Contents

Translators’ Note 7

Introduction 9
- The Modern Rejection of Reason
- The Socratic Alternative
- Plato’s Euthyphro
- Plato’s Apology of Socrates
- Plato’s Crito
- Aristophanes’ Clouds
- Plato’s Euthyphro 41
- Plato’s Apology of Socrates 63
- Plato’s Crito 99
- Aristophanes’ Clouds 115
- Selected Bibliography 177
whom they should least be done—you yourself and friends and father-land and us—then we will be angry with you while you live, and our brothers, the laws in Hades, will not receive you favorably there, knowing that you even attempted to destroy us as far as it lay in you. But let not Crito persuade you to do what he says rather than what we say."

Know well, my dear comrade Crito, that these things are what I seem to hear, just as the Corybantes seem to hear the flutes,27 and this echo of these speeches is booming within me and makes me unable to hear the others. Know that insofar as these things seem so to me now, if you speak against them, you will speak in vain. Nevertheless, if you suppose that you will accomplish anything, speak.

CRITO. But, Socrates, I have nothing to say.

SOCRATES. Then let it go, Crito, and let us act in this way, since in this way the god is leading.

28In connection with worship of the goddess Cybele a rite was developed to cure nervousness and hysteria by means of dancing to frenzied music played on the flute and kettledrum. Participants in this psychiatric exercise were called Corybantes. The present passage suggests that the music echoes, probably with a calming effect, in the memory of those who have undergone the cure.

Aristophanes' Clouds

Characters of the Drama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strepsiades</th>
<th>Creditor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pheidippides</td>
<td>Second Creditor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave of Strepsiades</td>
<td>Second Student of Socrates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student of Socrates</td>
<td>Hermes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socrates</td>
<td>Witness (non-speaking part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus of Clouds</td>
<td>Xanthias, Slave of Strepsiades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Speech</td>
<td>(non-speaking part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unjust Speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[For the opening scene of the play, one side of the stage represents a bedroom of Strepsiades' house. Two or three statues of gods are visible. Strepsiades and his son Pheidippides are in their beds. At stage center, toward the back, a small, unkempt dwelling can be seen: Socrates' "thinkery." The time is night, just before dawn.]

STREPSIADES [sitting up in bed]. Oh! Oh! O Zeus the King, how long the nights are! Boundless! Will day never come?

I heard the cock long ago,

but the servants are still snoring. They wouldn't have before. Perish, then, O war, because among many other things, now I can't even punish my servants!28

1 All stage directions and other remarks in brackets are by the translators. The Greek text contains nothing but designations of the respective speakers and the words spoken by them. This prose translation makes no attempt to imitate Aristophanes' poetic meter. However, the translation has been divided into distinct lines that correspond as closely as feasible to the lines of the Greek text.

2 During the Peloponnesian war between Athens and Sparta (431–404 B.C.), when the Athenian territory of Attica outside the city walls was frequently occupied by the enemy, slaves were easily able to desert to the other side.
Strep. My dear, you've rolled me out of my belongings, now that I've been losing lawsuits and now that others are saying they'll have my property seized for the interest.

Phed. [Now awake]. Really, father! Why are you upset? And why do you twist and turn the whole night?

Strep. Some sort of public official is biting me from the bedclothes.

Phed. Let me have a little sleep, you daimonic man.

[Go back to sleep.]

Strep. All right, sleep! But know that these debts will fall, all of them, on your head.

Oh, would that the matchmaker might perish evily, she who stirred me up to marry your mother!

Mine was a rustic life, most pleasant:
squalid, unswept, lying down at random,
leering at bees and sheep and olive-cakes.
Then I married a niece of Megacles the son of Megacles.
I was a rustic, she from the town:
clumsy, luxurious, aristocratic.

When I married her, I lay down together with her,
I smelling of new wine, fig crates, wool, abundance,
she in turn of perfume, saffron, kisses with the tongue,
expenses, gluttony, Colias, Genetyllis.

But I certainly won't say she was idle; she did weave.
And I would show her this cloak as an occasion and say, “Woman, you weave too closely.”

[The lamp goes out.]

—Twist and turn” translates the verb strepho, from which Strepsiades’ name is formed. Other occurrences of “twisting” or “turning” (the word can also mean “cheating”) are found at lines 88, 335, 434, 450, 554, 776, 792, 1455.

—As an address, “daimonic” usually conveys a sense of ironic reproach. A daimon may be an offspring of divine and human parents, or, as sometimes in this play and elsewhere in Greek poetry, a god may be called a “daimon.” On the daimonic, see Apology n. 37.

—Megacles (“famed for greatness”) is a grand, aristocratic-sounding name that belonged to several members of the venerable Alcmeonid family. There was a wealthy Megacles of this family living in Athens when the Clouds was produced.

—“Aristocratic” translates a word meaning, literally, “cosyfied.” Coisyra is the name of a real or legendary aristocratic woman of the sort described here, probably the mother of Megacles, which would make her the grandmother of Strepsiades’ wife.

—Colias is the name of an Athenian temple for Aphrodite, goddess of love; Genetyllis is a minor love-goddess who is associated with Aphrodite Colias.

—“Weave” (spathan) is literally “pick down the wool with the blade.” When the thread is packed too tightly, it is wasted. Thus the expression “weave too closely” means “be extravagant,” “waste money.” We may guess that the cloak that Strepsiades holds up is old, thin, and perhaps full of holes.
There. What is it?

STREP. Tell me, do you love me?

PHED. [stands up, gesturing toward a statue of the god]. Yes, by this Poseidon of horses!

STREP. Please, not by this god of horses, in no way!

For he is responsible for my evils.

But if you really love me from the heart,

my boy, obey. 19

PHED. What should I obey you in?

STREP. Turn your own ways inside out as quickly as possible: go and learn what I will advise.

PHED. Speak, what do you bid me?

STREP. And will you obey at all?

PHED. I will obey, by Dionysus. 20

STREP. [pointing to the house at the back of the stage, which is now fully visible in the growing light of dawn]. Look over here, now.

Do you see that little door and little house?

PHED. I see them. So really, what is it, father?

STREP. That is a thimble of wise souls. 21

In there dwell men who by speaking

persuade one that the heaven is a stove

and that it is around us, and we are charcoals. 22

If someone gives them money, they teach him

how to win both just and unjust causes by speaking.

PHED. Who are they?

---

13The Greek word for "obey" (peithō) is the passive of the word "persuade," and may also mean "be persuaded." See also line 119.

20As the god of banquets and of the vine, Dionysus is a compromise between the horseman's Poseidon (69) and the farmer's Demeter (121) (Leo Strauss, Socrates and Aristophanes [New York: Basic Books, 1966], pp. 13).

21"Thimblery" is phrontisterion, coined by Aristophanes on the model of such words as dikasterion ("law court," from dikē, "justice"). "Think-tank" is an alternate translation. Words with this phron- root occur frequently in the Clouds, and they are translated consistently with "think" or "thought" although they also convey the sense of "worry." See Apology n. 8. "Soul" (pouētēs), in popular usage, may also mean "ghost."

22The Socrates of this play holds the doctrine that Strepsias attributes to him, he may have learned that heaven is like a stove (pvigeus, a dome-shaped oven for baking bread) from the minor philosopher Hippon (so says a medieval scholium or explanatory note in one of the manuscripts) or from the astronomer Meton (Aristophanes, Birds 1001). The philosopher Heraclitus compared men to charcoal(s in the following way: just as charcoal(s glow when filled with fire and turn black when the fire is withdrawn, so we partake of "the common and divine logos" when the things surrounding us come into our mind through the passages of the senses—less when asleep, more when awake. (Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker [16th ed.], Dublin: Weidmann, 1972), A16.)
I don’t know their names precisely. Pondering thinkers—noble and good men.  

**Pheid.** Ugh! Villains, I know. They’re boasters, pale, shoeless men that you’re speaking of, and among them that miserably unhappy Socrates and Chaerophon.

**Strep.** Now, now, be silent. Don’t say anything foolish. But if you have any concern for your father’s barley, give up your horsemanship and for my sake become one of them.

**Pheid.** I wouldn’t, by Dionysus, not even if you gave me the pheasants that Leogoras is raising.

**Strep.** Go, I beseech you, dearest of human beings to me, go and be taught.

**Pheid.** And what shall I learn for you?

**Strep.** It’s said that they have two speeches, the stronger, whatever it may be, and the weaker. One of these speeches, the weaker, wins, they say, although it speaks the more unjust things.

So if you learn this unjust speech for me, I wouldn’t give anyone back even an obol of those debts that I owe because of you.

**Pheid.** I won’t obey, for I wouldn’t dare to see the horsemen after I’ve lost my complexion.

**Strep.** Then by Demeter, you won’t eat of my belongings, not you yourself, not your chariot horse, and not your thoroughbred!

I’ll drive you out of my house to the crows! But my uncle Megacles won’t let me go horseless!

I’m going inside, and I won’t give any thought to you!

[Exit Pheidippides into the interior of the house.]

**Strep.** But neither will I stay down, even if I have taken a fall. After I pray to these gods here, I will be taught. I’ll go into the thinkery myself.

[He sets off towards the thinkery, but along the way he hesitates.]

Now how, since I am an old man, forgetful and slow, am I going to learn the splinters of precise speeches? [Pauses.] One must go. [Starts again, then stops before the door.]

Why do I keep hanging back like this and not knock on the door? [Knocks.] Boy! Little boy! [within.]

Throw yourself to the crows! Who is it that knocked on the door?

**Strep.** Strepsias the son of Pheidon, from Cicynna.

**Student [opening the door].** Unlearned too, by Zeus, for you’ve kicked the door so very unponderingly that you’ve made a thought I had discovered miscarry.

**Strep.** Forgive me, for I dwell far off in the country. But tell me the matter that’s miscarried.

**Student.** It’s not sanctioned to say, except to the students.

**Strep.** Be bold and tell me now. For I’ve come here to the thinkery as a student.

**Student.** I’ll tell you, but you must believe these things are Mysteries.

Just now Socrates was asking Chaerophon how many of its own feet a flea could leap.

For after biting Chaerophon on the eyebrow, it jumped onto Socrates’ head.

**Strep.** How did he measure it?

**Student.** Most shrewdly.

He melted some wax, then took the flea and dipped two of its feet into the wax; as it cooled, Persian slippers grew around them. He took these off and was measuring the space.

**Strep.** O Zeus the King, what subtlety of the wits!

**Student.** What, then, if you should find out another thought of Socrates?

**Strep.** What? I beseech you, tell me.

32Expecting a slave to answer, Strepsias calls out “boy” in the usual Greek manner. But the Socratics, who have to steal their dinner if they are to eat at all (175–179), are too poor to keep slaves.

33Cicynna is the name of the daim or neighborhood division of Attica where Strepsias was born. (Sphettos, line 156, is the name of another daim.) Strepsias introduces himself as though reporting to the authorities.

34Mysteries are religious rites, knowledge of which was permitted only to initiates. In the Platonic dialogues Socrates frequently applies the language of Mystery-initiation to philosophy; e.g., Symposium 203e–212a, Phaedrus 250c–d.

35Persian slippers (literally, “Persians”) are a kind of female footwear.
STUDENT. Chaerephon from Sphetos was asking him which notion he held: do gnats hum through their mouth or through their behind?

STREP. What, then, did he say about the gnat?

STUDENT. He declared that the gnat’s intestine is narrow, and because it is slender, the breath goes violently straight to its behind. There the anus, hollow where it lies near the narrow part, resounds from the violence of the wind.

STREP. Then the gnats’ anus is a trumpet.

Q thrice-blessed for intestinal insight!

How easily would a defendant escape the penalty if he thoroughly knew the intestine of the gnat!

STUDENT. But lately he was robbed of a great notion by a lizard.

STREP. In what way? Tell me.

STUDENT. As he was investigating the courses and revolutions of the moon and was gaping upwards, a lizard (it was right) crapped on him from the roof.

STREP. [laughing].

I’m pleased by a lizard crapping on Socrates.

STUDENT. Yesterday evening we had no dinner.

STREP. Well, well. Then how did he contrive for barley?

STUDENT. He sprinkled fine ash on the table, bent a meat-slit, then taking it as a compass he made away with the cloak from the wrestling school.

STREP. Why then do we wonder at Thales?

STUDENT. It’s his wonder.

Open up, open up the thinkery, hurry, and show me Socrates as quickly as possible, for I’m going to be a student! Open up the door!

[The student opens the doors, revealing the courtyard of the house, where the students are discovered in various odd poses.]

Heracles! Where do these beasts come from?

STUDENT. Why do you wonder? What do they seem like to you?
Aristophanes’ Clouds

pulls to itself the moisture from the thought. The same thing happens also to water cress.  

STREP. What are you saying?  

SOC. I am plundered, I am pillaged by interest and most peevish creditors; my property is being seized for debts.  

STREP. I wish to learn to be a speaker.  

STUDENT. Truly, this is the area of Attica.  

SOC. [descends and gets out of the basket]. Where is it? Here.  

STUDENT. And where are my fellow demesmen of Cicyenna?  

SOC. [To the student.] Come, you shout to him loudly for me.  

STUDENT. You call him yourself. I haven’t the leisure. [Exit.]  

STUDENT. Socrates! Socrates!  

SOC. Why are you calling me, ephemeral one?  

STUDENT. First, I beseech you, tell me what you’re doing.  

SOC. I tread on air and contemplate the sun.  

STUDENT. Then you look down on the gods from a perch and not from the earth—if that’s what you’re doing.  

SOC. I would never discover the matters aloft correctly except by suspending mind and subtle thought and mixing them with their like, the air.  

If I considered the things above from below on the ground, I would never discover them. For the earth forcefully

46 Water cress seeds were known to absorb moisture, just as (according to Socrates) the earth does. The opinion that moisture impedes thought was held by the philosopher Diogenes of Apollonia, who lived and wrote at the same time as Socrates (Diels-Kranz, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, A19, §4).  

47 “Plunder and pillage,” literally “lead and carry” (agin kai perhein), is an expression used of troops looting in wartime, looting off slaves and cattle and carrying property away.  

48 It is noteworthy that Socrates shows no interest at all in Strepsiades’ offer to pay but only seeks to disabuse him of his old-fashioned religious convictions. This, along with the fact that Socrates and his students live in dire poverty (175), shows that Strepsiades’ uninformed opinion that Socrates teaches for pay (58)—an opinion with which many modern scholars agree—is incorrect. The gift that Strepsiades gives Socrates at line 1147 is spontaneous. See also n. 149.  

49 Literally, “gods are not nonnisima for us.” Socrates appears to be using the word nonnisima in its root meaning, “something believed in,” but Strepsiades indicates in his confused response that he understands nonnisima in its usual sense of “money.” Socrates was accused of not “believing in” the gods of the city (Apology 24b–c); the word “believing in” is nonnisima, related to nonnisima. (Alan H. Sommerstein, ed., Aristophanes, Clouds [Warminster: Aris & Phillips 1982], p. 173.)  

50 Unlike other Greek cities at this time, which used precious metals, Byzantium minted its coins from iron.
STREP. Very much so.
SOC. [leading him to a low bench].
Then sit down on the sacred couch.
STREP. There, I'm seated.
SOC. [placing a wreath on his head].
Now, take this crown.
STREP. Why a crown? Oh me, Socrates,
don't sacrifice me like Athamas!51
SOC. No, we do all these things to the initiates.
STREP. What will I gain, then?
SOC. You will become a smooth, rattling, fine-as-flour speaker.
But hold still.
[Sprinkles flour on him from a can by the bench.]
STREP. By Zeus, you're not going to be false with me,
for I will become fine as flour when I'm sprinkled!
SOC. The old man must hush and listen to the prayer.
[Solemnity.] O master and lord, measureless Air, who holds the
earth aloft,
and bright Aether, and august goddesses Clouds sending thunder
and lightning,
arise, appear, O Ladies, aloft for the thinker.
STREP. [covering his head with his cloak].
Not yet, not yet, until I fold this around me, so I won't be
drenched.
O miserably unhappy me, to come from home without even a cap!
SOC. Come then, much-honored Clouds, to display yourselves
to this man,
whether you are seated on the sacred snow-beaten peaks of
Olympus,
or setting up a sacred chorus with the nymphs in the gardens of
father Oceanus,52
or drawing waters in golden vessels at the mouths of the Nile,
or keeping to Lake Maeotis or the snowy look-out of Mimas53—
hear, receive the sacrifice, and rejoice in the sacred rites.

51In the *Athamas*, a lost tragedy of Sophocles, Athamas, crowned with a wreath, was about
be sacrificed on an altar when he was rescued by Hercules. Strepides may also have been
reminded of Athamas because of the name of Athamas' wife: Nephele ("Cloud"). This section
(525-562) is a parody of the initiation rites into the Mysteries at Athens (n 32).
52In Hesiod (Theogony 133) Oceanus is the child of Earth and Heaven (but not father of the
Clouds). His gardens were supposed to be in the sea far to the west of Greece.
53Lake Maeotis is the present-day Sea of Azov in the northeast corner of the Black Sea.
Mimas juts out from the coast of Asia Minor just north of the island of Chios. The four lines
that state the possible locations of the Clouds describe the four points of the compass: north
(Olympus), west (Oceanus'/gardens), south (the Nile), and east (Maeotis and Mimas).

Aristophanes' *Clouds* 127

CHORUS [song, offstage].
Ever-flowing Clouds,
let us arise, clearly apparent in our
dewy, shining nature,
from deep-resounding father Oceanus
up to lofty mountain peaks
shaggy with trees, so that
we may gaze upon look-out points apparent from afar,
and sacred land with well-watered fruits,
and roarings of rivers most divine,
and deep-thundering, roaring sea.
For the untrong eye
of Aether blazes
with glistering rays.
But let us shake off the rainy cloud
from our immortal form, and let us give
the earth to our far-seeing eye.
SOC. O greatly august Clouds, it is apparent that you heard me
calling you.
[To Strepides.] Did you perceive a voice and bellowing thunder,
divinely august?
STREP. Yes, and I revere you, much honored ones, and wish to
fart in response
to the thunder, so much do I tremble and fear before them.
And if it is sanctioned—right now, in fact, even if it isn't sanc-
tioned—I want to take a crap.
SOC. Do not mock, and don't do what those trygic daimons55 do,
but hush. For a great swarm of goddesses is in motion with songs.
CHORUS [song, still at a distance].
Rain-bearing virgins, [Antistrophe.]
let us go to the sleek land
of Pallas, to see the well-manned earth
of Cecrops,56 much beloved,
where there is reverence for sacred things unspeakable;

54"Strophe" is the name given to a song sung by the Chorus, to which an "antistrophe" answers (line 298). The names strophe ("turning") and antistrophe ("turning back") are thought to refer to the practice of having the Chorus dance in one direction during the strophe
and in the reverse during the antistrophe (not here, however, for the Chorus is still offstage).
55"Trygic" (mocking "tragedy") is a comic term for comedy, from tryg, "grape vintage,"
alluding to Dionysus, god of wine and of drama (line 539). The word translated "trygic daimon" is trygdaimon, coined by Aristophanes in imitation of kalamimem, "miserably un-
happy," but perhaps also suggesting the comic poets' claim to be daimons (gods).
56"Well-manned" (eunudros) means either "having good men" or "abounding in men." Cecrops is the legendary first king of Athens.
where the halls that receive the Mysteries
are displayed in holy initiation-rites.57
Gifts to heavenly gods are there,
lofty-roofed temples and statues,
most sacred processions for the blessed ones,
and well-crowned sacrifices
and festivals for gods
in all manner of seasons.
And as spring comes on, there is Bromian58 rejoicing,
and contentions of well-sounding choruses,
and deep-thundering music of flutes.

STREP. Before Zeus, I beseech you, tell me, Socrates, who are
these
who have uttered this august thing? They aren’t anything like
heroines,59 are they?

SOC. Not in the least: they’re heavenly Clouds, great goddesses
for idle men,
who provide us with notions and dialectic and mind,
and marvel-telling and circumlocution and striking and seizing.60

STREP. That’s why, on hearing their utterance, my soul is taking
flight,
and it already seeks to speak subtly and to quibble about smoke,
to oppose a speech with another speech by pricking a notion with a
sharper notion.

So if it’s somehow possible, I desire to see them now clearly
apparent.

SOC. Look over here toward Parnes.61 For I already see them
quietly descending.

[The Chorus of Clouds begins to enter from the side entrance.]

STREP. Where? Show me.

SOC. Quite many are coming
through the hollows and the thickets—there, at the side.

STREP. [peering].
What’s the matter? I don’t see them.

57 The Chorus refers to the Eleusinian Mysteries celebrated at Athens and famous throughout Greece. See Apology n. 80 on Triptolemus.
58 “Bromus” is Dionysus. These last three lines of the song refer to the comic and tragic poetry contests held in the spring at Athens in honor of Dionysus.
59 The terms “hero” and “heroine” were popularly applied to the outstanding protagonists in the Trojan and Theban wars described in poetry. As descendants of gods, they were held in great respect. Cf. Apology p. 48.
60 These four terms are technical jargon from current rhetorical theory. The precise meaning of “striking” and “seizing” is unknown.
61 Parnes: a mountain in Attica.

Aristophanes’ Clouds

SOC. By the entrance!

STREP. Now I do, but just barely.

[The Chorus of twenty-four Clouds is now fully on stage.]

SOC. By now you must see them, unless your eyes are oozing
pumpkins.

STREP. By Zeus, I do. O much-honored ones! They’re already
covering the whole place.

SOC. But did you neither know nor believe that they are
goddesses?

STREP. No, by Zeus. I held them to be mist and dew and smoke.

SOC. Then you don’t know, by Zeus, that they nourish most of
the sophists,

Thurian diviners,62 practicers of the art of medicine, idle-long
haired-onyx-ring-wearers.63

Song-modulators of circling choruses—men who are impostors
about the things aloft—

idle do-nothings they nourish too, because they make poetry and
music about these Clouds.64

STREP. This is why poets have composed “twisting-radiant burn
ning impetus of wet clouds,”

and “tresses of hundred-headed Typhus”65 and “hard-blowing
tempests”;

and then, “air-swimming, crooked-clawed birds of the liquid aire,”

and “rains of waters from dewy clouds.” And then, in return for
making these phrases, they gulp down

slices of great good fish and birds’ flesh of thrushes.

SOC. That’s why, of course. And isn’t it just?

STREP. Tell me, what’s happened to them
(if in fact they truly are clouds), that they are like mortal women?
For those in the sky are not such as these.

SOC. Well, what sorts of things are those?

STREP. I don’t plainly know. Anyway, they’re like spread-out

wool,

not women, by Zeus, not at all. These have noses.

62 The founding of the Greek colony of Thurii in southern Italy in 443 would have provided an occasion for divinations and prophecy, much of it no doubt fraudulent.
63 This word (sphragidomycargokómei), coined by the poet, means “loppy, sophisticated intellectuals and aesthetes.”
64 This and the preceding line refer to poets of dithyrambs, a form of lyric poetry sung by choruses at public contests.
65 Typhus, son of Earth, was buried beneath the earth and generated storm winds (Hesiod, Theogony 820–880). His “tresses” must be clouds. Strepsilades is recalling snatches of dithyrambic poetry that speak metaphorically of clouds.
and barefooted you endure many evils and put on a solemn face for us.

STREP. O Earth, what a voice! How sacred and august and portentous!

SOC. Yes, for they alone are goddesses; everything else is drivel.

STREP. Come now, by the Earth, isn't Olympian Zeus a god for us?

SOC. What Zeus! Don't babble. Zeus doesn't even exist.

STREP. What are you saying?

Who makes it rain? First of all make this apparent to me.

SOC. [indicating the Clouds].

They do, of course. I'll teach it to you by great signs.

Come, where have you ever beheld it raining without clouds?

Yet Zeus should be able to make it rain in the clear air by himself, while they are away.

STREP. By Apollo, you've certainly clinched that by your present argument.

Yet before, I supposed that in truth Zeus was pissing through a sieve.

But tell me who it is that thunders—which makes me tremble.

SOC. They thunder, as they roll.

STREP. In what way, you all-daring man?

SOC. When they are filled up with much water and are compelled

to be borne along by necessity, hanging down full of rain, then they heavily fall into each other, bursting and clapping.

STREP. And who is it that compels them to be borne along? Isn't it Zeus?

SOC. Not in the least. It's the ethereal vortex.

STREP. Vortex? I hadn't noticed that Zeus doesn't exist, and that instead of him Vortex is now king.

But you haven't yet taught me anything about the clapping and the thunder.

SOC. Didn't you hear me say that the clouds full of water fall into each other and clap because of their density?

STREP. Come, how am I to trust this?

66 "Rustics" is slang for homosexuals. The son of Xenophon may be Hieronymus, a foppish dithyrambic poet of no particular merit. Centaurs were mythical creatures—half-man, half-beast, shaggy and rustic in appearance—that indulged their heterosexual and homosexual appetites shamelessly.

67 Simon is otherwise unknown, except that he was also a perjurer (line 399).

68 Cleonymus, apparently cowardly and poor (line 673), was frequently ridiculed by Aristophanes. The deer is proverbially timid.

69 Cleisthenes, a notorious homosexual, was effeminate in appearance, apparently being unable to grow a beard. He appears as a character in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* 574-654 and is ridiculed in several other plays.

70 The word "compel" (here and 379) is literally "necessitate." Socrates' explanation of rain (and thunder: 403) in terms of necessity indicates his deterministic view of the nature of the Clouds.

71 Strepsiad is thinking of the dethroning of Ouranos by Kronos, and of Kronos by Zeus (see *Eutyphe* 68). He thinks that Zeus (Δίς in the genitive) has been overthrown by Vortex or Whirl (Δίνα).
I will teach you from yourself. Have you ever been filled up with stew at the Panathenaea, and then your belly was stirred up, and suddenly an agitation rumbled through it? Strep. Yes, by Apollo, right away it acts terribly and it’s been stirred up in me; the stew claps just like thunder and clamors terribly; softly at first, “pappax, pappax,” and then it leads to “papappax,” and when I crap, it absolutely thunders, “papappax, just like them. Soc. Then consider, since you have farted so much from such a little belly, [gesturing toward the sky] isn’t it likely that this air, being boundless, should thunder greatly? Strep. So that’s also why the names “thunder” and “fart” are similar to each other. But teach me where the thunderbolt, bright with fire, comes from, which burns us to ashes when it strikes, and scorches the living. For it is apparent indeed that Zeus hurls it at perjurers. Soc. You fool, smelling of the age of Kronos, you’re out of date. If in fact he strikes perjurers, then how is it that he didn’t burn up Simon or Cleonymus or Theorus? Yet they are vehement perjurers. But he strikes his own temple and Sunium, the cape of Athens, and tall oak trees. Why? An oak, at least, doesn’t perjure itself. Strep. I don’t know. But you appear to speak well. Then what is the thunderbolt? Soc. Whenever a dry wind is raised aloft and gets shut up into these clouds, it puffs them up inside like a bladder; then by necessity it bursts them and goes rapidly outside because of its density, and by its rushing and impetus it itself kindles itself.

Strep. Yes, by Zeus! At any rate, this is just what happened to me once at the Diasia. I was roasting a thick sausage for my kinfolk, and I carelessly failed to slit it; it got puffed up and, suddenly breaking open, it splattered my eyes with crap and burned my face. Chorus [addressing Strepriades]. O human being, desiring great wisdom from us, how happy you will become among Athenians and the Greeks!—if you have a good memory, and are a thinker, and have hard labor in your soul, and aren’t wearied either by standing or walking, and aren’t too much annoyed when you shiver with cold, and have no desire to dine, and keep away from wine and gymnastics and the other mindless things, and believe that it is best (which is likely for a shrewd man) to win by being active and taking counsel and warring with your tongue.

Strep. As for a solid soul and sleep-disturbing pondering, and a thrifty, life-consuming belly that dines on bitter herbs, have no care: as for these things, I would boldly offer to be forged on an anvil.

Soc. Now won’t you believe in no god but ours: this Chaos, and the Clouds, and the Tongue, these three? Strep. I simply wouldn’t converse with the others even if I should meet them, nor would I sacrifice or offer libations or offer incense to them. Chorus. Now tell me boldly what we may do for you. For you won’t fail to get it if you honor and admire us and seek to be shrewd.

Strep. O Ladies, I beg of you then this one very little thing: to be the best speaker of the Greeks by a hundred stadia. Chorus. This you will have from us, so that hencforth from now on.
no one will win more proposals in the Assembly of the people than you.

STREP. Don't speak to me of great proposals. For I have no desire for them,

but only to twist justice enough to give my creditors the slip.

CHORUS. Then you'll get what you yearn for, since you have no desire for great things.

Give yourself boldly to our ministers.

STREP. I'll do this, trusting in you. For necessity weighs me down
because of the koppa-horses and the marriage that has crushed
me.

So let them simply use me as they wish.

I offer them this body of mine
to be beaten, to hunger, to thirst,
to be squalid, to shiver with cold, to be flayed alive—
if only I am going to escape my debts
and be reputed by human beings to be
a bold, glib-tongued, daring go-getter,
a stinking concocter of falsehoods,
a phrase-finding lawsuit shyster,
a statute-book, a rattler, a fox, a sharpster,
supple, ironic, slippery, boastful,
a stinging, disgusting, twisting pest,
a cheater.

If those who meet me call me these things,
let them simply do to me whatever they want.
And if they wish,
by Demeter, let them serve up a sausage
made out of me to the thinkers!

CHORUS. This man has a mettle
that is not without daring, but ready.

[To Strepsias.] Know that
when you learn these things, from me
you will have glory among mortals
the length of heaven.

STREP. What will happen to me?
CHORUS. For all time you will lead with me
a life most enviable of human beings.

STREP. But will I ever see this?

CHORUS. Yes, and consequently
many will always be sitting
at your gates
wishing to consult
and come to speak,
taking counsel with you
over affairs and indictments
concerning many talents,
things worthy of your wit.

[To Socrates.]

But attempt first to teach the elderly man whatever you're going to,
and set his mind in motion, and try out his judgment.

SOC. Come then, describe your own way to me,
so that when I know what sort it is,
I may next bring novel devices to bear on you.

STREP. What? Do you have it in mind, before the gods, to lay
siege to me?

SOC. No, but I wish to ask you in brief
whether you have a good memory.

STREP. Yes, in two ways, by Zeus!
If something is owed me, I have quite a memory;
but if, miserably, I owe, I'm quite forgetful.

SOC. Do you have it in your nature to be a speaker?

STREP. To be a speaker isn't in it, but to be a cheat is.

SOC. Then how will you be able to learn?

STREP. Beautifully, have no care.

SOC. Come now, so that whenever I throw out something wise
about the things aloft, you'll snatch it up right away.

STREP. What, then? Am I going to feed on wisdom like a dog?

SOC. This human being is unlearned and barbaric.
I fear, elderly one, that you'll need blows.

Come, let me see, what do you do if someone beats you?

STREP. I let myself be beaten,
and then, after holding on a little while, I call the bystanders as
witnesses;

then, again after waiting a moment, I bring a lawsuit.

A "talent" is a large measure of silver, worth 6,000 drachmae.

"Way" is tropos, meaning here "bent," "turn of mind," or "temperament" (same word in line 485). The point is that different pupils, having various natures, need different approaches.

To make a stronger case in court, Strepsias lets himself suffer for a while.
Spectators, to you I will freely speak out the truth, by Dionysus who nurtured me. As I would win⁵⁹ and be believed wise, so also, since I hold you to be shrewd spectators and this to be the wisest of my comedies, I deemed it worthy that you first should taste afresh the one that provided me the most work. At that time I retreated, worsted by vulgar men, although I didn’t deserve it.⁶⁰ For this, then, I blame you, the wise, for whose sake I busied myself over it. But I will never voluntarily betray the shrewd among you. From the time when my Moderate Man and my Pederast were spoken of as best here by men whom it is pleasant even to speak of,—that was when I was still a virgin and wasn’t yet permitted to have children; I exposed it, but some other girl got it and took it up, while you nobly nurtured and educated it— from that time you have been keeping for me sworn pledges of your judgment. So now, in the manner of Electra, this comedy has come seeking, if she is fortunate enough to find spectators so wise: she will recognize, if she sees it, the lock of her brother.⁶¹ So consider how moderate she is by nature: first, she has not come with a hanging leather phallus stitched on, thick and red at the top, to make little boys laugh; nor does she mock the bald-headed, nor dance the cordax;
nor does the elderly man while speaking his words
beat whoever is present with his staff to hide poor jokes;
nor does she dart in holding torches or shout “Oh! Oh!”—
no, she has come trusting only in herself and her words.94
And I, a man who is such a poet, am no long-hair,95
nor do I seek to deceive you by leading in the same things two and
three times:
I always sophisticate by bringing in novel forms
not at all like one another—and all shrewd.
When Cleon96 was greatest, I am the one who hit him in the belly
and did not dare to jump on him again when he was down.
But they,97 now that Hyperbolus98 has given them a grip,
are always trampling on him, the wretch, and his mother.
Eupolis,99 the very first, dragged in his Maricas;
being bad, he badly turned our Knights inside out,
adding to it only a drunken rag for the sake of the cordax.
(Phrynichus100 put her in a poem long before, for the sea-monster
to eat.)
Then Hermippus in turn wrote a poem against Hyperbolus,
and now all the others are bashing away against Hyperbolus,
imitating my images of the eels.101
So whoever laughs at these, let him not delight in mine.
But if you enjoy me and these discoveries of mine,
in times to come you will be reputed to think well.

94In fact, of course, Aristophanes employs in the Clouds many of the low devices mentioned here, although less so than in his other comedies. The “cordax” is an undignified, perhaps licentious dance used in comedy.
95“Long-hair”: see n. 63. The line has a second meaning if, as seems probable from ancient evidence, Aristophanes was bald.
96Cleon was a crude but powerful demagogue, the leading figure in Athenian politics for a time after Pericles’ death (Thucydides III.36-40, IV.21-22). He was “greatest” after the capture of the Spartans at Pylos (n. 39), when Aristophanes attacked strongly in his Knights. His preeminence in Athens ended when he was killed in battle in 422 (Thucydides V.1-10), about a year after the first performance of the Clouds.
97“They” are Aristophanes’ rival comic poets.
98Hyperbolus was a demagogue, prominent in Athens after Cleon, and even more vulgar than his predecessor. The line means, “once Hyperbolus opened himself to criticism by his deplorable actions, my rivals started attacking him without restraint.”
99Eupolis, Cratinus, and Aristophanes were the three leading comic poets of the age (Horace, Satires I.4-1).
100Phrynichus, another rival poet (somewhat older than Aristophanes, like Hermippus, next line) wrote a comedy which apparently parodied the legend of Andromeda, a beautiful girl threatened by a sea-monster.
101In his Knights (864) Aristophanes compared Cleon to eel-catchers, who stir up mud in order to increase their catch.

Aristophanes’ Clouds

[Ode, sung by the Chorus.]
Lofty guardian, great
Zeus, tyrant102 of gods,
I first call upon to join the Chorus;
and the great-strengthened director of the trident,
wild heaver of
earth and salty sea;103
and our great-named father,
Aether most revered, life-nurturer of all;
and the steerer of horses,104 who
covers with rays exceedingly bright
the plain of earth, a daemon great
among gods and mortals.

[EpirrHEMA.105 The leading Cloud again speaks to the audience.]
O most wise spectators, apply your minds,
for we have been done injustice and blame you to your faces.
For although we of all gods benefit the city most,
to us alone of daemons you do not sacrifice or pour libations—
we who watch over you. If there is ever some mindless
expedition, then we thunder or drizzle.106
Further, when you were about to choose as general the enemy of
gods,
the Paphlagonian tanner,107 we drew our eyebrows together
and sent forth terrible things; thunder burst through lightning;
the moon was abandoning her courses; and the sun
quickly drew his wick back into himself,108
declaring that he would not appear for you if Cleon were to be
general.
Nevertheless, you chose him. They say that bad counsel
belongs to this city, but that the gods,
whenever you go wrong, turn it to the better.

102The term “tyrant” is not always as strongly disparaging as it sounds in English, although it certainly conveys the notion of illegitimacy or usurpation. (Consider what Zeus did to his father: Labyrinth 5e-6a and note).
103Poseidon.
104Hellas, the sun, was represented as a charioteer guiding his horses across the sky.
105This section of the parabasis is called the epirrheMA, “afterword” (575-594). The leading
Cloud now speaks on behalf of the Clouds as goddesses.
106The Clouds claim that they warn the Athenians against foolish military campaigns in
their war with Sparta. The Greeks took rain as an auspicious sign.
107The “Paphlagonian tanner” is Cleon, who was the son of a tanner and was presented in
the Knights as a slave from Paphlagonia, a barbaric region of Asia Minor.
108I.e., the stormy weather obscured the moon and sun.
And that this too will be profitable, we will easily teach you. If you convict the vulture Cleon of taking bribes and of stealing, and then muzzle his neck in the stocks, you will again find, as in the old days, that even if you did go wrong somewhat, the affair will turn out to the better for the city.

Further, come to me, lord Phoebus, Delian one, holding the lofty-haired Cynthian rock; and you, blessed one, who hold the all-golden house of Ephesus, wherein Lydian maids greatly revere you; and our local goddess, aegis-driving Athena, protector of the city; and you who hold the rock Parnassus and blaze with pine-torches, conspicuous among the Delphic Bacchants, revealer Dionysus.

When we were preparing to start on our way here, the Moon happened to meet us and enjoined us first to greet the Athenians and their allies. Next she declared she was angry and had suffered terrible things, although she has benefited all of you, not in words, but manifestly.

First, thanks to her, you save no less than a drachma each month for torches, so that everyone, as he is going out in the evening, says, "Don't buy a torch, boy, the moon's light is beautiful."

109"This" is the election of Cleon as general. The fact that Cleon is spoken of here as alive indicates that the epiphronema remains as it stood in the play's original version (see n. 90). Scholars therefore doubt whether Aristophanes ever completed his revision and whether the play was ever performed a second time at a major festival.

110This antode ("song answering an ode") continues the ode of 563–574, as the antepirrhema that follows it continues the epiphronema.

111"Phoebus" is Apollo; Delos is the island sacred to him, on which was found a rocky height called Cynthus.

112The reference is to Artemis, whose worship centered at Ephesus, a Greek city on the coast of Asia Minor. Artemis of Ephesus was highly regarded in Lydia, a non-Greek inland country to the east of Ephesus.

113Parnassus is the mountain facing Delphi, site of the oracle of Apollo. For three months of the year this region was given over to Dionysus and to the revels of his female worshippers, the Bacchants.

She says she does other good things for you, and yet you do not keep the days at all correctly; you wreak confusion up and down, so that the gods, she says, threaten her each time they are cheated of their dinner and go home without getting the feast appropriate to a reckoning of the days. So whenever you should be sacrificing, you are inflicting tortures and contesting lawsuits; and often when we gods are keeping a fast, lamenting Memnon or Sarpedon, you are pouring libations and laughing. In return for this, Hyperbolus, chosen by lot this year to be the Sacred Recorder, was stripped of his crown by us gods. Thus he will know better that he ought to keep the days of his life according to the moon. [The Chorus now retires from center stage. In the choral interlude an indefinite length of time has passed, during which Strepsiades has been receiving instruction indoors. Socrates now enters from the thinkery.]

Soc. By Respiration, by the Chaos, by the Air!

Nowhere have I seen a man so rustic, so resourceless, so dull, so forgetful that he has forgotten the petty little quibbles he was learning before he learned them! Nevertheless I'll call him outdoors here to the light.

[Calling into the thinkery.]

Where's Strepsiades? Come out and bring your bed.

STREP. [emerging with a flea-infested mattress and blanket]. But the bugs won't let me carry it out.

Soc. Hurry up, put it down and apply your mind.

STREP. [sets down the bed and edges away from it]. There!
Soc. Come now, what do you first wish to learn now of the things that you've never been taught at all? Tell me: about meters, or about words, or rhythms?

Strep. Meters for me. For lately
I was swindled of two quartas by a barley-meal huckster.

Soc. I'm not asking you that, but which you believe is the most beautiful meter, the trimeter or the tetrameter?  
Strep. To me, nothing is preferable to a half-sixth.  
Soc. You're speaking nonsense, fellow.  

Strep. Now make me a bet that a tetrameter is not a half-sixth.  

Soc. To the cows! How rustic you are and poor at learning! Perhaps you would be able to learn about rhythms.

Strep. But how will rhythms benefit me in getting my barley?  
Soc. First, they will make you elegant in company, an expert in what sort of rhythm is “enolion,” and again, what sort is “dactylic.”

Strep. “Dactylic?” By Zeus, I know that.

Soc. Then tell me.

Strep. [holding up his index finger].
What else but this finger?

[He extends his middle finger in a vulgar gesture.]

Before, when I was still a boy, like so.

Soc. You're crude and a dullard.

Strep. No, you dreary man, I'm not, for I have no desire to learn any of these things.

Soc. What, then?

Strep. This! This! The most unjust speech!

Soc. But you must learn other things before that: what quadrupeds are correctly called males.

Strep. I do know the males, if I'm not mad: ram, goat, bull, dog, chicken.

119 “Meters” is also the word for “measures.”
120 These are poetic meters; Strepides thinks (or pretends to think) measures of quantity are meant.
121 A “half-sixth” is equivalent to four quarts, the measure on which Strepides’ next remark is based (the word tetrameter means “four-measure”).
122 “Fellow”; see Apology n. 40.
123 Enolion (“warlike”) is a stirring martial rhythm which some believe to be: -/- -/- -/-.
Such a rhythm is sometimes employed, for example, in Souse’s marches. Dactylic (“finger”): each measure of this rhythm consists of a long and two shorts (---). For an account of these rhythms, see Dover, p. 180.

...
Wretched me, I'm perishing! From my couch
the Corinthians\textsuperscript{131} are creeping out and biting me,
and devouring my sides,
and drinking out my soul,
and pulling out my balls,
and digging through my anus,
and destroying me!
   soc. Now don't grieve too heavily.
   strep. [still under the covers].
How can I not, when
gone is my money, gone my complexion,
gone my soul, gone my shoe,
and further, besides these evils,
as I sing while I'm on watch,\textsuperscript{132}
I am almost gone!
[Pause. Strepsiades settles down. Socrates waits for a moment, then
speaks.]
   soc. You there! What are you doing? Aren't you thinking?
   strep. [sitting his head out].
   Me?
   Yes, by Poseidon!
   soc. And what did you think of, then?
   strep. Whether anything will be left of me by the bugs!
   soc. You will perish most evilly!
   strep. But, my good man, I have already just perished!
   soc. You must not be soft, but cover yourself up;
for you must discover an intellectual abstractional\textsuperscript{133}
and fraudulent. [Covers him up again with the sheepskin blanket.]
   strep. Oh me! If only someone would throw on me,
instead of sheepskins, an abstracting notion!
[Pause.]
   soc. Come now, first I'll observe what he's doing.
[To Strepsiades.]
You there! Are you sleeping?
   strep. [under the covers]. No, by Apollo, not I!
   soc. Have you got hold of anything?

\textsuperscript{131}Corinth was fighting on the side of Sparta, and its army regularly ravaged Athenian territory. There is a pun on 	extit{koinon}, bugs. This passage parodies Heracles' death throes in
Sophocles, 	extit{Trachinia} 1552–1557.
\textsuperscript{132}"To sing while on watch" may be an idiomatic expression meaning "to pass the time in
difficult or tedious circumstances."
\textsuperscript{133}"An intellectual abstractional": with a second meaning, "a cheating insight." Dover
assigns this speech, which in the manuscripts is Socrates', to the Chorus.
No, by Zeus, I certainly don’t! Nothing at all?

STREP. [poking out his head].

Nothing but the dick in my right hand.

SOC. Won’t you quickly cover yourself up and think of something?

STREP. What about? You tell me this, Socrates.

SOC. You yourself first discover and say what you wish.

STREP. You’ve heard ten thousand times what I wish: about the interest, how I can pay nobody back.

SOC. Go now, cover up, let your subtile thought loose; think about your troubles in small parts, distinguishing and considering them correctly.

STREP. [Under the blanket again, he is again beset by the bugs.]

Oh wretched me!

SOC. Keep still! And if you’re perplexed over any of your intellects, leave it, go away, then set your judgment back in motion again and weigh it up.

[Another long pause. Suddenly Strepsiades leaps out of bed.]

STREP. O dearest Socrates!

SOC. What, old man?

STREP. I have a notion abstractive of the interest!

SOC. Display it.

STREP. Now tell me—

SOC. What?

STREP. What if I should buy a Thessalian witch and draw down the moon by night, then close it up in a round feather-box like a mirror, and then keep watch over it?

SOC. How would this benefit you?

STREP. Because if the moon would no longer rise anywhere, I wouldn’t have to pay back the interest.

SOC. Why?

STREP. Because money is lent out by the month.

SOC. Well done! But again, I’ll throw out another shrewd thing for you.

If someone should indict you in a five-talent lawsuit, tell me how you would make it disappear. 136

STREP. How? How? I don’t know. But it must be sought.

SOC. Don’t always coop up your judgment around yourself, but slack your thought away into the air, like a beetle thread-tied by the foot.

STREP. [after a pause].

I’ve discovered a most wise way of making the lawsuit disappear; you’ll agree with me yourself.

SOC. What sort of thing is it?

STREP. Have you ever seen that stone at the drug-dealers’, the beautiful one, transparent, from which they kindle fire?

SOC. Are you speaking of a glass lens?

STREP. I am. Come, what if I were to take it, while the scribe was writing down the indictment, and were to stand farther off, like this, toward the sun, and melt away the letters of my lawsuit? 137

SOC. Wisely done, by the Graces! 138

STREP. Oh me, how pleased I am that my five-talent lawsuit has been written off!

SOC. Come, quickly snatch up this one.

STREP. What?

SOC. If you were a defendant and were about to lose because you had no witnesses present, how would you twist away from the lawsuit?

STREP. Most simply and easily.

SOC. Then tell me.

STREP. I am telling you.

What if, while one lawsuit was still pending before mine was called, I would run away and hang myself?

SOC. You’re talking nonsense.

STREP. I’m not, by the gods, since no one will bring a lawsuit against me if I’m dead.

SOC. You’re talking foolishness. Go away. I won’t teach you any more.

STREP. Why? Do teach me, before the gods, Socrates!

134A Greek tradition had it that witches of Thessaly could perform this feat (Gorgias 513a).

135Perhaps Strepsiades thinks of the moon as a mirror because he has learned that the moon’s light is a reflection of sunlight, as the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles taught (Diels-Kranz, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, B42, 43).

136To “make a lawsuit disappear” is a legal expression for quashing it. Strepsiades applies the expression literally.

137The suit would have been entered on a wax tablet.

138Dwelling with the Muses, the Graces were goddesses of song and dance (Hesiod, Theogony 64). Swearing by the Graces was not common.
STREP. By the Mist, you won't stay here any longer!
Go and eat the pillars of Megacles! 815
PEHEID. Daimonic man, what's the matter with you, father?
Your mind isn't well, 141 by Olympian Zeus.
STREP. See! See! "Olympian Zeus"! What foolishness! 820
Believing in Zeus at your age!
PEHEID. Really! Why do you laugh at that?
STREP. I was pondering that you're a little child and think ancient things.
[Motions to Pheidippides to come closer.]
Nevertheless, come here so you'll know more,
and I'll tell you a certain matter, and when you learn it, you'll be a man.
But don't teach it to anyone!
PEHEID. [comes up next to him].
There. What is it?
STREP. You swore just now by Zeus. 825
PEHEID. I did.
STREP. Do you see, then, how good it is to learn?
There is no Zeus, Pheidippides.
PEHEID. Who, then?
STREP. Vortex is king, having driven out Zeus.
PEHEID. Ugh! What are you babbling?
STREP. Know that this is so!
PEHEID. Who says this?
STREP. Socrates the Melian. 830
and Chaerephon, who knows the footsteps of fleas.
PEHEID. Have you come into such great madness
that you're persuaded by bilious men? 835
STREP. Hold your tongue
and do not disparage men who are shrewd
and intelligent: because of their thrift,
one of them has ever had his hair cut or oiled himself
or gone to a bath-house to wash. But you
are washing up my life as if I were dead. 840
Now go as quickly as possible and learn in my place.

140 I.e., go and beg for sustenance in the marble halls of your wealthy uncle Megacles.
141 "Your mind isn't well": literally, "you don't think well."
142 Diagoras of Melos was a notoriously atheistic philosopher or poet. Hence Socrates is a "Melian."
143 In Greek medicine madness was sometimes attributed to an excess of bile.
144 I.e., you are squandering my livelihood as if I no longer needed it.
Pheid. What could someone learn from them that is of any use?  
Strep. Truly? Whatever is wise among human beings.
And you will know yourself—how unlearned and dense you are.  
But wait here for me a little while.
[Suddenly rushes back into the house.]  
Strep. Oh me! What'll I do, my father’s out of his wits!  
Shall I take him to court and get him convicted of being out of his mind,  
or shall I announce his madness to the coffin-makers?  
[Strepsilis hurries out of the house, leading a slave holding a rooster and a hen.]

Strep. Come, let me see. What do you believe this is? Tell me.  
[Points to the rooster.]
Pheid. A chicken.
Strep. Beautiful! And what is this? [Pointing to the hen.]
Pheid. A chicken.
Strep. Both the same? You're ridiculous.  
Not so, from now on. Call this one “chickens” and that one “rooster.” [Exit slave.]
Pheid. “Chickens”? Are these the shrewd things you learned when you went inside just now to the earth-born?  
Strep. Yes, and many other things. But whatever I'd learn on each occasion  
I forgot right away because of the multitude of my years.
Pheid. Is that why you also lost your cloak?  
Strep. I didn’t lose it. I thought it away.  
Pheid. And what did you do with your shoes, you mindless man?  
Strep. Like Pericles, I lost them for something needful.  
[He leads his son over to the thinkery; Pheidippides follows reluctantly.]  
But come, walk, let's go. After you obey your father, do wrong if you like. I know that I too once obeyed you, a lisping six-year-old.  
With the first obol I got for jury-duke,  
I bought you a little wagon at the Diasia.  
Pheid. Verily, in time you will be indignant about these things.

145. i.e., perhaps he is about to die.
146. The expression may mean only “stupid clods,” but strictly speaking the “earth-born” are the Giants who once stormed Olympus to overthrow the gods (Sommerstein, p. 20).  
147. Pericles secretly bribed the Spartan king in 445 to withdraw his army from Attica. He later rendered account of the public money to Athens with the famous phrase, “spent for something needful.” (Plutarch, Pericles 22–23.)  
148. Diasia: see n. 76.
UNJUST SPEECH. Go wherever you want. For I’ll destroy you much more by speaking among the many. JUST. You’ll destroy me? Who are you?

UNJUST. A speech.

JUST. Yes, a weaker one.

UNJUST. But I’ll defeat you who claim to be stronger than I.
JUST. By doing what wise thing?

UNJUST. By discovering novel notions.
JUST. Yes, these things are flourishing because of these mindless ones here. [Points to the audience.]

UNJUST. No, they’re wise.
JUST. I’ll destroy you badly.

UNJUST. Tell me, by doing what?
JUST. By speaking the just things.

UNJUST. I’ll overturn them by speaking against them, for I quite deny that Justice even exists.
JUST. You deny that it exists?

UNJUST. Yes, for come, where is it?
JUST. With the gods.

UNJUST. If Justice exists, then why didn’t Zeus perish when he bound his father?  

JUST. Ugh! This is the evil that’s spreading around. Give me a basin.

UNJUST. You’re an old foggy and out of tune.
JUST. You’re a pedarast and shameless!

UNJUST. You’ve spoken roses of me.
JUST. You’re ribald!

UNJUST. You crown me with lilies.
JUST. And a parricide!

UNJUST. You don’t recognize that you’re sprinkling me with gold.
JUST. Before, this wasn’t gold, but lead.

UNJUST. But as it is now, this is adornment for me.
JUST. You’re too bold.

UNJUST. And you are ancient.
JUST. Because of you, none of the lads is willing to go to school. And someday the Athenians will recognize what sorts of things you teach the mindless.

151Justice here is Diké, the goddess or idea. In Hesiod, Works and Days 256–262, she sits beside her father Zeus and tells him of men’s injustices.
152See Lysyphros 6a and note for the story.
153A basin: to vomit in.
he'll be destroyed by my notions
as if he were stung on his whole face
and on both eyes by hornets!

CHORUS [SONG].
Now let the two, trusting
in their very shrewd
speeches and thoughts and
notion-coin ing ponderings,
show which of them will be
manifestly better as they speak.
For now the whole hazard
of wisdom is being risked here,
and about it there is a very great contest
among my friends.

[The leading Cloud addresses Just Speech.]
But you who crowned the elders with many upright habits,
utter forth your voice however you delight, and tell us your own
nature.

JUST. I will speak then of the ancient education as it was
established
when I was flourishing, speaking the just things, and when mod-
eration was believed in.
First, it was needful that no one hear a boy muttering a sound;
next, that those from the same neighborhood walk on the streets
here in good order
to the cithara teacher's, lightly clad, in a group, even if the snow
came down like barley-meal.

Next, again, he used to teach them to learn a song by heart (stand-
ing with their thighs apart),
"Pallas, Terrible Sacker of Cities" or "A Far-Reaching Shout," pitched to the harmony that their fathers handed down.
If anyone was ribald or added any modulation
of the sort they use nowadays
(those difficult modulations of Phrynis),

he would be thrashed and beaten with many blows, as one who
would efface the Muses.

It was needful for the boys to keep their thighs covered while
sitting at the gymnastic trainer's,

155 Aristophanes' Clouds
so as to show nothing cruel to those outside.

Next, again, when they stood up, they had to smooth the sand
back again and be mindful
not to leave behind an image of puberty for their lovers.
At that time no boy would anoint himself below the navel,
so that dew and down bloomed on their private parts as on fruit.
Nor would he make up a soft voice and go to his lover,
he himself pandering himself with his eyes.
Nor was it allowed him at dinner to help himself to the radishes,
nor to snatch dill or parsley from his elders,
nor to eat relishes, nor to giggle, nor to cross his legs.

UNJUST. Yes, ancient and Dipolia-like and full of grasshoppers
and of Cecides and of the Buphonia!

JUST. Yes, but these are the things
from which my education nurtured the men who fought at
Marathon.

But you teach them now to bundle themselves up in their cloaks
right away,
so that I'm ready to choke whenever someone at the Panathenaea
who ought to be dancing
holds his shield in front of his haunch, having no care for

Tritogeneia.

[To Pheidippides.] In view of these things, lad, be bold and choose
me, the stronger speech,
and you'll have knowledge of how to hate the marketplace and
keep away from the baths;
and to be ashamed at shameful things and to be inflamed if anyone
mocks you;

157 Holding the thighs together was apparently regarded as an unseemly or girlish posture.
158 These are probably the first words of ancient Athenian patriotic and warlike songs.
159 Phrynis was a musician whose musical innovations were already introduced before
Aristophanes was born.
160 i.e., the sight of a boy's nakedness is a torment to his older male lovers, with whom Just
Speech expresses a certain sympathy by using the word "cruel."
161 The Dipolia was a festival honoring Zeus Polieus ("City-Guardian"), probably full of old-
fashioned ritual. "Grasshoppers" was the name given to golden brooches used by Athenian
men of the Marathon period to fasten up their long hair (Thucydides I.6.3). Cecides was an
dehlythramic poet. The Buphonia ("ox-slaying") was probably a part of the festival
Dipolia.
162 Marathon, twenty-six miles from Athens, was the site of the famous battle at which the
Athenians defeated the invading Persian army (490 B.C.). This victory was traditionally re-
garded as the peak of ancient Athenian valor.
163 i.e., they are unable to endure cold even for a moment.
164 At the Panathenaic festival young men danced the famous Pyrrhic war dance, naked
and armed only with helmet and shield. But the youth who had always been 'coddled' in
cloaks found his shield more useful to keep his abdomen warm than to brandish in warrior-
fashion. It also required a strong arm to hold the shield out from the body during the
vigorous dance. This was a lack of the honor of Athena the war-goddess, Tritogeneia."
179.
and to stand up from your seat for your elders when they approach,
and not to misbehave toward your own parents; and not to do anything shameful that would tarnish the statue of Awe; \(^{166}\)
and not to dart into a dancing girl's house, lest you be broken off from your good fame
by being hit with a fruit by a whore\(^{166}\) while gaping at the things there;
and not to talk back to your father at all, and not maliciously to remind him,
by calling him "Iapetus,"\(^{167}\) of the age when he nourished you as a nestling.

**UNJUST.** If you obey him in these things, lad, by Dionysus,
You'll be like the sons of Hippocrates and they'll call you "honey-mama."\(^{168}\)

**JUST.** Yes, but you'll pass your time in the gymnasium, sleek and flourishing,
not mouthing prickly perversities in the marketplace as they do nowadays,
and you won't be dragged into court over a greedy, contradicting, shystering, petty affair.

Rather, you'll go down to the Academy\(^{169}\) and run under the sacred olive trees
with a moderate youth of your own age; you'll be crowned with a wreath of white reed,
smelling of yew and of leisure and of the white poplar shedding its leaves,
and in the season of spring you'll delight whenever the plane tree whispers to the elm.

If you do these things that I tell you
and pay mind to them,
you will always have
a sleek chest, bright complexion,
large shoulders, slender tongue,

---

\(^{166}\) I.e., do not disgrace the goddess Awe (Aidos), mentioned in Hesiod, *Works and Days* 200, and probably frequently represented as a statue.

\(^{167}\) It is thought that girls sometimes indicated their willingness to be seduced by tossing a man a piece of fruit.

\(^{168}\) Iapetus, the brother of Kronos, is another name for "old foggy."

\(^{169}\) The sons of Hippocrates were apparently regarded as simpletons. The expression "honey-mama" alludes to a child's begging for sweets.

\(^{169}\) The Academy was a public park and gymnasium located outside the city walls, later famous as the location of Plato's school.
Aristophanes’ Clouds

Hyperbolus of the lamp-market got very many talents because of villainy—but no, by Zeus, no sword!

JUST. Yes, and Peleus also married Thetis because of his moderation.

UNJUST. Yes, and then she went off and abandoned him, for he wasn’t hubristic or pleasant to spend all night with in the bedclothes.

A woman delights in being treated wantonly. But you are a big Kronos.

[To Pheidippides.

For consider, lad, all that moderation involves, and how many pleasures you’re going to be deprived of: boys, women, cottabus, relishes, drinking, boisterous laughter. Yet what is living worth to you if you’re deprived of these things? Well, then, From here I go on to the necessities of nature.

You’ve done wrong, fallen in love, committed some adultery, and then you’ve been caught.

You’re ruined, for you’re unable to speak. But if you consort with me, then use your nature, leap, laugh, believe that nothing is shameful! For if you happen to be caught as an adulterer, you’ll reply to him that you’ve done him no injustice. Then you’ll refer him to Zeus, how “even he was worsted by love and women; yet how could you, a mortal, be greater than a god?”

JUST [to Unjust Speech.

But what if he has a radish stuck up his rear end and has his hair plucked out with hot ash because he obeys you? By what argument will he be able to say that he’s not buggered?

UNJUST. And if he’s buggered, what evil will he suffer?

JUST. What evil could he ever suffer still greater than this?

176 The sea goddess Thetis was given by the gods as a wife to Peleus because of his virtues, according to Pindar, Olympian Od. VIII. Peleus is particularly praised there for his reverence, but moderation is also mentioned (lines 27, 40). Their son was Achilles. There are several traditions about why Thetis deserted him, none having to do with sexual disappointment.

177 Cottabus was a popular game at Athenian banquets, requiring each person to toss the last drops of wine in his cup into a central basin without spilling any.

178 Him: i.e., the husband. The following three lines allude to the frequent stories in Greek poetry of Zeus’s affair with mortal and immortal women.

179 Such punishments were sometimes visited upon adulterers caught in the act.

180 “Buggered” (eunyrhotos, literally “wide-anus”) is literally descriptive of the punishment here described, but the term was commonly applied to passive homosexuals, who habitually submitted to buggery. Just Speech’s point is that Pheidippides will be infamous if he follows Unjust’s advice. Unjust refutes this in the lines following by showing him that all the famous men, in fact almost all Athenians, are infamous. “Infamous” is perfectly compatible with a good reputation.
UNJUST. What will you say if you’re defeated by me on this point?
JUST. I’ll be silent. What else could I say?

UNJUST. *Come now, tell me,* from what group come the public advocates?
JUST. From the buggered.

UNJUST. *I’m persuaded.*

What then? From what group come the tragedians?
JUST. From the buggered.

UNJUST. You speak well.

But from what group come the popular orators?
JUST. From the buggered.

UNJUST. Then surely you recognize that you’re speaking nonsense?

And among the spectators, consider which are the greater number.

JUST [peering at the audience].

I am considering.

UNJUST. What do you see, then?
JUST. Many more, by the gods, who are buggered!

[Pointing to particular men in the audience]

Him, at any rate, I know, and that one, and him, with the long hair.

UNJUST. Then what will you say?
JUST. We’ve been worsted!

[Flinging his cloak into the audience, he addresses the spectators.]

You debauchees!

Before the gods, receive my cloak, since I’m deserting to you!

[He runs back into the skinkery, followed by Unjust Speech. Socrates comes out and addresses Strepistes.]

SOC. What now? Do you wish to take your son here and lead him away, or shall I teach him to speak for you?

STREP. Teach and punish him and remember to sharpen him up well for me: on the one side, sharpen his jaw for petty lawsuits, and on the other, for the greater matters.

SOC. Have no care, you’ll take him back as a shrewd sophist.

PHED. No, but pale, I think, and miserably unhappy.

SOC. Let’s go now.

PHED. I think that you’ll regret these things.

[Strepipes takes the comedy with Phædippides for his further instruction; Strepises goes into his house. The Chorus comes forward for its second parabasis, delivered to the audience by the leading Cloud.]

What the judges

will gain if they justly grant this Chorus a certain benefit, we wish to tell.

First, if you wish to plow your fields in season, we will rain for you first, for the others later.

Next, we will guard the vines when they are bearing fruit, so that neither drought nor too much rain will weigh them down. But if someone who is mortal dishonors us who are goddesses, let him apply his mind to the sorts of evils he will suffer from us. He will get neither wine nor anything else from his land, for whenever his olives and grapes are budding, they will be knocked off. With such slings we will strike.

If we see him making bricks, we will rain, and we will shatter the tile of his roof with round hailstones. And if he himself or any of his kinsmen or friends ever get married, we will rain all night, so that he will perhaps wish that he happened to be even in Egypt rather than to judge badly.

[The Chorus now retires from center stage. In this interlude an indefinite length of time has passed, during which Phædippides has been receiving instruction indoors. Strepises comes out of his house and approaches the skinkery to call for his newly educated son. He is carrying a gift of some sort for Socrates, perhaps a sack of meal.]

STREP. Fifth, fourth, third, after this the second, then that day of all days which I have dreaded and shuddered at and loathed the most: right after this is the old and new.

184 A panel of judges ranked the comedies performed at a given festival in the order of their merit. The Clouds are demanding the first prize.

185 Bricks were made by drying blocks of mud in the sun.

186 Much of the ceremony at Greek weddings was conducted outdoors, particularly the torchlight procession which accompanied the bride to her husband’s house and the dancing that followed.

187 Although Egypt is remote and its customs outlandish ("the country of the most ancient antiquity and of excessive piety"; Strauss, p. 35), at least it hardly ever rains there.

188 Strepides is counting off the last days of the month, the "twenties" (line 17), which were reckoned backwards. The penultimate day was the "second"; the last day was called the "old and new," and it was on this day that interest fell due. It was perhaps so called because during part of the day the moon was old and for the remaining part new.
For everyone whom I happen to owe say on oath that he will ruin and destroy me by putting down a deposit against me.

While I am begging for due measure and just things ("You daimonic man, don’t take this just now"); "Please postpone that"); "Let me off from the other"), they say they will never get it back this way: they rail at me for being unjust, and they say they will bring lawsuits against me. So now let them bring their lawsuits! Little do I care if Pheidippides has in fact learned to speak well. But I'll soon know by knocking at the thikery.

[He knocks.]

Boy, I say, boy! Boy!

Soc. [Opening the door]. I greet Strepsiades.

Strep. And I you. But take this first.

[He hands him the gift, which Socrates sets down inside.]

For one should show admiration in some way for the teacher. And my son—tell me if he has learned that speech which you introduced just now.

Soc. He has learned it.

Strep. Well done, O Fraud, queen of all!

Soc. So you may be acquitted of any lawsuit you wish.

Strep. Even if witnesses were present when I took the loans?

Soc. So much the better, even if a thousand were present.

Strep. Then I will shout an overstrained shout! Ho, weep, you moneylenders— you yourselves, and your principal, and interest on interest!

For you won’t do me any more dirt.

Such a boy is nurtured for me in these halls here, brilliant with two-edged tongue,

my bulwark, savior to our halls, to enemies a harm, suercase of a father’s great evils!

[To Socrates.]

Run and call him to me from within!

[Socrates goes inside to fetch Pheidippides; Strepsiades calls after him.]

---

189 A “deposit” was a sum of money paid to the city by the prosecutor on the first day of the new month to initiate a lawsuit; the deposit was forfeited if the suit was lost.

190 The words for “principal” (archaios) and “interest” (iteros) may also mean “ancestors” and “offspring.”
PHIED. —so he put the summons into two days, into the old and into the new so that the deposits would occur at the new moon.
STREP. Then why did he add the old?
PHIED. So that the defendants, my dear man, by being present one day beforehand, might be voluntarily released. Or if not, so that they might be distressed on the morning of the new moon.\textsuperscript{194}
STREP. Then why don’t the officials receive the deposits at the new moon instead of on the old and new?\textsuperscript{195}
PHIED. The same thing happens to them, it seems to me, as to the Foretasters;\textsuperscript{196} they do their tasting one day earlier so that the deposits may be filled as quickly as possible.
STREP. \textit{[to Pheidippides].}
Well done!
\textit{[To the spectators]}
You wretchedly unhappy ones, why do you sit there stupidly?
You are the booty of us wise men, since you are stones, number, mere sheep, stacked-up jars.\textsuperscript{197}
Therefore I must sing an encomium to myself and to my son here upon our good fortune.\textsuperscript{198}
\textit{[Sings.]}
"O blessed Strepsiades, your own nature—how wise!
And such a son you are nurturing!"
That’s what my friends and demesmen will say in their envy when you win our lawsuits by your speaking!
But I will take you inside, for I wish first to feast you.

\textsuperscript{194}Pheidippides is saying that the “old,” the last day of the old month, must be different from the “new,” the first day of the new month. By scheduling the summons one day before the suit could begin, Solon intended to encourage out-of-court settlements (“voluntarily released”).
\textsuperscript{195}i.e., why do the officials take the deposits one day earlier than Solon’s law intended?
\textsuperscript{196}Foretasters: public officials responsible for seeing to it that the food prepared for public festivals was satisfactory. Apparently they exercised their office on the day preceding the festival (Dover, p. 236).
\textsuperscript{197}The spectators, sitting in rows, one above another, must have looked like stacked jars from the stage.

\textit{[Father and son retire into the house for their feast. While they are dining, one of Strepsiades’ creditors approaches, a fat man, bringing a witness with him, with whom he is conversing.]}\textsuperscript{198}
CREDITOR. What? Should a man give up any of his own belongings?
Never! It would have been better to blush at once back then, than to have troubles now, when for the sake of my own money I am dragging you as a witness to my summons.\textsuperscript{199} Besides, I’ll also become an enemy to a man who is a fellow demesman. But never will I shame my fatherland\textsuperscript{200} while I live.
\textit{[In a loud voice.] I summon Strepsiades—}\nSTREP. \textit{[opening the door and coming out]. Who’s there?}
CRED. —to the old and new.
STREP. \textit{[to the audience].} I call to witness that he said two days.
\textit{[To the creditor.]}
What’s the matter?
CRED. It’s about the twelve minae you got when you bought the dappled horse.
STREP. \textit{[to the audience].}
A horse? Don’t you hear?\textsuperscript{201}
All of you know I hate horsemanship!
CRED. And by Zeus, you swore by the gods that you would give it back.
STREP. No, by Zeus, for then my Pheidippides hadn’t yet gained knowledge of the unassailable speech.
CRED. Do you have in mind to deny it now because of this?\textsuperscript{202}
STREP. Yes, for what else would I get out of his learning?
CRED. And will you be willing to deny it on an oath by the gods wherever I bid you?
STREP.\textsuperscript{203}
CRED. Zeus, Hermes, Poseidon.\textsuperscript{204}
What gods indeed!
CRED. Zeus, Hermes, Poseidon.\textsuperscript{205}

\textsuperscript{198}Some manuscripts identify this first creditor as Pasias (line 21).
\textsuperscript{199}In other words, “I should have suffered the shame of refusing him the loan in the first place, in order to spare myself the trouble I will now incur by bringing a lawsuit against a neighbor.”
\textsuperscript{200}He alludes to the Athenian addiction to litigation.
\textsuperscript{201}Oaths were felt to be more binding when sworn at an altar or sanctuary of the god in question.
\textsuperscript{202}Probably Zeus as the chief god, Hermes as the god of commerce, and Poseidon as the god of horses.
Yet I don’t wish for you to suffer this just because you foolishly called it “pan.”
[Creditor and witness depart. Strepsiades goes back into the house with his kneading pan. A second creditor enters limping.]

2ND CRED. Oh me! Me!
STREP. [coming out]. Ho!

Who ever is this who is lamenting? Surely it’s not one of the daemons of Carcinus that gave utterance?

2ND CRED. What? Do you wish to know who I am?

A miserably unhappy man.
STREP. Then follow your path by yourself.

2ND CRED. O harsh daemon! O fortune, smashing the wheels of my horses! O Pallas, how you have ruined me!

STREP. But what evil has Telemachus ever done you?

2ND CRED. Do not mock me, sir, but bid your son to give me back the money he got, especially since I’ve fared so badly.

STREP. What money is this?

2ND CRED. That which he borrowed.

STREP. Then you really are badly off, at least as it seems to me.

2ND CRED. Yes, I fell out of a chariot while I was driving horses, by the gods!

STREP. Why are you babbling, as if you had fallen off an ass?

2ND CRED. Am I babbling if I wish to get my money back?

STREP. There’s no way you yourself could be in health.

2ND CRED. Why?

STREP. You seem to me like one whose brain has been shaken.

2ND CRED. And you seem to me, by Hermes, about to receive a summons if you won’t give back the money.

STREP. Tell me now, do you believe that Zeus always rains fresh water on each occasion, or does the sun draw the same water back up from below?

Strepsiades perhaps refers to a lamenting god in one of the tragedies of the poet Carcinus, none of whose works has survived.

Xenocrates, one of the sons of Carcinus, was also a tragic poet, and his lost Lyceum is thought to have been the source of the credit of the tragic poet's lines 1264-1265. The tragic persona adopted by the creditor is Lyceum, an old man who was killed by his nephew Telemachus, son of Hercules. The story is told in outline in Plato's Phaedrus 275b-276c.

A man who was apo oyno (out of his mind) was said by the Greeks to have had a fall apo oyno (off an ass).

[i.e., you yourself in your mind (as opposed to your bodily injuries).]
of the money he borrowed. And it must be that some matter will come upon this sophist today which will make him suddenly come upon some evil for the knavery he has begun. For I suppose he will presently find just what he was seeking long ago: that his son is clever at speaking notions opposed to the just things, so as to defeat everyone, whomever he associates with, even when he speaks all-villainous things. But perhaps, perhaps he will even wish him to be voiceless.

[Strepsiades bursts out of the house, still carrying his tall drinking mug, which he drops outside the door.]

STREP. Oh! Oh!

O neighbors and kinsmen and demesmen!
Defend me with every art: I'm being beaten!
Oh me, miserably unhappy! My head and jaw!

PHÆD. Wretch, do you beat your father?

STREP. [to the audience]. Yes, father.

PHÆD. Do you see him agreeing that he beats me?

STREP. Certainly I do.

PHÆD. Wretch! Parricide! Housebreaker!

STREP. Say again that I am these same things and more.

PHÆD. You're hyper-bugged!

PHÆD. Sprinkle me with many roses!

STREP. Do you beat your father?

PHÆD. Yes, and I will make it clearly apparent, by Zeus, that I was beating you with justice.

STREP. Most wretched one, how could beating a father be with justice?

PHÆD. I will demonstrate it and defeat you by speaking.

209Father-beating was a serious crime, and Strepsiades calls on witnesses as though undertaking the first step of a lawsuit against his son.
STREP. You will defeat me in this?
PHEID. Yes, greatly and easily.
But choose which of the two speeches you wish to be spoken.
STREP. What two speeches indeed!
PHEID. The stronger or the weaker.
STREP. I did teach you, by Zeus, my dear,
how to speak against the just things, if you are
-going to persuade me that it is just and noble
for a father to be beaten by his sons.
PHEID. I do suppose that I will persuade you, so that
when you have heard it, not even you yourself will say any-
thing against it.
STREP. In fact, I do wish to hear what you will say.
CHORUS [song, addressing Strepsiades].
[Strophe.] You will overcome this man,
you would not be so unrestrained unless
he were confident in something.
But there is something by which he is emboldened:
the audacity of the man is clear.
[The leading Cloud, to Strepsiades.]
But you must now tell the Chorus out of what the fight first
began to arise. (You will do this anyway.)
STREP. All right, then, from where we first began to rail at each
other,
I will tell you. We were feasting, as you know,
and first I bade him to take the lyre
and sing a song of Simonides: "The Ram, How He Was Shorn."210
Right away he said that it was old-fashioned to play the lyre
and sing while drinking, just like a woman grinding barley.211
PHEID. Yes, shouldn't you have been struck and trampled on
right away back then
when you bade me to sing, as if you were providing a feast for
grasshoppers?212

210The traditional lyric poet Simonides, a contemporary of Pindar and Aeschylus, lived
during the Persian Wars. "The Ram, How He Was Shorn" apparently told of the defeat of a mighty
wrestler called Crias ("Ram"). It was customary at old-fashioned Athenian banquets
for a guest to accompany himself at singing one of the good old songs.
211Women often sing simple songs as they perform monotonous manual work.
212Grasshoppers, according to legend, spend all their time singing and do not need to eat or
drink (Phaedrus 259c). Perhaps there is an allusion to the old-fashioned "grasshoppers" of line
984.
213Apparantly it was traditional for those who sang at banquets to do so with a branch of
myrtle in the hand. Aeschylus was the old-fashioned tragedian. It was not usual to recite tragic
poetry at banquets, but Strepsiades is compromising: Philectippus does not have to sing lyric
poetry if only he will recite good old Aeschylus.
214The tragedy is Aiolus, of which only fragments survive. The incest was committed by
Aiolus’ children, Macareus and Canace. Strepsiades emphasizes "from the same mother" because
Athenian law permitted marriage between children of the same father but different
mothers. Euripides was regarded as a daring, unconventional, even atheistic poet (cf. Aristophanes’
Frogs and Thesmophoriazusae 450-454).
And when you'd ask for "mammon," I'd come and bring bread to you.

No sooner would you say "ca-ca" than I would take you through the door
and carry you outside, holding you out in front of me. But now you, strangling me
as I was shouting and crying out that
I needed to crap, didn't have the decency
to carry me outside, you wretch,
through the door. Instead, while I was being choked,
I made "ca-ca" right there!

CHORUS [song].
I suppose that the hearts of the youths are leaping at what he will say.
For if, having done such deeds as these, he persuades him by his chatter,
I wouldn't even give a chick-pea for the skin of old men.

[The leading Cloud addresses Pheidippides.]
Your work, you mover and heaver of novel words,
is to seek some way of persuasion so that you will seem to speak just things.

PHEID. How pleasant it is to consort with novel and shrewd matters
and to be able to look down on the established laws!
For I, when I was applying my mind to horsemanship alone,
couldn't even say three phrases before I went wrong.
But now that he himself has made me stop these things
[indicating the thinkery]
and I am associating with subtle notions and speeches and ponderings,
I do suppose that I will teach him that it is just to punish one's father.

STREP. Then keep on with your horses, by Zeus, since it is better for me
to nurture a four-horse team than to be beaten and battered!
PHEID. I'll pursue that point of my speech where you interrupted me,
and first I will ask you this: did you beat me when I was a boy?

Aristophanes' Clouds

STREP. Yes, I did; I was well-intentioned and concerned for you.
PHEID. Then tell me, isn't it also just for me likewise to be well-intentioned toward you and to beat you, since in fact to be well-intentioned is to beat?
For why should your body be unchastrised by blows, but not mine? And in fact I too was born free.216

Children weep: does it seem fit to you that a father not weep?217
You will say that it is the law that this is a boy's work,
but I would say in return, "Old men are children twice."
And it's more appropriate for the old to weep than the young, inasmuch as it's less just for them to do wrong.

STREP. But nowhere is it the law that the father suffer this.
PHEID. Wasn't he who first set down this law a man like you and me, and didn't he persuade those of long ago by speaking?

Is it any less allowable for me too, then, to set down in turn for the future a novel law for sons to beat their fathers in return? As for the blows that we get before the law is set down, we dismiss them, and we give them our past thrashings gratis. Consider the chickens and the other beasts; they defend themselves against their fathers. Yet how do they differ from us, except that they do not write decrees?

STREP. What then? Since you imitate the chickens in all things, won't you eat dung and sleep on a perch?
PHEID. It's not the same, sir, and it wouldn't seem so to Socrates, either.

STREP. In view of this, don't beat me. Otherwise you'll only have yourself to blame someday.
PHEID. How so?

STREP. Because it's just for me to punish you and for you to punish your son, if you have one.
PHEID. But if I don't have one, I'll have wept in vain, and you'll have died with the laugh on me.

STREP. [To the old men in the audience].
To me, O men of my age, he seems to speak just things.

216 A free man was permitted to strike his children, but it was forbidden for them to strike him (cf. n. 209). "Born" is phygn, related to physis, "nature.
217 This line is an adaptation of Euripides, Ajaxis 691, where Pheres indignantly refuses to die in the place of his son Admetus, saying: "You delight in seeing the light; does it seem to you that a father does not delight?"
and to me at least, it also seems fitting to concede to them\textsuperscript{218} what is fair.

For it’s proper for us to weep if we do things that aren’t just.

**Pheid.** Consider yet another notion.

**Strep.** No, for I’ll be ruined!

**Pheid.** And yet perhaps you won’t be annoyed at suffering what you’ve just suffered.

**Strep.** How so? Teach me how you’ll benefit me from this.

**Pheid.** I’ll beat my mother too, just as I did you.

**Strep.** What are you saying? What are you saying?

This other one is a still greater evil!

**Pheid.** But what if I defeat you by means of the weaker speech, saying that one should beat one’s mother?

**Strep.** If you do this, then nothing will prevent you from throwing yourself into the Pit\textsuperscript{219} along with Socrates and the weaker speech!

[To the Chorus.]

I have suffered these things because of you, O Clouds, from referring all my affairs to you.

**Chorus [the leading Cloud speaking].**

No, you yourself are responsible for these things by yourself, because you twisted yourself into villainous affairs.

**Strep.** Then why didn’t you tell me this back then instead of stirring up an old and rustic man?

**Chorus.** We do this on each occasion to whomever we recognize as being a lover of villainous affairs, until we throw him into evil so that he may know dread of the gods.

**Strep.** Oh me! This is villainous, O Clouds, but just.

For I shouldn’t have deprived them of the money I borrowed.

[To Pheidippides.]

So now, dearest one, come with me and destroy the wretch Chaerephon and Socrates, who have deceived you and me!

**Pheid.** But I wouldn’t do injustice to my teachers.

---

\textsuperscript{218}The word 	extit{divos} may mean either “vortex” or “goblet.” Apparently Strepsias misunderstood Socrates’ assertion (that vortex [\textit{divos}] replaces Zeus, who does not even exist) to mean that the statue of Zeus was replaced by a goblet (\textit{divos}).

There is controversy over what Strepsias points to on the stage. Our stage directions at 1340 and here indicate that he refers to a goblet that he himself dropped on the ground when he came out of the house. Another opinion, widely accepted by modern scholars, proposes that Strepsias points to a large goblet (symbolizing Vortex) which stands next to the door of the thinkery, occupying the place of the statue of Hermes which regularly stood by the entrance of Athenian homes.

\textsuperscript{219}It is not clear whether Strepsias addresses a bust of Hermes outside his door or whether he simply looks off into the distance. Strepsias certainly thinks or pretends that he hears Hermes at 1483.
[Xanthias climbs up the ladder and begins to hack off the roof tiles with the hoe. Strepsias again shouts into his house.]
Someone bring me a lighted torch!
[Another slave enters with a torch, hands it to Strepsias, and exits.]
I too will make one of them pay the penalty today to me, even if they are such great boasters!
[Srrepsias ascends the ladder with the torch and begins to set fire to the rafters exposed where the tiles are being hacked away by Xanthias.]

STUDENT [within]. Oh! Oh!
STREPI. Your work, torch, is to send forth much flame!
STUDENT [rushing out of the smoke-filled thinkery and seeing Strepsias on the roof]. You, fellow, what are you doing?
STREPI. What am I doing? What else but holding subtle conversation with the beams of the house?

2ND STUDENT [comes out; the remaining students emerge over the next several lines].
Oh me! Who's burning down our house?
STREPI. The one whose cloak you took.
2ND STUDENT. You'll destroy us, you'll destroy us!
STREPI. Yes, that's the very thing I do wish for, unless my hoe betrays my hopes or I first fall somehow and break my neck.

SOC. [coming out].
You there on the roof! Really, what are you doing?
STREPI. "I tread on air and contemplate the sun."
SOC. Oh me, alas! Wretched me, I'll be choked!
2ND STUDENT. And I, miserable unhappy, will be burned up!
STREPI. Yes, for why is it that you were hubristic toward the gods and were looking into the seat of the Moon?
HERMES222 [the god himself appears].
After them! Strike! Hit them because of many things, but most of all since I know that they were doing injustice to the gods!

[The thinkery is in flames. Climbing down the ladder, Strepsias and his slave pursue Socrates and the students out of the theater.]

CHORUS. Lead the way out, for we have chorused in due measure today.

[The Clouds retire and exit.]

222 Some manuscripts and most modern scholars deny that Hermes appears at all. They attribute Hermes' lines to Strepsias. The reading of Strauss, Socrates and Aristophanes, p. 46, is followed here.

Selected Bibliography

The items listed here are a small portion of a massive literature on Socrates and on the four works in this collection. The selections here include the best published writings in English on the dialogues and play, along with other items included as representative of current trends.

Readers should be aware that the assessments of these works are based on the understanding of Plato and Aristophanes that informs the Introduction.

The Bibliography is arranged under the following topics:
—Writings on Plato's Apology of Socrates (and on Plato or Socrates generally)
—Writings on Plato's Euthyphro
—Writings on Plato's Crito
—Writings on Aristophanes' Clouds
—Greek Texts: Plato
—Greek Texts: Aristophanes

Writings on Plato's Apology of Socrates
(and on Plato or Socrates generally)

