

THE CLOUDS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

STREPSIADES (TWISTER)

PHIDIPPIDES

Servant of Strepsiades

Disciples of Socrates

Socrates

Chorus (of Clouds)

Right Reasoning (Just Discourse) (RIGHT SENSE)

Wrong Reasoning (Unjust Discourse) (Wrong sense)

Right Logic, Wrong Logic (Just Word - Unjust Word).

Pasias a usurer

Pasias' witness

Amyntias another usurer

CHAEREPHON.

The play takes place in Athens

ACT. I

[It's night time. The curtain rises and we see at the back two houses side by side. In the one we see a room - the bedroom of Strepsiades' house. There are two beds. In one sleeps Strepsiades and in the other his son Phidippides. A lamp is flickering on the wall. On the floor near the door sleeps Strepsiades' house servant. Dawn is approaching and Strepsiades has not slept. He half sits up in bed. He groans

Strepsiades. (Roddling his forehead) Out, Out. Great Gods. Lord Zeus will this night never end: will daylight never come: Again I have the cock crow long ago and am still wake and the servants are snoring

Ah! For the good old times in the past. Perish you damned war. You have caused me enough trouble already. One now cannot even punish his own servants.

And this good lad of mine never bothers at all; never wakes up in the night, he muffles himself under his five blankets and blows off to his heart's content. (Pulling the coverlets over him) Well I will wrap myself up and snore away! ^{He blows out the light and} (Cries to sleep. After a few minutes he sits up again throws the clothes off and sits up again.)

O dear me. ~~As~~ I cannot sleep a wink. What with all the ^{involving} expenses and the debts which my son is involving me, they bite my ^{flesh} soul and do not let me sleep. Yes he is not worried. He has his hair ~~unlashed~~ set, rides about on horses and ^{chariots} ~~chariots~~ and I think that even in his sleep he dreams of horses while I am being ruined. Yes ruined watching the moon ~~(reaching in the third decemeter twentieth~~ ^{in the} twenties (Twenty days, i.e. the last third of the month Tramb) and the debt interest on the debts is due to be paid. (The interest was usually paid at the beginning moon i.e. the beginning of the month Tramb.)

(Shouts at the servant). Boy, boy! Get up! Light a lamp. (The boy jumps up and lights the lamp.) Bring me my tablets to see what I owe and whom I owe it, and reckon up the interest. (The boy brings the tablets.)

Let's see what we owe now; (he reads and calculates). Twelve minae to Parias. Twelve minae (i.e. twelve fivers-sixty pounds Tramb.) to Parias? What for? (He scratches his head) O yes! I remember. I bought that thoroughbred from Corinth. Oh, it was better that my eye was gouged out by a stone before ..

goes out but dawn is breaking and the figures in the room are quite visible. Yes where was I?

And later when we had this boy was born my good wife and I had many quarrels over his name. She wanted the word ~~word~~ ~~ippos~~ (hippos in Greek meaning horse ~~trawl~~) to be included in his name, - Xanthippos Charippos or Callippides. I wanted to call him after his grandfather Pheidonides. (From pheidesthe = spare and onos = donkey, i.e. ^{the one who} spares the donkeys. ~~trawl~~). We could not agree and argued about it for a long time. Eventually we compromise on the name Pheidippides (the one who spares the horses ~~trawl~~).

Then she began to fondle and spoil her son. Tell him: "when you grow you will drive like my ^{pridefully} father your chariot into town, dressed wearing a scarlet cloak like megacles." And I used to tell him "don't till you grow up and ^{serve} the goats for from the mountains dressed in a leather coat like your father."

It was no good! He never listened to ~~me~~ word I said, and bad luck, ^{he soon} "galloped" my fortune away.

All this long night through I have wracked my brain to find a way out. And I think I found it - ^{a miracle, a transcendental} ~~the miraculous~~ path leading to salvation.

If I convince him to follow it, we shall be saved. But first I must make him up. (In a dilemma). But how can I cure him gently without infuriating him. (Cribbing his chin) How? (Gently) Pheidippides. My little Pheidippidi!

Pheidippides (startled) What is it father?

Strepsiades. Kiss me and give me your hand.

Pheidippides. (Rises up grumpily kisses his father and sits on the bed beside him) There. What is it?

Strepsiades. Tell me! Do you love me?

Pheidippides. Yes ^{exactly} ~~exactly~~ by the equestrian Poseidon (Poseidon was the God of the sea. Here Poseidon on horse-back is an Aristophanic jest. ~~trawl~~). I do.

Strepsiades. No no by Poseidon there (evidently on the stage there was a figure of Poseidon riding. ~~trawl~~) the ^{equestrian} ~~God of horses~~. This god has been the cause of all my troubles. (Tenderly) but if you really love truly and with all your heart listen to me my son.

Pheidippides. Listen to you, of course. What is it?

Strepsiades. Get out of your present habit as quickly as you can and try ^{to} ~~and~~ follow my advice.

Pheidippides. Well give me your orders.

Strepsiades. And will you obey?

Pheidippides. Of course by Dionysos.

Strepsiades. Well look here now son! (Pointing out of the window) Do you see that little door over there, belonging and that house.

Pheidippides. Yes see. What is that father?

Strepsiades. That is the frontistery, the stop of wisdom, of many good souls. (Referring to a place where Socrates was

his pupils or disciples (would). There are men in there who teach that the vast expanse of sky is a furnace surrounding us who are but charcoal. They can teach, you, if one pays them well for it, how to talk himself in winning his case in court even if he is in the wrong.

Pheidippides. What do they call themselves?

Strepsiades. I don't know their names. But they are wise and good people and very deep-thinkers.

Pheidippides. You mean those cocky, pale, barefooted people - the wretched Socrates and his pupil Chaerephon! I know the rascals well.

Strepsiades. Hush son. Don't talk childish. But if you feel sorry for your father and you don't want him to die of hunger, forget all about horses and racing and join their school.

Pheidippides (with determination). No, no by Dionysos, even if you give me all the horses that Leagoras ~~breeds~~ (Aristophanes uses the word pharianos meaning pleasant, but in all probability ~~that~~ pharionos was the name of some special thoroughbred breed.)

Strepsiades. Ah, I beseech you my beloved boy. Go to them and follow their teachings.

Pheidippides. And what do you think I am going to learn?

Strepsiades. It appears that they teach ^{teachings} ^{four} ^{lines} of reasoning, the ^{straight} ^{correct} one so called, and the ^{crooked} ^{smart} one. This second line, the smart one can prevail on any argument and win the most unjust case for you.

Well if you learn this smart type of talk nothing of my debts I owe now and [let me remind you] which I have incurred because of you will be repaid - not a penny.

Pheidippides. No I cannot go. I should not be able to face my racing friends with my honour sullied!

Strepsiades. In that case by Demeter you will no longer feed at my expense either upon, or your horse or your team. Get out of my house and go to whichever devil you like.

Pheidippides. (more in sorrow than in anger). Uncle Megacles will never let me go about without a mount. I will go to him and little I care about what you say. (Pheidippides looking glum goes out of the house.)

Strepsiades. (To himself). No I won't take it lying down. Even if I am thrown I will not lie down flat. (with sudden determination) With a god's help I will go myself to the fountain of wisdom and learn [to think or two]. (He pauses). But how can I, old and forgetful and slow as I am, master the fine distinctions the terminological subtleties of this new logic. But I must go anyway. It doesn't do me any good ~~waiting~~ ~~any~~ ~~time~~ ~~more~~ ~~here~~ lingering longer here. (He gets out of bed puts his cloak on and goes out of the house.)

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[The scene now changes to the Frontistherion ~~in~~ ~~Socrates~~
Strepsiades enters.]

Strepsiades. Well now I will ^{knock} ^{back} at the door. (He knocks ¹⁰ ^{leantly} and calls).
Boy, Boy.

Disciple of Socrates from inside. To hell with it. (Opens the door and calls out) Who ^{are you breaking} ^{is this} ^{at} (the door down?)

Strepsiades. Hark, Strepsiades, the son of Pheidon from (the deme) of Kikyna.

Disciple. It must be a clumsy ignorant fool indeed who lets go at the door with such ricks. Your noise made my line of thought miscarry.

Strepsiades. Forgive me please. I didn't know I live far from here in the fields.

But tell me what was the idea which I caused the abortion.

Disciple. Only the disciples can hear it. No one else is allowed.

Strepsiades. It's all right. You can tell me. I have come to be a student at the frontistherion.

Disciple. In that case I will ^{He stops out closes the door and settles himself on the steps ready for a long talk. He is a big fellow, very tall, very thin, very long, sitting there both hand near the floor.)} Strepsiades enters. But remember that there are high mysteries ^{hated Socrates told his disciples many times, use length of its own feet can a flea jump? That is the question posed by Socrates to Chaerophon. A flea bit once the brow of Chaerophon then jumped on to the head of Socrates. That is how the question arose.}

Strepsiades. But how on earth did he measure it?

Disciple. Oh! Most ingeniously!

He melted wax and then took the flea and dipped two of its feet in it ^{and took it out again} when cooled he had a pair of true (flea) Persian slippers. He took those off and then measured the distance.

Strepsiades. O great Zeus, what a fine intellect!

Disciple. I wonder what you would say if you heard another of Socrates' explanations.

Strepsiades. Which one, tell me please.

Disciple. Chaerophon from Spettia asked his opinion once whether about the buzzing of the quail. He wanted to know whether the noise comes from the mouth of the quail or from its rear.

Strepsiades. And what did Socrates say about the quail?

Disciple. He explained that the intestine of the quail is very narrow and that the air passing ^{through} (this narrow passage) was driven with force towards the rear. From this narrow passage it was forced to the hollow of the rump which made it distend and made resound like a trumpet.

Strepsiades. Then ^{see!} The rump of the quail is a trumpet! Oh! O blessed man who even investigates the intestines. (Aside) I am sure it will not be difficult to win a court-case anyone who knows so much about the gut of a quail!

Strepsiades. Not yet. No! Not yet. Let's stay here a little while. I want to tell them about my own little affair.

Disciple. But they should n't stay out here in the fresh air too long. (Meaning the open stage Transl.)

Strepsiades (pointing at something). In the name of all the gods what is that thing there? Tell me!

Disciple. That is Astronomy.

Strepsiades (pointing to a map) And this here.

Disciple. That is Geometry.

Strepsiades. And what good does that do;

Disciple. To measure out the land.

Strepsiades. But that is done by lot! (Alluding to the custom of the Athenians of dividing newly conquered territory amongst the citizens by lot. Transl.)

Disciple. I don't mean only conquered land, but the whole earth.

Strepsiades (astror jesus) You are joking! (Becoming serious). But the idea is good and might prove useful to the state.

Disciple (going near the man) Here is the whole surface of the earth. Can you see. (Pointing) And here is Athens.

Strepsiades. What are you talking about? I don't believe you! I can see no courts sitting there! (Alluding to the Athenian passion for law-suits Transl.)

Disciple. Truly this is it, (Drawing with his index finger) the whole Attic land (pointing a bit to the right) And here is Enboia as you can see - this ^{stretched piece of} long (narrow) land.

Strepsiades. Yes I know. ~~Very narrow~~ We and Pericles ^{who} stretched and squeezed it (Enboia was conquered by Pericles 20 odd years earlier and treated very harshly. Transl.) But where is Lacedaemon (i.e. the Peloponnese) ~~where Sparta is situated~~

Disciple. Lacedaemon! (slowing him) Here it is.

Strepsiades. Too near us! Try you best and find ways to shove her off from us as far as possible. (At the time of course Athens and Sparta were at war. Transl.)

Disciple. It is impossible by Zeus, impossible. But there ~~is~~ no way to do that by Zeus, None.

Strepsiades. Hard luck for you ... and us! — But (looking up) ~~Hallo!~~ Who is that man suspended there in a basket?

Disciple. It's he himself.

Strepsiades. He himself! Who.

Disciple. Socrates.

Strepsiades. Socrates! Please call ~~at~~ him out, loudly, for me!

Disciple. You call him yourself. I have got no time to waste. (The Disciple goes inside)

Strepsiades (calling out). Socrates. O, Socrates my little Socrates!

Socrates. What do you want of me, mortal?

Strepsiades (taken aback and slightly hesitating slightly.) Well first ~~tell~~ please tell me what you are doing up there!

Socrates. I promenade on air and ^{study} contemplate the sun!

Stephriades. That is to say you cannot think higher than the earth from the ground but have to suspend from a basket, Et!

Socrates. How else can I find the true meaning of celestial bodies unless I suspend my mind in space and let ~~my~~ thoughts the most delicate mingle with the kindred air? If from the ground I were to study the things that are above I could have found nothing. The earth by its very force attracts to itself the living sap of thought. The same that is to say as happens with the water-cress (In fact vice-versa. The water-cress ascending to the scholar requires a lot of moisture and robs the adjoining plants of their root share Transl.)

Stephriades. What are you saying Socrates! Does thought attract the sap of force like the water-cress? Ah, by dearest Socratideon (my sweet little Socrates, Transl.) come down to me and teach me the things I come here to learn.

Socrates (coming down and getting out of the basket). For what purpose you come here you said?

Stephriades. I want to learn how to speak. You see it happens that I am in debt I am pestered and buggered by my creditors and all my goods and property are at stake.

Socrates. How did you get into such debt without realising the consequences.

Stephriades. This horse-racing ~~man~~^{evil} got ~~literary~~ got hold of me - a voracious evil indeed - and consumed entire. Now please teach me that of your reasoning method I mean the one which will help me to escape scot-free without paying a penny. And ~~compared~~ if you ~~will~~ do that I swear by the gods to pay you any fee you care to ask.

Socrates. What gods do you swear by? Learn first of all that the gods are no currency with us.

Stephriades. What do I swear by? Well, by the iron coins of Byzantium (In most of the Greek towns - i.e. the poorer towns the smaller coins were made from iron. The say as if saying to day: I swear by the copper pennies of England. Transl.)

Socrates (quizzically). And you want to know, to comprehend I mean, the truth about the celestial things?

Stephriades (interrupting). Yes, if there is any truth in them.

Socrates. And... and be able to converse with our goddesses, the bright clouds.

Stephriades. Yes indeed!

Socrates. In that case be seated then on this holy bed.

Stephriades (sitting down). Well I am seated!

Socrates. Now take this chaplet.

Stephriades. Chaplet Socrates? You are not going to sacrifice me like Athamas (An allusion Reference to a tragedy of Sophocles in which Athamas, King of Thebes was brought before the altar of Zeus with ~~his~~ chaplet on his head in order to be sacrificed. Transl.)

Socrates. Have no fear of that. We do this to all who come to be initiated with us.

Strepsiades: And what benefit shall I derive for this?

Socrates: You will become ~~be~~ king of talker, an expert dissembler, a thorough rattle-pate. (He takes a bowl of fine flour and sprinkles on the head of Strepsiades. Strepsiades shivers.)
Come keep still, don't tremble.

Strepsiades: In gods name you are not lying to me are you? (Socrates throws some more flour). If you don't stop this ~~sprinkling~~ jattering you will turn me into blinking flour.

Socrates: (Sharply) Silence old man, and pay attention to my prayers. (Socrates prays) O measureless air, wing and master, ~~bolting~~ in your infinite bosom the earth suspended in space, and you glowing Ether and godly ~~lightning-clad lightning~~ lightning-clad booming Clouds, come forth and manifest yourselves, O venerable divinity in your meteoric beauty to the philosopher.

Strepsiades: No not yet please till I wrap up well with my cloak in order not to get wet. (Aside) And to think that I have come here without any water-proof hood. How silly of me!

Socrates: (Still in an imprecatory pose).

Strepsiades: Come, goodly venerated Clouds show yourselves to this man!
Come whether you dwell on the sacred snow-clad Olympian summits
Or gathering nymph-like in the vast fields of your Ocean father;
Or whether you ~~explot~~ exude in your golden urns the flowing waters of the Nile,
Or the Maestic marsh or the windy rock of Minas.
Hear us, accept our suffering and bless our rites.

Chorus of Clouds: (heard singing but not yet visible)

Clouds eternal,

(let us rise from the deep-throated roar of our father Ocean)
let's rise and show ourselves, ~~pedal, dew-covered~~ turn earth to freshness,
From the deep-throated roar of our Ocean father's bed
to the leafy mountain tops over fruit-laden valleys
enveloping craggy distant peaks and fruit product
of holy mother earth, listening to ^{sweet} ~~the~~ murmur
of rushing streams
and the heavy sonorous chirping of the sea.
Ethers unsleeping eye flashing light
on marble-coloured dawn; Come!
let's shake off our rain-bearing mist
and sweep up in our majestic beauty
and from afar scan the earth.

Socrates: O divine venerable Clouds! You have answered audibly my prayer (Turning to Strepsiades). Have you heard their voices mingling with bellowing thunder removing the tremulous air?

Strepsiades. Where? Where? Show me!

Socrates. They are drifting in a great mass following an oblique course across the woods and valleys.

Strepsiades. (Looking intently). Where? the use of looking. I can see nothing.

Socrates. (Pointing). There there now, look ^{there} by the entrance (the chorus was coming through on to the orchestra, Transl.)

Strepsiades. (Looking intently). I think I caught a glimpse of them.

Socrates. Pausanias must see them clearly by now unless you are as blind as bat (Aristophanes actually says "unless you have pumpkins for eyes, Transl.")

Strepsiades. (After a while). Yes, by Zeus I can see them now (The chorus of clouds come on to the stage. Strepsiades utters ~~an~~ with exclamation.) Oh! venerable addresses! (To Socrates) They have filled the whole place up.

Socrates. And up to this very moment you did not know, did not even suspect that they were goddesses!

Strepsiades. No by Zeus! I thought the clouds were only mist and dew and vapour.

Socrates. (Jocularly) ^{And} Of course you did not know either that ^{those} ~~many~~ of the septuagint graze on this cloud pasture-land goddesses support on their vaporous pastures, a crowd of sophists, the packs of prophets and seers (1) both indigenous and strangers, ^{all kinds} ^{of} well-manicured and bejewelled sissies, the devotees of the cyclical chorus who butches the songs, the idlers of woolly thought - all these lazy rascals who do nothing and graze well simply stying the clouds on their verres!

Strepsiades. That is why then they drift about

"the rushing rain-dropper rain-dropping clouds which veil the light of day"

and the "thousand black locks waving from hundred-headed Typhoon whirls"

and "trunder-pealing storms," which

"blasting the gentle air" and

"sharp-clawed monsters floating through beavers"

and "water carrying lasses, dew loaded mists" — (Here Aristophanes ridicules some of the contemporary dithyrambic poet's Transl.) — and instead of mallowing their tongues they sit down and gobble down ~~chunks~~ of fatty fish, and ~~savoury~~ chunks of succulent meat and delicate thrusts.

Socrates. ~~Yes~~ Thanks to them (pointing towards the chorus clouds) Transl.) and don't you think they deserve it?

Strepsiades. (Looking at the clouds). But how is it that these clouds, which you say that they are clouds, they resemble women.

The clouds up there are not women, I know.

Socrates. Well if they are not women what do they look like to you?

Strepsiades. (Showing bewilderment). I don't quite know I guess like ^{packs of} floating wool, but not like women, — no not at all! — — — And there here have no sex!

Socrates: Well pay attention and answer my question.

Strepsiades: Please ^{ask ahead} ask which questions you like.

Socrates: Do you not now and then look up to the sky and see ~~if~~ clouds like Centaurs, a leopard, a wolf or a Bull?

Strepsiades: Yes, by God, I have. But what of it?

Socrates: They take whatever form they like. If they happen to see one of those loathsome perverts, those hairy apes with long wild hair like the son of Xenophanes (~~accompanying~~ ^{accompanying} Hieronymos, a dithyrambic poet and a pederast friend) they assume the lusty shape of Centaurs ~~to jeer at~~ and hold up to ridicule his mad partner.

Strepsiades: And what do they do when they catch sight of Siron ^(evidently some Tommy-Hall-ite of the day) who robs the public funds.

Socrates: They portray his fine nature at once and appear as wolves.

Strepsiades: That is why then yesterday when they saw that coward Cleonymos who threw away his shield (a general ~~incensed~~ ^{incensed} by attacked by Antophanes for his cowardice coward), they turned into stags and flew away.

Socrates: ~~Did not~~ And to day they have seen that cissy Cleisthenes... and as you see they have turned themselves into women.

Strepsiades (turning to the clouds ^{ie choro}): Hail my good ladies! I salute. And if ever you have let your celestial voice be heard by any one else please let me hear it - oh, you, great Queens of the Universe.

Chorus:

Hail to you old boy

hunter of the subtle and fine word!
And ^{to} you high priest of trivial wisdom
tell us what would you have us bestow.

Since there is no ^{other} hollow-headed scurge (~~to~~ ^{to} ~~us~~ ^{us})
that we would rather ~~obey~~
our respect
expect

Perhaps Prodikos so full of wise things
and knowledge ~~pleas~~ ^{pleas} great.

But you more so
because of the ^{confident} ~~firm~~ way you greet
with ^{heads held high, &c.} ~~stretching~~ ^{stretching} ~~hands~~ ^{hands}, &c.

your ^{trunks} ~~trunks~~ in the street,
and how you walk barefooted
all over the town,

to all misfortunes resigned,
and greet us
whenever you meet us
with modesty and airs refined!

Strepsiades (Exclaiming): Oh! Mother Earth! What wondrous, majestic, no found utterances!

Socrates. (oracularly). They, and they alone, are the true liars. Everything else is pure talk and nothing more.

Stephanoles (cunningly). What about Zeus, the Olympian; is he not a liar?

Socrates. Zeus! What Zeus? Don't talk nonsense. There is no Zeus.

Stephanoles. What are you saying Socrates. If there is no Zeus who makes the rain then. Tell me that.

Socrates. These cause the rain (pointing to the clouds), and I am going to prove it to you once and for all! Have you ever seen any rain coming down without any clouds in the sky. Can he cause rain in a clear day when the clouds have migrated some where else.

Stephanoles. By Apollo, you are right there. I must admit that you have a strong argument here. For my part I believed up to now that rain was caused by Zeus running into a sieve. That is alright. But who causes the dreadful thunders, tell me. (Pretending to tremble). They scare me out of my wits.

Socrates. They cause the thunder when they roll about and get mixed up.

Stephanoles. How so you wiseacre!

Socrates. It's like this. When they are full of rain and are forced to sail along the weight of the water precipitates them down and full as they are they fall on one another and burst out with terrific noise.

Stephanoles. But who compels them to fall down, if not Zeus?

Socrates. No. Not at all! It's the celestial vortex.

Stephanoles. Is that so? I didn't know. So there is no Zeus but in his place reigns somebody called Vortex. But you have not explained to me yet how the thunder rolls.

Socrates. You don't seem to understand. Didn't I tell you that the clouds when they are full of rain, blown out that is to say fall on another and break with terrific noise?

Stephanoles. I really don't see ~~parallel~~ ^{parallel} ~~between~~. How can that happen?

Socrates (restraining himself with difficulty). Well. I will prove to you how it happens taking yourself as an example. During the festival of Panathaea you usually gorge yourself with food (all the dependent cities of Athens were sending oxen for sacrifice during the Panathaea and thus there was plenty of free meat to be had by the Athenian citizens and consequently many of them were over-indulgent. Trans.) ^{and then} your stomach begins to growl you get pains in your stomach and all of a sudden they turn into resounding growls.

Stephanoles. O yes by Apollo! I see it all now. First I have pains and I feel uncomfortable. Then all the soup and stew and meat I had starts boiling up and I hear growling. Then stealthily and quietly a little gurgling pappap, pappap then a harsher pappapax and when at last I seek relief from pain it thunders out pappappapax just like they do (pointing at the clouds).

Socrates. Well, ~~why~~ think then that if your little stomach produces this awful din, why should not the air, which is limitless produce these mighty claps of thunder. They both, incidentally, spring from the same cause.

Stephanoles. But then where does the ~~lightning~~ ^{thunder-bolt} come, from flashing like a rod of fire which at times burns the living and at others only hardly singes them? Is it that the punishment that Zeus metes ^{out} on the perjurers.

Socrates. O, you ignorant ~~fool~~ ^{foolhard} with your mind still enased in the darkness of the past if it is a you say why hasn't Zeus burned Simon or any of that ilk like Cleonymos and Theoros. You will admit that there are no greater perjurers about. Instead of smiting them he strikes at his ^{own} temples, at Sounion the promontory of Athens, at the towering majestic oaks. Why then? Can you tell me? Is the oak a perjurer?

Stephanoles. Can't say that. But it seems to me that you talk sure. Well what is a thunderbolt then?

Socrates (proudly). When a dry wind galloping along gets engulfed by them (meaning the clouds) then it blows them out like a bladder and when distended to ~~unbreakable~~ ^{unbreakable} the maximum it bursts out violently and roar and flash into burn itself into flashing flame by the very reason of its own velocity.

Stephanoles. O, yes that is what happened to me once by accident. It was during the feast of Zeus. I was cooking a sow's belly for my family but somehow forgot to slit it open ^{there} it smelled out and suddenly it burst out and splashed me all over, ~~scald~~ burnt by face! (Socrates burst out laughing)

Chorus.

O, you happy man, who would like to make
 who the ~~incomprehension~~ ^{incomprehension} of the great ~~philosopher~~ ^{philosopher} to ~~particular~~ ^{particular} confound.
 Among all the Athenians and Greeks the happiest of men
 you will be. In all Athens and Greece alike
 the glory of your name will resound.

Provided the memory you have and the brain and ardour zest
 and from no task you ~~shrink~~ ^{shrink}
 and can stand the fatiguing fest
 of ignoring hunger and thirst
 and for sake wine and think
 that gymnastics and loves are follies
 like the ~~the~~ curse to cough or
 to feel cold and depressed
 and esteem it the best thing of all
 for an intelligent man
 is to ~~talk~~ ^{talk} ~~in words~~ ^{in words} ~~in beauty expressed~~ ^{in beauty expressed}
 and win your battles ~~as you sit~~
 and confound and confound and stall
 your adversary
 with your tongue and wit.

Strepsiades. If somebody beats me up. Let's see. First I am beaten up. Then I wait for a few seconds and call witnesses and then take my assailant to court at once.

Socrates. (peremptorily). Take off your coat.

Strepsiades. (taken aback) Why? What ^{reason} have I done?

Socrates. No. But it's the custom here to enter the school naked.

Strepsiades. But I have not come here with a search-warrant for stolen goods. (Plato says that officers searching for stolen goods had to enter the house naked or only with a shirt on so that they may not carry in secretly the things they were to look for as stolen goods.)

Socrates. Take your coat and don't talk nonsense.

Strepsiades. Tell me this between us. If I am diligent and willing and learn quickly whom of your students will I resemble.

Socrates. You will be the dead spit of Charerephon.

Strepsiades. God help me. I shall be half-dead then.

Socrates. Stop your chattering. Follow me and no more of this nonsense.

Strepsiades. Let me have something to eat - a piece of cake or ^{honey-pie} something. I feel dreadful going down there. I feel dreadful going down there. It looks like the case of the oracle Trophimos. (Trophimos lived in a cave and those who wanted to consult him had to take to him offerings of cakes to appease the serpent which haunted the cave according to the scholiast. Transl.)

Socrates (dragging strepsiades a push) Come in. Why do you keep dallying at the door. (Socrates goes ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ followed and Strepsiades enters followed by Socrates. The chorus is left on the stage alone and turn to the audience to deliver the Parabasis.)

PARABASIS

The parabasis was the author's commentary on his play and was delivered by the chorus. It was taking place at what is called now the interval and thus afforded the principal actors some time for welcome rest and restoration of their make-up and the scene-shifter (stage-hand) to arrange the new scene.

(The chorus waiting to strepsiades.) Good luck and all the best for you courage is great. Let fate smile upon him for though in life he started late his adventurous spirit demand new fields of thought to plough to walk ^{and practice} wisdom's garden-warden. And now;

PARABASIS

we turn to you spectators (the chorus turns and face the audience) and will frankly tell you the truth. Yes the whole truth by Dionysos my protector.

(The leader of the chorus speaking for the author): I hope Mayus be acclaimed the victor (i.e. in the dramatic contest) and given the crown for wisdom to day as I consider this the best

of my comedies and you the wisest of critics. I wished you to be the first to enjoy this work of mine which cost me so much in thought and time and toil. [The next few lines were added in by Aristophanes for the second production of the Clouds which took place five years after the first in 418 B.C. Trans.] The lines are marked by quotes Trans.)

"Then I had to depart, deemed unworthy by you, defeated by incompetent rivals. And I blame you, particularly the wise ones among you for this defeat, because I wrote this play particularly for you. But whatever happens I will never cease to seek the approval of those discerning for my efforts"

I shall never forget the day when men ^{here} whom it was a joy to have as audience, ^{received with acclamations} ~~excited~~ my first play (ie the Daitales) about my young madest man and the importuning delambree, and I unfortunately then a virgin could not officially beget children and had to expose my first-born and another adopted the foundling and cared for it. [Evidently there were laws in Athens stipulating the age when one could compete in a festival of drama. When the DAITALES was presented in 427 B.C. Aristophanes was obviously "under-age" Trans.] But it was you who nurtured and helped it generously to stand on its own feet. From that time on you have almost sworn to be my faithful allies.

And now this ^{younger sister of hers, this new} comedy of mine comes like the Electra of the poets (allusion to the recognition of Orestes by Electra by the former's "lock of hair" at the tomb of their father Agamemnon as stated by Aeschylus in his Choephoroi. Trans.) that come looking for ^{the same} wise and discerning spectators as previously (i.e. like the spectators who acclaimed Daitales and gave Aristophanes the prize Trans.) Even if from afar he will get a glimpse of Orestes will recognise him by the lock of his hair!

But not too, that ^{pure decorum of} ~~any~~ ^{has} ~~not~~ come to you with massive ~~handing~~ leather phallus, led at the end, ~~looming~~ in its sheers to make the boys laugh; neither did she crack bawdy jokes at the ball, nor dance the coarse sexy cordax dance, ~~nor~~ she neither put on stage the characte of an old man who while saying his lines hits his questines on the head just to cause laughter and conceal the poverty of his jokes (the Scholiast comment that Eupolis, the comic writer and rival of Aristophanes used this method to excite laughter Trans.) nor did she rush on to the stage carrying a torch and screaming and shouting loo, loo, ha, ha, ha. None of that! ~~Not~~ ^{pure} comes to you relying upon herself and her verse.

And I, being ~~the best~~ ^{the best} I am, ^{the} ~~poet~~ ^{poet}, do not grow hair on my bald head to ^{entertain} ~~entertain~~ ^{you} neither do I seek to ^{get by} ~~obscure~~ by sewing to you the same theme, slightly obsequious two or three times over. I always rake my brains to offer you ^{new} ~~new~~ ^{ideas} ~~ideas~~ ^{quite} ~~quite~~ different from ~~the~~ old, and excellent ones at that. [The following few lines in quote were added in the second presentation of the play. Translator.]

"When Cleon (the demagogue then) was at the height of his power I attacked him mercilessly, but I have scorned to strike at him after he was dead (Cleon died in 422 B.C. then). But my rivals once they get their cue from Hyperbolas (another demagogue who succeeded Cleon then) they have never ceased to trample on the dead to attack violently without sparing even his mother. First (the comic poet) Eupolis presented his 'Maikas'; this was simply my play 'Knights' which this plagiarist adapted and distorted to his own ends adding to it the character of an old drunken woman ~~to~~ on to dance the cordax - a character ~~taken from~~ ^{introduced earlier on by} Phrynichos who made her be devoured by, then Hermippos (a comic poet then) fell foul of Hyperbolas and every one else has fallen on him and repeat the simile that I introduced in the knights about the eels: ~~+~~ ⁺ ~~do~~ I ^{may} ~~hope~~ that those who find these jokes laughable will not be able to appreciate mine. But as for you (with a sweeping gesture to the audience) who love me and applaud my verses you will be thought wise and discerning people in the years to come."

(invocation)

O Zeus mighty master of the gods, Olympian Zeus
I invoke you first in my chorus. And you
dread power with trident in hand forerunner
ocean's salty waves and earth's bowels
I invoke you too.

And father divine all sustaining
Ether and Phoebus chariot driven - Phoebus who else -
drenching the world with light
to both gods I men an effulcent night
I call you to my side.

(Now turning to the audience with affected seriousness).

Now O wise and discerning spectators please pay attention. Listen to my just and legitimate complaints. I dare say that we have benefited the city more than all the gods put together (mean of course, Aristophanes' advice to contain in his plays Truif.) and and yet to us alone you never offer either libation or sacrifice (i.e. you never pay for our advice). And when, out of your mind you have decided upon some reckless expedition then we tremble against it or drench it with ridicule. And when you chose that enemy of God the Pimplagonian farmer (i.e. Cleon) to be your general our brow darkened our brow and let our wrath break out; [And as you ^{as if} "it was like" lightning crushed on thunder" (quotation from Sophocles). The moon angry went off the beaten track and the sun withdrew into himself and threatened to withhold its light from you if Cleon become a general (this passage evidently refers to some particularly ^{unusual} stretch of bad weather which preceded Cleon's rise to power. Truif.). But you elected him. It is truly that no sooner does this city embark upon some fatal or ill-advised course that the gods, ^{in spite of that} (somehow) turn everything to the good.

And now I shall advise how you can turn this (i.e. Cleon's death) to good advantage. It's very simple. Condemn this ravenous fellow Cleon for bribery and extortion, then muzzle him and fit a wooden collar round his neck (like they did to oxen & such) and leave him there and so you will be able to ~~turn~~ ^{turn} your mistakes to the advantage of the city and restore her to her ancient prosperity.

Phoebus and, ringing on Delos'

cragged Cynthian peak

And you blessed virgin

Epheesian Artemis

in whose gold-glittering temple

hydian maidens play;

And you Athens our town protectress

under Gods driving aegis

aid me all!

And you to reveler of glees and dances

joy-giving Dionysos

roaming over the Parnassian rocks

leading the Bacchantes of Delphi

with your flopping pines,

Good Dionysos, come to me too.

As we were ~~praising~~ ^{praising} ourselves ready to day to come the Moon has met us and charged us first to greet you Athenians and the Allies then becoming stern she said and showing her anger she said that though she always treats you well and ~~rewards~~ ^{benefits} you not in words but in living benefits you treat her abominably. She saves you, to start off with at least a drachma per month ~~each~~, so each one of you if he ~~is called out~~ ^{has to go out} at night for some reason or another can say "boy don't buy any torches, I can see perfectly by the light of the moon". Many other good things she gives you also, but you do not mark your days correctly ~~outroting~~ ^{outroting} but you mix up your calendar ~~and~~ ^{and} in a woful confusion. So the Gods get wild with her and threaten her every time they go home and there is nothing for them to eat or drink because of the changing around of the festival days and ~~them not able to keep up~~ ^{not keeping} them according to her ~~calendar~~ ^{calendar}. When the Gods expect you to sacrifice you torture men with your cross-examinations at court or indulge in the game of dispensing justice. And even - as the Moon said - when we Gods are fasting in honour of the minor ^{clans} ~~clans~~ Memnon and Sarpedon you sacrifice and drink and laugh and pour your libation. (This passage refers to certain alterations in the calendar effected introduced at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war by the astronomer Meton. ^{Tramb.}) Because of this when the chance invited Hyperbolas with the office of recorder ~~he~~ ^{we} ~~took~~ ^{took} the crown away from him in order to learn in the future to keep reckoning the days according to the phases of the moon. (The whole of this passage refers to the second edition of the Clouds ^{Tramb.})

[The Chorus after their song and dance disappear. Socrates comes out from the proscenium in an angry mood, followed by Strepsiades. Scene as before.]

Socrates. In the name of life's master Breath, in the name of Chaos and of all the ~~bits~~ I have never met such a boorish, stupid, inept and forgetful man before. Whatever little 'sense' I try to teach him he forgets it before he learns it. However it can't be helped. I will call him out here in the light of day. (He shouts) Strepsiades! Where are you? Come out here and bring your couch with you.

Strepsiades. (from behind the scenes). I can't. The bugs won't let me. (He is seen staggering out carrying his couch).

Socrates. Stop that nonsense. Place it down here quickly and pay ^{good} attention.

Strepsiades. (puts the couch down and sits on it). Well here I am.

Socrates. Of all the things you have not been taught before which one would like to be taught first? Tell me: Would you like to learn about the meter, the rhythm or the structure of the epic?

Strepsiades. Meters? Meter of course. I want to know all about measurements because the other day a shopkeeper cheated me of two measures of flour.

Socrates. It's not about that kind of ^{thing} meter I ask. Which (poetic) meter according to you is the best? The trimeter or the tetrameter?

Strepsiades. If you ask me I like the demi-sixth - the full gallon measure what!

Socrates. What are you talking about man?

Strepsiades. What am I talking about? Do you bet me that you eight pint measure does not make one gallon?

Socrates. (shrugs) To hell with you! This damned village idiot. (To Strepsiades) Come, perhaps you will be able to learn the rhythm ^{rather} quicker.

Strepsiades. Will the rhythms provide me with my daily bread?

Socrates. Undoubtedly they will help you in your after dinner speeches and conversation. They will help you to distinguish which is the sword-dance rhythm and which is the dactylic music?

Strepsiades. The dactylic one? I know that by Zeus!

Socrates. Well let's have it.

Strepsiades. Dactylic, it's the finger of course, what else? Well when I was young I was using this finger ^{like this} (Strepsiades, ^{make} the sign of the unseemly finger with palm outstretched and the middle finger erect). This the equivalent to the English vulgar sign, which the ~~verse~~ of the Church's Chorus ~~is~~ sign.

Socrates. You are a dirty-minded cur.

Strepsiades. Listen you misery. It's not these things that I want to know?

Socrates. Then what do you want to know?

Strepsiades. Well (hesitatingly) I want to know how to argue crookedly - what you describe as the art of false reasoning.

Socrates. But first you have to learn other things, to improve your knowledge. What of the quadrupeds are rightly male.

Strepsiades. Do you think me mad. Of course I know the male ones - The ram, the bull, the he goat, the dog, the chicken.

Socrates: Stop. You see what you are doing? You called the female chicken and the male the same? Haven't you?

Strepsiadēs: what else could I call them? Tell me.

Socrates: well... chicken & chicken of course.

Strepsiadēs: You are quite right by Poseidon. What shall I call them in the future then?

Socrates: You will call the one male chicken and the other female chicken.

Strepsiadēs: Female chicken indeed! Excellent (with upward glance) oh, you limitless air! And for this single superb lesson you will bring your trough along and fill him to the brim with barley! Eh?

Socrates: Now you have made another mistake. You make the trough masculine when it is neuter.

Strepsiadēs: How did I make the trough masculine?

Socrates: Of course you did! You called it him the same as if you were referring to Cleonymos.

Strepsiadēs: (flustered). I cannot get it.

Socrates: Well "him" for trough and "him" for Cleonymos. ^{Do they} ~~are they~~ belong to same gender?

Strepsiadēs: No they do not belong together. Cleonymos never had a trough; he used to knead his dough in a round mortar. But please tell me what should I call him?

Socrates: Call him? It's neuter like Socrataki (diminutive of Socrates transl.)

Strepsiadēs: well the trough is neuter. Socrates: That's right ^{Strepsiadēs} neuter, like ~~so many other things~~, Cleonymos for example. (This is meant as a jest but at the same time)

Socrates: Now I must teach you how to distinguish the ^{proper} masculine names that is to say to distinguish which are male and which are female.

Strepsiadēs: O, I know the female ones alright!

Socrates: Give me an example or two

Strepsiadēs: Lysilla, Philippa, (or Philinna) Kleitagora, Demetria

Socrates: And what about the masculine ones

Strepsiadēs: Philoxenos, Melisias, Amynias.

Socrates: no not so. The last two are not masculine.

Strepsiadēs: (aghast). Not masculine.

Socrates: not at all! How would you call Amynias if you happen to meet him in the street.

Strepsiadēs: How? I will say "hey there Amynia" (The ~~to~~ vocative in Greek in names ending in as becomes a, which is the feminine form of the nominative transl.)

Socrates: Can you see it now? You give Amynia a feminine ending.

Strepsiadēs: That's right by Zeus! That is why he refuses to join our army. But everybody knows that. What's the use of learning what everybody knows.

Socrates: None what so ever. Now lie on the couch,

Strepsiadēs: what?

Socrates: Lie on the couch and let your ponder over these things which interest you.