Communication as Power: The Correction of Sophocles' *Tereus* in Aristophanes' *Birds*

This paper offers two related arguments. First, after analyzing the fragments of Sophocles' *Tereus,* I argue that Sophocles empowers his female characters, Procne and Philomela, by giving them voices or abilities to communicate that transgress Greek societal norms, in which silence was the *sine qua non* of femininity. Most importantly, Procne's speech (fr. 583 Radt, very recently expanded by the discovery of more lines published in *P. Oxy.* 5292 [see Finglass 2016 and Slattery 2016]) and the description of Philomela's communication through weaving as "the voice of the shuttle" (fr. 595 Radt) assert the agency of both characters at moments when agency seems stolen from them. This reading will illuminate two previously unexamined areas, namely Sophocles' dramaturgical choices about whom he allows to speak (if the theorized attributions of speech are sound) and the impact of those choices on gender, as relates to Procne as a vocal wife and mother and Philomela as a silenced rape victim, forced to communicate through letters woven into a tapestry.

Second, I examine Aristophanes' *Birds* and posit that he attempts to correct the hierarchy of power constructed by Sophocles by empowering the male character, Tereus, with speech while muting Procne and in fact reducing her to the object of sexual advances by Euelpides and Peisetairos. This Aristophanic flip of the hierarchy puts on display a "normative" male-female relationship, with a vocal man and a silent woman, in a striking subversion of the wider conceit in the Aristophanic corpus of gender role reversal (as evidenced by, among others, the Kinsman in *Thesmophoriazusae* and the women in *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae*). Perhaps the utopian nature of Nephelokokkygia requires the example of such a socio-cultural ideal.

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