January 1997

Performance and Textuality in Aristophanes' Clouds

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Recommended Citation

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Reprinted from *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, Volume 10, Issue 2, 1997, pages 397-421.
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Abstract

During the 5th century BCE Athenians honored the god Dionysus at two public events with ritual activity, political business and public spectacle. The smaller of the two, the Lenean festival, took place in the winter, and the city Dionysia a few months later in the spring.² These festivals featured a number of musical and poetic events, but they are best known to us as the occasions for the performance of Greek tragedy and comedy.³

Comments

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Performance and Textuality in Aristophanes' *Clouds*

The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.

—Walter Benjamin¹

During the fifth century BCE Athenians honored the god Dionysus at two public events with ritual activity, political business, and public spectacle. The smaller of the two, the Lenaean festival, took place in the winter, and the City Dionysia a few months later in the spring.² These festivals featured a number of musical and poetic events, but they are best known to us as the occasions for the performance of Greek tragedy and comedy.³ All Athenian dramatists composed their plays originally for a single performance at one of these festivals, competing with other poets for the honor of a prize.⁴ We have some information about the mechanics of these dramatic productions—the selection of poets, for example, or the training of choruses—but despite a relatively rich corpus of testimonia about the classical theater, one of the greatest mysteries remains how exactly we end up with a *text* of the performances. No author's "autograph" manuscript, no "first edition" of a fifth-century play, has materially survived from classical Athens, and despite some evidence of an early textual tradition from papyrus scraps, we rely for our modern texts almost entirely on a manuscript tradition that begins only in the Middle Ages.⁵

The fact that the Athenian playwright was composing for a unique event, the festival competition, and not especially with an audience of *readers* in mind, has led many to question whether he had any concern at all for the survival of his work as a *text*. A formal text of the play, after all, need not have been necessary for a successful production. The dramatic poet at this time was in general directly involved himself in the production—distributing parts, attending rehearsals of actors and choruses, sometimes even taking on acting roles. How much actors were coached orally by the poet and how much they practiced from written parts is not well understood,⁶ but the evidence suggests

that the components of a play (spoken and lyric parts, instrumental accompaniment)⁷ were not assembled before a production into a textual artifact. What happened to the play when the festival was over? Indeed, what “was” the work at that point? Had it become a text, or was it just a collection of words housed in the memories of the poet and his performers?⁸

Obviously, if some sort of text of these performances had not circulated soon after their production, and if some form of text had not ended up in the hands of Hellenistic philologists and librarians, we would not have the editions we do today. Yet the crucial moment in which the poet’s words took on some sort of fixity remains a matter of great uncertainty, and even speculating about it inspires yet another set of questions, such as how poets of the period actually conceived of their “work,” how much authority or legitimacy they invested in “textuality” itself, whether they perceived the ontologies of text and performance as parallel or hierarchical, and what sort of relationships the poet had with his work and his audience.

In spite of the dearth of direct evidence bearing on such questions from fifth-century Athens, there is nevertheless at least one tantalizing case, namely Aristophanes’ comedy *Clouds*, which offers considerable insight into how poets conceived of their texts in this period. This work provides an unusual amount of information (or, perhaps, informative disinformation) about itself and the circumstances of its performance. As it turns out, the text of *Clouds* we now have was apparently a revision of an earlier version and Aristophanes felt moved to include some background to these revisions within the play itself. Since it seems unlikely that our revised version was ever performed, and so comes down to us only as a “script” of sorts, it has been noted that *Clouds* may in fact be the earliest known example of a classical drama with a strictly literary transmission.⁹ I would like, therefore, to examine in what follows Aristophanes’ own commentary, both direct and oblique, on the evolution of his *Clouds* from performed work to revised text, especially in relation to the question of how texts were conceptualized both as material artifacts and metaphysical abstractions in fifth-century Athens. As I shall argue, the manner in which Aristophanes speaks of both an “original” performative moment and a process of revision that was almost certainly “textual,” reveals in the poet simultaneous, but conflicting, concerns for performance and dissemination, and offers an unusual perspective on the evolution of Classical Athens from a highly oral to an increasingly literate culture.¹⁰

The focus of my discussion will be a section of Aristophanes’ *Clouds* known as the “parabasis.” The abstract noun “parabasis” itself, though ancient, is not attested in Old Comedy, but it derives from a verb, *parabaino*, meaning “to walk aside” or “step forward.” Aristophanes himself uses this verbal form in several plays to describe a point (generally more or less midway through the play) at which the chorus comes forward to address the audience, usually pre-

tending to speak on behalf of the poet himself.¹¹ Most of Aristophanes' plays contain some form of parabasis, and most of these parabases appear to intrude into an otherwise fictionalized plot, allowing the chorus leader to assume the voice of the poet and digress about matters of personal or political concern.

The study of the parabasis as a formal device in the so-called Old Comedy of fifth-century Athens—its origins, its morphology, its relationship to the plot, etc.—has fascinated scholars for over a century,¹² and it is easy to see why. In a poetic genre that, like tragedy, relies heavily on dramatic illusion,¹³ the poet's voice is rarely heard directly. The parabasis is by definition self-conscious and offers a place where the poet can at least pretend to speak *in propria persona*, whether it be to broadcast his own poetic merits, repudiate his rivals, or comment about current events. While we need not always assume that the parabasis dramatizes a poet's actual autobiography, the autobiographical *stance* adopted by the chorus leader in the parabasis on behalf of the poet constructs an essentially metatheatrical voice with much to say about the theatrical culture of fifth-century Athens.¹⁴

Clouds tells the story of a boorish, provincial man, Strepsiades, deep in debt because of his son Pheidippides' expensive tastes in horse-racing. Strepsiades tries to become a student of Socrates in order to learn the kind of rhetoric that will allow him to outfox his creditors. A chorus of clouds—divine figures appropriately portrayed as changeable and unpredictable—play an unstable role, at one point apparently supporting Socrates and his sophistic *phrontisterion* ("Thinkery"), at another repudiating them vindictively.¹⁵ At approximately one third of the way through the play, Strepsiades withdraws off-stage with Socrates into the *phrontisterion* to begin his rigorous sophistic training, and the parabatic section of the play begins. The change in scene is indicated not only by exits and entrances, but also by formal changes in meter and music. After a short lyric stanza (lines 510–17) signaling the beginning of the parabasis, the parabasis proper begins. The chorus leader here steps forward, takes off his mask and cloud-costume,¹⁶ and addresses the audience in the person of the poet:

Oh spectators, I will speak the truth frankly to you,
By Dionysus, who nurtured me.
May I win the prize, and be considered clever, 520
Since, thinking that you in the audience are shrewd
And that this play is the cleverest of my comedies,
I thought you worthy to be the first to taste it. which gave me
The greatest work. But then I withdrew, defeated by vulgar men
Unworthily! And so I blame you clever men for this,
On whose behalf I undertook the job.

ὦ θεώμενοι κατερῶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλευθέρας
τάληθ' ἢ νῆ τὸν Διόνυσον τὸν ἐκθρέψαντά με.

οὕτω νικήσαιμι τῷ ἐγὼ καὶ νομιζοίμην σοφός,
 ὥς ὑμᾶς ἡγούμενος εἶναι θεατὰς δεξιούδης
 καὶ ταύτην σοφώτατ' ἔχειν τῶν ἐμῶν κωμωδιῶν,
 πρώτους ἤξιωσ' ἀναγεῦσ' ὑμᾶς, ἢ παρέσχε μοι
 ἔργον πλείστον· εἴτ' ἀνεχώρουν ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν φορτικῶν
 ἡττηθεὶς οὐκ ἄξιος ὧν· ταῦτ' οὖν ὑμῖν μέφομαι
 τοῖς σοφοῖς, ὧν οὐνεκ' ἐγὼ ταῦτ' ἐπραγματευόμην.

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The opening lines of the parabasis seem to make a simple point: "I put a lot of effort into this play, which I take to be my most sophisticated; and I had faith that you, my audience, would be discriminating enough to realize this; but I lost unjustly, the victim of incompetent judges." It is not clear, however, which version of the play the poet has in mind in the opening lines of the parabasis, up to line 524. The following two lines (525-26) at least make it clear that the poet is angry at the audience for a past injustice, but in general throughout the parabasis the chronology of the two putative versions of the play is hardly explicit.¹⁷ In fact, lines 524-26, which mention the poet's defeat and subsequent "withdrawal" from the stage offer the only tolerably clear internal evidence for two editions of a play. It is surprising in fact how indirectly, almost anxiously, Aristophanes deals with the subject in the parabasis. At least some of the ambiguity about which version of the play the parabasis refers to derives, I believe, from a discontinuity between his conceptualization of an original *performed* play and a revised *textual* version of it.

Despite Aristophanes' own ambiguity about the two versions, there is also some external evidence to suggest a revision of an earlier *Clouds*. Our evidence for dating an original version of the play comes only from one direct source, namely one of the anonymous "hypotheses," the informational prefaces preserved in some medieval manuscripts of the text. Hypothesis II in Dover's edition begins as follows: "The first *Clouds* was produced at the City Dionysia in the archonship of Isarkhos, when Cratinus won with his *Pytine*, and Ameipsias with his *Konnos*."¹⁸ The archonship establishes the date securely to 424/3, and the amount of detail about the contest and the competitors is reassuring. But if we fix the date of a *performed* *Clouds* at 423, problems arise when we try to explain other chronological allusions in the parabasis itself. Specifically, the chorus leader mentions a play by Aristophanes' contemporary and rival Eupolis called the *Maricas* (see lines 551-54, quoted above), and a politician named Hyperbolos (lines 557-58). Since Eupolis' *Maricas* has been dated to the Lenaean festival of 421 BCE,¹⁹ and Hermippus, alleged here to have followed Eupolis in his attacks on Hyperbolos, is not known to have produced a comedy that year, scholars have assumed that the revision of *Clouds* must have taken place some time after 420. Other datable allusions in the play simply complicate matters further, suggesting indeed that the text we possess

retains the inconsistencies of an incomplete revision.²⁰ Establishing an exact date of a revised version, in the present state of the evidence, seems impossible,²¹ but of greater concern for our purposes is trying to understand in the first place the very notion of “textual revision” in this period.

One of the central questions in this regard is whether or not a second, revised version of *Clouds* was, or was ever intended, to be performed. Perhaps the most compelling evidence to suggest that the revised *Clouds* was not, in fact, performed comes from an exegetical comment on line 553 of *Clouds* in a fourteenth-century manuscript, which records a Hellenistic disagreement between the poet-scholar Callimachus (c. 305–240 BCE) and his pupil Eratosthenes (c. 275–194 BCE). When Callimachus read in the official records of the Athenian theater (known as *didaskaliai*) that Eupolis’ *Maricas* was produced two years after *Clouds*, he claimed the *didaskaliai* must have been mistaken since the parabasis of *Clouds* implied that the *Clouds* preceded Eupolis’ play. Eratosthenes repudiated Callimachus by pointing out that the *didaskaliai* would only have recorded a play that was actually produced (Callimachus frag. 454, Pfeiffer). In other words, it would not be surprising to find an allusion to Eupolis’ play in a revised version of *Clouds*, since revisions would have taken place after the production of Eupolis’ *Maricas*. Eratosthenes’ brief comment, then, certainly holds that a second, revised performance of *Clouds* never appeared in the didascalical records at Athens, and so was probably never performed.²²

To summarize our investigation so far: Aristophanes began to revise an original version of *Clouds* some time after 421, and he alludes to this activity in the parabasis. The second version—the version that we have—was probably never performed, but clearly the text was in circulation well into the Hellenistic period. It is also noteworthy that a text of the *first* edition, at least in some circles, was in circulation along with the second.²³

The likelihood that a second *Clouds* was never performed gives rise to another set of questions, with significant implications for our understanding of the relationship between text and performance in the fifth century. A text that is revised primarily or exclusively for the purpose of a contemporary performance, after all, will be conceptualized by the author differently from a text with no other immediate purpose than the recording and authorization of an original performance for posterity. Hypothesis I in Dover’s edition provides an intriguing account of the revision, and offers at least some insight into the conceptual dilemma confronting the Athenian dramatist. Dover translates the passage as follows:

This [the revised *Clouds*] is the same as the previous one, but it has been revised in details, as it would be if the poet wanted to produce it again but for some reason or other did not after all do so.²⁴ To take the play as a whole, correction, which has occurred in every part < . . . > some elements have been removed, while others

have been worked in and have been given a new form in the arrangement and in the alteration of speaking parts. And some elements have got their revision in their entirety as follows: the parabasis of the chorus has been replaced; also, the section where the just logos talks with the unjust [i.e. the agon], and finally, the part where Socrates' house is burned.²⁵

To judge from this description, Aristophanes reworked the original version quite radically at crucial points (the agon, the parabasis, the ending). Dover seems correct to use this passage as evidence that a second *Clouds* never made it to the stage, but it is less clear, as he believes, that the commentator makes a certain claim about Aristophanes' intention to revise the play for another performance. I would suggest that the commentator's phrasing reflects his inability to reconcile the nature of the revisions that he himself knew (and which we have in our version) with the notion that they would have been performed. The issue comes down to the precise meaning of the "if"-clause in the second part of the first sentence, and the adversative "but"-clause that follows: "it has been revised in details, as it would be if the poet wanted to produce it again, but for some reason or other did not after all do so." Does the commentator here mean: "the revisions of the play suggest that their author intended to perform the play again; but in fact, for some reason, the play never was actually performed"? On this reading, the "if"-clause speculates about Aristophanes' intentions in making his revisions, while the "but"-clause states a fact about the revised play, namely that it was never performed. The commentator in this case implies that Aristophanes would have felt his revised text to be performable, even though a performance never occurred. The grammar of this Greek sentence, however, suggests rather that we take the "but"-clause in close connection with the "if"-clause,²⁶ meaning: "the revisions to the play are of such a sort that they seem as if they were made by someone-who-wanted-to-re-perform-it-but-who-then-did-not." The revisions, in other words, were consistent with someone who *intended* to revise the play for re-performance, but who *himself*, for whatever reason, never followed through on this intention. Unlike the first interpretation of the sentence, which assumes that the revised play was performable, even if that performance never occurred, this reading would imply that the revisions to *Clouds* that have come down to us did not seem consistent with the kind of play that Aristophanes would be expected to perform, (i.e., "he wanted to perform it, but he left it in such a condition that is unlikely that it would have been performed as it stood."). Either the revisions were simply left unfinished by the poet, and so the poet abandoned his original plan to perform a revised version, or they were finished but turned out to be unsuitable for performance.²⁷ In either case, the commentator calls attention to the gap that a fifth-century dramatist must have perceived between conceptualizing his work as text on the one hand, and as a performance on the other.

In an age when plays were initially composed primarily for a single performance, the very notion of “revising” a composition that had already been performed must have entailed on the part of the poet, at least in the earlier stages of revision, a significant reorientation away from a strictly dramaturgical conception of the work towards a much more textual one. After all, that original performance of the play became the actual “object” of revision, a fixed composition: in essence, a sort of text itself. This process by which a performance, once completed in real time, “becomes” a text—a process which an Athenian dramatist intent on revising a given work must have internalized—helps to explain the problems that Aristophanes evidently had to confront in re-conceiving his original *Clouds* for another performance. Aristophanes seems to have recognized that revising his *Clouds* involved the difficult procedure of re-constituting a performance that had become a text back into a performance. Our Hypothesis commentator quoted above leaves open the possibility, at least, that Aristophanes might have *deliberately* abandoned his efforts to compose a second performable version of *Clouds*, leaving to posterity instead only a text for reading and consultation, a version that could definitively correct any misunderstandings that arose from the original performance in 423.²⁸

The possibility of a text intended explicitly for reading has appealed to a number of scholars, such as Kenneth Dover, who says of the revised *Clouds*:

This text was not a reminder of something seen on the stage, but was intended for readers. It is therefore an indication that at least from the penultimate decade of the fifth century a comic poet might not be exclusively concerned with theatrical effect, but might also take into account future readers, including, perhaps, readers who were not acquainted with his work in the theatre.²⁹

There may in fact be some truth in this assessment, but Dover’s overall formulation raises a number of fundamental questions about textuality and writing in fifth-century Athens which complicate the picture of a dramatic poet suddenly “collecting his papers” for posterity. In the case of *Clouds* we have seen the difficulty in articulating exactly *what* Aristophanes thought he would have been revising in the first place, and then, of course, *why*. We must ask, to begin with, what cultural valence a strictly textual version of a work would have at the time; that is, is it even conceivable that a dramatic poet could consider a *text* to be an end in itself? Before we conclude with Dover and others that Aristophanes could have edited his own texts, we must first consider the relationship between writing and performance, and the question of a reading audience in the late fifth century.

At the end of the fifth century, as we noted earlier, writing was becoming increasingly valued in Athens for both practical and aesthetic reasons. Only a century after Aristophanes we can even speak comfortably of Greece as a genuine “book culture”: Hellenistic Greece was a period of great libraries, and in-

tense activity in textual criticism, philology and data collection. For that era it is easy to envision poets composing in writing, valorizing the written text, and reifying the very essence of their work through a written artifact.³⁰ But conditions were less clear in Aristophanes' day. There is no question that books (papyrus rolls, that is, not the codex form which came much later) existed in fifth-century Athens, but our evidence for *how* they were used is limited. We have evidence for a book trade of sorts towards the end of the fifth century,³¹ as well as for the use of texts for official archiving, but the private use of books was still regarded as a novelty. There are anecdotes, for example, about Euripides' large library, yet at the time his general bookishness was regarded as unusual and risible.³² At the same time, a well known passage from Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1114) does suggest that, even in the eyes of the general public, a certain authority resided in published texts.³³

It is perhaps all the more surprising, therefore, that "writing" is either downplayed or ignored in contemporary testimony about actual poetic composition. Two passages in Aristophanes portray tragic poets in the act of composing. At *Acharnians* 383–479, for example, Euripides, shown in the act of composing a tragedy, calls for costumes appropriate for his characters, but bypasses any mention of something with which to write down verses. Even more intriguing is the opening of *Thesmophoriazusae* (25–265), where the tragic poet Agathon actually composes and then performs some lyric passages. The act of composition, that is, is presented as unmediated by writing. And here too, as in *Acharnians*, the poet feels compelled to compose by becoming the character in question: Agathon dresses in the female clothing of the chorus for which he is composing his song.

Scholars have concluded from passages such as these that writing must have been employed quite late in the process of composition, and probably mostly as a practical means of teaching the performers their parts, rather than with the idea of creating a textual artifact.³⁴ Yet clearly the plays *were* committed to papyrus at some point in a more or less coherent form, reflecting not merely fragmented parts for distribution among actors, but some sense of a "work." Such texts must obviously have been circulated after the production, or they would never have reached future editors. Indeed, the desire to account for that moment of textual fixation in a way that satisfies our own notions of literacy and aesthetic integrity has fueled the perennial debate about the extent of a specifically literary culture at the end of the fifth century.³⁵ I would suggest in what follows, however, that the parabasis of *Clouds* is perhaps the only evidence from the period that offers a contemporary perspective on the actual process of reconceptualizing a performed work as a textual one. The act of simply "publishing" a performed work, after all, in whatever exact form, need not necessarily be executed by the author himself. For all we know, tragic and

comic poets of the fifth century may themselves have had no interest in anything other than the performance of their works; others may have taken it upon themselves to render the performances into written form, for whatever reasons. But the decision actually to *revise* a play, as Aristophanes did with *Clouds*, presupposes a stage at which he confronted the issue of what exactly he was revising—words that were performed by actors, but which remained disconnected from any material instantiation, or an actual papyrus text recording these words.³⁶ *Clouds*, in fact, is one of the few pieces of contemporary literature that attempts, even if indirectly, to come to terms with this issue, and it represents perhaps our earliest indication of a tension felt by an author between the poetic “act”—the performative moment—and the creation of what we would call a “literary text.”³⁷

In order to explore this tension further in Aristophanes, we may begin by considering how the idiosyncrasies of our *Clouds*, with its self-conscious, literary-critical parabasis, were situated within the context of fifth-century theatrical production. *Clouds*, as we know, was defeated in competition at the City Dionysia of 423 BCE. What happened next? We must assume that some sort of “first edition” was disseminated more or less immediately, since, as we noted earlier, Hellenistic scholars seemed to have had access to it, and if it had not been circulated very close to the time of its original performance, it seems less likely that an original version would have survived Aristophanes’ subsequent revisions to it. One wonders, however, how Aristophanes would have reacted to the circulation of the text of a play that elicited such a negative reaction from the audience: would he have troubled himself to “disapprove” of a first edition of the play, if given a chance? Or would he even have connected the abstraction of his performed play with the materiality of its textual representation? We cannot, of course, retrieve Aristophanes’ thoughts on the matter, nor is there information for this period about any formal mechanisms by which an author might exercise control over the “publication” of his work. Nevertheless, as we shall see below, Aristophanes’ own commentary on the particular case of his *Clouds* allows us a glimpse of the possible relationships a dramatic poet might have had with the published texts of his plays.

Before we return to the parabasis, however, a few preliminary remarks about the concept of “revision” in the fifth century are in order. If a play fared badly in competition, and the author felt compelled to revise,³⁸ what exactly would he be aiming to revise? Revision implies, it seems, that dramatic performances were not in fact considered ephemeral, teleologically complete events. Clearly, the concern over the play’s reception and the urge to recompose it implies also that it will exist for posterity in one form or another. Even if we confirmed that his primary intention was to produce another version of the same play on the stage, it is significant that the mode of composition of this new version

must have been completely different from that of the first. That is, whereas dramatic poets seemed to have composed without a heavy reliance on writing or notions of texts as significant artifacts, the same cannot be said of the revision of *Clouds*. If the ancient commentators are at all to be trusted, Aristophanes did not compose the second *Clouds de novo*, but rather made changes to a text that had become a fixed representative of the original. While the first play surely grew out of a dynamic interaction between poet, actors, chorus-trainer and chorus members, the revised version must, it seems, have been the result of the poet's interaction with a *text*. Revisions, after all, cannot be made to the original event, which is by definition unique and unrepeatable. They are made, rather, to the medium that records the event, the text. It seems out of the question that Aristophanes approached the play the second time around in the same manner as the first. The "first" *Clouds* was created for a performance, and writing could have then been used strictly as an *aide-memoire*.³⁹ But when Aristophanes chose to revise the play later, he was not, as far as we can tell, working with an actual troupe of actors, musicians, and stagehands.⁴⁰ No performance was necessarily in the offing, and so his mode of (re-)composition could not have been oriented toward the oral training of performers. Moreover, even if it were *possible* for Aristophanes to rework *Clouds* without a text of the original production in front of him from the outset, we are still left with the fact that *our* text of the play seems to have been an *incomplete* revision of a pre-existing, "first edition," text that somehow made it into independent circulation in antiquity.⁴¹ Indeed, the very existence of two circulating versions of the play in antiquity virtually proves that the second one was essentially the product of a *literary* act. For when one says that "something" has been "revised" (as the ancient commentators said repeatedly of *Clouds*) there needs to be a "something" there in the first place, and in this case that can only be a *text*.

We might still wonder, returning to a question raised by the Hypothesis to the play, whether a strictly literary revision—a definitive textual artifact of his play—could have been the goal of the poet. Can we feel as confident as Carlo Russo, who has said:

Only a new performance in the theatre would have been enough to satisfy the defeated poet. From the reader, Aristophanes could have expected no more than the most slender satisfaction, if ever a fifth-century dramatist would have regarded a "book" as an effective expedient, or at the very least a way to ensure the wide diffusion of a text after its performance.⁴²

Russo's statement, in fact, makes a number of assumptions about Aristophanes' attitude towards textuality, which *Clouds* itself seems to call into question. In particular, within the parabasis the character speaking as Aristophanes⁴³ offers some idea as to how he conceptualized the play as both performance and text, and what he might have sought in revising the play.

At line 527 of the parabasis Aristophanes offers a brief synopsis of his literary career up to the present:

Still, I shall never willingly betray the shrewd among you.
 For ever since the time when my "Chaste" and "Gape-Assed" characters
 Got such rave reviews from men whom it delights me even to mention,
 And when I—and remember I was still an unmarried girl and wasn't
 allowed to have kids— 530
 Exposed my child, and another girl took it up,
 And you then nurtured it and educated it nobly. . .

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ὑμῶν ποθ' ἐκὼν προδώσω τοὺς δεξιούς.
 ἐξ ὅτου γὰρ ἐνθάδ' ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν, οἷς ἡδὺ καὶ λέγειν,
 ὁ σῶφρων τε χῶ καταπύγων ἄριστ' ἤκουσάτην,
 κἀγώ, παρθένος γὰρ ἔτ' ἦν, κοῦκ ἐξῆν πῶ μοι τεκεῖν, 530
 ἐξέθηκα, παῖς δ' ἑτέρα τις λαβοῦσ' ἀνείλετο,
 ὑμεῖς δ' ἐξεθρέψατε γενναίως κάπαιδεύσατε.

The metaphor that Aristophanes develops here is clear enough in its imagery—the poet as underage, unmarried girl; the play as an illegitimate child—but the full implications have not, I think, been adequately explored. On one level, Aristophanes is saying simply that he gave his early play *Banqueters* to someone else to produce ("another girl took it up," 531). This seems not to have been an uncommon practice in Old Comedy, and in fact, as is often pointed out, Aristophanes had others producing and directing his plays at other times as well, including *Birds* in 414 (produced by Callistratus) almost 10 years after *Clouds*.⁴⁴ In lines 527 ff., then, the image of the girl-poet leaving her illegitimate child for another to "adopt" need not only reflect the poet's youth and inexperience. I would suggest in addition that the metaphor refers more generally to the act of dramatic composition, and to the vagaries of a poet's work once it is out of his hands.

But what *is* the status of the play once it has been "exposed?" If we pursue the metaphor, a "child" so exposed is left out to die, but usually with the hope that someone will find it and adopt it, as happens here. The girl-mother-poet feels compelled out of shame—for she is too young—to disown her progeny and to distance herself emotionally from it. What is interesting about this metaphor, however, is that it does not imply a willing or total neglect of the offspring. The poet-parent is in fact glad that her child has been taken up by someone else, and is interested in its development. The poet, then, has not completely separated himself from his work, even as he recognizes that it develops an independent life at the hands of its new metaphorical parents, the audience ("and you then nurtured it and educated it nobly . . .," 532).⁴⁵ Indeed, the parabasis reveals that the poet feels the sort of ambivalence towards his work that a parent would feel towards a child reared by surrogate parents:

the biological connection remains strong, but the role of the biological parent in influencing its reception in the world is minimal. Metaphorically, that is, the play is out of the poet's hands and under the "control" of the audience, but the poet cannot possibly sever all ties with his work.

Lines 533–36 make a somewhat awkward transition from an earlier phase of Aristophanes' career to the play at hand, *Clouds*:

Ever since then, I have received trustworthy pledges of your
good judgment.
So now, this comedy has come, like Electra,
Looking to find somewhere spectators so clever. 535
For she will recognize the lock of her brother when she sees it.

ἐκ τούτου μοι πιστὰ παρ' ὑμῖν γνώμης ἔσθ' ὄρκια.
νῦν οὖν Ἠλέκτραν κατ' ἐκείνην ἥδ' ἡ κωμῳδία
ζητοῦσθ' ἦλθ', ἣν που ἰτιύχη θεαταῖς οὕτω σοφοῖς· 535
γνώσεται γάρ, ἦν περ ἴδη, τὰ δελφοῦ τὸν βόστρυχον.

Aristophanes' play is still figured as a girl, but she is older now and has an identity. Because the poet's earlier "children" had been well received by past audiences, his current daughter, now likened to the tragic figure Electra, comes searching for "spectators so clever" (534–35).⁴⁶ It is significant that the play "herself" is envisioned as looking for approval from a sympathetic audience, and that she *herself* is the one who will recognize ingenuity in the audience ("For she will recognize the lock of her brother when she see it," 536), when we might rather expect that the *audience* would be looking for ingenuity in the play. The personified play, in other words, has a will of its own, and plays an active role in its relationship with its audience. We should remember, moreover, that if a play is conceptualized as a real child, it has a past, a present and a future existence. It does not, in short, exist for the moment of its one appearance on a stage, but will live out its life in an evolving relationship with an audience.

As the passage continues at 537, Aristophanes still speaks of his play in the third person as a young woman, whose decorous nature kept her from engaging in lowbrow theatrics, such as obscene costuming, lewd dances, and slapstick stage-business.

Look how chaste she is in her nature, she who was the first not to
Come on the stage with a dangling leather schlong stitched onto her costume,
All red at the tip, and thick, so as to cause laughter among the boys;
Nor did she make fun of bald men, or drag out the lewd kordax-dance;
And there was no old man delivering his lines while beating another character
In order to distract attention from his bad jokes;
Nor did she dash across the stage holding torches and shouting "Alas, Alas!"
But instead, she came out trusting in herself and her lines.

ὥς δὲ σῶφρων ἐστὶ φύσει σκέψασθ'· ἥτις πρῶτα μὲν
οὐδὲν ἦλθε βραψαμένη σκυτίον καθειμένον
ἐρυθρόν ἐξ ἄκρου παχύ, τοῖς παιδίοις ἴν' ἢ γέλως·
οὐδ' ἔσκωψε τοὺς φαλακροὺς, οὐδὲ κόρδαχ' εἵλκυσεν,
οὐδὲ πρεσβύτης ὁ λέγων τάπη τῇ βακτηρίᾳ
τύπτει τὸν παρόντ' ἀφανίζων πονηρὰ σκώμματα,
οὐδ' εἰσηῖξε δῶδας ἔχουσ', οὐδ' ἰοὺ ἰοὺ βοᾷ,
ἀλλ' αὐτῇ καὶ τοῖς ἐπεσιν πιστεύουσ' ἐλήλυθεν.

It is unclear whether Aristophanes here is claiming (however disingenuously) that both the first and the revised version of *Clouds* avoided such devices, or, as Thomas Hubbard has recently argued, that he avoided them only in the first version, and reluctantly added them to the second.⁴⁷ But in either case, it is significant that the passage speaks of the play's (girl's) "nature," its *physis*—a Greek term that encompasses not only the essence of a thing, but also its potential for development (the root of *physis* is *phy-*, which forms the verb *phyo*, "to grow, develop"). The play's *physis*, therefore, is what makes it a stable, identifiable "thing" even after many details have been changed through production or revision. With this concept, it seems, the poet is actually articulating a reality for the play that transcends the theater, and points, I think, to textuality. This is the *physis* of a child, the poet's work, a metaphorical creature which lives out its own history apart from the author and his audience. And if it exists autonomously in this way, it can only be conceptualized as a text for people to contemplate after the moment of performance.

But clearly, Aristophanes is not entirely comfortable with the idea of a text out of his control, since he abruptly abandons the entire metaphor at line 545.

And although I am a poet such as this, I don't wear my hair long, 545
And I'm not looking to trick you by bringing the same thing on
stage twice or thrice,
But rather I am clever, always introducing new devices
All of which are witty and never the same as each other.

καγὼ μὲν τοιοῦτος ἀνὴρ ὦν ποιητὴς οὐ κομῶ, 545
οὐδ' ὑμᾶς ζητῶ ἔξαπατᾶν δις καὶ τρίς ταῦτ' εἰσάγων,
ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καινὰς ἰδέας ἐσφέρων σοφίζομαι,
οὐδὲν ἀλλήλαισιν ὁμοίας καὶ πάσας δεξιᾶς·

Suddenly the poet's "I" has returned with an explicit presence: "and although I am a poet such as this [i.e. like the girl with the chaste "physis"], I don't wear my hair long [i.e. act too snooty]. . . ." Next come those lines, mentioned earlier, in which the poet *in propria persona* complains about rivals plagiarizing his ideas and theatrical devices:

I did kick Cleon in the belly when he was at his peak,

But I never dared to stomp on him again when he was down. 550
 But as soon as Hyperbolos gave them a handle, these men
 Don't let up trouncing the poor wretch—and his mother to boot.
 Eupolis was the first culprit: a bad man badly contorting my own *Knights*,
 He dragged on stage his *Maricas*, adding to it a drunken old woman
 Just for the sake of a vulgar kordax-dance,
 A character whom Phrynichus had already created long ago,
 The one eaten by a sea-monster.
 Then, Hermippus again wrote a play attacking Hyperbolus,
 And now everybody else slams Hyperbolus,
 Imitating my own trope of the "eels."
 Anyone who laughs at these things, let him take no pleasure in my work, 560
 But if you enjoy my innovations,
 Then you will appear in future times to have had excellent sense!

ὅς μέγιστον ὄντα Κλέων' ἔπαισ' ἐς τὴν γαστέρα,
 κοῦκ ἐτόλμησ' αὐθις ἐπεμπηδῆσ' αὐτῷ κειμένῳ. 550
 οὔτοι δ', ὥς ἅπαξ παρέδωκεν λαβὴν Ὑπέρβολος,
 τοῦτον δείλαιον κολετρῶσ' αἰεὶ καὶ τὴν μητέρα.
 Εὐπολὶς μὲν τὸν Μαρικᾶν πρῶτιστον παρείλκυσεν
 ἐκστρέψας τοὺς ἡμετέρους Ἰππέας κακὸς κακῶς,
 προσθεὶς αὐτῷ γραῦν μεθύσῃν τοῦ κόρδακος οὔνεχ', ἣν
 Φρόνιχος πάλαι πεποίηχ', ἣν τὸ κῆτος ἥσθιεν.
 εἶθ' Ἑρμιππος αὐθις ἐποίησεν εἰς Ὑπέρβολον,
 ἄλλοι τ' ἤδη πάντες ἐρείδουσιν εἰς Ὑπέρβολον,
 τὰς εἰκοὺς τῶν ἐγγέλεων τὰς ἐμὰς μιμούμενοι.
 ὅστις οὖν τούτοις γελᾷ, τοῖς ἐμοῖς μὴ χαιρέτω· 560
 ἣν δ' ἐμοὶ καὶ τοῖσιν ἐμοῖς εὐφραίνεσθ' εὐρήμασιν,
 ἐς τὰς ὥρας τὰς ἐτέρας εὖ φρονεῖν δοκῆσετε.

The image of the poet as parent has suddenly disappeared, but the poet's behavior is perhaps even more parental than before. The independence of his plays, like that of children, is a fine thing as long as they do not need protection. But just like a concerned parent rushing to protect a child in trouble, the poet cannot sit back and watch his plays be recklessly abused by rivals. Aristophanes, in short, wants to retain control over his creation, both its abstract *physis* and the details of its words, and he wants ultimately to control its reception by the audience. Moreover, the last lines of the parabasis make it clear that he is as concerned with future audiences—posterity—as he is with any audience he himself might ever encounter: "But if you enjoy my innovations, / Then you will appear in future times to have had excellent sense!" The time-frame, after all, is ambiguous: while the lines can refer to a specific audience of a single production, they may also refer to an unspecified audience yet to exist, which could only be regarded by Aristophanes as an audience of readers. These lines, therefore, can reasonably be paraphrased: "if you, dear *reader*, delight in me, you will be thought by future *readers* to have good judgment."

The revised parabasis, therefore, with its oblique meta-commentary on the recent history of *Clouds*, offers us a unique view of the tension between the play as a single performance and as a fixed text. This tension may not have been felt by every dramatist who failed to win in competition: most defeated poets probably licked their wounds and began to prepare for the next competition with a different play, never stopping to consider the revision of an unsuccessful play or the ontological status of circulating versions of the original play. But it is clear from this study that at least Aristophanes' attitude towards his poetry was bifurcated. As a playwright, and sometime director and producer he was certainly aiming to compose successful works of theater within the specific context of the Dionysian festivals; and it is probably also safe to say that Aristophanes privileged the performative potential of his plays over a strictly literary one. We have seen, however, that Aristophanes also must have been driven by a parallel concern to "get the play right," by inscribing the performed event in a medium that would be able to engage not just one audience at only one moment in time, but any audience that could lay hands on the fixed work, the text.⁴⁸

Appendix: Some Analogues in the Textualization of Jazz

The parabasis of *Clouds*, as we have seen, not only suggests that Aristophanes wanted to leave a text of his work for a future reading public, but it also articulates an anxiety and ambivalence about doing so. Aristophanes, in other words, seems caught at a moment of time in Athens when the fundamental character of a performed work was being challenged by the antithetical force of reification through textuality. To help us imagine more clearly how Aristophanes might have viewed the relationship between a unique, theoretically unrepeatable performance of *Clouds* and its textual materiality, we may consider a remarkably analogous situation within the history of jazz. Jazz, especially in its earliest forms, has tended to privilege the moment of performance over any "textualized" versions of it, whether as musical score or on sound recordings. As a form that generally (although not exclusively) depends on the improvisational skills of individual musicians, jazz has often been analogized to oral poetry: true musical and verbal "improvising"⁴⁹ by definition can never be written out in advance, even though musical notation routinely appears in varying degrees throughout the history of jazz. Some successful jazz musicians were musically "illiterate" (i.e., unable to notate music), others conservatory-trained, but the point, as we have seen in the case of Greek literature of the fifth-century, is not so much the *method* of composition (e.g., did it use "writing" or not), as the *goal* of composition. When early jazz musicians were faced with the possibility of fixing their performances in the material form of a

phonograph recording,⁵⁰ they suddenly had to re-think entirely the very nature of their art as an "occasional" form. A famous anecdote about the New Orleans trumpeter Freddie Keppard illustrates the suspicion that many musicians must have felt towards recording their work. Ramsey and Smith, in their early history of jazz, *Jazzmen* (1939), describes Keppard as follows:

Although [he] never learned to read a note and played in the most robust and rough manner, he was associated early in his career with the more finished Creole musicians in the downtown section. He played in the Olympia Band, which had been a rival of Buddy Bolden's Band. . . 1913-1916 was spent in touring with the Original Creole Band throughout the country. . . ⁵¹

Everywhere they played the old New Orleans stand-by tunes and also other favorites of theirs, such as *Steamboat Blues*, *Roustabout Shuffle*, and Scott Joplin's *Pepper Rag*. Early in 1916 the Victor Phonograph Company approached the Original Creoles with an offer to record. Keppard thought it over and said: "Nothin' doin' boys. We won't put our stuff on records for everyone to steal." He persuaded the other fellows to turn down the recording offer. A few months later, Victor signed Nick La Rocca's group, which under the name of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band went on to fame and fortune.⁵²

The story itself may be apocryphal⁵³ (in any event, by the 1920's Keppard relented and did make some recordings, and there is some evidence that he had already recorded in the 'teens), but the simple phrase attributed to Keppard, "we won't put our stuff on records" reveals a major discontinuity, no doubt shared by many in these formative years of jazz, between the enterprise of creating before an audience in real time, and textualizing it in material form. This discontinuity is even more apparent when one considers his reasons for feeling this way, namely his fear of plagiarism. Considering that Keppard's performances would have been public occasions, and anyone could have listened, assimilated and "stolen" their "stuff," why was Keppard afraid of committing his music to record? Surely his ideas were not especially protected in a live concert either. What was new to the musicians of early jazz, it seems, was not only the ability to transform a unique performance into a permanent form, but even the very idea that their artistic production could actually be made to "become" something else, something material. Indeed, early recording technology presented musicians with so many limitations (playing time, instrumentation)⁵⁴ that conceptualizing their recorded work as a transcript of a "genuine" performance (i.e., as a performance that might actually have been experienced without the presence of recording equipment) was out of the question. Musicians had to work to "make the record" rather than to record to "make the work." Keppard, it seems, from his vantage point during the very infancy of phonography, could only conceive of recordings as an invitation to plagiarism; as an artistic medium, it was evidently, to him at least, without merit.⁵⁵

Keppard's suspicion of recording, however, tells only the very first part of the story, when the tension between performance and recorded artifact seemed most palpable. Gradually in the early decades of this century, however, what happened in ancient Greek literature also happened in jazz: the "textualized" *performance*, always an imperfect documentation of a singular event, began to assume an independent existence and an aesthetic status of its own. Burton Peretti has discussed the peculiar delight that musicians would often feel when they heard themselves recorded for the first time. An anecdote he cites about Eddie Condon is instructive:

When Eddie Condon and others heard their first disks in 1928, they knew that their experiences had been translated into oddly satisfying new artifacts. "The nights and years of playing in cellars and saloons and ballrooms, of practicing separately and together, of listening to Louis and Joe Oliver and Jimmy Noone and Leon Rappolo, of losing sleep and breathing bad air and drinking licorice gin, paid off. . . We had never been an audience for ourselves. . . . At the finish we were all laughing and pounding each other on the back."⁵⁶

An artifact that allows the musician to be his own audience, of course, also allows for there to be *many* audiences, different from the audience of the original, ephemeral performance—Keppard's initial objection to a fixed text of his work. In this sense, then, recorded music is analogous to the written text of a performed verbal event (reified as the *work*), such as the texts of Greek drama that have come down to us, and I suggest that in the parabasis of *Clouds*, Aristophanes expresses a combination of fear and exhilaration in the face of a growing culture of artistic dissemination similar to that experienced by early jazz musicians. In both ancient and modern examples, material fixation encouraged artists to conceptualize their works in two quite distinct ways, namely as performances and as texts. Indeed, by our own time, with the increasing sophistication of studio and editing techniques, a jazz *recording* is usually as much a fully contrived text as works that never pretended to be performative in origin.⁵⁷ As with jazz, ancient Greek texts that transmitted performed works did not replace a performance culture—poetry continued as a performed art in Greece for centuries to come. But long after the original audience was gone, texts simply "became" the original performances, and by the Hellenistic period the history of Greek literature was almost exclusively a history of these *texts*.⁵⁸ As I have argued in this study, Aristophanes seems to have had some prescience about the way literary history would develop as a history of texts. Like the savvy jazz musician, he too understood the dynamics of both performance *and* textual fixation, and could conceptualize them separately. Aristophanes' failure with the first production of *Clouds* in 423, and his conviction that the defeat was unjust, implies on his part a sense of artistic self-confidence and a desire for his work to endure. Yet he seems to have re-

alized, as the parabasis shows, that the only means by which he could ensure future glory for his play would have been to rework it as a text, however imperfect a record it would have been of its original multi-media extravaganza.

Notes

- 1 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 221.
- 2 There were, in fact, many other festivals in honor of Dionysus throughout Attica, the region surrounding Athens, though in the fifth-century the City Dionysia and Lenaia, assumed the greatest stature as explicitly city events. The evidence for Dionysian festivals is presented and analyzed in A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (second edition by J. Gould and D. M. Lewis; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968, and again with supplementation, 1988). Eric Csapo and William J. Slater translate the testimonia in *The Context of Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 103-65. On the various festivals scattered throughout rural Attica in particular, many of which included dramatic contests, see Csapo and Slater, 121-32. On the City Dionysia as a reflection of Athenian civic ideology, see Simon Goldhill, "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology," in John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin, eds., *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 97-129.
- 3 In addition to dramatic performances, the City Dionysia (and in varying degrees, most other Attic festivals for Dionysus), included ritual songs, phallic processions, dithyrambic contests, among other activities. See Csapo and Slater, 103-24.
- 4 Csapo and Slater, 2-3, caution against making too much of the notion of a "single performance," pointing out that plays could be re-entered in revised form (as Euripides did with *Hippolytus* in 428 BCE), or re-performed at rural festivals. Re-performances in Athens, however, are treated as exceptional (indeed, the re-performance of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, alleged by the fourth-century Dicaearchus, is said to have occurred because of its politically inspiring parabasis), and the prestige of a rural performance would not have compared to that of a city performance. It is likely, therefore, that the dramatist would focus his artistic energies explicitly on the Athenian competition. In any case, it makes little difference whether a play is composed for a single, unrepeatable performance or a few: the fact remains that an Athenian dramatist would have produced his plays with an entirely different set of assumptions than a dramatist in our own culture, where writing plays assumes the likelihood of repeated performances and the potential for future revivals.
- 5 See Egert Pöhlmann, *Beiträge zur antiken und neueren Musikgeschichte*, vol. 17 in *Quellen und Studien zur Musikgeschichte von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 23-40, who ascribes the earliest phases of textual transmission to an author's autograph. On the earliest stages of the transmission of Athenian texts, see the discussion below.
- 6 Csapo and Slater collect and translate the evidence for actors and acting on pages 221-74, but very little of the material addresses the interaction between actors and poets.
- 7 As much as we can say is that the poet "applied for a chorus" to the appropriate magistrate some months in advance of the festival, and had to perform selections of his work. Whether this was done orally or from a prepared text is uncertain, although some of our sources mention that the poet would "read" selections.
- 8 Jesper Svenbro, in *Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 169-70, speaks of classical drama as "vocal writing, which results when actors memorize texts for performance. Svenbro regards listening to a dramatic performance ultimately as a type of textual experience, though he distinguishes it from traditional reading (both vocalized and silent), which involves an active mental process of rendering letters (*grammata*) intelligible (see 4-5, 170-72). A performed play becomes, for Svenbro, an "inscription of the text in the mind

of the actor. . . [T]he actor seems to receive an inscription in the same way that a stone or a papyrus leaf may receive one" (180).

- 9 Csapo and Slater, page 2 (with text nos. 1-4 on page 4), cite Athenaeus 270a for evidence of two other dramatists (Metagenes and Nicophon, later contemporaries of Aristophanes), who wrote plays that were never produced. We cannot tell from Athenaeus, however, whether these poets actually *intended* those particular plays not to be performed, or whether external circumstances are to blame. As such, we are unable to use these plays as evidence for some early form of text-based "book-poetry."
- 10 The question of the degree which classical Athens was "oral" or "literate" is complex and requires careful analysis of often conflicting evidence. The most recent major work on the topic is Rosalind Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), in the first chapter of which (15-94) can be found an overview of previous scholarship. Thomas stresses how both "oral" and "literate" modes of communication were operative in fifth-century Athens, and cautions against characterizing Athenian culture at any given time simplistically as either one or the other; see esp. 30-34. The issue of literacy is particularly complicated when considering Greek poetry, since although poetry of nearly all genres up to the classical period was composed originally for *oral* performance on specific occasions, not all Greek poets are "oral poets" in the sense of those whose goal is to recompose traditional material. See the remarks of Charles Segal (on tragedy in particular), in "L'Écriture dans la tragédie," in *Les Savoirs de l'écriture en Grèce ancienne* (Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1988), 332-33. (On the important distinction between "oral" and "traditional" poetics, see John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 4-7.) In the case of the Greek dramatists of the fifth century, the question of how much writing was employed in the composition of their works is less relevant than what value (if any), they accorded to written versions of them when they began to be circulated. Any answer to this question must consider the extent to which there would be an audience for *texts*, and how a "literary" version of a once "oral" performance would be conceptualized in the fifth century. See further the discussion below, 404-5.
- 11 Aristophanes uses the form *parabaino* to refer to the choral action of the parabasis at *Knights* 508, *Peace* 735, and *Women at the Thesmophoria* 785. On the form of the parabasis, see G. M. Sifakis, *Parabasis and Animal Choruses* (London: The Athlone Press of the University of London, 1971), 53-70, and Thomas K. Hubbard, *The Mask of Comedy: Aristophanes and the Intertextual Parabasis* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 17-23.
- 12 T. Gelzer, *Der epirrhematische Agon bei Aristophanes* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1960) and Sifakis, *Parabasis*, are standard references on such questions. Hubbard, *Mask of Comedy*, 23-33 provides further discussion and bibliography.
- 13 Pace Sifakis, *Parabasis*, 7-14. For discussion of the controversy, see Hubbard, *Mask of Comedy*, 28.
- 14 Given the confusion that the subjective "I" of the parabasis has caused for readers, it is worth remembering that *never* in the extant plays of Aristophanes does this "I" attach to a stage character representing the poet. The parabolic "I" is always embodied by the chorus leader, who momentarily assumes the identity of, but can never visually become, the poet. The most successful parabasis may convince the audience that the "real" poet is actually speaking to them, but it does not follow that the parabasis—a formalized and traditional literary form—must therefore be an autobiographical document. On the other hand, the autobiographical *persona* created within the fictional context of the parabasis can certainly reveal attitudes and concerns of the poet discernible beneath the pretense of historicity. On the problem of evaluating the historicity and autobiographical layers of Aristophanes, see Stephen Halliwell, "Aristophanic Satire," *Yearbook of English Studies* 14 (1984), 6-20, Malcolm Heath, *Political Comedy in Aristophanes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1987), Ralph M. Rosen, *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition* (Atlanta: Scholars Press (American Classical Studies vol. 19), 1988), 59-84, and Douglas M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes and Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1-6.

- 15 The ambivalent role of the Cloud chorus has long puzzled readers. Recent discussion and bibliography can be found in Hubbard, *Mask of Comedy*, 89, 108-12, and Daphne E. O'Regan, *Rhetoric, Comedy and the Violence of Language in Aristophanes' Clouds* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 52-55.
- 16 Aristophanes *Acharnians* 626-7 and *Peace* 729-33 mention "stripping off" of some form of garb in preparation for the delivery of the parabasis, and most have assumed this signals to the audience an "uncovering" of the "real" poet (though see above, note 14). Sifakis collects and discusses all the evidence for "stripping" in Old Comedy in an Appendix (*Parabasis*, 103-8), though his own disbelief in the very notion of "dramatic illusion" in Greek drama, makes him skeptical of seeing much metaphorical significance in the disrobing of the chorus leader.
- 17 See K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes' Clouds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 165-66, and Hubbard, *Mask of Comedy*, 97 n. 28, on the ambiguity of lines 522-23. Exactly what line 523 means, "I thought you worthy be the first to taste it, is not certain and may be deliberately obscure. The prefix *ana-* of the verb *anageuein* ("to give a taste of") makes several meanings possible, as Dover notes.
- 18 The Greek texts of the Hypotheses are collected in Dover, *Clouds*, 1-5.
- 19 The evidence for this date comes from a scholiastic remark on *Clouds* 552 (= Callimachus fr. 454 in Pfeiffer's edition). See next paragraph for a discussion of this passage.
- 20 The scope of such revisions is well discussed in Dover, *Clouds*, lxxx-xcviii. See also Carlo Ferdinando Russo, *Aristophanes, an Author for the Stage* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994 (translation by Kevin Wren of a revised *Aristofane, autore di teatro* (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1962))), 97-109, P. Fabrini, "La rappresentabilità delle Nuvole di Aristofane, *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, series 3, vol. 5.1, 1-16 (with further bibliography in note 5), Thomas K. Hubbard, "Parabolic Self-Criticism and the Two Versions of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, *Classical Antiquity* 5 (1986): 182-97, along with his discussion in *Mask of Comedy*, 90-106, and O'Regan, *Rhetoric*, 133-39.
- 21 Recent discussions of the dating of the play include E. C. Kopff, "The Date of Aristophanes' *Nubes* II, *American Journal of Philology* 111 (1990): 318-29, Ian C. Storey, "The Dates of Aristophanes' *Clouds* II and Eupolis' *Baptai*: A Reply to E. C. Kopff, *American Journal of Philology* 114 (1993): 71-84, and Jeffrey Henderson, "Problems in Greek Literary History: The Case of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, in Ralph M. Rosen and Joseph Farrell, ed., *Nomodeiktēs: Greek Studies in Honor of Martin Ostwald* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 591-601, and Henderson and Storey argue against Kopff's dating of the play to after 414 BCE, preferring the more traditional 420-417 as the period during which the poet could have revised the play.
- 22 See discussion in Dover, *Clouds*, lxxxi, Russo, *Aristophanes*, 105-6.
- 23 One ancient critic even claims, if somewhat obliquely, to have written a commentary on the "First Clouds." See Dover, *Clouds*, lxxxv-lxxxvi.
- 24 τοῦτο ταῦτόν ἐστι τῷ προτέρῳ, διεσκευάσται δὲ ἐπὶ μέρους, ὥς ἂν δὴ ἀναδιδάξαι μὲν αὐτὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ προθυμηθέντος, οὐκέτι δὲ τοῦτο δι' ἥνποτε αἰτίαν ποιήσαντος. Dover explains the phrase ὥς ἂν δὴ ("as it would be if . . ."), to mean "in a manner consistent with the supposition that," lxxxii.
- 25 Dover, *Clouds*, lxxx-lxxxiv, translates the passage piece-meal in the course of commentary on the passage.
- 26 The Greek employs the common particles *men* and *de* to set off the two clauses, but the syntax is complicated by the fact that the clause translated as an "if"-clause is buried in a "genitive absolute" construction. The sentence contains two genitive absolute constructions ("the poet wanting to re-perform the play, 'the poet not doing this'"), each correlated with the other by the particles *men* and *de*. In the Greek it seems likely that both of these genitive absolutes depend on the introductory *hos an*, which Dover translates: " . . . as it would be, if . . ."
- 27 The commentator, of course, is mainly interested in whether the text of his *Clouds* was written by someone intending to perform it, not whether or not the text as he had it was,

- in fact, technically “performable.” On the performability of the revised text, see Dover, *Clouds*, xcii-xcviii (whose conclusion is negative), and Fabrini, “Rappresentabilità,” 1-16, who argues that the text we have was performable according to “theatrical norms” of Aristophanes’ day. “Performability” *per se*, however, is not the same thing as the *quality* and ultimate success of a performance. The commentator apparently believes that the revised *Clouds* did not seem consistent with something that Aristophanes would have successfully performed, not that it was technically unperformable. When he says that the play was not performed “for some reason or other,” he seems to be registering uncertainty as to what motivated the poet not to revise the play in such a way as to lead to a performance.
- 28 Hubbard, *Mask of Comedy*, 90-106 develops the argument that the Aristophanes intended in a revised *Clouds* to “broaden the play’s humorous and theatrical appeal” by adding more traditional comic devices than he had used in the original performed version. The original version, that is, was simply too sophisticated, and not “lowbrow” enough, for the audience. See also E. de Carli, *Aristofane e la sofistica* (Florence: La nuova Italia, 1971), 25.
 - 29 Dover, *Clouds*, xcvi. Others have also speculated that the poet himself was re-editing a text for a reading public only. See Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, “Der Chor der Wolken, Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie (1921): 38, and *Hellenistische Dichtung* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1924), vol. 1, 98 n. 4; W. G. Boruchowitsch, “Aristophanes als Herausgeber seiner Komödien, *Acta Antiquae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 21 (1973): 89-95; Don Fowler, “Taplin on Cocks, *Classical Quarterly* n.s. 31.1 (1989): 257-58; contra, Hubbard, *Mask of Comedy*, 105-6.
 - 30 See Peter Bing, *The Well-Read Muse: Present and Past in Callimachus and the Hellenistic Poets* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1988), 10-48, on how writing affected the very nature of Hellenistic poetry. On the effects of written documents in political and forensic contexts from the fifth to the fourth centuries, see Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 38-94.
 - 31 On the book trade in classical Athens, see Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 28; On the beginning of official archiving, see Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 35-48.
 - 32 See Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 19-20, for bibliography on the controversy over the cultural status of books in the fifth century.
 - 33 The chorus says to the dueling Aeschylus and Euripides (1109-16): “But if you two are afraid that the ignorance / of the audience / will prevent them from understanding the subtle things you say, / don’t worry about this, since this is no longer a problem; / they’re all experienced soldiers, / each one’s got a book (and so), understands the clever parts. / Their natures are at their peak, / and have been well refined now.” While I believe, along with Dover and others, that the reference to a book here (*biblion*) is probably unspecific, and does not refer to a copy of the *Frogs* being performed at that moment, it does imply that at least certain segments of society could (and did) read.
 - 34 See John Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 47: “Even when we make full allowance for the whimsical distortions of Aristophanic comedy, the probable conclusion from both scenes is that the late-fifth-century tragedian did not take to his pen or stylus until late in the composition or even until after the process was finished.” This may be true, but we also ought to keep in mind, as Bing notes (*Well-Read Muse*, 12), that “[e]ven when writing came to be used by the poets, it was never, or at most indirectly, acknowledged.”
 - 35 See Wilamowitz’s remarks in *Einleitung in die Tragödie* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1889), 121-23, who went so far as to argue that Greek tragedies were the “first” real books. Wilamowitz is criticized by E. G. Turner, *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries* (London: H.K. Lewis, 1952 [2nd ed. 1977]), 9-10, and Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 29. Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 23, in turn criticizes Turner for a confusing stance in claiming widespread literacy for fifth-century Athens, while maintaining that the publication of books was a relatively late development in the century.
 - 36 Svenbro’s remarks, cited earlier (see above n. 8), are apposite here. Svenbro emphasizes that the words memorized by actors form a text of sorts, and that, as such, the theatrical spec-

tator “reads” these texts when they listen to a performance. Callias’ “Letter Show” (often referred to as the “ABC Comedy”; in Greek: *Grammatike Theoria*), dated to the end of the fifth century, certainly indicated a growing self-consciousness of the fact that writing of some sort was used in composing plays. Our only testimony to this play is embedded in Athenaeus (2nd–3rd CE; see Athen. 7.276a and 10.453c), who believed it to be a tragedy, though most scholars now regard it (probably correctly) as a comedy. It featured, among other curiosities, a chorus composed of the letters of the Ionian Greek alphabet (formally adopted in Athens in 403 BCE); see Svenbro’s discussion, 182–86, with bibliography, on the manifold problems surrounding this play and its author. Svenbro concludes: “the idea of such a play could arise only in the mind of someone to whom the *grammata* [= letters] seem already autonomous and to whom their vocalization no longer constitutes a necessary condition for their deciphering. In other words, it only arises in the mind of someone to whom the letters have become the “pure” representation of a voice . . .” (186). The ability to conceptualize letters as “the ‘pure’ representation of a voice” is doubtless the first step in the process of conceptualizing collections of letters as coherent, autonomous units (i.e., “works”), and then, conceptualizing these units as autonomous, material texts. Svenbro himself, however, still regards the written text of an Athenian dramatic poet as little more than a mnemonic tool (182); see below note [37].

- 37 One wonders whether fifth-century poets might have perceived similar tensions in the evolution of Homeric epic, which by that century was itself in the process of becoming “textualized.” The evolution of “Homer” from poetic (non-textual) performance to fixed, literary text is complicated by the traditional oral provenance of the genre, and the elaborate system of dissemination through professional rhapsodes that arose in Greece. But in the case of Homer and other archaic Greek poets, whose works were being canonized as texts by the fifth century, the authors themselves were for the most part not involved in the textual fixation of their works. On the problem of the transmission of Homeric epic, see Gregory Nagy, *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), especially part II: “Fixed text in theory, shifting words in performance,” 107–206.
- 38 It is worth remembering that in a given competition, only one playwright would win the prize. That is, twice as many comic poets would lose as would win at every festival. Since there is no evidence to suggest that all these disappointed playwrights routinely went back to the drawing board to re-work the same play for performance at a future festival, it seems all the more eccentric and significant that Aristophanes would choose to revise *Clouds*. Clearly it was important to him that the particular “project” of *Clouds* be well remembered at least by his own age. But how he would have envisioned this “project”—the play as first performed in 423? a set of ideas as configured in words by means of plot and episode?—is the central question of this study.
- 39 The technical term for this in the fifth century was a *hypomnema*, on which see F. Bömer, “Der Commentarius, *Hermes* 81 (1953): 215–.
- 40 It has, in fact, been suggested that Aristophanes may have abandoned the revision of *Clouds* because he sensed it would not work on the stage, or even because he was unable to secure a chorus from the presiding archon. See Cedric H. Whitman, *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 137, MacDowell, *Aristophanes and Athens*, 149, and Henderson, “Case of Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, 601.
- 41 See above, 402–3. It is ironic that if the revision to *Clouds* actually seemed to be “complete” we would probably not be able to judge how much the poet used a previous text of the first version. For if there were no perceived infelicities or inconcinities in the revised text, it would be less easy to posit a work which was the original object of revision. It remains possible, of course, that whatever divergences from the earlier version exist in the later one were fully intended by the author for a reading audience only, and that the revisions only appeared to be partial or incomplete as a *performable* text. There are, however, indications within our text of *Clouds* that Aristophanes’ revisions were not, in fact, complete. Dover, xciv–xcviii, discusses in detail those “moments in the play at which we feel,

even if we put out of our minds all external grounds for suspecting incomplete revision, that by Aristophanes' dramaturgical standards something is amiss."

- 42 Russo, *Aristophanes*, 105.
- 43 Henceforth in this paper, for the sake of convenience I will refer to this character only as "Aristophanes," although it is important to remember that the chorus leader is actually the speaking part.
- 44 On the "producers" of Aristophanes' plays, see, among others, Stephen Halliwell, "Aristophanes' Apprenticeship," *Classical Quarterly* 30 (1980): 33-45, G. Mastromarco, "L'esordio 'segreto' di Aristofane," *Quaderni di Storia* 10 (1979): 153-92, and MacDowell, *Aristophanes and Athens*, 34-41.
- 45 The "other" girl who finds the exposed "child", that is, has evidently handed it over to her own parents (metaphorically, the audience) for them to raise.
- 46 The Electra simile somewhat confuses the familial metaphors that Aristophanes has been constructing in the parabasis. Earlier, as we noted, the audience are the adoptive parents of the play, who raise and educate her to maturity. If one takes the Electra simile at face value, the audience suddenly becomes her brother ("... looking to find somewhere spectators so clever. / For she will recognize the lock of her brother when she sees it."). Probably, however, the emphasis of the Electra simile is on the notion of the "recognition" itself, rather than specifically on the recognition of a *brother* (in the myth Electra recognizes that her brother Orestes has returned from exile to avenge the murder of their father, Agamemnon, by a lock of hair he has left at Agamemnon's tomb; the story is dramatized in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, the second play in the *Oresteia* trilogy). As Dover (*Clouds*, 168) explains: "... the essential point. ... is that Elektra waited with desperate longing for some news or sign of the return of one whom she had known and loved long ago, one who would reinstate her and rescue her from humiliation; ... and a sign of favorable reaction from the audience is the 'lock' which will revive Ar.'s hopes."
- 47 According to Hubbard, only after Aristophanes realized that he must have lost the first time around because he had not pandered sufficiently to the less sophisticated tastes of the general public, did he decide to add them; the version of the play we possess, after all, has examples of all the tricks he claims to avoid. If this is so, these lines indicate Aristophanes' misgivings about having to "dumb down" his revised edition of the play. In Hubbard's words: "... because the first version did not use cheap tricks in its performance, the *Clouds* is a good play 'by birth and origin, even if its revised version has gone astray by including such tricks.'" (Hubbard, *Mask of Comedy*, 97-98; see discussion 96-102). This is an ingenious explanation of a problematic passage, but it does not seem entirely consonant with the idea of line 535 that the play would be coming in search of an audience of "wise" or "clever" people (*sophoi*), who would not have approved of such vulgarisms. Hubbard's summary view of this passage (98) addresses the problem of an audience of *sophoi*, but seems tendentious to me: "The poet is not only making stylistic pronouncements he fails to observe in his own practice; he is also reminding us, or at least the *sophoi* among us, that he did not in fact use these tricks 'the first time, albeit he clearly does utilize every single one of them in the present version of the play.'"
- 48 It is for this reason that I align myself with scholars who would see Aristophanes as concerned to leave posterity a text for reading, rather than those who regard all fifth-century texts as little more than "transcripts" of spoken dramatic parts. Victor Turner in *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1987), 30-31, attempts to make an analogy between a similarly performative dramatic genre, the *Commedia dell'Arte*, and modern screenplays. Insofar as a screenplay is little more than the transcript of a film's dialogue, it is rarely considered "the work, and is usually only published for a specialist audience (film students, historians, etc.). They record "something else, some performance, as no doubt an early circulating copy of a Greek play did, but in themselves they "are" not that which they record. Turner's point about the insubstantiality of a "screenplay" as a record of a performance is well taken, and may give us some insight into why Aristophanes might have yearned for a more polished, authoritative textual version of his play than

a first edition would have been. But the analogy ultimately breaks down for Greek drama (as well as for his own example of the *Commedia dell'Arte*), when one considers that a modern screenplay exists in the service of an artifact intended to be fixed, permanent and available to posterity, namely, the final version of the film. In the case of modern cinema, that is, the screenplay prepares the way for an artistic moment that will be "textually" inscribed as film, and as such it actually bears little relation to a "performance." A text of a Greek play, on the other hand, was circulated only *after* an original performance and (at least originally), represented, however inadequately, that event.

- 49 Gregory Nagy's phrase, "composition-in-performance," as applied to Homeric poetry, is equally appropriate to jazz. The concept is most succinctly explained in Nagy, "An Evolutionary Model for the Making of Homeric Poetry: Comparative Perspectives, in *The Ages of Homer*, ed. Jane B. Carter and Sarah P. Morris (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995), 63.
- 50 A jazz musician could theoretically have his or her works fixed as a musical score, although notated music in jazz was almost exclusively conceived of as an aid to a given performance, not unlike the way in which the first text of a Greek play is often imagined. Burton W. Peretti in *The Creation of Jazz. Music, Race and Culture in Urban America*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 15-16, traces the advent of notated jazz and musical literacy to the increasing popularity of jazz orchestras in the 1920s. The sheer complexity of rehearsing a large ensemble, the frequently shifting personnel, and increasingly sophisticated musical directions, necessitated a formal system of musical dissemination. Jelly Roll Morton is often said to have been the first jazz musician to distribute written parts, particularly for recording sessions, but the testimony of one of his bandmembers from the '20s, George Mitchell, suggest little interest in the materiality of the musical text: "Morton wrote parts for the [Red Hot] Peppers . . ." but "permitted the players to discard the parts once they got the idea of the tunes"; see Peretti, 116. We may contrast to this the way "classical" composers often invest much creative energy in the artifact of the "score, so much so that many musicologists regard a written score more capable of producing an authoritative, unmediated experience of the composer's work than any one performance (even the "premiere"), might.
- 51 Frederic Ramsey, Jr. and Charles Edward Smith, *Jazzmen* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1939), 8.
- 52 Ramsey and Smith, *Jazzmen*, 22.
- 53 Martin Williams, in the liner notes to a release of Keppard's recorded music (Milestone MLP-2014), noted another explanation of Keppard's unwillingness to record, ascribed to New Orleans musician Sidney Bechet. Bechet claimed "that Keppard felt that records would commercialize a music that better belonged as a mutual communal communication between the players and their audience."
- 54 See David Baker, The Phonograph in Jazz History and its Influence on the Emergent Jazz Performer, in *The Phonograph and Our Musical Life*, ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, Institute for the Study of American Music, Monographs 14, 1977), 6, and Peretti, *Creation of Jazz*, 161-62.
- 55 Keppard's fear that recording his work would encourage plagiarism amounts to a fear of losing control over his work. As I argued earlier (on page 36), Aristophanes also worried about the loss of control that might result from a *textualized Clouds*, though it is never explicit in the parabasis that plagiarism was at the root of this fear. It is true, as we have seen, that Aristophanes did complain about plagiarizing rivals in the parabasis, and it is possible that some of his ambivalence about a textual version of his play derived from the fear (like Keppard's), that it would then be more accessible to rivals. But it seems more likely, given his active desire to re-work his play as an artifact for posterity, that Aristophanes viewed a textual version of his play more as jazz musicians subsequent to Keppard viewed recorded versions of their music (see discussion below), namely as a material proof of originality and, ultimately, a means of *protection* against plagiarism.
- 56 Peretti, *Creation of Jazz*, 153.

- 57 The same, of course, can be said of the recordings of other contemporary musical traditions that have performative origins, such as rock, folk, rap and blues. As if to highlight this fact, a distinct genre of "live" recordings has evolved, which usually purports to offer a recording of the performer "live in concert." Since all recordings need to be mastered and edited to some degree in order to be released in a playable format, few producers and engineers can resist the temptation to alter and "enhance" even live recordings. The promise to "play a piece from the current album," so much a feature of current performance practice in popular music, shows precisely how the original priorities of these genres have been reversed. In an attempt to return to the ethos of jazz as a form that should be experienced as an unedited performance, a recent record label, *Creative Improvised Music Projects (CIMP)*, instructs all their musicians in advance that their performances will not be edited or sonically enhanced in any way. They print a manifesto-like "statement of purpose" on each CD cover, which explains their technological and aesthetic principles (no equalization, compression, mixing, splicing, no re-takes, etc.). Adopting a protreptic and almost iconoclastic stance, the statement asserts a desire to offer a mimesis of a live performance: "These recordings capture the full dynamic range one would experience in a live concert. . . . Treat the recording as a private concert. Give it your undivided attention and it will reward you. . . . This method is demanding to not only the listener, but to the performer as well. Musicians must be able to play *together* in real time. They must understand the dynamics of their instrument *and* how it relates to the others around them What you hear is exactly what was played." *CIMP* producer Robert D. Rusch (also editor of *Cadence Jazz Magazine*), in a recent telephone interview, said that nearly all the musicians were initially uneasy with the idea of performing "without a net," so accustomed had they become to altering, sometimes drastically, a recorded performance before release. In the end, however, according to Rusch, the new aesthetic context, in which performance and "text" came into being simultaneously, inspired the musicians in remarkable ways.
- 58 Martin Williams, in "Jazz, the Phonograph and Scholarship, in *The Phonograph and our Musical Life* (above [n. 54]), 2-45, has made a similar point about the history of jazz, and chastises scholars for downplaying the influence of jazz recordings on the history of the music. Others have discussed the negative aspects of constructing a history of jazz based on records; See Brian Priestley, *Jazz on Record* (New York 1991), x, and Jed Rasula, "The Media of Memory: The Seductive Menace of Records in Jazz History," in *Jazz among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 134-62.