EXCREMENT, SACRIFICE, COMMENSALITY: THE OSPHRESIOLOGY OF ARISTOPHANES' *PEACE*[*]

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I. INTRODUCTION

Among Aristophanes' extant dramas, *Peace* is, by more than just a nose, the richest in the themes of smell.[1] The entire play is redolent of both the most repugnant odors of stercoraceous matter and the most delicious scents of foodstuffs and the processes of cooking.[2]

The pleasures of the preparation and consumption of food are ubiquitous in Aristophanes' comedies, where they are strongly associated with the comic hero's triumph, while exclusion from the feast is the punishment of characters foolish enough to oppose his[3] grand scheme.[4] Unsurprisingly, discourses of food with their attendant smells and savors have

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1 Cf. Whitman 1964.109–10. For good introductions to the themes of the play, see the remarks of Harriott 1986.119–38, MacDowell 1995.180–98, Moulton 1981.82–107, Olson 1998. xxxii–xlii, Sommerstein 1985.xvi–xvii, von Möllendorff 2002.71–80.

2 For the themes of smell in ancient Greek poetry, see Lilja 1972. For a survey of smells in Aristophanes, see Thiercy 1993.

3 The masculine possessive adjective is used advisedly: Aristophanes' heroines are not rewarded in this way on stage. Neither Lysistrata nor, in *Ecclesiazusae,* Praxagora is found indulging her appetitive pleasures in the way that male Aristophanic heroes do.

4 For the contours of the typical Aristophanic plot, see Sifakis 1992.

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been meticulously studied.[5] *Peace*, however, presents further opportunities for the study of olfactory themes: what has not been subjected to quite such detailed analysis is the mephitic stench of excrement that hangs over much of the play, nor the kind of critical response that the osphresiological theme and indulgence in olfactory imagery (both foul and fragrant) invite.[6]

It is perhaps partly because of the play's scatological content that it remains comparatively neglected and undervalued among Aristophanes' works.[7] A further, and repeatedly lodged, complaint is that the play lacks structure and unity.[8] As this essay demonstrates, once critics learn to follow their noses and analyze the Aristophanic osphresiology that *Peace* develops, the play appears distinctly better constructed and integrated.

The argument pursued in this paper runs as follows. Among critical commonplaces is the observation that as the narrative of *Peace* maps a path from war to peace, offensive and repugnant smells (primarily scatological) yield to pleasant and attractive ones (most prominently to do with cuisine). At the beginning of the drama, food and excrement are confounded in the nutritional preferences of Trygaeus's monstrous, coprophage dung beetle, and the entire city of Athens is engulfed in the all-pervasive smell of human waste. By the second half of the play, the fragrances and flavors of food have been isolated from the reeking cesspit of wartime Athens. However, the (initially entangled) themes of feasting and fecal matter are both present throughout the drama: scatological language and imagery are

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5 In general, see Wilkins 2000. On food in *Peace*, see Reckford 1979, Pütz 2007.19–32, Wilkins 2000.134–50.

6 The only discussions of the play's emphasis on excrement to go into any detail are Henderson 1975.62–66, Hubbard 1991.141–44, Bowie 1993.135–37. Discussion of the olfactory imagery of excrement is studiously avoided—apart from a brief reference at 130–31—by Cassio 1985. Vanhaegendoren 1996.120 comments only on the fragrance, which he connects to the theme of wine in the play, of the goddess at *Peace* 525–26. On scatological humor in Aristophanes in general, see Henderson 1975.187–203, Edwards 1991. For a survey of scatological odors in ancient Greek poetry, see Lilja 1972.138–41.

7 Sommerstein 2001.273 n. 5, in his addenda on *Peace*, remarks, "I cannot refrain from drawing attention to the extraordinary dearth of significant recent interpretative articles dedicated to this play, a neglect unparalleled for any of [Aristophanes'] other surviving comedies." Recent contributions include Camerotto 2007, Dobrov 2001.89–104, Slater 2002.115–31, and Robson 2007.132–89 (on lines 819–921).

8 The complaints of Solomos 1974.141 are typical: "[*Peace*] displays a naïve plot, a weak dramatic structure, and only a few genuine jokes." Whitman 1964.103–04 collects various earlier assessments of *Peace*. Judging by the relative lack of attention to the play compared to that devoted to the rest of Aristophanes' oeuvre, these views appear to have been influential.

not banished from the play with the disappearance of the dung beetle, as has sometimes been implied: the scatological (and the osphresiological) analysis of the play remains incomplete. Malodorous material persists, but whereas the olfactory offense suffered by the hero, his household, and, in fact, the entire city in the earlier part of the play was ubiquitous and indiscriminate, now, far from disappearing, it is inflicted (in the form of scatological abuse) on characters who are held to deserve it: the architects of war and its profiteers.

That this point has generally been overlooked suggests the need for a closer look at the olfactory imagery of the play and its osphresiological theme, clearly established in the programmatic prologue scene. The fact that the scatological themes of defecation and fecal matter are not expunged from the narrative but instead progressively disentangled from the themes of cooking, cuisine, and commensality, suggests that some more complex process is at work than the mere banishment of unpleasant odorants. The subtleties of the osphresiology of *Peace* have escaped full appreciation in previous readings of the play.

The fundamental question of the poetics of *Peace* is: "Why all the attention to smell in this drama?" The answer involves recourse to the genealogy of that as yet nascent branch of literary scholarship known as "gastrocriticism," which may be said to begin in the ancient Greek world with Theophrastus's treatise *de Odoribus*. Among the human senses, according to Theophrastus, smell is peculiar because its primary reflex is the identification of the attractive and the repulsive. Olfactory perception is therefore experienced most immediately in binary form, with scents falling into either one category or the other. Naturally, many systems of imagery are available to a poet to articulate the opposition of good and evil; among these, osphresiology tends to impose on experience the most naïve kind of categorization: it is a reflex that divides what is nice from what is nasty.[9] Therefore, the important point in regard to poetics is that the olfactory imagery of *Peace* is the basis of creating order—of constructing and organizing a system.

Once this point is grasped, the way is clear for an explanation of the significance of the osphresiology of *Peace*. The second part of this essay, drawing on the work of Mary Douglas (1978) on dirt and purity, offers an

9 Thiercy 1993.506 characterizes the olfactory world of Aristophanic poetry as subject to "une dichotomie simple et reconnue: ce qui sent bon est beau, ce qui pue est mauvais."

explanation for the central place in the play occupied by ritual, especially sacrificial ritual, in which the smells and savors of food and cooking are central elements (and stand in pointed opposition to the excrementitious odors). To anticipate the argument, dirt implies a system, and the narrative of *Peace* works to impose a systematic reorganization of the environment, where dangerous, chaotic, anomalous elements (of which the primary symbol in this play is coprophagy) are removed to the margins. The exclusive targeting of scatological material after the parabasis at the enemies of peace exemplifies the recreation of order and system. In the achievement of this systematic reorganization through the unconscious reflexes of disgust and appetitive desire, the ritual symbolism of sacrifice, marriage ceremony, and banqueting accompanied by sympotic poetry stand as an affirmation of the return of proper order to the world.

The extended presentation in the latter half of the play of the preparations for marriage and feasting, in which a sacrifice and cooking are indispensible (*Peace* 947–1042), stands in marked opposition to Trygaeus's earlier ascent to heaven and encounter with Hermes (*Peace* 177–458), which involves (among other ritual imagery) a parodic concretization of sacrifice. The importance of the relationship between these reflecting images of sacrificial ritual, which form a structural diptych, has not been sufficiently emphasized in previous treatments of the play. As well as making ritual practice the affirmation of order, Aristophanes also makes it the vehicle with which dangerous polluting matter is returned to its proper place. In short, the narrative moves from ordure to order.

The conclusion anticipates some objections to the analysis, outlines a defense to those objections, and lastly sketches a theory of why Aristophanes might have composed *Peace* in the way that he did.

II. THE PERSISTENCE OF SCATOLOGY IN *PEACE*

Previous discussions of *Peace* have found that there is a marked alteration in the play's imagery as the plot progresses from war to peace. The world in which the play begins is "heavily characterised by excrement" (Bowie 1993.135). The dung beetle stands as a constant reminder of this fact in the early episodes.[10] As the narrative unfolds, there is a shift from "the smell and taste of manure to the smells and tastes of the wedding feast"

10 On the dung beetle's symbolic associations with dirt and decay, see Detienne 1977.26–27.

(Sommerstein 1985.xvi). This is achieved through a reordering of the world of the play: Trygaeus's ascent to Olympus effects a displacement of excrement from Athens to the heavens; this serves as a counterweight to the gods' incarceration of Peace below the earth.[11] When Trygaeus returns to earth, the dung beetle remains with Zeus above, while the other coprophage, Cleon (48), is mercifully confined in Hades (647–50). A structural opposition balances the removal and neutralizing of these coprophage elements.

There are two important aspects to the characterization of war. First, war is described with repulsive olfactory imagery: Athens at war is imagined as smothered by the disgusting stench of human waste.[12] The play makes a very strong connection between war and excrement (cf. Bowie 1993.136). Second, war is figured as a chaotic inversion of normality, as is symbolized by the confusion of food and excrement in the dung beetle's nutritional preferences and reinforced by the ubiquitous references connecting war with unappetizing food (e.g., War's salad and soldiers' campaigning rations) and indigestion (cf. Bowie 1993.137). Consumption of food in wartime Athens is unpleasant and dyspeptic for all except the dung beetle.

The disappearance of the beetle (720–24) is an important transitional moment, after which the world emerges from the slough of war and begins to return to peaceful, georgic normality. There is a "movement from scatological interests . . . to sexual ones, not only Ganymede but Opora and Theoria as well" (Hubbard 1991.144). With the progress of the narrative, the enjoyment of food becomes the reward of characters inclined towards peace,[13] and the inedible cuisine of the prologue scene (and the murderous cuisine of War's salad, lines 233–88) is replaced by delicious, nourishing cooking.[14] In harmony, the humor shifts from predominantly scatological to

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11 For the dynamics of space in *Peace*, see Cassio 1985.31, 139–47. For the practical and symbolic uses of space in Aristophanic comedy more generally, see Jay-Robert 2003, Lowe 2006, Poe 1999, 2000.

12 On the (everywhere repugnant) smell of war in Aristophanes, see Thiercy 1993.517.

13 Furthermore, as Henderson 1975.65 shows, the imagery of the second half of the play strongly correlates indulgence in feasting with sexual pleasures. Trygaeus, the Council at 846–908, the chorus at 1305–17, and the audience at 1365–67 are feted with (or at least promised) all the usual rewards of the comic hero. On the question of whether the chorus eats at 1305ff., see Landfester 1977.181–84, Olson 1998 ad 1317, Sommerstein 1984.148, with n. 36.

14 See Bowie 1993.135–37 on the progress from bad smells to good, and pp. 137–38 on the thematic shift from bad food to good food.

sexual (and the sexual theme changes from homosexual to heterosexual).[15] The following lines sung by the chorus in the parabasis (775–80) do not a little to encourage the view that there is a fundamental thematic transition when Trygaeus returns without the dung beetle:

> Μοῦσα, σὺ μὲν πολέμους
> ἀπωσαμένη μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ
> τοῦ φίλου χόρευσον,
> κλείουσα θεῶν τε γάμους
> ἀνδρῶν τε δαῖτας
> καὶ θαλίας μακάρων·
> σοὶ γὰρ τάδ᾽ ἐξ ἀρχῆς μέλει.
>
> Muse, reject the theme of war
> and join me,
> your friend, in the dance,
> celebrating the weddings of gods,
> the banquets of men,
> and the festivities of the blest,
> for these are your original themes.[16]

Where olfactory imagery is concerned, the offensively odoriferous material in *Peace* has been found to be associated with war, with the confines of the urban center of the Athenian polis, and with the first half of the play, while the pleasurable scents waft on the breezes of the Attic countryside in times of peace and are found in the second half of the drama.[17] However, although the dung beetle does not return to Athens with Trygaeus (*Peace* 721–22), the scatological theme does not entirely evanesce.

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15 For discussion, see Henderson 1975.63–65, Hubbard 1991.144, Moulton 1981.89–90. Steiner 2008.89–92 (esp. 91 n. 31), discussing Hipponax frag. 92 West, points out further connections in ancient Greek thought between dung beetles and anal intercourse.

16 For the text of *Peace,* I have used Olson 1998. Translations, unless otherwise specified, are from Henderson's 1998 Loeb edition with minor modifications where necessary.

17 Bowie 1993.136–37, Henderson 1975.63–64, Hubbard 1991.144, Moulton 1981.89–90, Silk 2000.156. Thiercy 1993.510–11 shows that the smell of the city in Aristophanes, although it includes some attractive notes, is predominantly bad; meanwhile, the countryside, which should logically have its fair share of malodorous matter, is artfully idealized as a purely pleasant olfactory realm. For general discussion of war and peace themes in Aristophanes, see Newiger 1980.

In the parabasis, which immediately follows Trygaeus's discovery that the beetle will not be accompanying him back to earth, the monstrous Cleon, figured as Aristophanes' opponent in a Herculean struggle, is endowed with not just the smell of a seal but also the anus of a camel and therefore, by implication, with the odor of camel feces (758). In the ode following the *pnigos*, the chorus call Carcinus and his sons (who had been more extensively ridiculed the previous year by *Wasps* 1497–537) "snippets of goat-shit" (790).[18] Later, in part of the second parabasis, there is a satirical description of a military commander who defecates involuntarily in fright when he actually has to go into battle (1175–76).

In the episode immediately following the second parabasis, an armorer is insulted by Trygaeus when he suggests using the breastplate that the vendor is attempting to sell him as a portable latrine (1224–39). The rejection of the sale is accompanied by detailed discussion of how the corselet could best be set up as a mobile toilet. Trygaeus wonders how he might most effectively apply an abstergent after defecation, and then asks the armor seller the forceful rhetorical question (1236–37): οἴει γὰρ ἂν τὸν πρωκτὸν ἀπόδοσθαί με χιλιῶν δραχμῶν; "Do you think I'd sell my arsehole for a thousand drachmas?"

A couple of lines later, the prospective buyer rejects the sale, observing that the corselet irritates his derrière (1238–39). Trygaeus next declines to purchase a trumpet, proposing first adapting it to use as a cottabus target and then as a makeweight; the latter, he suggests, could be employed for measuring doses of laxative—thus continuing the scatological theme—to sell to the Egyptians (1253).[19] When the insulted hawkers decide to leave, Trygaeus congratulates them on their decision to go because an indeterminate number of small, micturating boys are coming out of the house to relieve themselves before commencing their singing practice (1265–67).

The important point is that the purveyors of equipment for war (along with Aristophanes' enemies past and present, poetic and political) are insulted in scatological terms.[20] Therefore, it is only true at the

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18 The translation is Olson's (in his note on lines 788–91). On Carcinus, see Olson 1998 ad 782–84.

19 Greek cultural knowledge of Egypt included the belief that Egyptians regularly used purgatives. Cf. Ar. *Th.* 855–57; for further references, see Olson 1998 ad loc.

20 Cf. Bowie 1993.136, noting that the scatological punishment meted out to the arms dealer at 1224–39 is "an appropriate reversal."

level of a generalization to say that "with the beetle Aristophanes can also leave behind all the shit jokes, Cleon jokes and other comic dross" (Hubbard 1991.144); and it is not quite correct to state that after 530–38, bad odors are only found at 758 and 1077 (Whitman 1964.109–10).[21] In fact, the presence of scatological material and unpleasant odors persists into the latter part of the play; the difference is that in the earlier part—especially in the first 176 lines—scatological references, appalling smells, and the concomitant sense of disgust at such noisome matter are generally distributed, overwhelming, and affect all Athenians, whereas in the later episodes, it is the opponents of peace and of Aristophanes' poetic art who are exposed to and insulted by reference to fecal and other foul-smelling matter. That this point has been for the most part overlooked suggests a closer examination of the osphresiology of *Peace* is warranted. Something more complex than the simple banishment of bad odors and scatology is going on.

III. THE OSPHRESIOLOGY OF *PEACE*

It can hardly be doubted that smell is in some sense central to Aristophanes' *Peace*. This fact is made plain in the prologue scene, in which two slaves belonging to Trygaeus are frantically attending to the gourmet requirements of a monstrous coprophage, the gigantic dung beetle that their master is going to use to ascend to heaven after his earlier attempt with a ladder ended in failure (69–71). The important elements of this introductory scene, which is clearly programmatic for the narrative as a whole, are the following: (§1) the ubiquitous presence of foul odors and the disgust caused by them; (§2) the significance of the olfactory sense; (§3) the introduction of the central scatological and gustatory themes; (§4) the confusion of the scatological and gustatory themes in the presence of the dung beetle with its repulsive nutritional preferences; and (§5) the opposition of attractive fragrances and the malodorous stench that surrounds the dung beetle.

(§1) The mephitic pall hanging over the slaves' chores is conveyed to the audience by verbal means several times (and presumably in performance by gesture as well): the waste collectors (κοπρολόγοι) are

21 Scatology in *Peace*: 3, 9, 11–12, 13–14, 15, 17–18, 24, 42, 48, 87(?), 99 *bis*, 101, 132, 151 *bis*, 164–65, 172, 175–76, 241, 335, 546–47, 758, 790, 1077, 1175–76, 1228, 1231, 1235, 1236–37, 1239, 1254, 1265–66. For a list of foul smells in *Peace*, see below n. 34.

asked to help if they do not want to see the Second Slave suffocated by the odor (9–11).[22] At line 15, the First Slave cannot suppress a cry (αἰβοῖ) of disgust as he comes out of the house,[23] and the task at hand is implicitly compared to bailing bilge water (17–18).[24] As the First Slave observes, the beetle is polluted, reeking (κάκοσμον), greedy, and clearly not sent by Aphrodite or the Graces (38–41), who are associated with fragrant substances, especially perfumes.[25] The stink of the beetle disgusts Trygaeus's daughter, who refers to the dung beetle as a "smelly animal" (κάκοσμον ζῷον, 132), and Trygaeus, who commands the beetle not to "breathe evil" upon him (87).[26] Furthermore, the odor of excrement is found everywhere, not just in Athens but also on Olympus and down in Hades: at line 42, Aristophanes makes his celebrated pun on Zeus Kataibatos—Zeus who s(h)its on high—and at line 48, the deceased demagogue Cleon is said to be in the Underworld ingesting diarrhea.

(§2) The importance of the olfactory sense is made clear above all by line 21: the Second Slave dreams of acquiring a nose without holes, to save him from inhaling the stench. Just as vision and auditory perception are flagged in the prologue scene of *Thesmophoriazusae* as the crucial hermeneutic keys to the play, in the case of *Peace,* it is the olfactory gland that will guide interpretation.

(§3) The scatological theme has been made sufficiently clear by the references in §1 and §2. The gustatory theme first appears in line 4 with a request for a cake of donkey dung (held to be lightly flavored, according to the available evidence[27]). It soon becomes clear that the beetle orders its

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22 For the *koprologoi*, see Owens 1985.47–50. Owens argues that the *koprologoi* were not public slaves, as has been widely assumed (e.g., Vatin 1976.556–57), but private waste contractors. Cf. Olson 1998 ad loc.

23 For αἰβοῖ as a cry of disgust, see Olson 1998 ad loc.

24 For the stench of bilge water, see Olson 1998 ad 17–18, citing Arist. *HA* 534a28–29.

25 For the association of Aphrodite with fragrances, see Detienne 1977.62 and, more generally, 60–122 on the structural opposition of Aphrodite and the hot, dry, perfumed spices to the cold, the wet, and the rotten. In fact, fragrance is generally attributed to the immortals: see Déonna 2003.7–22. On divine odors in Aristophanes, see Thiercy 1993.522–25.

26 μὴ πνεῖ μοι κακόν: there is a dispute over whether this should be taken straightforwardly to refer to the beetle's "halitosis" or metaphorically to mean something like "don't plan anything nasty for me." For discussion, see Olson 1998 ad 87–89. Either way, however, the phrase suggests a noxious odor, as Σ^{RV} note. Compare 525–26, where οἷον δὲ πνεῖς ὡς ἡδὺ clearly refers to a fragrant aroma.

27 Theophrastus *HP* 2.7.4 reports the analysis of Chartodras of different types of feces: human excrement is the heaviest and most pungent, followed in order of decreasing richness and offensiveness by that of pigs, goats, sheep, oxen, and, lastly, that of beasts of burden (i.e.,

preferred food with the refined judgment of a gourmand, enjoying a range of different tastes and textures.[28] In lines 11–12, a well-compacted cake is required, one composed of the feces of a catamite. An ordinary coprophage such as a dog or a pig, the Second Slave complains, will simply eat dung just as it finds it (24–25), but the beetle requires its food to be specially prepared by mashing and shaping into balls.

(§4) In fact, *Scarabaeidae* (dung beetles proper) tend to specialize by species in the exploitation of the feces of either herbivores or omnivores; more species make use of the excrement of herbivores than that of omnivores such as humans, though a few species do subsist on human bodily waste. Furthermore, those that roll balls of feces (*telocoprids*), roll dung into spheres with astonishing efficiency and without assistance, and are the only creature other than man to use the wheel; these "rollers" tend to prefer the more nutritious dung of omnivores, given that they can only transport small amounts of it at any one time and at the cost of considerable effort.[29] Even allowing for the state of ancient Greek scientific knowledge of dung beetles, strict naturalism is hardly Aristophanes' aim; rather, the important point is the programmatic confusion of the themes of excrement and food. The confusion suits the dung beetle, but is thoroughly inimical to human nourishment: at line 14, the Second Slave reassures himself and the audience that no one can accuse him of stealing and eating any of the food he is preparing (a routine problem with slaves, as the scholiast remarks; cf. Olson 1998 ad loc.). Apparently the dung beetle refreshes its palate with the slaves' urine (49): A. M. Bowie (1997.12) points out that the word for beetle in ancient Greek (*kantharos*) can also mean a wine cup, and sees the opening of a sympotic theme

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mules, donkeys, horses). For further discussion of different grades of manure and their uses, see Theophrastus *CP* 3.6.2, cf. 3.9.5.

28 The gourmand demands of the beetle are anthropomorphic. Farb and Armelagos 1980.190 point out that cuisine is a defining characteristic of human beings: no animal has cuisines.

29 In general, see Lewin 1999.87–91.The fullest study of the subject is the collection of papers edited by Hanski and Cambefort 1991a, in which Lumaret and Kirk 1991 provide the most detailed account of Mediterranean dung beetles that I have found. Admittedly the focus of their research is southern France, not Greece or Sicily (cf. *Peace* 73) as would be optimal for strict relevance to Aristophanes' *Peace*. For the preference of *telocoprid* dung beetles for omnivore feces, see Hanski and Cambefort 1991b.331. On knowledge of dung beetles in the Greco-Roman World, see Aristotle *HA* 552a17–19, Pliny *NH* 11.98, Aelian *NH* 10.15, Beavis 1998.157–64, Davies and Kathirithamby 1986.83–89. For their symbolic significance in ancient Greek thought, see Detienne 1977.26–27.

here; the linguistic ambiguity certainly contributes to the confusion of the play's scatological and gustatory themes.[30]

(§5) In order to make his ascent on the back of the beetle, Trygaeus has to beg the people of Athens to refrain from moving their bowels for three days. At 164–66, he is forced to berate a man down below in the prostitutes' district of the Piraeus for violating the moratorium: the offender is told to bury his excrement beneath plenty of earth and to fumigate the area by planting thyme and pouring "perfume" (in fact myrrh, which was thought to repel vultures and dung beetles) on the newly created tumulus (166–69).[31] In this regard, the prologue scene establishes an opposition between foul odors, represented by the stench of fecal matter, and attractive fragrances, represented here by aromatic herbs and perfumed oil. As the narrative unfolds, the smells and savors of food and cooking will be added to the category of pleasant aromas.

If the opening scene of *Peace* suggests very strongly that smell will be a central theme of the play, the point is confirmed when the goddess Peace returns. The welcome Trygaeus gives her is expressed chiefly in terms of her wonderful fragrance (524–26):

> οἷον δ' ἔχεις τὸ πρόσωπον, ὦ Θεωρία·
> οἷον δὲ πνεῖς, ὡς ἡδὺ κατὰ τῆς καρδίας,
> γλυκύτατον, ὥσπερ ἀστρατείας καὶ μύρου.
>
> What a countenance you've got, dear goddess!
> And what an aroma, how delightful to my heart,
> Utterly luscious, with hints of demobilization and
> perfume.

As the subsequent lines (527–38) explain, the way Peace smells (ὄζει, 529) is the antithesis of the stink of a soldier's knapsack and war-

30 Contra, see Pütz 2007.19 n. 71, arguing that the sympotic theme comes to the fore much later and that Aristophanes does not choose to emphasize this particular accident of language. Cf. Olson 1998 ad 1 and, for other senses of the word, ad 142–43. The literary dimensions of the symbolism of the dung beetle (Aesop and iambic poetry) have been much discussed: see Steiner 2008, esp. 93–100, with further bibliography.

31 Myrrh (μύρον) is scented oil. For its production, see Theophr. *de Odor.* 14–35. For the dung beetle's proverbial dislike and avoidance of myrrh, see Theophr. *de Odor.* 4, Pliny *NH* 11.98, Detienne 1977.26.

time rations, which reek of "oniony vinegar belches."[32] To paraphrase lines 530–38, Peace is redolent—with remarkable synaesthesia—of harvest time, entertainment, the Dionysia, pipes, tragic choruses, songs of Sophocles, roasted thrushes, quotations of Euripides, ivy, wine-straining gauze, the bleating of sheep, bosoms of women running to the fields, a drunken slave girl, a knocked over wine jug, and other wonderful things.[33]

Clearly the play invites an osphresiological analysis of the nexus of imagery that links excrement, war, the confines of the urban polis center, and unappealing food (such as the rations found in a soldier's knapsack), and opposes these repugnant odorivectors to the gastronomical and sexual scents emanating from cooking, commensality, and celebration in the countryside.[34] But if the olfactory sense is central to *Peace*, what inferences follow about its poetics?

In the somewhat recherché branch of literary scholarship dubbed gastrocriticism, Carolyn Korsmeyer explores the persistent disparagement and devaluation of taste in the sensory hierarchy constructed by occidental philosophy from Plato to Hegel. The key motivating factor behind this treatment of the sense of taste is its epistemological unimportance: it can have no function, the argument runs, in the development of "higher knowledge" (Korsmeyer 1999.61, 87, 111). The view that eating cannot be anything other than an expression of the most primordial of pleasures and that it can have no further or higher aim in the sphere of art or aesthetics is

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32 The word κρομμυοξυρεγμίας (529), which Olson (1998 ad loc.) translates as "acidic belching resulting from indigestion," gestures towards dyspepsia. In Xen. *Symp.* 4.7–9, two associations of eating onions are made clear. First, Niceratus will go home with his breath smelling of onions and his wife will believe he has not kissed anyone. Second, it is remarked that men setting out for battle should eat onions, just as roosters are fed garlic before they go in the ring at a cockfight. Eating onions is therefore associated with war (cf. 502) and is a guarantee of missing out on the sexual pleasures of the symposium.

33 Thiercy 1993.521 notes that this passage is the most complex description of fragrance in Aristophanes.

34 A list of scatological references in *Peace* is given above, n. 21. Scatological smells (or matter that produces them, places where they are found, and actions that produce them) are mentioned in lines 3, 9–10, 11–12, 13–14, 15, 17–18, 24, 38, 42, 48(?), 87(?), 99, 101, 132, 151 *bis*, 164–65, 172, 175–76, 335, 546–47, 758, 790, 1077(?), 1228, 1231, 1235ff., 1265–66. Other foul smells are found in lines 87(?), 527, 529, 753, 758 *bis*, 811, 1077(?). Direct reference to pleasant scents, fragrances, perfume, etc. (not everything mentioned in the play that could be described as pleasant smelling is included, since the list would be impracticably long) is made in lines 168–69, 525, 526, 530–32, 535–37, 554, 862, 1050. Verbs of olfaction, the reactions of characters to smells, and other references to the olfactory sense occur in lines 10, 15, 21, 38, 132, 152, 157–58, 162, 525–27, 529ff., 1050.

long-standing and well established: to appeal to eating as a metaphor is to risk the charge of base, voluptuary indulgence.[35] Thus there are two widely held prejudices concerning the sense of taste: it is not *about* anything other than how something tastes, and it is inescapably private, internal, and, in the end, therefore, incommunicable. Korsmeyer (1999.111) quotes the apt words of Luc Ferry: "Taste is the very essence of subjectivity."

If the sense of taste has been persistently undervalued by literary criticism, the sense of smell can only be said to have suffered at least equal neglect. In the *de Odoribus*, which may be claimed as the distant ancestor of modern gastrocriticism, Theophrastus sets out the problem.[36] Taste and smell are intimately connected: they exist in a reciprocal relationship since no smell is unaccompanied by taste and no taste is unaccompanied by smell (*de Odor.* 67). But as the *de Odoribus* makes clear, the sense of smell had not been subjected to the same detailed analysis as the sense of taste. Democritus, Theophrastus reports, categorized the sense of taste according to various flavors, but failed to create analogous categories for sight or smell (*de Odor.* 64 = D-K 68 F133). Surveying the inherited views of such matters, Theophrastus observes that whereas basic analytical categories have been established for colors and tastes, for example black and white, and bitter and sweet, in the case of smell, the only widely used categorization is that of fragrant and foul: τὸ εὔοσμον καὶ τὸ κάκοσμον (*de Odor.* 64).

Smell is, therefore, as Theophrastus was already complaining, even more under-theorized than taste. The reason for this comparative neglect, he explains in the introduction to the treatise, seems to be that smells are not in practice distinguished in regard to their precise characteristics, as tastes are, but by a more basic distinction: they are either attractive or repulsive, literally of "good" or "evil" odor (*de Odor.* 1).[37] The difficulty is that the descriptive terms of an osphresiological analysis, for example sweetness, bitterness, pungency, and heaviness, are found to apply to good and bad scents alike. The only unassailable distinction that may be used to categorize scents is good and bad, because the fragrant and malodorous smells do not combine (*de Odor.* 66). Among smells that are incontestably

35 Cf. Korsmeyer 1999.22. Gigante 2005 (see, esp., pp. 3–4) explores the prejudice of Enlightenment thought against the imagery of food and eating.

36 On the content of *de Odoribus* and the philosophical tradition in which it is located, see Sharples 1985. For discussion of Theophrastus on smell, see pp. 193–97. On the place of the *de Odoribus* in Theophrastus's biological-philosophical oeuvre, see Wöhrle 1998.

37 Cf. *de Odor.* 9, 67; *CP* 6.1.1, 6.9.1–2, 6.14.2; Arist. *de Sensu* 442b27–29; *de Anima* 421a16, 421a31–32.

bad, Theophrastus offers the examples of putrefaction and feces (*de Odor.* 2–3). When he starts to explore the opposite end of the spectrum, the first example he turns to is the smell of cooking (*de Odor.* 1.3, Loeb trans.): "To generalize, then, things which are attractive to the sense of smell (εὔοσμα) are those which have been cooked, those which are lightly fragrant (λεπτά), and those which are least earthy (γεώδη)."

Two conclusions emerge from this brief glance at Theophrastus's treatise. First, the essential perceptual function of the sense of smell is to distinguish between good and bad: it is a visceral or knee-jerk reaction to the pleasurable and the repugnant. In other words, the olfactory sense may be said to function as a mechanism for binary categorization. Second, the *de Odoribus* constructs an opposition between the smells of food and excrement (and the related processes of cooking and putrefaction). It is no coincidence that the osphresiological analysis of *Peace* finds the play to be similarly structured.

IV. FROM ORDURE TO ORDER

If the argument so far is correct, then the principal effect of Aristophanes' poetic decision to make olfactory perception thematically central to *Peace* is to encourage in the interpretation of the play a binary division of its contents into the simple categories of good and bad—the prime examples of which are, respectively, food and excrement. Taking the argument a step further, since the osphresiology of *Peace* shows that the scatological content of the play is only part of the system of olfactory imagery, the significance of the excrementitious material cannot be explained fully by the currently popular Bakhtinian approach to scatology in Aristophanes.

Since its translation into English over forty years ago, Mikhail Bakhtin's study of Rabelais has become immensely influential in the criticism of Aristophanic comedy.[38] Bakhtin's exploration of the fundamental opposition between popular culture and official culture, expressed through the celebration of the grotesque body in all its corporeal messiness (including the production of excrement), has provided critics of Old Comedy with a powerful hermeneutic for the interpretation of Aristophanic poetics: with Bakhtin to hand, the concepts of "the grotesque body" and

38 See Carrière 1979, Edwards 1993, Goldhill 1991.178–83, Suárez 1987, von Möllendorff 1995.27–109, Platter 2007.1–41. For important criticisms, see Henderson 1990, esp. 286.

"the carnivalesque" could be invoked to explain the troubling dissonance in Aristophanes of, as it were, poetry and the potty. Old Comedy, on this understanding, draws on a timeless store of folk images and modes of expression that, in the space and time of Carnival, create temporary, joyful release from the strictures of everyday, rule-bound existence, and, by the same token, advance a critique of the elite culture that is sustained by ordered hierarchy. Among these modes of expression and forms of carnivalesque discourse are the "low" literary genres and their constituent elements, including scatology.

However, where scatology is concerned, Bakhtin's enthusiasm for the authenticity of popular carnival forms is very arguably vitiated by a lack of adequate historicism and by an overly schematic approach that neglects important details of Rabelais' text in pursuit of an overarching theory.[39] In short, even allowing for changing attitudes towards dirt (see below with n. 41), the Bakhtinian articulation of low culture with the uninhibited celebration of the lower and nether regions of the body and enjoyment of the scatological arguably reflects more accurately Rabelais' class orientation (and Bakhtin's desire to articulate an anti-authoritarian discourse) than it does the attitudes of the peasants of medieval France.[40]

Recent work on scatology in a number of fields has shifted away from an over-emphatic reliance on the work of Bakhtin and has taken a different approach, one influenced by the ethnography and anthropology of cultural attitudes to dirt. In this project, the work of Mary Douglas occupies a central position. The important point, which will be explored in more detail shortly, is that dirt defines boundaries and creates separation. This cultural use of dirt, as, for example, the work of Stallybrass and White 1986 shows, exhibits one striking aspect of historical continuity between medieval and modern culture (unappreciated by Bakhtin): excrement and filth of all sorts—and the *social disorder* that they embody—have persistently been projected onto the subordinate classes by the dominant class for the

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39 See, for example, Screech 1979.52, 55–56, Bowen 1998.155, who shows that the celebration of excreta is not general in Rabelais, and Clark 1983.57, who criticizes Bakhtin's interpretation for being based only on carefully selected passages in Rabelais. Bakhtinian theory has more to offer the study of Aristophanes than simply attention to scatology: for further Bakhtin-inspired interpretations of *Peace*, see von Möllendorff 1995.122–27 (on the comic chronotope) and 204–08 (on Bakhtinian "multiaccentuality" and the elements of the grotesque in the play).

40 For more sympathetic readings of Bakhtin that refine and nuance his account, see Greenblatt 1982, Stallybrass and White 1986.

purposes of creating and maintaining hierarchical order and organization. From different theoretical perspectives, Norbert Elias's monumental study of the history of manners (1978, 1982) and the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984) describe the central place of the definition and separation of purity and dirt in the construction of the subject and the articulation of the ideological orientation of an entire culture. In each case, the idea of a system of organized hierarchy is key.[41]

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41 On the ways in which dirt and the practices of hygiene are used to create and represent order, see, in addition to Douglas 1978, the studies of Corbin 1986, Inglis 2001, Reid 1991, and Vigarello 1985. Bourke 1891 is the distant pioneering ancestor of all such studies, amassing information with all the enthusiasm typical of anthropologists of his era: see Greenblatt 1982 for discussion. Elias 1978, 1982 (originally published in 1933) explores the development of "civilized" values through the expansion of private space at the expense of public (in order that bodily functions may be screened), and the general proliferation of rules of purity and definitions of acceptable behavior, including the adoption of increasingly sharpened attitudes to excretion and excrement. Vigarello 1985 tracks the changing attitudes towards cleanliness since the Middle Ages, drawing particular attention to perceptions of the dangers and (later) the benefits of water and washing. He places the rise to dominance of an identification of cleanliness and social order in the later stages of the nineteenth century. Corbin 1986 charts the rising intolerance of odors in French society from the mid eighteenth century (see, esp., 56, 57–61) and the nineteenth century's public policy obsession with the disinfection of the poor in the cause of social order (see 142–60, esp. 143). Reid 1991 discusses the cultural symbolic value of filth in regard to the sewers of Paris in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From a different perspective, Biow 2006 examines the significance of dirt through discourses of cleanliness in renaissance Italy. The findings of Inglis 2001 are broadly in accordance with those of Corbin and Vigarello. In documenting the changing hygienic practices that formed part of the *habitus* of the emergent bourgeoisie keen to distinguish itself from its social inferiors, Inglis argues that the sharpness of the sense of revulsion at all forms of contact with fecal matter, including smell, is multiplied by a factor of the distance that the available technology of sanitation creates between the human body and its waste products. The leveling of these class-distinctive aspects of sanitation with the construction of sewage systems and the general introduction of the water closet only occurred with the recognition that the orderliness and regimentation of the subordinate classes demanded by capitalism was more important to bourgeois interests than social distinction achieved by a sharply gradated hierarchy of cleanliness (Inglis 2001.202–92). Laporte 2000 connects the rise of hygienic practices to the purification of the French language, beginning with the contemporaneous Royal Edict of Villers-Cotterêts of August 1539, issued by Francis I announcing the purification of the French vernacular (in which legal documentation was to be written), and an Edict of November of the same year proclaiming the responsibility of the residents of Paris for the sanitization of the streets of their city. The history of hygiene has also influenced the study of scatology in renaissance literature and culture: see the essays in Persels and Ganim 2004. In the latter, the editors' introduction (pp. xiii–xxi) contains a helpful overview of approaches to scatological literature (see, esp., pp. xiv–xvi) and has informed my study. Written for a more general readership but still very useful overviews are Lewin 1999 and Ashenburg 2007.

Douglas's comparative anthropological study of cultural definitions of pollution shows, among much else, that modern scientific knowledge of bacterial pathogens and the practices of hygiene that this knowledge promotes have largely blinded us to the symbolic importance of dirt in the maintenance of the integrity of social systems. Dirt, as she puts it, "is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements" (1978.35).

The central symbolic elements in this system are the associations of dirt with disorder and—especially important in the discussion of excrement—of the body with the social totality.[42] Matter that a culture defines as impure introduces disorder into the system: to use Douglas's words once more, "uncleanness is matter out of place."[43] In response to the threat of disorder created by dirt, cultures strive to achieve purity (figured as the proper reorganization of the environment) by the exclusion of this anomalous or ambiguous, system-defying matter.[44] From this perspective, the waste products of the human body are a dangerous ambiguity because they are part of the body but are physically expelled from it. Therefore, what is declared impure is that which threatens the system; what is excreted, whether from the body or from society, is execrated.

This hazardous, system-threatening matter provokes reactions of disgust and the closely analogous responses of fear and horror.[45] As Aurel Kolnai in his groundbreaking essay on the phenomenon of disgust and William Ian Miller in his often painfully explicit description and analysis of the subject show, the apparently instinctual reaction of disgust, which on the face of it neither requires nor admits of explanation, is not simply a biological, precognitive reflex; disgust inescapably reveals moral and political dimensions because the emotion of disgust and its expression function to establish and maintain hierarchical relations by rejection and

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42 For the use of the human body as a metaphor for society, see Turner 1984.

43 Douglas 1978.40. See 115 on the body as a symbol of social structure. On bodily waste as a symbol of disorder because it is produced at the margins of the body, margins being the area where any system is vulnerable, see 121–22.

44 See, in general, Douglas 1978.7–57. For beliefs about dirt and pollution in ancient Greek culture, see Hes. *Erga* 724–59, Moulinier 1952, Parker 1983. Carson 1990 discusses the special status of women in ancient Greek ideas of pollution.

45 On fear, horror, and disgust, see Carroll 1990.17–24, Kristeva 1982. Note that for Kristeva, "abjection" (which is closely akin to disgust) is that which disturbs order and system (see, esp., 4). Cf. Miller 1997.25–28.

condemnation of their object.[46] Along similar lines, Martha Nussbaum shows that disgust is a powerful, highly emotive tool of discrimination, and that manifold injustices continue to be perpetrated in its name (1999; cf. 2001.200–06).

An important part of what provokes disgust appears to be, in a sense, "life itself," the living organism with its inevitable, messy processes of decline and decay. The olfactory sense plays a crucial role in the reaction of disgust in its role as a "gatekeeper," protecting the body from dangerous matter before contact occurs; the means by which this is achieved is the powerful and primarily emotional reaction generated by olfactory perceptions. Yet disgust and delight, life and death, and decay and regeneration are interdependent: Charles Darwin theorized the reaction of disgust as the opposite of gustatory pleasure (see Miller 1997.1–23), and in Claude Lévi-Strauss's well-known "culinary triangle," it is the cultural process of cooking that transforms the raw into the cooked, rescuing it—at least temporarily—from the inevitable decay into the rotten that both the raw and the cooked must ultimately suffer. In these ways, the disgusting and the gustatory are intrinsically linked. The reaction of disgust at the scatological elements of Aristophanes' *Peace* and the pleasurable anticipation inspired by its gormandizing, each figured through olfactory themes, are reciprocal functions and tap into a complex of fears about the boundaries and purity of the body, a powerful set of desires, and a matrix of hierarchy and status assignment. Just as it is by design that the coprophage dung beetle stands for war and disorder and provokes revulsion and disgust, so too, it is no accident that the gastronomic pleasures of the latter part of the play are to be enjoyed in the highly ordered frame of sacrificial ritual, marriage ceremony, and commensality.

The focus on excrement in a literary work such as Aristophanes' *Peace* invokes a symbolic system of dirt, disorder, and danger, which are subsequently commuted by a reorganization of the world of the text in which the system-threatening matter is returned to its proper place. In the prologue scene, Second Slave reports Trygaeus's outraged plea to Zeus to put aside his broom and relent from sweeping away Greece (58–59) as though Hellas were imagined as a heap of dirt. Trygaeus's grand plan works as a kind of purification, expelling the disgusting, polluting elements that

46 Kolnai 2004, Miller 1997 (see 98–101 on disgust at excrement, 179–205 on disgust and morality, and 206–54 on disgust and politics).

have caused and carried on the war.[47] In the case of *Peace*, the return to normality and stability is expressed through that most powerful means of ordering experience and recreating society: the performance of ritual. The elaborate scene of Trygaeus's sacrifice and feast forms a transition from the abnormal world of wartime, in which the ambiguously nourished dung beetle confuses food and excrement and where Trygaeus's ascent to heaven is a grotesque parody of ritual practice, to a reconstituted peaceful society in which nourishment is derived from agriculture, excrement returns to its proper place as matter to be expelled from the community (used for nothing more than as an insult for the enemies of peace), and rituals are properly performed once more. The *hidrusis* (installation) of Peace, the ritual bathing in preparation for Trygaeus's marriage, and the sacrificial banquet in the latter half of the play point towards the proper reconstitution of the order of things.[48]

V. RITUAL CORRUPTED: TRYGAEUS'S JOURNEY TO OLYMPUS

Soaring aloft on his dung beetle, Trygaeus arrives at the gates of Zeus's house. His journey has been made possible by a general, voluntary, three-day cessation of all bowel movements and flatulence (150–51). As A. H. Sommerstein (1985 ad loc.) notes, the period of three days suggests ritual purity. The ritual theme will be reinforced by a flurry of references to ritual practices in the interaction between Trygaeus and Hermes.[49]

A particular point is made of Trygaeus's revolting appearance: in lines 183–87, Hermes repeatedly calls him "polluted" (μιαρός), and Trygaeus agrees, acknowledging that he is "*thoroughly* polluted" (μιαρώτατος). As T. K. Hubbard rightly observes, Hermes' characterization of Trygaeus as *miaros* has connotations of ritual pollution and manifestly compromises the ritual frame in which the hero makes his ascent to the gods (1991.143):[50]

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47 Cf. the purification rites at Trygaeus's sacrifice (956–73) and the cleaning of the tables at 1193. For war explicitly said to provoke disgust, see 395.

48 For the importance of ritual in the restoration of peacetime order in the play, cf. Wilkins 2000.142–50.

49 References to ritual practice are made at lines 192, 277ff., 374–75, 386–87b, 396–99, 409–13, 416–24, 431ff.

50 For the basic sense of *miaros* and cognates based on the *mia-* root, see Parker 1983.3–5. The essential idea is defilement caused by imperfection of a thing's form or the infraction

> His contact with dung, the basest form of earth, makes him impure in the context of intercourse with the gods. Trygaeus's prayer for silence and ritual purity at the beginning of his flight [*Peace* 96–101] is from the start undercut by the irony of its own impossibility.

Immediately after Trygaeus reveals his name, deme, and occupation, which cast him firmly as a countryside-dwelling Athenian farmer who has no love of city business, he offers Hermes a piece of meat (192–94). As S. Douglas Olson (1998 ad 192) correctly remarks, Trygaeus's conveyance of flesh to the god is the act of sacrifice made literal. The moment is marked as a pale imitation (and grotesque parody) of sacrificial ritual, since the normal practice is for the *smoke* of the burnt offering, not the flesh itself, to be conveyed to the gods above.[51]

The point of this becomes clear in the context of the entire interaction between Trygaeus and Hermes (177–458). As noted earlier, the episode is replete with references to ritual, especially promises of the future performance of rituals once peace is restored. Furthermore, there is a mirroring relationship between this scene and the later one (922–1124) where Trygaeus and his slave perform the rite of sacrifice in honor of the newly recovered goddess Peace. Each occupies the central section of one half of the play. After the parabasis, ritual will be the affirmation of the success and permanence of the restoration of Peace and the return of proper order, but in the earlier part of the narrative, this figure performs a double function: the corruption of ritual underscores the chaos and disorder of the war-torn world of Greece in 421 B.C.E.; at the same time, the performance of ritual is also the vehicle that makes the reorganization of the disordered world possible. At the beginning of the interaction between Trygaeus and Hermes, a perverted, defiled form of sacrifice is enacted; by the end of the episode,

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of its integrity. Although the adjective *miaros* may in a weakened sense mean "disgusting," it denotes otherwise something affected by a *miasma* (a pollution). Therefore it describes a condition of ritual impurity that debars a person from entering a temple, is contagious, and is subject to supernatural dangers. As Parker shows, it does not simply mean "dirty" (cf. 1983.3 n. 10).

51 That said, Hermes is frequently ambivalent about partaking of human nourishment (cf. *Wealth* 1120–38), and the ritual practice of leaving unburnt food offerings at herms reflects this: cf. *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 130–33, with Clay 1989.122–27, Kadletz 1984.103–05, Vernant 1989b.165.

Hermes pours libations from a golden bowl given to him by Trygaeus and utters prayers for the success of the comic hero's plan (435–58).

VI. RITUAL RESTORED: TRYGAEUS'S SACRIFICIAL BANQUET

The later ritual episode involves the remarkably detailed enacting of the sacrifice of a lamb in honor of Peace (947–1042). The performance of the rite reverses the parodic concretization of sacrifice earlier in the play and endows this episode with a strong sense of community.[52] Sacrifice, perhaps *the* central ritual of ancient Greek culture, is both socially aggregative and a site at which order is imposed through the definition of a group and the articulation of rank.[53] The practice of sacrifice delineates a select group of participants whose first act is to perform ritual ablutions. Then, within the larger group, the exigencies of different tasks, from the man who severs the jugular of the victim to the women who at the same moment raise the ritual cry (*ololuge*), create an organized hierarchy.[54]

The cooking practices with which sacrifice is associated divide the edible and inedible parts of the animal between gods and human beings.[55] The latter are burned along with aromatic spices, and the smoke rises to the gods—the scent of spices being thought to draw them to the sacrifice.[56] In these ways, the rite of sacrifice positions human beings in a hierarchy that includes gods and animals, creating a sense of cosmic order.[57] At

52 For a succinct summary of the evidence for proceedings at the rite of sacrifice in ancient Greece, see Burkert 1983.3–7; see 35–37 for the place of sacrificial ritual in the formation of agreements and alliances in ancient Greece. One of the journal's anonymous readers points out to me the distant influence on my account of F. M. Cornford. For Cornford's view of the place of sacrifice in Old Comedy, see 1961.47–55.

53 The core of sacrificial ritual is shared aggression directed against a victim both for the immediate benefit and long-term solidarity of the community. Burkert 1983 locates the origins of this in prehistoric hunting practices, Girard 1977 in the "scapegoat complex." For the purposes of this discussion, it is the reaffirmation of the group that is the important factor.

54 For the order and hierarchy imposed by the rite of sacrifice, see Burkert 1983.23, 37.

55 For the Hesiodic myth of the division of the sacrificial animal, its significance, and the ramifications for humanity, see Vernant 1989a.26–35.

56 See Σ Aesch. 1.23. For the presence of spices at ancient Greek sacrifices, see Detienne 1977.38. The words for the smoke and smell of a sacrifice overlap etymologically: see Casabona 1966.69–125.

57 For the symbolic ordering of the cosmos that sacrifice imposes, see Detienne 1981, Vernant 1981, 1989a. Aromatic substances are signifiers of a refined and civilized life at Pl.

the same time, the ritual bounds and organizes a group of participants. It is therefore entirely appropriate that as the narrative of *Peace* progresses from the disorder of dirt to the reorganization of the community, it is in particular the performance of sacrificial ritual that facilitates this process.[58]

However, it is not only sacrifice that fulfils this role: the marriage ceremony and the ritual bathing that precedes it reinforce the ritual themes of the sacrificial scene. When Trygaeus returns home bringing Opora and Theoria, the latter is given to the Council (the Boule), while the former he gives to his slave to be readied for the wedding that is to be held at the end of the play. At 842–44, Trygaeus orders his slave to wash Opora before the marriage ceremony. Opora must be washed primarily because bathing is a necessary part of the ritual preparation for the wedding.[59] However, these pre-marriage ablutions acquire a further significance in light of the osphresiology of the play. Dirt, pollution, and their attendant offensive odors are to be relegated to their proper place through the correct and successful performance of ritual activities: washing removes impurities (cf. the use lustral water and the ritual washing of hands at Trygaeus's sacrifice: 956–59, 961, 969–72). The point is reinforced by the mention of Trygaeus's fragrance. At 859–62, Trygaeus announces that he will soon appear as a "splendid bridegroom" (859); the chorus, drawing on the trope of the rejuvenation of the comic hero, reply that he will be enviable as an old man who has become young again, anointed with myrrh (860–62).[60] Both bride and groom were anointed with this perfumed oil prior to the marriage ceremony, and the motif occurs frequently in Aristophanes.[61] As noted earlier, on the osphresiological spectrum, the fragrances of perfumes are the polar opposite of the odors of excrement. The pointed contrast between the scents associated with the marriage ceremony and the stench of excrement could not be clearer.

Rep. 393a.

58 Sacrifice creates a purified space. The assembly (Dem. 54.39, Σ Aesch. 1.23, Σ Ar. *Eccl.* 128, Harpocration s.v. *katharsion*) and the theatre of Dionysos at the City Dionysia (*Suda* s.v. *katharsion* = Csapo and Slater 1994.3.33) were ritually purified by sacrifice before proceedings began.

59 For ritual bathing before the marriage ceremony, see Ginouvès 1962.265–82, Oakley and Sinos 1993.15–16, Rehm 1994.14, 30–31.

60 For the attire and the anointing of the bridegroom, see Oppian *Cynegetica* 1.338–40. For further references, see Oakley and Sinos 1993.16 with n. 42.

61 For references to the marriage ceremony in Aristophanes, see Olson 1998 ad 860–62. For discussion of the use of perfumes in marriage ritual, see Detienne 1977.62.

We must return to the starting point of this essay and the persistence of scatology in the latter part of the play to appreciate the systematic reorganization of the environment imposed by the narrative of *Peace*. The creation of order can be most clearly seen in the inclusion or exclusion of the various characters arriving at Trygaeus's sacrificial banquet (cf. Wilkins 2000.143–45). The first is the war-mongering seer Hierocles (1043–126). The importance of the olfactory sense is underlined here because the aroma of smoke (1050) from the sacrificial cooking draws Hierocles onto the stage.[62] The seer is an unwelcome guest because his prophecies predict war and the failure of Trygaeus's project. At 1077–79, he quotes the following oracle: "So long as the bombardier beetle in flight farts most foully . . . so long were it not yet meet for peace to be sanctioned." The insect in question, if it is indeed an insect at all, cannot be securely identified (see Olson 1998 ad loc.), but the important point is that foul smells are again associated with war.[63]

The seer is refused any portion of the sacrificial feast, but Trygaeus invites the spectators to share it with him (1115–66). Commensality, with all its connotations of community, works to exclude Hierocles and to embrace all who welcome peace. After the departure of Hierocles, a maker of vine pruning hooks and a potter are welcomed to the feast (1197–209), while the "arms dealers" are insulted and excluded. Once they have been shooed away, Trygaeus listens to two boys singing. The excerpts of epic poetry sung by the first boy, the son of the bellicose general Lamachus, show a marked opposition between war and eating (1270–94), the former meeting with Trygaeus's strong disapproval, the latter with his encouragement. Second, the son of the *rhipsaspis* (shield-dropper) Cleonymus predictably begins singing Archilochus fragment 5 ("Some Saean now vaunts my shield, a blameless weapon that all unwillingly I abandoned behind a bush") and is disgraced.[64] Trygaeus's poetic judgment here may be understood in relation

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62 Compare the arrival of the sycophant at *Wealth* 893–95. On the Hierocles scene in *Peace*, see Flower 2007.62–63. On *chresmologoi* in Aristophanes in general, see Smith 1989, who notes that Aristophanes mocks seers and diviners but never questions divination itself nor mocks oracular centers such as Dodona or Delphi. See also Muecke 1998. For doubts (not ultimately convincing) about the historicity of the Aristophanic "oracle monger," see Bowden 2003.

63 Borthwick 1968 discusses this problem and suggests that the reference may actually be to a weasel, whose noxious odor is well established elsewhere in Aristophanes: e.g., *Acharnians* 255–56, *Wealth* 693.

64 A much discussed passage: see Olson 1998 ad loc.; see, further, Camerotto 2007, Compton-Engle 1999.

to the work of disgust and the importance of olfactory discrimination in the play: war has become an object of unquestionable revulsion and even the grandeur of epic poetry cannot redeem it.

Peace ends appropriately with a marriage hymn and invitations to accompany Trygaeus and Opora to the idyll of the Attic fields.[65] The marriage hymn serves as a reminder of the role of ritual in the reconstitution of both the polis and Trygaeus's oikos. The invitation to the chorus to look forward to plenty of feasting and drinking (1361–62) and the promise that the audience will have cakes to eat if they follow along (1366–67) substitute desire and the anticipation of gastronomic delights for the atmosphere of disgust with which the play began.[66] The scatological material and the offensive odors that accompany it have been pushed to the margins of society along with the practitioners and supporters of warfare; peace has returned, banishing chaos and bringing with it fragrant scents, nourishment, and an ordered community.

VII. CONCLUSION

It will no doubt be objected that the osphresiological analysis proposed in this paper will do little to change our understanding of the meaning of Aristophanes' *Peace*. The point is admitted: after detailed attention to the numerous references to odors and fragrances in the play, war, excrement, and the city still smell repulsive; peace, food, and the fields delightful—and the narrative deplores the former and extols the latter. The foundations of these critical platitudes are unshaken.

In response it might be countered that the prospect of a reading of *Peace* that convincingly unmasks the play as a piece of hawkish, saber-rattling propaganda, encouraging renewed conflict with the Peloponnesian League and that argues persuasively that the play would have caused Athenians in 421 to hark back with teary-eyed nostalgia to their confinement behind the walls of the city, with its detrimental effects on public health and hygiene, seems unlikely. The purpose of the present paper is to offer the first account of the importance of osphresiology in *Peace* and the role

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65 On the rallying cry "to the fields!" in the play, see Moulton 1981.93 n. 47 and 92–101 on the pastoral themes more generally. Much of this material appears in the second parabasis (*Peace* 1127–90), on which subject, see Totaro 1999.106–12.

66 On the mirroring imagery of the cakes at the beginning and end of the play, see Whitman 1964.110.

that it plays in the narrative: no other published analysis (to my knowledge) has considered *why* smell is central to this play (or what the point of its centrality might be). Even if this is considered but small progress, the discussion at least corrects a widely held misapprehension: repugnant odors and scatological material do not disappear or diminish into critical unimportance after the parabasis.

When *Peace* was first performed at the Dionysia in 421 B.C.E., Athens had been at war with Sparta and her allies for nearly a decade. Peace negotiations were already underway and had been since the previous summer when the pugnacious Athenian and Spartan commanders, War's two missing pestles (*Peace* 259–84), Cleon and Brasidas, fell at the battle of Amphipolis.[67] Cleon's demagogic ascendancy at Athens had seen a period of bellicosity and intransigence in the matter of making a peace settlement after the capture of 292 Spartan soldiers in Pylos in 425 had all but removed any threat of annual Peloponnesian invasions of the Attic countryside with the attendant provocations of ravaging (cf. Thuc. 4.41.1).[68] Although the Attic countryside had been safe for the previous three summers, the memory of agricultural destruction and the experience of displacement from the fields of Attica must have remained fresh in the minds of Athenian farmers. The plot of *Peace* makes explicit reference to the frustrations of Athenian landowners at the devastation of the Attic countryside during the first seven years of the conflict.[69] Furthermore, it is obvious to even the casual reader that the play delights in raking up the past: recounting the alleged origins of the war (with scandalous innuendo focused in particular on the political intrigues of Pericles and Phidias) and recalling a number of events that took place during the conflict, both political and poetic (Sophocles and Cratinus are part of the news), as Trygaeus tells Peace what has happened since she went away (603–705). In short, the plot insistently pushes the evocation of memories of the events of the Archidamian War to front and center stage.

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67 For the Aristophanic imagery of Cleon as a pestle stirring up Athenian politics, see Edmunds 1987.1–9.

68 Attica was invaded five times in the seven years from 431 to 425 (see Thuc. 2.19, 2.47, 3.1, 3.26, 4.2). In 429, the Peloponnesians marched instead against Plataea (Thuc. 2.71), and in 426 they turned back at the isthmus, deterred by a number of earthquakes (Thuc. 3.89).

69 *Peace* 625–31. On ravaging and agricultural destruction as provocation, see Hanson 1998.42–76, 174–84.

In the event, the threat of renewed devastation of the countryside was removed when a treaty was concluded less than two weeks after that year's City Dionysia,[70] but the issue was far from decided at the time of the first performance of the play: to bring pressure to bear on the Athenian side of the negotiations, Sparta had summoned her allies in preparation for an invasion that spring (Thuc. 5.17.2). In any event, the outcome must have seemed even less certain when Aristophanes conceived the design of the play, presumably (but not necessarily) in the summer of 422.[71]

It seems far from unlikely that the osphresiological focus of *Peace* is designed—like the overt references to the ravaging of the Attic countryside—to evoke unsavory memories of wartime Athens, when Athenians from far and wide were crowded together behind the city walls in conditions that can only have been highly insanitary (as the severity of the plague and its recurrence indicate) and must have involved more than usually close and prolonged contact with waste products (e.g., *Ach.* 72*,* 616–17). It is well established that the olfactory sense is a peculiarly powerful stimulus in the activation of memories, especially emotional memories. The "Proust effect" has been thoroughly documented in the literature of experimental psychology and neuroscience (see Haviland-Jones and Wilson 2008.237, 238–40). If so, then the osphresiology of

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70 Thuc. 5.19.1 reports that the treaty was affirmed with sworn oaths on Elaphebolion 25 and that this was immediately after the Dionysia (5.20.1). In 421, the City Dionysia probably concluded on Elaphebolion 13. See Sommerstein 1985.xv with n. 1.

71 It has been suggested that *Peace* was composed in a rush: e.g., Whitman 1964.104. But as Landfester 1977.185–86 notes, the three or four months after Amphipolis would have been as long as Aristophanes often had to write a comedy, given that he sometimes presented two plays in the same year. Dover 1972.35 points out that Aristophanes does not mention Nicias's peace negotiations over the winter of 422/1; and at 137, he observes that Aristophanes must have been working on the play some considerable time in advance of the performance. It is, of course, impossible to know how much earlier—perhaps several years (having begun his career in 427 with *Babylonians*)—he might have begun work on what later became *Peace*. Sicking 1967.120–22 suggests that the plot of *Peace* might have been sketched before Amphipolis, with Aristophanes tweaking what had been a far-fetched fantasy plot to make it into a celebration of an achieved (or imminent) reality. In any event, some material, and therefore an outline, must have been composed by the summer preceding the production when the eponymous archon selected *choregoi* and assigned them to a poet. Cratinus *PCG* 17 and Plato, *Laws* 817d (= Csapo and Slater 1994.3.1, 2) provide us with only a few scraps of evidence for the process of selection. The fragment of Cratinus attests to the highly competitive nature of the struggle to be granted a chorus among poets, while the passage of Plato implies that some "songs" (this need not necessarily mean choral odes) had to be ready for demonstration before the archon. For further discussion of the selection process, see Wilson 2000.61–63.

Peace goes some way towards explaining why, on the eve of peace negotiations that might easily have collapsed, Aristophanes composed a play that stirred memories of some of the repulsive daily aspects of inhabiting a city at war.

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