish the birds as gods. Peisetaerus certainly tests his limits as a mortal when he takes reforming his world into his own hands to make it more pleasant, and is utilizing his human skill, his ability to persuade through rhetoric, to eventually supersede the birds as gods. At this time in Athens, there is a preference for human intellect, rather than divine, and men begin to take credit

for their own glory and skills while no longer fearing injustice from the gods, but rather other men.[24] In this way, the Athenians are becoming more autonomous and are realizing their impact on the world. These innovations presented, namely the revitalization of rhetoric, are not necessarily negative but show a progressive change in Athenian thought.[25] Men are realizing that they have control and power over their life (and fate) through rhetoric, rather than through the gods.[26] The focus is no longer on the gods and what men need to do to stay favorable in their eyes, but rather on how they can escape the mortal condition and advance their own civilization and society.

Peisetaerus and Euelpides represent these new values, namely autonomy and a focus on the self, when they focus on their own pleasures and needs over their city and the gods. They willingly separate themselves not only from Athens (which the Athenians considered the center of the world[27] and epitome of civilization) but also from the gods associated with that world. In addition to their own knowledge, they also value that of the birds. From the beginning of the play, the two characters establish that they do not think they can gain any insight from the gods. Peisetaerus and Euelpides do not seek help from the Olympian gods when they set off to find a city better than Athens, but rather from Tereus, a man who had become a bird (15-6; 46-8)[28] and therefore has both human and bird knowledge (119). Peisetaerus and Euelpides no longer consider Athens the best city they can live in, and they make it a point that they do not want a bigger or greater city, just one more pleasant (123-4). Through their rejection of Athens,

[24] Ibid., 102, cf. also Critias' view that men created the gods so they would be afraid to do wrong. The gods enabled men to move from disorder and violence to a civilized life.
[25] Adkins 1972, 101.
[26] Rowe 1977, 25.
[27] Rusten 2013, 314.
[28] All citations are from Aristophanes' *Birds* unless otherwise noted, and all translations are my own.

Peisetaerus and Euelpides are rejecting the Olympian gods as well. This questioning of the gods will then lead to the creation of new order, that of the birds.

Peisetaerus and Euelpides' willingness to abandon Athens shows a probable concern to the Athenians – a favoring of Sparta (or other territories) above Athens at this time of strife. Peisetaerus and Euelpides, who see themselves as good, upstanding citizens (32-4), want to escape (though for trivial reasons), and therefore, could others as well? The fact that Peisetaerus and Euelpides were ἀστοί μετ' ἀστῶν (citizens among citizens, 34) and part of the aristocracy,[29] would be an unsettling thought to the Athenians. If even the good citizens are willing and, apparently, eager to leave Athens, what does that mean for the bulk of the Athenians who may be lower class? This willingness to leave Athens could also be a concern for Athenians during a time of war.[30] Since Athens was at war with Sparta and their allies at the time Aristophanes was writing, there would have been, presumably, a strong call for Athenian unity. When Peisetaerus and Euelpides call themselves "citizens among citizens", they suggest they are deeply imbedded in the city and part of the general crowd of Athenians. However, these deeply imbedded citizens are still leaving Athens. Peisetaerus' and Euelpides' abandonment of Athens comments on dissent arising from the midst of the city and the ridiculous nature of attempting to flee everyday duties and responsibilities, such as paying fees.

In addition to asking a mortal man/bird for help over the Olympian gods, Peisetaerus *himself* convinces the birds that they are right to rule. He and Euelpides use Tereus and his knowledge as the basis to establish the birds as gods. Two mortals are essentially establishing a new order of gods in a parody of new cults and gods in Greece. The bird cult has no real standing in the tradition of the Olympian gods, since it is fabricated and instituted by men, and yet the

[29] Dunbar 1995, 147 elaborates that they would have claimed descent from some hero or divinity.
[30] Especially if able bodies, young Athenians (potential soldiers) were leaving.

characters in the play readily accept the birds as their new gods. The introduction of new cults into Athens (among other cities) is no new thing. Cults for lesser or new and foreign gods are especially prominent during times of war or crisis.[31] Since Athens is currently at war, it could be expected for the citizens, and audience members, to be familiar with this phenomenon.

These cults are instituted by men who "needed to be persons of solid conviction, restless energy and exceptional charisma".[32] Do Peisetaerus and Euelpides fall into this category? Peisetaerus is portrayed throughout as one well-versed in rhetoric.[33] His name alone means "Persuader." Euelpides, "Good-Hope,"[34] never persuades the birds rather, Peisetaerus is the one who comes up with the plan to build a city in the sky and to establish the birds as gods. Therefore, can the fact that mere mortals are able to establish a new set of gods be considered of less importance? I think not. The cults that are established do not supersede the Olympian gods and are often lesser gods. Peisetaerus and Euelpides, however, are creating the birds as above the Olympians. The introduction of new gods, or heroes, doesn't necessarily cause another god (or set of gods) to decrease in their worship by mortals.[35] What Peisetaerus and Euelpides are doing, then, can be considered rare.

Though cults were prominent and popular in Athens, they emphasize division rather than unity (which the Olympian gods represent since they are Panhellenic). This disunity is often viewed in connection with the tyrants in contrast to the unifying democracy since cults and religious changes often occur when an individual (or group of individuals) feels the gods are insufficient to meet their personal needs.[36] Similar to how a tyrant rises to power, the individual

[31] Garland 1992, 132.
[32] Ibid., 18.
[33] Kurke 2011, 99: A skilled craftsman has the power over others because he has knowledge that they do not and he can give order to chaos. Therefore Peisetaerus can be considered a skilled craftsman over the birds.
[34] Henderson 2000, 7.
[35] Garland 1992, 19.
[36] Jameson 2014, 234.

focuses on himself, rather than the community. The tyrant Pisistratus is credited especially with introducing cults into Athens.[37] Peisetaerus' name is very similar to Pisistratus, and Aristophanes seems to want his audience to recall his tyranny through this connection and, thus, cults. Oligarchy would have been a more prominent concern for the Athenians due to their war with Sparta and the brief Oligarchic rule that was imposed upon them in 411 BCE.[38] As shown throughout Thucydides, even though tyranny may have been a real threat with figures such as Alcibiades, some tyrant cults, such as the one of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, promoted patriotism among the Athenians.[39]

Does the establishment of cults, then, encourage individuals to consider themselves in higher status?[40] Peisetaerus does seem to gain in importance at the end of the play. A herald arrives at Cloud-cuckoo-land and tells Peisetaerus that "all the people honor you and crown you / with a golden garland on account of your wisdom" (1274-5). The herald then explains how before Peisetaerus built Cloud-cuckoo-land, everyone had Spartan-madness (ἐλακωνομάνουν, 1280-1281) but now they had bird-madness[41] (ὠρνιθομάνουν, 1283-4). When he is led out with his new wife and queen (Basilea),[42] he is described as a τύρρανος by the chorus (1708) who now has the power of Zeus. The birds even acknowledge Peisetaerus' success in creating the new city and gaining the power of the gods. The very last line of the play refers to Peisetaerus as "the highest of the gods" (δαιμόνων ὑπέρτατε, 1765). The birds give up their power they gained from

[37] Garland 1992, 39.
[38] Dunbar 1995, 584 notes however that "in the late 5th century Athenians used 'tyranny' and 'oligarchy' interchangeably for 'antidemocratic'."
[39] Garland 1992, 96.
[40] Ibid., 100: after the Persian Wars, less cults are established, and the *demos* has taken over the management of religion. Democracy doesn't promote individuals to make state decisions.
[41] Dunbar 1995, 638 explains how the herald intends 'bird-madness' as a joke and in fact relates Athenian customs, not bird, and therefore the Athenians still have 'Athenian-madness'.
[42] Anderson 2007, 324 notes that Peisetaerus and Basilea are led out in a chariot which parallels Pisistratos' use of Phye disguised as Athena in a chariot to trick the Athenians into accepting him as a tyrant.

Peisetaerus and accept him as their new ruler of Cloud-cuckoo-land. Peisetaerus becomes similar to a tyrant,[43] establishing a successful cult, and being honored for it. As will be shown later, the birds are more barbaric as gods due to their violent customs and pastoral habitats. The Greeks often associated the cruelty of tyrants with barbarians[44] and thus strengthening Peisetaerus' position as a tyrant by the end of the play.

This interpretation of Peisetaerus also supports the idea that he not only parodies cult-worship, but also democracy and demagogues. Aristophanes portrays the Athenians as fickle and quick to take up the next popular craze. Alcibiades is also called to mind here in his portrayal by both Thucydides and Nicias as a demagogue who has his own interests at heart. Through Nicias' speech in Book VI.9ff., Thucydides expresses his concern over demagogues swaying the general public with idle promises and the use of rhetoric. People didn't want to be on the "unpopular" side. The same phenomenon is happening in *Birds*. Not only are the Athenians swept up in worshipping birds as their new gods, seemingly throwing out the Olympian gods without a thought, but they are also easily persuaded by the same promises of a better life from the birds. Peisetaerus, though established as a tyrant or demagogue figure, still emphasizes that the birds are in a democracy. For example, when Heracles, Poseidon, and Triballus arrive to Cloud-cuckoo-land, Peisetaerus is spicing bird-meat from "some birds / who rose up against the bird democracy" (1583-4). Though Peisetaerus is clearly the new ruler of Cloud-cuckoo-land, he never refers to himself as such. Rather it is the birds who crown him in the manner of a victorious tyrant and call him a τύρρανος.

The creation of new gods ties into the focus on human knowledge and the importance of reason. Peisetaerus is the one who imparts knowledge onto the birds and explains to them how

[43] Romer 1994, 361 calls Peisetaerus "an arbitrary new political leader who is himself a Zeus-like tyrant."
[44] Hall 1989, 158.

they in fact are in the right to rule instead of the Olympian gods. He is also the one to suggest that the birds build a city in the air to intercept sacrifices to the gods in order to starve them into submission (171). In this way, Peisetaerus is a mortal creating a new world and new gods. The starvation of the gods is a reversal of sacrifice, or as Romer calls it "an anti-sacrifice".[45] Romer draws the association of the atheist Diagoras of Melos with the wall and starvation of the Melians and hints that Peisetaerus is encouraging the birds both to discount the Olympian gods, and besiege them.[46] However, I do not think Aristophanes is having Peisetaerus completely become *atheos* as Romer suggests. The characters still recognize the Olympians as gods, just not as kings of the gods. This notion of *atheos* is still complicated, though, since to the Athenians, *atheos* "meant an individual who did not believe in the gods worshipped by the state".[47] It is difficult to tell from the play to what extant Peisetaerus and Euelpides, therefore, discount the Olympian gods.

Though Peisetaerus seeks help from Tereus, he evidently does not need his advice due to his rhetorical skills. He takes prime agency and values human knowledge and innovation, and his eagerness for power and an easy life leads him on the path of tyranny. He sees life under the birds, rather than the Olympian gods and Athens, as a call back to a peaceful and easy life which the Athenians forfeited through being at war.[48] Though the establishment of birds as gods is reminiscent of cult worship, and the introduction of new gods into Athens is not a new idea, Aristophanes takes the divinity of the birds one step further in having them established as kings of the gods. This rise in power for the birds is necessary for Peisetaerus' eventual ascension as the true ruler of Cloud-cuckoo-land.

[45] Romer 1994, 352.
[46] Ibid., 358.
[47] Ibid., 353.
[48] Dunbar 1995, 3.

Peisetaerus begins in the human realm when he tells the birds they used to be kings (467) to establish them as kings of the gods. He then moves their reign into the divine realm when he elaborates that they rule *all* things, not only Peisetaerus himself, but even Zeus, Cronos, the Titans, and Gaia (468-9). Peisetaerus poses something of a reverse of Hesiod's *Theogony* as he goes back in time through the changes of power among the gods. With each former 'god-king' removed, Peisetaerus increases the authority and legitimacy of the birds as kings of all the gods. Aristophanes, via Peisetaerus, is undoing the traditional theogony of the Olympian gods. In order to insert the birds as older than even Gaia, he has to first remove each 'age' and then reorder the hierarchy of the gods with the birds in their place.

Peisetaerus uses the Aesop myth to back up his claims that the birds are indeed older than the gods, an argument with which the birds were unfamiliar. Peisetaerus' reference to Aesop when he explains to the birds that they were born first (471) is interesting because he does not use Hesiod (whose *Theogony* he has just reversed) or a source he feels the birds would know to legitimize their rule. He mentions that the birds have no knowledge of him and they are "unlearned and not curious (πολυπράμων)[49] for knowledge" (471). The upper class often used Aesop in order to manipulate the lower class and anyone unfamiliar with the fabulist.[50] Aesop, therefore, would have been known especially to the upper class citizens of Athens[51] but was still associated with the lower-class and seen as something that should be avoided in high-class discussions.[52] The birds do not question Peisetaerus' relation of the Aesop myth and he uses their ignorance to his benefit. Since Aesop's fables deal with animals and low-class professions (such

[49] Dunbar 1995, 325 argues that 'busy-body' here is not used negatively, as it often is, but instead has "a clearly favorable sense, appropriate to Peisetaerus, who is now actively interfering the life of the birds. A restless, interfering man would be likely to keep himself well-informed on everything, including Aesop's stories."
[50] Hall 2013, 291.
[51] Martin 1993, 116: "Notice that the performing sages often have a high-status audience, whether Greek or barbarian."
[52] Hall 2013, 291.

as a fisherman), the emphasis is not on the gods or heroes, like in Homer or Hesiod's *Theogony*, but on mortals. Peisetaerus' focus on Aesop, then, is also a focus on the human over the divine.

However, why Aesop over Hesiod? If the birds are as unlearned as Peisetaerus claims, they would also be ignorant of Hesiod's *Theogony*. The humor in this, I believe, is the unexpected. The audience would probably expect Peisetaerus to use the traditional *Theogony* of Hesiod, but instead he goes for the fabulist. Peisetaerus, in using Aesop over Hesiod's *Theogony*, is calling to mind for the audience that these are *birds.*[53] Animals are traditionally held in lower status than humans (as well as barbarians) and this treatment can be expected. It should also be noted, though, that the manipulation of myth was not an uncommon rhetorical device in the politics of Athens: "Aristophanes, is certainly here creating humor out of the absurd lengths to which such argumentation could go."[54] The audience, therefore, presumably would have been familiar with such techniques.

In order to establish the birds as kings, Peisetaerus tells the story of how the lark was born first of the birds and even before earth, from whom the Olympian gods are descended (472-3). This story has similarities with the succession of the gods in Hesiod's *Theogony*. The lark's father died, but since there was no earth, she had to bury him in her head (474-5). The lark follows the same tradition as the Olympian deities such as Ouranos hiding his children in Gaia, and Cronos consuming his own children. But it more closely recalls Athena's birth from Zeus' head. Peisetaerus, though, again overturns the traditional story. Instead of a parent eating his children, here the child is 'eating' her parent. Nevertheless, the parallel gives the story credibility to the birds and the audience but it also, as Hall points out, flatters the birds in term of their

[53] Russo 1994, 150: "At times [the birds are] behaving like human or divine beings, yet throughout conceived coherently as animals: everything the chorus says remains, in almost all cases, intrinsically pertinent to birds."
[54] Hall 2013, 287.

importance.[55] Peisetaerus continues to use Aesop myths for his own advantage instead of Homer or Hesiod and convinces the birds of their status through deceit, flattery, and their own ignorance.

Even though Peisetaerus argues that the birds are right to rule in birth alone, he still elaborates how the birds were not only gods, but kings who ruled over the early Persians, Greeks, and Egyptians (484-504). Peisetaerus is again showing the birds' reign over both the human and divine realm since they not only rule over all the gods (in age), but also the whole world. Not only did the birds now have a right to rule, but they have done it before. He also establishes their reign in the very distant past. He mentions they ruled before Darius I and Megabazus in Persia (484) and the Trojan War in Greece (509). Peisetaerus ends with the legacy of the former rule by the birds which is a kind of physical proof of his argument. He notes that the symbols of birds on scepters are the remnants of their role as kings over the gods since they appear on statues of the Olympian gods.[56] The fact that the birds are literally above the gods and kings on the statues (whether on the helmet or scepter) shows that they are claiming dominance.[57] Through the story of the lark and the examples above, Peisetaerus establishes the birds' superiority in age and in authority and proves how they are in the right to rule over the Olympian gods and men.

The birds themselves give a theogony based on the one provided by Peisetaerus which they take as a legitimacy for their rule and is a reimaging of Hesiod's *Theogony*. Not only is this *parabasis* meant to parody Hesiod, but the use of epic diction also recalls both Hesiod and Homer, as well as the fact that the birds are establishing a myth.[58] Cosmogonies often use epic

[55] Ibid.
[56] Dunbar 1995, 350.
[57] Ibid., 353.
[58] Moulton 1996, 221.

diction as well, such as in Hesiod and the Orphic tradition.[59] The birds begin by removing themselves from the human realm and setting themselves up as separate from mortals. They fully embrace their new divine status as they refer to the mortals as "living in darkness, much like the race of leaves, / of little strength, molded from clay, a shadowy and powerless race, / wingless creatures of the day, mortals who have suffered, and dream-like" (685-7). Though the birds seem to show some pity towards the human-condition,[60] they firmly place mortals on the ground and in darkness by associating them with earthly things such as trees and clay. The birds contrast the mortal condition with how they see themselves as divinities, "high in the air, un-decaying, planning imperishable things (ἄφθιτα)" (689). These descriptions set them up as another Zeus who is described in a very similar way. For instance, Hesiod describes Zeus's counsels as ἄφθιτα or imperishable (*Theogony*, 545, 550, and 561). Even though the birds initially promised to be present and involved in the lives of mortals, they still distance themselves in the opening of their theogony.

Aristophanes mimics Hesiod's *Theogony* closely, but subtle changes, made by the birds, legitimize their new role and position. The birds sing about their place in the cosmos to establish the order of the gods that Peisetaerus had undone earlier. Aristophanes very carefully begins with Chaos, Night, Darkness, and Tartarus (693) and quickly establishes that Earth, Air, and the Sky were not yet born (694). As is shown below, Aristophanes' presentation of the gods directly contradicts Hesiod's *Theogony*.

> First there was Chaos, but then / broad-breasted Gaia was born…/ and then murky Tartarus in the innermost part of the ground with its broad paths, / and limb-melting Eros…/ from Chaos there was born Erebus and black Night: / and from Night, Ether and Day were born…/ and then Gaia gave

[59] Dunbar 1995, 428.
[60] Dunbar 1995, 429.

> birth first to one equal to herself, / starry Ouranos…(Hesiod, *Theogony*, 116-128).[61]
>
> First there was Chaos and Night, black Erebus and wide Tartarus, / there was neither earth nor air nor the sky: then among the boundless bosom of Erebus, / Night first gave birth to a wind egg, / from which longed-for Eros grew as the seasons revolved, / glistening on his back with golden wings, like a whirlpool swift as the winds. / And he, having mingled with nightly, winged Chaos along broad Tartarus, / hatched our race, and had brought it first into the light. / And there was no race of the immortals, until Eros combined everything: / after combining some things with others, the sky, the ocean, / earth and the immortal race of the blessed gods were born. (Aristophanes, *Birds*, 693-702)

Whereas in Hesiod Night is the offspring of Chaos and Erebus, she is forefront with Chaos and Tartarus in Aristophanes' account. Night is important for the hierarchy of the birds since Eros, the child of Night, gives birth to an egg.[62] From this egg is the race of the birds. Since Gaia is the focus of the *Theogony* for the birth of the Olympian gods, it can be expected that Eros holds the same position in the bird theogony as the parent divinity. The birds' relationship with Eros is important for their relationship to the mortals since the birds also legitimize their birth from Eros by explaining that they both have wings and mingle with lovers (704). Both Eros and Chaos are described as 'winged' thus giving credibility that the birds can also be gods though winged.[63] The birds parallel Gaia's second position as presented in Hesiod with Night. Erebus needs to occupy the third position since Night is said to have "given birth to an egg full of wind[64] first of all in the hollow bosom of Erebus" (694-5). Gaia is also left out from the "primeval four" since

[61] Adkins 1985, 40: It should be noted that the order of Ouranos, Cronos, and Zeus "is Hesiod's own invention". Burkert 1999, 103 also comments on how "Hesiod is very much creating his own world."
[62] MacDowell 1995, 208: Though the idea of the gods producing an egg is not new, it is rare. There are two extant cosmogonies that refer to gods giving birth to an egg – in a poem considered to be composed by Epimenides (fr. 5), an egg is the product of the mating of two Titans; and Orpheus suggests that the whole world was oval like an egg.
[63] Dunbar 1995, 443: "It was important to make as many as possible of these earliest divine beings bird-like" and "if winged Eros mated with Chasm and produced as chicks…the race of the birds, then Chasm must be a kind of bird too" (449), and thus their rule is imbedded in the beginnings of the universe.
[64] Cf. LSJ entry on ὑπηνέμιος: a "wind-egg" is described as 1) an egg "which produce no chickens" and 2) "an egg laid by hens without impregnation" (1872). Does the fact that the egg Night produced is a wind-egg and therefore empty invalidate the birds whole theogony? See Dunbar 1995, 441 for more possibilities on the reasons for the 'wind-egg'.

the birds have to be older than her to keep in line with the story of the lark presented earlier.[65] Though Hesiod's presentation is but one version[66] of the order and birth of the gods and should not be taken as base fact, nevertheless, through the rearranging of the *Theogony*, the birds gain immortality and superiority over the Olympians. They adjust a traditional version of the hierarchy of the gods to fit their own needs.

The new theogony and cosmogony presented by Peisetaerus (and the birds) is creating a new world or universe for mortals. It is an alternate history with its own order of gods and myths. Peisetaerus takes the known world, including its literature, gods, and philosophy, and rearranges and reverses reality to create a new fantasy. [67] What Peisetaerus does is more drastic than supplemental myths that fill the gaps of the myths of Hesiod and Homer (i.e. the epic cycle and a good deal of tragedy). Peisetaerus manipulates the knowledge of the birds to establish them as kings of gods and men and convince them to starve out the Olympian gods. Through these actions, Peisetaerus will achieve his own interests in living a pleasant life in the soon to be established Cloud-cuckoo-land. Through reordering the birth of the gods, Peisetaerus also changes the cosmogony of the world to include the birds as gods in the new reality. Though Peisetaerus uses Aesop to convince the birds of their hegemony, the birds incorporate his arguments into a Hesiodic presentation in their own theogony to put into effect Peisetaerus' plan. Such a presentation takes their legitimacy from the human realm, through Peisetaerus' use of Aesop, to the divine. Before the creation of the actual city of Cloud-cuckoo-land, Peisetaerus has already constructed a new universe in his play since he supplied the birds with the needed

[65] Dunbar 1995, 438.
[66] Ibid., 437: "In Greece it is clear that from the 7th to 6th cc. onward several verse theogonies were in circulation, ascribed to Orpheus, Mousaios, Aristeas, and Epimenides, none likely to have been as old as Hesiod (8th C BCE), but clearly, from what is known of their content, not wholly dependent on him."
[67] Moulton 1996, 223.

knowledge to become the new rulers. He not only refers to a golden age in the past when the birds were kings, but he also portrays a future world that will be similar to the golden age.[68]

To the characters in the play, the birds are also better rulers than the Olympian gods since they promise to offer to mortals what the Olympian gods never could nor did, mostly pity and compassion. They make a point of saying that they will not be distant like Zeus: "nor will we retire and sit exalting on high / among the clouds just like Zeus; / but will be present and give to you all, / your children, and their children, / wealth, life, peace" (727-731). At the heart of the life of the birds is not just ease but also the stress on freedom for mortals.[69] In the exchange between Peisetaerus and the chorus before the theogony, Peisetaerus tells the birds that they will give to humans an extra 300 years to live (607-8). This doesn't make them immortal, but it certainly gets them closer to such a long, blissful life. Unlike the Olympian gods, who rule in their own interests rather than in men's,[70] Peisetaerus is hopeful that men will benefit from the rule under the birds.

However, does this closeness of the birds to humanity take away from their divinity? The Olympian gods are feared and respected because they are separated from mortals,[71] and they are often portrayed as distant and uninterested, or rarely mentioned at all. Traditional Greek gods were not benevolent gods to mortals, and so the fact that the birds are helpful and caring creates a closeness with the divine that would make the audience uneasy.[72] However, Hesiod does show that the gods care about mortals in a "political arrangement" and

> "in their relationship with human beings, gods may sometimes take note of justice and injustice between one mortal and another; but, as the *Works and Days*…shows, they care for many other things too: sacrifice,

[68] Given the time, it would be interesting to compare this 'future golden age' to the Ages of Man in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.
[69] Dunbar 1995, 1.
[70] Lloyd-Jones 1973, 161.
[71] Thibodeau 2013, 133.
[72] Rowe 1977, 20.

> observance of due season, hard-work, none of which…guarantees, in Hesiod's view, the success to which they are a hoped-for means."[73]

Aristophanes conveniently leaves out this characterization of the gods, as presented in Hesiod, to increase the benefits from the birds. Despite asking only for mortals to believe in and sacrifice to them, the birds continually promise benefits which the birds believe they are better able to offer than the Olympian gods. For instance, they promise to watch over farmers' crops since they naturally eat the bugs and vermin that plight them (1061-1071). However, most of what the birds promise was first described to them by Peisetaerus earlier in the play. After he proved to the birds that they are meant to rule, he then explains to them how they can benefit mortals thus looking after his own interests in the creation of his new reality.

Following the theogony, the birds present how they will be involved in human lives which is reminiscent of Hesiod's *Works and Days*. The birds mostly list deeds they already do as birds acting in their natural realm. The birds begin with the change of the seasons which is important for every aspect of Greek life.

> "First of all, we show[74] you the seasons – spring, winter, and autumn; / sow whenever the crane, cawing, migrates to Libya; / and at that time he shows to the ship-owner, having hung up his rudder, to sleep… / then the kite in turn, in addition to these things, appears to show another season, / when it is the season to shear the spring wool of the sheep; / when the swallow appears, then it is already necessary to sell your cloak and buy a light garment." (709-715)

Even though the Greeks are accustomed to use the bird migrations to observe the change in seasons, it focuses the need on the birds. The birds also do not reference the observance of the stars for the change of the seasons which Hesiod uses in addition to birds in *Works and Days* to

[73] Adkins 1985, 304.
[74] The account by the birds varies from Hesiod in that the birds have the agency – they are signaling to men when they should do what. Dunbar 1995, 450 comments that "the use of φράζειν…suits the birds here rather than the observer," since the birds are assuming superiority and control.

determine the harvest.[75] The lack of the stars may be since Cloud-cuckoo-land obscures the previously used Pleiades. With this creation of the birds as gods, the focus is drawn away from the human knowledge. It is redirected back to the divine. The birds make it seem like mortals will not have to do as much work since the birds will take care of all tasks. However, nothing is actually changing here – mortals are just using a different means of observing the sky. Aristophanes could be showing how nothing changes for the good under a new set of gods, but rather it is just a different way of doing the same thing. After establishing themselves as necessary for general survival (that is basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter) to the Greeks, the birds then include themselves in their day-to-day lives (716-8). Since the birds are physically closer to mortals as well (by living in the clouds and trees), men do not have to travel far to consult the birds which again reiterates the ease of life the birds are offering.

The birds describe their lives as being similar to the Golden Age, and they claim to offer a carefree life to humans as well. In the beginning, Tereus mentions to Peisetaerus and Euelpides that birds have no need of a purse, and therefore money (157), and eat freely of luxuriant plants (159-160). Later in the play, they show that they have no need for cloaks, are not affected by the cold (1089-1090) or the summer heat (1093), because they can easily fly to temperate climates for the summer and winter. The birds attribute most of their good life to the fact that they have wings and are able to fly. The birds also tell men that they can bestow wings on them so they can partake in the blessed life of the birds. The birds however describe their ability to fly in reference to everyday, menial tasks such as escaping a boring tragedy, relieving oneself, or committing

[75] Hesiod begins with the Pleiades to mark the harvest upon their rise, and the ploughing up their setting (*Works and Days*, 383-7); Sirius marks the coming of autumn (414-9); the crane also signals autumn and when to plough (448-9); Arcturus and the swallow are mentioned together for the beginning of spring (564-9); Orion also brings on winter (597-9).

adultery (785ff). To wherever the birds migrate for the seasons the place is described as pleasant, full of flowers and abundant (1094-1100) which is characteristic of the Isles of the Blessed.

The birds, however, later question whether mortals will believe that they are gods *because* of their wings: "and how will men consider us to be gods and not jackdaws, / we who fly and have wings" (571-2). This doubtfulness shows that the birds are not confident in their new status or do not fully trust the theogony provided to them. Peisetaerus reassures the birds that mortals will accept them as gods because some gods do have wings, namely Hermes, Victory, Cupid, and Iris (572-575). These gods, though, are lesser gods and not one of the main Olympian gods. The issue of wings is also brought up later in the play when people start to flock to Cloud-cuckoo-land. In order to live in the new city, all the citizens are provided with wings. They essentially are becoming immortal since they can now live with the new divinities.[76] Generally, flight is also connected to the need to escape. But life in Athens at this time (414 BCE) was not one of despondency or defeat rather, they were still powerful.[77] What these Athenians are escaping, then, is real life and adult duties, to which everyone at all times are indebted. The only way to completely separate oneself from reality is to become a bird in the newly established Cloud-cuckoo-land.

The birds as new gods can represent two (of many) possibilities to the fact that they offer a golden age for mortals and are now connected to their everyday lives. One, gods that can pity and be closely involved in mortal lives is the next step of the evolution of Greek thought about the divine; or two, since they are in fact *birds*, the characters in the play are actually taking a step backwards in this evolution. They de-anthropomorphize the gods and retract to an age when

[76] See Rusten 2013, 300-1 on how flight is also associated with immortality and that the lyric poets are often said to be living somewhere in the Zodiac.
[77] Dunbar 1995, 5.

society saw their gods as animalistic. The former option relates to a progression of thought often evident in Greek tragedy which focuses on the cultivation of pity. The ability to pity (by both humans and, in this case, gods) is connected to an aspect of civilization.[78] Could the characters in the play be attempting to make a more civilized state with gods who are able to show pity? And what is the implication that gods can now do what before they could not (namely, show pity)? Greeks had also changed the gods from animal form to human,[79] which ties into the latter point. Aristophanes is changing his gods back into animal form. However, after this change into human form from the animal, the gods remain separate from mortals since they are not subjected to the human condition – they do not suffer.[80] Due to the fact that *Birds* is a comedy the second option seems more likely.

Though the birds are meant to be a humorous order of gods to the audience, Peisetaerus successfully argues their place as rulers of gods and men. In order to gain their support from mortals for their new rule, the birds emphasize an easy life and more benefits from them as gods than were previously received from the Olympian gods. They stress closeness to the lives of mortals both physically and emotionally (through their ability to show pity) but also maintain a degree of separation to retain superiority. All of what the birds promise, however, was initially suggested by Peisetaerus. For his own benefit, and for a more pleasant life, he convinces the birds of all the things they eventually offer to mortals. If the birds are not accepted by his fellow Athenians and he fails to gain the cult following he seeks, Peisetaerus would not be able to establish Cloud-cuckoo-land as his utopic version of Athens.

[78] Alford 1993, 259.
[79] Thibodeau 2013, 117.
[80] Ibid.

II. Cloud-cuckoo-land, A Place for Mortals and Divine

With the establishment of the birds as the new gods, the characters in the play must now create a new world in which they can live. The old world, borders, and limits are no longer sufficient to accommodate what the birds promise to mortals. Since the birds, through the encouragement of Peisetaerus, vow to be closer to the lives of mortals, they need a single city close to earth as a sort of closer Olympus. Though the birds will still inhabit the trees on the ground, the construction of Cloud-cuckoo-land allows them to maintain a degree of separation and superiority over mortals. However, when Peisetaerus convinces the birds to give him wings so he can also live in the city (his plan since the beginning), the divide between mortals and gods is shifted – men can now dwell side by side with their gods. Not only does Cloud-cuckoo-land change the physical aspect of the world through its actual construction in the air, but it also reimagines the concept of the boundaries of the Greek world. Cloud-cuckoo-land reshapes the world in this second stage of creating a new reality.

The establishment of Cloud-cuckoo-land is not intended to be a new Olympus for the birds to inhabit, but rather a new Athens for Peisetaerus. The purpose of their journey was to find a better city to live in than Athens. Since there was no city (to the knowledge of all-knowing Tereus), they had to create one. Just as Peisetaerus led the creation of the birds as new gods, he leads the creation of a completely new town. However, Peisetaerus acknowledges that the birds will inhabit the new city because they need a central place to live (172). Before Peisetaerus and Euelpides can reside in the city, they first have to become birds and sprout wings via a magical root (664-5). This union of men and gods raises many complications to the idea that they intended Cloud-cuckoo-land to be a new Athens. Peisetaerus seems to be making himself immortal as he becomes a bird, with his wings, and plans to live in the city he created for the

gods. Or is this ability to live in Cloud-cuckoo-land part of the better life the birds are offering? If Peisetaerus is still mortal, will mortals and divine now live within the same city, under the same laws?[81] If so than the border between mortals and divine is so close that it is near impossible to tell them apart. And, finally, what does this say about birds as gods? If they are so close to mortals, are they really going to be effective gods? Peisetaerus, in his cunning way, gets his more pleasant city under this guise that it was for the birds.

Peisetaerus has the birds claim the air as their site for Cloud-cuckoo-land in a process that gives insight to the Greek (and Aristophanes') view of the world. What's curious is that before he mentions the air, he first establishes the hemi-spherical nature of the soon to be bird realm. Peisetaerus seems to have received this idea from the birds he and Euelpides were following at the beginning of the play since they are constantly pointing upwards and signaling that such a place they are searching for does not exist on land, rather in the sky (49-53). Peisetaerus has Tereus look around to show him the site of where to build the city: "look down…now look up…bring around your neck" (173-5). Tereus says he only saw "the clouds[82] and οὐρανὸς – the sky" (178).[83] Peisetaerus, however, takes Tereus' answer as characteristic of what should be in the realm of the birds. To emphasize the hemi-spherical nature of the sky, he refers to it as the ὀρνίθων πόλος (179). Though πόλος can mean just the sky, it also refers to the axis of the

[81] At the beginning of the play Peisetaerus claims that he and Euelpides are birds to the slave who answers Tereus' door: ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀνθρώπω (but we two are not men, 64). They go on to explain how they are both birds. This situation could be for humor, since this is a comedy, and since they should clearly be seen as men. This idea of humor is supported since later Euelpides does refer to themselves as men to Tereus: νώ; βροτώ (As for us? We two are mortals, 108). Not only are they not birds, but they are mortal. This switch could be a rhetorical device since Peisetaerus will soon argue how the birds are immortal to Tereus.

[82] Reckford 1987, 332: "The clouds, indeed, are symbols of illusion; the cloud city is where idle dreams build their cloud castles."

[83] It is unclear whether Peisetaerus is showing Tereus his realm (which, as a bird, Tereus should be familiar with) or the fact that it is empty. There are no gods in the sky. There is no Olympus. No one is ruling it. Is it free to claim? Or is he saying that the birds do not have a city and need one; they do not have anything that says 'this is the realm of the birds'.

celestial sphere, the vault of heaven, and the pole.[84] The imagery of 'pole' suggests a limit – the encompassing ends of a (hemi-) sphere. The reference to the air as a hemisphere is evident again when the *meton* arrives to portion out the sky: "for the whole air is in form / especially like an oven" (1000-1). The πνιγεύς is hemi-spherical, just like the πόλος implies.[85] The birds, as being above and around the earth (and under the Olympians) can now see all alike, both mortals and gods, and thus the sky proves to be an advantageous site for the new kings of the gods.

The way in which Peisetaerus describes his plan to build Cloud-cuckoo-land parallels the transformation of civilization from hunting and gathering to living in a settled place. Peisetaerus informs the birds that in order to be accepted by the Athenians as gods, they need to stop flying around (i.e. stop migrating) and be stable.[86] Some ancient philosophers saw the early stages of human life as similar to animals – living apart from one another without a strong sense of society.[87] The birds, however need to do more than simply inhabit the air, they have to colonize and fortify a city (172 and 183). Once the birds are ready to settle, the next step is to widen their influence and rule in a process very reminiscent of colonization in early Greece. As the birds grow in influence, so does their cult worship. Garland explains that

> "in religious terms one of the most significant developments which now took place was that deities and heroes who previously had been exclusive to a specific *genos* were henceforth required to transcend the boundaries of their particular kin-group and represent the interests of the entire citizen body."[88]

[84] Dunbar 1995, 192 acknowledges the scarcity of evidence for this reference to an axis: "the only 5th C. exx. are in high-flown poetry…though it may already have been a scientific term…for the axis of the celestial sphere…or a pole of that axis." There is also a pun here between πόλος and πόλις (Strauss, 1980, 163)
[85] Ibid., 555: Dunbar also describes the πνιγεύς as "a hemispherical baking-cover of terracotta familiar in ancient-Greek kitchens" and because of its use by Socrates in *Clouds* (95-96) has "become a joke of intellectuals interested in τά μετέωρα (middle air matters)."
[86] He also shows how movement is associated with fickle behavior, and staying in one place is connected with a good, trusted leader (165-170).
[87] Kahn 1997, 255.
[88] Garland 1992, 28.

The birds are becoming more than just a cult, then, with the construction of Cloud-cuckoo-land and instead Peisetaerus sets them up as the rulers of *all* of Greece, not just the new city. The birds are now expected to rule over all men and all men are expected to believe and obey the birds. The new city will function as the head of all the other "colonies" of the birds (various trees, for instance) but all will recognize the government and gods of the metropolis, Cloud-cuckoo-land. The colonization-aspect of the city's construction suggests that this is the intention Aristophanes has for the play.

Cloud-cuckoo-land tests the divisions of mortals and divinities because it calls into question the established boundaries of the world. To the Greeks, everything had its own particular place[89] and when an object is moved from its place, disorder (and thus reorder) follows. The gods, for instance, are supposed to be completely separate and uninvolved with human affairs in Epicurean thought,[90] and so emotionally and physically removed from earth. Mortals, in contrast, are limited to the earth and their position needs to be lower than the Olympian gods. Since in the newly established Cloud-cuckoo-land mortals will live with the new divinities, the birds, the mortal realm is brought upward and merged with the divine.

Peisetaerus shows concern at the beginning, however, about being able to live in a cloud city without wings. He uses another Aesop myth to warn against the mingling of land and sky and suggests that mortals (namely he and Euelpides) must *become* winged in order to live with the winged: "Now look, that it is said in the fables of Aesop how there was an ill meeting between a fox at one time with an eagle" (651-3). Peisetaerus is showing how two different realms (the sky and the land) don't mix well, an idea going back to the separation of Ouranos from Gaia in Hesiod's *Theogony*. There is also a long standing tradition in Greek thought that it

[89] White 1996, 183.
[90] Mansfield 1999, 463

is hubristic to vie to be like the gods, and mortals must suffer the human condition.[91] Before Peisetaerus and Euelpides can reside in the city, they first have to become birds and sprout wings via a magical root (664-5). The wings also enable Peisetaerus and Euelpides to fully escape their worldly limits.[92] They have a chance to leave their old world behind and establish a new one with the birds. However, since the birds immortalize those to whom they give wings, he can also be suggesting that mortal and immortals do not commune well. Therefore, mortals cannot and should not live in the city of the birds without becoming immortal. Throughout the 6th century and beyond, Greeks "demanded a closer link with higher powers than the old religion could offer them."[93] This apotheosis of normal human beings (an ability acquired only under the rule of the birds) shows this trend of crossing the boundaries of the mortal and the divine and seeking the status of the gods.

Since the relationship between gods and men have changed with the acceptance of mortals into the divine Cloud-cuckoo-land, the Greek orientation of the world must also change. This change is brought about by the shifting of the axes of the world – namely, where does the center (and most civilized) society dwell. A 6th century mythographer, Pherecydes, notes that

> "in order to move between the two viewpoints of mortals and immortals in Greek narrative, there must always be a readjustment, so that a supernatural view of space and time can be made to fit into the limited dimensions of human vision."[94]

The Greeks are not allowed to see their world as the Olympian gods do – that is, removed and with a birds-eye view. Cloud-cuckoo-land, a formerly divine location, therefore becomes the recreation of Athens and thus an entirely mortal realm by the end of the play. For Peisetaerus and the Athenians who come to live in the new city, Cloud-cuckoo-land is the new epitome of

[91] Lloyd-Jones 1973, 161.
[92] Reckford 1987, 332.
[93] Lloyd-Jones 1973, 164.
[94] Translated by Purves 2010, 106-7.

civilization. The Athenians formerly considered their city the center of the world, but more generally Greece as a whole held that position. This view is evident from a map by Hecataeus which shows Delphi in the middle, with the Pillars of Herakles as the Western boundary, and the Caspian Sea the Eastern.[95] In addition, the Hyperboreans were seen as the Northern epitome of the 'other' and in the South was Egypt and Ethiopia.[96] Because the Greeks were at the center, they considered themselves the most civilized. As one departs farther away from Athens, he or she finds more barbaric lands (according to the Athenians).[97] The Greeks judged these places based off of their known customs and world which were centered on Athens. When Cloud-cuckoo-land is established, though, these limits of civilization also change since it now becomes the center of the world to those in the play. The focus changes from the horizontal to the vertical,[98] or from a focus on the human realm (indicative of Hesiod) to the immortal (or the Homeric).[99] Cloud-cuckoo-land becomes the center of the world in regard to both axes, for both mortals and immortals.

Although the birds change the boundaries of civilization in regard to Athens, they do not seem to change the boundaries between the new city and the Olympian gods. The Olympian gods are still present on Olympus and the only thing that changes is that humans are now much closer to the divine. Since Cloud-cuckoo-land is in the air, most likely the lowest part of the αἰθήρ, the citizens, both birds and mortals, have taken a step closer to Οὐρανὸς. Athens and the rest of

[95] Purves 2010, 111. Romm 1992, 63 also notes that Delphi was considered the "navel of the earth" or 'omphalos'.
[96] Romm 1992 60-1 notes, however, that the Hyperboreans and (51) Ethiopians had a near-divine and easy life. They are more connected to the gods than the societies at the center of the world.
[97] The Greeks had a very ethnocentric view of their world as Romm 1992, 46 defines: "in the most literal sense of the word, [ethnocentrism] denotes a construct of space which sees the center of the world as the best or most advanced location, and therefore demotes distant peoples to the status of unworthy savages." But the inverse of this modal also existed for the Greeks where the boundaries or ends of the world were considered more civilized than the center as is seen with the Hyperboreans and Ethiopians.
[98] Rusten 2013, 314.
[99] The Homeric and Hesiodic worlds are discussed more in Chapter 3 – *Peace*.

mortals, however, remain on the earth, Γαῖα, and therefore are subject to being considered lowly by those living in Cloud-cuckoo-land. The Olympian gods are still in the highest plane and therefore can be considered to maintain a high degree of civilization, but the birds have cut off Olympus from the human realm. However, the Olympian gods are portrayed similarly to how the Greeks saw their own world in that they have their own set of barbarian gods. Though Triballus is a creation of Aristophanes,[100] he is used to represent the barbarian gods, the Triballians:

> *Peisetaerus*: "For there are some other barbarian gods / above you?" *Prometheus*: "indeed how are there not barbarians / …" *Peis*.: "and the name to these barbarian gods, / what is it?" *Prom*.: "What is their name? They are Triballians." (1525-9)[101]

For the Olympians, they are the center of heaven with the Triballians holding the position of the Hyperboreans on earth. Poseidon[102] establishes Triballus as such when they, along with Herakles, arrive in Cloud-cuckoo-land: "For I have seen that you, by far, / of all the gods, are the most barbaric" (1572-3). Through this view of their heavenly world, it is safe to assume Aristophanes wants Cloud-cuckoo-land to represent the earthly center of the world to parallel Olympus. Overall, what's important is that the boundaries between humans and divine have shifted, not so much the Olympian gods and birds, but both worlds are portrayed as parallel in their spatial organization.

The wall that is built around the city emphasizes Cloud-cuckoo-land as a bounded space and the epitome of civilization with the result that Athens seems to be less civilized to the characters. The new city is open for mortals, but it is closed to the Olympian gods and other immortals. The birds establish themselves as the upper limit for mortals when they construct a

[100] MacDowell 1995, 216.
[101] The presence of barbarian gods north of the Olympians is reemphasized by Prometheus later (1543).
[102] Poseidon, as one of the gods to enter the city, often represents a state of disorder and chaos (due to his association with the sea). His presence and eventual reconciliation with Cloud-cuckoo-land, could then be seen as the city embracing the barbaric. The Athenians' choice of Athena over Poseidon is in contrast his presence in Cloud-cuckoo-land since they placed Athena as a representation of order over Poseidon's 'barbarism' (Hall, 1989, 106).

wall between the earth and the heavens: "and then wall around the whole sky in a circle and the whole part in the middle / with great, baked bricks, just like Babylon" (551-2). The wall makes the Olympian gods the 'other' and something forbidden or out of reach/bounds since they are now outside and above the wall, not included within it. The birds had promised to be present and available to mortals in their theogony above, but here they are secluding themselves with a wall around the city. It is intended to be a fortification against the Olympian gods,[103] but it also establishes them as removed (something they promised against).[104]

The characters not only have a lateral view of their world, but also a vertical one. They seem to associate rule with vertical height. When Peisetaerus is explaining to the birds how they can rule over both mortals and the Olympian gods, he tells the birds that by having a city in the air, they will rule over men as they now do over locusts (185). The birds will rule men because they are physically higher than them, and will rule the Olympian gods because they will take their offerings.[105] Here, they stress the importance of being in the middle. The birds can see in every direction and rule what's below them and what's above them. What is interesting though is that they do not concern themselves with the horizontal. There is nothing else in their air with them.

The birds push Athens farther away from the new epitome of civilization (Cloud-cuckoo-land) and closer towards one of the more-barbaric directions when they establish Cloud-cuckoo-land.[106] The new bird city becomes the center of the world and a place where mortals and the

[103] The wall, however, fails to keep out Iris and Heracles, Posedion, and Triballus. Solomos 1974, 175: "Aristophanes chooses these particular gods because, possibly in the Peloponnesian War days, they were considered enemy gods; Poseidon was worshipped at the Isthmus, Heracles was an ancient hero of the Dorian drama, and Triballus was somehow connected with a Thracian tribe who had found against the Athenians."
[104] This action of the birds, the seclusion of their city after promises of inclusion, recalls Deioces in Herodotus who fortified his palace (Ecbatana) once established as tyrant (cf. Herodotus' *Histories* I.96ff.).
[105] A dominance also shown when the birds were said to be portrayed on the scepters and helmets of kings and gods.
[106] What's interesting, though, is that the location of this new city is never revealed. Peisetaerus and Euelpides are lost at the beginning of the play and the audience has no way of knowing where they are supposed to be. The setting

divine birds can live together in a blissful life. The birds change the limits of the world simply by shifting the center and, as a result, people flock to Cloud-cuckoo-land instead of Athens. The eagerness the Athenians show in the new city portrays them as quick to accept submission[107] and also as willing to give up their country for something potentially more powerful. The new city also becomes the basis against which all others are judged. Tereus even portrays the other birds (the chorus) as more civilized than the average bird since he has taught them to speak: "since I was with them for a long time, / I therefore taught them to speak, they who were barbarians before then" (199-200). Peisetaerus creates his new reality with the establishment of Cloud-cuckoo-land which he intends to be more pleasant than Athens. He also reorganizes the layout of the world and causes Athens to become less civilized than the new city.

III. Customs Redefined

Since the birds and Peisetaerus threw the world into confusion in the establishment of Cloud-cuckoo-land and the merging of mortals with the divine, new laws need to be established to reorder the world. Peisetaerus and the birds have already rejected the Olympian gods and therefore tradition and traditional Athenian values. With a change in religion (from Olympians to birds), the society also changes[108] and therefore customs, morals and laws.[109] In the third stage of Peisetaerus' creation of a new reality, he needs new laws to fit his new city and gods. However, as is evident throughout Greek literature, humans often face the dilemma between mortal laws and customs and those of the divine. The same issue presents itself when the mingling of humans

of *Birds* contrasts most of Aristophanes' other plays that usually take place in or around Athens (MacDowell, 1995, 199). Therefore, it is hard to tell how far back Athens is pushed in terms of civilization.

[107] Solomos 1974, 275.

[108] Jameson 2014, 233.

[109] νόμος spans both 'law' and 'custom' (Adkins, 1972, 105) and therefore what is violent by nature (custom) is also violent in laws.

and divine confounds the customs of the new town. Is it a city for mortals? Or the divine? Since the birds are the new rulers of the world, they become the new lawgivers[110] and their customs and laws apply to the whole human race as well as the Olympian gods above them. However, because birds in Greek thought are still animals, their customs and laws are proved to be barbaric, uncivilized, and violent. The blessed life the birds promised earlier in the play fades out as Peisetaerus takes more of an active role in establishing the city and determines what customs are allowed in the city and which ones are not. Peisetaerus, who has his own agenda,[111] initially accepts the violent ways of the birds, but in the end only recreates Cloud-cuckoo-land as another Athens.

The birds are portrayed as barbaric or uncivilized through the way they act, where they live, and the violent laws they propose for mortals. The birds first show their 'wildness' and violent nature when Peisetaerus and Euelpides encounter them since they are ready to go to war at once (344-348). The audience would initially have thought that the birds were barbaric from this response. When Peisetaerus sees Tereus for the first time he even exclaims "Oh Heracles! What in the world is this creature?" (92). The use of the word θηρίον (beast) does not account for Tereus' humanity even though he used to be a man. Since birds are indeed animals, they are acting on instincts, not reason. Animalistic instincts is often at the heart of the Greek view of the 'barbarian,' which instincts the birds show upon seeing Peisetaerus and Euelpides since the chorus of birds were afraid they would be captured and eaten since they were a source of food to

[110] Garland 1992, 28.

[111] When Peisetaerus and Euelpides seek for a new land at the beginning of the play, they are looking for something that is different than Athens in terms of customs. Namely, they do not want to pay their fines (38) and have few cares – they therefore want to escape the laws of Athens (MacDowell, 1995, 200). Specifically, as Dowell explains, Peisetaerus and Euelpides want to avoid any criminal charges that come from the accumulation of debt and not paying their fines (200). This is similar to Strepsiades in *Clouds*, but since the reasons for their debt is never explain in *Birds*, they become much more relatable characters to the audience than Strepsiades was (201).

the ancient Greeks.[112] Hesiod even separates human and animal behaviors in *Works and Days* and attributes violence to birds: "For the son of Cronos has portioned this custom (justice) to men, / and to beasts and winged birds / to eat one another, since there is no justice among them" (276-8). Hesiod sees violent customs as unfitting for humans[113] and so when Peisetaerus gains his wings and assumes the life of the birds, he is losing his humanity.

Peisetaerus describes the birds similarly to barbaric or pastoral-like gods[114] to establish their true realm on earth and in the forests in order to leave Cloud-cuckoo-land open to himself. He argues that as part of the good things the birds will provide for mortals as the new kings of the gods is that humans would no longer need to build temples in order to worship the birds (612-4). Humans, in this way, have an easier life, but the lack of temples also removes skill and craft or 'civilizing' activities such as building.[115] Instead, they would merely need to find a forest since trees will be the temples of the birds (615-8). Peisetaerus pictures the new site of sacrifice as very pastoral: "but standing among these strawberry-trees / and wild olive-trees, holding / barely, we will pray as we stretch out wheat / to them in our hands / to give us a share of good things" (620-4). Despite the construction of Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, the birds will still inhabit the earth and wild places. The new city has become more of a site for Peisetaerus and his winged friends. Though the birds can reside there, they are still carrying out their duties below on the ground.

[112] MacDowell 1995, 206.
[113] Adkins 1972, 30.
[114] The birds call to Pan and Cybele (744-6) who are associated with wilderness, mountains, and often considered uncivilized gods.
[115] Hall 1989, 149: In relation to foreign religions, there is "the idea that barbarians are somehow closer to the gods than the Greeks, that they have retained an intimacy with the mystical workings of the universe which civilized Hellas has lost." The birds' presence on earth, then, as barbaric gods, would further bridge the mortals to the divine. The birds also encourage the abandonment of 'civilizing' acts such as building temples.

The violent customs of the birds correspond to the fact that the Athenians were questioning their laws and customs in the late 5th century. They begin to redefine what it means to be good and just and what constitutes ἀρετή.[116] Peisetaerus shows such redefinition of values since he does not question the violent ways of the birds when they promise rewards for killing Diagoras, any tyrants (although already dead), and Philocrates (1072ff). Peisetaerus and Euelpides may perceive these new and violent customs as better than what they had in Athens, but they are not more civilized to the Athenian population. The view towards laws and morals begins to change from one, universal X is right and Y is wrong to if someone believes X is right, then X is right, etc.[117] Since the birds claimed that they were able to show pity and compassion to mortals, they may have seen their ways as more civilized actions,[118] which were considered to be love and pity,[119] whereas "uncivilized passions, such as naked ambition, lust for power, greed, envy, and unbridled sexual desire".[120] The latter passions are often connected with Athens as Aristophanes often uses them to describe Athenians (busybodies, e.g.) and they are especially represented in Peisetaerus.

The birds introduce a new set of customs that will be allowed under their rule which accept the things traditionally shunned by the Athenians and shun those accepted. What used to be normal in Athens, is now seen as strange to those living in Cloud-cuckoo-land. Such overturning of laws and customs shapes Cloud-cuckoo-land into the ideal version of Athens[121] and thus a new Athenian reality. The birds address the spectators that they will live a blessed life

[116] Adkins 1972, 117.
[117] Rowe 1977, 25.
[118] Alford 1993, 261: "Passions that are originally and primarily (but not exclusively) concerned with the welfare of others, such as pity, compassion, and some types of love."
[119] Ibid., 265: included in pity are "compassion, generosity, decency, and love of humanity (philantropia)"
[120] Ibid., 260.
[121] MacDowell 1995, 226. Therefore Cloud-cuckoo-land is not meant to rival Athens, but be a better reality of Athens. Contrary opinions believe, however, that Cloud-cuckoo-land is what Athens may end up being in a negative view: a place without laws, rules, etc.

because “as many things that are shameful here (i.e. Athens) for those who are subject to custom, / so many are all good among us birds” (755-6).[122] They advocate for people to be able to beat their fathers which is not only a barbaric and violent customs, but also very much shunned in Athens (757-9).[123] The birds welcome fugitives (760), foreigners (762), slaves (764-5), and traitors (766-7). Anyone who did not obey Athenian laws or customs were openly welcome to the birds and were each associated with one of their own kind. The birds are clearly setting themselves up, in this way, as an anti-Athens however it is not entirely a better city if it is full of criminals.

The various professions that visit the newly constructed Cloud-cuckoo-land represent Peisetaerus’ desire to keep the town as his new reality of a better Athens. The influx of Athenian professions show how Athens was attempting to impose her influence and power over the new city.[124] Peisetaerus excludes these men from his town in order to keep Cloud-cuckoo-land as peaceful and un-Athenian as possible.[125] The birds, also, do not want a recreation of Athens which is what the visitors were offering. It was a place where mortals could become someone else and give into their passions. Henderson describes it as “a utopian counter-Athens”.[126] What is interesting, however, is this desire to not be Athens makes Cloud-cuckoo-land more barbaric. Aristophanes is overturning the idea of barbaric twofold. Because of the shift in boundaries, as discussed before, Athens was pushed back to the less civilized realm both horizontally and vertically, as Rusten notes: “in the new vertically based world, Athens, like the Hyperboreans

[122] Dunbar 1995, 468 notes that “this section [753-68] reflects in comic form contemporary discussions of the relevance to human ethical questions of the observed behavior of animals.”
[123] Wanting to beat up one’s father can be a commentary on the Peloponnesian War (or civil war in general) since familial strife is advocated.
[124] MacDowell 1995, 212: “The Athenians generally thought it right and proper that they should rule over others…Peisetaerus and Cloud-cuckoo-land are quite different. They are independent and free.”
[125] Ibid., 228.
[126] Henderson 2000, 6.

before, is relegated to the hyper-periphery, a place whose *nomoi,* initially so repellent, now evoke ethnographic amazement."[127] The characters in the play who live in Cloud-cuckoo-land would see Athens as barbaric because they are closer to the outer realms of society.

However, the new customs that the birds assume in Cloud-cuckoo-land are also barbaric, but now seen as civilized. They welcome those who committed violent acts (a father beater), and turn away 'civilizing' professions such as a lawgiver (an avoidance of courts), [128] poet (refusing literature), a priest,[129] oracle monger (refusing oracles from the old gods), an inspector, decree seller, and *meton*. In nearly every case Peisetaerus hits the visitor showing that he is assuming the violent customs of the birds, saying "with one accord it seemed good to smite all quacks" (1015-6). Though he and Euelpides were afraid when the birds were ready to attack him in the beginning, Peisetaerus now initiates the attack. He physically beats out those who would bring order to the city, the *meton* in particular[130] who wanted to organize and portion out the land: "I want to measure out the air for you and to divide out the allotments of land" (995). The birds are still animals and despite offering humans a more pleasant life, they do provide a less civilized set of morals.

Cloud-cuckoo-land at the end nevertheless becomes a reinvention of Athens and a place for mortals (and those apotheosized), rather than for the birds, when Peisetaerus marries Basilea. Romer notes "the world Euelpides and Peisetaerus invent is, in effect, a New Athens, not the

---

[127] Rusten 2013, 314-5.
[128] See MacDowell 1995, 210-211 for a breakdown on the duties of these professions. "The six characters introduced in this part of the play (862-1057) are not merely a random collection of Athenian types; they are men who try to exploit others for their own advantage. That is why Peisetaerus wants to be rid of them" (212).
[129] Peisetaerus mentions "Not yet do I sacrifice for the 10th day of (the city)" (922) when the poet arrives with a song already made. He is implying the city has been built for 9 days or at least under construction for 9 days. This is interesting to take into consideration with the importance of 9 days. In ancient thought, it took 9 days to fall from Olympus to earth and the same amount from earth to Hades. In the Odyssey, Odysseus is driven on the Ocean for 9 days (Nesselrath, 1995, 156) and in Lucian's *True Stories*, he is driven for 8 days by a storm upward to the moon (I.10) – where would the 9th day have gotten him?
[130] Romm 1992, 10: The Greeks used boundaries to give order and form to their chaotic or formless world.

Anti-Athens of their dreams, and it shows the same faults as the old."[131] The change of Cloud-Cuckoo-Land back into an Athenian paradigm recalls the cyclical nature of the world presented in Thucydides Book I.12.4 where he emphasizes that human nature is bound to stay the same and so the world is bound to repeat itself. Reckford supports this cyclical nature of the world: "you can take Peisetaerus and Euelpides out of Athens, but you cannot take Athens out of them."[132]

Despite creating a new city, establishing new gods, and reforming the laws, Peisetaerus and Euelpides remain the same and therefore they do not fully create a new utopian city different from Athens.[133] Peisetaerus is the typical Athenian and his nature does not change.[134] The rule of the birds is completely overturned and the customs that were supposed to be maintained under their rule have gradually been superseded by Peisetaerus.[135] Basilea represents the ideal Athenian values: "good-planning, good laws, / moderation, dockyards, reproach, / financers, and half-drachmas" (1539-1541) as well as the powers of Zeus.[136] Once Peisetaerus marries Basilea, he will integrate her and what she represents into the city. However, since Peisetaerus has been established as a tyrant, and therefore Basilea his counterpart, they become a king a queen of the newly created city (as suggested by her name). He is turning Cloud-Cuckoo-Land back into a representation of Athens and Athenian values, but goes one step further into the past before the time of democracy.

---

[131] Romer 1994, 362.
[132] Reckford 1987, 333.
[133] This may be in part due to the fact that Cloud-Cuckoo-Land did not remain open to all – it was a walled, secluded, and exclusive city.
[134] Henderson 2000, 6: "Peisetaerus too remains very much a contemporary Athenian in his restlessness, his enterprising cleverness, his visionary ideas, his persuasive skill (displaying distinct sophistic elements), and his expansive dreams of power."
[135] Platter 2007, 65: "Carnivalized genres typically function by elevating an object then proceeding to undermine, expose, or 'uncrown' it." The birds, though elevated at the beginning of the play, have now been dethroned from their positions as gods and as kings.
[136] Dunbar 1995, 703: "Marrying her means that Peisetaerus will acquire all Zeus' present possessions, including all the instruments of his power."

Conclusion

In order to create a new reality, Aristophanes needs to redefine the gods, the physical world and its boundaries, and the laws and customs of that world. Each one of these parts of a new universe is enacted by a mortal in *Birds* – Peisetaerus. He manipulates the birds' lack of knowledge to convince them they are the true kings of the gods, has them build a new, more pleasant city for him to live in, and provide him with wings so he can become immortal and thus live in the city. Peisetaerus also gladly accepts the violent and barbaric customs of the birds since it means he can potentially beat up his father and elders (which cruelty he shows against the visiting professions). Peisetaerus clearly shows how much a single man with his own interests at heart can accomplish. He parodies both cult worship through the birds and the influence of demagogues on society. Despite the recreation of reality, Peistetaerus represents the unchangeable nature of man when he marries Basilea and transforms Cloud-Cuckoo-Land into another Athens, but an Athens under the rule of Peisetaerus the tyrant.

CHAPTER 2

CLOUDS

In *Clouds*, Socrates constructs his own world in the same way Peisetaerus did in *Birds*, though he represents an already established, alternate world into which Strepsiades wants to be initiated, whereas in *Birds*, Peisetaerus and Euelpides had established a new reality so they can live a more pleasant life. He has new gods (the Clouds, Tongue, and Chaos), a differing view of the world and its boundaries (middle-air matters), and new customs or laws based off of the two kinds of arguments – the stronger and the weaker (λόγω). Socrates, his school, and the focus on sophism and rhetoric form the basis of the new gods (mainly the Clouds), the perceived world, and the customs of that world. Socrates and his students are imbedded completely in their own reality at the school, and there is a disconnect when an outsider (Strepsiades) attempts to learn and assume their ways. Since Strepsiades represents the 'old' and Socrates the 'new', these two realities clash. Strepsiades cannot let go of his former life and learn the new customs under Socrates, nor is he able to discount the traditional gods in favor of the new Clouds. Strepsiades attempts to apply Socrates' reality and way of life to his own world, but fails in the end and resorts to his old ways. Since the play is a comedy, though, Strepsiades is not meant to succeed. *Clouds* seems to portray what happens when an old man, set in his ways, tries to interact with a new form of education and philosophy. Pheidippides, his son and who is of the younger generation, is successful in learning the weaker argument and has no trouble assuming a new way of life. The disconnect between Strepsiades and the school is what drives the comedy. At a

deeper level, however, we see a man struggling to combine two, coexisting realities, one of which threatens to overthrow everything he has known.

In the first section of this chapter, I analyze how Aristophanes portrays the school of Socrates and his students as a cult that worships the Clouds as their main divinities and considers rhetoric their secret knowledge. Before he is initiated into the school, Strepsiades has an encounter with the students. However, since he has not yet been exposed to their mysteries, he does not comprehend their way of life. The Clouds are also fitting goddesses for this cult since they are not real goddesses in the tradition of Greek mythology[137] (and thus Socrates creates them as such) and they are associated with rhetoric in the play. If Strepsiades wants to learn the λόγω, he has to be initiated into the school, leave behind his old, down-to-earth knowledge, and recognize a new order of gods. Socrates tries to show Strepsiades how the Clouds are the true goddesses over the Olympian gods through the explanation of natural phenomena. In order to do so, he has to discount completely the Olympian gods as gods. Strepsiades seems to acknowledge the Clouds as goddesses, but does not get rid of his belief in the Olympians, which is a necessary step for his initiation. The Clouds also are a better order of gods for mortals over the Olympians since they are able to be present among men and actually seen, unlike the elusive Olympians. They will also be more involved in the daily lives of mortals and provide rain for their crops. To Strepsiades in particular, they promise to give him glory through teaching him the λόγω.

Part two analyzes the relationship between mortals and divine by looking at the boundaries that are established, in what way they are able to be transcended, and how the students interpret their world. An integral part of the perceived boundaries of Socrates' world is the 'middle-air,' and thus I first look at how Aristophanes, and the characters in the play, seem to

[137] Pindar does mention Nephele, a cloud Zeus formed in the likeness of Hera to deceive Ixion (Pythian Ode 2.32ff).

portray their world in relation to the traditional concepts of the air, ether, and heaven. The Clouds inhabit the middle-air, between the Olympian gods above and the earth below. Such a position enables them to be closely involved with mortals, which they promise in their *parabasis*. Socrates, then, becomes the link between the new gods and mortals as he is able to merge with the middle-air or the realm of the Clouds. Therefore, he is able to take the knowledge from the divine, the Clouds, and bring it back to earth. Strepsiades, who was never initiated, cannot harness their abstract thinking and remains, literally and figuratively, on the ground. He shows his inability to think abstractly when he engages with the students in the school. He continually relates their instruments and concepts (such as geography) to his own world (that of a farmer) and what he has actually seen. He is not able to see the larger picture and cannot learn how to actually argue. Part of his disconnect is due to the change in the perceived boundaries of the new world. Strepsiades interacts with the world differently than the students and Socrates interact with it due to the respective closeness between them and their gods.

In part three of this chapter, Strepsiades' inability to change his old habits prohibits him from accepting fully Socrates' world. Once the gods and the boundaries or concepts of the world have been changed, the third step in creating a new reality is the change in the laws, customs, and morals (*nomoi*). Socrates' school and world has a set of customs that Strepsiades has trouble understanding. As shown in section two, Strepsiades cannot shed his old world and therefore neither its laws nor customs. He even attributes his own customs to the students and Socrates instead of interpreting them in view of their own world which shows that he cannot grasp the two realities. The customs of Socrates' world are reliant on the Clouds as goddesses and the Weaker Argument of the λόγω. The ἀγών between the Stronger and Weaker Arguments represents the conflict between the old world of Strepsiades in contrast to the new reality under Socrates. Since

Strepsiades failed in learning the Weaker Argument, he sends his son Pheidippides to learn rhetoric instead. Once Pheidippides learns the Weaker Argument, a series of reversals occur to symbolize the overturning of Strepsiades' old world and the introduction of Socrates' new reality outside the school.[138] Pheidippides also takes on the customs of the Weaker Argument which are merely the opposite of what the Stronger Argument advocated. In order to completely destroy the new world and reality, Strepsiades performs the ultimate overturning in burning down Socrates' school since it destroys Socrates' reality completely.

I. The Clouds as Goddesses

Socrates establishes his school as similar to a cult that worships the Clouds, Tongue and Chaos. Throughout the play, Socrates acknowledges various gods, but they are all 'airy' or related to the sky and abstract ideas (such as Void and Tongue).[139] The school has its own set of gods and mysteries or rites that are withheld from the uninitiated. When Strepsiades comes to the school to learn the λόγω, the student at the door informs him that he cannot tell him a story about Socrates because he was not a pupil (140).[140] It is only after Strepsiades tells the student that he has come for that very reason that the student is willing to divulge: "I will speak, but it is necessary to deem these things as mysteries" (143).[141] Even though the student is about to tell Strepsiades merely stories of Socrates' cleverness, he still considers them secrets of their school. The need to be initiated in the school secludes their world and separates the students, Socrates, and the gods from the rest of Greece. Since initiation is often a sign of renewal or rebirth, in

[138] See Marianetti 1992, 1-40 for a comprehensive look at how the new Sophistic world infringes on traditional Athenian values in society.
[139] Dover 2003, 134: "Here [264-5] Socrates' gods are Aer, Aither, and Clouds…in 365 they are the Clouds alone, and in 423f. Void, Clouds and Tongue; in 627 he swears by Breath, Void and Air."
[140] All citations are from Aristophanes' *Clouds* unless noted otherwise.
[141] All translations are my own.

particular the myth of Demeter and Persephone where the earth is essentially 'dead' until Persephone returns from the underworld,[142] Strepsiades must destroy his old reality before moving on with the new.

According to Socrates, rhetoric is not a skill or knowledge that Strepsiades can learn with the Olympian gods, but instead Strepsiades has to be initiated into the school with its new gods. For the students, speech is the sacred and secret knowledge of their rites.[143] Before he can learn the λόγω, Strepsiades also has to recognize the new gods of Socrates' school: "Do you want to know the divine matters clearly, what they correctly are…and to join in conversation with the Clouds, our own gods?" (250-3). The following scene (254-274) is meant to parody cults and their initiations.[144] Socrates has Strepsiades sit on a *holy* couch (ἱερόν σκίμποδα, 254), gives him a garland (255-6), and sprinkles him with flour (261-2).[145] However, Strepsiades' lack of seriousness towards the situation further exemplifies Aristophanes' commentary on the trivialness of such cults, as was evident in *Birds*, since he uses the initiation as a joke in the play.

Strepsiades' relationship with the student at the door leads to a humorous situation for the audience since he does not understand what they consider basic principles through his failure to separate himself successfully from his old world and reality. The students at Socrates' school do not leave the building (travel from home to the school), but rather live there.[146] They are completely engrossed in their experiences and do not see the absurdity that Strepsiades is witnessing. This disconnect causes the student at the door of the school and Strepsiades to have completely different conversations with each other at the same time, and for them to not

[142] See Keller 1988 for more on the Eleusinian mysteries and the idea of rebirth.
[143] Freydberg 2008, 20.
[144] Henderson 1998, n20 p43 comments on how this scene parodies such cults as those of Orpheus and Pythagoras.
[145] Ibid., n21 p43: This initiation resembles the sacrifice of Athamas. cf. Edmonds 2006, 347 for further elaboration on the initiation of Strepsiades. Edmonds notes that the initiation has ties to the Eleusinian mysteries and is meant to display Strepsiades' fear on whether he's actually being initiated, or sacrificed (361).
[146] Dover 2003, xxxiii.

understand each other. For instance, the student tells Strepsiades about Socrates' intelligence, but how he was deprived of a thought by a lizard (171-3). The only thing Strepsiades grasps (and laughs at), though, is why: "I laugh that the lizard shat on Socrates" (174). The student ignores, and thus doesn't understand, this, and he moves on with another story (175), showing the disconnect between these two worlds. Where Strepsiades focuses on the physical aspects of the story, the student is attempting to show him the cleverness of Socrates and abstract qualities of thought. Strepsiades, here, is set up for success to change his reality. He enters a new world and leaves his old behind, but he is not able to separate his old world from this new reality.

Strepsiades' initial experiences at the school show the link between the new gods and his ability to learn or understand the students' way of life as well as the λόγω. Before he is initiated, Strepsiades receives a tour of the school and observes the students, but he is permitted only to witness these secrets, and not allowed to understand them since he has not recognized their gods. When Strepsiades enters the school, he is amazed at the students – their forms (186), mannerisms (187, 191, 194), and instruments of learning (200ff). He has an outside view of their 'existence' which causes them to seem ridiculous.[147] This view of the students is evident when he first sees them and exclaims "By Heracles, from what country are these creatures?" (184). Strepsiades even compares the students to beasts or wild animals (θηρία).[148] The student is confused by Strepsiades' wonderment (185) since he is a part of this world and initiated in its rites to which Strepsiades is an outsider.

Socrates, again similar to Peisetaerus in *Birds,* is a mortal creating his own gods and a cult that seems to be one of knowledge based on rhetoric and the sophistic movement. Socrates'

[147] Halliwell 2008, 436.
[148] Dover 2003, 119 however notes θηρία is "not quite as hostile as it sounds…rather 'what on *earth* are these creatures?' than 'what kind of *animals* are these?'"

gods, the Clouds, advocate and teach rhetoric, and through his new gods, Socrates is able to access divine knowledge and aid in its transference to his pupils. He values human innovation and knowledge, but his eccentric nature is often criticized and parodied.[149] His willingness to question the gods is not a rare or new idea to Aristophanes and his audience and follows the current trend of the rise of rhetoric in the 5th century BCE. This knowledge, however, still comes from a divine source. The Clouds themselves are closely tied with the ability to speak well and with intelligence in general. Socrates, for instance, describes them as "heavenly Clouds, great goddesses for non-working men, / the very ones who offer us judgment and discourse and thought" (316-7). Since *Clouds* is a parody, the portrayal of Socrates, as a sophistic philosopher, tends to be negative as is shown above with ἀργοῖς (idle/non-working) and when he elaborates on the kinds of men the Clouds nourish (prophets, physicians, idlers, 330-4). However, Socrates here is doing more than just questioning the gods – he creates new ones. Clouds are not only not included in the Olympian gods, but according to Freydberg they "are not goddesses and to call them goddesses while denying the Olympians is excessive in the extreme."[150]

In order to remedy Strepsiades' inability to transform his nature and assume a new reality, Socrates attempts to overturn Strepsiades' knowledge of the gods so he can accept the new divinities and give up the old. Just as Peisetaerus in *Birds* reverses the order of the gods in the bird theogony, Socrates reverses the role of the gods in terms of what Strepsiades previously considered natural phenomena in gods to what he wants to be perceived as gods (the Clouds) and as natural phenomena (Zeus).[151] When Strepsiades first sees the Clouds, he is amazed that they

[149] See Garland 1992, 136-151 for Socrates' *daimonia* and the charges against him for "impiety".
[150] Freydberg 2008, 24-5.
[151] Hostility towards anthropomorphizing gods is "most fully displayed in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, where Socrates offers naturalistic explanations of rain and thunderbolt as the justification for not believing in Zeus" (Kahn, 1977, 250).

were actually goddess: “But I considered them to be mist, dew, and smoke” (330), or natural forces of the world. Since Socrates had established that he was introducing him to goddesses, Strepsiades was expecting just that, not clouds. Once he realizes that Socrates meant that the clouds were the goddesses, Strepsiades then anthropomorphizes the goddesses:

> *Strepsiades*: “Then tell me, why do they seem to be / like mortal women, if they are truly clouds? / For those (clouds) are not as such.” / *Socrates*: “Come on then, what sort are they? / *Str*.: “I don’t know entirely; they seem like spread-out wool / and not like women, no by Zeus, not whatsoever; but they have noses.” (340-344)

Though this scene is meant to parody the aspect of suspension of belief in the theater by referring to the chorus as not actually true representations of clouds, he still acknowledges a change in the Clouds as divinities.[152] Now that Strepsiades recognizes the Clouds as true goddesses and not just natural phenomena, Socrates removes Zeus from the status of a god, and discounts him completely (367), so Strepsiades can forget his old world entirely.

Socrates then teaches Strepsiades how the aspects of Zeus, namely the weather (rain, thunder, and lightning), are just forces of nature. Socrates tries to remove Strepsiades’ knowledge of Zeus as a god and replace him with aspects of the world. Strepsiades does not understand how these natural phenomena happen, but has always attributed them to Zeus. For instance, Strepsiades had believed that “rain was Zeus urinating through a sieve” (373). What Socrates attempts to do in the following scenes is to show Strepsiades that concepts of thunder and lightning can be explained by natural forces of the universe (such as friction and rotation). After Socrates explains the concept of thunder (clouds exploding when full with rain) twice, he resorts to using an example Strepsiades can relate to – his own body – in the hopes that he can see that such concepts are not solely in the realm of Zeus, but happen generally in the world.

[152] However, since the Clouds are plastic and can change their shape into that of animals (346ff), this anthropomorphism is not fixed.

> I will teach you from your own self. / When you, already full of sauce at the Panathenaia, are uncomfortable / in your stomach, does a noise then suddenly rumble through it? (386-388)

After Socrates uses this example, which he is sure Strepsiades has experienced at one time, Strepsiades finally understands the concept of thunder but does not see his bodily experience as the same as Zeus' thunder (i.e. natural phenomena), but only similar.[153] However, this explanation does not carry through when Socrates explains how lightening happens. Strepsiades needs another example to his own experiences in order to understand a new concept although it requires the same instruction. Instead of acknowledging that Zeus and his powers are just natural phenomena, Strepsiades needs Socrates to explain every aspect of Zeus. Socrates explains thunder as a rush of air that sets fire to itself as it escapes from within to which Strepsiades retorts he experienced such a thing when he was cooking (404-411). With the divine actions of Zeus being related to and confined in the human body, "the distance between human and the divine is thereby completely closed."[154] Socrates is taking divine, unexplained concepts and attributing them to base human functions.[155] Strepsiades, though, cannot grasp the abstract association. He still considers thunder and lightning as divine phenomena, and his body or earthly experiences as a similar, but not the same, concept.

Strepsiades recognizes the new gods, but he does not seem to discount the traditional gods even after Socrates' explanations. He never actually agrees to stop believing in the Olympians as gods:

> *Socrates*: "Then will you believe in no other thing as a god except the ones which we consider gods, / this Chaos and the Clouds and the Tongue, these three?" *Strepsiades*: "Encountering the others, I absolutely would not converse with them, / nor would I sacrifice to them or pour libations or place for them frankincense" (423-6).

[153] Strauss 1980, 19.
[154] Freydberg 2008, 78.
[155] Strauss 1980, 19.

Strepsiades does not say anything about belief (νομίζω) in response to Socrates, but only promises to ignore all the other gods. When Socrates was explaining the concept of thunder, he notes that δίνος, as a whirling rotation, drives the clouds to thunder against one another. Strepsiades responds to which: "Dinos? I don't know this one, / there is no Zeus, but instead of him Dinos now rules" (380-1). Instead of a force of nature, Strepsiades again takes δίνος, a kind of vessel, (not δῖνος,[156] 'whirl') as a god. He cannot take the new knowledge he learned from the school and apply it to his old life. Strepsiades shows his inability to consider any god as natural phenomena when he corrects Pheidippides for swearing by "Olympian Zeus" (817) by explaining that "Dinos is king, having driven out Zeus" (828). The only thing that Strepsiades really learns by the end of the play is a new perspective on his past and that he shouldn't have tried to reject his traditional values and gods by going to Socrates.[157]

> He did not expel (Zeus), but I thought this / because of 'Whirl'. Alas! I'm wretched / for considering you, earthenware jar, a god. (1472-4) … What madness! Oh, how I was mad / when I threw aside the gods on account of Socrates. (1476-7)

Strepsiades sees the wrong he did in trying to cast aside his old life and assume a new life, but never transforms his nature and reality from his experience at the school. The above passage reveals that Strepsiades never discounted the aspect of Zeus as a god – he only replaced him with Dinos or 'Whirl' as another god, not the natural phenomenon. He therefore halts the process of establishing a new reality since he never changes his gods.

[156] Dover 2003, 150 notes that "Empedokles believed that the sky rotates at high speed round the earth (A67), and he used the word *δίνη* (B35.1) but the connections in which he used it are far from clear…[Aristophanes'] audience would have been familiar with δίνη, 'rotation', 'whirling', but δῖνος to him meant a certain type of vessel." Henderson 1998, n31 p 63 further elaborates that a δῖνος, or jar, was thought to stand outside Socrates' school in place of the normal statue of Hermes.
[157] Silk 2000, 218.

Socrates considers the Clouds, the Tongue, and Chaos a better order of gods for mortals than the Olympian gods due to the fact that they are closer physically to earth and can be seen by mortals. In contrast to *Birds,* Socrates discounts the traditional gods and thus his new order is a direct overturning of the old. Though Socrates mentions Chaos and the Tongue in tandem with the Clouds, he does not explain the role of the other two divinities. His focus is on the Clouds whom he calls "the only goddesses, and all the others are nonsense" (365). Strepsiades desires to see the Clouds in person (322), and his wish is granted when the chorus enters the stage (324). The Clouds are more fitting to view human life since they are closer to mortals and are also not as involved in their lives like the Olympian gods. Instead, they are able to look down upon them and mock their behavior which is shown in how they change their forms. As Socrates explains, "they become entirely whatever they want: When they / see some long-haired, rustic man of those shaggy folk, / such as the son of Xenophon, they mock his madness and liken themselves to centaurs" (350-2). But in the same way as the birds were, the Clouds are able to be more involved in human lives than the Olympian gods. The Olympian gods never laugh at humans, but rather they remain at just the right amount of distance to care what mortals do, but not get involved in their day to day lives.[158] The Clouds, however, as Socrates describes, change their shape to mock humans. The Clouds' ability to laugh at humans and be present among mortals (just as the birds in *Birds*) make them, in Socrates' opinion, a better order of gods than the Olympians.

The Clouds offer Strepsiades and mortals benefits for accepting them as gods over the Olympians. They are not only granters and goddesses of knowledge, but they also promise to give Strepsiades glory once he's learned the λόγω (460). One of the major benefits is the power

[158] Gods are too involved in human life to see the absurdity, but they never mock the human existence. Instead, the Olympians see mortal life as more tragic than comedic (Halliwell, 2005, 126).

of speech (as shown by one of their gods – the Tongue). The Tongue, therefore, as one of Socrates' gods, speaks volumes to the idea that men, not gods, had agency in their lives through rhetoric.[159] As a representation of the physical tongue and abstract speech, the new god puts all the 'divine' power into the realm of mortals. The Tongue as a god symbolizes new gods to replace the gods and values of the Homeric past, or, as O'Regan notes: "put to the Sophistic test, in the real, post-heroic world, the tongue is to replace the hand; the word the sword; powerful speaking, physical might."[160] Not only can speech, here and with the λόγω, provide the wielder with that which he wants, but it can also lower one's enemies and those in power,[161] just as Peisetaerus in *Birds* lowered the traditional Olympians in favor of the birds. Strepsiades will also gain popularity since others will seek him out to argue their cases for them (469-475). However, since Strepsiades never actually accepts the Clouds as goddesses and fails to discount the Olympian gods, he is unsuccessful in gaining this knowledge. Though rhetoric is an increasingly important tactic in the late 5th century and part of Athenian daily lives, in Socrates' constructed world, it is only attainable at his school and cult through the acceptance of his gods.

In the *parabasis* the Clouds extend their benefits to the spectators of the plays and thus extend their reality to the actual world through the inclusion of real Athenians. What they offer is very similar to the birds' promises in *Birds*. Though to Socrates the main benefit from the Clouds is the ability to learn rhetoric, which they offer Strepsiades along with glory, they do not include knowledge in their pitch to the spectators. Instead, the Clouds offer good crops and plentiful wine to the judges if they help them (i.e. vote for Aristophanes to win) through providing them

[159] Cf. Rowe 1977, 25-6: In Gorgias' *Encomium to Helen* (fr.11, 5-19) he notes how "Speech is a great lord, which by means of the smallest and most invisible body effects the most divine results; for it can stop fear, take away grief, create joy, increase pity."
[160] O'Regan 1992, 13.
[161] Freydberg 2008, 55.

with rain first and protecting their fields from drought (1115-1120). They also argue that they have already tried to help mortals in the past through the display of omens that are often preventative.[162] For example, they stormed "if there was some expedition with no thought" (579-580) and also "at once when you led as general Paphlagon, the tanner, hostile to the gods" (581-3). The Clouds assume the powers of Zeus (in controlling the weather), involve themselves in the lives of mortals, and promise as their benefits naturally occurring phenomena. They show how easy it is for mortals to change their worship of the gods without affecting or disrupting their day to day lives. Despite their benefits, they do threaten to ruin the crops and wine, and to destroy the homes with excessive rain of those who fail to recognize them as gods or do not support the chorus to help Aristophanes win (1121-1130). The Clouds, here, as destroyers of civilization, eliminate both agriculture and architecture. Just as the birds in *Birds* (709-718), the Clouds include themselves in the daily lives of mortals, giving them benefits and yet showing the consequences of not worshipping them.

Aristophanes establishes Socrates' school as another reality for Strepsiades. The fact that Strepsiades does not understand the student or the concept of abstract over physical thinking shows that Strepsiades needs to be initiated into the school, and thus shed his old life and reality in order to learn their new ways and become a part of the sophistic world. However, as Dover notes, Strepsiades is not initiated in the conventional way since he is sprinkled with flour, not water.[163] Strepsiades, therefore, is never actually inducted into their world. In order to be initiated fully into the school, Strepsiades must accept the new gods, the Clouds, among others, just as Peisetaerus and Euelpides considered the birds as their new gods, and discount the Olympians. Strepsiades, however, cannot understand how Zeus is only an explanation for certain

[162] Henderson 1998, n50 p87.
[163] Dover 2003, n254 p130.

meteorological phenomena and only thinks that he has been succeeded by Dinos. The education Socrates is trying to supply for Strepsiades is too abstract for him to understand and since he never recognizes the gods of the cult, he does not become one of the students and change his reality. He also never learns rhetoric, the knowledge of the Clouds which Strepsiades facilitates, and so remains ignorant to the way of life of the students. He remains an outsider and therefore will not gain access to their knowledge.

II. The Middle-Air: A Change in Boundaries

The relationship between mortals and divine is important in constructing how the characters in the play viewed their physical world, limitations, and boundaries. Since mortals are not generally allowed to pass into the divine realm and know divine knowledge, to aim to do so can be construed as hubristic. Hubris is associated with having plenty or enough (i.e. being full of something and wanting more[164]), and so for Socrates and Strepsiades, to want more knowledge than allowed to mortals is overstepping their means. The boundaries between mortals and divine are also important since they separate the hierarchy of the world – gods should be above mortals and therefore mortals should not try to attain the status of the gods. Life with the Clouds as goddesses re-establishes these boundaries since they are now the beholders of rhetoric, the divine knowledge, and thus Socrates must first obtain his education from them before passing it out to his students. Strepsiades, though, represents the difficulty in accepting Socrates' new world and how to perceive it. At play are three levels of how Aristophanes constructs the new world: first is the view the Clouds have on the earth below; second is Socrates' relationship with

[164] MacDowell 1976, 16. Hubris is also not heeding, and therefore believing in, the gods (19-20).

the Clouds and the change of boundaries due to his access of middle-air matters; and third is the view of the students of the school, and Strepsiades' inability to learn their ways.

A key part in the spatial rendering of the world is the division of the three airs and where the gods are located. Traditionally, the Olympian gods inhabit Οὐρανός which is either within or above the αἰθήρ (the first 'air').[165] Below the αἰθήρ is ἀήρ (the second 'air' and thus the middle air). The Clouds occupy this 'middle-air' (such as Socrates discerns in his basket), enabling them to see both the mortals below them, and to see and be seen by the immortals above. Socrates describes the ἀήρ as the one "who holds the earth in mid-air" (264) which suggest ἀήρ surrounds earth completely. Under the earth, ἔρεβος (the third 'air') was envisioned as the darkness of the underworld. By occupying the ἀήρ, the Clouds are closer physically to earth[166] and, just as Cloud-cuckoo-land, intersect mortals and the Olympian gods (although the Olympians are discounted as gods by Socrates and his students in *Clouds*, they are not an issue for them, but remain problematic for Strepsiades).

Since the Clouds inhabit the middle-air, they are able to be omnipresent to mortals, and they also separate them from the Olympian gods because they inhabit the realm between the earth and the heavens. When Socrates invokes the Clouds for the first time, he calls them from Mt. Olympus, the realm of Okeanos, the Nile River, the shore of Maeotis, and the peaks of Mimas (269-273).[167] Aristophanes portrays the Clouds as both widespread and also able to inhabit the edges of the world (Okeanos). The Clouds' ability to go anywhere links them to the birds in *Birds* who are able to go everywhere as well due to their ability to fly. The Clouds, since

[165] See Sale 1972 for the distinction between Οὐρανός and αἰθήρ.
[166] Since the play is a comedy, this lowering of the gods is not necessarily good for mortals (the Clouds punish Strepsiades in the end).
[167] Dover 2003, 135: "Olympos is named first because that is where one would expect gods to be, and the mountain is apt to be covered by clouds; the 'gardens of ocean' come second because they are at the ends of the earth, like the Ethiopians…the Hyperboreans,…and the Isle of the Blessed…and the Nile third because of current interest in theories about rain and the Nile flood."

they are in fact clouds, also naturally obscure the heavens and Olympian gods.[168] They generally are described as gathered around Mount Olympus to hide the gods from mortal sight and are closely connected to lightning and rain (both of which come from clouds).[169] Sale connects the physical Mt. Olympus (obscured by clouds) to a symbol for Ouranos and thus the mythical Olympus – home of the gods.[170] Their connection to Zeus, who is often called 'cloud gatherer', also associates the Clouds with the heavens or divine, and so this connection would not be foreign to the audience.

Socrates' incorporation of the middle-air and role of the Clouds in his teaching influences how he sees the physical world and portrays it. Socrates describes the world as a cooking oven, or a πνιγεύς[171] for which he is often mocked by Aristophanes, and the πνιγεύς is later used as a joke for sophists or philosophers. Strepsiades even mentions this view of the world in the beginning of the play: "that is the school of wise souls. / Men live there who persuade by saying that the sky (οὐρανός) is just like an oven (πνιγεύς), / and it is all around us, and we are the coals" (94-7). The sky, or οὐρανός which is where the Olympians dwell, is the hemispherical dome-shaped top of the oven. A logical portrayal because the smoke from cooking would naturally collect within the dome top – just like the savor of a sacrifice rising to the Olympian gods. On the bottom, where the coals are placed, is representative of earth and mortals. The empty space between the top of the oven and the bottom, therefore, is the middle-air – the residence of the Clouds.

[168] Sutton 1993, 28.
[169] Sale 1972, 82.
[170] Ibid., 82-3.
[171] Cf. Diagram in Rayner 1956, 108.

Socrates is portrayed as the link between mortals and the divine world of the Clouds. His role is very similar to that of a midwife[172] as he is later portrayed by Plato. Since Socrates connects the earth to the ethereal gods (air, ether and the Clouds), he can be considered a 'meteorological sophist'.[173] Because of his role, Socrates is allowed to cross the boundary between mortals and the divine. Much like Peisetaerus who established the birds as gods, Socrates has established the Clouds as his main divinities. He therefore has a privileged position among (as their creator), and he is able to move between human and divine realms. As established above, the Clouds inhabit the middle-air (ἀήρ), and therefore the boundary between gods and men is much closer than men and the Olympians. Socrates, who is allowed to be in the realm of the Clouds, is hanging in the air in a basket when Strepsiades first encounters him (218).[174] Socrates thus pushes the vertical boundaries of the world upwards but only slightly.

Therefore, Socrates is between the mortal world and the divine but in doing so he seems to raise his own status. Socrates claims that he was 'walking the air' and 'looking down upon the sun' (225) for this was the only way to separate oneself from the earth to truly understand the matters of the sky. περιφρονῶ means both to speculate/consider and to despise or contemn. He is not only looking and contemplating the sun, but scorning it and taking a position above the sun in importance. He claims superiority over a divine entity, the sun; however, to him, the sun is merely a natural phenomenon and therefore not hubristic.[175] Socrates, therefore, is shown as

[172] As Freydberg 2008, 22 notes, Socrates is the bridge or midwife "between human life and erudition." Sages were also known to bridge the connection between mortals and the divine (Kurke, 2011, 223). Cf. Kurke 2011, 327-8 on how Socrates represents a sage.
[173] Russo 1994, 118.
[174]Ibid., 117 before this appearance, Socrates has been unseen and then suddenly revealed, similar to divinities revealing themselves from a disguise. Russo 118 further notes that "this technique would parody certain divine apparitions in tragedy, but it would also provide satisfying stage translation of the metaphorical language typical of philosophers: the spirit of the think drifting through the air, above the heads of ordinary mortals."
[175] Fisher 1976, 183-4: Hubris relies on notions of superiority – those who are inferior should not take a position above their superiors.

"impractical, above himself, and out of touch with reality."[176] Socrates also assumes a divine persona[177] when he initially talks to Socrates: "Why are you calling me, oh ephemeral one" (223). A *mekhane* would also have presumably been used to bring Socrates in view on stage, a technique used more often in tragedy than in comedy (though it will be used again in *Peace* for Trygaeus' ascension to heaven). The term ἐφήμερος is often used in tragedy to describe mortals, generally in contrast to the immortal gods. In this way, Socrates takes a position similar to that of the gods, in this case the Clouds.

Socrates argues that hanging in the air is the only way to gain understanding of 'middle-air matters'. Through this action he is searching for knowledge beyond mortal matters – that of the divine. Since rhetoric comes from the Clouds, he must merge his mind with their realm in order to harness it and transfer the knowledge to his students. He therefore shows this 'hanging in mid-air' as the only way to learn such matters:

> "For I would not correctly / ever discover the middle-air matters, / if I did not hang up my thoughts or ideas, / mixing them, light, in the same light air. / But if I, on the ground, was looking up from below, / I would never discover anything" (227-232).

Socrates shows the need for him to cross the boundary between the mortal and divine in order to merge his thoughts with the air to fully understand divine matters. It is impossible for him to remain on the ground to learn matters in another 'realm'. Socrates is part of world in which mortals can come closer to the divine. This ability suggests humans are no longer bound to the earth since, [178] despite Socrates' connection to the Clouds, he is still a mortal. Although he seems to be the only one allowed to do so, his merging with the divine realm is reminiscent of Peisetaerus' apotheosis when he gain his wings to live with the birds. Both Peisetaerus and

[176] Sutton 1993, 27.
[177] Dover 2003, 125: "Socrates is looking down on Strepsiades as a god might look down from Olympos on a mortal."
[178] Freydberg 2008, 62.

Socrates are allowed to commune with their gods and therefore gain special knowledge (rhetoric for Socrates) or abilities (the rule of Cloud-cuckoo-land for Peisetaerus) through this union.

Similar to Socrates, the students at the school also seek knowledge from somewhere beyond earth. They, however, do not physically merge their selves with the middle-air, but rather their thoughts. The students see their world as extending beyond the earthly limits since they look both above (the middle air) and below (into Tartarus) the physical earth. Though their mannerisms are customary to Socrates' school (or cult), Strepsiades marvels at their actions, much as he was amazed by their instruments of learning, which to him seem ridiculous since he has not yet been initiated:

> *Strepsiades*: "But why in the world are they looking into the earth?" / *Student*: "They are seeking the things below the earth." *Str*.: "Oh, they're seeking / truffles… / and what are these ones doing who are really stooping down and looking closely?" / *St*.: "They are groping about in darkness under Tartarus." (187-192).

Due to their education at Socrates' school, the students have a more expansive view of their world than what can just be seen. Here the students seem to be contemplating chthonic matters which Strepsiades mistakes as different things literally below the ground, such as truffles or onions. Despite their ability to access this knowledge, the students are not allowed to be in the ἀήρ for long (198-9) since they are not the same status as Socrates. Strepsiades, who is focused on his 'earthly' knowledge in contrast to the 'higher' knowledge of the school, still does not understand the way of the students.[179] Strepsiades is very much a "man of the soil" and cannot understand the nebulous, airy instruction at the school. The students have already been established as 'airy' creatures (the school of "wise souls", 94) and the initial distinction between

[179] The division of earthly knowledge and divine (or upper-air) is evident in a passage by Diogenes Laertius (1.34) where he recounts how Thales fell into a ditch while looking at the stars. He is reprimanded by an old woman who asks how can he hope to understand divine matters if he doesn't even know what's on the ground right in front of him.

sky (Socrates, the students, and the Clouds) and earth (Strepsiades) is maintained throughout the play.

Strepsiades' encounter with the instruments of the students further shows the disconnect between the two worlds. When Strepsiades comes across the different instruments for learning, he doesn't recognize them out of context. He applies their use to his own world and reality – that of farming – whereas the students apply their use to the whole world, not just a single plot of land. This disconnect is event when Strepsiades encounters geometry:

> *Strepsiades*: "And what is this?" *Student*: "Geometry" / *Str*. "What is it used for?" *St*. "To measure the earth." / *Str*. "For land allotments?" *St*. "No, for the whole thing." / *Str*. "You're not making sense…" (201-4).

When the student introduces him to this concept of 'measurement', Strepsiades only applies it to his own world, farming, and cannot grasp that the whole world is represented for anyone to use. The passage shows that Strepsiades has had some experience with the concept, since he's a farmer and most likely needed to portion out his farmland (which he has physically seen). However, he is not able to attribute its use to the whole world (which he may never see). The Student tries to explain further the concept by showing him a map of Greece. However, this instruction fails as he still has trouble removing himself from his world sufficiently enough to understand the map as an abstract representation of the world.

> *Student*: "And this, let me show you, is a map of the whole earth, / do you see? Here are the Athenians." / *Strepsiades*: "What are you saying? I don't believe you, / I don't see the judges sitting anywhere." / *St*. "Well, it's really the Attic land." (206-9)

Though the map allows Strepsiades to see fully his world from a different perspective, to have a 'bird's eye view', he still tries to find his own world and familiarities within the representation. He attributes lawyers and judges as key characteristics of Athens, and doesn't believe the land

can be represented without them.[180] Strepsiades further demonstrates that he cannot grasp rhetoric ('airy' matters) when he puts into practice what Socrates attempted to teach him. For example, he proposes to hire a Thessalian sorceress to hide the moon to prevent signaling (by the month) when he has to pay his interests (749-756). He also plans on getting out of a lawsuit by simply burning his indictment (469-772). He continually focuses on the earth and physical rather than rhetorical solutions to the problems posed.[181]

The Clouds as goddesses change the view of the world for the characters in the play. Since they inhabit the middle-air, they are physically closer to mortals than the Olympian gods. Their position also enables them to obscure and interact with the Olympians, since they are located in the middle of the human and divine realm, though the Olympians are non-existent in Socrates' world. The knowledge the students seek at the school is provided by the Clouds and they are able to access it because Socrates can cross the boundaries of men and gods by ascending into the middle-air. The students and Socrates become closely associated with the Clouds and are considered 'airy' creatures. Since Strepsiades has not shed his old life, he is placed firmly on the ground and does not have access to their knowledge. He shows his inability to learn through his lack of understanding the world of the students and their instruments for learning, as well as when he attempts to show what he learned to Socrates. Socrates' new reality portrays a stark contrast between the sky and the earth, a transition which Strepsiades cannot accept.

[180] Romm 1992, 4 notes, however, that Strepsiades' inability to understand a map should not be construed as a real life experience since he is a comically portrayed ignorant man.
[181] Strauss 1980, 26.

III. The λόγω and New Customs

Strepsiades needs to accept Socrates' new gods to learn the Stronger or Weaker Argument and thus the new morals that accompany each speech. Both of these speeches are a way for him to get out of debt which can be seen as an immoral action since he is avoiding his civic responsibilities. When he fails, Pheidippides learns the Weaker Argument in his stead. Unlike Strepsiades, Pheidippides fully accepts the new gods and new order and therefore has a new set of morals. He beats up his father near the end of the play all the while arguing why he was in the right to do so. Strepsiades had abandoned his education in learning one of the two speeches due to his age and regrets ever accepting the new gods when he sees the immoral actions associated with the Weaker Argument. Since Pheidippides was fully initiated into the school and recognized the new gods, he was able to assume a new set of morals and ethics.

Strepsiades experiences a different world while at Socrates' school which is most evident in the change in customs he witnesses. Since he never accepts the Clouds as goddesses or see the world in a different way, Strepsiades does not assume the customs of Socrates and his students. For a short time, however, his accustomed ways are overturned due to Pheidippides acceptance of the Weaker Argument. I will first analyze Strepsiades' reality and world and then briefly Socrates' customs. The λόγω offer their own set of customs, the Stronger Argument represents Strepsiades' old habits, and the Weaker Argument embodies the new education that Socrates offers. The Weaker Argument is victorious in the ἀγών and thus Strepsiades' world is overturned by the arguments of Pheidippides after he is educated.

Strepsiades' world consists of his own home and life and does not extend beyond that. His main concerns are his household and his money. In this way, he represents the average Athenian since he is not desirous of political advancement of any sort. Strepsiades' problem,

much like Peisetaerus and Euelpides, is that he owes money: "But I am not able to sleep, since I am wretched and being bitten / by the expenditure and the stable and the debts on account of my son" (12-4). Strepsiades does not want a new reality, but just a means of escaping his debts. However, as he will come to learn, in order to do so, he must become one of Socrates' students, thus changing his ways and accepting a new world. Strepsiades shows his dislike of changing his habits when he discusses his marriage. He portrays his old, rustic life favorably and full of leisure in contrast to the extravagance his wife was used to from the city (43-52). Pheidippides' own name represents the two worlds/realities Strepsiades is facing – 'Pheid-' was his father's addition in hoping he would be thrifty, and '-ippides' for '-ippos' from his mother to represent the upper class.[182]

Strepsiades is also not able to assume the customs of the school or to leave behind his old habits or thoughts. Socrates' school proves to be very different than normal Athenian life (which Strepsiades represents) and so Strepsiades faces confusion when asked to assume their ways.

> *Socrates*: "Come now, and put down your cloak." *Strepsiades*: "What did I do wrong?" / *Soc*.: "Nothing, but it is customary to enter lightly-clad." *Str*.: "But I am not going in to look for something stolen" (497-9).[183]

It is part of Socrates' world to enter the school without the outer cloak. Strepsiades, however, cannot grasp that Socrates and his students may have a different custom than him, namely entering the school without one's cloak. In Strepsiades' world that action would suggest the homeowner was afraid of theft or the accusation of theft. Strepsiades does not want Socrates to think that he believed something was stolen from him, thus he is entering the school to retrieve it. Strepsiades continually attributes the customs of his own, old world to that of Socrates. When, for instance, Strepsiades describes the students to Pheidippides before sending him to learn in his

[182] O'Regan 1992, 26.
[183] Cf. Dover 2003, 163.

place, he shows that he still has not accepted that they live a different way. “Be silent / and don’t speak ill about men who are clever / and have sense, not one of whom, because of thrift, / has ever cut their hair or anoint themselves with oil / or go to the bath in order to wash themselves” (833-7). Strepsiades attributes their customs to his own reasons that they are too cheap and frugal to tend to their looks and personal hygiene. He does not see that they live in a different world (that of Socrates) and do not participate in the same activities as Strepsiades.

Because the school has been established as a cult, any customs related to the school are therefore related to the new gods, the Clouds, who are part of their religion and world. In order to change his reality, Strepsiades must accept the customs of the λόγω in general, but his inability to learn the λόγω forces him to send Pheidippides in his stead. To Strepsiades, the λόγω are merely a way for him to escape his debts since “they say that one can win by speaking the more unjust speech” (115). In the ἀγών between the Stronger and Weaker Arguments, however, they prove how they represent more than just avoiding one’s debts. The Stronger Argument, who presents first and therefore is in the weaker position, since the Weaker can refute him, attempts to convince Pheidippides to learn his λόγος since he represents the old customs. “I will tell you now about the old education how it was, / when I flourished by speaking just things and moderation was customary” (961-2). Under his education, boys were well behaved and orderly (963-5), but corporal punished was used if they fooled around (969-972). In the world of the Stronger Argument, boys were beaten into line in order to live a just life later on. Through him, as he says, the men who fought at Marathon were raised (985-6) who represent the ideal youth to many Athenian citizens. The Stronger Argument criticizes rhetoric and young men wasting away in the agora (1002-4) instead of training their bodies. In many ways, the stronger argument represents Strepsiades’ world and the one in which he was raised. Strepsiades had wanted

Pheidippides to learn physical labor as his grandfather did (71-2), to train his body, but instead Pheidippides assumed the more leisurely customs of his mother.

The Weaker Argument, in contrast, represents the world of Socrates and promises to make Pheidippides well-versed in rhetoric so he can live the life he wants, not the one society wants for him. "Do you intend to withhold yourself from such pleasures; boys, women, *cottabus*, cooked-meat, drinks, and laughter? And really, what is worthy for you to live, if you deprive yourself of such things?" (1072-4). The Weaker Argument basically shows Pheidippides that he can talk his way out of any situation and that not everyone has to be a paragon of virtue. The Weaker Argument is the reality for Strepsiades and Pheidippides, and he successfully gains the victory of the ἀγών not by presenting an argument like the Stronger Argument did, but refuting his reasons.

Since Pheidippides accepts the new reality under the Weaker Argument, he goes through a process of overturning the old world, especially that of his father. Pheidippides, in this way, is extending the world of Socrates out of the school and into the public (and domestic) domain. Until now, Socrates' customs have been limited to the school. But when Pheidippides returns home, he symbolizes the spread of not only the cult of the Clouds, but the diffusion of rhetoric. Taken globally, Aristophanes transcends the play to relate to the audience – they too are the 'outside' world of Socrates' school. Strepsiades represents current Athens while Socrates, and now Pheidippides, represent the new trend of rhetoric and sophism. When Pheidippides transfers his new knowledge into the 'real' Athens of the play, he can also be seen as extending the rhetoric of Socrates' school into Athenian society outside the play. Such transcendence is also noted when the Clouds speak directly to the spectators and judges in the *parabasis*.[184] The

[184] Cf. Dobrov 1995, 87.

stronger argument even acknowledges the victory of the weaker argument: "by the gods take my / cloak, since / I am deserting to your side" (1102-4).[185] This yielding almost signifies the death of Strepsiades' old reality – his world and customs are gone and left in their place are those of the new world. Pheidippides first overturns the established custom of when Strepsiades had to pay his debts before getting sued (the old day and the new). He argues that, just like a young and old women, one day cannot be two (1183-4) and Solon, who established the law, clearly intended for a different custom (1189-1191). Though Pheidippides uses logic and his new rhetoric to argue this concept to Strepsiades, he is also overthrowing Strepsiades' former knowledge and is essentially changing his established world.

Pheidippides' greatest violation to the established customs, however, is when he argues that he is in the right to beat up his father. Part of the Stronger Argument's advice to Pheidippides was to respect his elders (993) and to not speak against his father (998). Strepsiades emerges from the house after chasing away the creditors because his son had beaten him (1321-5). Pheidippides responds however: "by Zeus I will show you how I am in the right to beat you" (1331-2) and uses the weaker argument to prove so (1338-1341). Strepsiades had thought that Pheidippides learning the Weaker Argument would only apply to his benefit by eliminating the creditors. He failed to realize, though, that Pheidippides was completely changed. He had accepted a new reality with Socrates and brought that reality back home, thus pushing out the old. Strepsiades never accepts this reality since he takes the position of the Stronger Argument, which has already been overturned, when he tries to reason with Pheidippides.

[185] The stronger argument's submission to the weaker argument shows the potentially dangerous effects of rhetoric (cf. Henderson, 1998, 4). Since Athens was currently at war with the Peloponnesus, a very real fear of Athenians deserting to the enemy (particularly Sparta) was bound to exist. Strepsiades even laments that he cannot punish his slave and curses war (6-7) because the slave may then desert to the enemy (Henderson, 1998, 10n.1). A similar concern was also expressed in *Birds* since Peisetaerus and Euelpides willingly left Athens.

Pheidippides' basic argument is that since Strepsiades could beat him when he was a child, so a child can beat his father when he's old. He reverses the status of elders by saying "you say that this action against a child is customary; / I refute that, however, since old men are twice children" (1416-7). Pheidippides takes the ability for men to make up laws (as those in the past did and therefore so can he) to legitimize his proposed custom of father-beating (1421-4). However, the violence he adds is more fitting to animals than man: "Look at the roosters and other beasts, / how they defend against their fathers" (1427-8). Aristophanes here combines the human and animalistic. Speech is very much human whereas violence or force is often associated with barbarians and animals.[186] Pheidippides is therefore using his humanity to argue for his bestial actions. The reference to violent birds recalls the new customs in *Birds* where the chorus also advocates the beating of one's father.

Under Socrates' new customs, via the Weaker Argument, there does not seem to be any concept of justice or the law. Since the Weaker Argument overturned the Stronger, it also overturned justice (δική) with which the Stronger Argument is associated. There is also no fear of punishment from the gods since Zeus does not exist and has no replacement to smite perjurers[187] (cf. 395-403). Therefore, what is actually just and unjust needs to be reordered under the rule of the new gods (the Clouds) since the Olympians are no longer the ones who give order, as O'Regan comments,

> "An amoral world, ruled by natural forces and laws, where the sky has been emptied of gods and meaning and value are determined by the exercise of autonomous human reason and debated by the independent human voices, is the necessary context for the art of the sophistic rhetor to whom *dikaia* and *adika*, just and unjust things, are interchangeable."[188]

[186] O'Regan 1992, 19.
[187] Strauss 1980, 19.
[188] O'Regan 1992, 30.

Without fear, there is no order. Such use of fear to maintain law and democracy has been a long standing tradition in Greek thought, and Aristophanes shows how it is needed to uphold society as a civilized entity. The Clouds, however, prove to care about laws[189] (though not prescribed to the Olympians) when they reveal they planned on punishing Strepsiades. The ἀγών was staged for the Weaker Argument to win and "it becomes clear that he has been a tool of the Clouds, used to entrap Strepsiades, whose love of evil deeds (1459) finds its appropriate recompense."[190] Since the Clouds have been noted to be on the lookout for their own interests above, this betrayal of Strepsiades is no surprise.

Despite getting out of his payments, Strepsiades overturns the reality his son had established in place of his old world. Once Pheidippides mentioned he also wanted to be able to beat his mother (1443), Strepsiades realizes the wrong he did in having his son learn the Weaker Argument. Pheidippides, though, stays firm in his new reality since he refuses to beat his teacher (1467) when Strepsiades wants to take vengeance on being cheated out of his money, and he still acknowledges Dinos, the natural phenomenon, as king of the gods over Zeus. Strepsiades' final decision, at the encouragement of a statue of Hermes, is to burn Socrates' school down (1484-5) and to destroy his world and reality completely.

Even though Pheidippides, as the object of Socrates, tries to change Strepsiades' reality, the violent customs he now proposes leads to an overthrow of the school. Since Pheidippides learned rhetoric under the Weaker Argument, he assumes violent customs that reverse the old ways. He becomes one of the students of Socrates' school and thus recognizes his new world. Strepsiades, however, is not able to accept the new Pheidippides into his own world, outside the

[189] Platter 2007, 72-3: "The Clouds eventually become the agents of destruction for Strepsiades when they reveal their true allegiance to the *nomoi*, 'laws,' of the city, as well as their predilection for teaching evildoers to fear the gods (1454-61)."
[190] Ibid., 65.

school, after he advocates father-beating and mother-beating. In this way, Pheidippides shows the potential dangers of his education and, in particular, of rhetoric. When Strepsiades learns that he has been punished by the Clouds, he destroys the world of Socrates and his students by burning down the school, and thus eliminating the reality that threatened to overthrow his own world.

Conclusion

One of the major issues Strepsiades faces is the distinction between earth and sky, or the mortal world and that of the divine, for which Socrates is the bridge (as he can transcend to the 'middle-air'). Throughout the play, Strepsiades is conflicted between his old world and the new one he can obtain under Socrates. He is never fully able to separate the two since he cannot give up his old way of life, nor can he accept the new gods and rhetoric of the school. As in *Birds,* Strepsiades needs a new order of gods to solve his problem of getting out of debt. However, he does not solve his problem. He regrets believing that a vessel and natural phenomenon, Dinos (or 'Whirl'), was in power over Zeus and never fully accepts the new gods under Socrates. Pheidippides, though, does accept the new order of gods at the end of the play and successfully learns the weaker argument. Pheidippides was only able to do this once he recognized fully the Clouds, the Tongue, and Chaos as the new gods. It is only at the end of the play when Strepsiades burns down Socrates' school (a symbol of another reality) that he accepts his own reality and eliminates the other.

CHAPTER 3

PEACE

Aristophanes explores a world in *Peace* where the Olympian gods are absent after they have fled from their homes on Olympus to the highest point of the sky. At the heart of the play is the conflict between war and peace as both concepts and gods. Trygaeus needs to overthrow War, established as the new ruler by the Olympian gods on Olympus, in order to restore peace to the world. Trygaeus shows the value of human knowledge and ability over the divine as he takes on the elimination of war from the world, a problem for all of Greece, without any divine help. Once he returns to earth with Peace, the statue which represents the goddess, he shows that the boundaries between mortals and divine have also shifted, and the new order of gods (namely Peace) is now closer to the mortal world. Since the Olympian gods are also no longer on Olympus, humans now have a broader range of travel as shown by Trygaeus' very ascension to the former home of the gods. Once Peace is established as the sole divinity for mortals, and her presence is solidified on earth and in the mortal realm, the customs of the world then change. While War was on Olympus, he ruled the humans and therefore they were in a state of war. However, when Peace is restored to earth, she brings a period of peace and therefore harvesting, theatre-going, leisure, and socializing as well. Farmers are able to once again return to their fields and engage in the customs they cherished before the time of war. *Peace* differs from *Birds* and *Clouds* in that the Olympian gods are not overthrown and the new order is not one of violence. However, the establishment of a new and better goddess, a change in the boundaries,

and the introduction of new customs maintain the trend of Aristophanes in creating a new reality for his characters.

In order for Trygaeus to change his reality from one of war to one of peace (section one of this chapter), he first has to establish Peace as the main goddess for mortals. Trygaeus is able to do so due to his ability to persuade and use rhetoric to his advantage. He does not need any help from the gods to ascend to Olympus, retrieve Peace, and return her to earth, and he therefore becomes the savior for all of Greece. Trygaeus questions the existence and decisions of the Olympian gods, tricks Hermes in order to gain his support, and goes against Zeus' direct orders that Peace is not to be removed from the cave. In these ways, Trygaeus is consistent with Peisetaerus and Strepsiades in that he is willing to give up the traditional gods in favor of a new order that can change his reality. Much like Peisetaerus and Socrates in *Birds* and *Clouds* respectively, Trygaeus institutes which gods he feels would be beneficial and better for mortals than the Olympians. His new order consists of Peace and the personification of goddesses that relate to her, namely Harvest (Ὀπώρα) and Spectacle (Θεωρία, or Theatre-going). When the Olympian gods abandoned Olympus, they make it clear that they no longer wish to be involved in the lives of mortals and leave War to continue ruling in their stead. Because Peace is physically closer to earth, Trygaeus believes she is a better goddess and the peace she provides is a better reality for mortals. She is also representative of all things good, such as agriculture, festivals, leisure, etc., in contrast to War whom Trygaeus briefly portrays as destructive and all-consuming. Trygaeus, in a way, is establishing a cult for all of Greece through his introduction of Peace as the main goddess for mortals. However, there is still some opposition to accepting Peace as the sole goddess by weapon smiths and armorers since they would be put out of business.

In section two of this chapter, Trygaeus also changes the boundaries and limits for mortals through his establishment of Peace as the main goddess worshipped by mortals. The change in these boundaries and limits for mortals is most clearly seen in the parody of Euripides' *Bellerophon* through Trygaeus. Both Bellerophon and Trygaeus ascend to Olympus on winged creatures – Pegasus and a beetle respectively. They also question the gods as a means for their journey and show disbelief in their existence. The journey of Trygaeus is not hubristic, unlike that of Bellerophon, since the Olympian gods have left Olympus. To reach Olympus, while the Olympians are there, is to challenge the gods because Trygaeus and Bellerophon, in this case, are raising their status and claiming equality with the gods.[191] He also returns to earth with more knowledge since he has traveled where no mortal has gone before and has access to 'divine' or special knowledge. He functions similar to Socrates in that he becomes a sort of midwife for this knowledge with his new connection to the heavens. In his new reality, mortals now have the potential to reach Olympus since the gods are now, theoretically, twice as far away as they used to be (at the peak of the heavens rather than on Olympus). Trygaeus does, however, bring mortals and the divine closer together through bringing Peace to the earth. Since she is their new main goddess, her physical presence and the Olympians' absence stresses her involvement in the human realm.

Though Trygaeus does change the boundaries of his world, problems arise from this action. He is allowed to interact with gods while on Olympus (Hermes, War, Uproar, and Peace) but they are all 'liminal' gods. That is, War, Uproar and Peace do not appear as gods and goddesses generally worshipped by mortals.[192] Some scholars even question Hermes' divine status (similar to Dionysus) since he was born to a nymph, has a strong connection with the

[191] Alford 1993, 266.
[192] MacDowell 1995, 183.

earth, and interacts often with humans.[193] Trygaeus, however, is portrayed as a Hermes-like figure (or even a Promethean figure) since he can transfer divine things (Peace, Harvest, and Spectacle) to both the fictive human realm in the play, and to the audience. He is free to move between the immortal and mortal worlds and thus shows limits that are in flux. The location of Peace's cave is also problematic, and so I end this section with a brief discussion on the cave and the physicality of Olympus since both pose many issues as to where Trygaeus actually goes and therefore how his journey influences the change in limitations for mortals.

With Peace being established as the new goddess and the boundaries between mortals and divine brought closer together through her presence on earth, customs for humans also undergo a change (part three of this chapter). Since Greece has been at war, the customs of the Greeks have reflected their reality in that they are indicative of a state at war. Aristophanes portrays war as consuming and destructive. Peace, however, contains all the pleasures of life as well as agriculture (a mark of civilization compared to hunting and gathering). Since the chorus consists of old farmers, they remember the old reality before war thus making War representative of the new, violent customs and Peace of the old, better ways of the ancestors. During war, the customs of peace seem to be non-existent and therefore with her presence back on earth, Trygaeus brings back the old customs. When peace is restored to the world, however, Trygaeus brings about consequences due to the overturning of the customs of war to those of peace. The threat of another overthrow (from peace to war) is ever-present, and the persistence of war and violence is maintained throughout the play.

The retrieval of Peace from the cave is shown to be difficult with dissention still arising among the various representatives of Greece. Peace's presence on earth also disrupts the

[193] Sardello 1995, 120.

economics since she puts out of business occupations associated with equipping soldiers, though benefitting farming-related occupations. Even when Trygaeus attempts to integrate craftsmen who made helmets, spears, and shields into this new reality, showing them how their products can be adapted for peaceful means, they still refuse to accept the change. Peace, Harvest, and Spectacle, however, do bring their customs back to Greece as they are united with the characters in the play and the real Greeks in the audience. Aristophanes seems to show the very real potential of obtaining peace and changing their own reality through the actions of Trygaeus. Trygaeus' wedding to Harvest solidifies her position on earth and the restoration of farming, and his handing over of Spectacle to the council, who are seated in the audience, represents the return of festivals and theatre-going for Greeks in the play and real life. Because Peace is returned to earth, the customs associated with her are once again present among mortals. They can enjoy once more what they had lost during their time of war.

I. The Institution of Peace

When Trygaeus enacts his plan of freeing Peace, he not only changes his own reality but that of all of Greece. Though Trygaeus does not discount the Olympian gods entirely, he does question the gods and value human innovation, much like Peisetaerus in *Birds* and Strepsiades and Socrates in *Clouds*. He believes he can solve the world's problem, being at war, without any help from the Olympian gods and even uses the help of a beetle, a lowly creature, to reach the heavens. When Trygaeus ascends to Olympus, he discovers that all the Olympian gods are gone, and only Hermes, who was left to man the door, and War, who was throwing Greece into confusion, remained behind. Trygaeus believes that rescuing Peace would restore her and all her benefits to mankind, despite the presence of the Olympian gods in the lives of mortals (who,

until this point, are still on Olympus). From his actions, he raises himself in status and is able to marry one of Peace's attendants, Harvest, to solidify the union of the gods (namely Peace) and mortals.

The problem Trygaeus sets out to fix is one greater than the personal matters of Peisetaerus and Strepsiades – he's on a mission to save Greece. Because he is taking on a public matter rather than a private one, he earns the respect and honor from others and from Greece in general: his peace is not just for him, but is a Panhellenic peace.[194] He notes that he is "flying for the sake of all the Greeks, / contriving a new kind of expedition" (93-4).[195] Trygaeus literally sets himself apart and above the rest of the world and takes on the role of a savior. Once he restores Peace to earth, the chorus praises him saying "you have become a savior for all men…and except for the gods we will always consider you first" (914-7). He becomes more than just a man to the others in the play since he is uplifted above all others in importance, and he is now just one step below the gods. The gods were not the ones to do this for him, but he alone accomplished such an action and rose to such a position. Much as Peisetaerus had shown how much he could accomplish on his own, so does Trygaeus. He single-handedly changes the reality of Greece – from one of war to peace. Trygaeus does not believe the gods can help him restore Peace (as the goddess and concept) to the world and values his own, human abilities over the divine.

He also shows his ability to persuade through rhetoric when he argues to his household why he chose to ride to Olympus on a beetle, showing a thrifty nature similar to Socrates in *Clouds* since he wouldn't need to feed two creatures on the journey: "But, my dear girl, I would need twice as much food; / but now whatever food I myself consume, / I will nourish him [the beetle] with the very same food" (137-9). His clever solution is reminiscent of the stories of

[194] Newiger 1996, 151.
[195] All citations are from Aristophanes' *Peace* unless otherwise noted.

Socrates the student relates to Strepsiades in *Clouds*, who also solves his problems through clever and subtle thinking. Trygaeus retains this elevated position throughout the play and increases his status, though he does not quite become a tyrant-figure as Peisetaerus in *Birds*. For example, when Trygaeus leads the chorus in freeing Peace from the cave, they refer to him as an αὐτοκράτωρ[196] (359) which can mean a ruler or commander, but really implies that he is free and independent (i.e. from the gods since he is "self-ruling"). He does not need the gods and is his own master. When Trygaeus returns to earth, he assumes a position higher than the other Greeks, much as Peisetaerus and Socrates do in *Birds* and *Clouds* respectively. Trygaeus remarks "you all were small to see from above. And to me / you appeared entirely to be in an ill plight from heaven, / but from here you seem to be in a much worse situation" (821-3). Trygaeus' slave had already foreshadowed his near-divine status when he was about to fly to heaven when he called him ἄναξ (90), a term generally used when addressing gods in tragedy.[197] Trygaeus no longer includes himself with the other Greeks since he feels he gained better understanding after his journey to Olympus. He feels near divine, a status which is further shown in his marriage to the goddess Harvest (though a goddess invented by Aristophanes, much like Basilea in *Birds*).

Though Trygaeus does not question the existence of the gods to the same degree as Peisetaerus and Strepsiades, he is not afraid to dispute and deceive them. In an interesting switch, Trygaeus blames Zeus for the current state of war in Greece, not War, as the god, himself.[198] His servant describes him as "throughout the day he looks up to the sky, / and with his mouth gaping open like this he reproaches Zeus / and says: 'Oh Zeus, what in the world are you planning to do? / Put down the broom; do not sweep out Greece'" (56-9). Trygaeus even threatens to indict

[196] Olson 1998, 145 explains that this word empowers Trygaeus "to give the Chorus orders…such power was yielded to individuals only in special circumstances and did not imply a lack of accountability for what one did."
[197] Ibid., 85.
[198] Strepsiades curses war, not Zeus, in *Clouds* (6).

Zeus if he doesn't reveal to him his plans for Greece (105-8). Here, Trygaeus imposes an Athenian law, a human law, on an immortal. Though this scene is meant perhaps to be a joke about the possibility of another war with the Persians,[199] Trygaeus still lessens Zeus' power and perceives him as able to be overpowered (in a legal matter) by a mortal.

As the play progresses, Trygaeus continually grows more confident in his rhetorical abilities and therefore, he takes more of an active role in order to change his reality. Trygaeus successfully persuades Hermes when he tells him about a threat against the Olympians, promising him that he will retain his power as a god and not be overthrown like the others.

> *Trygaeus*: "And I will show you some terrible and great matter, / which is being planned against all the gods… / for the Moon and the cunning Sun / plotting against you all for a long time / are betraying Greece to the barbarians." *Hermes*: "So that they accomplish what?" *Try*. "Because, by Zeus, / we sacrifice to you, and to them [the Sun and Moon] / the barbarians sacrifice, for this reason they rightly / want to destroy us all, / so that they could obtain the rites of the gods." (403-413)

Trygaeus invents this threat against the gods to convince Hermes that he and the Olympians are in danger of being overthrown. In a similar way as in *Birds* and in *Clouds* with birds and Dinos (and Clouds, Tongue, and Chaos) replacing the Olympians, respectively, the Sun and Moon[200] threaten to succeed the traditional gods as rulers.[201] Though this replacement of the gods never comes true, to Hermes the succession is already happening. Trygaeus gives Hermes a way out of this change of power by promising that he will continue to be worshipped with the Sun and Moon if he helps draw Peace from the cave:

> "And we will celebrate the great Panathaneia for you, / and all the other rites of the gods, / the Mysteries, the Dipolieia, the Adonia for Hermes; /

[199] Cf. Henderson 1998, n6 p441.
[200] See Olson 1998, 157-8 for the worship of the Sun and the Moon during the 6th-5th centuries, namely by foreigners.
[201] The threat from the Sun and Moon resembles Plato's portrayal of Aristophanes in the *Symposium* "where Aristophanes' tale (like Comedy itself) gestures toward a pre-Olympian order that threatens the regime of Zeus" (Kurke, 2011, 316). The Sun and Moon, older gods than Zeus according to Hesiod's *Theogony*, are therefore trying to assume power due to their status as elders. Their argument seems to be based on birth-rights as was seen in *Birds*.

> and the other cities, having ceased from their evils, / will sacrifice to you,
> Hermes the Warder against Evils, from everywhere" (418-422).[202]

Trygaeus successfully deceives the trickster, and traditionally cunning, god and uses rhetoric (a lie) to do so. He poses a reality for Hermes in which he will be one of the main deities worshipped by mortals. Hermes doesn't just gain a cult worship by Trygaeus, but he assumes the rites and worship of the other gods. He is essentially usurping them. Trygaeus even decides which gods the chorus should worship in conjunction with Hermes: "To Hermes, the Graces, the Seasons, Aphrodite, and Desire." *Hermes*: "but not to Ares…nor Enyalius" (456-7). Trygaeus removes Ares and Enyalius, another war god,[203] from the gods he intends to worship. Trygaeus also seems to be flattering Hermes here by including him with goddesses associated with Peace. To obtain his support, Trygaeus includes Hermes in his new set of gods that will benefit mortals – the new "Olympians".

Trygaeus begins his new reality through his desire to make Peace the sole goddess and uses rhetoric and his sophistic nature to reach Olympus, persuade Hermes to help him, and draw Peace from the cave.[204] Throughout *Peace,* there is a strong conflict between not only peace and war, but human and divine. Though this conflict is apparent in other plays of Aristophanes (such as *Acharnians* and *Lysistrata*), it is particularly noteworthy in *Peace* due to the focus on peace and war. Trygaeus' use of human knowledge and innovation is related to the competition between Hesiodic and Homeric themes. At the most basic level, Hesiod's *Works and Days* can be argued to represent the human world and their place in the cosmos whereas Homer is more focused on the gods and how mortals act under their influence, always subject to the desires of

[202] The Panathenaia was in celebration for Athena, the Mysteries for Demeter, Dipolieia for Zeus Polieus, and the Adonia for Adonis and therefore Hermes would assume all their rites (Olson, 1998, 160-1).
[203] Henderson 1998, n34 p437.
[204] Olson 1998, xlii notes "*Peace* thus confronts a reality in some ways not unlike our own, a substantially demythologized world from which an anthropomorphic God has receded so far as to inspire doubts about his real existence, and for the improvement of which we alone seem to be responsible."

the divine. Teló notes that Aristophanes even assumes the "authorial voice of *Works and Days*" through his characterization of Trygaeus.[205] Therefore, he is not just using the didactic style, but also advocating human nature. In Aristophanes, the average humans are becoming the heroes,[206] rather than gods and demigods, and therefore human abilities are valued over those of the divine.

Since the Olympian gods no longer inhabit Olympus, they are no longer in charge of the world – especially that of mortals. Hermes, whose role as one of the new kings of the gods is merely a fabrication of Trygaeus to gain his help, still leaves Olympus, the gods, and mortals without a ruler. The Olympian gods, who had fled and abandoned their control over mortal lives, instead left War to rule Olympus:

> *Trygaeus*: "For what reason did the gods go away from their home?"
> *Hermes*: "Because they were angry with the Greeks. Therefore, here, / where they used to be, they settled War, / handing you all over to him to do simply whatever he wants; / and they have migrated higher, as high as they can go, / so that they would not have to watch you fighting any longer / nor hear in any way those entreating them" (203-9).

The Olympian gods willingly want to separate themselves from mortals, cutting all ties with the human world. In this way, humans are left, for the most part, alone. Aristophanes may be hinting that the ideal and perfect world is godless,[207] or at least Olympian-less, since they cannot help mortals. Hermes claims the reason they left was because the Olympian gods had tried to enact peace, but the Greeks kept choosing war (211-2). Aristophanes poses a new reality in which the Olympian gods are not just distant, but completely absent, and in their place is War. However, Aristophanes' audience may not have found the absence of the Olympians all that surprising since at that time there are "popular anxieties about the gods, the fear that they are angry at the

[205] Teló 2013, 151.
[206] Solomos 1974, 140: "If Aristophanes were a coward he wouldn't have carried on so heroic a campaign against authority and public opinion, exposing himself to continuous danger. Also, in his plays, even in those that aim at peace, he always praises human heroism; he advises the citizens to vote for a truce, but does not advise the warriors to throw down their weapons."
[207] Reckford 1987, 17 raises a similar question.

Greeks or have withdrawn somehow from things."[208] The contemporary Greek sentiment of the gods would not call into question that Trygaeus plans on overturning the Olympians' institution of War as the new ruler of mortals by restoring Peace, and thus changing the reality once more.

Trygaeus needs to prove that Peace offers a better reality for mortals on earth than War and the absent Olympian gods to gain support from mortals. He and the chorus continually exult the benefits that will come from Peace while criticizing what War represents. However, they ignore the Olympian gods and do not compare Peace with them. Though it should not be a difficult to discredit war in favor of peace, Trygaeus still establishes that War as a god is a negative force and non-beneficial god for mortals. Since the Olympian gods had established War as the ruler in their stead, his negative aspects can be reflected back onto them. Aristophanes is expressing a very probable concern of the Greeks and asking the question "why do the gods want mortals to suffer?" As will be shown with the introduction of peace/Peace back into the world, Aristophanes will portray a reality in which there is no suffering, especially due to war. The focus for Trygaeus, and Greece, is the conflict between war and peace, a relevant theme for Athens and Greece during the Peloponnesian War. In general, War is associated with hard work, weapons of war, and strife, whereas Peace is representative of pleasure, freedom, food, and wine. Since most of the characteristics of Peace and War are indicative of their customs, they will be discussed in more detail in the third section.

Not only can Peace offer mortals all good things, but she is also physically closer and more available by being brought back to earth. War and the Olympians are never actually overthrown, but instead it seems that Peace's mere presence on earth is enough for there to be

[208] Ibid., 45.

peace. The fact that the Peace in the play is actually a statue[209] and treated as such, however, raise the questions of where the actual goddess Peace is and what does that means for the characters in the play. It is important to consider the statue of the goddess as an object of worship in the play, instead of just having an actor as the actual goddess, since the characters in the play worship and sacrifice to her as if she was real. Such an analysis recalls the de-evolution of gods which was seen in *Birds,* where the characters in the play resorted back to worshipping animalistic gods rather than anthropomorphic. Since Peace is a statue, however, all her benefits are attributed to her either by the chorus or Trygaeus himself – she never actually has a chance to argue why she is a better goddess for mortals than War or the Olympians as the birds and Clouds did. She, therefore, is completely in the hands of a mortal and does not seem to be divine at all. It is rather Trygaeus who is bringing all these good things to pass. When they are about to hoist Peace out of the cave, for instance, the chorus refers to her as "the greatest of all the gods and most loving of the vine" (308). Trygaeus assumes her presence on earth will enable mortals to be free again and participate in joyful pursuits once more (338-345). Peace is connected to all things good to contrast War, but she is also closely tied with wine and the freedom that comes with inebriation as something close to Bacchic revelry. Since Peace is not a new divinity, her benefits are not speculative – they are something the chorus very well remembers:

> "You used to be the greatest profit for us, you who are desired, / for us all, however many of us who / passed our life tilling the ground; / and indeed you alone helped us. / We received many / sweet things before, in your presence, / and many things without expense and dear. / For you used to be for the farmers their unripe wheaten groats and their savior." (585-595).

[209] Ibid., 193: "It is clear that Peace is represented on-stage by a statue, not by an actor. She speaks no audible words; the excuse is made that she will not speak to the spectators because she is angry at their treatment of her, and so she whispers questions to Hermes who repeats them aloud (658-705)…The statue is drawn into view at 519 and there is no indication in the text that it is ever removed. Presumably it remains on-stage for the rest of the play as a visible symbol that peace now prevails."

Peace not only has an image of abundance and food, and thus closely tied with agriculture and life, but she is also the sole goddess that can bring these things back for mortals.

Peace, however, is not accepted right away by the other Greeks as the goddess in charge of the world due to the ambiguity of her status as a goddess. MacDowell states that "Peace, like War, is personified in early poetry,[210] but it is doubtful whether she was publically recognized as a goddess in the time of Aristophanes."[211] If indeed Peace was not worshipped by mortals, Aristophanes would be the first poet to have his characters pray to Peace the goddess as she is portrayed in the play. Since he has created new gods before, recognition of an untraditional goddess is not uncharacteristic of Aristophanes. This innovation is seen in Trygaeus' bride as well, Harvest, who is also not an actual goddess.[212] Peace is the only one of her and her attendants, Harvest and Spectacle, who is treated as an actual goddess, while the others are only representations of her benefits.[213] Despite what she offers, the other Greeks still support the Olympian gods and their orders that war should remain on earth. Before the Olympian gods left, Zeus proclaimed that anyone who tried to free Peace would die (371-2) and therefore he shows that he wants War to rule mortals forever. He also has instilled fear into men through his proclamation – using the threat of force to keep them obedient, as was seen in *Birds* (1015-6).

Peace's imprisonment resembles when Zeus overthrows the Titans in Hesiod's *Theogony* as well, showing the overthrow of old orders in favor a new. Peace and the Titans, both represent the 'old' order, imprisoned by the new, War and Zeus respectively. She is also hidden from mortals, just like the fire is hidden by Zeus in the myth of Prometheus. Trygaeus, in the same

[210] E.g., *Theogony*, 902; *Works and Days*, 228.
[211] MacDowell 1995, 192.
[212] Newiger 1996, 149: "The bride of the wine-grower Trygaeus, who brings about the peace in *Peace*, is not the goddess of peace herself (that would be, according to Greek thought, hubris and sacrilege) but her attendant Opora, the Harvest, a happy invention of Aristophanes and a personification typical of those which occur abundantly in this comedy."
[213] MacDowell 1995, 194.

way as Prometheus, is the savior of mankind since he restores Peace and saves humanity. Just as Prometheus deceived Zeus and gave humans the means of life through the gift of fire, Trygaeus, in a similar away, ignores Zeus' orders and brings Peace down from Olympus and into the realm of mortals. Trygaeus, however, not only defies Zeus by freeing and restoring Peace, but he also wants to overturn the rule of War. Though Peace should be an easy goddess for mortals to accept, due to her benefits, her place as the sole goddess is shown to be problematic through the ambiguity of her divinity.

Such hesitation to accept Peace into the world and betray the orders of Zeus is shown when Trygaeus sacrifices and prays to her (974-7). In his prayer, Trygaeus seeks the removal of war in favor of the institution of peace:

> "But show forth your entire self / nobly to us, your / lovers, who have now pined for you / for thirteen years; / free us from battle and tumult, / so that we may call you Lysimache[214]" (987-992).

The chorus had prayed in a similar way to Peace (583-600) as all-beneficial and most welcome. However, both the chorus and Trygaeus do not consider the other gods in their prayers – for instance, they do not thank Demeter for crops, just Peace.[215] Trygaeus' prayer also sets up a cult for Peace.[216] Even though Trygaeus' slave and the chorus accept the sacrifice to Peace and her reign, there is opposition form an oracle monger Hierocles. Aristophanes parodies oracles in his portrayal of Hierocles, since oracles believe they have a close connection to the gods and know what the divine are thinking. When Hierocles learns that Trygaeus is sacrificing to Peace, he calls him and his slave "useless and childish mortals" (1063). He elaborates that they have to

[214] Henderson 1998, n78 p553 notes that "the name, which means 'Releaser from Battles," was in fact borne by the incumbent priestess of Athena Polias, who may have inspired Aristophanes in creating the heroine of *Lysistrata*."
[215] Strauss 1980, 148.
[216] MacDowell 1995, 193: When Trygaeus prays to Peace as a goddess: "Of course the performance of such a ritual in a comedy was not equivalent to the inauguration of a new cult in real life, but Aristophanes may be implying that such a cult is desirable, foreshadowing its actual establishment forty-seven years later."

stay true to the oracle not to release Peace since the gods did not yet want to cease the war (1073-1076a). Hierocles expresses his authority through using the Olympian gods and their orders, and he therefore does not accept Peace as a goddess over the Olympians.

In the scene between Trygaeus and Hierocles, they both take opposing sides of Homeric themes: one of peace (the side of humans represented by Trygaeus) and one of war (the side of gods argued by Hierocles) though he uses the Sibyl as his voice of authority, not Homer (1095). Trygaeus, when asked about his authority in establishing peace, uses Homeric phrases: "thus they, having pushed back the hostile cloud of war, / chose Peace and established her with a sacrifice" (1090-1).[217] Rather than gods, Trygaeus uses a mortal, Homer, and mortal characters to explain why Peace should be present on earth. At a deeper level, Aristophanes is showing how it is not up for the gods to decide when there should be peace or war, but rather it is in the hands of mortals. Whether he is commenting on divine agency, or trying to get his fellow Athenians to see that they do in fact have a choice, however, is uncertain. I am inclined to believe that Aristophanes does feel than his fellow citizens *can* change their state of affairs, and he wants to encourage them to stop relying on divine help and instead help themselves. We are all humans suffering the human condition. Such a commentary is most evident when Trygaeus, again using Homer, says: "he is friendless, lawless, and homeless, / who desires horrible war among his people" (1097-8). Trygaeus is still representing the sophistic values of human knowledge over the divine, but also seems to be asking that if mortals already suffer at the hands of the gods, why must they suffer from each other as well?

[217] Ibid., Both Trygaeus and Hieocles use dactylic hexameters which functions in two different ways in *Peace*: "First, as in *Lysistrata* and *Knights*, dactylic hexameters are part of a tactical move by one character to assert control over the comic situation, as the oracle-seller Hierocles attempts first to frustrate, then to co-opt the new world order of Trygaios. Second, they appear in the final scene of the play where the revelry brought about the restoration of the goddess Peace and the marriage of Trgyaios to Opora, "Harvest," is threatened by the attempted reinstitution of "warlike" Homeric poetry" (123).

Though the Olympian gods are not as clearly overturned in *Peace* as in *Birds* and *Clouds*, the same questioning of the gods and their power is still present. Trygaeus, true to the Aristophanic hero, challenges the authority of the Olympians, uses rhetoric to persuade Hermes, and establishes Peace back into the realm of mortals and thus changes the reality of Greece. His actions benefit not just himself, but the whole of Greece as he works to change their reality. He first has to establish Peace as the main goddess whom mortals will worship and overthrow the old order, that of War and the Olympian gods. Trygaeus also has no trouble in arguing why Peace is better for mortals since she is indicative all things good and civilizing. Though Peace does not completely usurp the Olympian gods, she is more present and available to mortals and therefore the only goddess pertinent to their reality.

II. Olympus and Back Again

Aristophanes redefines the boundaries between mortals and the divine through the interactions of Trygaeus, Peace, and War. Also, since the Olympian gods have abandoned Olympus, they unknowingly change the physical limits of mortals who now have the ability to ascend to the heavens. Trygaeus, too, is allowed not only in the home of the gods, but also in the presence of certain divinities. Though Hermes and War (and his attendant) have been left behind, they are not part of the traditional pantheon of gods. Hermes deserves special attention since he is the bridge between the human and divine worlds. The goddess Peace is also problematic. In the play she is a statue and therefore only an idol of worship that is brought back to earth and treated as a divinity. Trygaeus is even able to marry one of her attendants, Harvest, and Spectacle, another attendant, is handed over to the council. The presence of these three 'goddesses' on earth symbolize a closer, physical relationship between mortals and gods, such as

Cloud-cuckoo-land offered in *Birds* and the middle-air in *Clouds*. Overall, however, Trygaeus does cross the boundaries of previously established limits of human travel, interacts with the divine, and brings goddesses back to earth, all because the Olympians are now at the peak of the heavens and distant from mortals even more than before.

Before Trygaeus' flight to Olympus, Aristophanes proposes three ways of ascending to the heavens even though they are through absurd means: climbing via a ladder, flying up with a beetle, and using Pegasus. Both the fact that the ladder fails (69-71) and Trygaeus agrees with his daughter that he will not be sailing (125-6), show that he needs something with wings to reach Olympus. Though Peisetaerus in *Birds* will not need wings to reach Cloud-cuckoo-land,[218] the birds as winged and the distribution of wings is an important part of colonizing the city. The reference to Pegasus is also intended to parody Euripides' play *Bellerophon*.[219] Not only does Aristophanes seem to adapt a quote from the play when the slave describes Trygaeus as addressing his beetle similar to Bellerophon and Pegasus:

> 'ὦ Πηγάσειον,' φησί, 'γενναῖον πτερόν, / ὅπως πετήσει μ' εὐθὺ τοῦ Διὸς λαβών.'
>
> "Oh my Pegasus," he says, "my well-born winged creature, / see to it that you take me and fly me straight to the home of Zeus." (76-7).
>
> ἄγ', ὦ φίλον μοι Πηγάσου ταχὺ πτερόν
>
> "Come, my swift wings of Pegasus…" (Eur. *Bell.* Fr. 306).

[218] Strauss 1980, 189: In *Birds*, Herakles suggests that they take Peisetaerus to see the Olympians and get Basileia "he has then no doubt that Peisetaerus can rise as high as Trygaios without needing a dung beetle; he surely rises higher than the birds. But we are not permitted to see Peisetaerus in heaven as we were permitted to see Trygaios in heaven."

[219] Henderson 1998, n5 p437. Cf. also MacDowell 1995, 181: "It is a parody of a particular tragedy, Euripides' *Bellerophon*. Bellerophon was the hero who slew the monstrous Chimera; subsequently all his children perished in some way, and he set off for heaven on the winged horse Pegasos to complain to Zeus, but the horse threw him and he was lamed by the fall."

but he also references the tragedy specifically through the daughter of Trygaeus: "well, then it was necessary that you yoked the wings of Pegasus, / so that you may appear more tragic to the gods" (135-6). Because *Peace* is a comedy, the gods will not show pity for Trygaeus as they do in tragedies,[220] which is exemplified by their complete absence in the play. Since Pegasus is associated with Bellerophon's ascension to heaven, Trygaeus uses a lowly, comedic method for his flight – the beetle. The beetle, as told by Trygaeus, "in the stories of Aesop, was discovered / to be the only one of winged creatures to reach the gods" (129-130), aside from Pegasus.

Trygaeus not only parallels Bellerophon's journey via a winged creature, but also via the reason which sets him up as a comedic counterpart to Euripides' tragedy. From what survives of the play and as told by other authors (Homer in particular, *Iliad* VI.155ff), Bellerophon is upset with the gods because he feels they are unjust so he decides to use Pegasus to fly to heaven "either to disprove the existence of gods so unjust or remonstrate with them."[221] However, he is thrown back to the earth off of Pegasus[222] by Zeus. Bellerophon even calls the gods into question similar to the comic characters of Aristophanes (though not abnormal for Euripidean protagonists either): "Does someone say, then, that there are gods in heaven? / There are not gods, there are none, if someone of men wants / to use the stories of old, not being foolish" (Eur. *Bell.* fr.286, 1-3).[223] In a similar way to Bellerophon, Trygaeus is also flying to heaven to question Zeus on why he is being unjust to mortals and causing them to fight an incessant war (102-6). In contrast to Bellerophon, who is punished for his actions against Zeus, namely for going beyond human

[220] Platnauer 1964, 78.
[221] Collard 2008, 290.
[222] Both Pegasus and Trygaeus' beetle become yoked to Zeus' chariot (722) cf. Eur. *Bell.* fr.312.
[223] Olson 1998, xxxiii-iv: "Euripides' Bellerophon is concerned to protest the seemingly depraved moral order of the universe…and as a result denies not the Olympians' existence but only their right to worship and recognition if they insist on behaving as it seems they do." Trygaeus seems to feel the same way as Bellerophon when he replaces the Olympian gods with Hermes and eventually Peace.

boundaries to see the gods,[224] Trygaeus is not. He is allowed to fly to Olympus, unpunished, and he successfully transcends mortal limits. Trygaeus essentially does the impossible, as Newiger notes: "A metaphor – 'to fetch from heaven' which ought to express an impossibility – is actually staged, and for the fantastic and ingenious art of comedy the impossible turns out to be thoroughly possible."[225] Trygaeus transcends his human limitations and goes where no Greek has gone before,[226] to Olympus, all because the gods have left and therefore it is 'unclaimed' in its role between mortals and the divine.

Trygaeus' ability to fly to Olympus and back also allows him to return with a different perspective and more knowledge than the average mortal. He was able to go beyond the former limits of travel and therefore he becomes exposed to knowledge unknown before. As mentioned above, he returns to earth with a new view on the condition of humans (821-3), one that is similar to the Olympian view of men. At the beginning of the play, Trygaeus acknowledges the separation of human and divine knowledge and interactions. He realizes the only way he can address the gods is if he himself went there.[227] He is also able to see the spirits of dead dithyrambic poets (829) and is able to verify that mortals become stars when they die (832-3). Since travel is often linked with knowledge,[228] Trygaeus gains divine knowledge, something which no other mortal (as far as the play) has. He is even said to know more about the gods than Socrates in *Clouds* since he actually visits Olympus.[229] Trygaeus' journey also shows a flux in

[224] Reckford 1987, 12.
[225] Newiger 1996, 150.
[226] Strauss 1980, 145: "Trygaios is emphatically a Greek, an Athenian, but he is the first man we find in Aristophanes' work who left not only Greece, but the earth."
[227] Ibid., 137.
[228] Cf. Romm 1992, 167: Travel is often linked with the need for knowledge and, especially sea travel, emphasizes the separation of gods and men to show growth in human capabilities.
[229] Strauss 1980, 146.

the boundaries[230] for mortals, and through him, as well as other characters, Aristophanes questions the arbitrary nature of limits and human boundaries.

However, there does seem to be a distinction between going to see the gods and going to heaven or Olympus. In *Bellerophon*, the gods did not leave Olympus even though the protagonist questions whether or not they are ἐν οὐρανῷ (in heaven, Eur. *Bell.* fr.286, 1). He is not allowed to fly to Olympus because he is not allowed to be in the presence of gods. In *Peace*, however, the gods are not ἐν οὐρανῷ, they have left. The main reason Trygaeus is able to fly to Olympus, in contrast to Bellerophon, is because the Olympian gods are no longer present. When Trygaeus nears the home of Zeus (τὴν οἰκίαν τὴν Διός, 178), he thinks that he will therefore "be near the gods" (177). Hermes, however informs him:

> *Hermes*: "You are never going to be near the gods; / for they are gone; they emigrated yesterday." / *Trygaeus*: "To what part of the earth?" *Herm*: "Of earth?" *Try*. "Then to where?" *Herm*: "Very far away, / just under the very pinnacle of heaven." (196-9).

This passage gives insight to the shape of the world much as the cooking oven (πνιγεύς) in *Birds* and *Clouds.* Platnauer acknowledges the difficulty in translating κύτταρον ('pinnacle of heaven') and cites scholia (Σ^{R}) that κύτταρον "means the vault of heaven, adding unhelpfully [just like the cell of a honeycomb]."[231] However, the honeycomb or wasp's nest, in its dome shape, is hemispherical, and as problematic as Platnauer makes it seem. Olson too describes the κύτταρον as "something round and hollow" like the hemispherical πνιγεύς.[232] The gods, then, have merely retreated to the vertex of the dome of the sky.

---

[230] Since this play is about peace and war, it is interesting, as Teló 2013, 146 notes, that the 'normative' world is one of μάχη not δαίς or ἀγορή. Μάχη is war and therefore variable and chaotic whereas ἀγορή is the polis/city which is stable and formed. The 'normal' world is then one of chaos and without bounds.
[231] Platnauer 1964, 84. Platnauer uses the scholia attached to manuscript R (Ravennas 429) which he notes "is the oldest (end of tenth cent.), the most complete…and, speaking by and large, the best of all Aristophanic manuscripts" (xxii).
[232] Olson 1998, 107-8.

Since the gods have left Olympus, they extend the limitations of vertical travel for mortals who, like Trygaeus, seem to be able to travel now to the former seat of the gods. Just as Cloud-cuckoo-land brought the boundaries upwards, where mortals and the divine comingled, so the abandonment of Olympus brings humans and gods closer in *Peace*. However, this closeness is not in relation to the Olympian gods since they remain as distant as ever. Instead, it is Peace, War, and Hermes who become the gods Trygaeus is allowed to interact with. Peace, and her attendants, are even brought down to earth thus closing the gap between mortals and divine completely as they are integrated with humanity. The Olympian gods have been replaced and nearly forgotten since, to mortals on earth, they are now as far away as they can be, at the highest point of οὐρανός. In this new reality, Trygaeus bridges the realms of the divine and humans with his introduction of Peace as a goddess and her physical presence on earth.

The gods that are left behind on Olympus and interact with Trygaeus are 'liminal-gods' or are not fully divine traditionally. Their liminality enables them to be closer to mortals and therefore to associate with them as well. War (Πολεμός) for instance, is not mentioned in Hesiod as he appears in *Peace*.[233] He is only personified one other time in Aristophanes as a potential guest,[234] but he is not a character as he is here. Peace herself is merely a statue and therefore a representation of the real divinity.[235] She does appear in Hesiod's *Theogony* as one of the daughters of Zeus and Themis (901-2). However, she and her attendants are still able to be visible and present among mortals. Since she is in fact a statue, however, she is not able to speak. In the play, the characters claim that her silence is due to the fact that she is angry with mortals,

[233] War's attendant, Uproar or Battle-din (Κυδοιμός) does appear in Hesiod's *Shield of Herakles* (156).
[234] Cf. *Acharnians* line 978: οὐδέποτ' ἐγὼ Πόλεμον οἴκαδ' ὑποδέξομαι (I would never receive War into my home).
[235] Solomos 1974, 147 notes that the fact she is a statue may be because "in Attic comedy, the gods have been irremediably ridiculed and Aristophanes wishes to spare his divine Peace the comic fate of the other immortals. He produces her, therefore, in the form of an idol, a 'colossal' statue, as his contemporaries have said."

and therefore she will only talk to Hermes (658-660). However, Peace maintains her divine separation with mortals by only talking to Hermes (658ff) who is kept as the bridge between humans and immortals. The fact that she is a statue actually compliments her being a link between mortals and gods. Statues, in the context of ritual, bring the gods to earth and therefore humanize and unite them, and the heart of ritual is to bring humans closer to the divine.[236] Since the statue can also be *seen* by mortals, Peace's concern about their wellbeing will not be questioned like the Olympian gods'.

Hermes, as briefly mentioned in the first section, is also a special case in terms of his divinity. As the traditional messenger god and conductor of souls to the underworld, he forms a bridge between Olympus, earth, and the realm of Hades. Hermes has a close association with earth due to his birth: he is the son of Zeus and a nymph who is very closely related to trees, caves, rivers, etc.[237] Aristophanes seems to have intended Trygaeus to resemble Hermes, who is almost mortal himself due to his birth and closeness to earth, since he also is allowed to cross boundaries and interact with the divine. He is able to move freely between all three realms and even be seen by certain mortals. Similar to Prometheus, Hermes has the ability to take formerly divine objects and introduce them into the mortal world or only for mortal use. When Hermes steals Apollo's cattle in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, for instance, he transfers cattle from the property of the divine world to the human world: gods no longer get hungry for meat, only mortals do.[238] Trygaeus does a similar thing with Peace and her attendants. He takes them from Olympus (the divine realm) and introduces them into the human realm on earth. Since Hermes is

[236] Thibodeau 2013, 120.
[237] Sardello 1995, 119.
[238] Ibid.

"the god presiding over borders, making possible commerce between the divine and human"[239] he is essential for Trygaeus' transmitting of Peace back down to earth.

Peace's attendants, Harvest and Spectacle, also do not appear as goddesses anywhere else and are personifications of harvesting and theatre-going, activities only possible during peace. Trygaeus mimics Prometheus' role by taking Peace, Harvest, and Spectacle away from the realm of the gods and introducing them back into the realm of men. He himself marries Harvest[240] (706-8), and thus solidifies the union between mortals and Peace, the new divine ruler of mortals. Spectacle, on the other hand, is given to the council so that they could enjoy a break from planning (712-4; 871-2). Aristophanes includes the audience in his play as Trygaeus seems to lead the actor to the council members:[241] "I will lead and sit you myself in their midst" (882). Just as Pheidippides in *Clouds* brought Socrates' teachings to the outside world of the play, Trygaeus is introducing Peace and her attendants into the 'real-world'. The reality in the play is hoped to be the reality for all Greeks.

The cave that Peace is imprisoned is also problematic in terms of the spatial rendering of Olympus. When Hermes refers to the cave, it appears to be very close if not on the same plane as the home of the gods.[242] However, how can there be caves in the sky? It is therefore important to briefly look at this scene in conjunction with the physicality of Olympus and consideration of the real mountain in contrast to the abstract and invisible notion of Olympus as a symbol for heaven. If Aristophanes is playing off of the two notions of Mt. Olympus,[243] as the seat of the gods and

[239] Ibid., 121.
[240] Olson 1998, 212:"Tr[ygaeus], as a vintner (190), is appropriately wedded to *ὀπώρα*, the autumnal vintage."
[241] Henderson 1998, n59 p517 notes that "The 500 members of the Council enjoyed reserved seating in the theatre."
[242] MacDowell 1995, 185 brings up many questions on the scene where Trygaeus and the chorus retrieve Peace: "one is a problem of location: Trygaios is in heaven, which he reached only after a precarious flight, and yet when he calls for other people to help him they arrive at once without any suggestion of a long journey, as if the scene where on earth."
[243] See Sale 1972 for a discussion on the symbol of Olympus and the actual mountain in Greek thought.

as the actual mountain, the presence of a cave on a mountain would not be problematic.[244] Evidence for the actual mountain or a physical Olympus rather than imagined is apparent in terms of the physicality[245] of 'heaven' as described in the play. For example, Hermes had been left behind to guard the "utensils, pots, and jars" of the gods (200-3); the term αὐλάς or courtyards is used to describe the abode of Zeus (161); and when Trygaeus arrives at Olympus he notes the "house" (οἰκίαν) and "doors" (θύραισιν) of Zeus (178-9). But, when Hermes informs Trygaeus that "War has thrown her [Peace] into a deep cave" (223), he locates it spatially in reference to where he and Trygaeus are standing: "into that very one below" (224).

The cave from which Peace is emerged is qualified by τουτί "this cave here" by Hermes and therefore "implies that the cavern is within the same spatial circle and on the same plane as Hermes."[246] Peace cannot be located on earth, or there would be peace for the Greeks, so she has to be located somewhere in the sky. Olson also draws the connection between the cave in which Peace is imprisoned and the underworld, and her emergence parallels such escapes from the realm of Hades as that of Persephone.[247] While War was in charge, Peace was essentially dead. Trygaeus, then, assumes the role of the hero who brings her back to life. Although this problem may not be intended to have a solution, it does call into question whether Trygaeus actually reached Olympus as the heavens. Though beyond the scope of this thesis, it is interesting to

[244] See Morrison 1959 and his discussion on 'hollows' for potential explanations on the function/location of the cave.
[245] Sale 1972, 84: "Against all this is the obvious objection that the seat of the gods has certain objects in it, such as the divine homes and the gates of the Seasons, which are simply not to be seen in the sky. Nor, for that matter, are the gods themselves. Of course one can look up at the sky and *imagine* that the deities and their accoutrements are up there, only invisible. But if invisible, they are not natural; and if not natural, we have gone a long way towards admitting that it is not the physical sky that they dwell in." Sales seems to note that Olympus is a symbol, not a real place. The gods *cannot* be seen and so are they really there? Peace, however, *can* be seen and therefore she if very real and attainable.
[246] Russo 1994, 139.
[247] Olson 1998, xxxv-vi.

consider if peace was in fact on earth all along, very attainable and reachable, but just being ignored.

The Olympians' abandonment of Olympus changes the limits of mortal travel and enables Trygaeus to journey to their former home to free Peace. Since the traditional gods are gone, Trygaeus is able to do the impossible and becomes unique among the other mortals in the play. Where the distance between humans and the divine increases with the Olympian gods now at the highest point of the heaven, it is closed again when Trygaeus brings Peace, as a statue, back to earth. Since she is recognized as a goddess over the Olympian gods, their distance no longer matters. Instead it is the presence of Peace as a goddess and concept in the world. Olympus is also no longer a realm for the divine, but is now potentially open to mortals. Because Trygaeus successfully flew to Olympus and back, he gains new knowledge and perspectives and is treated differently by the other Greeks. He becomes closer to the divine himself as he resembles Hermes and even Prometheus in his ability to restore Peace out of the hands of the divine and into those of humans.

III. Peace and the Old Customs

With the reintroduction of peace into the world and establishment of Peace as the only goddess whom mortals should worship, the customs also change from those of war to those valued during a time of peace. Since peace is not a new concept, however, the customs are not new but rather a revitalization of the old ways. The customs of war seem to be associated with the 'new' rather than the 'old'. When Trygaeus returns peace to Greece, he essentially pushes out war and its customs but still faces consequences from this action. He brings about an economic shift through the change from producing war materials to farming implements. Violence, strife,

and war, despite the presence of peace, also show a persistence in the mortal realm and threaten another overturning of the restored peaceful customs. Though unrealistic, Trygaeus' marriage to Harvest at the end of the play portrays the hopeful expectation that peace, and the customs associated with it, will remain for the Greeks as they are returned to the old ways before the times of war.

Since the current state of Athens is that of war, the portrayal of War as the god is indicative of the customs of such a life. In this scene (226-288), War is making a salad consisting of Greek cities and is threatening to pound them together with mortar and pestle. War is a destructive, all-consuming force that is throwing Greece into confusion. War throws the various cities into the mortar which shows that no city is safe from the consequences of war. Trygaeus even notes that the mere sight of war is terrible (239), before he starts causing trouble. War, however, is unable to grind up the cities, a metaphor of active battles and thus the killing of soldiers, since he doesn't have a pestle (which is a metaphor for a general here). Both the pestles or generals of Athens (Cleon, 269-270)[248] and of Sparta (Brasidas, 282-4)[249] were lost or killed during battle. Athens, under the influence of Cleon is described as being in a state of fear (642) and unable to accept peace (665-679). The Greeks are held back from peace by their own people. War, here, is also portrayed as a kind of sickness that is infecting the minds of the Greeks since "people at war…lose their peacetime perspective of things…they become reduced to a thoroughly foul temper."[250] Without any leaders, though, Athens and Sparta are shown to be at a standstill – the prime opportunity for Trygaeus to retrieve Peace and bring her back to earth. The customs of war, therefore, are momentarily halted and consequently overthrown.

[248] Henderson 1998, n16 p461.
[249] Ibid., n18 p464.
[250] Reckford 1987, 11.

Peace, as the subject of the play, is given much more attention than War in respect to the customs she brings to humanity. She, as both the goddess and the concept of peace, is representative of the pleasures of life, farming, and a restoration of the old ways. Trygaeus utilizes Peace's smells as characteristic of the customs she incorporates: "[the smell] of her is of the harvest, entertainment, Dionysiac revels, / pipes, tragedies, songs of Sophocles, thrushes, / poetry of Euripides…and of many other good things" (530-7). That is, she smells of time free from war and devoted to agriculture, drinking, socializing, and festivals. Where war threw Greece into confusion and divided them, peace brings them back together as Hermes describes: "come now, look / how the cities talk to one another, / having been reconciled, and how they laugh gladly" (538-540). Such a statement is in contrast to War's mortar and pestle and the influence of Cleon on the Athenians.

The reintroduction of peace also calls back to the old days that the chorus longs for. The chorus consists of old farmers who remember the old days of peace and lament the current state of war: "I laugh / more at fleeing the shield than giving up my old age" (335-6). Once Peace is pulled out of the cave, the farmers then rejoice that they can return to the fields that they left behind from their childhood (556-9). It seems the entire prospect of farming and agriculture was non-existent when War ruled and only reemerges with peace and the farmers returning back to earth. Trygaeus urges the chorus to remember the ways of old and to thank Peace that they can now farm again (571-581). Peace also seems to have a concern that things may have changed (which they have) while she was gone. She has Hermes ask Trygaeus about "the old things which she left behind" (694). Her customs and objects associated with peace had been overturned due to war and she must now restore them, with the help of Trygaeus. Unlike *Birds* and *Clouds*, Trygaeus doesn't enact a new set of customs that border the violent. Instead he

advocates for the old ways since Peace, as it is argued, is the way of the ancestors and a better reality than that of war.

Peace's return to the realm of mortals, however, does not come without conflict and consequences of overturning the customs of war. There is also a strong persistence of violence, strife, and war itself which threaten to overturn again the establishment of peace back to the old reality (much as when Strepsiades burns down Socrates' school in *Clouds,* and Cloud-cuckoo-land becomes another new Athens in *Birds*). Bringing peace back to Greece is not shown as an easy feat. The scene of pulling Peace out of the cave (464-516) is portrayed as a mini-Peloponnesian War. Representatives of various cities appear on Olympus to help retrieve Peace, and Trygaeus needs them to work together to haul her out. However, as he notes, some are pulling one way while others are pulling another (491-2) instead of together.[251] There are also constant complaints about some cities not helping or getting angry with others, and so they continually face strife as they attempt to overcome it. Only the farmers, working by themselves, are able to finally free her (508; 511). The chorus is never said to be a single nationality but rather are representative of the general working class, for whom war is particularly destructive, as well as peace itself. Hermes notes, for instance:

> "And they [the Spartans], who are greedy of gain and treacherous, / having thrown her [Peace] away shamefully seized upon War; / and then their profit was an evil for the farmers; / for then the triremes again taking vengeance there / would devour the fig-branches of men not at all to blame" (623-7).

[251] MacDowell 1995, 185: "What is important in this scene is the co-operative effort. He wants to convey to his audience that the recovery of peace is possible only if people pull together, not if they oppose and obstruct one another. This theme differs from the theme of the earlier part of the play. Previously Trygaios was, in comic form, the bold hero setting out on a lone quest, but in this scene everyone is being urged to join in."

Since the farmers have no say in the war, they and their fields are only victims of the strife. Aristophanes feels that they had suffered the most from war.[252] They are also called 'blameless' and therefore are the only ones deemed worthy to free Peace and restore her to mortals.

Peace's presence on earth has a direct consequence for the economics of Greece. She not only restores agriculture and farming, but also threatens the stability of occupations that thrive in times of war. Again, Aristophanes refers to the reality of the audience when he describes various occupations and their reactions to the possibility of the return of peace:

> *Hermes:* "And look now at the faces / of the spectators, so that you can recognize their skills." *Trygaeus:* "No, that's wretched." / *Herm.* "That man there, do you see the crest-maker / pulling out his hair?" *Try.*: "And here the one who makes hoes / just farted at the sword-maker." / *Herm.*: "And don't you see how the sickle-maker rejoices?" / *Try.*: "And he jeered at the lance-maker." (543-9).

The workers who originally made weapons for war no longer have any purpose during peace-time and therefore are mocked and upset whereas the farmers and tool-makers rejoice.[253] Trygaeus faces this issue in person when he is visited by a sickle-maker and arms dealer, among others. The sickle-maker praises Trygaeus for helping his business (1198-1206) since farmers once again can till their fields and therefore need his tools. Much as he faced opposition from Hierocles, though, Trygaeus is blamed for bringing back peace by the arms dealer. He and others who make weapons of war now have their businesses ruined (1210-13). Instead of putting them completely out of business, Trygaeus shows how they can repurpose their wares to coincide with peace. Spears now can become staffs to hold grape vines (1262-3). Trygaeus tries to convey that peace, unlike war, does not have to be disruptive, but rather it is unifying and beneficial to

[252] Platnauer 1964, 114.
[253] MacDowell 1995, 196-7: "Is this the starting-point for some moralizing about how even the best policies do harm to someone? Not at all. Trygaios (and Aristophanes) shows no sympathy for the armourers, and mocks their products by suggesting new uses from them…The Audience is not encouraged to feel sorry for these men who have lost their livelihood. They ought to make their living in other ways."

everyone. The arms dealer, however, refuses to conform to this new reality and adapt his wares showing that the customs of peace and war cannot coexist, they must remain separate.

The persistence of war is most clearly shown when Trygaeus has two boys sing to him, but instead of songs of peace, they sing songs of war. Since the boys are of the new generation (the younger), they have only known war in contrast to Trygaeus and the chorus who have been exposed to both war and peace. During this exchange between Trygaeus and the boy, Trygaeus emphasizes the need for peace, Hesiodic themes, whereas the boy continues to focus on war, Homeric themes.[254] The first boy sings about "younger men" (1270), shields (1274), and "the lamentation and boasting of men" (1276) at war, all of which Trygaeus attempts to stop him from singing. Even when Trygaeus does succeed for a time in getting the boy to sing of bees and wine, the boy finishes (in a comedic resolution) once again with a reference to war (1287). Even though Trygaeus tries to change the habits of the boy, the idea of war is shown to be difficult to drive away completely. This inability to expel war entirely also appears in the episode with Hierocles. He gives a series of impossibilities that will happen before all of Greece unites together in peace (1080ff). Though humans may enjoy the customs of peace, it may only be short lived. Since the actual goddess is not really on earth, rather she is just a statue, War can take over once more. His attendant, Uproar, is even able to move freely between Olympus and earth, like Hermes, as shown when he is sent to retrieve the pestles from Athens and Sparta.

Trygaeus' wedding to Harvest, however, solidifies her presence on earth and the customs associated with her. The handing over of Spectacle to the council as well brings such customs to humanity once more. Trygaeus helps in integrating the attendants of Peace into the realm of

[254] Teló 2013, 130: At the end of *Peace*, a "contest between the old comic hero Trygaeus, relishing the joys of future peace, and a boy reveling in nostalgic fantasies of martial turmoil" is shown. "This peace-war opposition operates as the ideological clothing of an inter-poetic match casting Trygaeus and the war-addicted boy in the roles of Hesiod and Homer respectively."

mortals. Both the attendants represent customs that have been lost during the war. Harvest restored to the farmers their vines which Spartan soldiers had cut down, and Spectacle allowed festivals to once again be held since it was difficult to assemble Greeks during a time of war.[255] Trygaeus' end song not only describes his unity to Harvest, but emphasizes the inclusion of all of Greece in her benefits and customs. They will once again have grain, wine, children, and general happiness (1321-8). The uniting of Harvest, Spectacle, and Peace with mortals is very reminiscent of Hesiod as well with his discussion on agriculture and connection to the gods through ritual and festival.

Through his reintroduction of Peace and the customs that accompany her, Trygaeus overthrows the reality and customs of war and restores the old ways praised by the chorus. He does not advocate for a world free from work, but, similar to Hesiod, one in which farmers flourish and people are prosperous because of their hard work. War is shown to be unproductive and destructive of agriculture, the most basic and traditional custom for mortals. Aristophanes parallels war with the 'new' and peace with the 'old' and shows the overturning and supremacy of the customs of the ancestors. However, the new reality is threatened still by the influences of war, violence and dissention. Trygaeus' establishment of Peace is not entirely accepted by those who are unwilling to discount the Olympian gods and war. The presence of Peace in the realm of mortals brings back both agriculture and leisure, both of which society lost while at war.

Conclusion

The establishment of peace and the reintroduction of the customs of the time before Greece was at war is only possible when Trygaeus frees her from a cave on Olympus,

[255] MacDowell 1995, 193-4.

overthrows War and the Olympian gods, and reinstates Peace as the goddess for mortals on earth. Trygaeus single-handedly changes the reality of his world through changing the gods, boundaries between mortals and divine, and the customs of the world. He proves to be more successful than Peisetaerus in *Birds* since his new order is not overthrown and more knowledgeable than Socrates in *Clouds* since he actually visits Olympus. Though he seeks help from Hermes, he doesn't actually need divine assistance and is representative of a true sophist. His questioning of the Olympian gods, and their physical absence from the lives of mortals, enables him to fly to Olympus and retrieve a new, better, and more present goddess for society – Peace. Since she is brought back to earth, mortals have a goddess that will no longer abandon them and therefore Aristophanes suggests peace can be everlasting. The opposition Trygaeus faces, however, shows the impossibility of eternal peace since there will always be strife and dissention. Nevertheless, *Peace* shows the ability of one man to have a positive impact on his world and bring about a new era for the benefit of all the Greeks.

CONCLUSION

In the plays discussed above, Aristophanes shows realities in which humans are not limited by the boundaries of the traditional world. The creation of a new order of gods or a new theogony enables the characters in the plays to travel and experience realms that they could not under the Olympian gods. Peisetaerus' colonization of the sky in *Birds* and Trygaeus' ascension to Olympus in *Peace* show that mortals are not bounded by the earth. In a slightly different way, Socrates in *Clouds* also gains access to divine knowledge through his ability to merge with the middle-air, the residence of his gods the Clouds. The characters in these plays show the capability of changing their world in order to bring about the customs that they need to solve their problems – they do not always need the help of the gods, but can rely on their own, human abilities and innovations.

Since Aristophanes was writing during the Peloponnesian War, the tensions of contemporary Athens are prevalent in his plays. He comments frequently on generals and statesmen, such as Cleon and Alcibiades, and includes concerns about the rise of rhetoric for one's personal gain in his plays. Figures like Alcibiades and Nicias show the potential consequences of rhetoric which can be used to persuade and deceive for the benefit of the individual rather than the whole community. Such a concern is most prominent in *Birds* through Peisetaerus' persuasion of the birds to be the new rulers of gods and men and create a new city. Socrates and his school also represent the threat of this new trend overthrowing traditional

Athenian values and promoting unwelcome customs. *Peace*, however, seems to offer more hope since Trygaeus does bring peace to the land and eliminate war.

Aristophanes' reinvention of the gods and world through new theogonies and cosmographies earns him a place in the tradition of cosmologists. Though we only have a sample of his plays, fragments and references in other authors support that he may have written more plays than just *Birds, Clouds,* and *Peace* that offered a new reality. For example, a fragment from Aristophanes' Ὧραι (*Seasons*) mentions the god Sabazius (τὸν φρύγα, τὸν αὐλητῆρα, τὸν Σαβάζιον, fr. 578), and it was thought that the play involved a trial in which Sabazius and other foreign gods were judged and thrown out of Athens.[256] The testimonia on the play suggests that Aristophanes again questions the gods and brings in new, foreign gods as a potential replacement. Though they seem to be refused in Athens, the fact that there is a trial could suggest some characters may have supported Sabazius over the Olympians. It may be significant also that in Plato's *Symposium,* Aristophanes gives his own rendition on how humans came to be (189c-193d) during their discourse on Eros. Aristophanes seems to have known his place among other comic writers and that he was original in the way in which he combined fantasy and reality,[257] and based on *Birds, Clouds,* and *Peace,* it is evident that he took influence from non-comic authors to do so.

Aristophanes was also not alone in his questioning of the gods. Euripides, in particular, was well known for his characters rivalling the gods and in the *Sisyphus* fragment (415 BCE) he raises the notion that men created fear of the gods to keep the laws upheld.[258] Many other of

[256] Kassel and Austin 1983, 296: *novos vero deos et in his colendis nocturnas pervigilationes sic Aristophanes, facetissimus poeta veteris comoediae, vexat, ut apud eum Sabazius et quidam alii dei peregrini iudicati e civitate eiciantur* (test. ii Cic. leg. II 37).
[257] Moulton 1996, 216.
[258] Kahn 1997, 247.

Euripides' place, such as *Bellerophon* (discussed above), the *Bacchae*, and *Iphigenia Among the Taurians*, to name a few, question the gods. The *Sisyphus* fragment, though is important since, as Kahn comments,

> "the *Sisyphus* fragment happens to be the earliest surviving text to describe the transition from a natural "beastly" state to life in human society. Now in this text the invention of the gods in the second stage in the movement from natural to culture. The first moment is the establishment of laws (nomoi) to punish those who do wrong…or are guilty of hubris."[259]

Though the *Sisyphus* fragment shows the laws coming before the view of the gods, it still shows the link between a society's gods and customs.

Based on the plays of Aristophanes considered in this thesis, the characters seem to take inspiration from contemporary Athenian or Greek ideas on the human ability over the divine. The gods no longer seem sufficient to solve human problems and meet their needs. Instead, the characters look to their own abilities to bring about a change for the better in their lives. In particular, they use rhetoric to deceive and persuade others in order to change their reality. Though a point of controversy, I am incline to support MacDowell's reading of Aristophanes in which he believes there are moments, often through the voice of the chorus, where Aristophanes "is not just trying to make the Athenians laugh, but is making some serious point which is intended to influence them."[260] Through the actions of Peisetaerus, Strepsiades and Socrates, and Trygaeus, Aristophanes shows that human limitations are not actually bounded by the gods – as humans, we are capable of so much more.

[259] Ibid., 259.
[260] MacDowell 1995, 5-6.

REFERENCES

Adkins, A.W.H. *Moral Values and Political Behavior in Ancient Greece: From Homer to the end of the Fifth Century*. Chatto and Windus, London. 1972.

Adkins, A.W.H. "Cosmogony and Order in Ancient Greece" in *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics*, edited by Robin W. Lovin and Frank E. Reynolds. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL. 1985. pp. 39-66.

Adkins, A.W.H. "Ethics and the Breakdown of Cosmogony in Ancient Greece" in *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics*, edited by Robin W. Lovin and Frank E. Reynolds. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL. 1985. pp. 279-309.

Alford, C. Fred. "Greek Tragedy and Civilization: The Cultivation of Pity." *Political Research Quarterly.* Vol. 46, No. 2, 1993. pp. 259-280.

Alkman, *Fragments* in *Greek Lyric Poetry: A Selection of Early Greek Lyric, Elegiac and Iambic Poetry*, edited by David A. Campbell. Bristol Classical Press, London. 2003.

Anderson, Carl and T. Keith Dix. "Prometheus and the Basileia in Aristophanes' Birds." *The Classical Journal*. Vol. 1-2, No.4, 2007. pp. 321-327.

Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, edited by Jeffrey Henderson. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 1998.

Aristophanes, *Birds*, edited by Jeffrey Henderson. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2000.

Aristophanes, *Clouds*, edited by Jeffrey Henderson. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

1998.

Aristophanes, *Peace*, edited by Jeffrey Henderson. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 1998.

Austin, Colin. *Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta in Papyris Reperta*. Walter de Gruyter et Socios, Berlin, Germany. 1973.

Beasely-Murray, Tim. *Mikhail Bakhtin and Walter Benjamin: Experience and Form*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY. 2007.

Brague, Rémi. "Dans Quelle Mesure Peut-On Parler D'Une Cosmologie Dans L'Antiquité?" in *Cosmologies et Cosmogonies Dans la Littérature Antique*, édité par Pascale Derron. Foundation Hardt, Genevé, Switzerland. 2015.

Burkert, Walter. "The Logic of Cosmogony" in *From Myth to Reason? Studies in the Development of Greek Thought*, edited by Richard Buxton. Oxford University Press, New York, NY. 1999.

Collard, C. and Martin Cropp, editors. *Euripides: Fragments*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2008.

Craik, Elizabeth M. "Sophokles and the Sophists." *L'Antiquitē Classique*. T.49, 1980. pp. 247-254.

Dobrov, Gregory W., "The Poet's Voice in the Evolution of Dramatic Dialogism" in *Beyond Aristophanes: Transition and Diversity in Greek Comedy*, edited by Gregory W. Dobrov. Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA. 1995. pp. 47-98.

Dover, K.J., editor. *Aristophanes: Clouds*. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 2003.

Dunbar, Nan, editor. *Aristophanes Birds.* Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1995.

Edmonds III, Radcliffe, G. "To Sit in Solemn Silence? "Thronosis" in Ritual, Myth and

Iconography." *The American Journal of Philology*. Vol. 127, No.3, 2006. pp. 347-366.

Euripides, *Bellerophon*, edited by Christopher Collard and Martin Cropp. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2008.

Euripides, *Hecuba*, edited by David Kovacs. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2005.

Fisher, N.R.E. "'Hybris' and Dishonour: I." *Greece and Rome*. Vol.23, No.2, 1976. pp. 177-193.

Freydberg, Bernard. *Philosophy and Comedy: Aristophanes, Logos, and Eros*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN. 2008.

Funghi, Maria Serena. "The Derveni Papyrus" in *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, edited by Adré Laks and Glenn W. Most. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1997.

Garland, Robert. *Introducing New Gods: The Politics of Athenian Religion*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. 1992.

Greene, Elizabeth S. "Revising Illegitimacy: The Use of Epithets in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes." *The Classical Quarterly*. New Series, Vol. 55, No. 2, 2005. pp. 343-349.

Griffith, R. Drew. "Corporality in the Ancient Greek Theatre." *Phoenix*. Vol. 52, No ¾, 1998. pp. 230-256.

Hall, Edith. *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1989.

Hall, Edith. "The Aesopic in Aristophanes" in *Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres*, edited by E. Bakola, L. Prauscello and M. Teló. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. 2013. pp. 277-297.

Halliwell, Stephen. "Greek Laughter and the Problem of the Absurd." *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*. Third Series, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2005. pp. 121-146.

Halliwell, Stephen. *Greek Laughter: A Study in Cultural Psychology from Homer to Early*

Christianity. Cambridge, NY. 2008.

Henderson, Jeffrey, editor and translator. *Aristophanes: Birds, Lysistrata, Women at the Thesmophoria.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2000.

Henderson, Jeffrey, editor and translator, *Aristophanes: Clouds, Wasps, Peace*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 1998.

Herodotus, *Histories*, edited by. G.P. Goold. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 1981.

Hesiod, *Theogony*, edited by Glenn W. Most. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2006.

Hesiod, *Works and Days*. Edited by Glenn W. Most. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2006.

Jameson, Michael H. *Cults and Rites in Ancient Greece: Essays on Religion and Society*, edited by Allaire B. Stallsmith. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 2014.

Kahn, Charles, H. "Greek Religion and Philosophy in the Sisyphus Fragment." *Phronesis*. Vol. 42, No. 3, 1997. pp. 247-262.

Kassel, R. and Austin, C., editors. *Poetae Comici Graeci*. Vol. III 2 Aristophanes. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, Germany. 1983.

Keller, Mara Lynn. "The Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone: Fertility, Sexuality, and Rebirth." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*. Vol. 4, No.1, 1988. pp. 27-54.

Kotini, Vassiliki. "Aristophanes' Response to the Peloponnesian War and the Defeat of the Comic Hero." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*. No. 30, Trauma and Memory, 2010. pp. 134-149.

Kurke, Leslie. *Aesopic Conversations: Popular Tradition, Cultural Dialogue and the Invention of Greek Prose*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 2011.

Laks, André and Glenn W. Most, translators and editors. *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*.

Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1997.

Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1968.

Llyod-Jones, Hugh. *The Justice of Zeus.* University of California Press, Berkeley, CA. 1973.

MacDowell, Douglas M. "'Hybris' in Athens." *Greece and Rome*. Vol.23, No.1, 1976. pp. 14-31.

MacDowell, Douglas M. *Aristophanes and Athens: An Introduction to the Plays*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1995.

Maddocks, Melvin. "Comedy and War." *The Sewanee Review*. Vol. 112, No.1, 2004. pp. 22-34.

Major, Wilfred E. *The Court of Comedy. Aristophanes, Rhetoric, and Democracy in Fifth-Century Athens*. The Ohio State University Press, Columbus, OH. 2013.

Mansfield, Jaap. "Theology" in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, edited by Keimpe Algra, et. al. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. 1999. pp. 452-478.

Marianetti, Marie C. *Religion and Politics in Aristophanes'* Clouds. Olms-Weidmann, New York, NY. 1992.

Martin, Richard P. "The Seven Sages as Performers of Wisdom" in *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics*, edited by Carol Dougherty and Leslie Kurke. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. 1993. pp. 108-128.

Moulton, Carroll. "Comic Myth-Making and Aristophanes' Originality" in *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes*, edited by Erich Segal. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1996. pp. 216-228.

Morrison, J.S. "The Shape of the Earth in Plato's 'Phaedo'." *Phronesis*. Vol. 4, No. 2, 1959. pp. 101-119.

Nesselrath, Heinz-Günter. “Myth, Parody and Comic Plots: The Birth of Gods and Middle Comedy” in B*eyond Aristophanes: Transition and Diversity in Greek Comedy*, edited by Gregory W. Dobrov. Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA. 1995. pp. 1-28.

Newiger, Hans-Joachim. “War and Peace in the Comedy of Aristophanes” in *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes*, edited by Erich Segal. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1996. pp. 143-161.

O’Regan, Daphne Elizabeth. *Rhetoric, Comedy, and the Violence of Language in Aristophanes’* Clouds. Oxford University Press, New York, NY. 1992.

Olson, S. Douglas, editor. *Aristophanes Peace*. Clarendon Press, New York, NY. 1998.

Platnauer, Maurice, editor. *Aristophanes Peace*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, London. 1964.

Plato, *Republic*, edited by Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2013.

Plato, *Symposium*, edited by Jeffrey Henderson. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 1925.

Platter, Charles. *Aristophanes and the Carnival of Genres*. The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD. 2007.

Prauscella, Lucia. “Comedy and Comic discourse in Plato’s Laws” in *Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres*, edited by E. Bakola, L. Prauscello and M. Teló. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. 2013. pp. 319-342.

Purves, Alex C. *Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. 2010.

Rayner, Louisa. “Kitchen Problems in Ancient Greece.” *The South African Archaeological Bulletin*. Vol. 11, No. 44, 1956. pp. 108-110.

Reckford, Kenneth J. *Aristophanes' Old-and-New Comedy*. North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC. 1987.

Romer, F.E. "Atheism, Impiety, and the Limos Melios in Aristophanes' *Birds*." *The American Journal of Philology*. Vol. 115, No. 3, 1994. pp. 351-365.

Romm, James S. *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration and Fiction*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 1992.

Rowe, Christopher. *An Introduction to Greek Ethics*. Harner and Row Publishers Inc., New York, NY. 1977.

Russo, Carlo Ferdinando. *Aristophanes: An Author for the Stage*. Routledge, New York, NY. 1994.

Rusten, Jeffrey, editor and translator. *The Birth of Comedy: Texts, Documents, and Art from Athenian Comic Competitions, 486-280*. The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD. 2011.

Rusten, Jeffrey. "The Mirror of Aristophanes: The Winged Ethnographers of *Birds* (1470-93, 1553-64, 1694-1705)" in *Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres*, edited by E. Bakola, L. Prauscello and M. Teló. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. 2013. pp. 298-318.

Sale, William. "The Olympian Faith." *Greece & Rome*. Vol. 19, No. 1, 1972. pp. 81-93.

Sardello, Robert. "Some New Aspects of Hermes" in *The Olympians: Ancient Deities as Archetypes*, edited by Joanne H. Stroud. Continuum Publishing Company, New York, NY. 1995. pp. 117-124.

Silk, M.S. *Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, London. 2000.

Solomos, Alexis. *The Living Aristophanes*. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MD. 1974.

Sophocles, *Antigone,* edited by Hugh Lloyd-Jones. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2002.

Starr, Chester G. "The Decline of Early Greek Kings." *Historia: ZAG,* Bd. 10, H.2, 1961. pp. 129-138.

Strauss, Leo. *Socrates and Aristophanes*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL. 1980.

Sutton, Dana F. *Ancient Comedy: The War of the Generations*. Twayne Publishers, New York, NY. 1993.

Teló, Mario. "Epic, *nostos* and Generic Genealogy in Aristophanes' *Peace*" in *Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres,* edited by E. Bakola, L. Prauscello and M. Teló. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. 2013. pp. 129-152.

Thibodeau, Martin. *Hegel and Greek Tragedy*. Translated by Hans-Jakob Wilhelm. Lexington Books, Lanham, MD. 2013.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* edited by Jeffrey Henderson. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2006.

White, Michael J. "Concepts of Space in Greek Thought." *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science*. Vol. 29, No. 2, 1996. pp. 183-198.