

Spring 2016

ὁ κικλίκμορ ποτόρ: Comedy and Wine in Classical Athens

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ὁ κίχλισμός ποτός
Comedy and Wine in Classical Athens

Senior Project submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College

by
Lily Houston Smith

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2016

For Lizzie

Acknowledgements

I never thought that during my senior year of college, I would spend more time studying wine than drinking it, but I'm glad I did. I had a great deal of fun coming up with this project, and I think it a fitting way to end my four, incredible years at Bard. So, a huge thank you to all of the people who have helped this project come into fruition, and to those who helped prepare me, both intellectually and emotionally, to tackle a seventy nine page paper.

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Cheers!

ὁ κίχλισμὸς ποτός: Comedy and Wine in Classical Athens:

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Introduction

When I first started researching this project, I knew I wanted to study Aristophanes, but it would take time before my project evolved into a study of comic wine drinking. I held the belief, and still do, that to try to understand what inspires laughter in another, or in this case, another culture, is a deeply intimate act. Laughter is a unifying force. To share laughter is unassailable proof of a common worldview and set of values, proof which fosters intimacy and trust and is the birthplace of so many friendships and loves. What better way, I thought, to develop a more sophisticated sense of this culture, than to delve into these confounding texts and to try to understand what inspired laughter in the Ancient Greeks?

Beyond these lofty ideas, my interests in Aristophanic Comedy were largely vague and disjointed. I was struck, among other things, by Aristophanes' crude portrayals of the Greek gods. Just look at Dionysus in the *Frogs* or Hermes in *Peace*; self-ignorant, powerless objects of ridicule, these gods seem out of place in plays performed at what were essentially religious festivals. So I selected this topic, the presence of gods on the comic stage, just one of a dozen scattered interests, and began to research.

After reading all the plays of Aristophanes in translation, and a diverse selection of Aristophanic scholarship, I eventually broadened my topic to include not only the portrayals of gods on the comic stage, but the portrayals of Greek religion, more generally. I divided the project into four sections, which would each analyze components of Greek religion that had structural or thematic parallels in Old Comedy. These were: wine, procession and displacement, ritual practices and libations, and costume and disguise. As is clear from this project's title, *ὁ κίχλισμός ποτός: Comedy and Wine in Classical Athens*, I never made it past the first section.

Wine proved too rich a subject to confine to a single, twenty-page chapter. Even confining the discussion to these seventy-odd pages was a challenge. Discussing the significance of wine in Old Comedy meant discussing the Greek's simultaneous desire for and fear of wine's intoxicating effects. It meant discussing the ways in which ritualizing and portraying the consumption of wine helped them to define their own culture. It meant discussing Dionysus, whose strict requirements for piety and moderation are constantly undermined by the kind of extreme behavior his worship requires. It meant grappling with this god's strange dominion over both wine and theater, two subjects whose relationship to one another seemed, at first, infinitely mysterious.

Now, looking back on my last nine months of research, I have difficulty separating wine from theater at all. Wine facilitates the descent from the cerebral to the visceral—the entering into one's body and succumbing to its immediate, bestial desires.¹ Theater, in effect, does this same thing. It takes the cerebral and the philosophical and deposits them into physical bodies, actors who guide the audience, not to a logical conclusion, but through an experience. For the Greeks, whose culture placed such a high value on moderation (σωφροσύνη), or the ability to control and regulate these natural impulses, the descent into drunkenness poses a problem; and the problem is exacerbated in Old Comedy, whose heroes abandon the most essential restrictions placed on wine drinking. They drink their wine unmixed (ἄκρατος) and in excessive quantities, boasting a rejection of limitations in a hubristic, perhaps dangerous way.

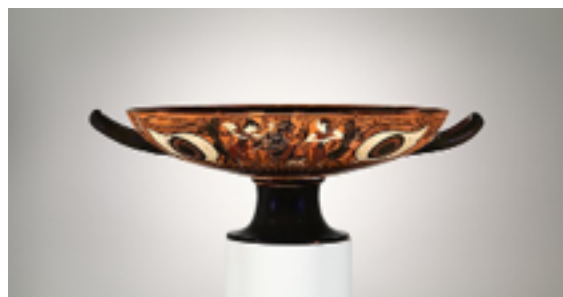
¹ This is one of wine's greatest appeals, especially to the average college student, who, on a regular basis, is expected to forcefully intellectualize his or her surroundings—to understand a single thought from multiple points of view, to articulate what is *felt*, and not *thought*. It is exhausting spending so much time in one's head. Drinking helps us to return to our bodies. Why else would Bard College schedule Spring Fling—its own Dionysian Frenzy—the weekend after this project is due?

It wasn't until I stumbled upon a strange collection of French essays in the art history section of the library that I began to envision a coherent way of talking about these problems. The book, *A City of Images: Iconography and Society in Ancient Greece*, took an almost romantic approach to its interpretation of Greek art; and its prose, translated from the French by Deborah Lyon, was highly poetic and philosophical—a guided experience through the beautiful and mysterious culture from whose womb these works of art were birthed. It was the kind of book undergraduates, like me, just adore. One of the essays, *Wine: Human and Divine*, written by Jean-Louis Durand, Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux, and François Lissarrague, addressed this very problem. They write:

Only Dionysus can drink [wine] without risk in its wild unmixed state. Human beings, on the other hand, can only approach this drug by controlling it with a body of laws defining the proper use of wine within the framework of a regulated conviviality. The very vases that are the instruments of mixing and distribution of the wine illustrate these practices and the god who commands them.²

These vases, in particular the ways in which they facilitate wine consumption while warning against its potential harm, were the inspiration for this project. If the instruments of wine drinking also served to regulate drinking, perhaps comedy, an instrument which grants access to otherwise inaccessible behavior, does the same thing.

The cups to which Durand, Frontisi-Ducroux, and Lissarrague referred were kylikes, like the one pictured here: a black figure kylix from the late sixth century, painted about a hundred years before Aristophanes was writing in Athens. Depicted on the obverse of its exterior is



² Durand, Frontisi-Ducroux, and Lissarrague, 1989; p. 121

Dionysus, who, as the god of wine and viticulture, fittingly appears on many Attic drinking cups and wine storage vessels. Accompanying him are two satyrs and two maenads. If the presence of Dionysus and the purpose of the kylix do not themselves suggest the presence of wine, the grape vines which surround the figures and the rhyton (another Greek container used to hold wine) solidify its thematic significance to the image.

The scene is one of revelry. However, the two eyes which frame the image are ominous. As the drinker raised the cup to drink, the image would cover his face, and the eyes would transform the bottom of the cup into a mask, perhaps turning him for a moment into an actor on the comic stage. These eyes are interpreted by scholars primarily as possessing an apotropaic function—warding off evil spirits.³ Although the evidence is limited as to what the precise intention is, there is a great deal of speculation about their warding off spirits that might cause the wine to spoil or cause the drinker to injure himself or others. Either way, it is clear that the ominous eyes are framing an otherwise happy scene; and whether the eyes are apotropaic or otherwise, they suggest, at the very least, an awareness of the dangers at hand.

Even more interesting, and what became the central theme of this project, is the image depicted within. As the drinker consumed more and more wine, the sight of the intoxicating liquid would have been replaced by the dreaded face of the gorgon. The gorgon, like the eyes on the exterior of the kylix, is an archetypically apotropaic symbol in Greek iconography, and this face could possibly have served to ward off evil—either evil from external



³ Potts 1982, p. 26

spirits which might spoil the wine, or, as Frontisi-Ducroux emphasizes in his interpretation, evil within the drinker, himself: “Ultimately it is his own face that the drinker encounters while looking into the cup he brings to his lips. It is a double of himself, the reflection of his drunkenness.”⁴ When the drinker finishes his wine and reveals to himself the face of the gorgon, he is faced with the disquieting experience of looking into the eyes of the monster he might become. The image seems almost to reflect the climactic moment of the Medusa myth—when the beast finally gazes upon itself and, in the moment of recognition, is destroyed.

Many Greek kylikes contain these kinds of images. This red figure kylix, similar to the first example, is surrounded on its exterior by a revel, in this instance, a band of reveling komasts. There is an aulos player, indicating that the revelers are singing and dancing, and



several of the revelers hold wine cups. However, as the drinker poured the wine down his throat, he would see the image of the wine pouring back out—a young boy holding the head of a vomiting man. Depicted in the very vessel from which the Ancient Greeks would drink their wine is a warning for what might happen should they exceed their limits.

Although there is certainly something ominous about facing this image upon finishing a large cup of wine, it is important to remember what this image really is: a joke. If no plays of Aristophanes had survived from antiquity, these paintings, at least, would serve as salient evidence that the Greeks had a sense of humor. The drunken revels depicted on the outsides of the cups seem innocent, while the images within are potentially more disturbing. The joke they

⁴ Frontisi-Ducroux 1989, 163

tell contributes to the revelatory spirit in which they are encompassed. By using humor, the kylikes manage, without detracting from the good spirits of the drinker, to serve as a reminder of how easily the mysterious balance can be tipped, and the drinker transported from revel to nightmare.

The extreme, hubristic behavior of the Aristophanic heroes, their ability to shame and make light of the gods, which had been my original interest, is like the revel on the outside of the drinking cups; but if this is the case, then what, in the comedies, is functioning as the face of the gorgon or the vomiting man? If comedy represents the revel occurring on the outside of the drinking cup, where are the eyes that cast their ominous gaze? What jokes does Aristophanes tell to remind the audience that, despite the how limitless the revelry of his comedies seems, there are, after all, limits?

I used this line of inquiry to focus my project, to read the texts of Aristophanes through a specific, interpretive lens, and, eventually, to expand the project to include two additional comic genres, Satyr Play and the Greek Symposium. By studying wine drinking as it is portrayed in each of these three genres, I found humor that can function in a way similar to the vomiting man at the bottom of the kylikes, both contributing to and moderating the spirit of revelry which surrounds them. Each chapter addresses the treatment of wine in one of these genres, beginning with satyr play, whose is the most subversive, and ending with the symposium, which most closely represents the actual drinking practices of the Athenians.

The chapters are all structured in roughly the same way. Each begins with a more detailed identification of the relationship the genre seems to have with wine drinking, and the ways in which it simultaneously facilitates and regulates the revelry of its spectators, or, in the case of the

symposium, its participants. Each introduction is followed by a brief overview of the genre, including its essential components, the state of its preservation from antiquity, and some sense of its modern scholarship. The sections which follow comprise my understanding of the texts through this interpretive lens. I provided the original Greek for all textual evidence, in addition to my own translations. The decision to use my own translations was in part for the sake of accuracy. I realized, when consulting the Greek, that many of the translations I initially read exaggerated or interpolated the presence of wine in certain passages. The decision was also, admittedly, for my own benefit; feedback on my reading of the original language is highly valuable at this stage in my education.

The first chapter of this project focuses on Satyr Play, the genre which most embodies the spirit of Dionysian revelry and is believed by some scholars to be the inspiration for the images on these very kylikes.⁵ I focus on Euripides' *Cyclops*, the only complete satyr play which survives from antiquity, beginning with a discussion of the Homeric myth it parodies: the Blinding of Polyphemus. This myth, from the ninth book of Homer's *Odyssey*, is highly concerned with the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate wine drinking; so when Euripides shifts the myth from the world of epic to that of satyr play, it becomes apparent how these expectations are subverted on the satyric stage.

Among the satyrs, whose ethical and behavioral standards are much simpler than those of the epic heroes, wine becomes the only important indicator of moral character; so, in the *Cyclops*, when the uncivilized Polyphemus consumes his wine, it does not destroy him as it does in the Homeric episode, but contributes to his moral growth. This specific subversion of the

⁵ Seaford, 1988; p. 3

original myth is the greatest source of comedy in the play; many of its antics are a result of Odysseus' frustration that the myth does not follow its expected course. In this way, the story so grossly departs from the original myth—and the characters from the expected model of Athenian behavior—that it draws attention to its own subversion and absurdity.

In my second chapter I transition to Old Comedy. Both the heroes and villains of Old Comedy, like the satyrs, drink their wine ἄκρατος, abandoning the most essential moderating practice for the Ancient Greeks—the dilution of wine in water. These plays, however, are not set in distant mythologies, but often in present-day Athens, where they would have been performed. Accordingly, the characters' abandonment of moderating practices does not rely on its own absurdity to remind the audience that the characters onstage are purposefully exaggerated. Instead, these characters, while abandoning the standard wine drinking behaviors, seem to adhere to other standards, which determine whether their consumption of unmixed wine will or will not be harmful.

The discussion in this chapter focuses on three plays of Aristophanes: *Acharnians*, *Knights*, and *Clouds*. Wine plays a significant narrative and thematic role in the first two, *Acharnians* and *Knights*, where the distinctions between appropriate and inappropriate wine drinking become clear. The two qualities which I argue are most important include the location of and the motivation for drinking. Drinking wine onstage, within a clearly comic context, is often beneficial or approved of by the other characters, while drinking offstage, outside of this context, is usually harmful or garners disapproval. Characters who pour libations or express gratitude for their wine can drink excessively without injury, while characters whose motivations seem selfish or are linked to gluttony are met with disapproval and often result in injury by the

end of the play. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the *Clouds*, which does not contain depictions of characters drinking wine, but whose references to wine drinking reinforce the same principles laid out in *Acharnians* and *Knights*. The play's unusually violent ending draws attention to the behaviors condemned by the comic stage and the scathing criticism of the audience's wine consumption expressed in its parabasis both demonstrate more explicitly the comic poet's moderating relationship to his audience.

The final chapter, which is least similar to the first two, focuses on the Greek Symposium, which moves us off of the stage and into the room where actual Greek drinking occurred: the *andron*. However, even inside of the *andron*, there are inherently theatrical and comic qualities to the symposiasts' behavior, and the treatment of wine reflects the same underlying principles of cautious consumption that govern the drinking on the comic and satyric stages. The chapter discusses three characters in Plato's *Symposium*, who each possess a unique relationship to wine. The first two, Eryximachus and Alcibiades, seem to represent the opposing forces of sobriety and drunkenness and, as a result, provide clear distinctions between the two. Because the portrayals of these characters are not as exaggerated as would be expected on the comic or satyric stages, they do not face obvious consequences for their actions, but more subtly reveal the necessity of regulating wine consumption.

The chapter then shifts focus to a discussion of Socrates, who, both physically and ideologically, resembles a satyr. His strange relationship with wine, namely, his inhuman capacity to drink in excess without injury, is characteristically satyric. The discussion of Socrates as a satyr, which is the primary focus of Alcibiades' speech, comes to reveal Socrates' inherent

and divine moderateness, which is perhaps the same moderateness inherent in the excessive portrayals of wine drinking in both Old Comedy and Satyr Play.

Satyr Play:

Drunken Cyclopes from Homer to Euripides

The only Satyr Play which survives from antiquity happens to be a source rich in examples of comic wine drinking. The play, Euripides' *Cyclops*, parodies the ninth book of Homer's *Odyssey*, an episode almost entirely concerned with distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate drinking practices. This appropriateness seems to be determined by the willingness or capacity of the drinker to submit to an external set of regulations, rather than indulging his own desire. However, this need for external restrictions on one's wine consumption becomes irrelevant in the world of Satyr Play. The satyrs, who comprise the satyric chorus, are not susceptible to the adverse effects of intoxication; and on the satyric stage, no one else is, either. By relocating Homer's story into the world of satyrs, Euripides abandons these distinctions, replacing them instead with an unconditional reverence toward wine and intoxication. Drinking behaviors which should incur negative consequences not only go unpunished, but ultimately seem to benefit the drinker.

These subversive depictions of intoxication are characteristic of all the comic genres and contribute to the humor of the play without condoning excessive, unregulated intoxication. Euripides draws attention to the absurdity of reimagining the myth in this way, both by subverting the expectations developed in its source material and by highlighting the contrast between the satyrs and the play's protagonist, Odysseus, whose ethical and behavioral standards remain mostly consistent with his Homeric prototype. In addition, the presence of the satyrs helps to characterize the action on the satyric stage as being off-limits for the audience. In this

way, Euripides allows his characters to abandon the necessary restrictions placed on wine drinking, without condoning the same behavior offstage.

i. An Overview of the Greek Satyr Play

Satyr Play (*Σάτυρος*) is, in many ways, the ultimate representation of Dionysian sensibilities. It was the customary final installment in the tragic cycle and shares some characteristics with its tragic counterparts. The Satyr Play, like tragedy, is written in iambic trimeter and similarly derives its plots from popular mythology.⁶ However, the genre's lewd humor and its failure to punish its characters for their hubristic abandonment of *σωφροσύνη* establish the genre as the antithesis of tragedy, which is so often concerned with punishing its hubristic characters. It also shares many qualities with Aristophanic comedy, but tends to be less political and is most notably distinguished from Old Comedy by its chorus, which always consists of a band of satyrs, the half-human-half-goat followers of Dionysus, whose childish preoccupation with and fondness for wine fosters in them a disregard for anything other than pure, boundless revelry. Kenneth Reckford, a prominent scholar of Aristophanes, refers to Satyr Play as the "Country Cousin" of Aristophanic Comedy, a label which humorously captures the genre's defiant rejection of all things sophisticated.⁷

Satyr Play is also, however, the dramatic literary tradition from antiquity we probably know the least about. There is a great deal of conjecture surrounding the purpose of Satyr Play. Although many scholars interpret the genre as the comic relief to tragedy, R. A. S. Seaford

⁶ Ormand 2012; p.156

⁷ Reckford, 1887; 105

challenges this notion, suggesting its failure to differentiate the genre from comedy.⁸ Horace, writing in the first century BC, identifies the purpose of the satyr play as a method of subduing the drunken and disorderly spectators, in a reading, perhaps, most similar to my own.⁹

Only one Satyr Play survives in full, Euripides' *Cyclops*,¹⁰ and even with substantial fragments discovered in the early twentieth century from Aeschylus' *Dictyulci* and Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, we only have access to a total of about two thousand lines of Greek Satyr Play—only marginally more than the length of a single tragedy, and in fragments, no less.¹¹ Ancient scholars made no attempt to preserve these plays; Euripides' *Cyclops* only survives by chance, as one of his nine “alphabetical plays.” Like all of Euripides' alphabetical plays, it contains no scholia, the grammatical, critical, and explanatory comments found in many ancient manuscripts. Even more troubling is its hypothesis, which is imperfectly preserved, so that no information about its date

⁸ Seaford 1988; p. 26

⁹ *carmine qui tragico vitem certavit ob hircum, / mox etiam agrestis Satyros nudavit et asper / incolumi gravitate iocum temptavit eo quod / inlecebris erat et grata novitate morandus / spectator functusque sacris et potus et exlex.* (Hor. Ars. 220-5)

“He who once, with a tragic song, competed for a lowly goat, / soon thereafter uncovered the wild satyrs, and without hope, / he attempted some jests, still preserving the gravity [of tragedy], / because the spectator, drunken and disorderly from the rites, / is busied by the attractions and agreeable novelties.

¹⁰ There is an additional fifth century play which contains highly satirical elements, as well as a narratively significant instance of excessive wine drinking. The play, Euripides' *Alcestis*, produced in 438 BC, is considered by scholars to be a “problem play,” as its placement in its tragic tetralogy and climactic scene of excessive drunkenness would both suggest its identification as a satyr play, but it lacks the genre's convention of the satyr chorus; and its length is more standard for a tragedy than a satyr play. Scholars do not know whether this deviation from the standard tragic cycle and straddling between genres was the only exception, or if the rules of the dramatic competition allowed for occasional substitutions (Sutton 1980; p. 134).

¹¹ Ormand 2012; p.155

or the circumstances of its production survive. Most scholars date the play sometime after 411 BC, though some date it as early as 424 BC.¹²

There is very little modern scholarship on Euripides' *Cyclops*, in part due to the lack of surviving material and context for the genre, and in part because of a perceived lack of quality. Dana Sutton, in her comprehensive study of the genre, *The Greek Satyr Play*, addresses the scholarly criticism the play has faced for its narrative and structural inconsistencies, which suggest its hasty composition; she additionally addresses the tendency in scholarship to dismiss the *Cyclops* as "a play deficient in originality," as well as the bounty of evidence that Euripides was considered by ancient scholars the least skillful of the three prominent tragedians at composing Satyr Play.¹³ However, this should not detract from its value as a source for understanding Athenian wine drinking. In fact, its simplistic approach to parody in many ways makes the deviations from its source material easier to identify.

ii. The Homeric Blinding of Polyphemus

The ninth book of Homer's *Odyssey* provides several examples of both appropriate and inappropriate wine drinking, which Euripides will pervert when he shifts the myth into the world of satyr play. In Homer's version of the Blinding of Polyphemus, the story progresses in the following way: Odysseus and his men find themselves in the Land of the Cyclopes, enslaved by the man-eating cyclops, Polyphemus. In order to escape, Odysseus gives their captor a draught of

¹² Dana Sutton argues that the *Cyclops* was produced alongside *Hecuba*, due to the similarity between the blinding scenes, both structurally and thematically, in both plays, which would place the production date in 424BC (Sutton, 1980; p. 95, 114). Seaford takes issue with this reading, believing it to be "unconvincing" (Seaford 1988; p.48).

¹³ Sutton, 1980; 103-105, 120, 180

unmixed wine. Unable to limit his consumption of this wine, Polyphemus drinks to excess, vomits, then falls into a deep slumber, making him vulnerable to attack. Odysseus and his men take advantage of this moment to blind Polyphemus by driving a burning stake through his one eye. As he writhes in pain, he is unable to convince his fellow cyclopes to come to his aid, and Odysseus and his men escape.

Although wine is a destructive force in this moment, the story, as a whole, is highly representative of the complex Greek attitudes toward wine. Homer by no means denounces the consumption of wine, outright, but instead provides four different examples of characters drinking with varying degrees of self restraint and adherence to cultural customs. The consequences which stem from each of these moments help the reader to identify which behaviors are and are not appropriate, and ultimately suggest that it is the manner in which one consumes wine that foreshadows one's fate, and not the consuming of wine, itself. Wine's destructive potential lies within the drinker, rather than the drink.

The ninth book opens with the first example of wine drinking, which elicits no negative consequences for the drinkers. Odysseus tells Alcinous, to whom he will narrate his story, that there is “no greater pleasure” (οὐ χαριέστερον) than those of banquets.¹⁴ When listing these pleasures, he pauses for a moment to reflect, specifically, on the pleasures of wine, thereby introducing a story about the destructive capacity of wine by expressing his fondness for it, saying, μέθυ δ' ἐκ κρητῆρος ἀφύσσων οἰνοχόος φορέησι καὶ ἐγχείῃ δεπάεσσι, “when the cupbearer comes frequently around, drawing wine from the krater, and pours it into everyone's

¹⁴ Hom. Od. 9.5

cups.”¹⁵ Even though the refilling of the cups is frequent, which suggests high levels of intoxication, the drinking in this scene is unproblematic. The cupbearer is drawing wine from a krater (ἐκ κρητῆρος), indicating that the wine has been ceremoniously diluted with water, unlike the wine Odysseus will eventually give to Polyphemos. Although it will become clearer why this is the case in contrast with later examples, two additional details to note are the social cohesion¹⁶ and civility of the banquet. In Book Six, Homer includes the detail that the Phoenicians were once neighbors of the cyclopes, but were repeatedly attacked, until the Nausithous led them to Scheria.¹⁷ This places the Phoenicians in both physical and ideological isolation from the cyclopes. The hospitality which they show to Odysseus by throwing him this banquet will contrast Polyphemos’ later violation of the guest-host relationship. This distinction between the two levels of civility will also help to determine which of these two groups will be able to consume wine without injury.

There is a tension between Odysseus’ reverence toward the wine, with which he introduces the story, and the first example of wine drinking he provides after his introduction. In this example, his men’s excessive and irreverent consumption of wine leads to disastrous consequences. He and his men raid the Cicones, rape their women and steal their food and

¹⁵ Hom. Od. 9.10

¹⁶ James Davidson’s chapter on Drinking in his popular book, *Courtesans & Fishcakes*, focuses on this very point. He argues that this social cohesion is the most important determining factor of appropriate wine consumption in Classical Athens (Davidson, 1999; p. 36-69).

¹⁷ αὐτὰρ Ἀθήνη / βῆ ῥ’ ἐς Φαιήκων ἀνδρῶν δῆμόν τε πόλιν τε, / οἳ πρὶν μὲν ποτ’ ἔναιον ἐν εὐρυχόρῳ Ὑπερείῃ, / ἀγχοῦ Κυκλώπων ἀνδρῶν ὑπερηγορέοντων, / οἳ σφεας σινέσκοντο, βίηφι δὲ φέρτεροι ἦσαν. / ἔνθεν ἀναστήσας ἄγε Ναυσίθοος θεοειδής, / εἶσεν δὲ Σχερίη... “Meanwhile, Athena / went to the country and country of the Phoenician men, / who had, at one time, lived in broad Hyperia, / near to the Cyclopes, terribly arrogant men, / mightier than they, who kept attacking them. / Making them rise, Godlike Nausithous led them from there, / and placed them in Scheria...” (Hom. Od. 6.2-8).

treasures. After they have conquered these defenseless people, Odysseus tries to convince his men to leave:

ἔνθ' ἧ̃ τοι μὲν ἐγὼ διερῶ̃ ποδὶ φευγέμεν ἡμέας
 ἠνώγεα, τοὶ δὲ μέγα νήπιοι οὐκ ἐπίθοντο.
 ἔνθα δὲ πολλὸν μὲν μέθυ πίνετο, πολλὰ δὲ μῆλα
 ἔσφαζον παρὰ θῖνα καὶ εἰλίποδας ἔλικας βοῦς.¹⁸

Then indeed I had ordered that we flee that place
 with swift foot, but they, much like children, did not obey.
 And then, much wine was drunk there, and many sheep
 and stumbling cows slain on the shores.

Odysseus adopts a particularly ominous tone in this moment. The slaying of cows on the shores suggests an unceremonious and gluttonous motivation for consuming the wine. Additionally, by having Odysseus describe the men as *νήπιοι*, meaning “childlike,” “foolish,” or “without forethought,” Homer echoes the epic’s proem, where Odysseus’ men, *σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο, νήπιοι*, “are destroyed by their own recklessness, the fools.”¹⁹ From the first lines of the epic, Homer makes clear the connection between foolishness (*νήπιοι*) and destruction. The audience knows, when he uses this word to describe Odysseus’ men, that their destruction is imminent.

The behavior they exhibit points to a clear lack of *σωφροσύνη*. His men are driven by their appetites, denying Odysseus’ requests that they place an external limit on their wine consumption. This problematic lack of personal restraint makes some sort of negative repercussion seem inevitable. Sure enough, the following morning, when Odysseus’ men are drunkenly sleeping, the Cicones attack, killing twelve men and forcing the remaining into a

¹⁸ Hom. Od. 9.43-6

¹⁹ Hom. Od. 1.7-8

hurried flight, which leads them further off their course, and ultimately to the Land of the Cyclopes. Their inappropriate drinking behaviors foreshadow the outcome of the story's climactic event, the Blinding of Polyphemus, in which Odysseus will recognize and exploit this same ignorance and lack of personal restraint in another.

When Odysseus arrives at the Land of the Cyclopes, he draws attention to specific traits which foreshadow and contribute to Polyphemus' eventual downfall, all of which indicate a lack of respect for authority or adherence to any external, regulating structures. Odysseus describes the cyclopes as "arrogant" (ὑπερφίαλοι) and "lawless" (ἄθέμιστοι).²⁰ They also lack "assemblies" (ἀγοραὶ βουλευφόροι) and "customary laws" (θέμιστες),²¹ and their crops grow "without sowing and without ploughing" (ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα).²² They are beasts, far from the civilized men at Alcinous' banquet, and therefore lack the capacity to consume wine in an appropriate fashion. When Polyphemus meets Odysseus and his men, this extreme rejection of authority becomes even more pronounced. He blasphemes the gods with a hubristic declaration that ἢ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰμεν, "we [the cyclopes] are much better than they [the gods]."²³ He then proceeds to demonstrate his impiety by eating several of Odysseus' men, and therefore violating the guest-host relationship of ξενία.

All of this characterization helps to set up the events of the blinding scene. With no external regulations placed on his behavior, Polyphemus will have no capacity to limit his consumption of wine. As a result, he drinks all the wine that Odysseus offers him, oblivious to

²⁰ Hom. Od. 9.106

²¹ Hom. Od. 9.112

²² Hom. Od. 9. 109

²³ Hom. Od. 9.276

how vulnerable he might become in his drunken state: τρις μὲν ἔδωκα φέρων, τρις δ' ἔκπιεν ἀφραδίησιν “Three times I [Odysseus] gave him [the wine cup], and three times he drained it thoughtlessly.”²⁴ Like Odysseus’ men, who are νήπιοι, lacking foresight, Polyphemus drinks ἀφραδίησιν, literally, “with thoughtlessness.”

The results of this inappropriate consumption of wine are disastrous for Polyphemus and are recounted by Odysseus in vivid detail. One particularly striking image he offers is of the cyclops vomiting before falling into his fateful slumber: φάρυγος δ' ἐξέσσυτο οἴνος ψωμοί τ' ἀνδρόμεοι: ὁ δ' ἐρεύγετο οἰνοβαρείων. “And from his gullet flowed out wine and bits of human flesh, and, heavy with drink, he vomited.”²⁵ This image, in addition to providing such a vivid representation of excess, helps to explain why, after being blinded by a large wooden stake, Polyphemus focuses on the power of the wine and not the weapon, claiming that Odysseus has “overpowered” him (ἐδαμάσσατο) him “by means of wine” (οἴνω).²⁶ What Polyphemus does not understand is that, ultimately, the wine does not destroy him as much as his own excessive intake of it.

After the blinding has occurred, Homer stresses an additional problem with Polyphemus’ behavior, which will become important when Euripides reimagines the myth in his Satyr Play: his isolation from the other cyclopes. Unlike Odysseus at Alcinous’ banquet, who is surrounded by people, Polyphemus is alone, and therefore more vulnerable to the adverse effects of wine. Odysseus initially describes Polyphemus with the following emphasis on his solitude: ἔνθα δ' ἀνήρ ἐνίαυε πελώριος, ὅς ῥα τὰ μῆλα οἶος ποιμαίνεσκεν ἀπόπροθεν: οὐδὲ μετ' ἄλλους πωλεῖτ',

²⁴ Hom. Od. 9.361

²⁵ Hom. Od. 9.373-4

²⁶ Hom. Od. 9.516

ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἐὼν ἀθεμίστια ἤδη “And there slept a gigantic man, who tended his flocks from afar, and did no business with others, but was far away, knowing lawlessness.”²⁷ This isolation becomes detrimental to Polyphemus. Because of this isolation, he does not think it suspect that Odysseus does not consume wine with him, as he does with the other Phoenician banqueters. Also, after the blinding has occurred, he cries out to his fellow cyclopes, whose proximity to him limits their ability to fully comprehend his situation.²⁸ As a result, none of the other cyclopes come to Polyphemus’ aid, and his surviving attackers escape unscathed.

Before ending the ninth book of the *Odyssey*, Homer provides a fourth and final example of wine drinking, more consistent with the first, at Alcinous’ banquet. Odysseus describes his men recuperating after they escape from the Land of the Cyclopes: ὡς τότε μὲν πρόπαν ἤμαρ ἐς ἠέλιον καταδύντα ἡμεθα δαινύμενοι κρέα τ’ ἄσπετα καὶ μέθυ ἠδύ, “Then, throughout the whole day until sunset, we sat feasting on a great deal of meat and sweet wine.”²⁹ This time, there are no negative consequences, and the drinking here comes to resemble the drinking at Alcinous’ banquet, where the story is being narrated. They are reverent toward the men they have lost, and drink with the approval of their leader, Odysseus, whose ability to predict the negative outcome of the raid against the Cicones—and to manipulate Polyphemus’ lack of self control—sets him up as the ideal consumer of wine.

²⁷ Hom. Od. 9.187-9

²⁸ This is also the result of the trick Odysseus plays on Polyphemus. Odysseus identifies himself as Οὐτιν “No Man” (Hom. Od. 9.366), so that when Polyphemus cries out to his fellow Cyclopes, they believe “No Man” has harmed him. Their failure to fully comprehend the situation is a result of their proximity to him. This is what Odysseus takes advantage of in order to deceive him.

²⁹ Hom. Od. 558-9

By concluding the story in this way, Homer bookends the narrative with two examples of wine drinking which are beneficial to the drinkers and do not result in negative consequences. This results in a more nuanced depiction of wine drinking than any of the examples might offer in isolation. Homer neither condemns wine drinking, nor does he approve of it unconditionally. This nuance, however, will be lost entirely in Euripides' satyric retelling.

iii. Satyric Reversal in Euripides' *Cyclops*

By Athenian standards, Odysseus will continue to be the ideal consumer of wine in Euripides' satyric reimagining of the Homeric Epic. However, in the world of Satyr Play, where wine is the most fundamental aspect of life upon which all ethical systems rest, this ideally moderate behavior becomes less than ideal. Emphasis on the consequences of one's actions is not the focus of the Satyr Play; the three preceding tragic performances would have offered enough indictment of excess that the Satyr Play simply would not need it. However, the story so grossly and humorously departs from the original narrative, that it becomes clear how inaccurate a portrayal of wine drinking it provides.

In Homer's version of the Blinding of Polyphemus, Odysseus' plan to use wine against the cyclops works with relative ease. Odysseus gives the wine to Polyphemus, who drinks an excessive quantity, vomits, then falls asleep, making him vulnerable to attack. In Euripides' retelling, Odysseus has more difficulty executing his plan. After drinking the wine Odysseus offers to him, many of Polyphemus' more problematic qualities begin to resolve themselves. These include his arrogant rejection of the gods, his isolation and lack of cohesive social and communal structures, and his refusal to allow singing or dancing, the last of which is particularly

distressing to the playful and childlike satyrs. He becomes an almost sympathetic character whose values begin to reflect those of the Athenians, forcing Odysseus into extreme behaviors to finally succeed in blinding him.

Both Euripides and Homer address the same problematic qualities which will contribute to Polyphemus' inability to regulate his consumption of the wine: his lawlessness, his isolation, and his godlessness. Euripides, in an exchange between Silenus and Odysseus which follows the first choral ode, addresses these concerns, explaining that they have no city walls (τείχη), no battlements (πόλεως πυργώματα), and no cultivated crops (Δήμητρος στάχυν).³⁰ In other words, they lack infrastructure, a governing system, and agricultural practices—all things which are indicative of external systems which would regulate the behaviors of the cyclopes.

In the *Cyclops*, Euripides exaggerates some of these qualities for comic effect. Euripides' Polyphemus has enslaved Silenus and his chorus of satyrs, forcing them to tend to his sheep and denying them the pleasures of drinking or dancing; so, his Polyphemus not only lacks these essential markers of culture and civility, he deprives others of them. The absence of wine is also more extreme in Euripides' Satyr Play. In the Homeric version, the cyclopes do possess wine before Odysseus' arrival: ἄμπελοι, αἳ τε φέρουσιν οἶνον ἐριστάφυλον, καί σφιν Διὸς ὄμβρος ἀέξει, "grapevines, which bear fine wine, the rain storms of Zeus increase them."³¹ It seems more significant to Homer that the cyclopes do not grow the wine grapes themselves, and therefore have no methods of cultivating or controlling it. Euripides' Polyphemus, however, has never seen wine, at all.

³⁰ Eur. Cycl. 115-21

³¹ Hom. Od. 9.109-10

This absence of wine is revealed in a stichomythic dialogue between Odysseus and Silenus, which consists of a series of questions posed by Odysseus in an attempt to locate the basic elements of a society in the Land of the Cyclopes. Odysseus' increasing surprise at the absence of each highlights his dependency on these cultural structures, structures which inform his approach to consuming wine safely. The series of questions also helps demonstrate the logical association between these different aspects of a culture, and eventually culminates in a series of questions specifically related to wine. Having learned that the cyclopes lack these basic cultural structures, Odysseus logically wonders whether or not they have access to wine, whose complex cultivation, to him, is likely indicative of a more advanced culture:

Ὀδυσσεύς	Βρομίου δὲ πῶμ' ἔχουσιν, ἀμπέλου ροάς;
Σιληνός	ἦκιστα: τοιγὰρ ἄχορον οἰκοῦσι χθόνα.
Ὀδυσσεύς	φιλόξενοι δὲ χῶσιοι περὶ ξένους;
Σιληνός	γλυκύτετά φασι τὰ κρέα τοὺς ξένους φορεῖν.
Ὀδυσσεύς	τί φήεις; βορᾶ χαίρουσιν ἀνθρωποκτόνῳ; ³²
Odysseus	Do they have the drink of Dionysus, the juice of the grapevine?
Silenus	Not at all! Indeed they live in a land with no choruses.
Odysseus	Are they friendly and respectful to strangers?
Silenus	Most delicious, they say, is the flesh of strangers.
Odysseus	What? They feast on the flesh of men?

When Odysseus discovers that the cyclopes do not possess wine, his next logical concern is whether or not they are friendly toward strangers (περὶ ξένους), which, as the audience knows from the Homeric story, they are not. They are set in physical and ideological opposition to the Phoenicians, who strictly adhere to the laws of the guest-host relationship, and honor Odysseus as a guest with a banquet. From this point, it becomes clear that Polyphemus represents the antithesis of this Greek ideal. He is not only unfriendly toward strangers, but outright hostile.

³² Eur. Cycl. 123-6

This hostility will be the primary concern for Odysseus, who is motivated by his need to escape death. Silenus, who leads the satyrs, but whose ethical standards seem significantly more complex, will be more concerned with Polyphemus' lack of religion. In his opening address to the audience, Silenus twice refers to Polyphemus as "unholy" (ἀνόσιος).³³ To the chorus of satyrs, however, the absence of all these key indicators of culture pales in comparison to the lack of one, in particular: wine. When they first enter the stage, attempting (unsuccessfully) to herd Polyphemus' flocks, they begin to sing of this offense:

οὐ τὰδε Βρόμιος, οὐ τὰδε χοροὶ
 βακχεῖαι τε θυρσοφόροι,
 οὐ τυμπάνων ἀλαλαγ-
 μοὶ κρήναις παρ' ὕδροχύτοις,
 οὐκ οἴνου γλωραὶ σταγόνες.³⁴

Dionysus is not here, nor are his Choruses,
 Frenzied and bearing thyrsi,
 nor the sounds of drums
 by the gushing springs,
 nor the dewy drops of wine.³⁵

The absence of wine in the Land of the Cyclopes is, to the satyrs, deeply upsetting. While Odysseus is more concerned with the hostility that wine's absence suggests, the satyrs' concerns begin and end with the absence of wine. While Silenus is more concerned with the the cyclopes' rejection of the gods, his satyr children are much more concerned with the cyclopes' rejection of one god in particular: Dionysus.

Although in Homer's epic, all of these concerns contribute to Polyphemus' inability to moderate his wine drinking, this is the world of Satyr Play. Here, the social and ethical systems of the satyrs apply, rather than those of the epic heroes. As a result, when the cyclops finally does obtain the wine, many of these problematic characteristics will begin to resolve themselves. One

³³ Eur. Cycl. 26, 31

³⁴ Eur. Cycl. 63-7

³⁵ An irony to note, here, is that although the satyrs are singing about Dionysus' absence from their land and their inability to participate in his revels, they are simultaneously participating in a Dionysian revel. They are the chorus whose absence they lament.

example is Polyphemus' blasphemous rejection of the gods—Silenus' primary concern at the beginning of the play. Polyphemus demonstrates his impiety when he first enters the stage. He claims, Ζηνὸς δ' ἐγὼ κεραυνὸν οὐ φοβίσσω, ξένε, οὐδ' οἶδ' ὅ τι Ζεὺς ἐστ' ἐμοῦ κρείσσων θεός “I do not tremble at the thunderbolt of Zeus, Stranger, nor do I know any way in which Zeus is a superior god to me.”³⁶ This is similar to a statement made in Homer's version, where Polyphemus first emphasizes the cultural distance between himself and Odysseus, referring to him as a ξένος, then asserting his own superiority over the gods.³⁷ Polyphemus then concludes with an assertion of the importance of his own appetites and desires (θυμός). He deifies his own stomach, saying, ἀγὼ οὔτινι θύω πλὴν ἐμοί, θεοῖσι δ' οὔ, καὶ τῇ μεγίστῃ, γαστρὶ τῆδε, δαιμόνων, “[my sheep] I sacrifice to no one except myself, not to gods, but to the greatest of divinities, my stomach.”³⁸ He places his own desires above those of the gods, reverence toward whom is itself a means of moderation.

In Homer's story, this arrogance blinds Polyphemus, both figuratively, to the possibility of attack, and literally, when he meets his tragic fate. However, in the world of Satyr Play, his lack of civility does not make the wine dangerous, but is resolved once he has become drunk. Immediately after Polyphemus drinks the wine, this hubristic disregard for the gods is replaced, very suddenly and unexpectedly, with reverence:

³⁶ Eur. Cycl. 320-1

³⁷ ‘νήπιός εἰς, ὃ ξεῖν’, ἢ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας, / ὅς με θεοὺς κέλειαι ἢ δειδίμεν ἢ ἀλέασθαι: / οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν / οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων, ἐπεὶ ἢ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰμεν: / οὐδ' ἂν ἐγὼ Διὸς ἔχθος ἀλευάμενος πεφιδοίμην / οὔτε σεῦ οὔθ' ἐτάρων, εἰ μὴ θυμός με κελεύοι. (Hom. Od. 273-8)
Stranger, you are either a foreigner or a fool, / To tell me to fear or run from the gods, / For the Cyclopes do not heed aegis-bearing Zeus, / nor any blessed gods, since we are better than they by far. / I would neither run from Zeus' anger, nor spare you / and your companions, unless my heart commanded it.

³⁸ Eur. Cycl. 334-5

ὁ δ' οὐρανός μοι συμμεμιγμένος δοκεῖ
 τῇ γῆ φέρεσθαι, τοῦ Διός τε τὸν θρόνον
 λεύσσω τὸ πᾶν τε δαιμόνων ἄγνων σέβας.
 οὐκ ἂν φιλήσαιμ'; αἱ Χάριτες πειρῶσί με.³⁹

It seems to me that the heaven is swirling together
 with the earth, and I see the throne of Zeus
 and the whole holiness of the majestic gods!
 Shall I not love them? The Graces are seducing me!

This kind of shift is absent in Homer's story, where Polyphemus simply demands more wine until he vomits. The introduction of wine in Euripides' story, however, accompanies a shift in his values, beginning to make him more similar to Odysseus. Suddenly, Polyphemus' hubristic attitudes toward the gods vanish, and he seems, with comical gusto, to more closely resemble a civilized Greek.

Just as Polyphemus' drunkenness inspires him to become reverent toward the gods, it also inspires him to seek the companionship he was lacking earlier. In the community-based Greek democracy, the solitude of the cyclopes and their rejection of the laws of *ξενία* are highly problematic and indicative of a bestial, uncivilized character. Both Homer and Euripides draw attention to the cyclopes' isolation from one another, which results in the neighboring cyclopes failing both to comprehend Polyphemus' situation and, as a result, to help him. However, in the world of Satyr Play, wine becomes a source of social integration. After giving Polyphemus the wine, Odysseus says in despair to the chorus of satyrs, ἐπὶ κῶμον ἔρπειν πρὸς κασιγνήτους θέλει Κύκλωπας ἠσθεῖς τῷδε Βακχίου ποτῶ. "He wants to go in revel to his brother cyclopes,

³⁹ Eur. Cycl. 578-81

⁴⁰ Eur. Cycl. 445-6

delighting in this Bacchic drink.”⁴⁰ His desire for solitude is replaced, in his drunkenness, by a desire for companionship and social cohesion.

The primary complaint the satyrs have at the beginning of the play also begins to resolve itself once Polyphemus drinks the wine. They complain that they are in the land of no dancing (ἄχορον), which is, for the satyrs, profoundly disturbing. However, after Odysseus gives Polyphemus the wine, he tells the satyrs that the first thing that Polyphemus does upon becoming drunk is to sing:

καὶ δὴ πρὸς ὧδ' ἀς εἶρπ'. ἐγὼ δ' ἐπεγγέων
 ἄλλην ἐπ' ἄλλη σπλάγχν' ἐθέρμαινον ποτῶ.
 ἄδει δὲ παρὰ κλαίουσι συνναύταις ἐμοῖς
 ἄμουσ', ἐπηγεῖ δ' ἄντρον.⁴¹

And next, he began a song, and I, pouring more and more wine,
 Warmed his organs with drink.
 And now, by my weeping shipmates, he sings
 tuneless songs, which resound in his cave.

Again, while Polyphemus initially lacks this aspect of culture, he seems to acquire it as a result of becoming drunk. His singing may be tuneless (ἄμουσα), but nevertheless indicates a departure from the more extreme absence of music at the beginning of the play; and this development into a more civilized being seems to accompany, and is perhaps caused by, his consumption of the wine.

These shifts in Polyphemus' character after he becomes drunk are a large source of the play's comedy. Euripides intentionally subverts the audience's expectations, which are formed by their intimate knowledge of Homer's original version of the story. Rather than facing the dangers

⁴¹ Eur. Cycl. 423-6

inherent in consuming wine with such immoderation, wine guides Polyphemus toward more appropriate and safe behaviors, a shift which the audience understands is a comic perversion of the myth.

iv. An Epic Hero in the World of Satyr Play

The connection between Polyphemus' consumption of wine and his moral growth is appropriate in the presence of satyrs, who can consume any amount of wine without negative consequences. Polyphemus, however, will eventually meet the same fate in Euripides' play as he does in Homer's epic; so the wine, while it may strengthen his character, does not make him impervious to attack. It does, though, make it more difficult for Odysseus to accomplish his task and reveals, in the process, Odysseus' inability to adapt to these satyric sensibilities. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' understanding and demonstration of proper wine drinking behaviors help him to navigate and manipulate his surroundings. In the *Cyclops*, the epic hero is out of place, and these same qualities stifle and ultimately paint him as foolish—an additional departure from his Homeric prototype which highlights the fictionality and subversive nature of Euripides' retelling.

Euripides' Odysseus consistently places too much emphasis on the destructive capacities of wine, without taking into account the benefits it seems to bestow upon Polyphemus. In Homer's story, only Polyphemus demonstrates this lack of self reflection, by blaming his downfall on wine, rather than his own lack of moderation. The additional examples of wine drinking—at Alcinous' banquet, at the raid of the Cicones, and after Odysseus' escape—all help to contextualize the blinding scene. In Euripides' play, however, where these contextualizing

examples of wine drinking are excluded, Odysseus makes the same mistake as Polyphemus, and attributes his downfall to the destructive nature of wine. In this way, the *Cyclops* comes to parody not only the original story, but also an overly simplistic interpretation of that story as a cautionary tale against wine drinking.

When Odysseus first reveals his plan to Silenus, his lack of insight becomes evident. He describes the wine as warming Polyphemus' σπλάγχνα (organs), summoning ominous images of sacrificial slaughter.⁴² However, Polyphemus begins to sing immediately after consuming the wine, an action of the sacrificer, and not the sacrificial victim. Odysseus then describes the moment that he conceives of his plan, saying:

ἤσθέντα δ' αὐτὸν ὡς ἐπησθόμην ἐγώ,
 ἄλλην ἔδωκα κύλικα, γινώσκων ὅτι
 τρώσει νιν οἶνος καὶ δίκην δώσει τάχα.⁴³

I saw that it [the wine] had given him pleasure,
 And I gave him another cup, knowing well
 That this wine would wound him and quickly deliver him justice.

Odysseus' claim that the wine will quickly deliver justice to the cyclops turns out not to be the case, as discussed in the previous section. Odysseus is oversimplifying wine's function in the story. His ability to understand his surroundings and cleverly manipulate them makes him a powerful character in the epic, but in Satyr Play, this will not be the case.

The wine inspires Polyphemus to seek the companionship of his fellow cyclopes, as we also saw in the previous section. This poses several problems for Odysseus. Firstly, and most obviously, he cannot orchestrate an attack against someone who is off reveling in the mountains.

⁴² Eur. Cycl. 424

⁴³ Eur. Cycl. 420-2

Secondly, if Polyphemus uses his newfound sense of camaraderie to unite the cyclopes, Odysseus will have the additional challenge of facing a larger number of these beasts. Odysseus, however, has a plan to keep Polyphemus from sharing the wine with other cyclopes, which he proudly relates to the satyr chorus:

Ὀδυσσεύς	δόλιος ἢ προθυμία.
Χορός	πῶς δαί; σοφόν τοί σ' ὄντ' ἀκούομεν πάλαι.
Ὀδυσσεύς	κώμου μὲν αὐτὸν τοῦδ' ἀπαλλάξαι, λέγων ὥς οὐ Κύκλωπι πῶμα χρῆ δοῦναι τόδε, μόνον δ' ἔχοντα βίοτον ἠδέως ἄγειν. ⁴⁴
Odysseus	I'm itching for deceit.
Chorus	How then? We have long heard about your cleverness.
Odysseus	I will keep him from this revel, saying that he shouldn't give this drink to the cyclopes, but have it for himself, to lead a life of pleasure.

Ultimately, this plan will work. However, it requires Odysseus to convince Polyphemus to act inappropriately. When Polyphemus comes stumbling onstage soon after, Odysseus has to make a series of ethically unsound arguments to keep Polyphemus from wandering off. Polyphemus expresses confusion, asking Odysseus if it is not necessary (οὐ χρῆ) to share wine, which, according to Odysseus' standards, it is.⁴⁵ However, Odysseus must now argue against this social cohesion, making obviously and purposefully problematic claims such as πεπωκότ' ἐν δόμοισι χρῆ μένειν, "it is best to remain in your home when drinking" and ὃς δ' ἂν μεθυσθεῖς γ' ἐν δόμοις μείνη σοφός "Wise is the man who drinks and remains home."⁴⁶ Homer makes the connection between wine drinking and Polyphemus' downfall clear in the *Odyssey*. Euripides

⁴⁴ Eur. Cycl. 449-53

⁴⁵ Eur. Cycl. 531

⁴⁶ Eur. Cycl. 556, 558

does not. The wine has no negative effects on him—Odysseus’ *lying* does—so when the satyr chorus flatters Odysseus, referring to his cleverness (σοφόν), it seems as though they are mocking him.

This mocking tone seems also to be present in other moments when Silenus and the satyrs express their support for Odysseus’ plan. While the blinding is occurring offstage, the chorus of satyrs sing excitedly about the destructive nature of wine:

ἀλλ’ ἴτω Μάρων, πρασέτω, μαιομένου'ξελέτω βλέφαρον Κύκλωπος, ὡς πίη κακῶς. ⁴⁷	But let Maron come, let him pass through, let him take out the eye of the mad Cyclops, so that he might drink badly.
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The satyrs draw clear connections between the act of Polyphemus consuming wine and his blinding. They personify wine as Maron, the character from whom Odysseus claims he received the wine,⁴⁸ and make him the one who drives the stake through the Polyphemus’ eye. They describe Polyphemus as μαιομένου, derived from the word μάινομαι, which is frequently used in reference to Dionysian madness and drunkenness. Finally, the satyr chorus expresses the desire that Polyphemus “might drink badly” (πίη κακῶς⁴⁹), an expression which, with euphemistic force, would suggest that the wine will destroy him. However, the satyrs’ only motivation to help Odysseus is to acquire the wine for themselves, which seems inconsistent with the sentiment of this violent choral ode. Silenus also seems inconsistent. When Polyphemus realizes that Odysseus κατέκλυσεν (drowned) him with wine, Silenus responds, δεινὸς γὰρ οἶνος

⁴⁷ Eur. Cycl. 612-5

⁴⁸ Eur. Cycl. 141

⁴⁹ Literally means “to drink badly” or “to drink evilly.” A modern equivalent might be the idea of getting “wasted” or “smashed,” which implies a violent force imposed upon the drinker of the wine.

καὶ παλαίεσθαι βαρὺς “Yes, wine is a powerful and heavy thing to wrestle against.”⁵⁰

Meanwhile, Silenus has been drinking himself silly the entire play, suggesting that his earlier statement is insincere.⁵¹

Conclusion

Odysseus cannot use wine against Polyphemus as effectively in a Satyr Play as he can in an epic poem. The satyrs see Odysseus as a means of escape from their joyless circumstances, seeming to humor his foreign sensibilities. Odysseus remains unaware throughout the play that the wine, itself, is only a positive influence on Polyphemus, while Odysseus is the one who truly destroys him. These departures from the original Homeric myth, which the audience would have been intimately familiar with, are so drastic, that it is clear that Euripides is subverting audience expectations on the satyric stage. The humor of the play is derived from the audience’s understanding that its portrayal of wine drinking is inaccurate and does not apply to them.

⁵⁰ Eur. Cycl. 534, 678-9

⁵¹ Odysseus offers wine to Silenus when he first arrives in the Land of the Cyclopes (Eur. Cycl. 150). He is drunk for the remainder of the play, making repeated reference to his drunkenness and his desire to consume more wine.

Old Comedy:

Redefining Boundaries on the Comic Stage

The heroes of Old Comedy are constantly rejecting and undermining the ethical standards of the Ancient Athenians. They are excessively violent, sexual, and blasphemous, lacking all evidence of the essential σωφροσύνη which dictates the behavior of the ideal Greek. They are excessive and hubristic, and, in an act symbolic of this excess, they, like the satyrs, drink their wine ἄκρατος, or “unmixed,” abandoning the most essential moderating practice of diluting the wine with water.

However, these standards are subverted in a more complex way on the comic stage than they are on the satyric, where revelry is at the center of all morality. The characters of Aristophanes’ comedies are not immune to all negative consequences associate with excess; some of these acts of hubris are condemned by the other characters onstage. Aristophanes defines these new, acceptable standards of comic wine drinking by providing examples of various behaviors and placing in contrast the consequences they elicit; so, while the characters of Old Comedy appear immoderate and immoral by Athenian standards, they continue to reinforce the need for restrictions.

This chapter focuses on three plays of Aristophanes: *Acharnians*, *Knights*, and *Clouds*. These comedies were produced consecutively over three years at the Lenaia Festival and are roughly contemporaneous with Euripides’ *Cyclops*, though the dating of Euripides’ play is imprecise. The first two, *Acharnians* and *Knights*, are plays in which wine drinking has large symbolic and narrative significance; as a result, each offers clear examples which help to identify appropriate and inappropriate comic wine drinking behaviors, much in the way Homer does in

the ninth book of his *Odyssey*. The chapter then shifts to a discussion of the third play, the *Clouds*, in which wine plays a smaller narrative role, but is significant to the parabases, where the comic poet speaks more directly to the audience. As a result, the *Clouds* offers more explicit examples of how the relationship between the comic poet and his audience influences the depiction and discussion of wine onstage.

Comic wine drinking consistently accompanies two behaviors in order for it to be consumed by the character of Old Comedy without consequence. The first of these is a demonstrated reverence for the wine which is being consumed. Characters who pour libations or express gratitude for the wine drink without consequence, while those who express a bodily, rather than a spiritual, desire for wine are condemned. The second behavior which accompanies safe wine drinking is related to the location of the character when he drinks. Comic characters who drink onstage not only avoid harm, but oftentimes procure benefits from drinking, while those who drink offstage, and therefore outside of the comic space, repeatedly incur negative consequences for themselves and are met with disapproval.

These apparent restrictions function as a reminder that the depictions of excess on stage are off limits to the audience members. Although these rules are not explicitly stated by the characters, as we will see in the Greek Symposium, the sense that there are appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, even on this comic stage, help to reinforce the need for distinguishing between the two offstage. The heroes of Old Comedy do not actually break free from restrictions when they drink their wine ἄκρατος.

i. An Overview of Old Comedy

Like all the literary genres of fifth century Athens, the vast majority of Old Comedy (ἡ κωμῳδία) has been lost. The works of only one comic poet—Aristophanes—survive from antiquity, of whose thirty plays, only eleven survive in full. The comedies, like all Athenian drama, were performed in competitions at religious festivals in honor of Dionysus, the god of both comedy and wine.⁵² Like Satyr Play, Old Comedy features obscene humor, happy and revelrous endings, and, of course, the excessive consumption of unmixed wine. Unlike Satyr Play, though, which was tacked on to the end of the tragic tetralogy, perhaps as comic relief, Old Comedy was the main event of the competition and tended to grapple with more serious thematic material, rather than deriving its plots from known mythology, Old Comedy consisted primarily of social and political satire, and often took place in contemporary Athens. The political relevance of the plays is reflected in its parabases, a convention unique to Old Comedy in which the chorus turns to address the audience in the voice of the playwright. The parabasis usually reveals the “moral” of the play and is expressed in a scathing and highly critical fashion.

Old Comedy is one of the lesser studied genres of classical literature. Ancient scholarship is almost entirely absent,⁵³ while modern scholarship, because of the wealth of references to contemporary Athenian life in Aristophanes, has tended to use Old Comedy as a way of parsing

⁵² Along with several smaller, rural festivals, the two primary events for comedy were the Lenaia and the City Dionysia, which were both held in honor of Dionysus (McLeish, 1980; 26).

⁵³ Aristotle, in his tantalizingly brief discussion of comedy, distinguishes the genre from tragedy by stating the following: ἡ μὲν γὰρ χεῖρους ἢ δὲ βελτίους μιμεῖσθαι βούλεται τῶν νῦν, “The latter [comedy] wishes to represent people as worse than they are now, the former [tragedy] wishes to represent them as better” (Aristot. Poet. 1448a). Beyond this, there is little evidence suggesting how the Ancient Greeks distinguished between comedy and tragedy; and even this discussion by Aristotle is ambiguous. The comedies of Aristophanes certainly provide numerous examples of problematic behavior, to which he may have been referring, but the characters of tragedy are deeply flawed, as well.

out the rituals and values actually held by the Greeks. Before Kenneth Reckford's book, *Aristophanes' Old-and-New Comedy*, published in 1987, there was very little serious literary attention paid to Aristophanes at all. Since then, some scholars have looked more closely at the comedies through a literary lens; and the general consensus among scholars, such as A.M. Bowie, Ismene Lada-Richards, and Carroll Moulton, seems to be that the plays' transgressive nature is fraught with religious and ritual significance.

Almost all scholars recognize the importance of wine to both the comedies and the comic festivals. All but three of the extant plays end in a revel, which either includes drinking onstage or suggests drinking which is about to occur.⁵⁴ Of the scholars who study this aspect of Old Comedy, E. L. Bowie has an interpretation most similar to my own. He argues that wine is presented in Old Comedy "as a central constituent of the good life and an important catalyst of well-being, provided that it is correctly used."⁵⁵ He, however, still sees the drinking of unmixed wine as a critique of the class and gender of the comic characters, who are usually the more marginalized slaves and women. Bowie does not distinguish between the wine drinking with negative consequences and wine drinking without, which will become the more significant metric of my discussion.

ii. *Acharnians*: Dicaeopolis, the Ambassador, and the God of War

Acharnians, produced in 425 BC, is the earliest extant play of Aristophanes. Its main themes are related to the Peloponnesian War, which was ongoing at the time the play was

⁵⁴ *Clouds*, *Frogs*, and *Women at the Thesmophoria* do not follow this convention. In my discussion of *Clouds*, I give a possible explanation for its strange and violent ending.

⁵⁵ Bowie, 1995; 133

produced. As in many of the Aristophanic comedies, wine and drunkenness are thematically present throughout, and appropriate examples of wine consumption occur frequently in contrast to inappropriate ones. The comic hero of the play is Dicaeopolis, whose excessive drinking is beneficial to himself and is met with general approval. Aristophanes sets this character's drinking behaviors in contrast to those of the Ambassador, whose drinking causes political turmoil, and also to those of the God of War, whose drinking causes injury to others and to whom the chorus refers with pointed disapproval.

The differences between inappropriate and appropriate comic wine drinking are additionally highlighted by the symbolic use of wine as a representation of either war or peace, depending on the context and manner in which it is consumed. Aristophanes establishes the symbolic significance of wine early in the play. Frustrated with Athens' endless engagement in war, Dicaeopolis asks Amphitheus for a selection of peace treaties, from which he will make an independent, peaceful state. Amphitheus presents to him a number of jars which supposedly contain these "peace treaties," but seem to contain wine instead. Dicaeopolis determines the quality of each as if determining the quality of wine, judging them by their aromas. The years of peace guaranteed by the treaty, like the age of wine, also help determine its quality; Dicaeopolis rejects the five and ten year treaties in favor of the particularly sweet-smelling thirty-year one.⁵⁶

After tasting this final treaty, Dicaeopolis pushes the metaphor even further, strengthening the connection between wine and peace by singing as he drinks straight from the jar:

ὦ Διονύσια,
αὗται μὲν ὄζουσ' ἀμβροσίας καὶ νέκταρος

⁵⁶ Aristoph. Ach. 178-204

καὶ μὴ 'πιτηρεῖν σιτί' ἡμερῶν τριῶν,
 κὰν τῷ στόματι λέγουσι, βαῖν' ὅπη θέλεις.
 ταύτας δέχομαι καὶ σπένδομαι κάκπιομαι,
 χαίρειν κελεύων πολλὰ τοὺς Ἀχαρνέας.
 ἐγὼ δὲ πολέμου καὶ κακῶν ἀπαλλαγεῖς
 ἄξω τὰ κατ' ἀγροῦς εἰσιῶν Διονύσια.⁵⁷

Oh Dionysia!

It smells like nectar and ambrosia,
 and it doesn't open its mouth to say, "Go—
 find provisions for three days," but... "Go—wherever you wish!"
 I accept this, and pour libations, and drink it up,
 ordering all the Acharnians to be joyous!
 Freed from war and its evils,
 I shall bring it as I go to the Rural Dionysia!

In this moment, Dicaeopolis suggests a bountiful enjoyment of wine, what E. L. Bowie describes as “visions of peace and plenty” often associated with comic wine consumption.⁵⁸ Dicaeopolis is able to do this by demonstrating behaviors which repeatedly accompany beneficial comic wine consumption. Firstly, he consumes the wine onstage, in a clearly comic space, drawing attention to the theatricality of his drinking. Secondly, he pours libations. After accepting the wine, he invokes the Rural Dionysia, a festival in honor of the god, Dionysus. He is grateful for the wine and wishes to spread its joys to others, pointing to a reverential and spiritual motivation for his drinking.

This moment is the first of several where Dicaeopolis drinks to excess, which he does more than any other character in the play. After he decides on his peace treaty wine, he drinks it and conducts a Bacchic procession, again linking this ritualized and reverent consumption of wine with the beginning of peace. He asks his slave, Xanthias, to carry a phallus (φαλλικός), and

⁵⁷ Aristoph. Ach. 195-202

⁵⁸ Bowie, 1995; p. 122

follows behind singing.⁵⁹ The phallic procession is a customary part of the comic festival, and although Dicaeopolis' version is exaggerated for comic effect, he is demonstrating perfectly acceptable comic wine drinking behavior. The procession, like his invocation of the Rural Dionysia, suggests his reverential attitude toward the wine.

In one of the play's final moments, Dicaeopolis makes explicit that he is consuming a large quantity of unmixed wine by crying out, *καὶ πρὸς γ' ἄκρατον ἐγγέας ἄμιστιν ἐξέλαψα*, "Again I've filled my large cup with unmixed wine and drunk it all!"⁶⁰ The most important moderating practice followed by the Greeks was the dilution of wine with water, without which the drinker would likely injure himself. This unmixed wine will not cause injury to himself or others, because his behaviors suggest appropriate comic consumption. Not only does he consume the wine onstage (and after expressing gratitude to various deities) he consumes it as part of the comedic structure of the play, which often ends in a revel and a procession off stage.

These "visions of peace and plenty," however, will not be present when the Ambassador (Πρέσβυς) drinks his wine. His excessive behavior is not lauded as Dicaeopolis' is, nor does it suggest the same kind of bounty or peace. The exceptionally incompetent Ambassador has been away for years drinking unmixed wine with the Persians, instead of negotiating with them for a much needed peace treaty. Dicaeopolis offers sarcastic condolences to the Ambassador for the hardships he has suffered, such as sleeping in the covered chariots which are reserved for women (ἀρμαμαξῶν), by claiming that his own struggles in the trenches, which were obviously much more perilous, kept him very much at ease (σφόδρα γὰρ ἐσφζόμεν ἐγὼ).⁶¹ The primary function

⁵⁹ Aristoph. Ach. 261-2

⁶⁰ Aristoph. Ach. 1229

⁶¹ Aristoph. Ach. 70, 71

of the joke is to poke fun at the softness of politicians, contrasting the hardships of those in the political realm with the much more dire hardships of those fighting on their behalf; but it also establishes the Ambassador's crucial role in keeping Athens in a constant state of war, which, as he will reveal soon after, is related to his relationship with wine.

While Dicaeopolis fulfills all the requirements of appropriate comic wine drinking, when the Ambassador narrates the circumstances of his wine consumption, he will admit to several problematic behaviors:

ξενιζόμενοι δὲ πρὸς βίαν ἐπίνομεν
ἐξ ὑαλίνων ἐκπωμάτων καὶ χρυσίδων
ἄκρατον οἶνον ἠδύν.⁶²

And whenever we were received as guests,
we were forced to drink sweet,
unmixed wine from gold and crystal cups.

Accompanying the Ambassador's consumption of wine are the two behaviors which repeatedly accompany harmful wine consumption. Firstly, Aristophanes places the drinking practices of the Ambassador outside the confines of the comic stage. The drinking is no longer a customary part of the comic play, as Dicaeopolis' is, but instead is within the context of barbarian practices, perhaps resembling Cleomenes I, who, we know from Herodotus, became mad after learning to drink unmixed wine from the Scythians.⁶³ Secondly, his claim that he is drinking by force (πρὸς βίαν), in addition to demonstrating a lack of personal agency, suggests both a lack of gratitude for the wine and an unspiritual motivation for drinking it. He continues shortly thereafter to make explicit that the motivation for consuming wine in this context were gluttonous rather than spiritual, saying, οἱ βάρβαροι γὰρ ἄνδρας ἠγοῦνται μόνους τοὺς πλεῖστα δυναμένους καταφαγεῖν

⁶² Aristoph. Ach. 73-5

⁶³ δὲ Σπαρτιῆται φασὶ ἐκ δαιμονίου μὲν οὐδενὸς μανῆναι Κλεομένεα, Σκύθησι δὲ ὁμιλήσαντά μιν ἀκρητοπότην γενέσθαι καὶ ἐκ τούτου μανῆναι "The Spartans say that Cleomenes went mad not from an evil spirit, but that, consorting with the Scythians, he became a drinker of unmixed wine, and because of this he went mad" (Hdt. 6.84.1).

καὶ πιεῖν “You see, barbarians only consider men worthy who are able to eat and drink the most.”⁶⁴ This gluttonous motivation for drinking wine will repeatedly be an indicator of problematic wine consumption on the comic stage.

The Ambassador’s inappropriate drinking behaviors additionally subvert the symbolic association between Dicaeopolis’ wine drinking and peace; while Dicaeopolis’ wine drinking literally brings about peace, the Ambassador’s brings about war. He fails to fulfill his political duties and refuses to acknowledge that his own behavior is barbarian. Instead, he claims that he was forced (πρὸς βίαν) to drink these excessive quantities of unmixed wine, implying that in order for him to perform his duties as an ambassador, he must adhere to these barbarian customs. However, the Ambassador, as is clear from his first interaction with Dicaeopolis, lacks self-reflection. These very wine drinking customs, which he claims are necessary, disrupt his ability to fulfill his professional and political duties and therefore play a direct role in keeping Athens in a constant state of war.

Aristophanes offers an additional image which associates improper wine drinking with the state of war. The chorus of Acharnians, having just recently decided to support Dicaeopolis, sings disapprovingly about the God of War, saying that he can no longer dine with them:

ὅτι παροινικὸς ἀνὴρ ἔφου,
 ὅστις ἐπὶ πάντ’ ἀγάθ’ ἔχοντας ἐπικωμάσας
 ἠργάσατο πάντα κακά, κἀνέτρεπε κἀξέχει
 κἀμάχετο καὶ προσέτι πολλὰ προκαλουμένου
 ‘πίνε κατάκεισο λαβὲ τήνδε φιλοτησίαν’
 τὰς χάρακας ἦπτε πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐν τῷ πυρί,
 ἐξέχει θ’ ἡμῶν βία τὸν οἶνον ἐκ τῶν ἀμπέλων.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Aristoph. Ach. 76-78

⁶⁵ Aristoph. Ach. 981-6

because he is by nature a drunkard,
 who comes flailing in towards those who have all sorts of good things,
 and accomplishes for them all sorts of harm—he turns about and spills
 and, what’s worse, he challenges everyone to fight!
 And when I’d say, “Lie down! Take and drink this loving cup!”
 He just set my vine poles on fire and, in a violent manner,
 poured out the wine from our vineyard!

Like the Ambassador, the drinking behaviors of the God of War, in this image, are harmful to others, this time in a much more explicit way. Because he is only expressed as a metaphor, his drinking very obviously does not occur onstage; but, even within the depicted scene, the God of War enters the space (*ἐπικωμάσας*, lit. “to rush in like revelers”) from outside, suggesting consumption outside of this party, where wine drinking would be appropriate. He also demonstrates a lack of reverence for the wine, rejecting the chorus’ offer to drink a loving cup (*τήνδε φιλοτησίαν*), or a sacred cup of friendship. He reacts to this offer by refusing the wine and becoming violent, suggesting a lack of gratitude and civility, which would otherwise make his behavior more appropriate.

Dicaeopolis’ behavior, though perhaps more excessive than either the Ambassador’ or the God of War’s, is symbolic of peace. His highly performative consumption of the wine, which he draws attention to in his ritualistic procession and his proud declarations of drunkenness, is appropriate in this comic context. The presence of the Ambassador and the description of the God of War both remind the audience that Dicaeopolis’ consumption of the unmixed wine is only appropriate within this comic context. His excess is off limits to the audience, for whom the drinking of unmixed wine would be dangerous.

iii. *Knights*: Demosthenes and the Paphlagonian Slave

Aristophanes' *Knights*, produced in 424 BC, establishes similar boundaries of wine consumption on the comic stage as does *Acharnians*. The play begins with two slaves, Nikias and Demosthenes, who have just received a beating from their master. They are complaining about the Paphlagonian Slave, a corrupt man who is extorting their master and manipulating him for his own privilege. Immediately, this Paphlagonian Slave, most likely a parody of the political figure, Cleon, is established as the play's villain. Accordingly, the Paphlagonian Slave, much like the Ambassador of *Acharnians*, demonstrates problematic drinking behaviors, while Demosthenes, much like Dicaeopolis, demonstrates behaviors that, though forbidden by Athenian society, are appropriate on the comic stage.

Upon stealing an oracle from inside the master's house, Nikias and Demosthenes discover that the Paphlagonian Slave is destined to rule the *polis*, but is also destined to be replaced by a Sausage Seller. Nikias and Demosthenes find a Sausage Seller and place him in a contest against the Paphlagonian Slave in a comic *ἀγών*. Most of the play consists of these two characters arguing with one another, each attempting to prove his superior ability to rule with irrelevant information and comically backward rhetoric. One of the first questions posed by the Sausage Seller to the Paphlagonian Slave is related to his consumption of wine. He asks, τί δαὶ σὺ πίνων τὴν πόλιν πεποίηκας, ὥστε νυνὶ ὑπὸ σοῦ μονωτάτου κατεγλωττισμένην σιωπᾶν, "What have you drunk, then, so that you, all by yourself, can berate the city into silence?"⁶⁶ Before the Paphlagonian Slave's specific drinking practices are even made explicit, which they will be only

⁶⁶ Aristoph. Kn. 351-2

moments later, this question suggests that they will cause injury to others, and will therefore be demonstrative of inappropriate comic wine consumption.

Instead of offering a serious response to the question, which is more concerned with his political actions, the Paphlagonian Slave addresses the attack on his personal character. In his own defense, he draws attention to his problematic drinking:

ἔμοι γὰρ ἀντέθηκας ἀνθρώπων τίν’; ὅστις εὐθύς
θύννεια θερμὰ καταφαγών, κᾶτ’ ἐπιπιὼν ἀκράτου
οἴνου χοᾶ κασαλβάσω τοὺς ἐν Πύλῳ στρατηγούς.⁶⁷

Can you set anyone of mortals against me? Me who
devoured hot tunny-fish and drunk, in addition, a jar
of unmixed wine! I’ll go and screw the generals of Pylos!

The detail that the Paphlagonian is drinking unmixed wine is, again, characteristic of Old Comedy and ultimately unsurprising, though it may contribute to his characterization as excessive. Other details indicate that the manner in which he drinks is inappropriate. Like the Ambassador of *Acharnians*, the Paphlagonian Slave refers to an instance of his consuming wine which has happened previously, and therefore outside of the confines of the comic stage. His drinking also has a direct, negative impact on others and contributes to the play’s primary conflict. In addition, his consumption of wine is related most closely to the consumption of food (θύννεια θερμὰ καταφαγών), echoing the barbarian values which the Ambassador described. This association suggests a lack of control over his own appetite and a gluttonous motivation to become intoxicated.

Also contributing to his inappropriate wine drinking behavior is the bestial imagery with which he is repeatedly characterized. A.M. Bowie, in his reading of the play as a parody of

⁶⁷ Aristoph. Kn. 353-5

minotaur myths, points out that the Paphlagonian Slave is consistently compared to animals and beasts. Bowie cites eight different passages in which this character is compared to an animal, including an eagle, a pig, an insect, a lion, and several others.⁶⁸ To take an additional example, not cited by Bowie, the Paphlagonian provides an argument in his defense, that an oracle spoke of a *ἱερὸν κύννα καρχαρόδοντα* “sacred dog with jagged teeth,” that needed to be saved, and then claims, *ἐγὼ μὲν εἶμι’ ὁ κύων*, “I am the dog!”⁶⁹ This kind of characterization, as Bowie points out, is absent in the characterizations of other characters within the play. This heightens the Paphlagonian Slave’s more bestial nature, which perhaps helps to characterize him as similar to Polyphemus, whose lack of human *σωφροσύνη* inhibits his ability to drink Odysseus’ wine responsibly.

Aristophanes places the Paphlagonian’s wine drinking in contrast to Demosthenes’, whose drinking practices are more reticent of Dicaeopolis’ in *Acharnians*. When trying to decide what to do about the Paphlagonian Slave, Demosthenes and Nikias contemplate the different courses of action they can take. In order to become inspired, Demosthenes suggests they drink *ἄκρατον οἶνον ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος*, “unmixed wine of the benevolent spirit.”⁷⁰ Both he and the Ambassador draw attention to the fact that the wine they drink is unmixed, but Demosthenes’ instinct to associate the wine with the benevolent spirit (*ἀγαθός δαίμων*), rather than the consumption of food, as the Paphlagonian Slave does, helps to distinguish his attitude toward drinking as appropriate. The Paphlagonian Slave’s wine drinking is a product of gluttony, while Demosthenes, equally indulgent, is reverent toward the gods who provide the wine. His

⁶⁸ Bowie, 1995; PG

⁶⁹ Aristoph. Kn. 1023

⁷⁰ Aristoph. Kn. 85

consumption is moderated, if not by quantity, by the reflection on divine province and observation of religious custom. When Demosthenes actually consumes the wine, he does so on stage, in a highly ritualistic fashion; he waits for Nikias to pour the necessary libation, saying: λαβὲ δὴ καὶ σπεῖσον ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος, “Take it and pour a libation to the benevolent spirit.”⁷¹ Again, he summons the ἀγαθός δαίμων, consequently legitimizing his behavior with his reverential attitude toward the wine.

E.L. Bowie interprets the same scene much less generously, seeing the slaves’ theft of the wine and decision to drink it in broad daylight as representative of the negative ways in which masters viewed their slaves, noting that it places his drinking, “apart from that of respectable citizens.”⁷² However, this interpretation does not take into account the lack of moral significance unmixed wine contains on the comic stage. Both the protagonists and antagonists of Old Comedy consume their wine unmixed, so this detail lacks significance. The more useful metric by which to measure the appropriateness of wine drinking is the measure of the extent to which wine drinking is beneficial or harmful to the drinker; and Demosthenes only benefits from his consumption of the wine. Just before he begins to drink, he expresses the benefits which he expects to receive from drinking wine to a highly skeptical Nicias, who says:

Νικίας ἰδοῦ γ’ ἄκρατον. περὶ πότου γοῦν ἐστὶ σοι;
 πῶς δ’ ἂν μεθύων χρηστόν τι βουλευσάιτ’ ἀνήρ;
Δημοσθένης ἄληθες οὗτος; κρουνοχυτρολήραιον εἶ.
 οἶνον σὺ τολμᾷς εἰς ἐπίνοιαν λοιδορεῖν;
 οἴνου γὰρ εὖροις ἂν τι πρακτικώτερον;
 ὄρᾳς, ὅταν πίνωσιν ἄνθρωποι τότε
 πλουτοῦσι διαπράττουσι νικῶσιν δίκας
 εὐδαιμονοῦσιν ὠφελοῦσι τοὺς φίλους.

⁷¹ Aristoph. Kn. 106

⁷² Bowie 1995; p.119

ἀλλ' ἐξένεγκε μοι ταχέως οἴνου χοῦν,
τὸν νοῦν ἴν' ἄρδω καὶ λέγω τι δεξιόν.⁷³

Nicias Look at that! Unmixed wine! You have drinking on your mind?
Can a man devise a useful plan when he's drunk?

Demosthenes What? Your head must be leaking!
Do you dare to revile ingenious wine?
Can you find a thing more practical than wine?
You see, whenever men drink,
They are wealthy, successful, they win lawsuits,
They are happy, and they help their friends.
Quickly! Bring out the pitcher of wine,
so that I may water my brain and say something clever!

Demosthenes' logic in this scene is naive. Drinking wine, especially unmixed wine, would not be able to produce all of these benefits for the drinker outside the context of the comic stage.

However, by the end of the play, Demosthenes will prove himself correct in a typical comic reversal of expectation. After drinking the wine, Demosthenes does, in fact, come up with an idea, which is ultimately helpful to himself and his friend, Nicias (ὠφελοῦσι τοὺς φίλους), relieves him of his current misfortunes (εὐδαιμονοῦσιν), helps them defeat the Paphlagonian in the council (νικῶσιν δίκας), ultimately contributes to the success of the city (διαπράττουσι), and prevents the Paphlagonian Slave from stealing from them and their master (πλουτοῦσι).

Demosthenes' drinking, much like Dicaeopolis', proves beneficial to himself and others, distinguishing his approach to wine drinking as appropriate on the comic stage.

iv. *Clouds*: The Comic Poet and his Audience

The discussion of wine drinking in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, produced in 423 BC, demonstrates the ways in which these conventions of comic wine drinking manifest when

⁷³ Aristoph. Kn. 87-96

directed explicitly at the audience. Instead of characters drinking wine onstage, wine becomes a topic of contention in the parabasis and the ἀγών between the Just (Δίκαιος) and the Unjust (Ἄδικος) Arguments. In this play, where wine drinking is spoken about, rather than enacted, the relationship between the comic poet and his reveling spectators becomes clearer.

In the rather accusatory parabasis, Aristophanes, still scathing from having lost a comic competition,⁷⁴ points out the audience's intellectual and moral shortcomings. Among his many criticisms is a judgement against the irreverent manner in which the audience consumes their wine:

πολλάκις δ' ἡμῶν ἀγόντων τῶν θεῶν ἀπαστίαν,
 ἤνικ' ἂν πενθῶμεν ἢ τὸν Μέμνον' ἢ Σαρπηδόνα,
 σπένδεθ' ὑμεῖς καὶ γελάτ'.⁷⁵

Oftentimes, when the gods are observing a fast,
 when we mourn for Memnon or Sarpedon,
 you are pouring libations and laughing.

This accusation identifies specific behavioral standards for wine drinking. Firstly, because the chorus directs this speech at the audience, who are outside the boundaries of the comic stage, any descriptors which follow must be in line with the standard practices for wine consumption, not with those acceptable on the comic stage. Aristophanes claims, however, that they fail to do this. The audience does pour libations (σπένδω), but they do so disingenuously, ignoring the wishes of the gods. They therefore demonstrate a lack of piety, which additionally distinguishes their behavior as problematic. In this way, the parabasis of the *Clouds* seems to function in a way

⁷⁴ The extant version of *Clouds* is a revision of an earlier play, which lost the comic competition. In this revision, Aristophanes criticizes the audience for having made a poor decision the first time the play was produced.

⁷⁵ Aristoph. Cl. 621-3

similar to the gorgon on the bottom of the kylix, by forcing the audience to reflect on their own behavior before filling the cup again with wine. The comedy of the parabasis does not allow these accusations to detract from the spirit of revelry which governs the comic competition, but does serve as a reminder that their drinking behaviors are being observed.

Aristophanes does not simply lecture the audience in the parabasis without demonstrating his argument in the action of the play. For the comic *ἀγών*, the sophistic Socrates brings out from his school two opposing characters: the Unjust and the Just Arguments. The Unjust Argument, whose name immediately identifies him as the morally inferior character, is characterized, as one would expect, as immoderate, specifically with respect to his wine drinking. In response to the Just Argument's assertion that moderation (*τὸ σωφρονεῖν*) is beneficial, the Unjust Argument poses the following question:

σκέψαι γὰρ ὃ μαιράκιον ἐν τῷ σωφρονεῖν ἅπαντα
 ἄνεστιν, ἡδονῶν θ' ὅσων μέλλεις ἀποστερεῖσθαι,
 παίδων γυναικῶν κοττάβων ὄψων πότων κιχλισμῶν.
 καίτοι τί σοι ζῆν ἄξιον, τούτων ἐὰν στερηθῆς;⁷⁶

Consider, my boy, everything that exists in this moderation,
 And how greatly you will be robbed of pleasures,
 Of boys and women and drinking games and cooked meat and drunken laughter.
 Indeed what value is left in living, if you are deprived of these?

The Unjust Argument summons an image of the same behaviors associated with inappropriate comic wine drinking in *Acharnians* and *Knights*. Among this brief list of life's *ἡδοναί* (pleasures) are two references to the consumption of wine: the *κότταβος*, an Attic drinking game,⁷⁷ and

⁷⁶ *Aristoph. Cl. 1071-4*

⁷⁷ The *κότταβος* was an ancient game not unlike the popular modern game, beer pong, as its objective was similarly linked with the ability to throw objects with precision in an increasingly intoxicated state. The player, with his right hand, was challenged to throw the remaining portion of wine in his cup at a target with enough precision that it produced a specific noise (*λάταξ*).

πότος κιγλισμός, or “drunken laughter,” the inspiration for this project’s title. Like the Ambassador and the Paphlagonian Slave, the Unjust Argument associates these pleasures of wine drinking with the pleasures of consuming food (*ᾠψων*), suggesting a gluttonous rather than divine motivation to become intoxicated; and his argument is rhetorically convincing—who *would* want to give up these things? Moderation (*σωφροσύνη*), however, does not require the individual be “deprived” of pleasure, but requires that they moderate these behaviors to avoid harm. This argument reveals his own lack of self awareness, much like that of the Ambassador or Polyphemus, which allows him to justify his inappropriate behavior.

Aristophanes subverts the expectation by allowing the Unjust Argument, who demonstrates these inappropriate behaviors, to win the comic ἀγών. After this moment, it appears as if the protagonist, Strepsiades, will not have the happy ending characteristic of Old Comedy. It also appears that the audience might be absolved of the poor behavior Aristophanes points to in the parabasis. However, he will reveal to them by the play’s end that they have been duped. The play concludes with Strepsiades burning down Socrates’ school, whose values the Unjust Argument embodies. The final scene ends with the screams of the terrified students within the building, whose deaths become the symbolic cleansing of their immoderate behavior.

The ending of *Clouds*, though it seems to depart from comic convention in its violence and abruptness, actually corrects what would have been an inappropriate ending. To allow the Unjust Argument to prevail, whose behavior mirrors that of the Ambassador of *Acharnians* or the Paphlagonian of *Knights*, would suggest that these inappropriate behaviors can go unpunished on the comic stage. This particularly violent ending serves as a striking reminder of the necessity for σωφροσύνη, even within the confines of the comic stage. Like the drinking cups whose interiors

reveal the dangers of the revels they depict on their exteriors, Aristophanes reminds the audience that transgressive behavior cannot go unpunished, even, as in the *Clouds*, when it appears as though it already has.

Conclusion

Although Aristophanes does not explicitly state the expectations for wine drinking on the comic stage, it is clear that not all of the wine drinking depicted is appropriate. The sense that there are restrictions placed on the characters, unlike the characters of satyr play, makes clear the need for restrictions, more generally, even if the spectator does not attempt to identify the comic standards, as I have done here. In the *Clouds*, Aristophanes makes explicit his relationship to the audience, asking that they be more aware of and begin to moderate their excessiveness, in a moment which characterizes the comic poet's moderating relationship to his audience.

The Greek Symposium:

Human and Divine Intoxication in Plato's *Symposium*

By shifting focus from two dramatic genres to the literary symposia, we move off of the comic stage, where wine drinking was merely represented, into the room where actual, appropriate wine drinking was meant to take place: the andron (ἄνδρῶν lit. “[room] of men). Both of the literary symposia which survive from the fourth century BC, Plato's and Xenophon's, regardless of the extent to which they were fictionalized, bring us inside a space where comic shifts and subversions no longer protect the drinker from the dangers of excess. It is also the space, however, where the consequences for consuming excessive quantities of wine are not as exaggerated, and the distinctions between appropriate and inappropriate wine consumption are blurred.

Though the literary symposium is not a theatrical genre, it does contain many theatrical elements and is inherently concerned with the consumption of wine; the name, τό συμπόσιον, literally means “a drinking together.” Its treatment and discussion of wine retains the same underlying principle which applied to the previous genres, namely, that while characters laud and embrace drunkenness, and in some cases drink to excess, there is an awareness of the need to regulate and to place external limitations on the individual's desire for wine—a desire he loses more and more control over as he descends into his intoxicated state.

Both Xenophon's and Plato's literary symposia include useful discussions about and demonstrations of wine drinking. However, the primary focus of this chapter will be on Plato's *Symposium*, in part for the sake of concision, and in part for wine's integral dramatic function in Plato's text, whose narrative arc is, in many ways, driven by shifts between various states of

intoxication. There are three characters in Plato's *Symposium* whose various relationships to wine most clearly demonstrate these shifting states. The first two, Eryximachus and Alcibiades, represent the opposing forces of sobriety and drunkenness, respectively. Both of these characters, through a shift in power from one to the other, illustrate the movement from the sober, the cerebral, and the philosophical; to the drunken, the physical, and the theatrical. The third, Socrates, is described by the drunken Alcibiades as resembling a satyr figurine, whose childish and immoderate appearance conceals the images of gods which are held within. This metaphor proves a useful way of understanding Socrates' unique relationship to wine in the *Symposium*, namely, that he cannot become drunk at all. He, like the satyrs of Euripides' *Cyclops*, appears to drink in excess without risking injury to himself or others; however, this appearance of boundless revelry masks what Alcibiades claims is a divinely moderate nature, and what Plato suggests is an eternal state of intoxication.

i. An Overview of the Greek Symposium

The Greek Symposium was a highly sophisticated drinking party and a popular social event amongst the Athenian elite. The entertainment was centered primarily around communal and competitive wine drinking, and included many of the integral components of Old Comedy, such as lively debate and conversation, competition, sexual entertainment, and the performance of music and poetry; most scholars believe the lyric poetry of archaic Greece to have origins in the symposium, which featured the competitive recitation of poetry.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Robinson 2006; p. 675

As the ideal setting in which one could safely and appropriately consume wine, the symposium featured many ritual practices which placed external limitations on its participants. Unlike the characters of Old Comedy and Satyr Play, the symposiasts cannot drink their wine ἄκρατος without risking injury. Instead, at the beginning of the ceremony, a symposiarch was selected from amongst the symposiasts, who would determine the ratio according to which the wine would be ceremoniously diluted. The wine would be mixed in a large krater (κρατήρ), from which young slaves would fill and refill the symposiasts' drinking cups. The standard ratio, producing a mix which could effectively intoxicate without harming the drinker, was one to two parts wine to three parts water, and the resulting alcoholic strength was about three to six percent.⁷⁹ This symposiarch would additionally dictate how many times the krater would be refilled, effectively determining how drunk the symposiasts would become.⁸⁰

As with appropriate comic wine consumption, the offering of libations was a necessary prerequisite for symposiac wine drinking. The symposiasts offered three customary libations—one to the Gods, one to the departed Heroes, and one to Zeus.⁸¹ Also similar to comic wine consumption, the symposiasts drank their wine in a clearly defined space—the *andron*. The symposiasts reclined on couches (κλῖναι), whose orderly arrangement distinguished the symposium from other drinking events; and, as James Davidson argues, this arrangement adds an additional theatrical component, writing “The arrangement was less a static circle of equality than a dynamic series of circulations, evolving in time as well as in space, with the potential for

⁷⁹ Robinson 2006; p. 328

⁸⁰ Davidson 1999; p. 47

⁸¹ Younger 1966; p.143

uncoiling into long journeys, expeditions, voyages.”⁸² The *andron*, like the comic stage, becomes a confined space where excess can be safely explored.

Composed sometime in the early fourth century BC, Plato’s *Symposium* narrates one such event at the house of the tragedian, Agathon. The actual symposium probably took place in the late fifth century BC, around the same time Aristophanes and Euripides were writing; and Plato, who writes the account, did not attend the party, but records the recollections of Aristodemus. The narrative consists of a series of speeches on the topic of love (ἔρως). While the formality and strict organization of the speeches suggests a highly sober and academic affair, Plato’s *Symposium* proves to be anything but. The text’s mocking portrayal of its characters and its eventual descent into a chaotic, drunken romp both contribute to its highly comedic tone.⁸³ The text also, quite literally, gives voice to the comic poet. That Aristophanes, himself, is among the speechmakers seems to suggest that the text is not exclusively a philosophical discourse, but also a comic and theatrical discourse.

ii. Eryximachus and Alcibiades

The first character to act as the symposiarch of Plato’s *Symposium* is the physician, Eryximachus. Though himself a comically exaggerated character, Eryximachus comes to represent the antithesis of comedy. He dislikes and often misunderstands jokes and expresses apprehension before Aristophanes’ speech, fearing that the comic poet might fill his speech with

⁸² Davidson 1999; p. 44

⁸³ Charles Beye, in his comprehensive study of Greek literature and society, shares this opinion that Alcibiades’ speech is highly theatrical and comedic, writing, “Plato, who is always so ambivalent about the rival claims of prose and poetry, gives to poetry a triumphant final statement in a prose dialogue that is a kind of comedy ending with the drunken Alcibiades in search of love” (Beye 1975; p.349-50).

jests (γελοῖον).⁸⁴ Most significantly, he denounces the consumption of wine, outright. He is, to use a colloquialism, a buzzkill. However, his rejection of wine does not take into account the necessity of the typical symposiac structures which regulate the symposiasts' drinking behaviors. When he claims himself symposiarch, he inadvertently facilitates the party's descent into the drunken romp he wants to avoid.

Eryximachus begins the symposium with a lofty speech in defiant opposition to wine drinking and intoxication, which he disapproves of, not only in excess, but more generally. He claims:

ἐμοὶ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτό γε οἶμαι κατάδηλον γεγονέναι ἐκ τῆς ἰατρικῆς, ὅτι χαλεπὸν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἡ μέθη ἐστίν· καὶ οὔτε αὐτὸς ἐκὼν εἶναι πόρρω ἐθελήσαιμι ἂν πιεῖν οὔτε ἄλλῳ συμβουλεύσαιμι, ἄλλως τε καὶ κραιπαλῶντα ἔτι ἐκ τῆς προτεραιίας.⁸⁵

For, indeed, this has become clear to me from the practice of medicine—that drunkenness is grievous for all mankind. And, I, myself, would never be willing to become drunk of my own accord, nor would I recommend it to another to drink, especially when still hungover from the previous evening.

The problem with this kind of outright rejection of wine is that Eryximachus' need for moderation becomes excessive. His rejection of wine is as extreme as unregulated consumption and does not take into realistic account the desire others might have to become intoxicated. This rejection of wine additionally reveals Eryximachus' lack of self awareness, as he claims that he would never become drunk willingly (οὔτε ἐθελήσαιμι) right before admitting to his hangover (κραιπαλῶντα). He fails to recognize his own agency in consuming wine, somewhat like the Ambassador of Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, who believes his drinking is only done πρὸς βίαν.

⁸⁴ Plat. Sym. 189b

⁸⁵ Plat. Sym. 176c-d

This lack of self awareness continues to pose a problem for Eryximachus, whose unrealistic expectations, combined with his excessive desire for moderation, make him a decidedly poor symposiarch. He lacks an understanding of the symposium's purpose, which becomes clear when he removes one of its most integral components. He dismisses the aulos player (who will return later, when Alcibiades makes his drunken entrance) so that the symposiasts can instead come together in conversation and rational debate (διὰ λόγων).⁸⁶ Then, he comes to the strange conclusion that the best way to keep the symposiasts sober is to remove all restrictions on and expectations for their drinking. He orders them, πίνειν ὅσον ἂν ἕκαστος βούληται, ἐπάναγκες δὲ μηδὲν εἶναι “to drink as each desires, without any requirements.”⁸⁷ He thinks that as long as no one is required to consume as much as any other, those who wish to remain sober can do so. The obvious flaw in this logic, however, is that though he forgoes implementing some sort of minimum drinking requirement, he also forgoes the implementation of a maximum; so, when Alcibiades eventually arrives and demands that the symposiasts consume more wine, there is no regulatory system in place to keep them from becoming excessively drunk.

In place of these systematic regulations, Eryximachus offers vague and somewhat condescending advice, taking it upon himself to draw attention to the general dangers of succumbing to one's desires, specifically in relation to food and drink. He declares, rather superfluously for what would have been so self-evident, that the symposiasts must proceed with caution (εὐλαβοῦμενον) in these festive occasions, so as not to foster intemperance or

⁸⁶ Plat. Sym. 176e

⁸⁷ Plat. Sym. 176e

licentiousness (ἀκολασίαν).⁸⁸ Despite these lofty claims, however, Eryximachus fails to recognize that he has just removed the very structures which, more subtly and effectively, facilitate a cautious approach to wine drinking.

These problems with Eryximachus' naivety begin to reveal themselves early on, before Alcibiades even takes over as symposiarch. When it is Aristophanes' turn to speak, the comic poet is overcome with hiccups, rendering him incapable of presenting his encomium. The hiccups (λύγγα) are caused, ἢ ὑπὸ πλησμονῆς ἢ ὑπό τινος ἄλλου “either by satiety or some other thing,” which Aristodemus tells Plato in what is perhaps a joking suggestion that if not from eating too much (πλησμονῆς), the hiccups are caused by too much of something else (i.e. wine).⁸⁹ Whatever the cause, Aristophanes' hiccups disrupt the strict order Eryximachus has placed on the symposium; and, who better to pose this interruption than the comic playwright, whose genre is so concerned with the excessive consumption of wine?

Aristophanes' hiccups additionally foreshadow the much larger disruption wine will present when Alcibiades makes his drunken entrance. The symposiasts hear the sounds of reveling in the courtyard before Alcibiades actually enters the andron, in a moment which visually depicts the shift in power from Eryximachus to Alcibiades. Plato writes, ἄγειν οὖν αὐτὸν παρὰ σφᾶς τὴν τε ἀθλητρίδα ὑπολαβοῦσαν καὶ ἄλλους τινὰς τῶν ἀκολουθῶν, “So he was lead to them, supported by the aulos player and the others attending him.”⁹⁰ After Alcibiades demands a

⁸⁸ He then proceeds to compare this type of caution to the merits of his own profession: ... ὥσπερ ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ τέχνῃ μέγα ἔργον ταῖς περὶ τὴν ὀσοποικὴν τέχνην ἐπιθυμίαις καλῶς χρῆσθαι, ὥστ' ἄνευ νόσου τὴν ἡδονὴν καρπώσασθαι. “...just as in my own art it is a great matter to regulate, with propriety, the desires of the epicure, so that he may indulge these pleasures without becoming ill” (Plat. Sym. 187e). Plato writes Eryximachus as a caricature of a self-important, pompous physician, which helps set him up as the anti-comedian. He at no point indicates that he is in on the joke.

⁸⁹ Plat. Sym. 185c

⁹⁰ Plat. Sym. 212d

place at the event, he is supported and brought into the room by the very same aulos player whom Eryximachus sent away at the beginning. Eryximachus' early decision to remove the aulos player from the scene proves to be not only ineffective, but ultimately counteractive, as this character, by literally ushering Alcibiades into the space, ushers in the revelrous spirit of the symposium Eryximachus wished to suppress.

Alcibiades provokes unruly behavior amongst the symposiasts, claiming himself to be the new symposiarch and demanding that everyone drink more excessively. He orders Socrates to consume a bowlful of wine. In response, Eryximachus scolds Alcibiades for encouraging such unceremonious drinking behaviors; τὸν δ' Ἐρυξίμαχον πῶς οὖν, φάναι, ὃ Ἀλκιβιάδη, ποιοῦμεν; οὕτως οὔτε τι λέγομεν ἐπὶ τῇ κύλικι οὔτε τι ᾄδομεν, ἀλλ' ἀτεχνῶς ὥσπερ οἱ διψῶντες πίομεθα; “‘How are we doing this, Alcibiades?’ Eryximachus said, ‘Do we neither speak nor sing over our kylikes, but simply drink as thirsty men?’”⁹¹ Eryximachus expresses concerns which appear reasonable, but ultimately undermine his original sentiment. To drink as thirsty men (ὥσπερ οἱ διψῶντες) would be to succumb to one's appetites rather than adhering to an external, regulating structure; but Eryximachus earlier requested that drink according to his own desires (πίνειν ὅσον ἄν ἕκαστος βούληται). The absence of something to say (λέγομεν) or to sing about (ᾄδομεν) reflects his rejection of these structures.⁹² However, the one rule which Eryximachus has established is that no one be compelled by another to drink, which Alcibiades violates in this

⁹¹ Plat. Sym. 214a-b

⁹² Notice that these are two of the key factors in distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate drinking behaviors in Old Comedy. Alcibiades even becomes drunk outside of the andron, which would also be an indication of inappropriate drinking if this were presented on a comic stage. Accordingly, Alcibiades' entrance does prove to be someone disruptive, like the God of War in *Acharnians* or Heracles in *Alcestitis*.

moment. Once again, Eryximachus' lack of self awareness contributes to his failure to be an effective symposiarch.

Alcibiades does comply with Eryximachus' request that each symposiast present a speech on the topic of love. However, his speech is also inherently subversive. While the preceding symposiasts have each offered organized, theoretical speeches on the concept of love, Alcibiades instead offers a disorderly, drunken *declaration* of love. This confession, that he is in love with Socrates and that his love is unrequited, removes his speech from the hypothetical. It instead becomes a physical embodiment of the ideas presented by the other symposiasts and, in this way, is like theater, which also takes the hypothetical and deposits it into physical bodies, who enact those ideas in a concrete, narrative form.

There are several parallels between the initial speeches presented by the symposiasts and Alcibiades', which demonstrate the theatricality of his love confession. To take one example, Phaedrus claims that love inspires the feeling of shame (αἰσχρός) before one's lover.⁹³ Alcibiades demonstrates this idea in a more concrete way by saying πέπονθα δὲ πρὸς τοῦτον μόνον ἀνθρώπων, ὃ οὐκ ἄν τις οἴοιτο ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐνεῖναι, τὸ αἰσχύνεσθαι ὄντινοῦν: ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτον μόνον αἰσχύνομαι. "I suffer because of this man alone, of all men, such as no one would expect of me, to be made to feel ashamed. I feel shame before only him."⁹⁴ Pausanias and Eryximachus provide an additional example, both making clear distinctions in their speeches between noble and base love. They praise noble love as love which is inspired by the admiration for a lover's moral and intellectual character. Sure enough, Alcibiades demonstrates his noble love for

⁹³ Plat. Sym. 178d

⁹⁴ Plat. Sym. 216a-b

Socrates, telling him, ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστι πρεσβύτερον τοῦ ὡς ὅτι βέλτιστον ἐμὲ γενέσθαι, τούτου δὲ οἶμαί μοι συλλήπτορα οὐδένα κυριώτερον εἶναι σοῦ, “To me, nothing is more important than to make myself as excellent as possible, and for this there is no partner superior for myself than you.”⁹⁵

Alcibiades, in his drunken state, embodies the philosophical ideas presented by the other, more sober symposiasts. His drunkenness is what allows his speech to become so uniquely comical, which he recognizes when he interrupts himself to say, τὸ λεγόμενον, οἶνος ἄνευ τε παίδων καὶ μετὰ παίδων ἦν ἀληθής, “As the saying goes, wine, with or without children, is truth.”^{96, 97} Alcibiades accounts for the frankness of his speech by drawing attention to his own drunkenness. Accordingly, once he concludes, the philosophical portion of the Socratic dialogue ends, and Plato is left to narrate the remaining events of the symposium without clear details: καὶ θορύβου μεστὰ πάντα εἶναι, καὶ οὐκέτι ἐν κόσμῳ οὐδενὶ ἀναγκάζεσθαι πίνειν πάμπολον οἶνον, “And the whole place was full of noise, and losing all order, they were compelled to drink vast quantities of wine.”⁹⁸ The party has descended into chaos, and becomes a hazy recollection. The shift in power from Eryximachus to Alcibiades comes to represent the shift from sobriety to drunkenness and, in turn, the shift from the philosophical and cerebral to the theatrical and visceral.

⁹⁵ Plat. Sym. 218d

⁹⁶ Plat. Sym. 217e

⁹⁷ In his article, “Wine and Truth in the Greek Symposium,” Rosler points out literary evidence as early as the 7th century for this connection in the Greek mind, citing a fragment of Alcaeus (οἶνος, ὃ φίλε παῖ, καὶ ἀλάθεια) to which Alcibiades directly refers in this moment. The joke when he says, “with or without children” is referring to the direct address (ὃ φίλε παῖ) in the original poem (Rosler 1999).

⁹⁸ Plat. Sym. 223b

iii. Socrates the Satyr

The satyric presence of Socrates complicates this otherwise straightforward shift from sobriety to drunkenness. Alcibiades begins his speech by preempting how inadequate his words will be at capturing the essence of this strange figure. He says, ἐὰν μέντοι ἀναμνησκόμενος ἄλλο ἄλλοθεν λέγω, μηδὲν θαυμάσης: οὐ γάρ τι ῥάδιον τὴν σὴν ἀτοπίαν ὄδ' ἔχοντι εὐπόρως καὶ ἐφεξῆς καταριθμῆσαι. “You shouldn’t be surprised if I tell you these memories in one way, then another. It isn’t easy to recount a man having your [i.e. Socrates’] eccentricities in a fluent and orderly way.”⁹⁹ This is the first of several insightful observations Alcibiades will have about this strange figure. While the shift from sobriety to drunkenness is easily traceable from Eryximachus as symposiarch to Alcibiades, Socrates’ role in the symposium is much more difficult to define, and requires, just as Alcibiades predicts, some jumping around in the text.

Despite his concerns, the initial image that Alcibiades uses to describe Socrates is helpful in understanding his unique ability to drink wine without becoming intoxicated. Alcibiades draws a comparison between Socrates and a type of satyr figurine, setting up an important visual comparison to which will refer back several times in his speech:

φημὶ γὰρ δὴ ὁμοιώτατον αὐτὸν εἶναι τοῖς σιληνοῖς τούτοις τοῖς ἐν τοῖς ἐρμολυφείοις καθημένοις, οὐστὶνας ἐργάζονται οἱ δημιουργοὶ σύριγγας ἢ αὐλοὺς ἔχοντας, οἱ διχάδε διοιχθέντες φαίνονται ἔνδοθεν ἀγάλματα ἔχοντες θεῶν.¹⁰⁰

For I say that he [Socrates] is most similar to the Silenus figurines which sit in the statuary shops, those which craftsmen make, carrying shepherd’s pipes or auloi. And when you split open their middles, they reveal within that they contain images of the gods.

⁹⁹ Plat. Sym. 215a

¹⁰⁰ Plat. Sym. 215a-b

This comparison between Socrates and the satyr figurine is, at its most basic level, a comment on Socrates' unattractive appearance. This is a familiar jest in the Greek literary canon, as Socrates was known for his short stature, his paunch, and his snub nose.¹⁰¹ Alcibiades, however, deconstructs this popular joke, suggesting that the similarities are much more pervasive than the joke suggests.

He begins by comparing Socrates' persuasive rhetoric to the intoxicating sound of the instruments that the satyr figurines are holding (σύριγγας ἢ αὐλοῦς),¹⁰² then continues with the second aspect of the metaphor, which, to him, is much more revealing of Socrates' character: the presence of the ἀγάλματα θεῶν—the images of the gods—which are contained within. He accounts for these in the metaphor by claiming that they are representative of Socrates' moderate nature: τοῦτο γὰρ οὗτος ἔξωθεν περιβέβληται, ὥσπερ ὁ γεγλυμμένος σιληνός: ἔνδοθεν δὲ ἀνοιχθεὶς πόσης οἴεσθε γέμει, ὧ ἄνδρες συμπόται, σωφροσύνης, “For this exterior has been thrown around him, just like a sculpted Silenus. But once opened up, you would find his interior full, my drinking companions, of such a moderate nature!”¹⁰³ To describe Socrates as moderate is somewhat confusing. The type of moderation that is a necessary for safe wine drinking usually manifests itself in one's adherence to external limitations; but Socrates drinks without any limitations, at all. When Alcibiades orders his cup be filled with wine, Socrates drinks it all

¹⁰¹ Even in Xenophon's *Symposium*, Critobulus makes what is essentially the same joke. τί τοῦτο; ἔφη ὁ Σωκράτης: ὡς γὰρ καὶ ἐμοῦ καλλίων ὦν ταῦτα κομπάζεις. νῆ Δί', ἔφη ὁ Κριτόβουλος, ἢ πάντων Σειληνῶν τῶν ἐν τοῖς σατυρικοῖς αἴσχιςτος ἂν εἶην (Xen. Sym. 4.20). “What is this?” said Socrates, “You boast as if you were handsomer than me.” “By gods, yes,” said Critobulus, “Or I would be the ugliest of all the satyrs in the Satyr Plays!”

¹⁰² Alcibiades says, ὁ μὲν γε δι' ὀργάνων ἐκίλει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τῆ ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος δυνάμει, “He can charm men with his instrument, through his lips.” Plat. Sym. 215c

¹⁰³ Plat. Sym. 216d-216e

immediately.¹⁰⁴ At the end of the symposium, Socrates stays up later than anyone else, drinking from a large bowl (ἐκ φιάλης μεγάλης) until his two companions, Agathon and Aristophanes, fall asleep.¹⁰⁵ What Alcibiades suggests is that Socrates' rejection of external, regulating structures is possible because of an *internal* regulation; so while he appears immoderate, like a satyr, his drinking behaviors are, in reality, the most moderate of the symposiasts'.

Socrates' moderateness seems not to be defined by a control over his desire, but by a lack of desire. Eryximachus suggests this when he first mentions Socrates' indifference toward wine. When determining how drunk the symposiasts should become, he says, δ' ἐξαιρῶ λόγου: ἰκανὸς γὰρ καὶ ἀμφοτέρω, ὅστ' ἐξαρκέσει αὐτῷ ὅποτέρ' ἂν ποιῶμεν, "I do not take Socrates into account; for either way is sufficient; it will be sufficient to him whether we drink or not."¹⁰⁶ It becomes clearer as the symposium progresses, however, that this is a gross understatement. Socrates is not only indifferent toward wine, but impervious to its negative effects. After he leaves the party, which he remains at until dawn, his day continues as usual; he betrays no symptoms of sleep deprivation or of being hungover:

τὸν οὖν Σωκράτη, κατακοιμίσαντ' ἐκείνους, ἀναστάντα ἀπιέναι, καὶ ἔ ὥσπερ εἰώθει ἔπεσθαι, καὶ ἐλθόντα εἰς Λύκειον, ἀπονιψάμενον, ὥσπερ ἄλλοτε τὴν ἄλλην ἡμέραν διατρίβειν, καὶ οὕτω διατρίψαντα εἰς ἑσπέραν οἴκοι ἀναπαύεσθαι.¹⁰⁷

So, once he saw that they [Aristophanes and Agathon] had fallen asleep, he stood and left, and went about just as usual. And when he arrived at the Lyceum, he washed himself, then spent the rest of the day just as usual. And when day passed into evening, he returned home and rested.

¹⁰⁴ τὸν μὲν οὖν Σωκράτη ἐγγέαντος τοῦ παιδὸς πίνειν. "So Socrates drank what the boy poured out" (Plat. Sym. 214a).

¹⁰⁵ Plat. Sym. 223c

¹⁰⁶ Plat. Sym. 176c

¹⁰⁷ Plat. Sym. 223d

This disregard for the body's need for sleep and imperviousness to the effects of a hangover exceed the normal, human capacity for stoicism.¹⁰⁸ Socrates' indifference toward wine extends to an indifference toward the physical needs of his body, suggesting that Socrates is somehow more divine than human.

Socrates' relationship to wine is also inhuman. Not only does he not desire wine, drinking it does not seem to intoxicate him at all. Alcibiades is the only character who explicitly states that Socrates is unable to become drunk; however this relationship is, to Alcibiades, a crucial component of Socrates' character. He refers to this oddity twice, first when he orders Socrates to drink a large bowl of wine, saying, ὅποσον γὰρ ἂν κελεύῃ τις, τοσοῦτον ἐκπιὼν οὐδὲν μᾶλλον μὴ ποτε μεθυσθῆ, "For as much as anyone orders for him [Socrates], he will drink it all, but never be made drunk."¹⁰⁹ The second time he refers to Socrates' inability to become drunk, he recalls their time together during the Peloponnesian War, describing Socrates' singular resilience in the face of hardship:

ὅποτ' ἀναγκασθεῖμεν ἀποληφθέντες που, οἷα δὴ ἐπὶ στρατείας, ἀσιτεῖν, οὐδὲν ἦσαν οἱ ἄλλοι πρὸς τὸ καρτερεῖν—ἔν τ' αὖ ταῖς εὐωχίαις μόνος ἀπολαύειν οἷός τ' ἦν τὰ τ' ἄλλα καὶ πίνειν οὐκ ἐθέλων, ὅποτε ἀναγκασθεῖη, πάντας ἐκράτει, καὶ ὁ πάντων θαυμαστότατον, Σωκράτη μεθύοντα οὐδεὶς πώποτε ἐώρακεν ἀνθρώπων.¹¹⁰

Whenever we, having been cut off in some place, were compelled, such as happens in expeditions, to abstain from food, the others were nothing compared to him in resiliency (nor, when once again in good cheer, in enjoyment) and though he would not wish to

¹⁰⁸ Aristophanes jokes about these very attributes in *Clouds*, which we looked at in the previous chapter (Aristoph. Cl. 413-9). He reimagines Socrates as a sophistic leader, a rhetorically skilled but morally challenged figure, heightening his amorality by highlighting these same strange, almost inhuman qualities.

¹⁰⁹ Plat. Sym. 214a

¹¹⁰ Plat. Sym. 219e-220a

drink, whenever overruled, he outdrank everyone. Most marvelous of all, no man has ever seen Socrates drunk.

Alcibiades sees Socrates' indifference toward his own hunger as being closely related to his indifference toward wine. This connection between appetite for food and wine is common in Greek texts, where an overindulgence in one usually accompanies or foreshadows an overindulgence in the other. This was the case in Old Comedy, where characters who drank inappropriately usually equated wine drinking with the gluttonous consumption of food. It is therefore unsurprising that a character so inhumanly resilient when made to abstain from food, would also be immune to the intoxicating effects of wine.

Still, the relationship between these two resiliencies does not account for Socrates' mysterious exemption from human suffering and from the experience of drunkenness. Much like the characters on the comic and satyric stages, Socrates is able to participate in revelry without boundaries, as his wine drinking fails to provoke the expected shifts in his internal state. However, Socrates is not on the comic stage, but inside of the andron, where boundaries need to be followed in order to keep the symposiasts safe.

The image of the ἀγάλματα θεῶν, which Alcibiades puts forth in his initial description, helps to explain Socrates' exemption from these restrictions. Alcibiades posits that Socrates' immoderate behavior is superficial, masking a divine presence; and these mysterious, divine statues which lay at the center of the satyr are a reference to a form of moderation that supersedes the conventions of the symposium or the limitations of the body. Perhaps another metaphor Alcibiades might have used would have been between Socrates and the very kylikes the symposiasts would have drunk from, the kylikes whose exteriors depict reveling satyrs, only

to reveal the image of a vomiting man or the face of a gorgon within. Much like the comic heroes, the satyr choruses, and the revelers on the exteriors of the kylikes, Socrates can overindulge without consequence, because he contains within him a sobering quality. If Eryximachus and Alcibiades represent the opposing states of sobriety and drunkenness, then Socrates comes to represent a comic or satyric figure, whose participation in revelry is performative, or even reflective of his audience, who are actually effected by the consumption of wine.

iv. Diotima, Wine and Love

Concluding here, with the discovery that Socrates is somehow divine, would be unsatisfying, because there remains a problem. Socrates is human and will eventually have to face his own mortality.¹¹¹ By looking at the speech he gives in the *Symposium*, we will see a possible human explanation for this inhuman resilience to wine's intoxicating effects: that Socrates is unable to become drunk, because he is in an eternal and constant state of drunkenness.

When it is Socrates' turn to offer a speech in praise of Love, he relates the story of another, rather than speaking in his own voice. Diotima, from whom Socrates claims he acquired all his knowledge on love-matters, explains to him the mythological origin of Love, which she

¹¹¹ He is tried and found guilty of two offenses, which are both, coincidentally, relevant to Alcibiades' initial description of the satyr statue. The first, corrupting the youth (τούς τε νέους διαφθείροντα), is reflected in the intoxicating persuasiveness, which Alcibiades refers to when he describes the satyr's flute playing. The second, not believing in the gods the city believes in (θεούς οὓς ἡ πόλις νομίζει οὐ νομίζοντα), is reflected in these ἀγάλματα θεῶν, whose presence shifts worship inward and precludes a reliance on external regulating structures. (Plat. Apol 24b-c). These internal divinities are the very thing that force Socrates to face his own mortality.

describes as being inherently connected to intoxication.¹¹² Love is not a God, but a liminal creature, perhaps like the satyrs, and is begotten as a result of drunkenness. In her story, Resource becomes drunk off of nectar, as wine has not yet been invented (οἶνος γὰρ οὐπω ἦν) and falls asleep.¹¹³ Like the drunken Polyphemus, Resource becomes vulnerable in this state. Poverty takes advantage of this vulnerability, has sex with the sleeping Resource, and consequently becomes pregnant with Love.¹¹⁴

Immediately, Diotima's mythology draws a connection between the idea of Love and the vulnerability inherent in the drunken state—a connection which will become important in understanding Socrates' eternal state of intoxication. Alcibiades demonstrates this connection, as he does with the other ideas of the symposiasts, in his drunken love confession. He describes his love for Socrates as having this same intoxicating effect on him, saying:

ἐγὼ γοῦν, ὧ ἄνδρες, εἰ μὴ ἔμελλον κοιμηθῆναι δόξειν μεθύειν, εἶπον ὁμόσας ἂν ὑμῖν οἷα δὴ πέπονθα αὐτὸς ὑπὸ τῶν τούτου λόγων καὶ πάσχω ἔτι καὶ νυνί. ὅταν γὰρ ἀκούω, πολὺ μοι μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν κορυβαντιῶντων ἢ τε καρδία πηδᾷ καὶ δάκρυα ἐκχεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν λόγων τῶν τούτου...¹¹⁵

As for myself, gentlemen, if it didn't happen that I appear to be so totally drunk, I would have sworn to you all how I suffer because of the words of this man, and still suffer now. For when I hear him, my heart throbs, even more than the people celebrating the rites of the Corybantes, and tears gush forth from his speaking...

¹¹² It should be noted that Aristophanes also provides an origin myth in order to talk about the nature of Love, which Plato draws attention to when Socrates concludes his speech, saying that everyone applauded, τὸν δὲ Ἀριστοφάνη λέγειν τι ἐπιχειρεῖν, ὅτι ἐμνήσθη αὐτοῦ λέγων ὁ Σωκράτης περὶ τοῦ λόγου, “except for Aristophanes, who was attempting to say that Socrates' speech reminded him of his own” (Plat. Sym. 212c). This is perhaps a reminder of the theatrical, and perhaps even comical aspects of Socrates' speech.

¹¹³ Plat. Sym. 203b

¹¹⁴ Plat. Sym. 203b-203e

¹¹⁵ Plat. Sym. 215d-215e

Alcibiades twice suggests that being in the presence of his love has an intoxicating effect; he first compares his emotion to that inspired by some sort of ritualistic frenzy (in this case, the celebration of the Corybantic rites) and then, suggests that were he not drunk, the effects of Socrates' presence would have a much more visible effect; his drunkenness from the wine masks the physical symptoms of the drunkenness inspired in him when he sees Socrates.

After explaining these mythological origins, Diotima continues to outline the proper ways to love and to conceive of love, a methodology which Socrates prescribes to, admitting in the introduction of his speech that he has been fully persuaded (πέπεισμαι δ' ἐγώ).¹¹⁶ Diotima visualizes the process of educating oneself on love matters as being similar to climbing the rungs of a ladder, beginning at its base with the love of physical bodies, and ascending toward a more mature and ideal love. This final type of love, from which we derive the idea of the non-sexual "platonic" love, is a love of beauty itself (αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ¹¹⁷); it is a meditation on the nature and practice of philosophy, which occurs when one turns away from beautiful bodies or objects, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ θεωρῶν πολλοὺς καὶ καλοὺς λόγους καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς τίκτη καὶ διανοήματα ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ, "but turn[s] instead toward the great ocean of the beautiful and beholding the many and beautiful discourses and the magnificent thoughts he might engender in bountiful philosophy."¹¹⁸ Much to Alcibiades' chagrin, Socrates cannot fall in love with other men.¹¹⁹ He has climbed Diotima's theoretical

¹¹⁶ Plat. Sym. 212b

¹¹⁷ Plat. Sym. 211c

¹¹⁸ Plat. Sym. 210d

¹¹⁹ Referring, in this case to Alcibiades. However, his rejection of love confessions is not exclusive to Plato's *Symposium*. This also occurs in Xenophon, when he spurs the advances of Antisthenes, who also claims to be in love with him (ἐράω) (Xen Sym. 8.4-12).

ladder, and no longer loves individual bodies, but the concept of beauty, itself. If this is truly the case, that Socrates is in love with this omnipresent beauty, then Socrates would, in theory, always be in the presence of his lover.

Alcibiades seems to be aware of Socrates' "platonic" experience of love. He knows that Socrates is immune to the sexual temptations present in beautiful bodies, saying, ἴστε ὅτι οὔτε εἴ τις καλός ἐστι μέλει αὐτῷ οὐδέν, "Know that however beautiful a man is, it means nothing to him."¹²⁰ Alcibiades additionally alludes to Socrates' frenzied and intoxicating relationship to philosophy:

καὶ ὄρων αὖ Φαίδρους, Ἀγάθωνας, Ἐρυξιμάχους, Πausανίας, Ἀριστοδήμους τε καὶ Ἀριστοφάνους: Σωκράτη δὲ αὐτὸν τί δεῖ λέγειν, καὶ ὅσοι ἄλλοι; πάντες γὰρ κεκοινωνήκατε τῆς φιλοσόφου μανίας τε καὶ βακχείας.¹²¹

And looking at Phaedrus, Agathon, Eryximachus, Pausanias, Aristodemus, and Aristophanes—is it even necessary to mention Socrates, himself?—and all the others. All of you have had his share of the frenzy, the Bacchic frenzy and madness of philosophy.

Again, Alcibiades equates feeling of love to a drunken frenzy (μανίας τε καὶ βακχείας); but the object of this love is not a person, but the concept and practice of philosophy. Socrates (more obviously than any of the other symposiasts, as Alcibiades points out) engenders thoughts not in bodies, but, as Diotima describes, in bountiful philosophy (ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ). Socrates' love of the beauty itself provides a reasonable explanation for his inhuman stoicism. While Alcibiades' physical drunkenness masks the symptoms of his emotional drunkenness, the reverse happens to be true of Socrates. He betrays no evidence that wine is intoxicating him, because he is already intoxicated by the presence of his lover, the beauty itself (αὐτός ὁ καλός).

¹²⁰ Plat. Sym. 216d

¹²¹ Plat. Sym. 218a-218b

Conclusion

Eryximachus and Alcibiades represent opposing states of sobriety and drunkenness, removed from the exaggerations of the comic stage. The shift from the philosophical and cerebral to the theatrical and visceral is embodied in the shift of power from one to the other and demonstrates the connections between drunkenness and the theatrical. Alcibiades describes Socrates as a satyr statue, unable to articulate this elusive, divine internal state which seems to drive him. However, the image he presents of Socrates as a satyr proves an insightful way of imagining his character. Socrates's divine moderation, the *ἀγάλματα θεῶν* that rest within his soul, seem to mirror the internal moderation of the satyric and comic characters. He, like them, is able to drink excessively, without injury to himself or others. His participation in revelry is performative, or even reflective of his audience, Eryximachus and Alcibiades, the ones actually effected by the consumption of wine, perhaps suggesting why Alcibiades feels such shame in his presence. Like the comic and satyric characters, Socrates appears immoderate, but does not forgo the necessity of *σωφροσύνη*. Instead he adheres to an internal *σωφροσύνη*, separate from that needed for the Athenians, driven by his love of philosophy.

Conclusion

I realize now that I need not have been so surprised at the ease in which the argument laid out by Durand, Frontisi-Ducroux, and Lissarrague in *Wine: Human and Divine*, mapped itself onto the understanding of these comic genres. The humorous images at the bottoms of the kylikes function as all comedy, in all cultures, does: as a means by which to simultaneously grant and deny permission to engage in excessive or inappropriate behavior. The humorous engagement with wine in all three genres demonstrates this comedic paradox, which in turn helps to specify what the Greeks believe was and was not appropriate.

Review of Key Arguments

Each of these three genres deals with the fear of abandoning moderation (σωφροσύνη) by allowing for characters to engage in excessive behaviors within a clearly defined space. In this way, they function similarly to the kylikes depicted in this project's introduction; by looking through their revelrous exteriors, one discovers the subtle, often humorous ways their interiors remind the reveler that there are limits to his revelry.

Satyr Play abandons all moderation, relying on its parodistic tone and mythological distance to make clear that the excessive behavior portrayed is off-limits to the audience. The more contemporary and political plays of Aristophanes do not abandon these moderating practices, but redefine them. The consumption of unmixed (ἄκρατος) wine does not bear significance to the characters of these two genres, but rather, is representative of the excessive nature of the genres. Instead, qualifiers like location and motivation for drinking determine what is and is not appropriate. Finally, the parabasis of Old Comedy functions to make clearer

distinctions between the behaviors appropriate for the audience members and those appropriate for the characters onstage.

The literary symposium, unlike Satyr Play and Old Comedy, is representative of actual Greek drinking practices, and therefore recounts actual external, regulating structures. We see this need in Eryximachus' failure to moderate drunkenness by having the symposiasts drink "as each desires" (ὅσον ἂν ἕκαστος βούληται). Socrates is the singular exception to this rule; his satyric resilience to the negative effects of wine seems more appropriate to the comic stage than the *andron*, and perhaps reflects the inherent moderateness of these otherwise excessive comic genres.

Potential for Further Study

This project has really only scraped the surface of understanding the comic treatment of wine in Classical Athens. Each of the discussions could be usefully expanded to include other genres and plays. The study of wine in Satyr Play would benefit from an analysis of Euripides' prosatyrical *Alcestris*, in which Euripides, as he does in the *Cyclops*, uses the excessive intake of wine as a catalyst for the actions which resolve the primary conflict of the play. However, the absence of the satyr chorus reflects the play's more complex treatment of wine.

Additional plays of Aristophanes, left out of this project for the sake of time and concision, provide examples of comic wine drinking. *Wasps* features a character, Philocleon, whose inappropriate drinking reflects that of the Ambassador and the Paphlagonian Slave. Both *Ecclesiazusae* and *Thesmophoriazusae* feature scenes of wine being drunk by women, whose consumption of wine was discouraged in Athenian society. Including this gendered element of

the Greek perception of wine might help to more accurately define the behavioral boundaries of the comic stage.

To enrich my discussion of the Greek Symposium, a chapter of equal length on Xenophon's *Symposium*, would be necessary. This text is perhaps more helpful than Plato's in constructing an image of what a symposium would have looked like and more explicitly explores the relationship between comedy and drunkenness, as he suggests in his introduction: ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ τῶν καλῶν κάγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔργα οὐ μόνον τὰ μετὰ σπουδῆς πραττόμενα ἀξιομνημόνευτα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐν ταῖς παιδιαῖς “It seems to me that those deeds of good and noble men accomplished in seriousness are not alone worthy of mention, but also those accomplished in play.”¹²²

Conclusion

I began this project with intentions of developing a more sophisticated sense of Athenian culture by trying to understand some aspect of its comedy. Wine seems to be a symbolic representation of just one of many desires that need to be moderated. However, for a culture which placed such high value on σωφροσύνη, the fifth century Athenians were remarkably immoderate. The Peloponnesian War was the result of the excessive spending of embezzled money—money which was spent to create some of the largest and most expensive architecture in the western world. Even the production of the Aristophanic plays was an elaborate and expensive spectacle, and itself demonstrative of the kind of excess it warns against.

¹²² Xen. Sym. 1.1

The fear of excess seems to loom over the art and literature of the Greeks like the eyes on the outside of their kylikes. The awareness of the dangers of excess which pervade the comic genre are certainly a testament to the perceptiveness of comedy, but I wonder if the subtlety with which these warnings were presented masked the seriousness of the problems at hand. I also wonder what this might reveal about our culture, which does not even pretend to value moderation; we value excess. The political satire of our age is highly perceptive, and finds humor in extreme behaviors and ideologies, but if Aristophanes' awareness did not save Athens, perhaps it is wise not only to laugh at this kind of comedy, but to take pause and reflect on the grave truths it reveals.

I conclude with this reflection not to dampen the spirits of revelry, but rather to encourage a more thorough engagement with the objects of our laughter. It isn't enough to simply laugh at our own immoderation, we have to look into the face of the gorgon and realize that we are looking at ourself.

Until then, let the revel continue. Cheers.

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