Hippocratic Medicine in Aristophanic Comedy

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Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation untersucht das Vorhandensein und die dramatischen Funktionen hippokratischer Medizin im aristophanischen Korpus. Vorherige Studien beachten, wie diese Komödien einen Einblick in die medizinischen Kenntnisse und Gebräuche im klassischen Athen bieten. Jedoch sind solche Studien meistens darauf begrenzt, die Fachterminologie zu identifizieren und zu katalogisieren. Im Gegensatz dazu analysiere ich diese Bilder und Ideen zusammen mit ihrem Kontext in verschiedenen Passagen und gegebenenfalls in ganzen Stücken. Ich enthülle dabei, wie die rationale Medizin des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v.Ch. eine Rolle in der Poetik des Aristophanes spielt. Meine Arbeit ist unterteilt in drei thematische Kapitel: (1) Im ersten Kapitel „(Dramatische) Formen und Funktionen des Körpers“ analysiere ich Ideen der hippokratischen Anatomie und Physiologie, die in den Komödien erscheinen. Die ersten zwei Teile beschäftigen sich mit zwei Themen, die für den gesamten aristophanischen Korpus von Bedeutung sind: Vergleichungen des Körpers zu Gefäßen, und materiale Modelle des Geistes. In der zweiten Hälfte des Kapitels 1 erörtere ich, wie *Ritter* und *Wolke* auf gewisse Entwicklungen in Medizin und Naturphilosophie des 5. Jahrhunderts anspielen, nämlich durch die Verwendung der Analogie, um den Innenraum des Körpers zu beschreiben, und die Relevanz der Meteorologie für Körperfunktionen, beziehungsweise -dysfunktionen. (2) Im zweiten Kapitel, „Verantwortung für die Gesundheit, Schuld für ihr Versagen,“ richte ich mein Augenmerk auf hippokratische Nosologie, medizinische Therapie, und die Figuren des Arztes und Patienten in den *Acharner*, *Vespen*, *Weibervolksversammlung*, und *Reichtum*. Ich gehe die Frage an, was und wer in den Komödien Krankheiten auslöst, und wer für medizinische Vorsorge und Behandlung als verantwortlich erachtet ist. Ich zeige, dass hippokratische Theorien zu Krankheitsursachen und hippokratische Einstellungen zu der Pflicht des Patienten und Arztes eine soziale, und vor allem politische, Bedeutung in den Komödien erhalten. (3) Das letzte Kapitel, „Die Künste der Medizin und der Dramaturgie,“ ist eine Untersuchung der metapoetischen Aspekte rationaler Medizin in den *Vespen* und *Fröschen*. Ich behaupte, dass der Dramatiker in diesen Stücken die Rolle des Arztes auf die des Dichters überträgt, indem er eine metaphorische Verbindung zwischen ihren Arbeitsweisen und ethischen Verpflichtungen herstellt.

Table of Contents

Introduction **1**

1. (Dramatic) Forms and Functions of the Body **17**

1.1 Body as Vessel, Vessel as Body 17

1.2 Cognitive Apparatuses: the *Phren(es)*, the *Noos*, and the Brain 36

1.3 Cleon's Body in *Knights*: a Colonoscopy of Political Misconduct 55

1.4 Strepsiades' Body in *Clouds*: Meteorological Effects and Moral Consequences 78

2. The Responsibility for Health and Culpability for its Failure **105**

2.1 Pittalus' Practice in the *Acharnians* 105

2.2 Political Nosology in the *Wasps* 119

2.3 The Patient's Responsibility to the Body (Politic) in the *Assemblywomen* 140

2.3.1 Blepyrus' Constipation 142

2.3.2 Neocleides' Eyes 163

2.4 Asclepius' Role as Public Physician in *Wealth* 179

3. The Arts of Medicine and Dramaturgy **190**

3.1 Dirty Jobs: The Playwright as Doctor in the Parabasis of the *Wasps* 190

3.2 Embodied Poetry and the Ethical Dimensions of Dramaturgy in the *Frogs* 204

Conclusion **237**

Bibliography **242**

Introduction

This dissertation explores a vein within scholarship that concerns Aristophanes' portrayal of the body. Scholars have long appreciated the social and political significance of the body in Old Comedy. Yet the body, and what the body means, is very much determined by its historical context, and in particular by the medicine of the era. Aristophanes' plays offer glimpses into medical theories and practices in Classical Athens, but studies on this topic have largely been confined to identifying and cataloging technical terms. To a much lesser degree do they analyze their significance for the passage in question, let alone for the comedies as a whole. Only in the last decade has the full potential of studying medicine in literary works become apparent, largely thanks to our increasing awareness of the relevance of ancient Greek science for understanding ancient Greek society. This development has paved the way for a fresh look at these images and themes in Aristophanes' comedies, one that takes into account what we know about medicine from his time. The central contention of my thesis is that ideas from Hippocratic medicine make their mark on these comedies, and especially on the bodies and diseases that Aristophanes portrays.

The following are the fundamental questions that my dissertation raises and aims to answer: how does Aristophanes engage with contemporary ideologies concerning the form and function of the human body? What function do these kinds of portrayals have in their literary context? I am also interested in the playwright's depiction of injuries and illnesses: how do the comedies mobilize these themes, both literally and metaphorically, and to what end? What do characters identify as the causes, as well as cures, of diseases? Furthermore, the ethical framework behind disease and the maintenance of health is also a key element of this study: how do the comedies represent the role that the patient, doctor, and state have in the maintenance of both individual and public health? My answers to these questions shed light on a remarkable conjunction between emergent Greek science and the playwright's poetics.

Aristophanes' Work in the Context of the History of Medicine

What we call "rational" speculation in medicine did not begin with Hippocrates, but rather with Presocratic philosophy. As Theophrastus reports, already in the first half of the

fifth century, Alcmaeon of Croton had speculated on internal body parts and their functions, and even attributed sense-perception to the brain.[1] Empedocles, who apparently flourished in the mid-fifth century, was known to practice healing.[2] To him we attribute the idea that the body is composed of the four elements in varying proportion.[3] In the 430's BCE Diogenes of Apollonia described bodily vessels in detail, the mechanism of the tongue, humoral theory, and a theory of pain.[4] Although his work was not medical in nature, Thucydides also made sophisticated observations about the plague in his *History* in 431 BCE; his language and methodology reveal a familiarity with new ideas in medicine.[5] Therefore, many theories that we associate with Hippocratic medicine were part of intellectual discourses even before Aristophanes began his career.

Aristophanes' works span some four decades, from the *Banqueters,* which premiered in 427 BCE, to the second version of *Aiolosicon* in 386 BCE. Over that time period, the playwright bore witness to a great deal of political and economic change as well as domestic and foreign conflict. Although less tumultuous and pressing than matters of state, an intellectual bloom took place during this time as well; medicine in particular underwent a significant transformation. In treatises that would later constitute the Hippocratic Corpus of today,[6] writers recorded medical theories (diagnoses, prognoses, and treatments), case studies, and their philosophical attitudes towards the practice of medicine. While the composition or publication dates are uncertain for these texts, scholars have established time frames with which we may comfortably work. Elizabeth Craik dates twenty-two treatises before 400 BCE,[7] eight around the turn of the century,[8] and ten somewhere between the late fifth and early fourth centuries.[9]

"Medical," "Scientific" and "Rational" as Defined in this Dissertation

Although my focus is on fifth-century medicine, approaches and ideas from

[1] (DK24) A5.24-5; A8.
[2] (DK31) B111; B112.
[3] (DK31) A78.
[4] (DK64) B6 (vessels); A22 (tongue); A29a (humoral theory); A19.43-55 (pain).
[5] Craik (2001); Swain (1994); Rechenauer (1991); Lichtenthaeler (1965).
[6] I use the terms "Hippocratic writers, "Hippocratics," and "medical writers" to sidestep the "Hippocratic question," that is, who Hippocrates himself was and what exactly he wrote. See Jouanna (1999, 58–65); Smith (1979, 31-44); Lloyd (1975b).
[7] *Acut*., *Aër*., *Art*., *Artic*., *Carn*., *Epid*. 1 and 3, *Flat*., *Fist*., *Genit*., *Loc. Hom*., *Nat. Hom*, *Morb*. I and III, *Oss*., *Prog*., *Prorrh*. II, *Sac. Morb*., *Salubr*, *Ulc*., *VA*, and *VM* (Craik 2005, ad loc.)
[8] *Alim*., *Aph*., *Epid*. II, IV, and VI, *Hum*., *Liqu*., and *Prorrh*. I (Craik 2005, ad loc.)
[9] *Aff*., *Anat*., *Foet. Exsect*., *Iusj*., *Lex*, *Morb*. I, *Mul*. I-III, *Off*., *Reg*., and *VC* (Craik 2005, ad loc.)

Presocratic philosophy are also very relevant to my work. Firstly, scholars in recent years no longer concern themselves with the division between medicine and philosophy in this era, dismissing it as a fool's errand.[10] Medicine in particular is very indebted to, and invested in, natural philosophy. For this reason I follow certain scholars in their use of the anachronistic term "science" when appropriate. It has the disadvantage of calling to mind the methodological approach which today's science, a creation of the modern era, entails. Nevertheless, it serves as an expedient to refer to all texts which share the common aim of explicating physical aspects of nature.

In my dissertation I term "medical" anything associated with, or reflecting, the theories and practices of the "rational" healing that emerged in fifth-century Greece as opposed to magical or religious healing. My primary sources for this context are the Hippocratic Corpus as well as surviving fragments from Presocratic natural philosophers who took an interest in the human body. We may single out such works for their (sometimes explicit, sometimes tacit) theory that human nature, rather than divine or magical forces, can reliably and consistently explain bodily functions and dysfunctions.[11] While the lines can become blurry (as fifth-century tragedians demonstrate), the traces of Hippocratic thought are very often distinct enough to be identified and distinguished from other types of healing. For the sake of simplicity, I use the terms "rational" and "Hippocratic" interchangeably, despite the fact that other therapeutic methods sometimes appear in the treatises. Hippocratic pharmacology, for instance, often has the marks of a sympathetic, rather than allopathic, approach to disease.[12]

What makes a word, phrase, or image in Aristophanes' comedies medical or scientific? Scholars who have studied medicine in Old Comedy have taken an approach essentially based on terminology. Their definition of technical terms also tends to be generous, so that many words that refer to the body or therapy are deemed medical or Hippocratic because they also appear in medical treatises.[13] This method nonetheless has its critics. Andreas Willi quite dramatically pares down the list of possible technical terms in the Aristophanic corpus with his much more stringent definition of technicality. In fact, all of the words that Simon Byl and Harold Miller note in their studies he describes as non-technical,

[10] Asper (2007, 11) also justifies his use of the term "Wissenschaft" thus; see also Longrigg (1993); van der Eijk (1997).

[11] Hankinson (1998b, 51-69). See also Lonie's (1977, 235) definition of ancient Greek medicine as defined by predictable nosology and dietetics in both health and disease.

[12] See von Staden's (1992a) analysis of the use of excrement for Hippocratic gynecology.

[13] Soleil (2010); Jouanna (2000); Rodríguez Alfageme (1995; 1981); Zimmermann (1992); Byl (2006; 1990); Kudlien (1971); Southard (1970); H. Miller (1945); Denniston (1927).

leaving us only with a smattering of words that he would even consider specifically medical, such the eye disease "ὀφθαλμία."[14] It is true that when Aristophanes includes a term like ὀφθαλμία, we can be sure that he refers not only to bodily (dys)functions and the healing art, but also specifically to Hippocratic medicine.[15] Part of our certainty comes from the fact that such words first appeared in fifth-century medical treatises and have no denotation that is not medical.

Even this approach, however, is too restrictive for meaningfully analyzing Hippocratic influences in literature. It allows us hardly any material for consideration simply because, relying exclusively on single words or small phrases, it is ill-equipped to evaluate parallels with medical thought from this time. When criticizing what he sees as a lack of methodology in Byl's and Miller's studies, Willi points out "the banality of many of the words they discuss."[16] He uses the term "wild pear" ἀχράς as an example of what cannot be considered technical, and understandably so.[17] It is precisely this banality, however, that poses a methodological problem. Hippocratic medicine, and especially dietetics, *is* for the large part extremely banal, a fact which of course is reflected in the language used in these treatises. Doctors prescribed gruel and wine and walking much more frequently than hellebore and surgery. Even for medical descriptions, Hippocratics did not use technical terms, but common words that took on additional denotations to fulfil the task. To borrow Geoffrey Lloyd's useful examples, πυρετός means fever, but also fiery heat, as in the *Iliad* 22.31; πέψις had botanical and culinary associations before it denoted digestion in addition;[18] κάθαρσις too can indicate cleansing of any sort, but in a Hippocratic context, it refers to a therapeutic approach which has a sophisticated theoretical framework behind it. Thus, unlike medicine today, fifth-century medicine was not especially marked by its special terminology, but rather by its theories, and these theories have the greatest relevance for my study.[19]

Desiring to go beyond discussions of direct medical references, I not only accept the necessary risk of addressing non-technical words and imagery whose medical denotation is ambiguous, but see the great value in embracing them. In fact, as I demonstrate throughout

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[14] Willi (2003, 79-87). For a critical response to his conclusions, see Soleil (2010) and Byl (2006).

[15] Zimmermann (1992, 516).

[16] Willi (2003, 80).

[17] Byl (2006, 196); Willi (2003, 61).

[18] Lloyd (1987, 203-7). Following Lloyd I put "metaphorical" in scarequotes here as it is difficult to draw the line between metaphor and simply an additional denotation of a word.

[19] Soleil (2010, 31-48) makes a case for qualifying Willi's (2003, 79-87) findings, arguing that we cannot dismiss the motif of disease his Aristophanes' plays. Nonetheless, she concludes that Aristophanes employs medical themes (particularly ὀφθαλμίη and ὀφθαλμιάω) for his own comic purposes, advising against looking to Hippocratic medicine to understand the playwright's usage of them.

this thesis, Aristophanes himself certainly does so as well. Images are rarely purely medical in his comedies, but rather are mixed with obscene, culinary, rhetorical, philosophical, literary-critical, and political meanings.[20] Thus, in order to avoid linguistic strictures, I focus both on language and ideas concerning bodily functions, disease, and the practice of medicine. This material, I argue, often overlaps with Hippocratic concepts in ways that are interesting for interpreting the plays themselves.

Furthermore, Aristophanic parallels with isolated medical concepts ultimately constitute the smaller part of my dissertation. My thesis mainly explores how Aristophanes' plays reflect and incorporate the social and ethical implications of this nascent medicine. Hippocratics shaped not only how society understood the body and its diseases themselves, but also how they understood the social aspects of disease, in particular the roles of the patient and doctor in combating illness. With new theories of physiology and pathology came new ideas about how a person relates to their body and what they can and should do to maintain their health. To shed light on this area, I examine the dramatic purpose of healer figures and the representation of the medical art itself in Chapters 2 (especially 2.1 and 2.4) and 3.

Related to the issue of technical terminology and medical theories is the question of Aristophanes' audience and their level of education: what would they have known about these intellectual discourses? Would they even have understood the presumably erudite references that I examine? To address this objection on a practical level, I contend that the playwright's audience was more familiar with Hippocratic medicine than we might assume. Gaining credibility as a doctor required public confidence, not official qualifications; some fifth-century medical texts were clearly intended for public performances which ordinary people could attend.[21] The common-sense argument can also be made that medical knowledge, much like disease itself, spreads throughout a population more indiscriminately than other intellectual disciplines.[22] Disease, whether chronic or acute, is a reality that affects everyone directly and immediately. Doctors were potentially men of learning, but were also practitioners with whom people from all walks of life interacted and perhaps even saw at work. The author of *On Joints* even disdainfully describes how some doctors use foolhardy

[20] For e.g. ambiguous sexual-medical imagery, see Zimmermann (1992, 516-7).

[21] Jouanna (1999, 80-2; 438 n. 19) divides Hippocratic writings into what he calls "courses and discourses." The works he considered intended for the general public (the latter category) are *VM, Nat. Hom., Art., and Flat*. For arguments on specific texts see Schiefsky (2005); Laskaris (2002); Demont (1993); Jouanna (1984).

[22] Kosak (2004, 14 n. 28) makes a similar common-sense plea in her study of medicine in Euripides.

medical procedures just to awe their audiences.[23]

In any case, the playwright certainly could not have reckoned with universal comprehension of all of his allusions, scientific or otherwise. Yet such words and passages were effective on different levels. To take an example concerning natural philosophy in the *Clouds*: Aristophanes appears to draw his material largely from Diogenes of Apollonia.[24] Audience members unaware of the specifics would likely hear comical, scientific-sounding mumbo jumbo, while the more knowledgeable would identify a parody of his specific tenets. Essentially everyone present would appreciate the basic import and humor, but they might differ in what they think constitutes the actual joke.[25] Moreover, there is sufficient textual evidence to suggest that the playwright himself was well-versed in the medicine of his day, regardless of whether including such ideas in his comedies was a conscious artistic decision on his part. With this in mind, we might ask if it is actually critical to know exactly what the audience knew. Incidentally, however, this dissertation shows that many Athenians probably did have a relatively developed awareness of Hippocratic medicine, if not as a science, then at least as a facet of everyday life.

Background in secondary literature

Academic interest in Aristophanes' corporeal imagery grew substantially after the publication of Jeffrey Henderson's *Maculate Muse* in 1975; his book argues for the relevance and social significance of Aristophanic obscenity, which had for centuries been considered more or less expendable and thematically discrete in the comedies.[26] Scholars have since then fleshed out his approach with the concept of the "grotesque body" which the Russian structuralist Mikhail Bakhtin originally applied to François Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* and to medieval carnival in general. It is by far the most influential, and perhaps the only systematic, approach to understanding the body's meaning in Old Comedy and it has

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[23] Hipp. *Artic*. 42; 78. Zimmermann (1992, 522) also believes it is a fair assumption that Aristophanes' medical terminology was comprehensible to his audience.

[24] See Vander Waerdt (1994); Gelzer (1956).

[25] When discussing the sophistication of Aristophanes' audience vis-à-vis drama, Revermann (2006b, 106) argues that "theatre is both complex and accessible, difficult and easy at the same time," what he calls the "paradox of theatrical conversation." I suggest that the same could be applied to the audience's familiarity with contemporary intellectual discourses.

[26] An aim which a glance at the table of context makes clear; a chapter is entitled "The *Dramatic Function* of Obscenity in the Plays of Aristophanes" (italics mine) Henderson (1991). See Henderson's (1991) introduction, xiii-xiv., esp. note 4 for early twentieth-century theories that obscenities in Aristophanes were fossils of ritual, of which we as modern readers must be understanding, most notably Murray (1933, 7-11).

gained widespread (albeit not universal) acceptance in Aristophanic scholarship.[27] With its characteristic focus on the most basic physiological functions, Bakhtin's "grotesque body" serves simultaneously as an image of death, fertility, and the immortality of the collective through renewal.[28] Thus, it is socially symbolic—both instrumental in, and representive of, major parts of human experience. The primary occasion for this portrayal of the body is the "popular-festive carnival atmosphere,"[29] in which, according to Peter von Möllendorff, Aristophanes and Rabelais' works operate.

As von Möllendorff proposes in his monograph, Aristophanic representations of the body can be boiled down to a more or less uniform "Ästhetik der Alten Komödie."[30] Nonetheless, I argue that the obscene body is not the only type of body Aristophanes presents in his works. In the comedies, there is also what one might call a "medical body," the body as seen from an anatomical or pathological viewpoint. While the two models overlap considerably in his works, we fundamentally cannot understand the medical, clinicized body in terms of the Bakhtinian grotesque. The grotesque body is timeless and universal. The body as understood by healers from a particular place and time period is anything but. This insistence on universality, therefore, makes the Bakhtinian approach inappropriate for a study of medicine in the comedies. Especially in the last few decades, scholars (both of classics and ancient medicine) have made much headway in destabilizing certain ideas about the body that were once deemed universal. While some scholars argue that there are common concepts that span across time and space,[31] we cannot fully explain away or escape the reality that the body is imagined quite differently according to its historical context. Two areas that seem particularly culture-bound are how internal bodily events are conceptualized and how the social significance of the body and diseases is perceived.

Although it is abundantly apparent that contemporary medical ideas shape Aristophanes' creative portrayal of the body and its pathologies, until now scholars have found it most expedient to consider the plays' obscene and medical descriptions separately, explaining scatological and sexual imagery in terms of the grotesque and medical imagery as

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27 Platter (2006); Robson (2006, 71; 80-82); von Möllendorff (1995); Edwards (1993); Suarez (1987); Carrière (1979). Henderson (1990, 286), however, resists it, citing essentially the same reason as Bakhtin: ancient Greek dramatic performances were a state institution, not a mode of resistance and escape from the status quo in the way that medieval carnival was.

28 Bakhtin (1995, 74-9).

29 Ibid. (1984, 303-364).

30 Von Möllendorff (1995).

31 Among their front ranks are cognitive scientists, who are positive about their discipline's potential for explaining how all humans understand the world around them, including biology and healing. Thagard (1999, 21-4), for instance, describes how the emergence of Hippocratic humoral theory fits into a wider explanatory schema that can be applied to medical discoveries in subsequent eras.

satire of current intellectual trends.[32] One of my fundamental aims in this dissertation is to demonstrate that it is fruitful to break down the boundary between these two approaches and consider the socio-historical contextualization of the body in these comedies. My conclusions ultimately nod to Bakhtin's view that corporeal imagery often has powerful social implications. My treatment of the material differs from his approach, however, in that I seek to give an account both of the images' medical-historical background and of their literary significance. I argue that these bodily and medical themes, colored by contemporary science, often work together with larger social, political, and metaliterary topics in the comedies.

In *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin also briefly mentions a subset of the grotesque: the "medical grotesque." Bakhtin reasonably believes that, as a medical doctor and devotee of Hippocrates, Rabelais brought Hippocratic ideas and images of the body into his work. Bakhtin views the Hippocratic body as essentially and intrinsically grotesque, noting how Hippocratic writers link the human body to its environment and cosmic events in texts such as *On Winds* and *Airs, Waters, and Places*.[33] As evidence he points to the emphasis Hippocratic doctors place on bodily excretions and, less understandably, he sees Hippocratic descriptions of dying patients as grotesque because their focus on the body's vital materials and processes commingle elements of life and death.[34] The presence of the Hippocratic "grotesque" body in Rabelais serves Bakhtin's thesis that there was a shift from medieval, Aristotelean medicine to Renaissance medicine, the latter of which he argues was more characterized by Hippocratic ideas.[35]

In this way, one could potentially place a Bakhtinian flag in absolutely any image of the body in Aristophanes: his purely obscene material can be "grotesque" and his presentations of Hippocratic ideas can be the "medical grotesque." Because of the importance of the Hippocratic corpus for my study, I must address this issue in order to justify the limited role this Bakhtinian idea plays in my analysis. I would like to go about it in two ways: first, without going too far afield from the purview of this introduction, I briefly speak about

[32] Following Henderson (1991, 35), Robson (2006, 73) writes "Medical terms for sexual and scatological phenomena existed alongside, but distinct from, primary obscenities. These terms are also non-euphemistic, just as primary obscenities are, but unlike primary obscenities are used in respectable contexts such as medical treatises." While I agree with this lexical assessment, I am interested in exploring how Aristophanic comedy also blurs the distinction between the medical and obscene.

[33] Bakhtin (1984, 355-6).

[34] Ibid. (357-8; 358-9).

[35] Crucially, the Hippocratic body, Bakhtin writes, is understood in terms of its environment and the cosmos (what he calls the "horizontal plane"), as opposed to the hierarchal conceptualization found in Aristotle, in which all elements had a specific vertical location, terminating in celestial quintessence at the top of the rung. Earthly bodies were fundamentally different than, and inferior to, celestial bodies. Ibid. (362-4). For an argument against this claim see Yamada (1997, esp. 229-31).

Bakhtin's understanding and application of Hippocrates; secondly, and more central to my project itself, I discuss the relevance of this kind of analysis for fifth- and fourth-century Athens.

Firstly, I object to the characterization of the Hippocratic corpus as emblematic of the "bodily grotesque." The Hippocratic corpus itself does not present a "grotesque body" in the way that Rabelais does in his *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, or Aristophanes in own his plays. As Yamada (albeit with different aims in mind), soberly asserts:[36]

> "it is very difficult to imagine that those who engage in medical science should regard any part of the body or any bodily function enumerated by Bakhtin (save "dismemberment" and "swallowing up by another body") as "grotesque." They know too well that those are something to be observed as inherent in human physical nature—not as ugly or beautiful, abominable or agreeable but as purely physiological phenomena which have to be diagnosed as correctly as possible."

Rabelais incorporates various elements of Hippocratic medicine in his works and presents them as grotesque,[37] but the original ideas in no way participate in this carnival mode. The material becomes grotesque through its implementation in a certain context; it is not so by its very nature. Moreover, Hippocratic texts in general are remarkable for their appeal to logical argumentation, lack of appeal to divine or magical causation, and attempts at objective, descriptive presentations of the body. The occasion for carnival, and therefore bodily grotesque, is completely lacking. For these reasons, I argue against the notion of a "medical grotesque" in Hippocratic medicine as it might apply to my project. In light of some compelling similarities, I instead propose that incidental points of overlap exist between both portrayals of the body; an author can recognize, highlight and creatively mobilize either for his literary ends. Thus, while the model of the grotesque is a very useful theory for understanding the body in Aristophanes, with respect to the scope of its explanatory power and the content to which it is applicable, it has certain boundaries that I would like to venture beyond.

Secondly, my project involves more than the depiction of bodies *per se*; it also addresses how Hippocratic texts shape how ancient Greeks understood bodily processes, interpreted symptoms, attributed responsibility for health, and blame for ill-health.[38] My approach, therefore, in many ways has more in common with scholarship that addresses Hippocratic material in other literature from fifth-century Athens. A study of medicine in Aristophanes has a natural precedent in, and debt to, explorations of this kind in tragedy and

[36] Yamada (1997, 229).
[37] Bakhtin (1984, 179-80). E.g. the physician's preoccupation with urine and feces.
[38] Issues which Holmes discusses in her book *Symptom and the Subject*.

elsewhere. The most recent and thorough analyses pertain to Euripides, e.g. in Jennifer Clarke Kosak's *Heroic Measures: Hippocratic Medicine in the Making of Euripidean Tragedy* (2004), and the chapter "Euripides' Symptoms" in Brook Holmes' *Symptom and the Subject: the Emergence of the Physical Body in Ancient Greece* (2010).[39] These scholars explore the different ways in which Euripides thematizes disease and medicine in his works. A number of studies treat similar themes in Sophocles' dramas as well.[40] We may also consider of interest the attention that Thucydides has received for his use of medical ideas and the concept of an ἀνθρωπεία φύσις, not just for his description of the Athenian plague, but also for his *History* in general. Thus we find Hippocratic theories and their social implications both in the works of Aristophanes' contemporaries.

My dissertation has two conceptual foci. The first, primarily addressed in the first chapter, examines medical theories and practices in the comedies and gives an account of their literary purpose. I discuss how and why certain models of the body found in medicine also appear in these comedies (Chapter 1.1 and 1.2). In addition, I explore how Hippocratic concepts of the body take on symbolic relevance in the plays as a whole (Chapter 1.3 and 1.4). My second focus is an analysis of how the social and ethical aspects of Hippocratic medicine, which Holmes describes in her *Symptom and the Subject*, play a role in the Aristophanic corpus. This question I address in Chapters 2 and 3.

In her book, Holmes proposes a shift in ethical responsibility that emerged in fifth-century Greece along with the new, Hippocratic concept of the body. The *soma* of Classical Greece, she asserts, exists vis-à-vis the self as an ethical subject. In other words, historically, the notion of *having* a body is intimately connected with the *care of* the body. She argues that fifth-century medicine was one of the major driving factors in this change. Previously, divine agents were regularly cited as the cause of disease. Mysterious, internal diseases in particular were often figured as divine retribution for a human transgression. At the beginning of the *Iliad*, we find the *locus classicus* for this model: Apollo sends a plague to punish the Achaeans for the theft of his priest's daughter. While this idea of divine vengeance certainly persisted into the Classical period and beyond, the new model made headway, as we see reflected in drama and (especially Platonic) philosophy.

By the late fifth century, disease could also be explained as the result of multiple factors and failures within the body which are spread out as micro-events. This concept both

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[39] Kosak (2004); Holmes (2010, 228-74). Also on Euripides, Holmes (2008), Ferrini (1978).

[40] Sophocles: Allan (2014); Mitchell-Boyask (2012); Worman (2012); Craik (2003); Kosak (1999); Ryzman (1992); Biggs (1966). Both Euripides and Sophocles: Kosak (2005). Tragedy in general: Jouanna (1987; 1988); Collinge (1962).

transfers and diffuses the responsibility (and blame) for the prevention of disease. Medical writing from this time claims that good health starts with one's proper adherence to a suitable regimen—with all the ethical implications that entails. The treatment of a disease that had already established itself, on the other hand, requires the expertise of the doctor to intervene at the correct time and make the right kind of intervention. The ethical subject now becomes both patient and doctor. Thus health is not elusive because of the inscrutability of divine will, but rather because of the complexity and fragility of the human body which patients and even doctors only imperfectly understand.

Fifth-century drama typically has a strong focus on divine agents who drive the plot, often by wreaking psychological and bodily suffering.[41] In Aristophanes, however, I argue that we find the first instance of engagement with these newer, Hippocratic concepts of disease in extant Classical Greek drama. I suggest that the *Clouds* (423 BCE) mobilizes the idea from natural philosophy and medicine that the body and its functions are subject to impersonal, natural forces (Chapter 1.3). The *Wasps* (422 BCE) too encourages us to view Philocleon's mania in light of the Hippocratic claim that multiple factors cause certain internal diseases (Chapter 2.2). These scientific ideas are not simply present in the two comedies, but I claim that they are linked to major dramatic themes: the power and limits of intellectualism and the causes of political strife and corruption, respectively.

Holmes' theories are also very useful for Aristophanes' two latest surviving plays, *Assemblywomen* and *Wealth*. I argue that they both lend political significance to the Hippocratic principle that one is personally responsible for maintaining their health (Chapters 2.3 and 2.4). In both of the plays, Neocleides' disease reflects his social and political shortcomings. In *Assemblywomen* the character Blepyrus desperately struggles in comic *aporia* with his knowledge and lack of knowledge about his constipation. Ideas about self-care, responsibility for disease, and medical authority come together in these scenes to form a picture that has substantial relevance for social and political subject matter. These ideas do not just emerge in passing, but also help us interpret some of the central questions of the play. In the context of the *Frogs* too, I make a case for the importance of this concept of accountability regarding bodily health. Here I suggest that it is paralleled with the playwright's accountability both to his audience's morality and to the aesthetics of his poetry (Chapter 3.2). Therefore, one of my dissertation's major claims is that the social and intellectual developments that Holmes identifies can be found at work in Aristophanes'

[41] Although there are notable exceptions, such as Euripides' *Orestes*.

comedies, and particularly in the three last surviving ones, by which time Hippocratic medicine had become comfortably established.

Overview of Dissertation

In Chapter 1 I discuss a variety of ways in which conceptualizations of the form and function of the human body from fifth-century science are relevant for our reading of Aristophanes. In particular, I consider how Aristophanes constructs and curates the invisible interior of the human body in ways that echo medical treatises. The first two sections follow two subjects throughout the Aristophanic corpus, while the second two sections focus on specific plays, the *Knights* and *Clouds*, and propose readings which take into account their engagement with certain trends in fifth-century medicine and natural philosophy.

Chapter 1.1 concerns Aristophanes' use of the imagery of the body as a man-made vessel; it primarily focuses on the scene in the *Acharnians* (425 BCE) in which the informer Nicarchus is described as a piece of pottery for sale. I also address, and draw from, other instances of this imagery in the Corpus for my analysis. This particular image serves as a productive case-study and starting point for my project in that it is an example of derisive bodily humor that is neither obscene nor gendered (two aspects of corporeal humor in Aristophanes which have received that most scholarly attention). For contextualization I examine descriptions of the human body as a vessel in contemporaneous medical texts, which are the only other source for this imagery at this time. In keeping with other scholarly analyses of this scene, I read this characterization as a means of ridiculing Nicarchus. Yet I also explore the significance of this imagery in greater detail, examining a common denominator between the medical and comical representations. This descriptive mechanism, I suggest, is similar to the mechanism of the medical gaze on the body even as its purpose and impact remain different: focus is placed on a depersonalized model of the body, the involuntariness of bodily functions, and the vulnerability they both entail.

Chapter 1.2 is an exploration of references to different seats of the intellect, primarily the *noos*, *phren(es)*, and the brain, throughout the corpus. It is clear that Aristophanes freely borrowed from different conceptualizations of cognition and its physical location and that these different ideas need not be reconciled. Nonetheless, through examining when and why the playwright employs a particular concept, I provide new insight into the passages in question. I give an account for the playwright's creative choice in having characters refer to certain models of the intellect, particularly in passages from the *Frogs*, *Clouds*, and one key

passage from the *Knights*.

Unlike in the previous two section, for my third section (1.3), I analyze evidence throughout a particular comedy and propose a reading. I direct my attention to the representation of Cleon's bodily interior in the *Knights* (424 BCE) and interpret its symbolic significance. Examining the multiple meanings and inherent ambiguities of the word *koilia* which are present in the play, I suggest that a parallel is forged between the act of consumption and physical (as well as political) mastery, a connection which is facilitated by contemporary Hippocratic accounts of the process of digestion. I discuss how the playwright uses the double meaning of the word *koilia* to imply both cannibalism and autophagia, thereby presenting the political power of the demagogue Cleon not only as invalid, but even as perverse and unnatural. I suggest, furthermore, that these images ultimately serve to offer the audience a look into Paphlagon's body that is otherwise only gained through the taboo practices of medical dissection or cannibalistic butchery. The play's use of imagery, and particularly of analogy, simulate an exposure of Cleon's insides and so his scurrilous conduct in turn. In these ways, the *Knights* incorporates current scientific ideas for describing bodily structures and processes whose symbolic significance Aristophanes has operate in tandem with the political plot of the play.

In Chapter 1.4 I explore how bodily and medical subject matter serves the plot and themes of the *Clouds* (423 BCE). I argue that Aristophanes highlights a concept found in many areas of scientific inquiry of the time: that natural forces and phenomena, especially winds, play a central role in the functions and dysfunctions of the body. The playwright first thematizes the body's susceptibility to external agents and influences, then orchestrates a crucial shift in the identity of these agents in the course of the comedy. Up until the agon, characters focus on how impersonal forces cause physical phenomena (wind, water, rarefaction, and structural features of the body), whereas thereafter the focus reverts to personal agents (Pheidippides and Hermes). Thus, while the *Clouds* offers a critical view of intellectualism and scientific discourse, this critique is more nuanced than a vilifying parody. I propose that this scientific notion of climatic influence is metaphorically mapped onto moral influence, the cross-section of which is primarily located in Strepsiades' body, manifesting itself through his bodily experiences. I conclude with the speculation that the play thereby insinuates that natural philosophy is, by nature, morally neutral, and only becomes dangerous in the wrong hands.

This chapter, therefore, explores the presence and purpose of Hippocratic accounts of anatomy and physiology in the comedies, that is, how particular Aristophanic plays reflect

and thematize ideas from fifth-century medicine about the body and its functions. In Chapter 2 I turn my attention to Hippocratic nosology, medical therapy and the figure of the doctor, focusing on these topics in the four comedies, *Acharnians*, *Wasps*, *Assemblywomen*, and *Wealth*. The following question, relevant to all of these plays in different ways, unites and underpins my analyses: what, or who, is responsible for disease and who is responsible for its treatment? I show how ideas from Hippocratic medicine about cause and responsibility take on political and social import in these comedies.

In Chapter 2.1 I return to the *Acharnians* to focus on references to the figure of the public physician, Pittalus, as well as passages concerning the treatment of bodily ailments and trauma. While this doctor is only twice mentioned in passing, I argue that he, as an elected "public servant," has an important symbolic function in the play. He highlights the potential that the Athenian government has for effecting practical measures for the universal benefit of the city. I propose that allusions to the city's state physician offer a counterpoint to Dicaeopolis' fantasy of a rural Athens, and that Aristophanes thereby suggests that the cure for what ails its war-weary citizens can be found within the city itself.

The *Wasps* and its comic hero, Philocleon, are the subjects of Chapter 2.2. Scholars have long noted the importance of the play's theme of nature (*phusis*), and I propose that *Wasps* thematizes its other, medical meaning as well: a person's physiological nature that predisposes them to particular ailments. In addition to this concept of constitutional "risk factors," I draw attention to certain medical accounts of the cause and progression of disease. Diverging from traditional accounts of sickness, Hippocratics often characterize internal disease as the result of a series of events involving multiple causes rather than simply one disease-bringing agent. While Philocleon's disease of jurymania is the major subject of the comedy, I also address descriptions of Philocleon's body which I argue are also relevant: his physiological nature (*phusis*) and his other, conventional afflictions such as chronic fevers and strangury. These aspects of Philocleon strongly inform our reading of the play's political critique. I argue in particular that the medical imagery helps qualify, and render ambiguous, Cleon's role as the play's villain.

In Chapter 2.3 I make a case for the importance of two sequential scenes in the *Assemblywomen*: Blepyrus' soliloquy about his constipation and Chremes' report of the assembly meeting at which Praxagora establishes her new government. I parallel Blepyrus' struggle to understand and cure his medical condition with his civic ability, and responsibility, to preserve the city. For my analysis, I draw on late fifth-century Hippocratic ideas about the patient's role in maintaining his own health and the facilitative role of the doctor to that end.

Immediately following this scene is the report about the purblind politician Neocleides who attempts to give a speech. I argue that, in this characterization too, we see another parallel drawn between the (diseased) body and the state, with personal responsibility and expertise likewise standing at the fore. I read both of these passages in light of the questions that *Assemblywomen* raises about political participation and political effectiveness of laymen, concluding that Aristophanes uses this medical imagery in part to allude to fundamental issues in, and anxieties about, Athenian democracy in the early fourth century.

The unstaged figure of Neocleides is again relevant for Chapter 2.4, in which I discuss the character of Asclepius in *Wealth*. In particular, I examine the description of a temple incubation at which Asclepius cures the god Wealth and harms Neocleides, who, for a second time, plays the role of political nuisance. Asclepius, I suggest, is portrayed as a mortal doctor, but without the ethical code of a mortal doctor. Because he is as a civic-minded god with the interests of Athens rather than individual patients at heart, he is free to harm as well as heal. Analyzing the parallels and differences between the god's treatment of the two suppliants, I propose that the healer-god serves a dual function in the comedy as a physician for both the body and the body politic.

Chapter 3 explores Aristophanes' use of medical imagery in relation to literature and more specifically to his own genre of comedy. I begin by analyzing his first explicit use of imagery that parallels medicine and literature in the *Wasps* (Chapter 3.1). In this drama's metapoetic passages, Aristophanes figures his persona as a doctor of the diseased body politic who heals through his comedies. I argue that the playwright thereby locates himself in the literary tradition of poets and singers who describe themselves as healers. This metaphorical connection is very often based on the role of song or incantation in healing and on the magical, palliative effects attributed to both arts. Yet, as I establish in the previous chapter, the *Wasps* pointedly thematizes rational approaches to medicine rather than these other, traditional types of therapy. Accordingly, instead of appealing to imagery from magical healing in his use of this imagery, Aristophanes seems to draw from contemporary medicine for his self-presentation in the drama as well. I argue that his artistic claims in the parabasis thematically resemble the rhetoric found in the epideictic and highly-wrought treatise *On Breaths.* In its proem the speaker asserts that the worth of a doctor lies, among other aspects, in his capacity for physically demanding and repulsive work; he defensively argues for the eminent respectability of the medical profession, somewhat ironically, on the basis of this very fact. I argue that Aristophanes too adopts this posturing and justification for his comic genre in *Wasps*.

This trope becomes much more fully developed several years later in his *Frogs*, which I discuss in Chapter 3.2, my final section. Here playwrights and their verses metaphorically become medical subjects prone to disease and injury. As in the *Assemblywomen*, the issue of responsibility for one's health is an essential theme in the play and likewise draws from emergent ideas in fifth-century medicine about the role of the physician and patient in preventing and curing disease. This imagery, however, serves not so much a political purpose, but a literary one, raising questions about the aesthetics of poetry and the duty of the poet *qua* citizen. In *Frogs* Hippocratic attitudes about the role of the patient and doctor in the maintenance of health are mapped onto the poet and their artistic products. Both poet and poetry thereby take on an ethical obligation to their audiences and, in turn, a liability to blame. This imagery of course functions not as a fixed model for evaluating good plays and playwrights, but rather constitutes a creative representation of literary critique that shows the ways in which Aristophanes engages with ideas and values from fifth- and fourth-century medicine for reflecting on his own art.

1. (Dramatic) Forms and Functions of the Body

1.1 Body as Vessel, Vessel as Body

On several occasions in his works, Aristophanes has his characters draw parallels between human bodies and man-made vessels. This kind of imagery is typical for his comedy in that it situates the body as a focal point of derisive humor, but in one respect it differs from the majority of such depictions:[42] it is not necessarily obscene. My survey of this comparison offers a glimpse into an Aristophanic representation of the body without the additional complexity that obscenity inevitably brings in tow, potentially obscuring any subtler connotations present.[43] I show what can be gleaned from taking into account other ideas that lurk behind the comic body, and in particular how fifth-century medicine can help us identify and understand them. Exactly what mechanism and function this image has is the subject of this section.

We find the most elaborate instance of this metaphor in the *Acharnians* where the informer Nicarchus is likened to a piece of pottery. This scene has not received much scholarly attention, perhaps because of the relative simplicity and immediate comprehensibility of the comic material. Hans-Joachim Newiger, for example, remarks that "umgangssprachliche Metaphern sind der Motor der Szene," and offers modern examples of the metaphor that have similar import.[44] For my study, however, the verbal mechanics that facilitate the scene are less important than their implications and effects. I argue that this metaphor ultimately reduces the human body to its most simplistic form and thereby removes the agency, and in turn social validity, of the victim of the joke. It is a consummate example of objectification, fulfilling Martha Nussbaum's seven proposed criteria.[45] Yet Nicarchus is neither a slave or sex object, as one might expect. How and why does Aristophanes then

[42] Derisive humor involving the body is often sexual or gender-related, as we see in Agathon' character in *Women at the Thesmophoria*, discussed e.g. by Stehle (2002); McClure (1999, 218-26). This type of mockery can also involve obscene bodily excretions; Aristophanes mocks other poets' alleged bodily dysfunctions, such as Cinesias' diarrhea (Wright 2012, 120-2). On obscenity in Aristophanes, see Rosen (2015); Robson (2006, 70-94); Willi (2002, 10-12); Henderson (1991); De Wit-Tak (1968). For sexual obscenity, Halliwell (2002); Komornicka (1981). For scatological obscenity, Edwards (1991).

[43] Other places where we find stylized obscenity in ancient Greece inform how we understand it in Aristophanes' works. Obscenity likely has some connection, for instance, to ritual abuse. Henderson (1991, 13-19). For the association between *iambos* and Old Comedy, see Rosen (2015; 2013; 1988) who argues for their generic, if not genetic, similarity. E. Bowie (2002, 33-50) is skeptical about their historical relationship, arguing that the similarities are largely coincidental.

[44] Newiger (2000, 126).

[45] Instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity. Nussbaum (1995, 257).

present this comparison?

I explore this question by examining a few examples from the abundance of parallels between pottery and the body in medical writing, and I suggest that the medical function and the comic function of this metaphor are in some ways similar despite the obvious discrepancy between their respective purposes and contexts. In both comedy and medicine, the comparison presents a schematic image of the body and stresses the involuntariness of the movement of fluids within. In the comic context, the image of the body as a vessel has the effects of exposing and degrading the subject, whereas in the medical context, it provides instructive, analytical insight. For both cases, however, the description de-emphasizes the personal agency of an individual and places the focus on the body's structure and automatic functions. Furthermore, I demonstrate how Aristophanes uses this comparison to integrate value judgments. The *Acharnians* plays with the ambiguity of a word which can be applied to both person and pot: χρηστός, which denotes both moral and practical worth. The comedy also often alludes to the intrinsic and unalterable nature of this quality, further invalidating the victim Nicarchus and his legal claims in turn. In the final few pages of this section, I address other Aristophanic passages in which bodies are described as receptacles, noting a parallel in the *Clouds* to the description of Nicarchus and discussing an example of the metaphor in reverse: a vessel compared to a living body.

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The *Acharnians* scene in question takes place after the comic hero Dicaeopolis has already established his separate peace and set up a free market. A variety of characters come to take part in it, including a merchant from Boeotia who has the exact contraband delicacies that Dicaeopolis craves. In exchange for Boeotian eels, Dicaeopolis offers him Phaletrum whitebait and pottery (*Ach*. 901-2). When the Boeotian rejects this trade because he has these two items back home, Dicaeopolis presents a specialty product found only in Athens: an informer. Yet he does not describe him as a person, but as a special type of pottery, thereby thematically returning to his original offer of Athenian ceramics. At first Dicaeopolis begins with a short simile, telling the Boeotian to export the informer "like a piece of pottery" (904-5). The Boeotian appears to delight in this idea and remarks that he would profit from this export. It would appear that the he is fully aware of the nature of informers in Athens:

Δι. ἐγᾦδα τοίνυν· συκοφάντην ἔξαγε,

	ὥσπερ κέραμον ἐνδησάμενος.
Βο.	νεὶ τὼ σιὼ
	λάβοιμι μέντἂν κέρδος ἀγαγὼν καὶ πολύ,
	ᾇπερ πίθακον ἀλιτρίας πολλᾶς πλέων.
Δι.	καὶ μὴν ὁδὶ Νίκαρχος ἔρχεται φανῶν.
Βο.	μικκός γα μᾶκος οὗτος.
Δι.	ἀλλ᾽ ἅπαν κακόν. (*Ach*. 904-9)

Di.	I know! Export an informer
	and pack it up just like pottery.
Bo.	Yes by the twin gods, I would make a profit
	by taking him—a great one, even. He's full
	of lots of devilry like a monkey.
Di.	here's Nicarchus coming now.
Bo.	its size is *small*!
Di.	but it's *all* bad!

The Boeotian immediately picks up on Dicaeopolis' pottery conceit for informers; his response even hints at the vessel comparison. According to him, informers are literally "full of lots of devilry," ἀλιτρίας πολλᾶς πλέων, as if it were an additional feature of the ware that it comes already filled with something of value. During this comic haggling, the extended metaphor becomes highly developed through Dicaeopolis' description of the informer's qualities. When an actual informer, Nicarchus, appears on stage, Dicaeopolis and the Boeotian direct their metaphorical speech at him. The Boeotian expresses skepticism over the small size of Nicarchus, but Dicaeopolis invokes the "quality over quantity" adage, assuring the potential buyer that, despite the informer's smallness, the goods are *fully* bad. Throughout this conceit, Aristophanes has the characters ironically present bad qualities as good qualities. Yet, importantly, the opposite of κακός here is not ἀγαθός, but rather, χρηστός: "good," also in the sense of "useful." This κακός–χρηστός opposition is one important aspect of this ceramic imagery.

After a brief interlude in which the informer accuses the Boeotian of bringing a wick as contraband, the two traders resume the pottery metaphor. For the second time, Dicaeopolis mentions packing up the informer, but this time, he refers to Nicarchus' breakability as the reason to do so (*Ach*. 928). The chorus leader echoes this issue in turn (929-31):

Δι.	ξυλλάμβαν᾽ αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα·
	δός μοι φορυτόν, ἵν᾽ αὐτὸν ἐνδήσας φέρω
	ὥσπερ κέραμον ἵνα μὴ καταγῇ φερόμενος.
Χο.	ἔνδησον ὦ βέλτιστε τῷ ξένῳ καλῶς τὴν ἐμπολὴν
	οὕτως ὅπως ἂν μὴ φέρων κατάξῃ.
Δι.	ἐμοὶ μελήσει ταῦτ᾽, ἐπεί τοι καὶ ψοφεῖ λάλον τι καὶ
	πυρορραγὲς κἄλλως θεοῖσιν ἐχθρόν.
Χο.	τί χρήσεταί ποτ᾽ αὐτῷ;
Δι.	πάγχρηστον ἄγγος ἔσται,
	κρατὴρ κακῶν, τριπτὴρ δικῶν,
	φαίνειν ὑπευθύνους λυχνοῦχος

καὶ κύλιξ καὶ πράγματ᾽ ἐγκυκᾶσθαι. (*Ach.* 926-39)

Di.	Close up his mouth: give me wood shavings, so that I can carry and pack him up like pottery so that he doesn't break in transit.
Ch.	Pack the goods up well for the foreigner, like this, my good man, so that it doesn't break.
Di.	I'm on it, since it's making some babbling, some cracked-in-the furnace, some altogether godforsaken noise.
Ch.	How on earth will this be useful for him?
Di.	it's a pot serviceable for everything, a crater of evils, a vat of lawsuits, a lamp stand for illuminating magistrates, and a *kylix* for mixing officiousness.

Dicaeopolis remarks that the pot makes a noise as if cracked (πυρορραγές), and he bookends this adjective with two value judgments more appropriate for human speech: it "babbles" (ψοφεῖ λάλον τι) and this sound is "hateful to the gods" (θεοῖσιν ἐχθρόν). Nicarchus' human qualities are thereby further conflated with his ceramic ones. The adjective λάλον, an internal accusative with ψοφεῖ, clearly refers to the informer's objectionable utterances.[46] The term πυρορραγές, on the other hand, is completely figurative—only ceramic could be cracked in the fire. Because this imperfection in the firing process would produce a particular sound, Dicaeopolis suggests that one can discern by listening whether or not it was damaged. Its intactness is an important issue for the sale. If the pot is not solid, it is not useful and good (χρηστός). Following up on this matter, the chorus voices their concern about the pot's utility. Dicaeopolis answers by advertising the vessel as "useful for everything," πάγχρηστον. Again, he ironically inverts the meaning of κακός and χρηστός, just as when he first tried to sell the informer-pot by insisting that it was bad "through and through." The chorus' imagery furthermore implies that informers and cracked crockery alike are defective by nature. The proof of their defectiveness is also the same: a distinctive sound. Thus the importance of structural integrity for "goodness" and "badness" features prominently in this scene.

The characters continue to discuss the pottery's bad qualities. Dicaeopolis addresses the chorus' apprehensive comment that someone could not trust/rely on (πεποιθοίη) a vessel (ἀγγείῳ) like that in their home. Aristophanes thus exploits two slightly different meanings of the word πείθω: "trust", as you would a person, and "rely on", as you would an object which you use. Dicaeopolis, however, pointedly removes the ambiguity and insists on Nicarchus' status as an object. He emphasizes the fact that Nicarchus is only a pot, thereby denying that his language is metaphorical at all. He urges the chorus not to be concerned, citing the fact that the pot is sturdy: ἰσχυρόν ἐστιν ὦγάθ᾽, ὥστ᾽/ οὐκ ἂν καταγείη ποτ᾽, εἴπερ ἐκ ποδῶν/

[46] Kidd (2014, 38-40) for Classical definitions of λάλος (loquacious in bad way).

κατωκάρα κρέμαιτο (*Ach*. 943-5). If they keep him like pottery, hanging him upside down by the feet, the informer would never break. Dicaeopolis does not address the issue of the trustworthiness of the informer, only the pot's reliability. Again, the playwright brings our attention to the parallels between vessel and human. He effects this parallel by having his characters mention the qualities of a pot and human that are, at least metaphorically, shared. In this scene, therefore, we consider the matter of physical, as well as moral, integrity. The chorus questions Nicarchus' integrity as a pot, his wholeness and imperviousness; because he sounds broken, he could leak or break apart entirely. His integrity as a person, in turn, becomes topical as well. His potential deceit, figured as leakiness, also threatens his credibility, and even viability, as a citizen.

Dicaeopolis then superfluously re-describes the vessel in four different ways, emphasizing its multipurposeness to the inquiring chorus. Nicarchus can be a mixing bowl of evils, a vat for lawsuits, a lamp stand, and a *kylix* (*Ach*. 937-9). Aristophanes endows these lines with many references and puns. The phrase a "mixing bowl of evils" (τοσόνδε κρατῆρ' ἐν δόμοις κακῶν ὅδε) alludes to Clytemnestra's metaphor in the *Oresteia* about the consequences of Agamemnon's actions.[47] According to her, the king brought this "crater of evils" onto the house. Here, of course, it is a person which this phrase describes. The intertextual moment highlights Nicarchus' status as an object: he himself is the crater of evils, having no agency of his own. Dicaeopolis then makes more direct references to political engagement: Nicarchus can be another container, a vat for pressing lawsuits instead of olive oil; he could be a "lamp stand for shedding light on magistrates" (*Ach*. 938). Nicarchus' propensity for informing thereby translates metaphorically into illumination. The last potential purpose for Nicarchus that Dicaeopolis mentions is also a common drinking vessel, a *kylix*. It is not for mixing *pharmaka*, as we might expect, but for mixing *pragmata*—a paraprosdokian that parallels dealing in politics and poison.[48] All of these metaphors refer to the political activities that Aristophanes famously lambasts, connecting Nicarchus' busybodiness with his vessel-like qualities. The image of the informer as a cracked pot conveys a similar message: just as a faulty pot produces a certain ring, a faulty person can be identified by what he says, in this case, the fact that he informs.

In these few lines, we also notice a strong focus on Nicarchus' passivity. He does not press out lawsuits or mix *pragmata* himself; he is merely a receptacle for doing so. He is a

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[47] Aesch. *Ag*. 1397. One is also reminded of two other mythical vessels of evil (πίθοι κακῶν): Pandora's (Hes. *Op*. 90-105) and Zeus' (Hom. *Il*. 24.527ff).

[48] The "disturbance" or "stirring up" of affairs (*pragmata*) is an important political image for Aristophanes, especially in the *Knights*. Newiger (2000, 27-9); Taillardat (1965, 410-2); Edmunds (1987, 5-20).

stand for the lamp, not the lamp itself, let alone the person who lights it. Certain grammatical structures that reinforce this idea dominate the lines: genitives of characteristic and infinitives of purpose. The pot imagery emphasizes the informer's emptiness and status as an instrument of others. The practice of engaging in lawsuits, informing, and political officiousness is thus linked to a lack of personal agency.

In addition to features, the characters also refer to the parts that a piece of pottery and a human have in common.[49] Human-Nicarchus and pot-Nicarchus both have a mouth and feet. In line 926 Dicaeopolis orders someone to close the informer's mouth, ostensibly for packing him up, but also to make him quiet; notably, the informer has no more lines in the scene. Rather than addressing Nicarchus at this point, our comic hero instructs others to close his mouth for him. Quite deliberately throughout the rest of the scene, in fact, Dicaeopolis does not speak to the informer, or even acknowledge his ability to control his own body. In comparing Nicarchus' feet to a vessel towards the end of the transaction, Dicaeopolis completes the verbal transformation of the informer that he has been developing: from mouth to feet this informer is a piece of pottery. The informer's costume and Dicaeopolis' and the chorus' pantomime would also be very useful for reading this scene. For instance, if the informer had an especially large false belly, it would have certainly added to his vessel-like appearance. Nevertheless, the text alone also elaborately illustrates the comparison and gives a good idea of what occurs onstage. We may assume, for instance that the actor playing Nicarchus is small in stature, which facilitates the pot comparison as well as the action of wrapping him up.[50]

So far we have observed how the characters stress pot-Nicarchus' emptiness, passivity, as well as its utility, or lack thereof. The informer is in this way no longer a person, but an empty receptacle from top to bottom which is to be bought, sold, transported, and used. In addition, Nicarchus' frangibility as a vessel is an issue which Dicaeopolis and the chorus mention multiple times. They draw attention to this issue in part because packing up Nicarchus onstage was a good opportunity for physical humor. The theme of his corporeal vulnerability, however, has further importance in this scene, suggesting weakness and susceptibility to outside influence. The image of the human body as ceramic not only has a dehumanizing and objectifying effect, but it also refers to the most fundamental perils of embodiment: the congenital flaws and external violence that threaten the integrity of a person

[49] Newiger (2000, 126).
[50] Stone (1977, 440) reasonably assumes that the chorus wraps him up on stage, flinging him around while singing their song.

and pot alike. It conjures notions of perviousness and heteronomy. As a vessel, the informer is vulnerable to the free-flow of liquids and the external agency which determines both his movement (hanging him upside down, exporting him as goods) and the movement of liquids within him (his role as a receptacle for preparing and serving various kinds of mischief). Through the verbal transformation of the informer into pottery, he is neutralized into an uncanny caricature of a human, an oversimplified model that serves primarily to highlight the weaknesses of the body.[51] In contrast to the multifaceted, visceral imagery of monstrous politicians, salivating sexual deviants, emaciated, self-soiling, and scabby poets, the human body *qua* man-made vessel is a sterile image. With this image in this scene, Aristophanes has presented a subtly different kind of social critique.

The audience is accustomed to obscene content in Aristophanes, whether sexual or simply bodily; it is an important, powerful means of mockery and debasement of a comic target.[52] Yet we see in this scene how the body can be verbally refigured and effectively dehumanized in another way entirely. Dicaeopolis' sale of the Megarian "piglets" relies heavily on sexual obscenity for mocking what the playwright portrays as Megarian desperation. The "ceramification" of Nicarchus, on the other hand, invokes a quite different method of objectification with different implications.

I continue by offering a short overview of imagery of the body as a vessel in other texts prior to, and contemporaneous with, Aristophanes' work in order to help develop a context for this metaphor for the human body. I do not imply that the playwright had direct, conscious awareness of any of the following passages *in particular*. Nor is the fact that the examples are from medical treatises of essential importance to my argument. These Hippocratic texts are simply an especially fruitful source for ancient discussions about the nature of the body. I introduce these examples to draw attention to the fact that this imagery had a solid foothold in the Greek imagination and to suggest that it brings in tow a certain perspective on, and implications about, the body. By exploring how the nature of man-made receptacles is understood in relation to a human being, I shed further light on the Nicarchus passage.

The idea of a human as a container, or series of containers, has both medical and non-medical origins. First, the lexical overlap between man-made vessels and bodies implies that

[51] This image, while in a sense grotesque, cannot readily be categorized under Bakhtinian carnival; there is a conspicuous lack of the fertility, sexuality and superabundance of bodily parts and substances. While grotesque bodies can be inanimate objects (Bakhtin 1984, 316), they must also have other carnivalesque qualities, which this particular example largely lacks. Thus Aristophanes does not only stage comically objectified bodies that reflect the aesthetics of, and serve the purpose of, the Bakhtinian carnival mode.

[52] Henderson (1991, 10-13).

Greeks were aware of their potential similarities. We mostly find this imagery in reverse, with the vessel as the tenor and the body as the vehicle of the metaphor. The ancient Greek language has lent many human features to containers, which have mouths, sometimes bellies, handles (called ears) and feet, depending on their shape and whether they are made to stand:[53] στόμα is the mouth of a vessel; a tripod lexically has "three feet;" there is a ritual drinking cup called a *mastos*, "breast." Some words to denote parts of containers are also derived from words for body parts. For example, γάστρα, from γαστήρ, denotes the lower part of a receptacle or the hull of a ship (another type of vessel which must be impervious in order to be sound).

While these metaphors are of course long dead, they attest to a basic parallel between the bodies of humans and man-made vessels that lingers in the back of the mind, ready to be revived. When Cratinus says to his wine flask "so your belly (τὴν γαστέρα) really is full of cobwebs" (202 K-A), he clearly not just refers to a part of the object; he also personifies the container through addressing it in the second person. Through its personification, the flask becomes an object of pity which in turn legitimizes Cratinus' comic mourning for it. Aristophanes too is an expert in resurrecting dead metaphors for comic effect. As we have seen, he utilizes at least two of these linguistic parallels. Dicaeopolis tells the Boeotian to shut the informer's mouth: ξυλλάμβαν' αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα (*Ach*. 926). He later mentions Nicarchus' feet, another pun on the shared parts of a pot and a human: εἴπερ ἐκ ποδῶν/ κατωκάρα κρέμαιτο (*Ach*. 942-5).

Imagery comparing human bodies as vessels in ancient Greek texts can nevertheless only take us so far before we find ourselves facing a frustrating chicken-and-egg conundrum. Questions about the definitions and limits of a metaphor arise and we run the risk of equating the idiosyncratic developments of language with real culture significance. No one would argue that the word "table" (τράπεζα, "four-foot") means that the Greeks conceptualized human bodies as furniture any more than one would argue for the same when considering the "legs" of English tables.[54] One can, however, still take into account evidence for how ancient Greeks themselves perceived, and mobilized for various purposes, the similarities between body and container. In this way, we can go beyond examining discrete words; we can observe

[53] Froehner (1876) discusses the verbal parallels between parts of vessels and human body parts, while Coccagna (2009) analyzes their meaning in a sympotic context. For examples of ancient vessels that imitate human or animal bodies or body parts, see Ducat (1966); Trumpf-Lyritzaki (1969); Amyx (1988).

[54] Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 54-5), however, identify table legs as an idiosyncratic metaphor rather than a part of a metaphorical system with multiple points of overlap between vehicle and tenor. One may argue that the body-as-vessel metaphor, by contrast, is more systematic in that there are several similarities between the two, as I have listed above.

overarching concepts in order to help form a better idea of what is reasonable to conclude about the function of this type of imagery in a given context.

The connection between containers and human bodies was indeed not purely lexical, but also conceptual. The ancient Greeks imagined the body as mostly hollow, as a collection of vessels through which liquids moved. From our earliest sources it is clear that the ancient Greeks saw the human body in this way and Hippocratic writers a few centuries later continue with, and extensively elaborate on, this fundamental idea. This conceptualization, moreover, has certain implications for how we understand the embodied experience of ancient Greeks in general, and this passage from the *Acharnians* in turn.

The author of the Hippocratic treatise *Diseases* IV is particularly keen on using explicit analogies between interior body parts and vessels. There are several instances in which he illustrates the mechanisms of liquids in bodily cavities by describing observable parallels with man-made containers, including bronze bowls, drinking cups (*kylixes)*, and jars (*angoi*). In one instance he gives a detailed description of how liquid behaves in the body: just as water distributes itself between three bronze bowls when pipes are connected between them, the body distributes moisture between its own cavities.[55] He also describes fevers caused by excessive bile with an analogy involving bronze bowls once again: if one were to put water and oil in a bronze bowl and place it under a fire, much of the water would evaporate, but only a little of the oil.[56]

When describing the nature of hemorrhaging due to physical trauma, he compares the *phlebes* to a *lekythos*.[57] He states that the blood cannot flow out due to its large quantity, just as oil that is bottlenecked in the narrow neck of a *lekythos*. With a similar principle he explains dropsy in the 'cavity,' which he compares to a large vessel (*angos*) that also has a relatively narrow neck.[58] According to him, these analogies explain how morbid excesses of moisture cannot exit the body. The author also describes bladder stones by offering a comparison to a wine cup or bronze vessel: "Just as when water that is not clean is stirred up in a *kylix* or bronze vessel and stands, there is sediment in the middle, so also in the bladder when the urine is not clean."[59] Again, the nature of liquids is the most important aspect of this medical problem; the bladder, as receptacle, simply defines the space in which the process takes place. In this treatise and elsewhere, Hippocratics also imagine the stomach as a kind of

[55] Hipp. *Morb*. IV 8 = L 39.
[56] Ibid. 18 = L 49.
[57] Ibid. 20 = L 51.
[58] Ibid. 26 = L 57.
[59] Ibid. 24 = L 55.

crockpot which digests food through cooking it. [60] This analogy is not always direct, but the cooking comparison certainly brings ceramic pots to mind. The authors indicate that heat is the central agent of digestion, not the pot itself.

The author of *On Ancient Medicine* also speaks about the different *schemata* of the body, describing their different natures, textures, and sometimes shape: the bladder, uterus, and even head are hollow and tapered like cupping instruments, always drawing in and filling themselves with liquid from without.[61] He thereby emphasizes a crucial element of similarity between these "vessel-like" *schemata.* By nature of their texture and structure, they provide a particular environment for liquids to exhibit certain behaviors, either to move in particular directions, remain static, or collect in places in the body. The authors of *On Ancient Medicine* and *On Diseases* IV, therefore, use these comparisons between man-made and bodily vessels to demonstrate how bodily functions and dysfunctions fundamentally depend on the nature of the liquid and its movement. These *schemata* are simply reservoirs that do not perform any function beyond holding, and possibly conveying, liquid. They are not the *organa* that Aristotle would later call them and thereby imply their instrumentality.[62]

Hippocratic writers of gynecological treatises also consistently describe the womb as a container.[63] In *On Generation*, the author depicts the growth of the fetus in the womb as a plant growing in a pot (*angos*).[64] The child's formation depends on the size and shape of the womb just as the growth of a plant depends on the shape of the pot in which it grows. Furthermore, as Helen King notes, it is not only the womb itself that is vessel-like; it also represents a woman in synecdoche.[65] This model for female anatomy has its own range of implications, in particular an anxiety about women's sexual incontinence which the integrity of the vessel (or lack thereof) represents.[66] When compared to receptacles, however, non-

[60] Ibid. 11 = L 42; *VM* 11. As I mention later in my discussion on *Knights*, the process of digestion can be figured in different ways among the Hippocratics: it is similar to cooking, ripening and/or fermenting. Two of these descriptions carry with them the implication that these processes occur within a receptacle for the preparation of food or drink. In these models of the digestive process, therefore, the stomach is also a kind of vessel.

[61] *VM* 12.

[62] Ioannidi (1983, 327-330); Byl (1971, 121-133).

[63] King (1998); Dean-Jones (1994); Hanson (1990).

[64] Hipp. *Genit.* 9.

[65] King (1998, 25-6) citing Campese (1983, 16). See also Reeder (1995) on the metaphor of the woman as a container and, in the same volume, Lissarrague (1995) on the symbolic importance of boxes for the feminine sphere.

[66] When men are described as a body part in synecdoche, they are a stomach, which is analogous to the womb with its greedy rapaciousness. King (1998, 25). See Worman (2008, 29-48) for a detailed discussion of literary figures characterized as bellies. Like digestion, Hippocratic authors explain the mechanism of fetal development as a cooking process. The fact that the stomach and womb are both conceived of as vessels is not surprising in light of the parallels they have elsewhere. Both contain and transform matter, and conceptually, they also have undesirable qualities in common: voracity and shamelessness. They seem, at

gendered and female bodies alike share the telling conceptual overlap of passivity and uncertain structural soundness. To be a vessel is to be vulnerable, and vulnerability invites calamity. This idea is exemplified in Hesiod's account of Pandora, who, like Nicarchus, is metaphorically represented as a container of evils.[67]

Ancient Greek medical writers not only describe similarities between body parts and vessels; they often use vessels as similes to illustrate the nature of the bodily interior as a whole, which in turn is relevant for the nature of disease. The author of *On the Sacred Disease* makes an implicit comparison between ceramics and the human body in his discussion of the south wind's nearly universal influence. He mentions in particular how the liquid in ceramic pots changes when the south wind blows: "Ceramics filled with wine or another liquid, underground or in the house, all react to the south wind and alter their form into another shape."[68] In *Diseases IV* as well, the body is compared to a wooden vessel (*koilia*) filled with liquid that meteorological changes can agitate, which in turn causes disease.[69] A passage from *On the Art* also implies that the internal interstices of the body make it susceptible to internal afflictions.[70] With these comparisons, the writers suggest that a human body and a vessel have features in common: both hold liquids, and, despite their ostensible self-containment, are subject to insalubrious alterations in climate. Furthermore, not only is the body's external environment a concern in medicine, but also what exits the body. It is not mere coincidence that both Nicarchus *qua* pot and very sick patients are said to chatter senselessly (λαλεῖν). Rambling talk, whether pathological or foolish, displays a fundamental lack of self-restraint, an inability to shut the mouth and control, as it were, one's "verbal diarrhea."[71]

Not only medical writers, but also worshippers of Asclepius on occasion see a parallel between the body and a container, although our first evidence of this comes from the fourth century. According to one narrative, the healer-god removes the head of a woman suffering from dropsy and hangs her upside-down, thereby in effect draining her of the disease.[72] Elsewhere Asclepius is thanked for the repair of a broken goblet; although the act first seems outside of his purview, we see a commonality between this favor and his usual medical

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best, to be a necessary evil of life.

67 Hes. *Op*. 90-105.

68 Hipp. *Sac.Morb.* 16.27-30.

69 Hipp. *Morb.* IV. 20 = L 51.

70 Hipp. *Art.* 10.

71 E.g. Hippocrates *Epid.* VII.11. For the medical usage, see Thumiger (2013, 75); Berretoni (1970, 95); for the overlap of the medical and comic usage, see Kidd (2014, 26-9).

72 *IG* IV^2 i.122.1-6.

miracles: the concepts of healing and repair are conflated.[73] In taking on characteristics of a vessel, the body becomes simple and its cure, comprehensible. These examples are in many ways dissimilar to Hippocratic writing, which instead uses vessel imagery to describe a type of bodily fluidics. Nonetheless, in both approaches to healing, this image presents a person as schematic, rather than organic, and especially susceptible to morbid fluids and fragmentation; it bespeaks an anxiety about the body's structural integrity.

With this background, we now return to the *Acharnians* passage, which is incidentally the first extant example in Classical literature of a man (rather than woman) metaphorically figured as a pot.[74] How are we to interpret this in the context of Aristophanes? One could explore the issue of gender and ask if he is feminizing Nicarchus' body, as he as does with other victims of his satire.[75] Yet applying this gender analysis to the Nicarchus scene requires us to make conclusions by analogy since there are no explicit references to issues of gender or sex. Because Aristophanes is so willing and able to add references to coitus (filling the jar) or sexual continence (properly sealing it),[76] this absence of sexuality seems almost conspicuous. He has Dicaeopolis dehumanize Nicarchus with this vessel comparison in a distinctly ungendered way. The full focus of our attention is on Nicarchus' mouth (the only orifice of a pot), rather than on any other openings. The chorus seals it in preparation for transit because it is, after all, the sole reason why he cannot be trusted.

I argue that this imagery speaks to a fundamental anxiety about the human, not just female, body. The vessel metaphor does not always relate to *sexual* perforicity, but to the helplessness and hollowness of all human bodies: their vulnerability to physical trauma on the battlefield, the loss of blood and other vital liquids.[77] As mentioned, the internal bodily structures themselves have no particular claim on being responsible for the *life* within the human body. In fact, according to medical writers, it was the movement itself of the liquid that signaled animation and vitality. The author of *On Regimen* even describes the soul of a person as the circuit of fire and water throughout the body;[78] how a body is constructed, therefore, has absolutely nothing to do with life, perception, or essentially anything that

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[73] *IG* IV^2 i.121.79-89. See Chapter 2.4 note 624.

[74] Other images of a gender-neutral, or male, body as a vessel come later. Lucretius *DNR* III.434-41; 551-57; 925-37, etc. Persius *Satires* 3.20-4. Both texts are discussed at Reckford (1998).

[75] E.g. Agathon in *Women at the Thesmophoria* (see e.g. Stehle (2002); McClure (1999)); but also, indirectly, Cleon in *Knights*. Worman (2008, 93-4).

[76] Eg. *V*. 583-5. Discussed in Henderson (1991, 142).

[77] Although the male body is normative, the female body represents almost in caricature the vulnerability and hollowness of human bodies in general. According to the Hippocratics, the male body is denser and has fewer hollows and orifices by nature, but it still can be affected by the weather, penetrated, overwhelmed by peccant materials. Hipp. *Mul*. I. 1; *Glan*. 16.

[78] Hipp. *Reg*. I. 35.

pertains to someone's personhood. In describing the body as a vessel, therefore, one emphasizes the body's emptiness and involuntariness. The image draws attention to the aspects of the body most subject to violation: mouth, empty spaces within, the desultory flow of liquids within the body which are beyond a person's direct control.

In this passage from the *Acharnians*, Dicaeopolis' description very literally objectifies Nicarchus in that he verbally transforms him into an actual object. This utterance in itself does a fair amount of footwork in humiliating and neutralizing the informer's power. Instances of verbal objectification can be found in many other scenes in Aristophanic comedy, all having more or less the same basic purpose.[79] Nevertheless, the fact that the object is a vessel, rather than some other inanimate object, adds more depth to this scene. Unlike Aristophanes' comparisons of humans to plants, for instance, the vessel metaphor implies an inherent, permanent subjection to any influx and influence. Even when compared to a plant, a person has some degree of self-determination, but as a man-made receptacle, he has absolutely none.

Furthermore, when we consider two Roman instances of this metaphor for comparison, we see that they echo the same kinds of concerns about bodily existence. Lucretius returns to this theme throughout *On the Nature of Things*, in which the image serves to underscore the body's physiological frailty.[80] Later, Persius' third *Satire* connects this frailty with morality in addition to mortality. Here a Stoic chides a friend who languishes in bed nursing a morbid hangover. Before elaborately comparing profligacy to disease, the enlightened companion describes his querulous interlocutor as a pot:

> You're leaking mindlessly, you'll be despised.
> No good response comes from the unbaked jar
> with its green clay: strike it, you hear the fault. (3.20-2, trans. Reckford)

As Kenneth Reckford points out, the image draws attention to the realities of corporeal fragility and death which are beyond human control; moreover, the "babbling" or "pouring out" of the jar (*efflius*) underscores a disconnect between the mindless (*amens*) student and his unstable, ungoverned body.[81] The student *cum* leaky pot literally and figuratively lacks integrity, a fact which, as in the case of Nicarchus, is betrayed by a sound (*sonat vitium*

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79 *Pl*. 942-3, in which a person is compared to a wild olive tree; *Av*. 1470-80, in which Cleonymus is likened to a tree; old people are compared to dried up vegetation (*Lys*. 385; *Pl*. 1053-4); the word σαπρά for old women in particular is common, as if they were rotten organic matter (*Lys*. 378; *Ecc*. 884; 926; 926; 1098; *Pl*. 1086).

80 Segal (1990, 27-8; 105-6). City walls, a similar image, also denote the body's susceptibility to death and disease throughout the poem.

81 Reckford (1998, 341).

percussa maligne). While scorning the weakness of the human body may be a matter for Stoics, the metaphor of the imperfect vessel clearly raises concerns about self-control and even agency. In Lucretius and Persius too, the pot imagery also seems to resonate naturally, if only coincidentally, with medical imagery.

As in Persius' *Satire*, the image of Nicarchus-as-pot raises the issue of physical and moral soundness, as we see in the various references to the κακός–χρηστός opposition throughout the comedy. Earlier in the play we hear Dicaeopolis describe χρηστός as a desirable quality in a citizen; he proudly calls himself a πολίτης χρηστός (*Ach*. 595), contrasting himself with greedy war-mongers. Thus this word, with its dual meaning, is an important political concept for the drama. The comedy implies that ceramic wares, just as humans, are χρηστός if they are solid and impervious, admitting nothing superfluous or bad in or out.[82] An informer does precisely the opposite. Nicarchus is therefore degraded with the same mechanism by which Aristophanes insinuates that Nicarchus degrades himself: by having no integrity, Nicarchus becomes a dysfunctional, cracked vessel. As a vessel, he becomes utterly devoid of everything but the most basic form of a human, and is consequently not human at all, just an instrument of external, corrupting forces.

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For comparison I examine a number of other instances in which characters are likened to containers in Aristophanes' works. These metaphors mostly function like the Nicarchus conceit, but vessel imagery is of course employed for reproductive and obscene imagery as well, and I argue that these sexual innuendos operate differently. In *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Mnesilochus tells a story about a woman who feigns pregnancy (*Th*. 502-515). An old woman acting as a co-conspirator brings in an earthen pot (χύτρα) a baby that the young woman can pretend is her own. Because of the symbolic connection between the womb and man-made vessels, the woman can make a clever pun: she says that she can feel the baby kicking the "belly" (ἦτρον), implying for a moment her own belly, but then adds the possessive genitive "of the pot." Aristophanes therefore also plays on the visible structural parallel between the belly of a human and the belly of a pot, yet he also hints strongly at the interior of the female body. The womb itself is conceptualized as a vessel, as we saw in mythological sources as well as medical treatises.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, reproductive imagery concerning women's bodies features

[82] The Homeric image of the "barrier of the teeth" (ἕρκος ὀδόντων) has a similar implication. (*Il*. 4.350; 9.409; 14.83; *Od*. 1.64; 3.230; 5.22, etc.)

much less frequently than sexual imagery in Aristophanic comedy. Nonetheless, these metaphors often have a vehicle in common. As Henderson observes, Aristophanes refers to the external, in addition to internal, parts of female anatomy as vessels.[83] In the *Knights*, the Sausage Seller accuses Paphlagon of licking the bowls (τὰς λοπάδας) and the islands clean, alluding to cunnilinctus (*Eq*. 1034).[84] The chorus of *Assemblywomen* also says that Smoios "licks the bowls (τρύβλια) of women" (*Ecc*. 847). Characters of Aristophanic comedy also use puns which compare hearths and ovens to female anatomy.[85] Both the sexual and the reproductive applications of the metaphor figure the woman as a receptacle that is subject to male ingress. The implied women of the metaphor, however, are not the subject of the insult. The men are described as deviants because of their interaction with the "bowls." The sexual practice is aligned with an immoderate appetite for food: the men are like dogs.[86] In these cases, therefore, the vessels' association with food and appetites is the crucial aspect of the metaphor rather than their form or mechanism, as was the case for Nicarchus and, as I now discuss, Pasias.

In the *Clouds* Strepsiades' uses the metaphor twice. First he yells at the audience, insulting their lack of action by calling them "piled up amphorae" among other animals and objects (*Nu*. 1203). Later, at the end of the drama, he gleefully puts his newly learned cleverness to use in worming his way out of debt. A confrontation begins when the creditor Pasias summons Strepsiades to court for not paying his debt for the purchase of a horse. The old man proceeds to banter with him, discrediting him for his general ignorance on "learned" matters, such as the nonexistence of traditional gods and the proper grammatical gender of a word. In the middle of this discourse, Strepsiades comments that Pasias would benefit from being rubbed with salt (ἁλσὶν διασμηχθεὶς ὄναιτ᾽ ἂν οὑτοσί, 1237) and that he could hold up to six *choai* (ἓξ χοᾶς χωρήσεται, 1238). Strepsiades perhaps points to Pasias' belly here, which additional padding in the costume has probably made especially conspicuous. Strepsiades makes fun of Pasias by likening his stomach to a wineflask—his skin need only be treated in salt to become a leathern container for wine. Here even the amount of liquid is indicated, adding a further, hyperbolic detail to the image: six *choai* (nearly 20 liters!). The occasion and purpose of the insult resembles the scene in the *Acharnians*. The vessel

[83] Henderson (1991, 143-4).
[84] A related insult is later made about Ariphrades (*Eq*. 1284-7). The vulva is called "coals," recalling other oven metaphors. Henderson (1991, 143).
[85] DuBois (1988, 110-29).
[86] A reading which would harmonize with Davidson's (1997, 250-60, esp. 254-5) account of sexual deviancy in ancient Greece. He rejects Dover's (1989) theory that penetration is the primary concern, arguing that immoderate consumption often lies at the heart of such an accusation.

comparison dehumanizes Pasias, strips him of agency, and reduces him to a container of liquid which is neither his nor under his control. He pours out wine instead of words. With Pasias lacking autonomy and agency in this way, Strepsiades can metaphorically void his legal claim.

In the *Assemblywomen*, the character Blepyrus uses this body-as-pot imagery as well, yet here it is not an insult against others, but rather expresses anxiety about his own social situation. While suffering from constipation he calls on the goddess of childbirth to help:

> ὦ πότνι' Ἰλείθυα μή με περιίδης
> διαρραγέντα μηδὲ βεβαλανωμένον,
> ἵνα μὴ γένωμαι σκωραμὶς κωμῳδική. (*Ecc*. 369-71)
>
> O lady Eileithyia, don't watch me
> As I burst and stay bolted,
> Don't let me become a comic chamber pot!

He (rightly) fears that he will become a "comic chamber pot." It is a strange expression, but one which can be better understood in the context of this analysis. Through the imagery, his whole person is reduced to the status of a receptacle, and thereby is dehumanized and ridiculous.[87] The metaphor draws attention to a basic function that Blepyrus and a chamber pot at the moment share: they contain feces. He serves quite literally as an *object* of ridicule in that a chamber pot has an intrinsic comic value: no cleverness or even acting is required.[88] In this way, the metaphor recalls passages in which Aristophanes' poetic persona tries to distance itself from jokes based on inherently comic objects, like costume phalluses.[89] Blepyrus' objectification through "ceramification" operates on two levels, one diegetic and one metatheatrical. In the story itself, Blepyrus fears losing face in front of his neighbors, while in the context of the comedy as performance and as a self-aware Aristophanic character, he does not want to be equivalent to a voiceless prop that is funny for no other reason than its mere presence onstage. The vessel imagery, therefore, has implications for Blepyrus' role as a person and social agent.

In the *Wasps*, Philocleon also makes this comparison in the two Sybarite tales that he tells a man accusing him of battery (*hubris*). In the old man's first tale, a man falls off his chariot and fractures his head: ἀνὴρ Συβαρίτης ἐξέπεσεν ἐξ ἅρματος,/ καί πως <u>κατεάγη</u> τῆς κεφαλῆς μέγα σφόδρα (*V*. 1427-8). When Philocleon's frustrated interlocutor objects, he continues with another story about a Sybartic woman who breaks a vessel: ἄκουε, μὴ φεῦγ'.

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[87] Edwards (1991, 164-5) discusses Aristophanes association of comedy with scatology.
[88] Taillardat (1965, 71 n. 1).
[89] *Nu*. 658.

ἐν Συβάρει γυνή ποτε/ κατέαξ᾽ ἐχῖνον. (*V.* 1435-6). The juxtaposition of both stories and the repetition of the verb κατάγνυμι forges a parallel between the head and the bowl (ἐχῖνος), both of which are subject to the same kind of trauma.[90] Further connecting the body-vessel comparison in this pair of stories is the personification of ἐχῖνος: the bowl is imagined as a person who would call witnesses against the woman that smashed him.[91]

The meaning and purpose of the stories are not entirely clear, especially as Philocleon creatively adapts the genre of the Sybaritic tale to his own ends, making leaps of logic to bridge different levels of discourse.[92] Both tales, however, are an attempt to dissuade the accuser from taking legal action. They also are both conceptually linked through their shared theme of correcting a trauma. Philocleon describes the act of reparation in terms of healing, and in turn describes healing in terms of reparation: he insinuates that no legal reparation is necessary, only medical care. In the first case, he advises the man to go to the public doctor Pittalus.[93] The comparison of a head to a bowl, moreover, as in the case of the *Acharnians*, trivializes the severity of bodily injury and the body itself in turn. A broken bowl, like a head, can be repaired with a bandage, ἐπίδεσμον (*V.* 1440).[94] There is consequently no need to call witnesses:

> οὑχῖνος οὖν ἔχων τιν᾽ ἐπεμαρτύρατο·
> εἶθ᾽ ἡ Συβαρῖτις εἶπεν, "εἰ ναὶ τὰν κόραν
> τὴν μαρτυρίαν ταύτην ἐάσας ἐν τάχει
> ἐπίδεσμον ἐπρίω, νοῦν ἂν εἶχες πλείονα." (*V.* 1437-40)
>
> And so the bowl called on someone as a witness:
> Then the Sybarite woman said, "by Persephone, if you quit this
> Witness-calling and bought yourself a bandage at once, you'd have more sense."

To understand the extent of Philocleon's trivialization of the situation, we must first consider the crime of which Philocleon is accused: *hubris*.[95] The law against hubris reflects the concerns of the archaic Athens in which Solon first introduced it; its fundamental purpose was to curb capricious aristocratic violence and thus promote solidarity between citizens from different classes.[96] As this scene suggests, causing another citizen bodily harm, especially while drunk and in a comastic context, could warrant such an allegation. The potential

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90 Southard (1970, 195-7) also remarks that κατάγνυμι is the standard term for fractures in the HC.
91 Schirru (2009, 161-2).
92 Schirru (2009, 160); Kloss (2001, 112).
93 For more discussion on Pittalus and the office of public physician, see Chapter 2.1.
94 H. Miller (1945, 78). A term unsurprisingly found throughout the Hippocratic treatises *On Fractures* and *On Joints* (*Fract*. 4.16, 5.6, 21.10-1, 25.33; *Artic*. 14.8, 30.2-3, 62.35, 80.15).
95 Quoted in Demosthenes XXI.47.
96 Murray (1990, 144); In Aristophanes' time, however, the law's value seemed to have been largely rhetorical. Fisher (1990, 123-38).

seriousness of this charge, moreover, stems from the political and social importance of the body. The speaker of Isocrates' *Against Lochites* describes it in a way particularly illustrative for our analysis of this scene in the comedy: he argues that the punishment for stealing money should not be equal to injuring a man's body because all men consider their body to be the most personal (οἰκειότατον).[97] While this comment serves a rhetorical purpose and does not necessarily reflect common sentiment, the contrast between a personal possession and one's body helps us understand the thrust of Philocleon's bogus argument. Through conflating healing and legal reparations, Philocleon suggests that, through medical treatment, his accuser can heal his personal, as well as bodily, injury.

The comparison of the body to the bowl thus has two main ways of rebuffing the old man's victim: first, it underplays the seriousness of the corporeal damage: a simple bandage, according to Philocleon, can make both body and pot good as new. Secondly, it effectively metaphorically voids the possibility of a charge of *hubris*, because broken pottery is not an assault against a person, but rather, their property.[98] The vessel imagery thereby symbolically deprives the body of its personal and political relevance in the eyes of Athenian law. Just as in the Nicarchus and Pasias scenes, this image of the body as a piece of pottery in *Wasps* serves to undermine one's personhood and political rights in turn. In both *Acharnians* and *Wasps* the pottery comparison invalidates the victims' call for witnesses; after all, only a human can suffer injustice (*Ach*. 926; *V*. 1436-7). In this way Dicaeopolis neutralizes someone whose political engagement he contemns while Strepsiades and Philocleon for their part can evade the law.

In a reversal of this type of metaphor in *Wasps*, the vessel and body exchange their roles as vehicle and tenor. When Philocleon describes a fantasy of his life when he is rich, a donkey serves as a replacement for a vessel from which to drink wine (*V.* 617-19). This appellation "donkey" denotes a type of drinking cup with large donkey-like ears.[99] The ambiguity of word, therefore, effects an imaginative transition from vessel to living animal. Suddenly the donkey-shaped cup comes to life, braying and breaking wind. The passage captures well the intended effects of some fanciful, sympotic drinking cups, whose designs created illusions of life, movement, and transformation through the process of draining the

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97 Isoc. XX. 1.

98 MacDowell (1978, 129-32; 149-53).

99 MacDowell (1971, ad loc.) and Sommerstein (1983a, ad loc.) for the theory that it is a vessel with ears that resemble a donkey's. I suggest that it also might be a reference to a rhyton in the shape of a donkey's head, a popular design around this time. Hoffmann (1962, 3; 56). Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.), by contrast, conclude that Philocleon must mean a donkey-*load* of wine.

vessel or lifting it to drink.[100] The reversal of the tenor and vehicle for the metaphor, unsurprisingly, has a dramatically different impact than the comparison of humans to ceramics. By endowing a lifeless object with life, Philocleon presents a fantasy world which is superabundantly animated, suitable to the fantastical atmosphere of a festival or symposium (which he would later attend, with disastrous consequences).

Pottery thus has a range of potential designata in Aristophanes' plays and assumes different connotations when applied to different subjects. While the sexual and reproductive connotations of crockery are presumably more familiar to the audience (and also paid better attention to in scholarship), the playwright uses it as well for comparisons between humans and pot that highlight some of the most basic aspects of, and anxieties about, the human body. This parallel raises issues about bodily "ownership," integrity, and susceptibility to external influence, all of which make this metaphor a particularly potent weapon to strip away the validity of an opponent as a citizen or even person.

While these different instances of pottery-body imagery do not have monolithic import for the Aristophanic corpus, they show the ways in which the playwright reactivates and mobilizes this (largely) dead metaphor. It has a certain initial shock value that can be exploited for comic purposes, but these metaphorical transformations of organic and/or living things into inanimate wares often have more significance, as a look at parallels in medical treatises helps reveal. Albeit for different purposes, Aristophanes and medical writers alike are interested in presenting people as physical objects, uncannily depersonalized. The imagery can activate webs of associations in the audience's imagination and produce a much more complex impression than the immediate comic effect would suggest, sometimes even involving issues of socio-political import such as integrity and corruptibility. In the *Wasps*, the imagery also works in reverse, having a correspondingly opposite impact on the audience; Philocleon's lifeless drinking cup is transformed into the body of a living animal. The former produces a dehumanizing effect, while the reverse is comic fantasy, a sympotic revelry in an overabundance of life. Both mechanisms, however, draw from the tensions and parallels between living bodies and static artifacts.

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[100] Lissarrague (1990, 47-67).

1.2 Cognitive Apparatuses: the *Phren(es)*, the *Noos*, and the Brain

In this section I analyze a number of passages from the Aristophanic corpus which in some way refer to, or describe, the nature and location of the intellect. I offer explanations for why we find a specific model or term in the comedies where we do, examining in particular instances of the terms νόος, φρήν/φρένες, and ἐγκέφαλον.[101] Yet, rather than limiting myself to a study of vocabulary, I also ask the following questions about Aristophanes' characterization of cognition: is the intellect described as tangible or intangible? Is it localized? If so, why? I conclude that characters refer to a physical mind with a physical location primarily for comic expediency. I argue, however, that there are a few instances where particular models of the mind also work within the larger context of the passage or even the drama as a whole, as is the case with *Clouds*.

What do the *noos*, *phren(es)*, and brain have in common? They can all, in certain contexts, involve or substantiate conscious reasoning and imaginative thought. For the purposes of my study, I am more concerned with references to the physicality of these different entities rather than their actual nature, and so I discuss both the seat of the intellect itself and the mental activities that occur there (although this conflation is not entirely unproblematic). Furthermore, I avoid the mire of philosophical and cognitive-scientific debates concerning the materiality of the mind or mental activities by very narrowly defining what I mean by "material." In the context of my study, a physical mind or act of cognition is simply one which is described as an object that can quite literally be held in the hand.[102] They can be both figurative (e.g. a cockchafer on a string) and non-figurative (e.g. the brain). This type of conceptualization thus stands in contrast to portrayals of the mind and mental activities as indistinct and obscure to human perception, as the *noos* is most often described. Of course, these two types of depictions do not neatly correspond to "brain" and "*noos*," and the ways in which they do, and do not, are of central importance to my study.

By the time of Aristophanes' floruit, poets, natural philosophers, and doctors alike had presented a number of different conceptualizations of, and theories about, the nature and seat of the intellect. The *noos*, roughly translated as the "mind," was from the time of Homer one of the primary intellectual apparatuses of a person. The *phren(es)* also played a significant role in thought, but had a larger variety of psychological functions in addition, making the

[101] Except in quoted texts, I hereafter use the transliterated or English terms for ease of reading.
[102] Therefore, I do not refer to a "materialistic" theory of the mind in the sense of atomistic philosophy.

noos quite specialized in comparison.[103] In the playwright's time and earlier, the *noos* behaved like other "psychological organs," such as the *phren, thumos*, or *kardia,* in the sense that it often had physical reactions to exterior stimuli, some of which were voluntary, but most not.[104] Yet, unlike most of these psycho-corporeal entities, ancient Greek writers do not describe any distinct physical or anatomical features of the *noos,* nor do authors refer to its specific location after archaic times.[105]

Phren(es) underwent an (in some ways) similar development. While in early Greek texts this "organ" was both located in the chest and responsible for cognitive processes,[106] we see from Hippocratic texts that, by the fifth century, the *phrenes* (most often in the plural) largely only indicated a physical part of the body in the chest. Only in colloquial or poetic language did they continue to denote cognitive faculties. The author of *On the Sacred Disease* even explicitly rejects the model of the *phrenes* (and *kardia*) as the seat of the intellect, thereby making a distinction between common parlance and reality.[107] The cognitive *phren(es)* thus became somewhat disassociated from its status as a body part.

While the *noos* and *phren(es)* continued to be the standard denotata of cognition throughout Aristophanes' career, certain natural philosophers and medical writers had already started attributing intellectual activity to the brain in addition. While the brain was certainly not the only candidate for the intellect in fifth-century science and philosophy, I limit my discussion to this idea because it is the only one to which Aristophanes directly refers.[108] Presocratic thinkers were the first to indicate that thinking occurred in the brain. Over a hundred years before these comedies, Alcmaeon points to the brain as the seat of reasoning.[109] A contemporary of the playwright, the Pythagorean Philolaus, would later assert the same.[110] We also hear this opinion from one Hippocratic in particular, the writer of *On the Sacred Disease*, who argues in no uncertain terms for the brain's function as the interpreter of

[103] Sullivan (1997, 137) Padel (1992, 20-4). Sullivan (2000, 11) also concludes that the *noos* was generally considered unerring, whereas the *phren(es)* could deliberate. Furthermore, *noos* acquired a special meaning in some Presocratic thought. Anaxagoras' governing principle was called *Noos* (DK59) B12.

[104] Padel (1992, 32).

[105] Sullivan (1997, 137) (1999, 83) (2000, 55); Padel (1992, 32); Warden (1971, 5); Homer locates *noos* four times in the chest, as Hesiod does once as well). Homer *Il*. 3.63, 4.309; *Od*. 2.124, 10.329; Hesiod *Th*. 122. Aristotle would later conclude that the *noos* is not an organ, or even a part of the body (*An*. 429a22-26).

[106] Sullivan (1997, 13-4). For speculation as to its precise physical referent see Sullivan (1988, 21-36); Cheyns (1980).

[107] *Sac. Morb*. 17. Langholf (1990, 40-1).

[108] Hankinson (1991, 194-217). For instance, the author of *On Regimen* believes the "intelligence of the soul" is dependent on how the body's "fire" and "moisture" are blended and what qualities they have. Hipp. *Reg*. I. 35.

[109] Alcmaeon (DK24) A5.24-5; A8. See discussion at Manuli and Vegetti (1977, 25-35).

[110] Philolaus (DK44) 13, which Huffman (1992, 307-323) examines; apparently Pythagoras himself believed in the brain as the seat of the intellect.

the consciousness (διὸ φημὶ τὸν ἐγκέφαλον εἶναι τὸν ἑρμηνεύοντα τὴν σύνεσιν).[111] Furthermore, there is other, less direct evidence that earlier medical writers attributed some cognitive function to the brain: by indicating that head injuries can have psychological repercussions, they reveal certain assumptions about the importance of the brain, if not for mental activity, then at least for sense perception and speech.[112]

It is impossible to say how widely accepted this encephalic location of the intellect came to be in Classical Athens.[113] Some scholars describe the theory as eccentric for the fifth century, while others understand it as more or less common knowledge.[114] It is also important to note that that these models were not necessarily mutually contradictory; Pythagoras and Philolaus, for instance, seem to conflate the brain and *noos*.[115] Clearly, these different ideas about the intellect's location coexisted peacefully and neither model of thought ousted the other during playwright's floruit (or in fact for a long time).[116] Aristophanes' plays themselves are a good testament to this fact.

In light of the playwright's usage of many different terms and models for the seat of the intellect, one could argue that he simply reflects current, ordinary opinion and language. Colloquial language is neither dogmatic nor consistent,[117] but comfortably accomodates a variety of apparently conflicting ideas. On some level, the presence of different models simply indicates that Aristophanes availed himself of different ideas and theories, both traditional and emerging, for his work. Nevertheless, it would be naive to assume that they are distributed at random in his corpus. I disagree with what I consider to be Padel's oversimplifying suggestion that the playwright made these choices exclusively out of a desire to parody other genres or to present language similar to the vernacular.[118] Lexical choices depend in part on the tone and context: if a passage is farcical,[119] for instance, or if it refers to

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[111] Hipp. *Sac. Morb*. 20.1-2.

[112] *Morb*. I. 4; *Aph*. VII. 58; *Coac*. 489, passages which I discuss below.

[113] It is, however, perhaps worth considering whether the myth of Athena's cephalic birth (Hesiod 343 MW) might also be evidence that the head had an old claim to being the seat of the intellect since it resulted from Zeus' swallowing Metis, "counsel."

[114] Padel (1992, 12).

[115] Pythagoras also identifies the brain as the seat of the *noos* and *phren* according to Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* 8.30). Later, during Aristophanes' own time, the Pythagorean Philolaus would adhere to this theory, associating the brain with intellectual activity along with the *noos*, which he locates inside the head specifically (DK44) B13. For these two thinkers, the brain and the *noos* thus appear to be equivalent.

[116] As is evidenced by Plato's encephalic model for thought in contrast to Aristotle's' *kardia* location.

[117] While the author of *On the Sacred Disease* has a vested interest in arguing against any other theory of the seat of the intellect, Aristophanes of course has the freedom to refer to the *noos* or the brain depending on whatever suited the context.

[118] Padel (1992, 41).

[119] E.g. the parody of dithyrambic poetry in the *Birds* when Cinesias declares that he is "fearless in mind (*phren*) and body" (ἀφόβῳ φρενὶ σώματί τε νέαν ἐφέπων, *A*. 1376). See Dunbar (1995, ad loc.) for a fuller analysis of its meaning.

contemporaneous medical and philosophical ideas.[120] Yet verisimilitude and parody do not adequately explain all the references to certain models of the intellect in the comedies.

Upon closer examination, moreover, it becomes clear why particular representations of the mind appear in particular passages; they all are formulated for a purpose within their respective contexts. Characters frequently mention the seat of the intellect without an indication of its physicality or physical location, as is typical for representations of psychological entities. In other cases, however, they indicate that it is physical, placed in the head or even synonymous with the brain. In the following, I look at a few noteworthy examples of different ways in which the phenomenon and location of mental activity are presented, explaining how the different conceptualizations of the intellect are adopted to suit the content and context of the passage. In particular, I explore Aristophanes' references to the location and function of the *noos* and *phren(es)* and how they differ from, or resemble, those of the brain.

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In three Aristophanic passages, characters mention head trauma. In two of these instances (*Nu*. 1272-6; *Ra*. 851-5), this physical damage is said to have an effect on cognition; intellectual activity is thus implicitly located in the head. In the third passage (*Ra*. 133), two physical features of the brain are mentioned which correspond to a description in *On the Sacred Disease*, a text which champions the brain as the seat of the intellect. Although the connection to this Hippocratic treatise is minor, I argue that the context brings to mind the model of the brain as the seat of thought. I explore how and why Aristophanes introduces this particular notion in these three passages.

In the *Clouds*, Strepsiades indirectly mentions the cognitive consequences of a head injury. In order to accuse his creditor of acting idiotic, the old man willfully misinterprets his figurative language, "I've fallen off my chariot,"[121] and cheekily tells him that this "fall" must have caused a knock to his head:

Αμ. ἵππους γ᾽ ἐλαύνων ἐξέπεσον, νὴ τοὺς θεούς.
Στ. τί δῆτα ληρεῖς ὥσπερ ἀπ᾽ ὄνου καταπεσών;
Αμ. ληρῶ, τὰ χρήματ᾽ ἀπολαβεῖν εἰ βούλομαι;
Στ. οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως σύ γ᾽ αὖθις ὑγιαίνεις.
Αμ. τί δαί;

[120] As in the case of Dionysus' diploid model of the brain in *Ra*. 133-4, which I also discuss in Chapter 3.2.
[121] Plato glosses the proverb "to fall from some ass" as "to speak nonsense" (*Leg*. 701c5-d2).

Στ.	τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ὥσπερ σεσεῖσθαί μοι δοκεῖς. (*Nu.* 1272-1276)

Am.	I've fallen while driving my horses, by the gods.
St.	Then why are you blathering as if you've fallen off a donkey?
Am.	I'm blathering if I want to get my money back?
St.	You've got to be unwell in turn.
Am.	How's that?
St.	It seems to me that your brain's been shaken up!

Strepsiades' statement implies that brain trauma negatively affects one's mental soundness and thus that the brain has a role in cognitive function. He says that Amynias "blathers" (ληρεῖν), a word which, depending on its context, refers to stupid talk as well as serious mental delirium.[122] When he tells Amynias that he cannot be healthy (ὑγιαίνειν), Strepsiades clarifies that he is in fact referring to his creditor's mental soundness.[123] He then drives the joke home by giving a full account of what he thinks has made his interlocutor unwell, tying it back to the original turn of phrase about "falling."

With this logic, Strepsiades seems to parrot Socrates' earlier affronts to his intelligence: 'you're not making sense' (οὐδὲν λέγεις, *Nu.* 644; ὑθλεῖς, 783). Yet the old man has gone rogue and now employs his own kinds of rhetorical tricks. For instance, where does his idea about the brain come from? It is not an ingenious invention of Strepsiades' newly wrought intellect. We may well assume that the association between head injuries and impaired cognition is simply a conclusion drawn from experience, especially from battle and wrestling. Homer suggests as much in two passages from the *Iliad*.[124] Later, this idea abounds in medical treatises, where writers observe that sensory problems result from brain injury. The author of *On Diseases* writes that a blow to the head causes loss of sight and hearing in addition to speech, specifically using the words "brain" and "shaken:" καὶ ἢν ὁ ἐγκέφαλος σεισθῇ τε καὶ πονέσῃ, πληγέντος, ἄφωνον παραχρῆμα ἀνάγκη γενέσθαι, καὶ μήτε ὁρῆν, μήτε ἀκούειν.[125] *Aphorisms* features a similar sentence: "For patients whose brain is shaken up from whatever cause, it happens necessarily that they immediately become mute:" ὁκόσοισιν ἂν ὁ ἐγκέφαλος σεισθῇ ὑπό τινος προφάσιος, ἀνάγκη ἀφώνους γίνεσθαι παραχρῆμα."[126] *Coan Prenotions* also contains a slightly elaborated, but nearly identical, account.[127] These

[122] See Chapter 1.1 note 46.
[123] See Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 6) for a discussion of these and other related words in Greek comedy.
[124] When Euryalus is hit on the head, he is "out of his senses" (ἀλλοφρονέοντα) (*Il.* 23.698). Hector also loses consciousness when hit in the head (*Il.* 11.355-6).
[125] Hipp. *Morb.* I. 4.
[126] Hipp. *Aph.* VII. 58.
[127] Hipp. *Coac.* 489. In relation to this *Clouds* passage, see H. Miller (1945, 77) and Starkie (1911, 275) who mention parallels in *Aphorisms* VII: "Daze or delirium from a blow (ἔκπληξις) to the head: bad sign" (*Aph.* VII.14). Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 114) also mentions the passage *Aph.*VII. 58 for the loss of speech in the case of a concussion and discusses the passage's medical context in some more depth.

treatises all likely postdate the *Clouds*, but some of their material is considerably older, and the same subject-verb combination of "brain" and "shake" is striking.[128]

Of course, while the wording is similar, these medical aphorisms do not entirely conform to Strepsiades' point. He associates the diagnosis of a "shaken" brain not with hindered sense perception, but with hindered cognitive function. The connection between brain injury and sensory functions, such as sight and hearing, as well as the ability to speak, does not *necessarily* presuppose the cognitive function of the brain.[129] In other medical treatises, however, we do find writers mentioning derangement as an effect that certain diseases have on the brain, particularly ones that involve excess fluid.[130] This idea suggests that, when the brain is compromised in some way, so is one's mental health. Thus we find the pieces of Strepsiades' idea in different medical passages which address the connection between the brain and one's consciousness, whether sensory or cognitive. He clearly conflates the mind with the brain in this passage and highlights its physical susceptibility as such.

Although the humor of the joke is quite apparent, we might wonder why Aristophanes has his antihero use this "diagnosis" as an argument, especially when the education at the Phrontisterion focused more on training one's clever presentation of, rather than the acquisition of more, knowledge. Strepsiades' purpose in mentioning the encephalic seat of the intellect becomes clear when we consider the alternative, yet similar, insult we have heard in Aristophanes' work before: Strepsiades does not say that the creditor has no *noos,* nor, as we often find in poetry, that his *noos* is affected in some abstract way, for instance, deceived or blunted by wine or enchantment like a Homeric character's.[131] For whatever reason, the *noos*

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[128] *Coan Prenotions* and *Aphorisms* have been dated posterior to *Diseases I* and quite possibly used this earlier treatise as a source. Craik (2006); Wittern (1974, 101; 95; 99); Jones (1923, xxviii). Craik (2015, 34, 52, 174) dates *Aphorisms*, *Coan Prenotions*, and *Diseases* I to the turn of the fourth century at the earliest. Since it is unlikely that these treatises predated the *Clouds*, therefore, we can only assume that this subject-verb combination had circulated earlier in some form. Craik (2015, 33-4) observes that *Aphorisms* did include older material. *Coan Prenotions* also likely had much earlier texts derived from traditional wisdom (Craik 2006).

[129] In fact, the distinction between thought and perception became a central issue to the many Presocratics, or at least Presocratic opinions on the matter interested Aristotle and a number of natural philosophers after him.

[130] E.g. The account of the sacred disease in the titular Hippocratic treatise. The author of *Diseases III* also cites delirium as a consequence of fluid in the brain, caused by disease rather than injury (*Morb*. III. 2): ὁκόταν δὲ περιωδυνέῃ ἡ κεφαλὴ ὑπὸ πληρώσιος τοῦ ἐγκεφάλου, ἀκαθαρσίην σημαίνει, καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὅλην περιωδυνίαι ἴσχουσι, καὶ <u>παραφρονέει</u>, καὶ ἀποθνῄσκει ἑβδομαῖος, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐκφύγοι, εἰ μὴ ῥαγείη τὸ πύον κατὰ τὰ οὔατα· οὕτω δὲ ἡ ὀδύνη παύεται, καὶ <u>ἔμφρων γίνεται</u>· ῥεῖ δὲ πολλὸν καὶ ἄνοσμον.

[131] There is, however, an overlap between archaic poetry and natural philosophy/medicine regarding the effect of wine on the mind. According to Hesiod (Fr. 239) and Theognis (475-82, 498; 504), wine negatively influences the mind (*noos*). Presocratics gave an account of this observation too. Diogenes of Apollonia, for instance, believes that wine dulls the brain because pure and dry air are required for thought; excess moisture has a negative effect on intelligence (DK64) A19.56-70.

and the (cognitive) *phren(es)* do not suffer injury as a result of physical trauma and thus could not be compromised in a chariot accident. Only the head could. The old man refers to the tangible, localized (and therefore vulnerable) brain as an intellectual apparatus in order for his argument to frustrate his creditor effectively.

Strepsiades thus uses the encephalic model of the intellect for calling into question Amynias' whole state of mind. The joke relies on Strepsiades' idiosyncratic reasoning and, in that respect, employs the same strategy as his other deflections: interpreting a lender's statement literally,[132] then dismissing the person on the basis of their "demonstrated" insanity or idiocy. Perfectly fitting into the pattern of humor in these two impostor scenes, Strepsiades' remark is an example of the playwright's tailored application of a topical scientific subject. Moreover, the significance of this model of cognition in the *Clouds* extends beyond this scene—a matter to which I return towards the end of this section.

In the *Frogs* we also find two instances of references to the brain, one direct and one indirect. During the agon between Aeschylus and Euripides, Dionysus warns Euripides to step away so as to avoid getting a head injury from his opponent's (verbal) attacks:

> ἐπίσχες οὗτος ὦ πολυτίμητ᾽ Αἰσχύλε.
> ἀπὸ τῶν χαλαζῶν δ᾽ ὦ πόνηρ᾽ Εὐριπίδη,
> ἄναγε σεαυτὸν ἐκποδών, εἰ σωφρονεῖς,
> ἵνα μὴ <u>κεφαλαίῳ</u> τὸν <u>κρόταφόν</u> σου ῥήματι
> θενὼν ὑπ᾽ ὀργῆς <u>ἐκχέῃ</u> τὸν Τήλεφον· (*Ra.* 851-855)
>
> Stop, oh much-honored Aeschylus.
> And rascally Euripides, move yourself out of
> the hailstorm, if you've got sense,
> lest he strike your temple with a heady words
> out of anger and spill out your Telephus!

Here Dionysus indicates that Euripides' artistic product somehow resides in his head. Although he does not use the term for brain, Dionysus implies that the contents of the head, literally what is "ἐν τῷ κεφάλῳ," are ideas, and thereby constitute the intellect. According to the imagery, this mental object, much like blood or innards, can pour out (ἐκχεῖν) of a person as a result of trauma.[133] This metaphor is in keeping with the overarching representation of the tragedians' agon as a kind of physical, rather than strictly poetic, contest. Words and phrases metaphorically take on concrete, physical forms and are employed as weapons as well as deployed as soldiers. According to this aesthetic, Euripides' *Telephus* is just as visible and tangible as any other substance in his body and is thus localized and vulnerable to the

[132] Part of which is Strepsiades' classic tendency to "literalize" the abstract: *Nu*. 188-9 (meteorology); 206-16 (maps); 244-9 (currency); 746-56 (the concept of debt). See also Woodbury (1980).

[133] Aesch. *Eu*. 653; Hom. *Il*. 4.525.

same violence. Not only does Dionysus refer to Euripides' temple (κρόταφον) as the susceptible part of his body, he also makes a pun on the word "head" by calling the phrase that Aeschylus wields as his weapon of choice "heady" (κεφάλαιος). In this passage Aristophanes again alludes to the idea of the brain's central role in cognition, here to harmonize with the play's presentation of playwriting as a plastic art.

Elsewhere Aeschylus says that his mind (*phren*) takes imprints, casts, (ἀπομαξαμένη) of heroes for his works: ὅθεν ἡμὴ φρὴν ἀπομαξαμένη πολλὰς ἀρετὰς ἐπόιησεν,/ Πατρόκλων, Τεύκρων θυμολεόντων (*Ra*. 1040-1). Although he does not mention the location of the intellect, he presents the *phren* as a solid material that is malleable to a cast-pattern, like wax or clay. The metaphor is familiar, and it is surely not a coincidence that we find it in Aeschylus' own works. There and elsewhere the *phrenes* are described as a writing tablet on which you imprint memories as you would words.[134] Logically, it is how the literate age reimagined the Homeric idea that topics are "held" in the *phrenes* for consideration.[135] In this image too, therefore, the physicality of the mind is especially expedient for the conceptualization of literature as a material art form, as if Aeschylus produced figurines of heroes instead of characters in a play.[136]

This physical, sometimes even encephalic, model of the intellect perhaps comes more readily to the audience's mind because of a passage several hundred lines earlier in the play. In a conversation with his half-brother, Dionysus first describes his *noos* as if it were a three-dimensional space and, a few minutes later, refers specifically to his brain. After Heracles disagrees with him about the artistic value of Euripides' *Andromeda*, Dionysus suggests, with a comical adaptation of a line from the tragedy, that they agree to disagree: "Don't inhabit/control my thoughts (*noos*)—you have a house" (μὴ τὸν ἐμὸν οἴκει νοῦν· ἔχεις γὰρ οἰκίαν, *Ra*. 105). He deviates from the original quote by replacing the second half: the original Euripidean line runs, "Don't control my thoughts—I can handle myself."[137] Dionysus thus plays on the double meaning of οἰκεῖν (to control/dwell in) and transforms the *noos* into a physical location that Heracles could metaphorically inhabit. Unless the actor made an unscripted gesture onstage, however, he does not indicate where the *noos* is. It is nonetheless perhaps noteworthy that the *noos* is characterized as a space which could be occupied; in contrast to other psychological entities, the *noos* traditionally does not have physical

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[134] *Phren* as "written on": Aesch. *Choe*. 450; *Eum*. 275; *P.V*. 789; Soph. *Ph*. 1325; Pi. *Ol.* 10.2.

[135] Sullivan (1997, 29) points this connection out and gives the examples: Hom. *Il*. 1.297, 2.33, 9.611; *Od*. 11.454, 19-236.

[136] Much later Lucian describes his works as clay as well (*Prom. Es*. 2).

[137] Eur. *Andromeda* 144 K-A.

attributes and never contains other entities.[138]

This idiosyncratic image of the *noos* primes us for Dionysus' other cognitive "organ." Later in the scene, he refers specifically, albeit obliquely, to his brain. Heracles gives Dionysus suggestions for how he might get to the underworld, one of which involves him leaping off a cliff. Dionysus responds to this in horror:

> ἀλλ᾽ ἀπολέσαιμ᾽ ἂν ἐγκεφάλου θρίω δύο.
> οὐκ ἂν βαδίσαιμι τὴν ὁδὸν ταύτην. (*Ra*. 133-4)
>
> But I'd ruin my two brain-wraps.
> I wouldn't take that route!

In these lines Dionysus demonstrates some knowledge of the current Hippocratic anatomy of the brain, namely that it is divided into two parts, separated by a membrane.[139] The author of *On the Sacred Disease* gives a detailed explanation brain's form which corresponds with Dionysus' joke. "The human brain is double, as with all other animals. A fine membrane separates it in the middle:" Ὁ ἐγκέφαλος ἐστὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου διπλόος ὥσπερ καὶ τοῖσιν ἄλλοισι ζώοισιν ἅπασιν· τὸ δὲ μέσον αὐτοῦ διείργει μῆνιγξ λεπτή.[140] According to the Hippocratic author, this diploid model accounts for why we experience isolated pain on one side of the head or the other. Dionysus himself does not give a detailed anatomical explanation; nor does he use what any scholar could consider specialized vocabulary. He does, however, mention a particular anatomical feature by referring to the brain as doubled. Furthermore, the fact that he represents these two parts of the brain as fig-leaf "wraps" indicates that he is also aware of the thin brain membrane that the medical writer describes.[141] If we do not understand "fig wrap" as a current term for the brain (as I believe we rather should not),[142] Dionysus' description is all the more significant because he applies his own imagery to an established medical idea, adopting and reformulating the anatomical information for the sake of this joke.

When we take a closer look at the context of the god's remark, we also glimpse the literary purpose of this anatomical detail. The use of this bit of information elegantly suits

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[138] Sullivan (1997, 137); (1999, 61).

[139] H. Miller (1945, 77); Willi (2003, 86 n. 88) interestingly designates this passage as the one requiring the most medical knowledge to understand in the Aristophanic corpus.

[140] Hipp. *Sac. Morb.* 6.4-7. Cf. Hipp. *VC* 1.30-40, where the head is described as diploid and the brain covered in a membrane.

[141] Dalby (2003, 144).

[142] Taillardat (1965, 62 n. 71) says the term belongs to the "langue vulgaire." Sommerstein (1983b) also suggests that the term "fig-leaf wrap" for brain was current. It is an interesting proposition in the context of his argument, but hardly a necessary conclusion to be drawn. Because the word ἐγκέφαλος is included, I think it is likelier that it was not an idiom. Aristophanes could have used virtually any imagery for the brain (whether current in medicine or not) and still maintain both the sense and the humor of the lines.

Dionysus' exchange with Heracles. The humor of this dialogue relies heavily on the double meaning of each proposed pathway to Hades. The second, literal meaning of each route that Heracles describes has specific bodily consequences. First, with Heracles' proposal that Dionysus hang himself, Aristophanes presents a pun on the double meaning of "stifling" for both "hot" and "choking." The hero then suggests another route to the underworld, poisoning, which the protagonist dismisses as too cold, thereby alluding to the idea that poison has a chilling effect. The god, moreover, specifies what part of his body the poison would make cold: εὐθὺς γὰρ ἀποπήγνυσι τἀντικνήμια. (*Ra*. 126); "shins" is a word that, looking at extant Greek texts of the time, appears almost idiosyncratic to Aristophanes and medical writers. In his responses to both suggestions, the god is thus concerned about damage to particular body parts: first this neck and then, very specifically, his shins. The physiological detail of the risks of bodily harm crescendos with every new suggestion. When Dionysus asks for a downhill path, his half-brother appropriately advises jumping off a cliff, to which Dionysus replies with his brain-wrap comment, thus ending the round of jokes.

The brain description, therefore, makes sense in the context of the concrete, corporeal consequences of each death which Dionysus discusses. It also serves as the climax in a pattern of increasing detail and obscurity of anatomy: neck, shins, and the diploid, membrane-enclosed brain. This theme of physicality, even anatomical physicality, appears and reappears throughout in the drama. Dionysus is preoccupied with pain and bodily injury; he is a god paradoxically very much of flesh and blood, about whose preservation he expresses great concern.[143] Not just in this scene, but also later, the god has physical reactions to fear which are also quite medical in nature. He asks for his slave to bring a sponge for his heart (a therapeutic procedure) because he fears that it has crept down to his "lower cavity." We also see how his ability to feel pain reveals his physical susceptibility (despite his godhood) when he and his slave are beaten (*Ra*. 631ff.). Thus the tangible, encephalic characterizations of Dionysus and Euripides' intellects reflect and bolster an important aesthetic that Aristophanes presents throughout the play, and particularly in the poetic agon. They prime the audience for the presentation of mental objects (specifically literary products) as material objects. Dionysus himself is, after all, the patron, even embodiment, of the theater. It makes poetic sense that he himself should be anatomically laid bare in the course of the play just as elements of dramaturgy assume physical, and sometimes even bodily, forms. This theme I discuss in detail in Chapter 3.2.

[143] For example, the physical discomfort he describes while rowing, his bodily reactions to fear, and his experience of pain (in this dialogue with Heracles and in the following passages mentioned).

For the sake of contextualization and comparison, let us now turn to the more traditional models of the mind which are much more common in the comedies: the *noos* and the *phren(es)*, the primary sites of mental activity. Aside from their fixed, idiomatic usages, the two entities are essentially synonymous with each other. Characters colloquially say that the *noos* and *phren(es)* are moved, touched, tricked, nourished, or fly away in a fit of madness. As a short study of *noos* in the comedies demonstrates, the playwright's use of the word is, on average, even more copious and banal than *phren(es)*;[144] the latter he often employs in parodies of intellectuals or of elevated language,[145] while the *noos* appears more frequently in common idioms such as "pay attention" (τὸν νοῦν προσέχειν) and "have sense" (νοῦν ἔχειν).[146] Yet there are also more unusual usages of these cognitive entities which defy traditional classification and suggest a creative engagement with these different models of the seat of the intellect.

Aristophanes often reactivates, or has us imagine, the physicality of the *noos* and *phren(es)* through literalizing idioms and describing them as tangible entities. We already saw how Aeschylus describes his *phrenes* as wax in the *Frogs*. The comic playwright also draws out the literal meaning of idioms in which these two entities take flight (i.e. are agitated) in the *Birds*.[147] In the *Clouds* too, the *noos* and *phren* are described as almost excessively physically active; this characterization parodies intellectual pursuits and draws parallels between mental and physical training. Nonetheless, with one interesting exception, neither *noos* nor *phren(es)* are given a particular location in the body. For my discussion which follows, I focus on passages from *Frogs*, *Clouds*, and *Knights*.

When Dionysus refers to the contents of Euripides' head in the *Frogs*, it is actually the second time that an Aristophanic character mentions this tragedian's intellect in quasi-physical terms. In the *Acharnians* we hear that Euripides has an itinerate *noos* when Dicaeopolis knocks on the tragedian's door hoping to borrow tragic garb for his speech. Euripides' slave comes to answer and, in response to Dicaeopolis' inquiry about whether the playwright is at home, he tells a kind of riddle:

Δι. Ἔνδον ἔστ' Εὐριπίδης;
Θε. Οὐκ ἔνδον ἔνδον ἐστίν, εἰ γνώμην ἔχεις.
Δι. Πῶς ἔνδον, εἶτ' οὐκ ἔνδον;

[144] Handley (1956, 218). See also Rodríguez Alfageme's (1981, 129-36) analysis of how Aristophanes uses these and related terms to describe insanity.
[145] Handley (1956, 217-18) categorizes them as burlesque oracles (*Eq*. 1053, *Pl*. 1068; 1099), parody of lyric (*A*. 938; 1376) and paratragedy (*Eq*. 1237; *A*. 1238; *Ra*. 886; *Lys*. 708).
[146] Stewart (1968, 253-5); Handley (1956, 209-10).
[147] *A*. 1438-50. See Dunbar (1995, ad loc.) on the pun on flight/excitement.

Θε. ὀρθῶς, ὦ γέρον. Ὁ νοῦς μὲν ἔξω ξυλλέγων ἐπύλλια
κοὐκ ἔνδον, αὐτὸς δ' ἔνδον ἀναβάδην ποιεῖ
τραγῳδίαν (*Ach.* 395-400).

Di. Is Euripides in?
Sl. He's in and he's not in, if you catch my drift.
Di. How is he in, and yet not in?
Sl. Exactly so, old man. His mind is away collecting tidbits of words,
but he's inside composing a tragedy with his feet up.

Dicaeopolis is at first puzzled by the slave's opaque language, but soon realizes that both "ἔνδον" and Euripides have two possible referents: "inside" refers to both the inside of Euripides' house and the inside of Euripides' body. Euripides is both the man himself and his freewheeling *noos*. This sophistical statement thus emphasizes the disjunction between the *noos* and the person.

In the two passages about Euripides' mind, one from *Acharnians*, one from the *Frogs*, we see two different models of the intellect. The application and purpose of these two models differ as well. In the *Acharnians* Euripides' slave wants to highlight a difference between the tragedian's visible, physical self and his hidden, intellectual self in order to present a paradox about Euripides' simultaneous presence and absence. The slaves' reference to an abstracted, nonphysical mental apparatus is fitting for his clever allusion to Euripides' own penchant for sophistical, paradoxical one-liners.[148] In the *Frogs*, by contrast, it is necessary that Euripides' mental seat have a distinct physical form and defined location within him. The entire agon between the two tragedians involves imagery which represents words and thoughts as physical objects. Euripides' mind must also be physical in order for it to be vulnerable to the attacks of Aeschylus' embodied words. In the imagery of this agon scene, Euripides' *Telephus* functions as a metonymy for the tragedian's intellectual apparatus; at the same time, his drama is part of the encephalic contents, which can be removed by a swift blow. Here too, as with Strepsiades' insult of Amynias, we are reminded of Hippocratic writers who speak of the consequences of head injuries. A physical location is a prerequisite for physical vulnerability.

In the *Knights* we find an unusual use of the word *noos* and, along with it, another highly ambiguous characterization and localization of the intellect. In an exchange between Demos and the chorus in the *Knights*, Demos seems to locate the *noos* in very strange place:

Χο. ἀλλ᾿ εὐπαράγωγος εἶ,
θωπευόμενός τε χαίρεις
κἀξαπατώμενος,
πρὸς τόν τε λέγοντ᾿ ἀεὶ
κέχηνας· ὁ νοῦς δέ σου

[148] The *locus classicus* is the 'sworn tongue, unsworn *phren*' in Eur. *Hipp*. 612.

παρὼν ἀποδημεῖ.

Δῆμ. νοῦς οὐκ ἔνι ταῖς κόμαις
ὑμῶν, ὅτε μ᾽ οὐ φρονεῖν
νομίζετ᾽· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἑκὼν
ταῦτ᾽ ἠλιθιάζω. (*Eq.* 1115-24)

Ch. But you are easy to lead astray,
You enjoy being flattered
And deceived,
And every orator
Holds you agape, with your mind
present and yet absent!

Dem. There's no [*noos* in] that long hair
Of yours, if you think me
Witless; this imbecility
Of mine is deliberately put on. (trans. Sommerstein with changes in brackets)

This conversation contains a crucial reversal in the play. The chorus tries to convince Demos to wise up, and Demos haughtily informs them that, on the contrary, all has gone according to plan. The term "*noos*" is central to the passage's meaning and impact: the chorus of knights tells Demos that he has a *noos*, but it is "out of town," and Demos responds by retorting that they have no *noos* at all, specifically locating it in their hair. The mention of long hair evokes youth, decadence and sometimes even anti-democratic tendencies, implying that the chorus is long on hair, but short on *noos*.[149] This odd answer, nevertheless, involves more than an affront to their intelligence and politics.

In ways that are not immediately apparent, Demos rather ingeniously reveals his intentions to the chorus in his reply. He riffs off of the sophistic-sounding paradox in their last comment that his *noos* is present, but not present. This idea is very similar to the comment Euripides' slave makes in the *Acharnians,* and similarly indicates a rhetorical cleverness, an acquaintance with the "new education" Aristophanes enjoys ridiculing. Yet Demos refuses to respond in kind. Whether out of ignorance or stubbornness, he rejects their clever usage of *noos* as a rhetorical device and instead takes their comment literally, concretizing this psychological organ. Through localizing it in an unusual place, Demos has his interlocutors imagine the *noos* as a physical object, thereby transforming it from a sophistic idiom to a material entity and reestablishing its status as a psychological organ. This literalization of the abstract is a familiar element of Aristophanes' humor, but it is also relevant for understanding when and how he uses different models of the intellect.

Demos' witty comeback proves his mental agility at once and provides a fitting segue to the bombshell he drops immediately afterwards. His comment recalls well-worn adages

[149] Sommerstein (1981, ad loc.) notes other passages that evidence these associations with snobbery and anti-democratic views (*Nu*. 14; 545; *V*. 463-70; Lysias XVI. 18).

about how age affects the *noos* and suggests that his advanced age has increased his mental prowess rather than robbed him of it. According to some poets and tragic characters, advanced age obliterates the *noos*, but Demos, in line with Homer, Theognis, and Solon, asserts it is *young* people suffer from an inadequate, or even absent noos, rather than older ones: ἥβη καὶ νεότης ἐπικουφίζει νόον ἀνδρός.[150] Demos' formulation of his sentiment is familiar as well. In tragedy, *noos* is regularly found as the subject of the verb ἔνεστι, taking a person as its grammatical object.[151] Demos thereby engages, and has the last laugh, in a conflict of traditional wisdom about this mental apparatus. With his statement, Demos reasserts the validity of old-fashioned principles.

His placement of the *noos*, at the same time, is not at all traditional, but rather seems to be a product of the fifth-century tendency to locate the intellect in the head. His reference to the hair as the location of the *noos* suggests that the *noos*, in reality, would be properly located in the head. We may assume this because, whenever Aristophanes has characters physically locate the seat of the intellect, it is in the head. Some Presocratics, furthermore, actually do place the *noos* in the brain, and no one since archaic times had placed it elsewhere.[152] We may well suppose that this scene does not constitute an outlier in that regard.[153] According to that reasoning, Aristophanes' joke likely relies on a metonymy of physical proximity; the long, distinctive hair of the chorus could be imagined to represent the general area of the head. With his encephalic localization of the *noos,* therefore, Demos updates an almost formulaic insult and thereby implicitly demonstrates not only the effectiveness of the old and old-fashioned, but also their adaptability to new ideas.

This passage shows a nuanced comic implementation of traditional and less traditional ideas about cognitive faculties as well as their different implications. In this exchange between the chorus of knights and Demos, the playwright uses these ideas as a means to contextualize his characters socially. The contrast between rhetorical *noos* and material *noos* stands at the fore of this passage, exaggerating the chorus' youth and trendiness and altering our understanding of Demos, whom we thought to be a senile old man.

[150] Hes. *Thgn*. 629. Sullivan (1997, 138-9). Yet Mimnermus (5.8) says that old age harms the *noos*. On the relationship between age and *noos* in Sophocles, see Sullivan (1999, 63-6); in Euripides, Sullivan (2000, 45-6).

[151] Soph. *El*. 1328; Eur. *And*. 667; *Hipp*. 920; Fr. 25.4K (*Aeolus*); Fr. 212K (*Antiope*).

[152] See Chapter 1.2 note 105.

[153] One could also make an argument about the formal aspects of the joke and say that the humor depends on Demos' statement being only slightly off the mark instead of a whole-sale invention. Robson (2006, 23) gives an account of this particular mechanism of humor which I believe to be applicable here. Although Kidd (2014) does not examine the passage, from his analysis, however, we could also very well understand Demos' hairy *noos* as enjoyable nonsense (118-23) or a purposely flat wordplay (137-42).

Aristophanes does not use one conceptualization or the other indiscriminately in this passage; he adeptly plays with different images of the physicality and location of the mind.

While the playwright telescopes two representations of cognition into one small passage in this exchange in the *Knights*, he introduces a similarly purposeful mixture of conceptualizations on a much larger scale in the *Clouds*, scattering the different ideas throughout the play and even thematizing the imagery of thought as a tangible entity. If we return to examine these types of descriptions in the *Clouds*, we discover that Strepsiades' mention of the brain as the seat of the intellect is actually rather out of keeping with the other various imageries of intellectual activity that Aristophanes has presented up to that point. Characters mostly describe the mind as a delocalized, and even animate, entity, more like the familiar *noos* than the brain. Although the mere fact that different conceptualizations of the mind are present in the play should not surprise us, the local contexts of the different models, as well as the motifs of the play as a whole, reveal a more global significance.

The characters that are associated with the Phrontisterion use especially creative ways to refer to mental faculties. They not only mention the *noos qua* psychological organ, but also reify cognitive events.[154] These metaphorically embodied thoughts are described as entities which behave relatively independently from a person and are pliable to education and training in quite literal, physical terms. In Strepsiades' first encounter with Socrates, he sees the philosopher suspending his thoughts so that they can mix with similar air: εἰ μὴ κρεμάσας τὸ νόημα καὶ τὴν φροντίδα,/ λεπτὴν καταμείξας εἰς τὸν ὅμοιον ἀέρα. (*Nu*. 229-30). Parodying tenets from Presocratic philosophy, Socrates concretizes thought as a physical object that is subject to natural laws; thoughts can be physically suspended, just as Socrates' body itself. As Strepsiades begins his education, the chorus encourages Socrates' attempts by speaking about the training of the mind as if it were a physically demanding task: ἀλλ᾽ ἐγχείρει τὸν πρεσβύτην ὅ τι περ μέλλεις προδιδάσκειν,/ καὶ διακίνει τὸν νοῦν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς γνώμης ἀποπειρῶ. "But try your hand at instructing the old man how you will, and stir up his mind and make an attempt on his intellect" (476-7). According to this imagery, the *noos* can be moved around through the process of learning as if it were a body part which could get fit through exertion.[155]

The chorus advises their aged pupil further: if you fall into a dead end, quickly leap onto another "notion from your insight": ταχὺς δ᾽, ὅταν εἰς ἄπορον/ πέσῃς, ἐπ᾽ ἄλλο πήδα/ νόημα φρενός (*Nu.* 702-5). They instruct Strepsiades to move metaphorically around in his

[154] Taillardat (1965, 250-2).
[155] See note 159 below.

own consciousness, falling from one train of thought and leaping to another; his mental activity occupies a physical space outside of him which he must reach. The chorus uses elevated language, the singular *phren* found largely in epic poetry and tragedy, instead of the more typical plural form, *phrenes*. The poetic-sounding combination " νόημα φρενός" recalls a Homeric phrase "ἐνὶ φρεσὶν... νόημα" (*Od*. 14.273) (the only other passage where these two words are found together), as well as the similar phrase "ἐνὶ στήθεσσι νόημα" (*Od*. 13.330). The chorus thus describes mental faculties with fantastical, exaggerated imagery which not only hearkens to, but even exceeds, the highly poetic representations of thought processes in Homer. These kinds of descriptions of cogitation lend a very physical component to Strepsiades' education in these scenes.

Aristophanes returns to, and develops, this idea later. When Socrates tries to train Strepsiades in mental gymnastics, he tells him to do a variety of activities with his thought, which is figured as a concrete object that one can move and manipulate: [156]

> ἴθι νυν καλύπτου, καὶ σχάσας τὴν φροντίδα
> λεπτὴν κατὰ μικρὸν περιφρόνει τὰ πράγματα
> ὀρθῶς διαιρῶν καὶ σκοπῶν. (*Nu*. 740-2)
>
> Come and cover yourself up, and letting loose
> a fine thought little by little, think about the problems,
> distinguish them and consider them exactly.

His instructions are essentially physical in nature. One can remove thought from oneself, releasing it little by little. In this context another, literal meaning of διαιρεῖν also presents itself: the old man should not only distinguish the issues; he also should chop them up into pieces. He should consider them (σκοπεῖν) but also behold them (σκοπεῖν) as visible objects. Socrates later even compares thought (φροντίς) to a cockchafer on a string which one could let loose and pull back. While "φροντίς" and "γνώμη" are not equivalent to a psychological organ, they relate to intellectual processes and are characterized similarly in the play, that is, as if they had physical qualities:

> μή νυν περὶ σαυτὸν εἷλλε τὴν γνώμην ἀεί,
> ἀλλ᾽ ἀποχάλα τὴν φροντίδ᾽ ἐς τὸν ἀέρα
> λινόδετον ὥσπερ μηλολόνθην τοῦ ποδός. (*Nu*. 762-4)
>
> Now don't keep hold your discernment back within you,
> But let loose your thought into the air
> Tied with a string, just as a to the foot of a cockchafer.

This metaphor presents thought (φροντίς/γνώμη) as an object or even a living thing that exists

[156] Taillardat (1965, 251-2) discusses the following passage and expression "let loose your thought."

outside the body and acts somehow independently. Again Strepsiades is asked to engage in a mental activity through the imagery of moving physical objects.

In these lines in the play, thought and thought processes are characterized as very animated, recalling other psychological "organs," such as the *thumos*, *phrenes*, and *kardia,* which Greek writers describe as moving about, sensing things, and even residing within one another. Some of these behaviors can also be attributed to the *noos*: on occasion the *noos* flies (indicating either the imaginative process or madness); one can be outside of one's *noos*, or be accused of having no *noos*.[157] Yet Aristophanes seems to make a pointed effort here and elsewhere in the *Clouds* to portray the faculty of cognition as even more animated and independent than in these traditional representations. Its level of activity is nearly on par with the psychological entities which respond to emotional stimuli. Scholars have noted how the comic playwright parodies the descriptions of psychological organs found in tragedy, in particular the *psyche*, *thumos*, and *kardia*.[158] To some extent, he likewise caricatures the *noos* through his exaggerated, concretized representations. Nevertheless, *noos* neither has the same poetic associations nor the emotional denotation that these other entities which lend themselves to paratragedy do. In the *Clouds*, Aristophanes employs the term and refers to similar cognitive phenomena in this way to a specific end.

This imagery of the reified intellect in part serves to buttress a particular comic trope in this play, namely the parallelism between physical and mental training to which sophists famously refer, and which constitutes a major feature of the ancient Greek approach to education in general.[159] One of the principal motifs staged in the *Clouds* is the rift between the traditional and new methods of argument and education, an opposition which the agon between the Just and Unjust Arguments encapsulates. The physique promised by the Just Argument exemplifies the inverse relationship between physical and mental fitness;[160] he boasts that Pheidippides would have broad shoulders and a small tongue if he concedes to him, but the opposite if he practices the Unjust Argument's way of life (*Nu*. 1013-18). A tongue in training grows as the physique shrinks. This agon thus, in turn, sheds light on Aristophanes' metaphorical characterization of mental activity as physical activity. Socrates

[157] Examples of the *noos* flying (*Il*. 79-83;V. 93; *Theog*. 1049-1054). Having a minimal *noos* is epidemic among youths according to Theognis (629-30). Athena tells Ares that his *noos* has perished (*Il*. 15, 129) if he wants to defy Zeus. Sullivan (1996, 40-1).

[158] Handley (1956, 211-17).

[159] Hawhee (2004, 86-161) convincingly argues for the intimate connection between rhetorical and athletic training in fifth- and fourth-century Greece.

[160] The appearance of the Just Argument himself, however, probably did not reflect what he purported to teach. Revermann (2006a, 209-11).

conditions (or tries to condition) Strepsiades' mind through mental exercises imagined as physical ones, a practice which necessarily relies on the conceptualization of the mind as a physical object.

Yet Aristophanes' portrayal of the mind as a concrete entity serves another important purpose. During Strepsiades' education, characters present the mind as not only physical, but also as something malleable and flighty which intellectual training can shape, or in this case, warp. This notion that the mind can be taught and altered for evil purposes is in itself not new. In Sophocles' *Antigone* Creon complains that silver is an evil νόμισμα, "currency" or "custom," that "teaches and perverts the *phrenes*" (ἐκδιδάσκει καὶ παραλλάσσει φρένας).[161] This kind of metaphor comes more vividly (and comically) to life in the *Clouds*, where we see how it is the νόμισμα (*Nu.* 248) of Socrates and his initiates to manipulate Strepsiades' mind through cognitive exertions. Thus characterized, the mind becomes vulnerable to outside influences in very literal ways. Throughout the play, the audience visualizes the physical manipulation of the mind. Even with Socrates' own comment about the bad effects of moisture on his thinking, we are made to understand that the mind is concrete, if not located anywhere in particular. As a result, the influence of "new education" is manifestly dangerous. These passages in which the playwright presents the *noos* and *phren(es)* as so active, vivid, and disembodied are revealing when contrasted with the scene where he has Strepsiades refer to the head, specifically the brain, as the (necessarily permanent) seat of the intellect. The mind, when fixed in the brain, assumes a very different kind of vulnerability.

A mind figured as an object is not the same as the brain, but the differences between the two models bring into sharp relief a key similarity. As I have established, in the creditor passage Strepsiades' insult requires that we imagine Amnyias' intellect in his brain. Yet on a fundamental level, it also operates alongside Aristophanes' other representations of cognition in the play. Strepsiades' comment points above all to the corporeal frailty of the brain. In this encephalic model, physical trauma has the power to cause mental damage. While the *noos* and *phren(es)* can likewise be compromised, writers never indicate bodily injury as the reason.[162] It is only through metaphorical reification that the mind becomes susceptible to figurative onslaughts. Socrates' attempt on Strepsiades' intellect (ἐγχειρεῖν) indeed might bring in tow the latent violence of the word. Throughout the play, the old man's dubious

[161] Soph. *Ant*. 295-8.

[162] Although the *phrenes* can be physically harmed and even removed from the body (e.g. *Il*.16.504), I can find no examples of physical trauma to the *phrenes* resulting in mental disability. The *phrenes* can be diseased, but the result seems to be behavioral or moral, not cognitive, aberrance. Furthermore, the cause of the disease is abstract rather than tangible, i.e. Xerxes' foolhardiness is a disease of the *phrenes* (Aesch. *Per*. 750) (Sullivan 1999, 51-2).

education has an deleterious effect on his mind. By training in fashionable, sophistic ways of thinking his intellect is primed to engage in all kinds of knavery. Yet, of course, he ultimately laments these actions. At the end of the play he describes what happened to him as insanity,[163] expressing this fact in no fewer than three different ways: "damn my madness: how insane I was" (οἴμοι παρανοίας: ὡς ἐμαινόμην ἄρα, *Nu*. 1476). He asks Hermes to forgive him because he was deranged by prattle (ἐμοῦ παρανοήσαντος ἀδολεσχίᾳ, 1480). It makes for delightful poetic justice—ultimately he experiences the same problem with which he had "diagnosed" Amynias. It was not Amynias who suffered brain damage from a chariot accident, but Strepsiades who suffered from a *phrenes* perverted by crooked intellectuals. This is an idea which I develop more fully in Chapter 1.4, which explores the motifs of moral and intellectual influence in the *Clouds*.

Even with these few examples, we see how terms and models for the location of the intellect are suited to their particular passages or even larger themes in the plays themselves. In the case of the *Frogs*, the reference to the brain contributes to the emphasis placed on physicality in the play, specifically Dionysus' corporeality. In an exchange between the chorus and Demos in the *Knights*, traditional and newer cognitive faculties are merged together. Demos speaks of the *noos*, but implicitly locates it in the head. His insult effectively reestablishes himself and his generation as not only competent, but also aware of, and adaptable to, change. In the *Clouds*, moreover, Aristophanes introduces two different models of the intellect which on an essential level serve the same purpose. By representing the mind and thought as physical objects, he renders the intellect tangible and in turn necessarily subject to the vagaries of physical existence: manipulation, damage, and destruction. The playwright pointedly exaggerates the characteristics of the traditional *noos* and *phren(es)* by pushing their metaphorical potential psychological organs to the brink. In a seemingly unrelated and inconsistent passage, he has Strepsiades refer to the brain as an organ of cognition in order to draw attention to its weakness. Yet both conceptualizations, the brain and the *noos*, share a common thread that thematically fits into the play as a whole: the susceptibility of cognitive faculties. Therefore, Aristophanes' references to various models of the intellect, both traditional and new, can serve as means of expressing and exploring the vulnerability of the human mind.

[163] The attempt at reconciliation through pleading insanity has deep roots in ancient Greek literature. Konstan (2010, 36-7; 61-3). It does not necessarily indicate Philocleon believed he was insane (ibid. 52 n. 42), but it is significant that he should use this pretext to re-ingratiate himself with the traditional god Hermes at all, considering the fact that madness is not a central subject in the *Clouds*, but rather, mental infirmity in the form of ignorance or stupidity. Strepsiades' plea establishes a retrospective resonance between the image of the malleable mind and that of madness; the former suggests the dangerous potential of the latter.

1.3 Cleon's Body in *Knights*: a Colonoscopy of Political Misconduct

> *Joe: Well it is unethical, I can't . . .*
> *Roy: Boy, you are really something. What the fuck do you think this is, Sunday School?*
> *Joe: No, but Roy this is . . .*
> *Roy: This is. . . this is gastric juices churning, this is enzymes and acids, this is intestinal is what this is, bowel movement and blood-red meat—this stinks, this is politics, Joe, the game of being alive.*
> *(Angels in America, Act II, Sc. VI)*

While Greek comedy revels in food and eating, nowhere in the Aristophanic corpus do the themes of consumption and digestion feature more prominently than in the *Knights*. The play is riddled with descriptions of individuals, groups of people, concepts, and even places as food to be ingested. This imagery involves everything from simple agricultural metaphors to a detailed comparison of Paphlagon's bodily interior and that of a pig. Aristophanes highlights the physiological mechanism of consumption by drawing attention to the alimentary tract itself: from mouth to stomach, intestines to anus. The focus, however, is not placed on normal eating, but rather on perversions of consumption and on disruptions in the natural order of the food chain. Allusions to cannibalism lurk throughout the text as imagery for the political corruption and disorder in the city. The particular ways in which this material is presented, and their indebtedness to certain trends in fifth-century thought, is the subjects of this section.

I explore how two ideas found in fifth-century prose, and particularly scientific writing, enrich the alimentary and bodily imagery in the comedy. The first idea is a basic analytical method that is characteristic of contemporary inquiries in natural philosophy, medicine, and even history: the use of analogies of visible phenomena to explain invisible phenomena.[164] The second idea, which comes more specifically from fifth-century medicine, constitutes an example of such an analogy: the conceptualization of both cooking and human digestion as zero-sum acts of physical mastery. I argue that these modes of thought tacitly buttress the play's critical account of Cleon's political behavior, an account, moreover, that simulates a revelation of the truth. This revelation is effected through various metaphorical exposures of Paphlagon's bodily interior and, in one particular passage, their implicit evocation of the practices of butchery, medicine, and soothsaying. I suggest that the common ground between these three activities exemplifies the purpose of this imagery in the comedy.

[164] Lloyd (1966, 304-83). Lonie (1981, 83–86) and Regenbogen (1930) discuss the different functions of analogies in the HC specifically.

Whatever fantastic costumes, props and dancing the original audience of the *Knights* saw, they could only pale in comparison to Aristophanes' poetic illustrations of what we cannot see onstage: the bodily interiors of the antihero and villain. Referring to analogues that can be readily seen, Aristophanes metaphorically depicts this invisible space and the actions that take place there. Yet he is certainly not the first to do so. Many intellectuals of the time used the external and the visible to depict internal and invisible phenomena; the Presocratic thinker Anaxagoras made the first quasi-programmatic statement about this method: ὄψις ἀδήλων τὰ φαινόμενα, or paraphrased, "things which are apparent are (our means for) seeing the obscure."[165] Other natural philosophers, including Empedocles and Democritus, and even the historian Herodotus, explicitly or implicitly employ this approach.[166] Medical writers in particular found this method of reasoning very valuable for their descriptions of bodily interiors. Because everything beneath the skin defies visual perception,[167] Hippocratics have a natural expedient in the use of analogies when illustrating structures or mechanisms within the human body.[168] Moreover, medical writers not only use such analogies, but they were also often very self-aware of their methodology in doing so: three passages in the Hippocratic corpus echo Anaxagoras' maxim.[169] It was a method of argument that was very much in vogue. We even have a quote from an unknown play of Aristophanes' that alludes to, and makes fun of, this Presocratic interest in "the invisible" (τἀφανῆ): "he concerns himself with the invisible, but eats things that are from underground" (ὃς τὰ μὲν ἀφανῆ μεριμνᾷ, τὰ δὲ χαμᾶθεν ἐσθίει).[170]

Despite its very different context, the *Knights'* comparison between a pig's visible innards and Paphlagon's invisible innards fundamentally belongs to this fifth-century type of reasoning. I do not insinuate that Aristophanes directly employs, or refers to, scientific approaches in this comedy. Rather, I want to draw attention to why contemporary thinkers found this method expedient where they did in order to shed light on the playwright's own use of it. Analogy is a tool for curating, or even fabricating, a space one cannot observe. To some extent, all metaphorical language operates in this way as well, and likewise generates

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[165] (DK59) B21a.

[166] Sextus Empiricus has Democritus in agreement with Anaxagoras (DK68) B11; Empedocles (DK31) B84; B92; Herodotus *Hist*. 2.10; 33; 34, discussed in Lloyd (1966, 341-5); Diller (1932).

[167] Padel (1992, 68-75; 77) discusses the obscurity of the bodily interior in tragedy.

[168] The idea that physicians are excellent at perceiving the invisible can also be found in a fragment of the six-century epic poet Arctinus, here "ἄσκοπά" (Fr. 5 Allen).

[169] Lloyd (1966, 328-55); *Flat*. 3.13-15; *VM* 22.7-8; *Reg*. I. 12.1-8.

[170] Fr. 691 K-A. It apparently references a line from Sophocles (Fr. 737 Radt).

meaning. Yet, as opposed to metaphor, scientific analogy tends to have an explanatory-predictive function, greater clarity, and systematicity.[171] By employing it, a medical writer can present a comprehensible reference image for the bodily interior. I propose that, blurring the line between expressive metaphor and explanatory analogy, the playwright makes similar move with his depiction of the inner-workings of Paphlagon. The alimentary tract and its functions are not an evanescent image in the comedy; they are central to Aristophanes' poetic explication of how Cleon, and demagogues like him, function.

The playwright, like medical writers, uses observable referents to depict internal bodily structures. A space otherwise only revealed through violent trauma is revealed here through violent imagery.[172] In *Knights* the external referent is the porcine equivalent of human anatomical structures:[173] the gut of the slaughtered swine and the finished product of pork sausage. This analogy, like all analogies, gives the audience sight (ὄψις) with which they gain imaginative access to something that is, in typical situations, unknowable. Near the beginning of the play, Demosthenes indirectly instructs the audience before Paphlagon comes onstage that we cannot rely on Paphlagon's superficial appearance for understanding who he is: Cleon is not portrayed (ἐξῃκασμένος), that is, represented with a portrait mask (*Eq.* 230-3).[174] The textual evidence for costumes in *Knights* is minimal; he might have had a revolting costume, but his visible portrayal onstage does not itself illustrate his bad behavior in any detail.[175] By penetrating the surface of his highly politicized body, however, the comedy certainly does offer such an illustration.[176] The inside of the body is a particularly opportune space for projecting images and assigning meaning, and through the play's descriptions of Paphlagon's innards, the audience conceptualizes his political *modus operandi*.

While it is of course extremely common to use analogy to describe bodies and bodily

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[171] Gentner et al. (2001, 240-1); Genter (1982).

[172] Dissection was not practiced at this time (see note 237 below). Violent trauma was the only way ancient Greeks could empirically conceptualize the bodily interior, but the only scientific treatise which regards such traumas as informative for medicine is *On Joints* and *On Fractures*, which primarily focus on bones rather than what we would call organs.

[173] Hippocratic medical writers seldom engage with comparative anatomy in their writing, instead making comparisons to vegetation, cooking, and other inanimate and mundane objects and phenomena. Notable exceptions are found in Hipp. *Sac. Morb*. 11 (a human brain to a goat's) and Hipp. *Epid.* VI. 4.6 (human intestines to a dog's). The author of *On Fleshes*, however, believes that internal bodily structures are formed similarly in humans and animals (*Carn*. 1) and later states that both human and animal eyes contain a gluely liquid (*Carn*. 17). Aristotle himself, however, performed dissections on animals. See discussion in Lloyd (1975a, 128-44).

[174] See Stone (1977, 36-7) on the implications of these lines.

[175] Compton-Engle (2015, 45-48) observes how *Knights* mentions very little in the way of costumes. She brings attention to the appropriateness of the gaping comic mask and how Paphlagon's stomach padding was crucial for the references to his large belly and for any stage violence against it.

[176] Slater (2002, 68-85, esp. 84-5) observes that the *Knights* resumes the *Acharnians* theme of the importance of recognizing false politicians by seeing through their appearances.

functions, I argue that the extended metaphor of Paphlagon as a slaughtered pig (*Eq*. 375-81) stands out for its paradigmatic nature and level of detail. This particular image of a human body in *Knights* is also fundamentally different from seemingly similar descriptions of the interiors of heroic or tragic bodies.[177] The latter offer a momentary comparison, while this visualizion of the inside of Paphlagon's body remains relevant throughout the comedy. Any Greek would be hard pressed to draw the bodily cavity of the chorus in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* when they sing, "my *splanchna* do not speak folly: my *kear* is stirred up and whirls forebodingly against my prudent *phrenes*.[178] This imagery is powerful and certainly implies the discrete nature of these "organs," but it is not easily pictured in concrete terms and, moreover, does little for our understanding of the bodily system as a whole.[179]

Furthermore, this example from the *Agamemnon* is hardly typical. The image is in part so striking because the chorus mentions multiple internal body parts and gives an indication of their spatial relation to each other. Generally, ancient Greek poets (and medical writers too, for that matter) focus on the movements within the body rather than the internal structures themselves. Moreover, these physiological descriptions most often serve to capture the psychological state of their subject, not evaluate them from an outsider's perspective. These structures (σχήματα) are more of a concern in the realm of medicine and, in the case of animals, cuisine. Consequently, the contrast between the pig analogy in the *Knights* and typical figurative language is even more pronounced because the points of comparison in the analogies are fixed structures inside the body instead of the phenomena which occur within them. The metaphor, in this case, functions as model. In the *Knights*, we imagine the interior of Cleon's body with the kind of precision only a butcher or physician has. However chaotic and complex the imagery becomes, the parallel between Paphlagon's body and a pig's body, once established in the audience's imagination through the slave's butchery conceit, follows the character throughout the drama.

This image of Cleon, however, is not presented for medical purposes, but rather literary ones—and with clear political implications. Scholars have shown the ways in which the main characters' bodies and relationships with food operate as political critique;[180] these

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[177] The metaphorical nature of which are anyway a matter of dispute.

[178] Aesch. *Ag*. 995-7.

[179] For an analysis of this passage and Aeschylus' "emotional physiology" see Thalmann (1986, esp. 508-11).

[180] Corbel-Morana (2012, 57-62) views the culinary imagery as a critique of *misthophoria*, and in particular Cleon's increase of jury pay. Worman (2008, 84-92) focuses on descriptions of characters' bodies and aspects of gender, while Wilkins (2000, 186-201) studies the play's organization of food, specifically sacrifice. Examing the corpus as a whole, Taillardat (1965, 413-18) comments on the imagery of excessive consumption for demagogue characters.

images and their social import have deeply sunk roots in early Greek poetry. Yet I argue that Aristophanes has another, very sophisticated take on this motif. In step with an impulse found in scientific and historical writing from this time, he shows us a new level of detail in Cleon's interior and its processes. The playwright avails himself of analogy and directs his creative powers under Cleon's skin. This authoritative mode of comparison for the bodily interior is implemented to great effect in the *Knights*.

While his porcine analogy gives the audience an image of the landscape within Paphlagon's body, Aristophanes engages with another sort of metaphor to describe what takes place there. In particular, the playwright focuses on digestion and the bodily structures it involves. Unsurprisingly, this topic, so central to the drama's imagery, also interested fifth-century medical writers and was among the bodily processes which they used analogy to explicate. The act of consumption is necessarily an extreme act of dominance, yet Greek medical writers make an additional connection between the acts of eating and conquest.[181] As their use of words like κρατεῖν and ἐπικρατεῖν implies, some Hippocratics consider digestion as another step in conquering one's food;[182] they often conceived of bodily processes as political or social transfers of power.[183] The first text in which we find this theory is *Places in Man*, which some argue can be dated as early as the mid-fifth century.[184] Thus, possibly even before Aristophanes had started his career, this conceptualization of digestion was in circulation. The following passage from the treatise explains the theory:

> Τούτου δ' αἴτιόν ἐστιν ἡ τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενείη· τὸ γὰρ σῶμα ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν σιτίων ἴσων ἴσως τρέφεται, ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ σώματος τὰ σιτία <u>κρατέεται</u>· ἐπὴν δὲ μάσσον προσενέγκηται, ἢ ἀλλοίως μεταλλάξας <u>κρατέηται</u>, <u>κρατέει</u> δὴ τὰ σιτία· καὶ ὁπόταν <u>κρατέηται</u> τὸ σῶμα ὑπὸ τῶν προσοισμάτων, [ἃ] θάλλειν ποιέει ταὐτὰ καὶ <u>κρατέει</u> ἅμα τοῦ σώματος τά τε ὑπεναντία ποιέουσιν (*Loc. Hom*. 43)
>
> The following is the cause of sickness/weakness in the body: the body is nourished by an equal amount of food in equal measure, and the food is overcome by the body. Yet, when it is given more than it is capable of converting into something else, the body is overcome, and the food dominates.

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181 H. Miller (1949, 197 n. 34); Winslow and Bellinger (1945, 129-30). For the Aristophanic context, Wilkins (2000, 25) comments on this fact in general terms: "Eating is a physical and aggressive process, ingesting one body, whether plant or animal, into another. The eater is likely to benefit more than the eaten, and eating is generally a good in comedy, a benefit to the eater –though the eater may not be approved, particularly the excessive or gluttonous eater and the exclusive eater, such as Cleon/Paphlagon in *Knights*." Von Möllendorff (1995, 78-9) also describes eating as representative of a triumph over one's environment.

182 Hipp. *Aff*. 47; *Al*. 3.1; *VM* 3; 11.

183 Hippocratics borrow metaphors and terms from social and political spheres to describe the body. Vegetti (1983) examines Hippocratic ideas of dominance and conflict in the body, including the term *(epi)kratein* as well (463-5). See Cambiano (1983) for similar descriptions in pathology; *(epi)kratein* in particular is discussed *passim* at 451-5.

184 Craik (2015; 162), (1998, 29). Vegetti (1965) also places it around 440 BCE. In other scholarship, however, proposed dates extend into the fourth century. Müller (1965, 232), in the last decades of the fifth. Rodríguez Alfageme (2010), from the end of the fifth to early fourth. Jouanna (1999, 405) and Schubring (1964, 744), in the fourth century.

> And when the body is overcome by the nourishment that makes it thrive, these same things overcome the body and have the opposite effect.

The author thus figures digestion as the successful mastery of food; sickness results when a body fails to do so. In this way, food plays a zero-sum game with the body. Either the body wins out over the food and converts it into nourishment for its own purposes, or food overpowers the body and causes disease.

Around the time of the *Knights* premiere or shortly after,[185] we find the terms κρατεῖν and ἐπικρατεῖν in a description of digestion in *On Ancient Medicine* as well,[186] a treatise otherwise rife with analogies drawn from the visible world and applied to the invisible bodily interior.[187] Importantly, these analogies are also markedly heuristic in nature: that is, they are central to the author's theories—generating, rather than confirming, ideas.[188] In his account of the diet of early humans, the author states that uncooked, indigestible foods have "great powers" (μεγάλας δυνάμιας)[189] and so were too strong for humans to eat without becoming ill. Food had to be weakened through cooking in order to suit the power and constitution of the human body (τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν τε καὶ δύναμιν), that is, cooking enables the human body to overcome, and thereby assimilate, food and acquire its powers.[190] For the author of *On Ancient Medicine*, and later, for the author of *On Regimen*, the interaction between different powers (δυνάμεις) is a key in the inner-workings of the human body.[191] Yet in *On Ancient Medicine* digestion is also imagined as a process of cooking (πέσσειν) which took place in the belly.[192] As implied in his discussion on the diet of ancient humans, he thus views cooking and digestion as parallel processes, both connected with the idea of domination through weakening one's opposition. The *Knights* reflects these ideas, featuring

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[185] The treatise *On Ancient Medicine* could have been written before the production of the *Knights* at the Lenaea of 424 BCE. Craik (2015, 285) deems plausible "a date in the final decades of the fifth century," and notes that it antedates *Loc. Hom.* (1998, 26). Schiefsky (2005, 64) also places it the last quarter of the fifth.

[186] *VM* and *Loc. Hom*. have notable similarities, particularly in their theory of coction. Craik (1998, 231-3); Jouanna (1990).

[187] Schiefsky (2005, 320-7; 328-36).

[188] Schiefsky (2005, 323-5).

[189] Hipp. *VM* 3.23-4. The authors of *on Regimen* and *on Affections* also describe the powers of different foods at length: *Reg*. II. 39-55; *Aff*. 47-61.

[190] His formulation has roots in the association between prepared food and civilized people (versus barbarians and animals) to which Homer refers in his description of the Cyclops (*Od*. 9.105-11). See also Bakker (2013, 53-60). Nonetheless, here it is more precisely defined and smacks of Presocratic philosophies on proper mixtures, for instance, Alcmaeon's concept of bodily harmony, *isonomia*, (DK24) B4.

[191] Schiefsky (2005, 154-6; 168-9) on Hipp. *VM*; *Reg*. I. 2; II. 39; see also H. Miller (1952) on Hipp. *VM*. Holmes (2010, 98-101) describes how, according to fifth-century science, power struggles in the body are governed by natural forces along with the rest of the natural world. In this way, scientific descriptions using terms for political and social interactions are not metaphorical, but literal.

[192] Jouanna (1999, 314; 319-20); later also in Aristotle (*Meteor*. 4.3.381b7). In *VM* 11 digestion was figured simultaneously as a struggle, cooking, *and* fermentation.

strong resonances between these three domains: physical mastery, cooking, and digestion.

Before these scientific theories of digestion, we also find a connection between eating and power in myth. Along with other evidence, Bowie structurally links the *Theogony* to the *Knights'* plot:[193] as Hesiod relates, Cronus swallows his offspring one by one in an attempt to escape the prophesy that his son would replace him. Here consumption is a prophylactic assertion of power. Yet, while the archaic poet only speaks of the generic "νηδύς" (*Th*. 487), Aristophanes opts for a wide array of vocabulary for the bodily interior. Particularly striking is his characters' insistent use of the term κοιλία, the gut, a word which, although not actually technical, refers to human bodies virtually only in medical contexts at this time.[194] Furthermore, although eating and domination are conceptually related for the Greeks, outside the *Knights* and Hippocratic literature, nowhere else do we hear of such detail regarding the process. Like certain medical treatises, therefore, the *Knights* concerns itself with the topic of the 'digestive conquests' of κοιλίαι. This increased bodily specificity is further conspicuous through the latent parallel between Paphlagon and Cronus' gastric methods of gaining and maintaining power. The playwright thus operates in a descriptive mode that aims at a new level of precision and descriptive political "exposure."[195]

A two-, or even threefold,[196] process of mastery is associated with consumption in the play: eating one's prey is a clear proof of superiority, but afterwards the audience witnesses a second struggle play out on an invisible plane. Taking place in the stomach and in the κοιλίαι, digestion too involves conquering and incorporating the ingested food. Thus, in the context of the play, among the intestinal metaphors and threats of cannibalism, the fact that the Sausage Seller overcomes Paphlagon (κρατεῖν, *Eq*. 134, 210) resonates on two levels. First I analyze these ideas in the drama, first describing the imagery of consumption, then the ways in which Hippocratic notions of bodily cavities and the digestion process enhance how we read Paphlagon. I focus next on the analogy of Cleon as a pig, in particular on the butchery conceit, and analyze the reason for presenting this detailed interior of Cleon's body throughout the play. My conclusions suggest that a high level of anatomical detail, belonging to the medical and culinary realms, is mobilized to symbolize perversions of political relations and activities. The metaphorical dissection/slaughter of Cleon, moreover, enacts an

[193] A. Bowie (1993, 59-60).

[194] With a notable exception in Herodotus' description of Egyptian embalmment (*Hist*. 2.86-88).

[195] I do not refer here to a theory of humor, but rather, an exposition: a descriptive account of the inside of the body. Henderson (1991, 7-35) by contrast uses this term "exposure" for his model of obscenity to denote the degrading effect that obscenity has on its victim.

[196] If we include the civilized step of cooking the food first before consuming it. Characters eat both raw and cooked food in the play.

account-taking of his wrongdoings in the form of an inspection which, as befits the blurred lines between human and animal throughout the play, resonates with the practice of extispicy in addition to medicine and butchery.

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The play's leitmotiv of ingestion and digestion is immediately apparent in its cast of characters. The antihero is a sausage seller, an ἀλλαντοπώλης or κοιλιοπώλης. As Whitman remarks, "the image of a stuffed gut, a sausage, stands at the center of the dizzying whirl of gastronomic and alimentary images." Just as the Sausage Seller stuffs his sausage, Paphlagon stuffs his own gut.[197] This stuffed gut Whitman describes is a threefold image, reflected in the Sausage Seller's craft as well as both Paphlagon's and Demos' belly. Yet the playwright does not just triple the image laterally; rather, like Russian nesting dolls, each one contains the other. Digestion imagery thus takes on much more complex and transgressive implications than it otherwise might. At the level of the plot, the drama concerns an overturning of social order: how this peddler of cheap snacks is raised to the coveted position of Demos' servant, thereby supplanting another low-class tradesman, Paphlagon. The distortion of normal order, however, does not end there. The symbolism of the Sausage Seller's products alone sets the stage for the aberrant acts of eating which occur throughout the *Knights*. This food consists of two basic parts: the intestine of the pig and the ground pig meat, an image which already suggests a complex, even cannibalistic, economy of consumption.

The playwright characterizes Paphlagon with two features, a superhuman appetite and an enormous belly which serves as metonymy for this voraciousness. While the subject of ingestion is concentrated around Paphlagon's behavior, it also can be found in every metaphorical combination imaginable.[198] Paphlagon's prodigious gluttony of course requires comestible victims, and so inedible objects, even ideas, people, and places are portrayed as foodstuff. Aristophanes thus stages a kind of food web whose two basic elements are the eater and the eaten. Alimentary metaphors applied to objects or ideas refer to the avarice or overindulgence of the cook or consumer.[199] In this way, gluttony stands for excess in general. When applied to people, however, food imagery serves as the basic expression of political

[197] Whitman (1964, 93).
[198] Wilkins (2000, 196-7).
[199] For an analysis of the Sausage Seller as a proto-*mageiros* character, see Dohm (1964, 30-6).

dominance in the play.[200] Those in power consume while the weaker are consumed.[201]

The characters talk of money as if it were a dish for Paphlagon. Tribute becomes food for his insatiable appetite when the chorus compares Paphlagon to a tuna fisherman watching the water for tribute: κἀπὸ τῶν πετρῶν ἄνωθεν τοὺς φόρους θυννοσκοπῶν (*Eq*. 313). With Demos unawares, Paphlagon pulls out the sprouts of public examinations (τοὺς καυλοὺς/ τῶν εὐθυνῶν ἐκκαυλίζων), gulps them down, and sops up public funds with both hands (μυστιλᾶται τῶν δημοσίων) (823-7). In this detailed food metaphor, the Sausage Seller accuses Paphlagon of eating, i.e. pocketing, public funds. Gravy represents the money that he quickly and savagely collects to eat; his rapacious hands and mouth are the focus of the comparison and present a grotesque image of his appetite. The Sausage Seller also compares Paphlagon to a fisherman who stirs up stagnant water in order to catch eels. Athens becomes a lake with edible contents: καὶ σὺ λαμβάνεις, ἢν τὴν πόλιν ταράττῃς (867). Although it is unclear what exactly the eels represent, many reasonably interpret it as another monetary metaphor.[202] The description is in any case familiar: Paphlagon stirs up (ταράττῃς) the city in order to find a meal for himself. Thus, state funds become food items for Paphlagon to consume, equating his financial greediness with gluttony. The imagery emphasizes his beastly appetite and consequently, the monstrousness of his body. Yet it also directs the audience's attention to the idiosyncratic food web of the play: the economy of consumption wherein Paphlagon treats money as if it were edible.

Characters can even cook and eat intangible ideas and utterances. As the slaves remark, the Sausage Seller can very usefully apply his own professional skill set to his political career. Instead of stirring black-pudding (χόρδευμα), he would stir the people's affairs (τὰ πράγματα) (*Eq*. 214). To keep the people loyal, he should sweeten them with word-delicacies: ὑπογλυκαίνων ῥηματίοις μαγειρικοῖς (216). The notion of preparing πράγματα like food, especially with the word "τάραττε," indicates that he would distort, as well as create confusion with, the πράγματα.[203] The Sausage Seller's actions as a metaphorical cook contribute to the idea of the universal edibility of Aristophanes' fictional Athens.

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[200] For Littlefield (1968, 13-14), eating is analogous to political activity in general, not necessarily political dominance in particular. Taillardat (1965, 395-8) describes the imagery relating consumption and politics in Aristophanes.

[201] As Hesiod illustrates with the fable of the hawk and the nightingale, in which power is described in terms of the predator-prey relationship (*Op*. 202-11).

[202] Henderson (1998) and Sommerstein (1981), among others, supply a money-related translation.

[203] Similarly the modern culinary metaphor "to cook the books" means manipulating the records in order to present a plausible, albeit false, account.

With growing confidence, the Sausage Seller claims that he can speak and "make a sauce" as well as Paphlagon: ὁτιὴ λέγειν οἷός τε κἀγὼ καὶ καρυκοποιεῖν (*Eq*. 343). The sauce-making metaphor implies that he cooks and stirs, which again calls to mind the "ταράττειν" that Aristophanes associates with demagogues in his plays.[204] "Πράγματα" make a second appearance on the menu as Paphlagon and the Sausage Seller brag about their ability to gorge. Immediately the chorus applies these boasts to politics: τῶν πραγμάτων ὁτιὴ μόνος τὸν ζωμὸν ἐκροφήσει (360). Thus, the chorus yet again describes "πράγματα" as comestible, a stew to be gulped down. With these metaphors, the characters introduce the pervasive imagery of consumption in which even immaterial concepts are food. Intangible matters of state as well as tangible public funds constitute the diet of demagogues. Both types of imagery not only insinuate that demagogues are grotesquely greedy, but also that they hold such an irresistible sway over the *polis*, its money, and affairs, so as to place it on a lower rung of the food chain.

In addition to money and immaterial concepts, live people serve as fare for unscrupulous politicians. The chorus describes humans as food: figs, fruit, lamb, and fish. Paphlagon squeezes magistrates just as one examines the ripeness of figs. Citizens are compared to lambs (ἀμνοκῶν, *Eq*. 264), who are also victims of Paphlagon's gluttony. According to the chorus, the tanner also plucks foreign allies who, like the local magistrates, are compared to fruit: ἀμέργεις τῶν ξένων τοὺς καρπίμους (326). The Sausage Seller claims that Paphlagon caught Demos with bait (δελεάσμασιν), like a fish (789). In each instance, magistrates, citizens, and foreign allies are edible bits, vegetable or animal, for Paphlagon to devour. Because these people and concepts are presented as part of a natural diet for a human, they are metaphorically placed beneath Paphlagon on the food chain and are thereby reduced to unintelligent, defenseless prey.

Furthermore, each of these groups are strongly associated with the government of Athens, whether they are domestic or foreign. Everything and everyone who fall victim to Paphlagon's belly are in fact political in nature, and so these metaphors of consumption necessarily signify political domination. The imagery, moreover, insinuates very sinister methods of gaining power. Paphlagon savagely quashes and incorporates his enemies, who are metaphorically figured as fruits or herbivores, which occupy a lower rung on the natural food chain. Yet his actions and threats are not only aggressive; they are also transgressive. Characters directly speak of humans eating other humans as well without any intermediate

[204] Newiger (2000, 27-9); Taillardat (1965, 410-2); Edmunds (1987, 5-20).

metaphors about vegetables or livestock. The comedy thus not only hints at, but also directly refers to, cannibalism and even the cannibalization of cannibals themselves. Aristophanes presents a natural hierarchy of consumption only to distort it later through images of this quintessential taboo.[205]

As scholars have observed, a disorienting blurriness between human and animal bodies emerges in the course of the drama, particularly in the dialogues between Paphlagon and the Sausage Seller.[206] The two rivals metaphorically transform each other into animals with their insults and threats. Paphlagon becomes a pig for the Sausage Seller to slaughter and stuff while the Sausage Seller becomes nothing more than animal skin that Paphlagon is eager to turn into leather. The comparison, like many of the insults and obscenities in Aristophanes' plays, dehumanizes the two characters.[207] Yet these animal metaphors have another mechanism and function. The insults are foremost an assertion of dominance: by verbally reducing the enemy to an animal, they each can claim superiority. Behind this verbal assertion of power, moreover, lies the threat of violence and ultimately even consumption.

Secondly and importantly, the imagery focuses on dead animals whose parts are itemized and commodified for the market setting.[208] The characters do not refer to the nature, behavior or movement of animals, but rather concentrate on the animals' specific, static body parts: the Sausage Seller's skin which is to be used for leather and Paphlagon's intestines and flesh for sausages and black-pudding. These comparisons to animal organs focus the audience's attention on discrete physical parts that comprise a person which are responsible for the most basic bodily functions. This focus on animal and human corporeal *schemata*, moreover, presents a paradigmatic, as well as systematic, image of his body. Although many other people are dehumanized and objects are consumed in the comedy, we only have detailed anatomical detail where Paphlagon is concerned. Through this developed analogy, I argue, Aristophanes establishes Cleon's nature.

In addition to a pig, Paphlagon is likened to two other animals: a bird and a dog. This imagery focuses on the upper half of the digestive tract rather than the lower end on which the porcine metaphors concentrate. The Sausage Seller refers to a part of Paphlagon's

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[205] Cannibalism is a taboo *par excellence* in ancient Greece. For analyses of its meaning and associations with primitive and uncivilized ways of life, see Vidal-Naquet's (1986, 21-2) (of the Homeric Cyclops in particular (*Od*. 9.105-11; 289-93)); Hughes (1991, 188-9); Detienne (1979, 55ff).

[206] Wilkins (2000, 24-6) on the parallel between animal and human bodies, particularly regarding the stomach, in comedy. He further connects this fact with comedies' performance context: festivals at which audience members indulge in meat. Taillardat (1965, 80-6) discusses eating imagery in Aristophanes which likens people to animals.

[207] Henderson (1991, 66-70).

[208] Wilkins (2000, 179-201) focuses on this marketplace context for his reading of this imagery in the *Knights*.

anatomy not even present in human: a crop (*Eq*. 374). This organ, found in birds among other animals, functions as a kind of storage pouch for food before it enters the gizzard to be digested. The Sausage Seller thus compares Paphlagon to fowl by threatening to cut out this organ. This insult, as the others, is thematically gastric, but the force of this comparison is almost hyper-bodily in that it implies that Paphlagon is so gluttonous that he must have more alimentary organs than a normal human. In other avian imagery, the slave offers the Sausage Seller garlic to make him aggressive like a fighting cock. His opponent metaphorically becomes a rooster in turn with crests and a wattle: δάκνειν, διαβάλλειν, τοὺς λόφους κατεσθίειν,/ χὤπως τὰ κάλλαι' ἀποφαγὼν ἥξεις πάλιν (496-7). Paphlagon thus turns into a grotesque accumulation of at least two different beasts.[209] He has the large intestines of a pig and the comb, wattles, and crop of a bird. Both the upper and lower end of his digestive tract are in this way represented as animalistic and excessive. Nonetheless, the pig analogy remains the most central to his representation.

The *Knights'* ecosystem of consumption becomes more complex. Rather than just an image of the predator eating prey, we are confronted with cannibalistic imagery and even stranger taboos. The roles of eater and eaten are fluid throughout the play; even within the same conversation the audience witnesses the metaphor shift multiple times: Paphlagon describes the Sausage Seller as food and the Sausage Seller does the same to Paphlagon. Such passages hint not only at cannibalism, but even at mutual cannibalism.[210] Aristophanes thereby perverts the natural order of consumer and victim by making the roles of each flexible. Evoking the fundamental association between eating and overpowering, he likens this animal mastery, which the consumption of prey signifies, to political mastery.[211] Yet cannibalism is not part of the natural sequence of the food chain, and thus signals that a paramount disorder is portrayed in the political world of the play.

Halfway through the *Knights*, cannibalism begins to manifest in much more barefaced way. Up to this point, magistrates, allies, and citizens are often represented as fruit and animals which humans normally eat, making the image of cannibalism relatively veiled. The references, however, slowly become more direct. As we have seen, the two opponents threaten to prepare each other's organs like animals. Later in the play, however, they both make concrete, cannibalistic threats. After the parabasis, Paphlagon and the Sausage Seller

[209] A. Bowie (1993, 62) sees this portrayal of Paphlagon as reminiscent of the Minotaur.

[210] Teleclides' *Amphiktuones* (Fr. 2 K-A) also uses the imagery of cannibalism for political discord among citizens: "παύσασθε δικῶν ἀλληλοφάγων." See analysis at Bagordo (2013, 75-82).

[211] According to a Bakhtinian reading, the political world is thereby reduced to the bodily microcosm of the alimentary tract. Bakhtin (1984, 19-20); in Aristophanes, see von Möllendorff (1995, 74-90) and Worman (2008, 65-71).

say they would rather die than fail in devouring or gulping up the other:

Πα.	Οὔτοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρά γ', εἰ μή σ' ἐκφάγω ἐκ τῆσδε τῆς γῆς, οὐδέποτε βιώσομαι.
Αλ.	Εἰ μὴ 'κφάγῃς; Ἐγὼ δέ γ', εἰ μή σ' ἐκπίω, κἂν ἐκροφήσας αὐτὸς ἐπιδιαρραγῶ. (*Eq*. 698-701)

Pa.	By Demeter, if I don't eat you up out out of this land, may I die!
Sa.	If you don't devour me? If I don't gulp *you* down… Even if I myself will burst open after eating you!

Casting metaphorical language aside, the rivals now directly threaten each other with cannibalization. Up to this point, the antagonists have both accused each other of over-consumption and bragged about their own eating prowess. The Sausage Seller has threatened to prepare Paphlagon like a pig and Paphlagon describes how he would tan the Sausage Seller's hide. Yet here the food and animal metaphors reach their logical, literal conclusion in the rivals' expressed desire to consume each other. The imagery is especially taboo because these two demagogue-types are at the top of the food chain in the diegetic ecosystem. Citizens are lambs, while magistrates and foreign allies are merely fruit. Aristophanes portrays Paphlagon and the Sausage Seller as the apex predators of the drama and therefore presents the audience with an especially disturbing image when he has these rivals threaten to eat each other. Predator and prey, consumer and consumed, are utterly confused in this grotesque imagery.

The complexity of the themes of consumption and cannibalism progresses with the seemingly never-ending agon.[212] The audience understands Paphlagon as the villain in the play and the Sausage Seller, at best, as the lesser of two evils. Paphlagon's ravenous appetite at the beginning of the play is presented very negatively. Yet the act of consumption itself becomes morally ambivalent. The Sausage Seller claims that ingestion played a positive role in Athens' past. Aghast at Paphlagon's comparison of himself to Themistocles, the Sausage Seller explains in alimentary metaphors how, unlike Paphlagon, Themistocles benefited Athens:[213]

ὃς ἐποίησεν τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν μεστὴν εὑρὼν <u>ἐπιχειλῆ</u>,
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις <u>ἀριστώσῃ</u> τὸν Πειραιᾶ <u>προσέμαξεν</u>,

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212 Von Möllendorff (1995, 165-6) ingeniously connects the *Knights'* swollen agon to the oversized, grotesque body of carnival.

213 This passage is somewhat obscure. Marr (1996) believes it describes how Themistocles made the city larger through rebuilding its walls (filling the cup), fortifying the harbor (adding lunch) and expanding its perimeters (adding fish), whereas Cleon only extended himself. Sommerstein (1981, ad loc.) suggests that these lines refer to Themistocles' apparent role as controller of the public water supply. See also Taillardat (1965, 397).

ἀφελών τ' οὐδὲν τῶν ἀρχαίων ἰχθῦς καινοὺς παρέθηκεν· (*Eq.* 814-16)

Finding it filled only to the lip,[214] he made the city full,
And he kneaded the Peiraia onto it as her lunch,
Without taking away any of the old fish, he added new ones.

The first metaphor invites multiple interpretations. Themistocles found the city "filled to the lip" and made it full; Athens is a partially filled vessel and represents a passive instrument for ingestion rather than an eater itself. Yet the image also draws attention to an anthropomorphized aspect of the cup, namely the lip (ἐπιχειλῆ). Even in this first metaphor, we see how Athens can be viewed as both diner and dinner.

As the Sausage Seller continues, however, he clearly places the city in the role of the eater. Mixing the metaphorical and literal, he says that Themistocles fed Piraeus to Athens, thereby referring to the port's incorporation in addition to its supply of fish (*Eq*. 815).[215] Here Athens' ingestion of Piraeus is a positive, rather than monstrous, act for the good of the city. In the metaphor, Themistocles plays the roles of chef and server to the city, while Cleon only dines. From this one positive example of consumption, the audience gleans a possible distinction between politically acceptable and inacceptable eating habits. Cities may consume other cities as a matter of course, but they should not feed off of themselves—that is to say, Athenian politicians should not bogart Athenian resources. Nonetheless, this condemnation of political autophagia becomes moot in the remainder of the play, especially as the audience witnesses a final plot twist involving the food chain within the drama.

Near the conclusion the play's action, Demos reveals his surprising, secret intentions. Far from suffering from the rise of demagogues in the city, Demos in fact supports them in order to tear them down when they are most powerful. Using a metaphor of sacrifice, the chorus explains how the Demos fattens these citizens (δημοσίους τρέφεις) for sacrifice (θύσας ἐπιδειπνεῖς) like livestock (*Eq.* 1135-40). Sacrificial animals are of course ultimately eaten, which makes this image especially important for understanding the multi-layered theme of consumption in the comedy. In keeping with this ongoing trope, the metaphor involves consumption, but the roles of eater and eaten undergo a final reversal. Previous alimentary metaphors mostly related to Paphlagon's voracious appetite for magistrates, public funds, cities, immaterial concepts such as "πράγματα," and finally for the Sausage Seller himself. Now it is Demos' turn to dine, and how he dines is even more perverse. He not only

[214] It is not clear what "filled to the lip" means, but in any case it must contrast with "full." Marr (1996, 563).
[215] Elsewhere Aristophanes turns the metaphor around and makes Piraeus the consumer and not the consumed (Fr. 683 K-A).

sacrifices these demagogues, he also induces them to disgorge his stolen goods:

Δῆμ. τηρῶ γὰρ ἑκάστοτ᾽ αὐτοὺς,
οὐδὲ δοκῶν ὁρᾶν,
κλέπτοντας· ἔπειτ᾽ ἀναγκάζω
πάλιν ἐξεμεῖν
ἅττ᾽ ἂν κεκλόφωσί μου,
κημὸν καταμηλῶν. (*Eq.* 1145-50)

Dem. I watch them all the time, and pretend
I don't see them stealing: then I force them
to vomit back up again whatever
they've stolen from me, using a ballot-jar funnel as a probe.

Thus, in addition to a butcher of bad citizens, he is also a doctor who gives an unpleasant treatment.[216] Inducing vomiting was a usual treatment in Hippocratic medicine; the author of *On Regimen*, for example, recommends it for overweight patients and those who have overindulged in food as well as for those suffering from constipation and diarrhea alike.[217] This procedure makes perfect poetic sense, as stealing public funds metaphorically figures as the excessive consumption of food.[218] Of course, this treatment is not done for Cleon's health, but rather for the health of the state. The medical metaphor foreshadows Paphlagon's eventual expulsion from the city as a *pharmakos,* whereupon Athens rejoices and Demos regains his youthful, vital form.[219] The good is purged from the bad, and the bad is purged from the city.

This imagery is a wild confluence of consumption and eating taboos. Paphlagon ingests the city's affairs and cannibalizes its people. Demos itself then cannibalizes Paphlagon, an act which would, by proxy, imply a kind of autophagia because Paphlagon has lived on a diet of Athenians. Demos announces his plans to purge Paphlagon of the aberrant contents of his body and so make him fit for his own consumption. In these ways, the various abnormal digestive activities that play out in the characters' bodily interiors fundamentally reflect a perversion of social order. Both the Sausage Seller and Paphlagon lack an appropriate pedigree for politics; they are low-class tradesmen who deal in the most unsavory, ill-smelling businesses at the city gates, the seedy neighborhood where prostitutes loiter (*Eq.* 1398-1401). It is natural that a Greek writer would attribute the vice of

216 Newiger (2000, 24).

217 H. Miller (1945, 81). E.g. *Reg*. II. 66.72-95; III.68. 45-56; 76.1-18. Vomiting can loosen constipated bowels and dry out loose ones: Κοιλίην δὲ συνεστηκυῖαν λύει ἔμετος, καὶ διαχωροῦσαν μᾶλλον τοῦ καιροῦ ἵστησι, τὴν μὲν διυγραίνων, τὴν δὲ ξηραίνων (*Reg.* II. 59.8-18).

218 This image of Cleon disgorging money was introduced at the beginning of *Acharnians* (6).

219 *Eq*. 1405; Discussion in Wilkins (2000, 184), A. Bowie (1993, 74-5); Bennett and Tyrell (1990). Alternatively, we may also think of him as the pig that must be slaughtered and ritually carried around in order to purify the assembly before it convenes (Istros, *FGrHist* 334 F 16).

indiscriminate gluttony to base characters;[220] yet when this consumption serves as shorthand for their political activities, it spells out chaos in the city. These alimentary metaphors function as a harsh indictment of Cleon and other perceived demagogues: their political sway is not only illegitimate; it is portrayed as a monstrous transgression of natural, not just social, order.

Unsurprisingly Paphlagon's stomach and guts themselves play a significant role in this depiction of perversion. The other characters focus their violence on this area of his body, as the use of the unusual word γαστρίζειν demonstrates (*Eq*. 273; 454). The analogy between Paphlagon's human guts and pig innards again emerges when the first slave encourages the Sausage Seller to hit the tanner in the gut (γάστριζε) with his entrails and tripe (τοῖς ἐντέροις/ καὶ τοῖς κόλοις) (454-5). The physical proximity of the two innards, Paphlagon's intestines and the pig's, enhances the parallelism between the human and animal versions of these organs. It again blurs the boundary between the visible intestines of an animal and the obscure intestines of a human. The physical nearness of the two κοιλίαι, moreover, could have been easily depicted with acting on stage with props which would have enhanced the comparison.

The Sausage Seller too directs his accusations towards Paphlagon's stomach, accusing him of unlawfully eating at the *prytaneion*: ὅτι κενῇ τῇ κοιλίᾳ / εἰσδραμὼν εἰς τὸ πρυτανεῖον, εἶτα πάλιν ἐκθεῖ πλέᾳ (*Eq*. 280-1).[221] Κοιλία is the same word used of pig intestines or tripe which the Sausage Seller prepares to sell by washing out (160); he also uses it later to refer to the finished food itself, tripe (356). When arguing who will be the first allowed to speak, Paphlagon says that he is bursting (διαρραγήσομαι, 340), which implies a internal, bodily pressure that the audience quickly associates with his own overstuffed belly and simultaneously the stuffed gut that is sausage. In this way, Aristophanes not only thematizes Paphlagon's gut, he also draws attention to the specific intestinal structure within his stomach which shares its name with sausage, κοιλία.

As the screaming contest continues, Paphlagon and the Sausage Seller become less easily distinguished from each other, as the similarity of their threats indicates. The Sausage Seller vies with Paphlagon in gluttony and, accordingly, both of their stomachs become the object of verbal violence. They each threaten to tear out each other's bellies or their contents:

[220] As Bourdieu (1991, 87) explains, physical or appetitive excesses denote a lack of bodily "domestication." Worman (2008) applies this to ancient Greek context, also in particular for the *Knights*.

[221] For the social and political significance of this accusation, see Wilkins (2000, 179-84; 87-92). Wilkins argues that Paphlagon treats Demos' private home as a *prytaneion,* overstepping himself and behaving like a rapacious slave.

Πα. Ἐξαρπάσομαί σου τοῖς ὄνυξι τἄντερα./ Αλ. Ἀπονυχιῶ σου τἀν πρυτανείῳ σιτία. (*Eq*. 708-9). The act of consumption looms large in these alimentary metaphors, with special attention placed on the bodily structures associated with digestion, particularly the midsection and the κοιλίαι it contains.

The taboo practice of cannibalism is in fact already built into the most common images in the play, γαστήρ (belly/haggis) and κοιλία (gut/sausage). These food items symbolize an important element of the drama; their form inherently implies a kind of cannibalistic imagery. A butcher makes the sausage from the intestines of pigs, a part of the pig's body which digested food for the pig while it was alive. He then fills these intestines with other parts of the pig's body, thereby creating an image of self-consumption by proxy: the pig digests itself. This image of cannibalism, even autocannibalism, mirrors Paphlagon's own guts and his aberrant habit of people-eating. In the Odyssey, Homer also plays with the cannibalistic imagery inherent in the word γαστήρ, using it to describe Odysseus' weakened and debased state upon his homecoming; the poet compares him to a γαστήρ, and a γαστήρ is also what the disguised hero tries to win for himself to eat.[222] This concept, therefore, was already in Aristophanes' poetic inventory, but the playwright takes it to an extreme. Moreover, he chooses to fixate, not on the belly, but rather on the κοιλίαι, which were underneath the visible surface of the body and much more specific.[223] They were also an important focus of fifth-century physiological descriptions; these internal alimentary organs, according to medical writers, re-stage the familiar, and visible, process of mastering prey.

Hippocratics used "κοιλία" to denote a bodily cavity, often distinguishing between upper and lower κοιλίαι, which refer to the spaces above and below the diaphragm, respectively.[224] On its own, the word most often indicates this lower cavity, specifically the guts. While not technical in a strict sense,[225] in the fifth century it appears by far the most frequently in medical treatises. Some Presocratic fragments also contain the word, also indicating parts of the human body. In a passage which Aristotle preserves, Diogenes of Apollonia uses the term multiple times in a description of bodily vessels.[226] Outside of medical writing in the fifth century, Herodotus uses the term κοιλία while explicating Egyptian customs (in particular embalming corpses),[227] and Thucydides once in his

[222] *Od*. 20.25-30; 18.11-7, respectively. Bakker (2013, 141-2); Worman (2008, 38-9).
[223] Unlike γαστήρ, which, like "stomach" in English, could refer to the interior or exterior of this area of the body.
[224] E.g in *Morb*. I. 4; 8; 11 etc.; *Nat. Hom*. 12. See Gundert (1992, 454 n. 8).
[225] Willi (2003, 81).
[226] (DK64) B6; also Empedocles (DK 31) A97.
[227] *Hist*. 2.40; 4.72 (of animals); *Hist*. 2.86-8 (of human corpses).

description of the plague (*Hist*. 2.49.6). In comedy, however, it refers to the stomach, intestines or sausage, which is of course made from porcine κοιλίαι.[228] It is unsurprising considering the focus that this genre places on both food and the human body, yet nowhere except in the *Knights* do we find such a commingling of the bodily and alimentary meanings of the word, the confusion of which is so central to the import of the drama.

Referring to a person's κοιλία of course primarily has a debasing impact, in a way similar to Homer's metaphor of Odysseus as haggis or the Muses' description of humans as "mere bellies" (γαστέρες οἶον) in the *Theogony*.[229] Nevertheless, the word κοιλία has significantly more descriptive and revelatory power than γαστήρ due to its relative rarity, greater specificity, and medical connotation with reference to humans. When characters mention Paphlagon's κοιλία, they use a word which, unlike γαστήρ, is otherwise only found in medical contexts for describing human bodies. The mention of κοιλία invites us to look at Paphlagon-Cleon not only as butchers, but also, because he is ultimately human, as doctors. The professions of butcher and physician are perversely blurred along with their respective subjects, animal and human. The butchery imagery is crystalized early in the play with a particularly violent statement by one of the slaves. It evokes taboos that are complementary in this play: cannibalism and human dissection. With this conceit Aristophanes deftly reinforces his symbolic scrutiny of Cleon, as I discuss in detail at the end of this section.

Towards the beginning of the play, when the agon transitions from boasts of consumptive prowess to personal threats, the animalistic bodies of Paphlagon and the Sausage Seller come to the fore and set the tone for the rest of the comedy. The rivals threaten each other with the treatment that they give animals in their respective professions. The Sausage Seller plans to stuff Paphlagon instead of a sausage: ἐγὼ δὲ βυνήσω γέ σοι τὸν πρωκτὸν ἀντὶ φύσκης (*Eq*. 364). He thereby highlights the anatomical parallel between his enemy's body and an animal's, replacing the pig's intestines with a human anus in the metaphor.[230] The Sausage seller continues by threatening to make mincemeat of Paphlagon: περικόμματ' ἔκ σου σκευάσω (*Eq*. 372). Again, Paphlagon's body is paralleled with an animal carcass whose meat is edible. The threats invite the audience to consider Paphlagon's innards, his intestines, and the flesh beneath his skin.

The first slave brings to a fever pitch the metaphor of Paphlagon as a pig. The passage

[228] There are only two extant instances outside of Aristophanes; in both cases it denotes the gut: Eupolis 187 K-A; Theopompus 63 K-A.

[229] Hes. *Th*. 26.

[230] This insult implies sexual violence which adds another element to the dehumanizing effect of the comparison according to Henderson (1991, 67).

epitomizes the play's preoccupation with visualizing the bodily interior and with conflating human and animal bodies. Here we have the clearest example of the kind of analogy which I have been discussing: an analogy which gives the audience a view into the invisible areas of Cleon's body through an extremely explicit comparison. The porcine analogy is at its most developed, detailed apogee in the play, and so the audience is especially attuned to how Aristophanes has Paphlagon's body verbally portrayed and manipulated. The imagery is a butcher metaphor. The evaluation would be for culinary (μαγειρικῶς, *Eq*. 376) purposes, yet the uneasy slippage between human and animal bodies and the act of examination inevitably has medical undertones:

> καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ ἐμβαλόντες αὐτῷ
> πάτταλον μαγειρικῶς
> ἐς τὸ στόμ᾽, εἶτα δ᾽ ἔνδοθεν
> τὴν γλῶτταν ἐξείραντες αὐτοῦ
> σκεψόμεσθ᾽ εὖ κἀνδρικῶς
> κεχηνότος
> τὸν πρωκτὸν εἰ χαλαζᾷ. (*Eq*. 375-81)
>
> And by Zeus, like cooks we'll put a peg
> into his mouth, then pull out his tongue
> and, as he's gaping open,
> we'll take a good look at his asshole to see if he's diseased.

The slave in effect compares Paphlagon's body from head to toe with a slaughtered swine. Demosthenes suggests that they examine Paphlagon like a pig, checking for signs of disease (*Eq*. 375-381). The author in *Epidemics* IV also describes a diseased human orifice this way (χάλαζα).[231] Although the tongue, rather than anus, is the affected part, we can safely assume the term does not evoke exclusively animal afflictions in this passage, but also human ones; at any rate there is already a strong association between these two orifices in the *Knights*. The proposed inspection would begin with a brusque examination of the pig's mouth and end with looking up the rectum:[232] the whole digestive system of the body is under examination; from mouth to anus, the pig's carcass is visually mapped onto Paphlagon's body. In particular, the mouth and anus are pointedly paralleled in this image. Both parts of the body, vocal and sexual, are associated throughout Aristophanes' works,[233] yet these lines present another symbolically relevant aspect of the body: its internal, pathological flaws and what they mean in the context of the comedy.

[231] H. Miller (1945, 84). *Epidemics* IV compares the texture of a tongue to hail: "γλῶσσά τε ἐτρηχύνετο, ὥσπερ χαλαζώδει πυκνῷ" (Hipp. *Epid.* IV. 10).

[232] Perhaps there is also a parallel to be found in the *a capite ad calcem* organization of early Greek prognostic treatises (Jouanna 1999, 145-6).

[233] Both orifices have the potential to denote lack of self-control and excess and play a part in a complex matrix of sexual and rhetorical associations. Henderson (1991, 209-10; 211); Worman (2008, 88-92).

Paphlagon's would-be butchers imagine his alimentary tract, and thereby establish a detailed comparison that serves as a reference in the rest of the play. In a real human body, the movement of food within the body is, of course, largely invisible; only the initial consumption and final excretion of the food is observable. Through this imagery, therefore, the audience members are given a look at the inner-workings of Cleon's body by visualizing these two (potentially sickly) orifices as far up and down as possible. Aristophanes introduces a strong connection between the visible, edible κοιλίαι of a pig and invisible κοιλίαι within the human body. It is a detailed anatomical analogue. Although he presents it exactly so, the slave does not, and cannot, actually "expose" the inside of Cleon to demonstrate "what he really is." Rather, with his suggestion, the slave projects a distinct image onto Cleon/Paphlagon's invisible insides, thereby helping the audience clearly imagine what the demagogue eats, and how he eats it. Thus, in addition to his grotesque surfaces and orifices, Cleon's bodily interior serves as political critique. Throughout the play, and particularly here in Demosthenes' threat, Aristophanes presents an anatomy of Cleon's internal body parts and descriptions of their activities.

Why does the playwright revel in describing Cleon's insides in this way? What explicative power do these internal structures and activities have that a description of the surface of his body does not? The answer becomes clearer when we consider exactly who is normally privy to this sort of knowledge. These anatomical descriptions belong to the world of doctors, butchers, and seers. All three specialists are symbolically present in this passage. When Demosthenes proposes to examine the body and look for signs of disease, the viewer takes on these three roles: they do not only view Paphlagon through the eyes of a butcher, but also through the eyes of a seer, and, because Paphlagon is ultimately human, even a physician. These crafts, furthermore, resonate with each other:[234] a butcher and seer have key roles in sacrifice. The former prepares, and the latter examines, sacrificial animals, but their tasks overlap.[235] A butcher might already deem a diseased animal unfit for sacrifice even before a diviner can inspect the entrails. Both a seer and doctor, furthermore, must read signs within bodies and make predictions based on these.

Butchers and seers had practical knowledge through examining the inside of animal

[234] Especially with regard to the importance of prediction in Hippocratic medicine, e.g. in Hipp. *Reg.* I. 12; *Reg.* IV. 86. Discussion in Lloyd (1979, 44-5). The fact that the author of *Regimen in Acute Disease* feels the need set himself in opposition to diviners is also telling (Hipp. *Acut*. 8 = L 3). Manetti (1993, 39-40), moreover, draws our attention to the dual figure of doctor-seer, ἰατρόμαντις, as Apollo and Asclepius were called.

[235] Berthiaume (1982, 29-31), *pace* A. Bowie (1995, 473). Dohm (1964, 36) avers that the *mageiros* would perform only private sacrifices, leaving a priest to do public ones, although he does not cite evidence; he nonetheless discusses the important element of sacrifice in the role of the *mageiros* (27ff).

bodies, while doctors, like the playwright, largely worked with analogy for describing the inside of human bodies. Medical writers from this era did not perform dissections, instead basing their theories of anatomy on analogies, most of which did not involve animal bodies.[236] Aside from the fact that the cutting open of cadavers was taboo in ancient Greece,[237] another reason, however surprising, is that fifth-century investigators did not believe that this practice would provide insight into the interior processes of the human body.[238] The movement within the body, its signs of life, was of greater interest. Hippocratic anatomical explanations thus rely on inferences and comparisons to other visible phenomena. The inspection of animal innards, however, was a different story.

In contrast to human bodies, for animal bodies, there was no dissection taboo. The innards of sacrificed animals not only shed light on animal anatomy, but through the practice of extispicy can even promise revelatory, prophetic information which their bodily exterior could not.[239] As a pig, Paphlagon not only can be slaughtered and cut open, but in this state he also gains the potential to offer prophetic truths, not with his words, but with his entrails.[240] Through using the analogy of an animal body for Cleon, Aristophanes opens this floodgate of other metaphorical implications. This pig metaphor does not only present the demagogue as potential food. When Demos reveals that his true intentions are to fatten up bad citizens for sacrifice, it becomes clear that Cleon too is a slated for slaughter. The demagogue can no longer recite false oracles to manipulate the "Sibyl-mad" Demos.[241] It is not in his words, but in his bodily cavity, that the audience can find the truth about his role in the city. Thus, by conflating these different practices, the scene underscores the ways in which the interior of bodies can convey meaning in different contexts. It impresses upon the audience the revelatory results of examining, or even imagining, Cleon's body. Through giving us a view into Paphlagon's insides, Aristophanes guides us through a (very critical) examination and evaluation of Cleon.

The insight we gain into Cleon, moreover, inevitably has a strong political dimension. Because of Paphlagon's diet of public funds and magistrates, the image of the exposed bodily

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[236] Animal dissections are a minor exception (see note 173 above). The fifth-century Presocratic Alcmaeon seems to have dissected an eye, but not a cadaver (Lloyd 1975a, 118-28).

[237] Von Staden (1992b, 225-31). There was an extreme disparity between the moral, as well as heuristic, value of cutting open a sacrificial animal and a human.

[238] Hippocratics of this era did not use the empirical approach which would characterize modern science. Lloyd (1979, 126-225).

[239] On how human innards also have prophetic qualities, see Padel (1992, 73-75).

[240] Adult pigs were not the typical animals used for extispicy, but rather, oxen, sheep, goats and sometimes roosters. Collins (2008, 321); Bremmer (2010, 133-4). Paphlagon is compared to a rooster later (*Eq*. 496-7).

[241] *Eq*. 61; 1090-1; 1229-30. Yet perhaps it is also worthy of note that he should be compared to an animal which it is unusual to sacrifice.

interior symbolizes a reckoning of his political conduct. All of the bizarre and perverse descriptions of consumption in the play are not fleeting images, unfounded accusations. In the logic of the comedy, we find that they are documented and on display when we look inside the body itself: it is a metaphorical examination of his generalship, the kind which could occur during his term (an εἰσαγγελία) or at the end (an εὔθυνα).[242] The slave verbally enacts this fantasy of inspection through a kaleidoscope image of a butcher-seer-doctor. Yet the audience already knows what the examiner of innards would find: Paphlagon does have diseased insides; this disease, moreover, portends nothing good for the state. The demagogue's entire alimentary tract, in addition to his orifices, is exposed for an evaluation of his political behavior.

Thus a reading for the *Knights* can be found in the characters' digestive tracts whose contents, function, and appearance are described in detail. We understand Paphlagon's nature when we fix our imaginative gaze on his gut, a space that Aristophanes fleshes out through highly nuanced figurative language, and in particular the comparison of Paphlagon to a (cannibalistic) pig. Like analogies in the Hippocratic corpus, this imagery sheds light on the form and function of a bodily interior and enables an evaluation of its health. Yet, while in medical writing it serves to illustrate human anatomy or physiology, in this comedy analogy serves to depict a perverse, even pathological, state of politics. By engaging with this mode of thinking, the playwright taps into its explanatory power. Value judgements, in this way, masquerade as analytical judgements.

Furthermore, the fifth-century conceptualization of digestion as an act of domination sets up the comedy's metaphorical doublet of external and internal mastery which grows increasingly disordered in the course of the drama. With its dual meaning, the term κοιλία functions as a flagship for these disruptions in the natural hierarchy of eater and eaten. Alimentary organs offer a doubled, even tripled, image of a fundamentally political plot, scaled down into the bellies of the main characters: Paphlagon has control over Demos until the equally, if not more, revolting Sausage Seller wrests it from him. Fundamentally, all of this imagery recalls iambic critique leveled against the mouths and bellies of its victims,[243] but here it is enriched with more specific and obscure anatomical structures which have associations and implications of their own. Through these images of the body, Aristophanes not only depicts extravagant perversions of power structures in his fictional Athens. He also,

[242] The latter of which could potentially be frustrated by the lack of limitations on re-election. See Hamel (1998, 128; 143). This "examination" might also be a comic justice for Cleon's attempt two years prior, according to some scholars, to railroad Laches for embezzling money in Sicily.

[243] Worman (2008, 25-61). E.g. Archilochus 124b.

and more importantly, suggests that this power-grapping and bribe-taking escape the notice of ordinary citizens because they occur in secrecy and obscurity, much like the inner workings of the human digestive tract. These crimes of the metaphorical belly require the expert explication of metaphorical doctors, seers, and butchers, all three of which the language and imagery of *Knights* supplies in spades. The playwright thereby stakes out Cleon's insides as a space for political critique with a level of medical detail and authority that his poetic forbearers had not.

1.4 Strepsiades' Body in *Clouds*: Meteorological Effects and Moral Consequences

The *Clouds* presents conflicts between generations: father and son, traditional values and intellectualism, old and new gods. Strepsiades' attempt to maneuver his way into the trendy, shameless world of sophists and the Lesser Argument ends in failure, as it only can. Yet, rather than simply staging a dismissive critique of contemporary intellectualism, Aristophanes has his characters engage with these scientific issues in a more meaningful, nuanced way. On the road to ruin and subsequent revelation, Strepsiades draws the audience's attention to theories of fifth-century thinkers which are relevant for reading the social conflict of the play. This section focuses in particular on the references to Hippocratic and Presocratic theories about meteorology, the human body, and the common ground between these areas of inquiry. I argue that the *Clouds* highlights the shared interest that natural philosophy and medicine have in explaining obscure phenomena in terms of impersonal forces and physical attributes rather than traditional gods. The comedy's themes of susceptibility and influence are thematically aligned with the omnipresent, and in cases omnipotent, Presocratic element of air. I propose that they are ultimately also linked to the play's depiction of the negative influence that contemporary intellectualism can have on morality. Instead of demonizing natural philosophy itself, however, the comedy leaves us with the impression that such pursuits are not intrinsically evil, but rather, that they are instruments that respond and change to the will of a potentially immoral personal agent. In that sense, they are much like shapeshifting Cloud-goddesses themselves and all other objects and bodies subject to natural forces. I begin by giving a short overview of the direct references to Presocratic science in the *Clouds*, then analyze relevant scenes from Strepsiades' education and contextualize them within the agon and dénouement of the play.

During Strepsiades' stay at the Phrontisterion, he learns the great range that the inquiries of Socrates and his pupils appear to have, extending from cosmology to the measurement of insects' bodies. Yet these two extremes are neither unrelated nor arbitrary. Rather, they are intimately related to each other, according both to real natural philosophers and the mock intellectuals of the comedy. In the cavities of the body, whether human or animal, Aristophanes' Socrates finds a microcosm of meteorological events. This basic comparative paradigm was in fact already well-established in medical dialogue at this time. Air constitutes one of the major themes of the play and features as the common thread that binds these two very different areas of science in many of the play's scientific descriptions

and explanations. Aristophanes' Socrates describes the cause of a gnat's buzzing, thunder, and lightning in terms of the movement of air, thereby identifying this substance as a fundamental meteorological, as well as biological, actor.

In the *Clouds* air is not only a tangible object of intellectual inquiry; it is part of Socrates' pantheon, a god whom he invokes even before calling upon the Clouds themselves: ὦ δέσποτ᾽ ἄναξ ἀμέτρητ᾽ Ἀήρ, ὃς ἔχεις τὴν γῆν μετέωρον,/ λαμπρός τ᾽ Αἰθὴρ, σεμναί τε θεαὶ Νεφέλαι βροντησικέραυνοι: "O Lord and Master, measureless Air, who hold the earth aloft,/ and you, shining Empyrean, and ye Clouds, awesome goddesses of thunder and lightning."[244] In this prayer Air replaces Zeus as king of the other meteorological gods. Socrates later swears by "Respiration, Void and Air": μὰ τὴν Ἀναπνοήν, μὰ τὸ Χάος, μὰ τὸν Ἀέρα (*Nu*., 627). Learning from his teacher, Strepsiades also exchanges his usual gods for Air in an exclamation: εὖ γε, νὴ τὸν Ἀέρα (667). Socrates and his pupils thus inextricably commingle the intellectual and divine qualities of air, leaving the audience without so much as a blurred distinction between the two.

The association between the divine and meteorological was hardly new to Aristophanes or to his even moderately informed theater-goers:[245] it is an (in)famous feature of certain Presocratic philosophies. Heraclitus seems to understand Zeus as a thunderbolt in one of his fragments,[246] while Anaxagoras reportedly called the sun a "red-hot glowing mass of metal" (τὸν ἥλιον <μύδρον> εἶναι διάπυρον),[247] a theory which resulted in an accusation of impiety.[248] Such an impiety charge reveals an anxiety about relegating the gods to the merely physical plane and thereby deprived them of any incorporeal, divine quality. For his meteorological explanations of deities, Xenophanes in particular meditates on the play's titular goddesses, claiming that what is called the Dioskouroi are actually glimmering little clouds. Iris too is, in reality, a cloud which only gives the impression of chromatic variegation. Although not directly dismissing Iris' godhood, Anaxagoras also states that a rainbow is a cloud which reflects the sun's light.[249] These statements, particularly the ones attributed to Xenophanes, have an effect which Alexander Mourelatos aptly characterizes as "deflationary."[250] Xenophanes' clouds, just like Socrates' Clouds in the play, are gods

[244] *Nu*. 264-5, trans. Henderson.
[245] Bierl (2004, 15-16) in fact sees the new, cosmic gods of the *Clouds* not as a form of atheism, but rather as a return to the first generation of gods that Hesiod describes in his *Theogony*.
[246] (DK22) B64.
[247] (DK59) A1.3-9.
[248] (DK59) A1.
[249] (DK21) A39; B32; (DK59) B19.
[250] Mourelatos (2008, 136).

reduced to mundane objects. Both Aristophanes' comedy and these Presocratic ideas, therefore, confuse and conflate the divine and banal. I show how this plays out even more clearly in the *Clouds'* representation of bodily function and the implications it has for personal agency.

What intellectual(s) does the playwright specifically lampoon? The ideas of Socrates and his initiates in the *Clouds* are not strictly those of the historical Socrates, but are rather a mish-mash of various philosophies and thinkers.[251] His especial preoccupation with air, however, can be traced to the tenets of a particular natural philosopher, Diogenes of Apollonia.[252] Scholars interpret these apparent references to Diogenes in various ways.[253] Whatever the reason, however, Diogenes is an excellent source for diverse examples of natural philosophy and medicine which we find the *Clouds*. As evidence for the connection, scholars cite the fact that Diogenes apparently theorized, like Anaximenes, that air is the fundamental element and that variations in density account for different kinds of matter, as Anaxagoras also believed.[254] He therefore reintroduced monism, which had been out of vogue among his most recent predecessors, and resolved the problem of different types of matter by theorizing that the principal element, air, takes on different forms depending on physical factors such as its rarity. Simplicius also preserves Diogenes' ideas that air is intelligent, governs everything, and provides the ability to govern others. Like Anaxagoras, Diogenes believed this intelligence is a god which reaches and arranges everything.[255] Furthermore, since air is thought itself, or at least productive of thought, a creature's intelligence depends on how moist its brain is.[256] His theories are thus both meteorological and biological; he in fact wrote on medicine as well as natural philosophy.[257]

Even in this smattering of extant tidbits, some of the parallels between Aristophanes' Socrates and this Presocratic philosopher are apparent.[258] Diogenes' deification of air, as mentioned, serves an important thematic purpose throughout the *Clouds*. The notion of air's

[251] Konstan (2011). Scholars still discuss the degree to which Aristophanes' Socrates resembles the historical Socrates. Recent studies include Konstan (2011), Alfhoff (2007), Morales Troncoso (2001), Newell (1999), and E. Bowie (1998).

[252] Vander Waerdt (1994, 61); Byl (1994); Gelzer (1956, 68-70). Diels (1881, 105-8) was the first to make this observation.

[253] Dover (1968, 127-8) follows the traditional approach by remarking that Aristophanes alludes to Diogenes in order to ridicule him, which certainly at least partially explains the reference. Vander Waerdt (1994, 66-75) boldly argues that Aristophanes chooses Diogenes because Socrates himself was a follower of Diogenes at the time, which he argues through later sources such as Plato and Xenophon.

[254] (DK13) A1; (DK64) A6; (DK59) A70.

[255] (DK59) B12; (DK64) B4; B5.

[256] (DK64) A19.

[257] See Introduction, note 4.

[258] Diels (1881) and later Laks (1983) discuss this comparison.

intelligence and the importance of air's rarity certainly provide a background for Socrates' statement about mingling his thoughts with rarefied air (*Nu*. 227-30). Yet, just as in Diogenes' own philosophy, these various tenets concerning air, its divinity, its intelligence, and its status as the sole element are not limited to the meteorological realm of inquiry; they are also all relevant for the speculations about the body that we hear during Strepsiades' stay at the Phrontisterion.

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Among the Socrates' biological subjects are the innards of a gnat. As Socrates' pupil tells Strepsiades, Chaerephon of Sphettus asked Socrates about the origin of its buzzing noise: does the mouth or rump of a gnat produce it? (κατὰ τὸ στόμ᾽ ᾄδειν ἢ κατὰ τοὐρροπύγιον, *Nu*.158). Socrates refers to the mechanics of air pressure in his complex answer:

> ἔφασκεν εἶναι <u>τοὔντερον</u> τῆς ἐμπίδος
> <u>στενόν</u>, διὰ λεπτοῦ δ᾽ ὄντος αὐτοῦ τὴν <u>πνοὴν</u>
> βίᾳ βαδίζειν εὐθὺ <u>τοὐρροπυγίου</u>·
> ἔπειτα <u>κοῖλον</u> πρὸς <u>στενῷ</u> προσκείμενον
> τὸν <u>πρωκτὸν</u> ἠχεῖν ὑπὸ βίας τοῦ <u>πνεύματος</u>. (*Nu*. 160-4)
>
> [Socrates] said that the gut of the gnat is narrow,
> and that, through this space, because it is small,
> the gust perforce goes directly to the rear end:
> then the asshole, being a cavity next to the narrow one,
> resounds from the force of the air.

This account involves bodily cavities and focuses on their size and shape. Socrates mentions the narrowness of the gut three times, first with a predicate adjective (στενόν), then with a participle with causal denotation (διὰ λεπτοῦ δ᾽ ὄντος αὐτοῦ),[259] and lastly with the substantive (στενῷ). The emptiness of the anus is underlined through its apposition to κοῖλον, the "cavity," or as a substantive adjective, the "hollow part."[260] He emphasizes the functional importance of the shape of the gut and anus, which he both describes simply as channels for wind. The physical dimensions of these body parts are thus represented as the only information that is essential about them; it is the passage of air through these narrow and broad cavities, rather than the cavities themselves, that causes the gnat to buzz. The theory exclusively involves the animal's insentient bodily cavities and makes no appeal to its agency

[259] O'Regan (1992, 36-7) observes that the term *leptos* is a play on sophistic over-subtlety.
[260] As e.g. Henderson and Halliwell take it in their translations.

as a living being.[261] The imagery also suggests a strong lack of distinction between the external and internal. The idea that the body and other natural objects have passages (*poroi*) was a topic of scientific interest at this time.[262] Here the gnat is not only perforated, it is caricatured into two large *poroi* which the wind readily permeates. The insect is hollow, a mere instrument of aerial forces.

Responding with glee, Strepsiades himself concludes that the gnat's rear end is literally an instrument, a musical instrument: "The asshole of gnats is a trumpet, then:" σάλπιγξ ὁ πρωκτός ἐστιν ἄρα τῶν ἐμπίδων (*Nu*. 165). The old man's comparison to this wind instrument again emphasizes the essential role of the empty spaces and external agency; a trumpet of course requires a player blowing into it in order to function. In the same way, without the passage of air through the body of the gnat, the animal also loses its characteristic sound, and thereby in turn the indication that it is alive. Socrates' and Strepsiades' depictions thus focus on the mechanical aspects of the animal and involve imagery of inanimate objects.

Unsurprisingly, the explanation that Socrates offers for the buzzing of a gnat also draws from Presocratic ideas. At first glance, the passage seems to relate more to meteorological phenomena than to the bodily functions of an insect. Socrates certainly uses language fitting for ancient physics. Explaining solar eclipses and the phases of the moon, Anaximander describes celestial bodies as three rings encircling the stationary earth. These rings are like chariot wheels with inner rims filled with fire; because these inner rims are perforated, we can often see their fire from earth. He specifically states that the sun gives off light from a hollow, narrow place (ἐκ κοίλου τόπου καὶ στενοῦ) on this "chariot wheel," just as from a trumpet (ὡς ἀπὸ σάλπιγγος).[263] In this testimonium, therefore, Anaximander also uses the analogy of a trumpet, but speaks of the emission of light instead of sound. Here too it is key that the space is narrow (στένος) and hollow (κοῖλος).[264] Like Socrates, he focuses his attention on physical forms and how these affect the mechanism of bodies, albeit it celestial, rather than insectile, ones.

In Presocratic and Hippocratic accounts of the human body as well, physical form was

[261] O'Regan (1992, 37) sees this lack of agency and the involuntariness as a comic critique of sophistic argumentation. According to her, this and other air-related descriptions reduce rhetoric to mere flatulence.

[262] Padel (1992, 40-44).

[263] "τινὲς δέ, ὧν ἐστι καὶ Ἀ., φασὶ πέμπειν αὐτὸν [n. τὸν ἥλιον] τὸ φῶς σχῆμα ἔχοντα <τροχοῦ>. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῶι τροχῶι κοίλη ἐστὶν ἡ πλήμνη, ἔχει δὲ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἀνατεταμένας τὰς κνημῖδας πρὸς τὴν ἔξωθεν τῆς ἁψῖδος περιφοράν, οὕτω καὶ αὐτὸν ἀπὸ κοίλου τὸ φῶς ἐκπέμποντα τὴν ἀνάτασιν τῶν ἀκτίνων ποιεῖσθαι καὶ ἔξωθεν αὐτὰς κύκλωι φωτίζειν. τινὲς δὲ ὡς ἀπὸ σάλπιγγος ἐκ κοίλου τόπου καὶ στενοῦ ἐκπέμπειν αὐτὸν τὸ φῶς ὥσπερ πρηστῆρας." (DK12) A21.

[264] Unlike in Socrates' account, however, he uses this term adjectively and does not use the neuter substantive κοῖλον, "cavity."

in fact a major explanation for the function of body parts, as I already discussed while analyzing comparisons of human bodies to vessels (Chapter 1.1). The author of *On Ancient Medicine* explains the roles of different sorts of bodily structures (*schemata*), "some of which are hollow and tapering, from wide to narrow" (τὰ μὲν γὰρ κοῖλά τε καὶ ἐξ εὐρέος ἐς στενόν ἐστι συνηγμένα);[265] a structure's nature, according to him, explains its behavior. The bladder, head and womb are like cupping instruments (broad and tapering) in order to draw moisture. He also mentions flatulence specifically, remarking that it makes noise and rumbles in hollow, wide parts of the body, like in the bowels (ἐν…κοιλίῃ).[266] Through its movement, the gas makes noise. Like many other fifth-century thinkers, the author stresses the necessity (ἀνάγκη) of these phenomena.[267] Socrates too says that the air travels "perforce" (βίᾳ) from a narrow part of the body to the wide part (the rump)[268] and later uses the usual Presocratic word while explaining thunder and lightning, "δι᾽ ἀνάγκην" (*Nu*. 377) and "ὑπ᾽ ἀνάγκης" (*Nu*. 405). Therefore, although the Hippocratic author and Socrates imagine the mechanism of bowel noises differently, they both focus on the structures of the bodies, the characteristics of their dimensions, and how these features, by necessity and because of the movement of air, produce the phenomena observed.

As scholars have noted, this theory about the buzzing noise of gnats also resembles other scientific accounts of sound,[269] including Alcmaeon of Croton's account of the mechanism of hearing.[270] He describes the perception of sound as the reverberation of air through ear cavities: ἀκούειν μὲν οὖν φησι τοῖς ὠσίν, διότι κενὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐνυπάρχει· τοῦτο γὰρ ἠχεῖν (φθέγγεσθαι δὲ τῶι κοίλωι), τὸν ἀέρα δ᾽ ἀντηχεῖν· "[Alcmaeon] says that we hear with the ears because they have a hollow in them which makes a noise (resounds by means of the cavity), and the air echoes it back."[271] Another fragment of Alcmaeon gives a similar account: "We hear with the empty space within the ear. For this resounds in accordance with the ingress of air because all cavities make noise:" ἀκούειν ἡμᾶς τῶι κενῶι τῶι ἐντὸς τοῦ ὠτός· τοῦτο γὰρ εἶναι τὸ διηχοῦν κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος εἰσβολήν· πάντα γὰρ τὰ κοῖλα

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[265] *Hipp. VM* 22.6-7.

[266] Ibid. 22.47-50.

[267] This concept is mentioned in Parmenides (DK28) B8; B10; A37; Empedocles (DK31) B115; Leucippus (DK67) B2; Democritus (DK68) A66.

[268] Some have translated βίᾳ as denoting force instead of necessity, but the element of necessity suits his quasi-scientific diction better.

[269] Schmid (1948, 215-6) draws a parallel between this account and Archelaus' physical account of sound. As Diogenes writes of him: πρῶτος δὲ εἶπε φωνῆς γένεσιν τὴν τοῦ ἀέρος πλῆξιν (DK60) A1.22-3. Archelaus was, moreover, purported to be an Athenian resident and teacher of Socrates (DK60) A1.10. O'Regan (1992, 36) believes the comedy is emblematized by the idea that articulate speech, φωνὴ, is the percussion of air.

[270] Althoff (2007); Sommerstein (1982, ad loc.); Dover (1968, ad loc.). Althoff (2007, 108 n. 18) and Dover (1968) also mention Archytas' theories on the production of sound from the fourth century: (DK47) B1.

[271] (DK24) A5.17-19.

ἠχεῖ.[272] In these explanations, this natural philosopher identifies a bodily void (κενόν), cavity (κοῖλον), and air (ἀήρ/πνεῦμα) as the important factors for hearing. Aristophanes likewise has Socrates refer to the passage of air through bodily cavities, using the term κοῖλον as well. He also uses at least one substantive adjective that describes a physical trait (στένον, *Nu.* 163), which might reflect the similarly vague-sounding κενόν, "empty place, void," in both Alcmaeon fragments. As Jochen Althoff observes, the Hippocratic treatise *On Fleshes* also describes hearing as the result of resounding hollows in the ear:[273]

> Hearing occurs for the following reason. The openings of the ears lead to a bone that is hard and dry like a stone, and besides there is a caveronous hollow (κοίλωσις σηραγγώδης) next to the bone. Sounds are directed toward this hardness, and through its hardness the hollow bone resounds (τὸ δὲ ὀστέον τὸ κοῖλον ἐπηχεῖ)" (*Carn.* 15, trans. Potter)

These Presocratic and medical thinkers, therefore, conceptualize hearing very similarly; both are interested in the role that bodily forms have for bodily functions.

The beauty of the word κοῖλον lies in its ambiguity: it can denote ear structures, as in Alcmaeon's description, as well as intestinal cavities. The different meanings of this term in each account, along with its medical associations, make for natural comic material. The Presocratic provenance of Socrates' account likens the small cavities of the human ear to the even more minuscule κοῖλον of an insect's gut. The cerebral topic of sense perception, occurring in ears, is quite literally lowered and reduced to a gnat's rump.[274] Audience members enjoy a satire of Presocratic theorizing along with a good, old-fashioned fart joke.[275] Along with these elements of humor and parody, this passage presents some less immediately apparent concepts from fifth-century science which are relevant to our understanding of the play. Alcmaeon's account of hearing has other, important similarities to the explanation of a gnat's buzzing. Both biological accounts emphasize the body's perforation and susceptibility to, as well as dependence on, the external force of air to perform basic functions. The bodily cavity is much like Anaximander's celestial rings whose chariot-wheel form dictates their sole activity: when and how they provide light and heat. The natural philosopher's universe runs automatically and eternally, not requiring any personal agency. The body in Alcmaeon's and Socrates' accounts too seems to be inseparable from the surrounding air, forming a seamless system of elements within and outside the body. Without the distinction between inside and outside, the possibility of agency tends to fall even further

[272] (DK24) A6.
[273] Althoff (2007, 107).
[274] Similar to the carnival mechanism described by Bakhtin (1984, 19-20).
[275] O'Regan (1992) focuses on this aspect of the passage (see note 261 above).

away.

While most audience members probably did not hear a reference to Alcmaeon's ear canal or Anaximander's trumpet simile here, the diction and subject matter make the explanation unmistakably scientific in style.[276] In any case, the direct allusion to particular Presocratics is not necessary for understanding the fundamental ideas presented. In effect, Socrates introduces two topics with a tone of intellectual authority: bodily cavities, the determinative nature of their shape, and the influence that air has upon them. Furthermore, it is clear that κοῖλον would lend itself to a mock-scientific theory as it appears relatively infrequently outside of medical contexts. Terms for air require a particular context to take on scientific connotations, but one which *Clouds* certainly provides. The agency of air not only plays a key role in the production of sound in both Socrates' and Alcmaeon's explanations but, as we remember, it also is a leitmotiv of the play, even a buzzword for intellectualism and quackery.[277]

A few hundred lines later, Socrates attempts to give Strepsiades lessons in various aspects of meteorology. Scholars regard this scene as emblematic of Strepsiades' idiocy and inability to grasp abstract concepts.[278] This (mis)understanding in general provides much of the comic material in the *Clouds*.[279] He takes representations, such as maps, literally; conversely, he thinks intangible concepts, like his debts, could disappear simply by removing their arbitrary physical designations. In this particular scene, the old man must re-conceptualize meteorological phenomena as impersonal, rather than divine, events. This lesson fundamentally involves a shift of focus from questions of personal agency to causation.

This latter task, in fact, comically encapsulates fifth-century trends in scientific inquiry. Diverging from traditional explanations of nature which involve the actions of gods, Presocratic philosophers disavowed the role of personal agency in cosmic and climatic events. This idea can be seen echoed in the word *aitia* (cause/responsibility) itself. As Vegetti establishes, until the end of the fifth century, ancient Greeks conceptualized causation only in terms of personal responsibility, what *aitia* had originally and exclusively denoted.[280] Many Presocratics still explained the order of the world in terms of divine justice, even when no

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[276] Specifically reminiscent of scientific poetry, such as from Empedocles or Pythagoras, because of the poetic word "gust" (πνοή) (Willi 2003, 107).
[277] Gelzer (1956, 83).
[278] Whitman (1964, 139).
[279] For a closer analysis of the ways in which Strepsiades misunderstands Socrates and how this reflects society's reaction to contemporaneous science, see Woodbury (1980).
[280] Vegetti (1999).

conventional deities were present in their theories; Presocratic *dike* regulated cosmic traffic and the universe in general.[281] Vegetti identifies *On Ancient Medicine*, written roughly around the time of the *Clouds*, as the first text which explicitly refers to the impersonal, causal aspect of the word *aitia*. Therefore, the notion of an *aitia* divorced from personal agency was gestating in, and alongside, natural philosophy at this time. By the end of the century, it was more or less fully formed.

These very issues of causation and agency are at the heart of Strepsiades' education and "discoveries," as Holmes has astutely observed.[282] The old man demonstrates a preoccupation with the traditional idea that there is a personal will behind natural phenomena. Tellingly, he wants to know the grammatical subject of these meteorological events, but Socrates repeatedly deemphasizes this aspect:

Στ. ὁ δ' ἀναγκάζων ἐστὶ τίς αὐτάς – οὐχ ὁ Ζεύς; – ὥστε φέρεσθαι;
Σω. ἥκιστ', ἀλλ' αἰθέριος δῖνος.
Στ. Δῖνος; τουτί μ' ἐλελήθει,
ὁ Ζεὺς οὐκ ὤν, ἀλλ' ἀντ' αὐτοῦ Δῖνος νυνὶ βασιλεύων. (*Nu*. 379-81)

St. But who forces the clouds to move—not Zeus?"
So. Not in the least. It's a vortex of air.
St. Vortex? *That* I missed,
It isn't Zeus, but instead, Vortex now reigns.

In response to Strepsiades' curiosity about the personal agent that sets the clouds in motion, Socrates gives an abstract answer, "a vortex of air."[283] This "vortex" was part of the natural philosophy of Anaxagoras,[284] Leucippus, and Democritus although only the latter two specifically used the term δίνη or δῖνος.[285] According to Diogenes Laertius, Leucippus determines that multiple worlds come about essentially as a result of the separation that occurs from centrifugal and centripetal forces (a whirl, δίνη). More in line with Socrates' answer here, Diogenes says of Leucippus that "the cause of the coming-into-being of all this is the whirl, which he calls necessity."[286] Therefore Leucippus in effect equates this vortex with the Presocratic concept of necessity. In mentioning the vortex, Socrates similarly foregrounds the impersonal nature of this phenomenon, characterizing it as a logical consequence rather than an action performed by divine will. Strepsiades' phrasing in his

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[281] Holmes (2010, 96). See Lloyd (1966, 210-19) for a discussion on this social and political imagery of the cosmos in early Greek natural philosophy. Anaximander (DK12) B1; Parmenides (DK28) B1; Heraclitus (DK22) B94.
[282] Holmes (2010, 92-3).
[283] See Ferguson's (1979) account of the term's Presocratic origins.
[284] (DK59) A1; A12; A71.
[285] As observed by the commentators Dover (1968, ad loc.), Sommerstein (1982, ad loc.) and Starkie (1911, ad loc.). (DK67) A1; (DK68) A69.
[286] (DK67) A1, trans. Kirk and Raven.

question, furthermore, plays off Socrates' reference to Presocratic necessity which occurs two lines prior: "δι᾽ ἀνάγκην." Not quite getting his teacher's point, Strepsiades uses the active participle ἀναγκάζων in formulating his question about the agent behind the thunder. Holmes' reading of this passage brings us straight to the point:

> "Socrates, in turn, describes a series of events (the saturation of the clouds, their movement, the outcome of their collisions) that he explains in terms of both necessity and then nature of wind and clouds (denseness, fineness, lightness). This series allows him to fill in the space typically spanned by symbols of divine agency."[287]

In a variety of ways throughout the lesson, impersonal forces are contrasted with, and replace, personal agents. There is only a series of events: proximate causes without an ultimate explanation. As we watch Strepsiades struggle to understand, we realize that Socrates does not think that Vortex reigns in any conventional sense. In his philosophy, no one does.

With his teacher's encouragement, Strepsiades also imagines these celestial spaces and occurrences by relating them to his own body. We first heard about the importance of air for the buzzing sound emitted from gnats' cavities. Now Socrates' character shows the applicability of this basic idea to other bodily cavities in his explanations of thunder and lightning. In this way, he reestablishes the importance of basic atmospheric features (temperature, density, moisture, movement) and stuffs (in particular, air and water) for the inner-workings of living bodies, and especially for the abdominal cavity. Because of the micro-macrocosm relationship between the body and heavens, moreover, the lack of agency behind airy phenomena applies in turn to the bodily interior. This emphasis on external climatic factors was, in fact, one of the major features of fifth-century accounts of the body, and so the scene reflects this particular overlap between Presocratic natural philosophy and medicine.[288] Exactly why this connection is made I discuss later in the section.

Their lesson starts with Socrates' attempt to disabuse his pupil of the idea that Zeus has a hand in celestial events. The teacher first explains rain and thunder, and Strepsiades responds:

Στ. νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω, τοῦτό γέ τοι τῷ νῦν λόγῳ εὖ προσέφυσας·

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[287] Holmes (2010, 92).

[288] In the sixth century, Democritus is supposed to be the first to have observed, "man is a small *kosmos*" and this concept resonated in later medical writing (DK68) B34. For its use in the Hippocratic treatise *On Regimen*, see Jouanna (1998); Joly (1960, 37-52) On the Near Eastern influences for this idea, see Palm (1933), Götze (1923). On its relationship to philosophy, Magdelaine (1997). Le Blay (2005) also observes that some medical theorists reversed the analogy as well, describing a macranthropic model to the cosmos, especially in the Hippocratic treatise *On Sevens*.

καίτοι πρότερον τὸν Δί᾽ ἀληθῶς ᾤμην διὰ κοσκίνου οὐρεῖν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅστις ὁ βροντῶν ἐστι φράσον, τοῦθ' ὅ με ποιεῖ τετρεμαίνειν.

Σω. αὗται βροντῶσι κυλινδόμεναι.

Στ. τῷ τρόπῳ, ὦ πάντα σὺ τολμῶν;

Σω. ὅταν ἐμπλησθῶσ᾽ ὕδατος πολλοῦ κἀναγκασθῶσι φέρεσθαι,
κατακρημνάμεναι πλήρεις ὄμβρου δι᾽ ἀνάγκην, εἶτα βαρεῖαι
εἰς ἀλλήλας ἐμπίπτουσαι ῥήγνυνται καὶ παταγοῦσιν. (*Nu.* 372-78)

St. By Apollo, you've made that point marry well with what you were just saying.
And I really used to think that it was Zeus pissing through a sieve!
But tell me who causes the thunder that makes me tremble.

So. The Clouds thunder when they roll about.

St. You'll stop at nothing. How?

So. When they are filled with a great deal of water and are compelled by necessity to move,
hanging full of rain, then when they collide with each other,
being heavy they burst with a crash. (trans. Sommerstein)

Strepsiades learns here that rain is not Zeus urinating, but is rather caused by clouds. Socrates begins with passive constructions, "ἐμπλησθῶσ'" and "κἀναγκασθῶσι φέρεσθαι," thus already removing the aspect of personal agency from his account. Goaded by Strepsiades' questioning, he gives a second, shorter explanation of thunderstorms: "Didn't you hear me? I said that when the clouds are full of water and knock into each other; they clap on account of their density" (οὐκ ἤκουσάς μου τὰς νεφέλας ὕδατος μεστὰς ὅτι φημὶ/ ἐμπιπτούσας εἰς ἀλλήλας παταγεῖν διὰ τὴν πυκνότητα;, 383-4).

Socrates edifies his pupil with an answer to a question well-pondered by Presocratics,[289] and his account unsurprisingly has a number of similarities to theirs. Socrates uses the word ἐμπίπτειν for his description twice (*Nu.* 378; 384), echoing Heraclitus' and Anaximander's word choice in their theories on thunderstorms.[290] Heraclitus describes thunder as a result of the gathering of winds and clouds, and in particular, winds falling upon (ἐμπτώσεις) the clouds.[291] Anaxagoras' account of thunder is thought to resemble this passage from *Clouds* the most; he defines it as a "clashing of clouds" ('βροντὰς σύγκρουσιν νεφῶν,' as Diogenes Laertius indirectly quotes him).[292] Therefore, Socrates draws from these Presocratics in that he characterizes this phenomenon as a violent celestial traffic accident. He seems, however, to add in the role of water and the factor of density (πυκνότης), which can also be found throughout in Presocratic philosophy, but in different contents.[293] Socrates

[289] Dover (1968, ad loc.) identifies Anaximander (DK12) A23 as well as the Heraclitus and Anaxagoras testimonia below. Sommerstein (1982, ad loc.) mentions the role of clouds in many theories about thunder, including Anaxagoras (DK59) A84, Diogenes of Apollonia (DK64) A15, Leucippus (DK67) A25, and Democritus (DK68) A93.

[290] Anaximander speaks of lightning specifically, however: (DK12) A11.

[291] βροντὴν μὲν κατὰ συστροφὰς ἀνέμων καὶ νεφῶν καὶ ἐμπτώσεις πνευμάτων εἰς τὰ νέφη (Stobaeus 1.29.1).

[292] Anaxagoras (DK59) A1.9, most similar according to Dover (1968, ad loc.) and Starkie (1911, ad loc.).

[293] In particular, density was key to Anaximenes' and Diogenes of Apollonia's argument for, and explanation of,

implies that the clouds can contain water in some way, whether by absorbing it, or by carrying it as a vessel would. According to him, this fullness is the original cause of their excess heaviness and subsequent movements.

When Strepsiades expresses disbelief at this naturalistic explanation of thunder, his teacher gives him a more personal exemplum of the phenomenon. Alluding to a real Socratic approach, Socrates states that he will teach his pupil "from himself" (*Nu.* 385).[294] The remark, however, quite literally means, 'from your own body' rather than the more typically Socratic 'from your own experience:' ἤδη ζωμοῦ Παναθηναίοις ἐμπλησθεὶς εἶτ᾽ <u>ἐταράχθης/</u> τὴν <u>γαστέρα</u>, καὶ κλόνος ἐξαίφνης αὐτὴν <u>διεκορκορύγησεν</u>; "Have you ever gorged yourself with soup at the Panathenaea and then had an upset stomach, and a sudden turmoil sets it all arumble?"[295] Strepsiades' belly (γαστήρ) represents the clouds in this didactic comparison;[296] soup and rain water are both liquids which cause the respective disturbances.[297] The belly, when filled with liquid, reacts exactly the same as clouds when filled with rain; noise and turbulence are a result of their repletion. Strepsiades delights in this idea and, fully convinced, finishes the analogy by onomatopoetically describing his noisy flatulence (παππὰξ παππάξ) as the result of his consumption of this soup.

Socrates then directs the discussion back to the cosmic level and asks, "Now then, consider what farts you let off from such a little tummy; isn't it natural that this sky, being limitless, should thunder mightily?" (σκέψαι τοίνυν ἀπὸ <u>γαστριδίου</u> τυννουτουὶ οἷα πέπορδας·/ τὸν δ᾽ <u>ἀέρα</u> τόνδ᾽ ὄντ᾽ <u>ἀπέραντον</u> πῶς οὐκ εἰκὸς μέγα βροντᾶν;).[298] With this statement, Socrates reminds us of the great difference in size between the two referents in his metaphor. Yet at the same time, he reinforces their parallels, establishing a macro- and microcosm relationship between the two systems.

This second mention of the issue of size draws attention to the similarities between the human body and the gnat's body. In the example of the gnat, external air exerts its influence upon the insect's bowels. In this explanation of thunder as well, air is thought to have an important effect on Strepsiades' bowels. These lines make an even stronger claim for

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material difference: (DK13) A5; (DK64) A30.

[294] Vander Waerdt (1994, 59). This statement also hearkens to Protagoras' idea that man is the measure of all things (DK80) B1.

[295] *Nu.* 386-7, trans. Henderson.

[296] O'Regan (1992, 60-3; 75-6) also understands the image of the stomach to be conceptually important to the play, but she focuses on how Aristophanes parallels the stomach with *logos* or *nomos*, which are conventionally in opposition.

[297] As H. Miller (1945, 83-4) notes, this verb (ταράσσω) occurs very frequently to describe gastric symptoms in the *Epidemics*. E.g. in *Epid.* I. 15.2-3; case 13.16; III, case 8.171-2; case 12.217.

[298] *Nu.* 392-3, trans. Henderson.

the connection between bodily and meteorological elements. The exact same phenomena occur in the clouds and the human body, an assertion which presupposes a fundamental similarity between the Strepsiades' and the gnat's cavities: they are both permeable, porous and subject to external, unseen meteorological forces, and in particular, air.

At his student's request, Socrates then explicates lightning, which involves three events: air fills the clouds, causes them to explode, and thereupon bursts out:

> ὅταν ἐς ταύτας ἄνεμος ξηρὸς μετεωρισθεὶς κατακλησθῇ,
> ἔνδοθεν αὐτὰς ὥσπερ κύστιν φυσᾷ, κἄπειθ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀνάγκης
> ῥήξας αὐτὰς ἔξω φέρεται σοβαρὸς διὰ τὴν πυκνότητα,
> ὑπὸ τοῦ ῥοίβδου καὶ τῆς ῥύμης αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν κατακάιων. (*Nu.* 404-7)
>
> When a dry wind rises skyward and gets locked up in these Clouds,
> it blows them up from within like a bladder, and then by natural compulsion
> it bursts them and is borne out in a whoosh by dint of compression,
> burning itself up with the friction and velocity. (trans. Henderson)

Again Socrates employs Presocratic concepts in his lessons. He reintroduces the factor of air compression, and with the same phrase: "διὰ τὴν πυκνότητα" (*Nu.* 406; 384) and again describes this phenomenon as a result of necessity (ὑπ᾽ ἀνάγκης). Additionally, the account recalls the tenets of two specific Milesian natural philosophers, Anaximander and Anaximenes, who believe that lightning occurs through the violent interaction of wind and clouds which involves air being trapped and then bursting forth "by means of [the wind's] fineness and thinness."[299] Anaxagoras too apparently maintains that lightning was a friction of clouds (ἔκτριψιν νεφῶν), thus implying the importance of this physical contact between them.[300] Other aspects of Socrates' account, however, differ from these Presocratics and recall ideas from his earlier lecture on thunder.

As in his explanation of thunder, Socrates represents the clouds as containers. His description of lighting, however, involves an elaborate simile in addition. He characterizes the clouds as passive receptacles of wind, comparing them to a bladder (κύστις), which is both a human body part and a container made from the body parts of animals. As in the previous explanation, Socrates' clouds seem to be more than simply fog or mist, as Strepsiades' used to think (*Nu.* 330): they are hollow vessels of sorts. Except for Anaximander's idea that clouds can trap (περιλαμβάνειν) wind, this physical feature of

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[299] Anaximander (DK12) A23: ὅταν γὰρ περιληφθὲν νέφει παχεῖ βιασάμενον ἐκπέσηι τῆι λεπτομερείᾳ καὶ κουφότητι, τόθ᾽ ἡ μὲν ῥῆξις τὸν ψόφον, ἡ δὲ διαστολὴ παρὰ τὴν μελανίαν τοῦ νέφους τὸν διαυγασμὸν ἀποτελεῖ. Anaximenes apparently agrees: (DK13) A17. Anaximander also reportedly says lightning occurs "whenever the wind breaks apart the clouds by falling upon (ἐμπίπτων) them:" ἀστραπὰς δέ, ὅταν ἄνεμος ἐμπίπτων διιστᾶι τὰς νεφέλας (DK12) A11.

[300] (DK59) A1.9.

clouds is not the focus of surviving Presocratic theories on weather. Anaximenes describes rain as the consequence of the compression of clouds and Anaximander concludes it comes from evaporated water;[301] both of these tenets imply that rainwater is actually air, just at a higher density. Strepsiades' teacher opts for a different model involving abdominal cavities and bladders. By the end of the meteorological lesson we even, ironically, return to Strepsiades' naïve notion that Zeus urinated through a sieve: the sky is populated by bladder-like objects after all. Thus, in dwelling on this container imagery for this lesson, Socrates departs from conventional natural philosophy. Unlike Presocratic clouds, Socrates' clouds resemble the hollows in the human body. It is for this reason that water or air can fill, and thereby impel, them to behave in certain ways.

By this point in the lesson Strepsiades has caught on. Without prompting, he is now readily able to reapply the analogy of meteorological phenomena to his own body:

> νὴ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ γοῦν ἀτεχνῶς ἔπαθον τουτί ποτε Διασίοισιν
> ὀπτῶν γαστέρα τοῖς συγγενέσιν, κᾆτ᾽ οὐκ ἔσχων ἀμελήσας·
> ἡ δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐφυσᾶτ᾽, εἶτ᾽ ἐξαίφνης διαλακήσασα πρὸς αὐτὼ
> τὠφθαλμώ μου προσετίλησεν καὶ κατέκαυσεν τὸ πρόσωπον. (*Nu*. 408-11)
>
> By Zeus, exactly the same thing happened to me one time at the Diasia,
> when I was cooking a haggis for my relatives and forgot to make a slit.
> So it bloated up, then suddenly exploded, spattering gore in my eyes and
> burning my face. (trans. Henderson)

Imitating Socrates' diction, Strepsiades employs the term φυσάω "blow up;" he likewise describes an explosion (διαλακήσασα) and a projectile force (προσετίλησεν). His comparison is similar to Socrates' example of flatulence after eating soup. Yet for the previous explanation, Socrates offers the imagery of Strepsiades' stomach, while here for lightning, Strepsiades chooses an animal stomach as an analogy.[302] Strepsiades has no difficulty extending the analogy from a human stomach to that of an animal; after all, the word γαστήρ is the same. Thus a parallel is again forged between the vessel-like clouds and the bodily cavity of the belly, whether Strepsiades' own belly or the animal belly he plans to eat.

Like the Knights, the *Clouds* presents us with the doubled imagery of an edible animal cavity that the dialogue tightly associates with its human analogue: a twofold image of a stomach within a stomach. Yet, unlike in *Knights*, the parallelism between the animal and human stomach is not at all transgressive. The comparison instead serves to bring the audience's focus to Strepsiades' body, highlighting the discrete organ of the stomach which

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[301] Anaximenes (DK13) A17; Anaximander (DK12) A11.

[302] Wilkins (2000, 25-6) emphasizes the context, the religious and social occasion of the Panathenaia or Diasia: the bodily structures and the food (haggis) which imitates them reflect social structures of the *polis*.

is, in the case of the haggis, tangible as well as visible. The stomachs represent the clouds in both comparisons, forming a striking metaphorical doublet which reinforces the clouds' gastric qualities.

A Bakhtinian interpretation offers one level of insight into this scene. In the carnivalesque mode, the noblest activities of humans (whether spiritual or cerebral) are commingled and reduced to the lowest.[303] Socrates inquires into sophisticated matters such as the cause of thunder, thereby speculating about a topic which is not only high-minded, it is literally high in the sky. The playwright, as we know, has already introduced this connection between cognitive heights and the spatial heights by presenting Socrates suspended mid-air, meditating on meteorology (*Nu*. 229-30). Meteorology represents perhaps one of the purest forms of intellectualism, furthest away from the lower functions of the human body. Celestial, intangible clouds and thunder, once associated with the father of the gods, are reduced to a single human belly.[304] The analogy also relates to another aspect of Bakhtin's theory, namely that "the grotesque body is cosmic and universal. It stresses elements common to the entire cosmos: earth, water, fire, air; it is directly related to the sun, to the stars."[305] Accordingly, the grotesque body is inevitably connected both to the landscape of the earth and celestial bodies. For our analysis of the *Clouds*, however, this principle can only take us so far. These images of a "cosmic body" cannot be satisfactorily explained as certain type of comic material. After all, their context is the *Clouds*, a comedy which not only presents current intellectual and scientific material, but also explicitly thematizes them. The play's scientific content does more legwork than Bakhtinian theories could adequately account for.[306] In particular, the play alludes to the very intimate relationship that natural philosophers claim exists between the body and the external world. I suggest that this connection, moreover, has relevance for the social issues in the comedy which were topical in late fifth-century Athens.

Furthermore, this miniaturization of the universe into the bodily cavity points to the connection between the environment, seasons, and meteorological events which, according to

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[303] Bakhtin (1984, 19-20). Whitman (1964, 139) makes a similar observation: "This wedding of astronomic with the gastronomic is typical both of Aristophanes in general, and of this particular play. In the world of *phusis* the necessities of the stomach do not differ radically from those of the upper air, any more than compressed air differs in essence from air at large; philosophy and cookery merge, and Strepsiades is driven "by necessity" to accept the Clouds as goddesses, and to turn himself over to their instruction."

[304] The effect is, of course, humorous as well as destabilizing in a Bakhtinian sense – if carnivalistic writing challenges institutions, the institutions here in question are both fifth-century intellectualism as well as divine explanations of meteorological events. Thus the comparison of the intellectual to the bodily produces a comic effect and also debases the cerebral pursuit of theorizing about meteorological events.

[305] Bakhtin (1984, 318).

[306] In his Bakhtinian analysis of Aristophanes, however, von Möllendorff (1995, 194ff) perhaps addresses this issue by reading Socrates' lessons as failed examples of the grotesque, arguing that their corporeal subject matter shows the ineffectuality and sterility of the Phrontisterion.

contemporaneous medical writers, greatly affect one's health. As Holmes observes, "one of the distinguishing features of sixth- and fifth-century physical and medical theories is that all compounds participate in the same economy of impersonal force."[307] Indeed, in this scene Socrates does not just refer to the stomach as a fun analogy for meteorological entities, but also implies that air has a direct effect upon occurrences within bodily cavities, just as it does on the earth. Diogenes of Apollonia, whose philosophical tenets are identified the most closely with those presented in *Clouds,* maintains this opinion as well.[308] Diogenes believed that air was essential for the inner-workings of the body. Yet rather than focusing on the gastric cavity, he speculated on a more cerebral part of the body, arguing that the state of the air entering the body determines a creature's intellectual capacity. Thus he imagines a kind of unobstructed exchange between the outside environment and the human brain. These views also accord with Socrates' wish to avoid the damp earth:[309]

> οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ᾽ ἡ γῆ βίᾳ
> ἕλκει πρὸς αὑτὴν τὴν ἰκμάδα τῆς φροντίδος.
> πάσχει δὲ ταὐτὸ τοῦτο καὶ τὰ κάρδαμα. (*Nu*. 232-4)
>
> For the earth perforce draws the moistness of the mind to itself.
> The watercress undergoes the same thing.

Although we do not have much additional evidence for Diogenes' biological tenets, we see how often this idea appears in other scientific writing. The author of the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease,* dated to the second half of the fifth century,[310] suggests a similar theory of intelligence and air: air first enters the brain, giving it intelligence, then travels throughout the body.[311] Like Diogenes, this Hippocratic author imagines air traveling from outside and passing into the brain quite freely, influencing the person's body and, in turn, cognition.

Excess moisture is not only bad for intelligence, but also for one's health according to some medical writers.[312] The author of *On the Sacred Disease* writes that the brain, just like storage jars, respond negatively to the moistening effects of the south wind.[313] Scientific comparisons like this are not merely metaphorical, but also illustrate the fact that this wind is

[307] Holmes (2010, 108).
[308] (DK64) B5; A19; Vander Waerdt (1994, 61-75); Gelzer (1956, 68-69).
[309] Dover (1968, ad loc.) and Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 263-6) on scientific references in these lines. Rodríguez Alfageme speculates in addition on what or whom exactly Aristophanes tries to mock here.
[310] Jouanna (1999, 411-2).
[311] Hipp. *Sac. Morb*. 19. Heraclitus similarly believes in the negative influence of moisture (especially alcohol) on the *psyche* (DK22) B12; B36; B117; B118.
[312] Heraclitus seems to make a related claim, stating that a "dry soul is wisest and best" (DK22) B118.
[313] *Sac. Morb*. 16.

the actual, direct cause of both phenomena. This moisture affects all physical objects. The author goes on to explain how, upon observing how the south wind changes the earth and celestial bodies, one logically comes to the conclusion that it influences the body as well:

> Ὅτε οὖν καὶ τούτων οὕτω μεγάλων ἐόντων καὶ ἰσχυρῶν τοσοῦτον ἐπικρατέει καὶ τὸ σῶμα ποιεῖ αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ μεταβάλλειν ἐκ τῶν ἀνέμων τούτων ἐν τῇσι μεταλλαγῇσιν, ἀνάγκη τοῖσι μὲν νοτίοισι λύεσθαί τε καὶ φλυδᾶν τὸν ἐγκέφαλον καὶ τὰς φλέβας χαλαρωτέρας γίνεσθαι. (Hipp. *Sac. Morb.* 16.32-8)
>
> "Since then [the wind] so masters even things that are so big and strong, makes the body feel its effects and change with the changes of these winds, of necessity a south wind relaxes and moistens the brain…" (trans. Jones)

His argument hinges on an analogy of scale. He proposes that the effect of wind on the body is a necessary, logical conclusion if the wind can dim the stars. This idea resembles Socrates' concluding remark about his stomach comparison, "consider then the wind you've broken from such a little belly. How couldn't it be the case that the air, which is limitless, make great thunder?" (σκέψαι τοίνυν ἀπὸ γαστριδίου τυννουτουὶ οἷα πέπορδας·/ τὸν δ' ἀέρα τόνδ' ὄντ' ἀπέραντον πῶς οὐκ εἰκὸς μέγα βροντᾶν;, *Nu.* 392-3). His statement relies on a comparison and conclusion based on size as well. The phenomena are the same, he implies, but the scale simply is altered.

Hippocratic writers assert further connections between events outside and inside the body. This concept is central in particular to the treatises *Airs, Waters, and Places*, *On the Sacred Disease*, and *On Regimen*, which are all dated to the end of the fifth century.[314] The author of *Airs, Waters, and Places* explains how meteorological phenomena have a direct effect on one's bodily constitution and ailments, that is, how external influences influence the body internally.[315] In his introduction, the author asserts the strong connection between the two:

> εἰ δὲ δοκέοι τις ταῦτα μετεωρολόγα εἶναι, εἰ μετασταίη τῆς γνώμης, μάθοι ἄν, ὅτι οὐκ ἐλάχιστον μέρος συμβάλλεται ἀστρονομίη ἐς ἰητρικήν, ἀλλὰ πάνυ πλεῖστον. ἅμα γὰρ τῇσιν ὥρῃσι καὶ αἱ νοῦσοι καὶ αἱ κοιλίαι μεταβάλλουσιν τοῖσιν ἀνθρώποισιν. (Hipp. *Aër.* 2.21-6)
>
> If someone should think that these (the seasons and the rising and setting of stars) are meteorological phenomena, upon reconsideration he would learn that astronomy has no small share in medicine, but rather, a very great one. For men's diseases and bodily cavities change along with the seasons.

By making this claim concerning meteorology's relevance to medicine, the author not only

[314] In addition *Diseases* IV, a fourth-century treatise, stresses the importance of meteorology in understanding disease (*Morb*. IV. 19-21 = L 50-2).

[315] Jouanna (1999, 146-8). The relationship between astrological phenomenon and health is an old and familiar concept, most significantly in the purported effects that the Dog Star has on one's health which we find already in Homeric epic.

expresses a belief that the weather influences body and its diseases, but also presents the cavities of the body themselves (κοιλίαι) as sensitive to seasonal changes in the exact same way that the environment is: belly and earth alike are systems which meteorological phenomena influence. Like the author of *On the Sacred Disease*, he focuses especially on the impact of winds from different compass points, but discusses different types of water and the variations of the seasons in addition.[316] The author of *On Regimen* too explains the effect of different winds and seasons on the body.[317]

According to *Airs, Waters, and Places,* meteorological factors do not only affect the changeable aspects of a person, but can also determine peoples' bodies from birth. He describes how the Scythians' climate affects their physiology.[318] Because there are virtually no changes in seasons (ὅμοιαι [ὧραι]), the people look the same (τὰ εἴδεα ὅμοια αὐτὰ ἑωυτέοισίν εἰσιν). Thus, both the seasons and the Scythian physiques are uniform. Because of the excessive rain, mist and moist air, these people necessarily have very moist bodily cavities (αἵ τε κοιλίαι ὑγρόταται).[319] Yet, while bodily constitution reflects environment, the writer attributes both bodily and environmental features to meteorological factors in the end: "[Scythia] lies right close to the north and the Rhipaean mountains, from which blows the north wind."[320] The lack of sun and wind from warm countries coupled with the cold northerly winds are the ultimate causes for the nature both of the environment and the people who live there. Conversely, those who live in dry locations with seasonal extremes, summer sun and winter winds, differ among themselves and are hard and sinewy instead of watery.[321] These assertions similarly imply that meteorological phenomena—the sun, wind, rain, and positions of the stars—exert their influence on the human body in addition to the environment. In this way, the author of the treatise also implies that the body can be seen as a mirror image of its environment.

From the last decades of the fifth century, the Hippocratic text *On Breaths* perhaps offers the most relevant medical parallel for these passages in the *Clouds*. As its style and argumentation strongly attest, the treatise was intended as a speech rather than an educational or reference text for physicians. In this carefully crafted rhetorical piece, the speaker argues

[316] Hipp. *Aër.* 3-6 (compass points); *Aër.* 7-9 (types of water); *Aër.* 10-11 (seasons).
[317] Hipp. *Reg.* II. 38 (winds); *Reg.* II. 68 (seasons).
[318] This author too seems implicitly to respond to divine explanations of disease. Jouanna (2005, 10-13) contrasts this rational explanation for the Scythian's impotence with Herodotus' account of divine vengeance (*Hist*. 4.67).
[319] Hipp. *Aër*. 19.26-33; 35-8.
[320] Hipp. *Aër*. 19.7-9, trans. Jones.
[321] Hipp. *Aër*. 24.

that air is the supreme cause of bodily functions and dysfunctions.[322] The following passage encapsulates his premise well:[323]

> How air, then, is strong in the case of wholes has been said; and for mortals too this is the cause of life, and the cause of disease in the sick. So great is the need of wind for all bodies that while a man can be deprived of everything else, both food and drink, for two, three, or more days, and live, yet if the wind passages into the body be cut off he will die in a brief part of a day, showing that the greatest need for a body is wind. (Hipp. *Flat*. 4.1-11, trans. Jones)

The author engages with, and seems to reduce *ad absurdum*, the established Hippocratic idea that air is an important environmental and bodily component that affects one's health. In this respect, it resembles Socrates' references to the omnipotence of air in the comedy, and in fact, scholars comment on the allusions that both Euripides and Aristophanes seem to make to this text regarding the divinity of air.[324] Yet no one has remarked on how the medical aspects of the treatise relate to *Clouds*. Just as Socrates and Strepsiades, the author of *On Breaths* is preoccupied with the body's subjection to the influx and influence of air. The thematic relevance of this treatise brings to our attention the tacit presence of medical thought in the play.

Hippocratic authors, therefore, often write about meteorological effects on the human body, and those of air in particular. With these kinds of explanations, moreover, they distance themselves from supernatural accounts of, or cures for, disease.[325] The author of *On the Sacred Disease* very pointedly argues for a naturalistic, rather than divine, explanation for epilepsy. The cosmos and the human body alike thus become subject to natural forces as natural philosophy and medicine develop. Inevitably, these kinds of accounts often compete with, even if they do not replace, traditional explanations.

In this way, Socrates and Strepsiades' gastric explanations seem to have a double function: first, they parody meteorology by comparing weather events to flatulence and indigestion. In so doing, moreover, they present an idea which is native to Hippocratic medical writing: the stomach, as a microcosm of the world, responds to the celestial and

[322] Jouanna (1984, 34-40).

[323] Moreover, this treatise serves as an example of the fluidity between the pursuits of natural philosophy, medicine and sophistry, subjects which Aristophanes pointedly jumbles together in the *Clouds* for the purpose of parody. According to Socrates, these goddesses nurture "soothsayers, healer-practitioners, long-haired, long-nailed signet-ring-wearers, song-writers of torturous choruses, meteorological quacks" (*Nu*. 332-3). Aristophanes emphasizes here and elsewhere the "airy," immaterial quality of all of these types of people. Unlike Rodríguez Alfageme (2000), I do not see why or how we could make an accurate and meaningful distinction between these "ἰατροτέχναι" and doctors who earn their living.

[324] Craik (2015, 102).

[325] The attitude of the Hippocratics to divinity, nevertheless, was complicated. Hankinson (1998a); Jouanna (1989); Lloyd (1975c).

climatic changes. This lesson on thunder and lightning has relevance not only for Strepsiades' body, but also for the gnat's, whose seemingly unrelated description likewise focuses on air and its influence on bodily cavities. Socrates presents the gnat as a series of hollows through which air moves and produces sound. In this imagery, the gnat becomes an empty instrument without agency, subject to the external power of air. Strepsiades too has a bodily cavity, a belly, which undergoes meteorological phenomena when filled with soup just as clouds produce thunder when filled with water. In his analogy for lightning, he describes the influence of heated air on his haggis, the animal belly. This bodily cavity is similarly susceptible to air that puffs it up and causes it to explode. In each of these cases, we find meteorological forces at work in the hollows of the body. The body reflects its outside environment and is likewise open to the forces of seasonal and climatic change.

The tension between traditional and intellectual concepts of divinity has further import for the comedy. Central to the play is the image of automatic universe, a universe run not by gods, but by impersonal natural forces which must maintain a balance between themselves. This model inevitably brings to mind a world of arbitrariness, devoid of moral agency.[326] It is hardly the conventional, everyday world of Athens. While Ancient Greeks saw themselves as sometimes subject to inexplicable, meaningless turns of fate,[327] they also certainly saw scrupulous behavior as a safeguard against punishment, whether banal or divine. As Strepsiades reminds us, anthropomorphic gods enforce justice through various means, including striking down oath-breakers with thunderbolts. Indeed, it is exactly this kind of justice looms in the background of the *Clouds*. By trying to wriggle his way out of debt, Strepsiades himself violates an oath (*Nu*. 1227) and even later tells his creditor Pasias that he would swear another oath (by Zeus, Hermes, and Poseidon) that he had never borrowed the money (1232-3). His attempt to avoid settling his balance with his creditors is indisputably unjust, or at least by any traditional reasoning. His wrongdoing is quite literally financially quantifiable, and as such, constitutes an example of violating a very basic form of justice.

This issue becomes more relevant when we hear the agon between the Just and Unjust Arguments. As the Unjust Argument explains, the goddess Justice herself does not exist, otherwise Zeus would have been punished for locking up his father (*Nu*. 901-5). He thereby sets the stage for the rest of his argument and also reintroduces the idea of divine agency, or

[326] Segal (1969, 155) points out the (seeming) amorality of the Clouds, which are driven by natural laws rather than justice. See also Redfield (1999, 58), who argues that Socrates' universe is *comprehensible* rather than *meaningful* on a social level.

[327] R. Parker (1983, 251-6).

lack thereof, in this scene. According to him, a scrupulous man receives no rewards for his sexual restraint, or only inadequate ones: Peleus was only given a knife and an unfaithful wife (1060-1064). There is no recompense for good behavior in the world of Socrates and the Unjust Argument. One's moral turpitude makes no difference; it can even be a wise approach to life. Perhaps ironically, the stories of the gods themselves provide the evidence for this conclusion. A piece of advice from the Unjust Argument seems to gesture at Xenophanes' objection to Homer and Hesiod's portrayal of gods who are as morally deficient as humans.[328] If charged with adultery, Pheidippides should refer to Zeus' infidelity and argue that, after all, a mere mortal could be more powerful than the king of the gods (1080-2). In this rhetorical contest, therefore, Aristophanes introduces the topic of moral ambivalence, but, as we know, not for the first time in the play. In the meteorological and biological descriptions from earlier, we saw how causal explanations for these phenomena replace traditional accounts of moral failure.

The play's cosmic gods of course have immediate relevance for the human body, as we have already seen. In the same impartial, automatic way, the air has effects on the body, disturbing it or causing disease at random. It does so for no reason other than the automatic workings of the universe: the climate, winds, turns of the seasons. All these forces and the objects which they act upon are part of the same system. Socrates and his pupils reveal how the human body has the same structure and mechanisms as clouds in the sky, which also work spontaneously, responding to celestial or meteorological phenomena which throw them off balance and set them into motion. The body, particularly the mysterious, invisible bodily interior, is also a space susceptible to the whims and chastisements of the traditional gods. This model for bodily functions and dysfunctions, however, is conspicuously missing from the play. The *Clouds* contrasts traditional conceptualization against, and replaces it with, the idea of the automatic body. In Socrates' world, there is no Apollo sending diseases upon disrespectful mortals.

Socrates' education promises to free Strepsiades from his social and financial burdens. Part of this education is the reconceptualization of *aitia* as "cause" rather than "responsibility." The old man learns about his body's unity with the meteorological world and sees it partially as an excuse for his new, scurrilous way of life. When there are no responsible agents, only impersonal causes, when the laws of crime and punishment are thereby nullified, Strepsiades is free to live as he pleases. Yet Strepsiades' fantasy of an

[328] Xenophanes (DK21) B11; B12.

automatic, impersonal world is, of course, short-lived. During Strepsiades' initiation earlier in the play, we even see a foreshadowing of the triumph of human retribution that the old man later experiences.

When Strepsiades' lies on a bed in the Phrontisterion, he has an unwelcome and violent encounter with bedbugs. He describes his anguish in dramatic, mock-tragic style, recalling Heracles' gruesome death in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* in language and content.[329] The passage thus alludes to a particularly graphic representation of tragic vengeance wreaked on the human body. In this Sophoclean tragedy, the centaur Nessus posthumously avenges his own death by fooling the hero's jealous wife into applying his own poisonous blood to a cloak as a love potion. In the bedbug scene, therefore, Aristophanes calls to mind this extreme example of retributive justice: a life for a life. He attunes the audience to this idea even before he makes the reference to Sophocles. As soon as Strepsiades first notices the bedbugs, he cries out, "what a penalty I'll pay the bedbugs today!": οἵαν δίκην τοῖς κόρεσι δώσω τήμερον (*Nu*. 699). This statement is odd considering that Strepsiades' has, strictly speaking, not yet done anything to warrant punishment. Read alongside the tragic parody of Heracles that follows, however, it becomes clear that the bodily pain Strepsiades anticipates here is in fact somehow justified. In these ways, the passage hints at his future corporal punishment at the hands of his son.

Pheidippides indeed later disproves Strepsiades' newly-acquired belief in the absence of moral agency regarding the body. The son secures his own poetic justice by beating his father and thereby giving him a taste of his own medicine: Strepsiades wanted to free himself from monetary and ethical obligations, and now he must experience the full consequences of such a topsy-turvy world, including filial violence against parents. Through physically reprimanding his father, furthermore, Pheidippides also re-imposes external, personal agency on his body and thereby sends him back to the traditional ethical world in which social agents, whether immortal or human, subject people to corporal punishment when they behave badly.[330] Masters beat slaves and gods strike down unlawful mortals with lightning bolts or disease. Strepsiades, however, had been un-learning these realities throughout his education.

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[329] Mitchell-Boyask (2008, 71-4).

[330] Of course, physically harming one's father was a very serious crime (MacDowell 1978, 92). Even physically punishing free men in public was an offense; this kind of violence was reserved for slaves and had a communal, in addition to punitive, function (V. Hunter 1994, 173-84). Yet this comedy is a fantasy world, unmoored from the usual anxieties associated with father-beating (Reckford 1976, 97-102). For the use of comic violence in Aristophanes in general, see Kaimio (1990). I believe, however, that the beating (which had, albeit, taken place off-stage) retains a social and ethical significance, especially as the presence of the audience contributes to the social nature of the punishment.

He instead had begun to believe that bodies are not manipulated by divine agents, but simply respond to external forces moving at random. The gnat buzzes because air whistles through it. His belly, just as clouds, are set into motion with excess heat or liquid. In these descriptions, there is a distinct sense of necessity according to *phusis*, rather than *nomos*.[331] There is no Zeus hurling penal thunderbolts at oath-breakers; temperature and humidity cause bad weather.

Now, by contrast, Strepsiades is re-inducted into the traditional social world with its conventions of recompense. Pheidippides explains it as an instructive measure, putting his father in the role of a child (*Nu.* 1410-19), as is fitting for the comic reversals of roles and fate.[332] With dramatic polysyndeton, Strepsiades complains that his son has maltreated him: "Then he jumps up; and he knocked me and banged me and choked me and pulverized me" (εἶθ᾽ οὗτος ἐπαναπηδᾷ,/ κἄπειτ᾽ ἔφλα με κἀσπόδει κἄπνιγε κἀπέτριβεν).[333] Later, the old man complains that he would rather keep horses for his son than be crushed by his blows (τυπτόμενον ἐπιτριβῆναι, 1407). Importantly, he describes himself as quite literally "compressed/squeezed out" when he says that his son's violence made him defecate: ἀλλὰ πνιγόμενος/ αὐτοῦ 'ποίησα κακκᾶν (1389-90).[334] In contrast to the indifferent airs and liquids running through his body, his son's violence has personal agency and purpose. We may contrast this intestinal event with a Hippocratic description of involuntary defecation in the case of an epileptic fit: the displacement of organs due to excess phlegm compresses the patient internally, forcing him to defecate (ἡ δὲ κόπρος ὑπέρχεται ὑπὸ βίης πνιγομένου).[335] Thus liquids may upset Strepsiades' bowels, causing pains and flatulence, but it is his son's punitive thrashing that purges them entirely. Even after his lengthy account of internal illnesses, the author of *On Diseases* IV does not forget this simple reason for bodily suffering either. He remarks that diseases arise not only as a result of a bad regimen and meteorological forces, but also, and most forcefully, as a result of violent trauma, such as a wound or a blow from without.[336]

The theme of the justice through corporal punishment returns near the end of the play.

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[331] For this *nomos-phusis* theme in *Clouds,* see O'Regan (1992, esp. 93-5); Nussbaum (1980, 52ff); Reckford (1976, 105-7); Segal (1969, 156-6); Whitman (1964, 129-32). For the theme at this time period, Guthrie (1971, 55-134); Pohlenz (1953).

[332] Reckford (1976).

[333] *Nu*. 1374-5, trans. Sommerstein.

[334] Reckford (1976, 102) also connects this defecation reference to the explanation of thunder, remarking that both passages resolve into absurd hilarity what should otherwise be serious and tragic (Zeus' vengeance and parricide).

[335] Hipp. *Sac. Morb*. 10.34-8.

[336] *Morb*. IV. 19 = L 50

When praying to Hermes, Strepsiades again uses the word "crush" (ἐπιτρίβειν): "But dear Hermes, don't be mad in any way, or crush me" (ἀλλ᾽, ὦ φίλ᾽ Ἑρμῆ, μηδαμῶς θύμαινέ μοι,/ μηδέ μ᾽ ἐπιτρίψῃς, *Nu.* 1478-9). The old man thereby connects his son's punishment with the god's potential punishment. Strepsiades is suddenly chastened by the prospect of physical retribution. Furthermore, this threat surpasses his son's beating in severity. He now not only fears social consequences in the realm of mortals, but also in the realm of the gods. Social and ethical agency that act on the body takes center stage. We are reminded of the presence of the herm statue, visually contrasted with the "vortex" cup that symbolizes, and for Strepsiades' actually is, Socrates' god.[337]

At this point, Strepsiades naturally raises his fist at the chorus. Yet the Clouds, as synecdoche for all celestial and disembodied natural beings, disavow having a hand in his fate. They speak of responsibility, ethical *aitia*, rather than the *aitia* of natural causation that Socrates had taught: αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν σαυτῷ σὺ τούτων αἴτιος,/ στρέψας σεαυτὸν ἐς πονηρὰ πράγματα (*Nu.* 1454-5). This line is additionally conspicuous for its clear reference to the pun of Strepsiades' name: he turned (στρέψας) himself to evil. The grammatical construction of the active participle with the reflexive pronoun also emphasizes his own agency in the matter. He cannot blame the Clouds— but not because these celestial beings do not participate in the economy of justice, as we might have erroneously believed at the beginning of the play. He cannot blame the Clouds because the blame lies elsewhere: on him himself.[338] The chorus reminds him, moreover, that they do in fact have moral motivations. They had planned Strepsiades' downfall all along, intending to teach him a lesson not in natural philosophy, but in morality. Strepsiades responds that he finds this devious, but fair (δίκαια) of them (1462). This plot twist should not, after all, come as a complete surprise.[339] Even as Socrates describes nature as impersonal, the Cloud chorus makes a number of moral, aesthetic, and political judgements in their songs. They also express a desire for traditional forms of worship and threaten the judges with natural disasters.[340] The Clouds were never actually

[337] Ferguson (1979, 356).

[338] Richardson (1970, 62-3) too discusses the importance of Strepsiades' realization, understanding it as a key step in the character's repentance.

[339] This turn of events, and how its described, also resembles the revelations at the end of Aeschylean tragedies (Rau 1967, 173-4) and misunderstood oracles in Herodotus (Davies 2007, 20-21). For arguments that this outcome was actually foreshadowed throughout the play, see Blyth (1994), A. Bowie (1993, 124-30), and Köhnken (1980). Counter-arguments that stress the element of surprise can be found in Gaertner (1999) and Landfester (1977, esp. 111ff).

[340] The Clouds make it clear in the epirrhema and antepirrhema that they are very concerned with Athens' political misjudgments (*Nu.* 575-94; 607-26). According to Socrates, they also shame bad citizens, but instead of punishing them in a traditional way, they take on their forms, reflecting what they perceive their nature to be (352). Furthermore, their involvement in the social realm becomes exceptionally apparent in the

reconcilable with the Presocratic air and "vortex" that Socrates mentions in his scientific explanations.

For the old man, divine causation and agency are also restored as concepts. At the beginning of the play, Strepsiades said that the god of horses was to blame for his financial troubles: αἴτιός μοι τῶν κακῶν (*Nu.* 85). He understood Poseidon as the personal agent of his misery, rather than, for example, citing insalubrious climatic conditions as the cause of his son's profligacy. In the end, Strepsiades regains his interest in traditional gods and believes anew in their efficacy in, and engagement with, the world of mortals. He imagines Hermes to be a potentially wrathful god motivated to punish him for his foolishness and disregard of true, traditional divinities. The hero comes full circle; his belief in gods that have responsibility and agency bookends the play. The end of the comedy, moreover, fittingly no longer concerns itself with the cerebral, rariefied intellect, but rather with the material body which Socrates and his pupils tried to deny, and at which gods are known to direct their anger.[341] Ultimately too Strepsiades takes vengeance on the Phrontisterion, not with tricks or guile, but with barefaced violence.[342]

In the course of the play, Socrates' teachings and the Unjust Argument's speech have completely upset the notion of justice, from its most abstracted political sense to its simplest sense of "recompense" (whether reward or retribution). The traditional gods themselves serve as examples of this illogic, and so it makes sense that Socrates' gods are of a different ilk, entirely removed from this basic form of social interaction. The clouds are not anthropomorphic and thus do not participate in these kinds of exchanges.[343] According to sixth- and fifth-century philosophers, however, natural phenomena do have their own logic, which is not determined by interpersonal behavior but by nature itself, running automatically, free from moral evaluation.[344] Rather than being totally abstract, their "morality" is instead

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epirrhema of the second parabasis (1115-30), when they threaten the judges in the audience should they not favor the comedy. See Segal (1969) for an analysis of this reversal, in which he concludes that they represent a postitivistic side of *phusis* rather than the amorality of the Unjust Argument. Looking in particular at the mixture of gods evoked in the parabasis, Blyth (1994) argues that Aristophanes gives hints throughout the play that the Clouds and the traditional gods join forces to punish Strepsiades in the end.

[341] Kastely (1997, 31) remarks, "What [Socrates'] education offers is an understanding that speaks to the dream of the disembodied…. One does not have to be a Freudian to see that the conditions are ripe for the return of the repressed, that the excluded body will eventually reassert its authority." I argue, however, that the body is present all along; its social relevance is what gets lost and subsequently reasserted.

[342] Von Möllendorff (1995, 193) sees Strepsiades' resorting to physical violence at the end of the play as demonstrative of his inability to understand anything except in bodily terms. I argue that in addition it constitutes another example of the comedy's restoration of concrete, corporeal punishment.

[343] That the staged Clouds, however, are in fact humanoid and played by human actors accords with my conclusion.

[344] Holmes (2010, 95-101).

abstracted into ideas such as cosmic *dike*,[345] Alcmaeon's *isonomia*, and the balance of bodily forces in *On Regimen* and *On Ancient Medicine*.[346]

This naturalistic version of *dike*, however, is not only in the play's subtext; Aristophanes also at one point explicitly highlights this concept. When Strepsiades asks the Second Creditor a trick question about whether or not the sea grows with time, he answers in the negative, "For it isn't right (δίκαιον) for it to be bigger." (μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἴσην./ οὐ γὰρ δίκαιον πλεῖον' εἶναι, *Nu*. 1291-2). Commentators have clarified that the creditor uses the word "just" as a synonym for the Presocratic phrase "according to nature."[347] Thus here too the audience sees the blurriness between natural and human *dike*. Natural forces, Socrates' divinities, figure as the abstracted, impersonal justice of the Presocratics. While the *Clouds* sets Presocratic justice at odds with the conventional gods, however, Socrates' scientific ideas themselves do not argue against the existence of traditional justice in the same way that the Lesser Argument does. The play's natural philosophy is not actually aligned with the Lesser Argument and his amoral statements.[348] Yet as we know, this science-focused view of the world, albeit harmless in itself, proves to be very misleading for Strepsiades.

In this section I have argued that the body—in particular Strepsiades' body—is an important locus for key dramatic concepts in the play, with especial relevance for the issues of blameworthiness and justice. In the old man is staged a microcosm of the universe, a small sample of the meteorological world described by Presocratics. This model also reflects Hippocratics' conceptualization of the body as a system which is directly connected to its impersonal environment and, in turn, prone to the changes which occur there. Aristophanes at times lays the body bare for us to observe as a scientific object, thereby draining its mechanisms of personal agency and moral responsibility in turn. This scientific image of the body functions in part to remind us that impersonal and indifferent forces of nature do not serve readily as agents of retribution. Nonetheless, the comedy does not condemn intellectual pursuits for this reason.

While the *Clouds* critiques and satirizes the science of his day, Aristophanes does not in fact present natural philosophy as intrinsically immoral or dangerous. The Clouds, as

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[345] See note 281 above.

[346] Alcmaeon (DK24) B4; Hipp. *Reg*. I. 10; Hipp. *VM* 9.

[347] Sommerstein (1982, ad loc.); Dover (1968, ad loc.); Starkie (1911, ad loc.).

[348] As Redfield (1999, 57) remarks, "the impiety of Socrates consists in the fact, not that he worships [the Clouds], but rather that he worships them in the wrong way, that he does not understand them." Marianetti (1992, 76-107) also argues that the Clouds are not entirely at odds with traditional values and that Aristophanes does not present novelty and intellectualism as evil. Richardson (1970, 64-5; 70), however, believes the Clouds are clearly associated with the Lesser Argument and his lack of morality.

symbols of Presocratic natural forces, are deities who coexist unproblematically with traditional gods at the end of the play. Strepsiades' problem was never natural philosophy *per se*, but rather, the denizens of the Phrontisterion. Socrates taught Strepsiades about the effect of environmental forces on bodies, from which the old man deduced that he lived in a world devoid of justice. Yet, even Presocratic philosophy cannot entirely dispense with the concept of *dike*. While Strepsiades was contemplating the nuances of how air influences his bowels, he should have been concerned with the even more surreptitious influence of bad company.

In the end, we learn that sophistry and natural philosophy are themselves just as impersonal and impartial as the winds. Like the Clouds, they can change their form and function, only becoming destructive through human implementation and personal motivations. Strepsiades' age and cognitive clumsiness spare him the truly crooked part of his "Socratic" education. After his lessons in natural philosophy, Strepsiades was still able to remedy his ways. His son, on the other hand, might not ever recover from the teachings of the Unjust Argument. Strepsiades' bodily experience throughout the play not only echoes the play's dramatic arc and themes, but also refines how we understand them. Ideas from natural philosophy and medicine do considerable legwork in the *Clouds* beyond playing the villain. They draw attention to, and sketch out the limits of, human agency and its relationship to morality. In this way, Aristophanes engages even more intensely with ideology from fifth-century science than current scholarship has us believe.

2. The Responsibility for Health and Culpability for its Failure

2.1 Pittalus' Practice in the *Acharnians*

The association between the body and the state is a commonplace of Aristophanes' floruit. Ancient authors typically describe a "diseased city" as a city *qua* political unit.[349] They thematize issues of hierarchy; the head, for instance, metaphorically denotes the head of the state;[350] in the fourth century, medical purging can represent the removal of undesirables from the city, and citizens can figure as incompetent physicians to the state.[351] This body-as-state imagery is present in *Acharnians* as well, whose depictions of bodily suffering clearly have political import. Yet here it assumes a distinctive form and function. In the comedy, the metaphor engages with the tension between urban and rural Athens, and, through references to rational medicine, serves the play's commentary on the relationship between citizen and state. In particular, Dercetes' and Lamachus' injured bodies are aligned with Athenian agriculture rather than the urban or political realm. This thematic substitution dovetails with an idea that Dicaeopolis introduces at the beginning of the play when he hints at an alternative "heart" of Athens: one placed in the countryside surrounding the city rather than in the agora or the Pnyx.[352] Dicaeopolis' dream of a separate, rural peace, however, has its limits. The play's references to injury, medicine, and the office of public physician allude to the reciprocal obligation that a citizen and state have to each other, thereby not only reminding the audience that Dicaeopolis' plan is a fantasy, but also suggesting that it is better that way. Like *Assemblywomen* and *Wealth*, which I discuss in Chapters 2.3 and 2.4, the *Acharnians* parallels the theme of civic engagement with the themes of responsibility for, and expert knowledge about, health. Thus, even in playwright's earliest surviving play, the body and its ailments are instrumental in his presentation of socio-political subject matter.

After securing his personal peace treaty, Dicaeopolis cheekily disregards the medical problems with which two characters confront him. In the first instance (*Ach*. 1018-1036), an Athenian farmer, Dercetes, approaches him and asks for a share of the peace, metaphorically presented as an ointment. Dicaeopolis refuses to help, despite the fact that Dercetes seems to

[349] See Brock (2000, 35-54); Wickkiser (2008, 83 n. 39); Rechenauer (1991, 351).
[350] Brock (2013, 70-1).
[351] Brock (2013, 72-3).
[352] The contrast between the city and the country greatly color the play, especially at the beginning. Cf. A. Bowie (1993, 39-44) on the contrast between deme and city. Wilkins (2000, 181) describes how the lines between the city and the rural deme are nonetheless blurred—one does not supersede the other (107). Compton-Engle (1999) argues differently and suggests that Dicaeopolis undergoes a transformation from a humble farmer to an urbane city-goer.

be a humble rustic like him. Perhaps because it complicates positive interpretations of the protagonist's character and actions, this particular scene has not attracted the attention of many scholars. Dicaeopolis' dismissive behavior fails to gratify us in the way we expect from such "impostor scenes" because there is no clear reason why his interlocutor is objectionable.[353] I argue that readers' instincts about the scene are fundamentally correct and that a closer analysis reveals precisely why. Through focusing on how the scene's bodily and medical content falls in line with the play's main themes, I offer an interpretation of the interaction between these two characters.

First and foremost, this passage underscores the impact that the Peloponnesian War has on humble Athenian farmers.[354] Boeotian raiders stole or killed Dercetes' two oxen simply because he was unlucky enough to live in Phyle, which lies between Athens and Boeotia (not unlike the northern-dwelling chorus of the Acharnians themselves). The specific ways in which the farmer describes his injury, however, and how Dicaeopolis reacts, offers us another layer of insight:

Δε. ἀπόλωλα τὠφθαλμὼ δακρύων τὼ βόε.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τι κήδει Δερκέτου Φυλασίου,
ὑπάλειψον εἰρήνῃ με τὠφθαλμὼ ταχύ. (*Ach.* 1027-9)

De. I lost my two eyes crying over my pair of oxen.
But if you care at all for Dercetes of Phyle,
rub peace quickly onto my eyes!

The playwright has Dercetes repeatedly use the dual number for his livestock: ἐτρεφέτην (1025), τὠφθαλμὼ (1027; 1029), τὼ βόε (1027; 1031), τοῖν γεωργοῖν βοιδίοιν (1036). The pair of oxen are mentioned three times, each time at the end of the line, indicating the significance of twos in this scene. These oxen, furthermore, form another dyad with Dercetes' eyes, which are themselves in the dual number. He has "lost" both the animals and the eyes: ἀπολέσας τὼ βόε (1022); ἀπόλωλα τὠφθαλμὼ (1027). This twofold pairing draws a parallel between the oxen and eyes, and indeed the former has a causal relationship to the latter—the farmer claims he destroyed his eyes through crying over his lost cattle.[355]

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[353] MacDowell (1983, 159-60) and L. Parker (1991, 206), however, posit that the Athenian audience would have known Dercetes and had reason to dislike him. Hence their more favorable interpretation of Dicaeopolis' attitude toward him. Olson (2002, ad loc.) also believes Dercetes was certainly the Dercetes of Phyle mentioned in an inscription (*IG* I^3 109.7) and must have been a warmonger. Olson (2002, ad loc.) reminds us not to take the scene to seriously because Dercetes' lament is more bathic than pathetic. Whitehorne (2002) indeed goes so far as to view the scene as an elaborate joke about testicles.

[354] On Dercetes' identity, see Kanavou (2011, 43-44).

[355] Olson (2002, ad loc.) identifies Dercetes' condition with *ophthalmia* (ὀφθαλμία), a general term for eye disease, but distinct from blindness because of its theoretical curability (see the scholion ad *Pl.* 115). Cf.

With Dercetes' account, Aristophanes thus not only shows a single consequence of the war; he also presents a domino effect: military conflict leads to loss of property, specifically livestock, and then to bodily trauma. The war's effect on the private sphere is exaggerated and exemplified in this, albeit absurdly incurred, damage to an essential body part. Dercetes' story offers us an image of rural Athens that is pointedly connected with the body. It presents the agricultural realm as the most important and relevant to Athenian life and, in turn, the most vulnerable to political and military conflict.

When a messenger reports Lamachus' injury, we see this pattern again: a body that is metaphorically linked to husbandry suffers the ravages of war, and medicine is presented as the solution. The speech replaces every potentially heroic element in Lamachus' story with the quotidian and rural, thereby emphasizing this agricultural space.[356] Olson draws our attention to the Homeric language and subject matter in the chorus' antistrophe (*Ach.* 1171-3) before the messenger's entrance,[357] as well as how the speech itself parodies messenger speeches from Euripidean tragedy.[358] Beginning with a line that intermingles high and low registers, the messenger tells of how a stake, a vinicultural implement, is the weapon responsible for Lamachus' injury instead of a spear.[359] The general was also wounded by falling in a ditch rather than on a proper battle field. The trench (τάφρος) adopts agricultural significance in this context alongside the stake, bringing to mind an irrigation ditch rather than a military excavation.[360] The second mention of the ditch with the unambiguous word "ὑδρορρόα" then reinforces this interpretation (*Ach.* 1186). Lamacus is placed squarely in the countryside.

In the following two lines, the messenger gives more detail about the trauma by using a food metaphor: the general dislocated (literally "popped out") his ankle by twisting it backwards. Because this verb conventionally denotes picking out seeds, its use here metaphorically figures Lamachus' body as produce.[361]

ἀνὴρ τέτρωται <u>χάρακι</u> διαπηδῶν <u>τάφρον</u>,

Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 141-3) and Southard (1970, 83-4) on the curability of this disease and its mention elsewhere in Aristophanes: *Ra*. 192, *Pl*. 115; *Fr.* 132 K-A.

[356] I follow Sommerstein's (1978, 394) interpretation that the "trench" of 1178 and the "ditch" have the same referent.

[357] Olson (2002, ad loc.).

[358] Olson (2002, ad loc.).

[359] Zimmermann (1992, 521-2) observes that the mixture between tragic, medical, and slang vocabulary serves to increase the comic tension. Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 157-8) sees Lamachus' injury and its treatment as a parody of Euripides' use of medical language in tragedy. See also Southard (1970, 198-202).

[360] Olson (2002, ad loc.).

[361] Taillardat (1965, 351-2). He also notes a similar metaphor in *Peace* in which Trygeus curses Zeus for "pitting" cities (*Pax* 63).

καὶ τὸ σφυρὸν παλίνορρον ἐξεκόκκισεν,
καὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς κατέαγε περὶ λίθῳ πεσών,
καὶ Γοργόν᾽ ἐξήγειρεν ἐκ τῆς ἀσπίδος.
πτίλον δὲ τὸ μέγα κομπολακύθου πεσὸν
πρὸς ταῖς πέτραισι, δεινὸν ἐξηύδα μέλος: (*Ach*. 1178-83)

The man's been wounded by a stake after leaping over a trench,
And popped out his ankle by twisting it backwards,
And he cracked open his head on a rock as he fell,
And he awakened the Gorgon up out of his shield,
A great plume fell off his crest onto the rocks,
at which he cried out a frightful strain.

The vine prop, the trench refigured as an irrigation ditch, and the imagery of his body as a piece of fruit all align Lamachus' body with farming. His injuries are associated with the agricultural realm. This scene recalls Dercetes' story in that husbandry imagery (whether agricultural or animal) is connected with both of their ailing bodies; through this parallelism, threats to one's livelihood are merged with threats to one's life itself.[362]

Of course, Lamachus' and Dercetes' injuries differ. While in a sense both characters suffer on account of the war, Lamachus' injuries are not battle wounds, but rather, accidents which belong to the agricultural and rural world. He injures himself with a vine-prop and subsequently falls into a ditch, cracking his head on a rock. Elsewhere in the play, the trampling on, or ripping out of, vines serves as synecdochic shorthand for the effects of war (*Ach*. 229-31; 182-3). In this ironic twist of fate, a vineyard has a destructive power over military conflict, embodied in the character Lamachus.[363] This picture stands in contrast to Dercetes' story in which agriculture plays the unwilling victim. Nevertheless, both acts of destruction, whether war against husbandry or husbandry against war, are pointedly presented in terms of damage to human bodies.

In these scenes, agricultural metaphors for, and associations with, the body do not have the sexual connotation they so often do,[364] but instead offer a condensed, portmanteau image of the corporeal and agrarian losses of military conflict. The playwright presents an unusual situation: in a critical portrayal of war, one would expect combat injuries if anything, but his characters' injuries are at most indirect, accidental consequences of the conflict. The depictions take the audience's focus outside of the city and direct it to a simpler, less political aspect of Athenian life. We thereby gain another frame of reference for understanding the war. Dercetes' and Lamachus' comic plights may contrast with tragic or heroic suffering, but

[362] Two concepts already associated in the Greek language through their shared denotation βιός.
[363] On the ironic opposition between war and wine in this scene see Wilkins (2000, 132-3; 132 n. 143); E. Bowie (1995, 122-25); Edmunds (1980, 19-21); Whitman (1964, 73).
[364] See Henderson (1991, 166-9) and Taillardat (1965, 100-1) on agricultural metaphors with sexual meaning.

their injuries are nonetheless meaningful and relevant to the drama. Although outside of, and seemingly totally removed from, the city, these characters' traumas take on unexpected socio-political significance through Aristophanes' use of medical themes.

In the Dercetes scene, just as the destructiveness of war is translated into concrete bodily suffering, peace is also imagined to have a direct salubrious effect on the body. It is represented as a healing salve with which Dicaeopolis could anoint the blind man's eyes.[365] The way in which Dercetes expects Dicaeopolis to administer this liquid also strongly recalls commonplace medical treatment from the era. He asks for a drop distilled into a reed, a standard receptacle for carrying eye medication:[366] σὺ δ᾽ ἀλλά μοι σταλαγμὸν εἰρήνης ἕνα/ ἐς τὸν καλαμίσκον ἐνστάλαξον τουτονί (*Ach*. 1033-4). Aristophanes thereby draws our attention to analogies between injury and war, medicine and peace. While the curative powers of a liquid peace are a comic fiction, the method of treatment that Dercetes proposes is entirely rational and mundane. The scene that follows in fact sets in high relief the relative banality of the farmer's request: peace is here a magic potion with which a bride can detach her groom's genitals. The Lamachus scene that follows, and the ways in which it relates to Dercetes, shed light on the relevance that this medical image has for reading Dicaeopolis' plan for a utopian Athens.

While Dercetes refers to one medical object, a reed which doubles as a phial, Lamachus' slave lists several iatric paraphernalia, again drawing attention to conventional means for treating injuries in rational medicine.[367] The slave calls for the general's domestic servants to heat water and prepare linen, cerate, greased wool, and lint, listing them asyndetically to highlight the urgency and specificity of his request:

> ὦ δμῶες οἳ κατ᾽ οἶκόν ἐστε Λαμάχου,
> ὕδωρ ὕδωρ ἐν χυτριδίῳ θερμαίνετε·
> ὀθόνια, κηρωτὴν παρασκευάζετε,
> ἔρι᾽ οἰσυπηρά, λαμπάδιον περὶ τὸ σφυρόν. (*Ach*. 1174-7)
>
> O servants at Lamachus' house,
> Water, water, heat it up in a jug:
> Prepare linen, cerate,
> Greased wool, lint for his ankle.

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[365] See Taillardat (1965, 373-4) on the metaphor of peace as a balm.

[366] Jouanna (2000, 176 n. 17) notes the lack of technical terminology for the farmer's eye condition, but indicates that the treatment is found in Hippocratic medicine. Cf. Southard (1970, 172-3). Xenophon mentions a man suffering from an eye condition carrying a reed (presumably with medicine inside) from the doctor's: ἐντυχών τινι ὀφθαλμιῶντι ἀνθρώπῳ ἀπιόντι ἐξ ἰατρείου, κάλαμον ἔχοντι. (*Hell*. 2.1.3).

[367] Jouanna (2000, 181-3); Zimmermann (1992, 521-2) unsurprisingly sees connections to the Hippocratic treatise *On Fractures* in particular. Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 361-3); H. Miller (1945, 78) cites the passages Hipp. *Acut. Sp*. 62 = L 29 (greased wool); *Artic*. 14.35; *Fract*. 4.36; 26.8; *Mochl*. 2.7 (cerate).

In this list of physician's implements and medicines, we hear a parallel to what Lamachus himself ordered as he was making preparations for war. These two scenes which involve Lamachus have strong resonances with each other because, in addition to the catalogues in both, one occurs directly before Lamachus' exit and the other anticipates his return onstage. This second list contrasts with Lamachus' own demands for equipment and supplies when he sets off for battle as Dicaeopolis, for his part, has a sumptuous feast prepared (*Ach*. 1095-1141). Among the requested items we hear a sack, an onion wrap, helmet crest, crest-case, spear, shield, shield-stand, oil for the shield, shield blanket, breastplate, backpack and cloak. The doctor's items, like these military impedimenta, are also to be applied or fastened to his body, a fact which intensifies the opposition between the two lists. Lamachus reappears onstage, perhaps without the crest or the Gorgon on his shield with which he had exited.[368] Instead of crests and bucklers, he requires bandages around his head and ankle, prepared by the state-appointed doctor Pittalus.[369]

Lamachus' premature and paratragic return likewise highlights the themes of healing and medicine. The general addresses Apollo the Healer in line 1212 (ἰὼ ἰὼ Παιὰν Παιάν), yet his entreaties do not remain tragic. He describes his symptoms of dizziness in terms that arguably allude to Hippocratic language: <u>εἰλιγγιῶ</u> κάρα λίθῳ πεπληγμένος/ καὶ <u>σκοτοδινιῶ</u> (*Ach.* 1218-9).[370] Soon he also resorts to the public doctor Pittalus: Carry me inside to Pittalus' practice with healing hands! (θύραζέ μ' ἐξενέγκατ' ἐς τοῦ Πιττάλου/ παιωνίαισι χερσίν, 1222-23). The adjective "παιώνιος" that describes human hands echoes the paratragic epithet "Παιάν" for Apollo[371] and reinforces his replacement of the immortal with the mortal healer. He also intersperses his tragic cries with an adjective common in the Hippocratic corpus ("painful," ἐπώδυνος):[372] ὢ συμφορὰ τάλαινα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν./ ἰὼ ἰὼ τραυμάτων ἐπωδύνων (1204-5). In these ways, the passage transports the character yet again from the heroic to the banal, but now this banality belongs decidedly to the urban, rather than rural, realm. Ad hoc healers will not treat him on the battle field;[373] he is fortunate enough to

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368 Stone (1977, 437).

369 Olson (2002, ad loc.).

370 Jouanna (2000, 182-3) notes that "εἰλιγγιαν/ἰλιγγων" appears in the HC, while "σκοτοδινιῶ" has the suffix "–ιάω" which denotes a pathological condition (see Chapter 2.2 note 408 and Chapter 2.3.1 note 482). Southard (1970, 104-5) H. Miller (1945, 77) remark on the frequency of this symptom in the HC.

371 Sommerstein (1980, ad loc.); Olson (2002, ad loc.).

372 Olson (2002, ad loc.); Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 155); Southard (1970, 41); H. Miller (1945, 78). E.g. in *VM* 22.74; *Prog*. 7.12; 8.14; 19.11; *Epid.* I, case 3.97, etc.; *Frac*. 43.2; *Prorrh.* I. 53; 75; 86 etc.; *Coac*. 8; 46; 36 etc.

373 Olson (2002, ad loc.) makes a similar point. See Salazar (2000, 68-74) for battle wound treatment. It is unclear how common army doctors would have been at this time, but it is unlikely that they would have been a standard fixture, especially on shorter campaigns. We know, however, that Xenophon mentions physicians

receive the full benefit of experienced physicians in the city. Although Lamachus is a soldier, therefore, his body is everything but heroic; it is first metaphorically assimilated into an agrarian landscape, then later becomes an object of medical care in the messenger speech and the scene that follows. As in the case of Dercetes, Lamachus' injury parallels medical and military matters, but here the former trumps the latter. The general's military expertise and authority give way to the medical expertise and authority of the local doctor.

Now that I have established the main themes of these two scenes and their relevance to one other, I turn to their function in the context of the play. The subjects of injury, medicine, and the public physician in part work together to paint an undignified portrait of the destruction and fog of war. On another level, however, and contextualized within the play, they call into question the hero's own actions. They have, therefore, two distinct purposes: firstly, and most apparently, they offer another argument for peace; secondly, and somewhat counteractively, they present an objection to Dicaeopolis' solution for achieving it. The first idea is a well-established (if not entirely uncontroversial) aspect of the play,[374] although scholars have not discussed it with an eye to Dercetes' and Lamachus' health problems. Aristophanes presents a critical view on the war through the bodily damage that it incurs on these two characters. In addition, he draws attention to the paradox of a pro-war Athenian government: Dicaeopolis' mention of Pittalus' practice highlights the irony that Athens supports a state doctor whose duties must have included treating citizens for injuries from a war which Athens also supports.[375] Living up to his name "Just City," Dicaeopolis displays his own sense of justice concerning the matter:[376] he does not so much aim to punish Dercetes himself. Rather, he directs the burden of the farmer's medical treatment back to the office of public physician, an office appointed by popular vote in a city which, albeit indirectly, instigated and perpetuated the war in the first place. When Lamachus later refers himself to Pittalus, this irony is again underscored, and all the more so. After all, this plea comes from a character whose depiction brings in tow the added irony that he, as war hawk, is the greatest victim of war in the play.

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in Spartan armies (*Lac*. 8.7) and even Homer puts doctors in the Achaian camp in the Trojan War (*Il*. 2.231-2).

[374] See e.g. de Ste Croix (1972, 363-71); MacDowell 1983; Foley (1988); Contra Forrest (1963).

[375] Treating war wounds was of course more in the purview of a doctor who travels with an army (see note 373 above); the topic of war is also never directly mentioned in medical treatises from this time. Yet it is reasonable to assume that during these decades of continuous military conflict, any competent doctor could treat such injuries. *On Wounds in the Head*, for instance, describes how to remove missiles from the skull throughout (e.g. at Hipp. *VC* 11). In *Physician*, a much later treatise, the author remarks that an urban doctor has very little practice with extracting missiles since most do not experience a military conflict in their lifetime—certainly not the case for fifth-century Athenian doctors! (*Medic*. 14).

[376] Foley (1988, 47).

The mention of the Pittalus, moreover, takes on special meaning in the case of Lamachus. In a key way, this iatric office is a counterpart to Lamachus' own appointment. Athenian generalships and the offices of public physician[377] were both appointed by the people.[378] They also both ostensibly existed to preserve Athenian lives. As Aristophanes demonstrates so well in this play, the Peloponnesian War had by now (425 BCE) hit home particularly hard; during wartime only military interventions could repel attempts on Athens and its people, and while Athenian generals had other duties, managing wars was certainly their most conspicuous responsibility.[379] Yet, of course, a general is at cross-purposes when it comes to saving people. A doctor of the state, by contrast, has a fundamentally and solely therapeutic function.[380] This latter appointment, if not the purely altruistic position it was once thought to be,[381] in any case symbolizes, and testifies to, a civic interest in the health of the citizenry at large and constitutes a public health measure in the most basic sense. The reference to Pittalus necessarily evokes these civic-minded ideas.[382] The audience thus sees a certain irony in the juxtaposition of Lamachus and Pittalus, his fellow "civil servant," and considers how the office of public physician places the generalship in a critical light.

Without the mention of Pittalus, of course, Dicaeopolis' condemnation of the war still comes across very clear in both scenes. Lamachus' and Dercetes' ailments were, directly or indirectly, both caused by Boeotian raids. In the comedy, furthermore, the conflict with Sparta affects most severely the Athenian rural landscape and its denizens, those portrayed as the most peace-loving and impartial of all. The injuries, albeit accidents that occur in uneventful rural areas rather than battlefields, are the war wounds of comedy. By presenting humans bodies as intimately connected with husbandry, both scenes suggest a priority of Athenian agriculture over urban politics, especially when it comes to the question of war—an opinion which the comic hero himself explicitly endorses as he waits for the assembly at the opening

[377] It is unclear exactly how many public physicians there were at a time in Athens, but there is evidence from the Hellenistic age that there was certainly more than one (Cohn-Haft 1956, 57).

[378] Albeit likely by different means. The different tribes (generally) each elected a general in the assembly, but we do not know exactly how public physicians were elected (Arist. *Ath.Con*. 44.4). Evidence for the election of public physicians is found in Pl. *Gorgias* 455b and Xen. *Cyropaedia* I.6.15.

[379] Hansen (1991, 268-9).

[380] Thucydides has Nicias making a similar point while addressing the chairman of the council ten years later. Recalling the Hippocratic oath, the general encourages him to be the physician of the state, 'to help or at least do no harm,' by putting the question of the Sicilian expedition to another vote (*Hist*. 6.14). This sentiment is found in the Hippocratic Oath and almost verbatim in Hipp. *Epid.* I. 11.11-2.

[381] Hands (1968, 133-4) and Cohn-Haft (1956, 33-6) believe state physicians practiced for a fee; *contra* Cordes (1994, 53), Gil and Rodríguez Alfageme (1972, 50-3), Bolkestein (1967, 75) and Woodhead (1952, 236-7), who follow a fifth-century CE scholium to the *Acharnians* which asserts such doctors worked for free. Jouanna (2000, 188) also interprets δημοσιεύω "I work for the state" in this way.

[382] Regardless of whether Athens paid or merely designated public physicians, it is clear that the purpose of both was to secure competent medical treatment in the city.

of the play (*Ach*. 32-33). City-people, the implication is, countenance a continuation of the conflict, yet they are hardly the ones that suffer the brunt of the damage it causes. Nevertheless, Dercetes' and Lamachus' misfortunes do not unproblematically offer another argument against the war to add to Dicaeopolis' own complaints.

The images of their traumas are also at odds with the references to Pittalus which attend both descriptions. The agricultural imagery for the human body sends our imagination beyond the city walls, calling to mind a fantastical, perhaps Bakhtinian, commingling of the body with rural abundance that is typical of Aristophanic comedy. Yet these bodies are damaged, and both times they are directed back to the city for a practical cure. The two references to the doctor in fact place a distinct emphasis on direction. Lamachus cries to be taken to Pittalus' practice: ἐς τοῦ Πιττάλου (*Ach*. 1222). Dicaeopolis tells Dercetes to go cry to Pittalus' people, implying the movement toward him with the preposition πρός (πρὸς τοὺς Πιττάλου, 1032). We are twice told, therefore, that medical care is to be found in Athens, and from none other than the state-approved public physician himself. When considering the passages as a whole, we now observe a chink in the hero's plans: Dicaeopolis' fantasies of an independent, rustic world seem bound to come to naught because the human body, unlike lost oxen and thrashed vines, requires expert, urban care.

When faced with Dercetes' plight, the comic hero mentions the office of public physician as an argument to dismiss him. The hero shows an unwillingness to give away his hard-earned peace and refuses Dercetes in particular on the grounds that his problems do not concern him. As the farmer first announces his misery, his would-be benefactor instructs him to keep it to himself: κατὰ σεαυτόν νυν τρέπου (*Ach*. 1019).[383] He also insists on his lack of responsibility for his fellow citizens' health, implying that only Pittalus has this duty:

Δι. ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πόνηρ᾽ οὐ <u>δημοσιεύων</u> τυγχάνω.
Δε. ἴθ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽, ἤν πως κομίσωμαι τὼ βόε.
Δι. οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ κλᾶε πρὸς <u>τοὺς Πιττάλου</u>. (*Ach*. 1030-1032)

Di. But I'm not a public servant, miserable man.
Der. Come, I'm begging you, if I might recover my pair of oxen…
Di. Impossible! Wail at Pittalus' practice.

This passages follow the formula of Aristophanic impostor scenes in which characters justly or unjustly try to demand (a share of) something valuable from the hero. Here we find a telling response from the hero. Dicaeopolis' refusal to concern himself with Dercetes and

[383] Edmunds (1980, 21) argues that the hero was not being selfish, but rather was preserving the festive spirit by averting the farmer's unlucky influence.

Lamachus demonstrates that he lacks a certain sense of obligation to fellow citizens; unsurprisingly, he has been characterized as selfish in a number of readings, even hypocritical.[384] By attending the assembly at the beginning of the play, Dicaeopolis showed a concern for his city, or at least the proper governmental channels for ending the war. Now in these lines he makes a distinction between the responsibilities of the state and the private citizen, but (ostensibly unwittingly) shows us the problems of such a distinction. The doctor Pittalus represents an argument against Dicaeopolis' utopia. Through mentioning him, the hero presents the issue of state welfare in general, thereby inviting speculation on the limitations it reveals his separate peace to have.

We also arrive at this critical perspective of Dicaeopolis' peace via another route when we consider the uneasy resonances between Dicaeopolis and Lamachus that several intertextual references to Euripides' *Telephus* forge.[385] Dicaeopolis overtly fashions himself as Telephus through borrowed rags and hostage-taking, but Lamachus hearkens to this Euripidean tragedy as well: like Telephus, he sustains a leg wound.[386] Telephus travels from Mysia to the mainland in search of a magical, sympathetic cure in Achilles, [387] the one who gave him the wound in the first place. By contrast, Lamachus resorts to practical measures, begging to be helped over to a mortal doctor. Thus in this respect too, mundane medicine takes the place of a heroic or miraculous cure in the play,[388] and thereby hints at the practical necessity of rational medicine. Because of this indirect connection between Dicaeopolis and Lamachus, a latent idea manifests itself: the rustic's utopia might be more vulnerable than it appears. The comic fantasy is clearly not absolute in the play, but is rather interspersed with, and tacitly frustrated by, suggestions of a practical disadvantage to the hero's disregard of the Athenian *polis*.

The issue of government expenditure, a major theme in the *Acharnians*, is also potentially relevant for Pittalus' role in the play. It is possible that, in addition to officially designating certain practitioners as "public physicians," that the state also paid them a stipend.[389] If this is the case, then Pittalus' position has additional financial implications for

[384] Whitman (1964, 76-8); Dover (1972, 88); A. Bowie (1993, 32-5). Foley (1988,45-6) considers the hero selfish, but calls for a distinction between him and the "true justice of comedy." *Contra* MacDowell (1983, 147-8) and Edmunds (1980, 27-9), who offer different rationales for his behavior.
[385] Foley (1988); Reckford (1987, 172-86).
[386] Foley (1988, 39); Reckford (1987, 165; 196).
[387] Fr. 724 Kn., discussed in Preiser (2000, 557-66).
[388] Foley (1988, 39 n. 26) notes other links between the general and tragic hero in *Ach*. 1188 and Eur. fr. 705 Kn. and their apparent disrespect for Dionysus.
[389] Gil and Rodríguez Alfageme (1972, 50-3) argue this case, accepting the authority of a scholion: "οὐ δημοσιεύων τυγχάνω: οἱ δημοσίᾳ χειροτονούμενοι ἰατροί ὡς δημόσιοι προῖκα ἐθεράπευον" (Wilson 1975,

the drama. In his complaints, Dicaeopolis repeatedly concerns himself with the issue of misappropriated public funds. At the assembly he grumbles about the expense of sending embassies to the Persians and confirms his suspicion that the office is a scandalous sinecure and a complete waste of the Athenian treasury (*Ach*. 61-90). Although he soon learns that the Persian embassy is indeed a rouse (115-122), it is only after he hears that they will eat in the prytaneion that he resolves to establish his peace. Like the embassies themselves, dining at the pyrtaneion, besides constituting an honor reserved for worthy men, is run at municipal expense;[390] abuse of this privilege consequently constitutes a misuse of state money as well. Furthermore, Dicaeopolis repeatedly criticizes Lamachus for his purported desire to perpetuate the war for personal gain rather than out of patriotic sentiment. After his speech, and while still in beggar's clothing, Dicaeopolis encounters the general. To Lamachus' demand that he identify himself, the hero cheekily replies:

> ὅστις; πολίτης χρηστός, οὐ σπουδαρχίδης,
> ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ὅτου περ ὁ πόλεμος, στρατωνίδης,
> σὺ δ᾽ ἐξ ὅτου περ ὁ πόλεμος, μισθαρχίδης. (*Ach*. 595-7)
>
> Who am I? A useful citizen, no Power-grabby-McGee,
> but ever since the war, I've been Fighty-McGee,
> while ever since the war, you've been Salary-McGee.

A few lines later Dicaeopolis lands two other jabs regarding the general's covetousness, one at 607-9, and one at the end of their discussion: Lamachus: "Oh democracy, can this be tolerated?" Dicaeopolis: "No indeed, at least not if Lamachus isn't paid!" (Λά. ὦ δημοκρατία ταῦτα δῆτ᾽ ἀνασχετά;/ Δι. οὐ δῆτ᾽ ἐὰν μὴ μισθοφορῇ γε Λάμαχος, 618-19).

In his arguments against the war, the hero thus fixates on the abuse of the Athenian treasury. When considered alongside these other state expenditures, a doctor's salary is a use of state funds which is (relatively speaking) universally beneficial to citizens.[391] The case of Pittalus would then raise another tacit counterargument to Dicaeopolis' approach, revealing a baby that he throws out with the bathwater of the Athenian state. Unfortunately, given the

130 n. 1030a). Cohn-Haft (1956, 33-54), however, voices a healthy suspicion of this late scholion and finds indirect evidence to suggest the contrary, i.e. that, through some kind of popular vote which took place outside the usual council and assembly (Pl. *Gor.* 455b; Xen. *Cyr*. I.6.15), the Athenian state officially recognized the qualifications of certain doctors by calling them "public." This title, however, did not necessarily indicate that these doctors actually drew pay from the state.

[390] See Wilkins (2000, 175-83) on the significance of the prytaneion in *Knights*. See S. Miller (1978, 4-5) on the institution in general; see also the scholia of *Eq*. 167; 281.

[391] Of course, it is still likely that the number of physicians in Athens, and especially state physicians, was not adequate. Wealthier Athenians would have had better access to doctors, and competent ones (Cohn-Haft 1956, 38-9).

scanty evidence on the issue of state-salaried physicians in Athens,[392] this idea must remain speculative. In either event, there is still sufficient evidence to establish the other social and political aspects of the office of public physician.

The question of the state stipend notwithstanding, money matters not only play a major role in the hero's actions; they also play a major role in problematizing them. Dicaeopolis' solutions for establishing peace illustrate how he identifies Athens' problem largely as a financial one. This will, nonetheless, prove to be a miscalculation. He takes these matters into his own hands, commissioning the Athenian ambassador Amphitheus to do a side job for the sum of eight drachmas, paid out of pocket (*Ach.* 130-4). In his private agora, he becomes the sole Athenian exporter (never mind how he acquired the diverse goods) and naturally keeps all profit and import tax for himself (in the form of an eel). Besides Amphitheus' one-time task, the hero delegates no authority and only gives a bride a portion of peace for free. It seems, according to Dicaeopolis, that one can stop the abuses of public funds if one removes the need for accountability altogether, which he does—by removing anyone to whom he must be accountable. Because he has no duty to his new state and his state in turn owes him nothing, he can quite innocently pocket all taxes and make all decisions. Yet Aristophanes certainly does not present this move as entirely sound. Dicaeopolis myopically focuses on financial and economic issues at the expense of other considerations, and the two brief references to the public physician play a substantial part in outlining this obvious weakness in the hero's plan: a one-man state cannot take care of itself. Aristophanes represents this care as the medical care that qualified, that is, state-recognized, doctors perform.

In these different ways, the implications of the office of public physician have considerable importance for the two scenes discussed. The mention of Pittalus serves to clarify an important aspect of Dicaeopolis' fantasy world. In the hero's system of justice, only those who support the war should have to shoulder the costs of its damages—a point illustrated by the noncombat ailments and injuries of Dercetes and Lamachus. Yet, while the hero's motivations have their logic, they also have a flaw. Dicaeopolis' problem may not be so much that he is selfish or hypocritical (what has long been a preoccupation in scholarship), but rather, that he plants the seeds of a counterargument to his own plan. The simultaneous benefit and limitation of his agora apart is that there are no other citizens to whom his new state his beholden; he isolates himself from the benefits of Athenian city life and urban

[392] Incidentally, most of them are sourced from Aristophanes' plays themselves.

expertise even as he insulates himself from public obligations and the war.[393]

How Aristophanes presents the body in these scenes reveals a telling tension. Dicaeopolis' idyllic rural world, a comic fantasy, presents an "agricized" image of the body which easily regrows and restores itself. A slave girl's breasts are quinces (*Ach*. 1119); Lamachus' foot is only a fruit. In this conceptualization, there are no real consequences of bodily injury. Old comedy revels in this kind of agricultural imagery and the renewing power of the agricultural gods.[394] Nonetheless, this aspect of the drama cannot be neatly reconciled with the rational medicine to which Dicaeopolis, the messenger, and Lamachus refer. The festive, agricultural body is juxtaposed with the ugly realities of bodily trauma and their necessary medical care. The *Acharnians*, like Aristophanes' other works, strikes a balance between play and seriousness, between individualistic and civic impulses. Dercetes' and Lamachus' misfortunes ultimately offer a hopeful outlook for the Athens of the real world even as they toss a small but fateful wrench in the gears of Dicaeopolis' utopia. The play's medical subject matter reasserts the importance of the mundane healing art within the city, thereby alluding to Athens' own need of, and potential for, self-repair through practical means. Dicaeopolis' triumph participates in the regenerative, festive powers of the Lenaea at which the *Acharnians* was first staged, but in the end, it can only exist within that temporary world. Real healing takes place in the city.

Yet, in light of the situation at Athens at this time, how could such a message not be entirely out of touch? A year prior to the *Acharnians'* premiere, the plague had returned and, according to Thucydides, would have lasted through this very Lenaea.[395] Although Dicaeopolis only mentions its unpleasant aspects (*Ach.* 71-2),[396] the real dangers of urban overcrowdedness as well must have been fresh in the minds of Aristophanes' audience. The helplessness of the city's doctors in the face of this disease, vividly illustrated by the historian, must also have left anxiety and bitter memories in its wake.[397] Why then have a drama insinuate that citizens could find health and salvation *within* the city's walls? Perhaps, I suggest, it was perhaps precisely the right time to do so. Even as he thematizes and validates pessimistic attitudes about Athens and its politics, the playwright offers a counterpoint to this

[393] Nelson (2014, 117-22) also argues that Dicaeopolis' separate peace is self-contradictory by design, that Aristophanes simultaneously valorizes and problematizes Dicaeopolis' impulse to break free from the city.
[394] Wilkins (2010, 138).
[395] He writes that it returned in the winter of 427/6 BCE and lasted for another year, thus, until the January/February festival of the Lenaea (*Hist*. 3.87).
[396] Alternatively, sleeping on the ramparts in a bed of straw could refer to sentry duty instead of the discomforts of living as a refugee in the city. Olson (2002, ad loc.).
[397] Thu. *Hist.* 2.47ff.

critique through the play's images of healers and healing. Without treading too close to the subject of the plague itself, he qualifies this very skepticism and weaves into the comedy the fine thread of a positive outlook for the city.

2.2 Political Nosology in the *Wasps*

In the Aristophanic corpus, the *Wasps* stands out for its most explicit engagement with the theme of disease. Philocleon suffers from an addiction to jury service—a malady that arguably plays more the villain in the drama than the politician Cleon himself. The comedy's medical vocabulary is thus in itself not surprising.[398] In this section, however, I go deeper and explore exactly how the play's dramatic themes fit together with the medical language and subject matter which are present throughout. I approach this topic by addressing two simple questions which I believe help us more fully appreciate the *Wasps'* engagement with Hippocratic medicine: why does Aristophanes choose to stage a critique about the jury system of Athens through the metaphor of disease? This comedy, like his *Knights* which premiered two years earlier, presents an unflattering portrait of Cleon. In what ways does the nature of its political commentary differ? My analysis shows how two ideas from fifth-century medicine are relevant for interpreting the thematic significance of Philocleon's disease: first, the concept of a natural bodily constitution (*phusis*), and secondly, the explanation of certain diseases as a gradual process, the result of multiple factors instead of one trigger.

Aristophanes draws attention to the concept of *phusis* through both the chorus and Philocleon's character. The wasps openly explain their nature to the audience (*V*. 1071ff), while Philocleon reveals his very distinctive nature through his actions. In the exodus the chorus specifically refers to the apparent change in the antihero's nature and wonders if it is even possible: τὸ γὰρ ἀποστῆναι χαλεπὸν/ φύσεως, ἣν ἔχοι τις, ἀεί (1457-8). Reckford argues that a popular moral in Aesopic fables is tacitly present in these lines: that one's nature cannot be changed.[399] It is in fact a common topic that other dramas address as well: tragedians explore questions of Nature, also with a particular focus on whether or not it is permanent.[400] In the *Wasps*, however, *phusis* runs the gamut of its possible definitions, including origin, temperament, and physiological constitution, the main topic of my analysis. Because one's constitutional nature is so central to the diagnosis and prognosis of disease in fifth-century medicine, I argue that this informs our understanding of Philocleon's disease and its ultimate

[398] Zimmermann (1992, 522-3). Jouanna (2000, 173-5; 183-8; 193-4) also comments on the various uses of medical themes and language in the play.

[399] It was a reoccurring idea in Aristophanes' works. Reckford (1977, 311) points to a fable found in *Pax* 1083, 1086; the general concept is also found in *Nu*. 513-17.

[400] Kosak (2004) discusses this theme in a few Euripidean plays, in particular with respect to the potential of a hereditary *phusis*: *Orestes* (pp. 135-6); *Phoenissae* (174ff); *Bacchae* (191 n. 114); also in Soph. *Ph*. 902-3, as observed by Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.).

incurability.

Another important Hippocratic idea in the *Wasps* is the concept of disease as a predictable process, a causal chain of events, instead of a single attack by a single agent. The etiology of the comic hero's malady is not entirely clear. We know Cleon is somehow to blame, but he does no direct harm. Notably, the demagogue also does not appear onstage, but there is a certain suspense which Aristophanes cultivates around this very possibility.[401] In the action of the play, Cleon is markedly different than the monster he is described as in the parabasis. His influence, much like Philocleon's own condition, is more insidious. This jurymania has a certain mysteriousness and ambiguity which Athenians had likely not seen on the stage before and would not to see again until Euripides' *Orestes* fourteen years later. I argue that Aristophanes composes this farce about the jury system in Athens through the portrayal of a disease in order to present causation as nuanced and progressive, and to take into account the "nature" of Athens itself.[402]

In the opening sequence, the slaves Sosias and Xanthias announce that Bdelycleon's father suffers from a strange disease: νόσον γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἀλλόκοτον αὐτοῦ νοσεῖ (*V.* 71). They then engage the audience, asking them to guess what sort of disease this is (54-87). At first, however, they give no information on which to base a conjecture. Xanthias remarks that no one could guess the malady if he did not already know (72-3; 85) and he gives futile hints that the condition's prefix is "philo-" and that it is neither a disease of good nor perverse men. Continuing with the "performatively self-conscious" phrase "φράσω...ἤδη" (87),[403] he describes his own diagnosis of Philocleon. Only after naming the disease, however, does he speak of the signs of disease that the old man exhibits. The slave thus draws attention to the idea of prognostic inference, but does not actually give the audience a chance to try it themselves.

Xanthias divulges what led the household to their diagnosis and lists their various attempts at a cure, which include a variety of practical and religious methods (*V.* 88-135).[404]

[401] As Biles and Olson (2015, 124) write, "in [Cleon's] absence emphasis falls on the attitudes and behavior of those made in his image, the sovereign demos as represented by the chorus of jurors, and the refinement of these ideals into an exceptionally potent example of civic devotion in Philocleon, whose very name embodies the sway Cleon held of the demos in this period." Similarly, Konstan (1995, 17) remarks that Cleon is not really an antagonist in the play, but rather, Philocleon and Bdelycleon, who are pitted against one another.

[402] A. Bowie (1993, 101) mentions *passim* that the theme of the *phusis'* immutability refers to the city of Athens as well.

[403] A term found in other expositive texts from the time. Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.) mention comparanda from Her. *Hist.* 2.147 and Hipp. *Aff.* 1.

[404] Jouanna (2000, 183-4) sees the "cleansing" (*V.* 118) as a reference to Hippocratic medicine, but the context gives no indication that it is anything but ritual cleansing.

His description is fundamentally a retrospective account of various signs. Up until this point, the audience only sees the fun in, but ineffectiveness of, random guesses about Philocleon's disease. In reply to the suggestion of a gambling addiction, Sosias claims that Amynias infers that disease from himself: ἀφ᾿ αὑτοῦ τὴν νόσον τεκμαίρεται (76). Amynias' attempt at some kind of inference, if only from himself, misses the mark entirely. While ostensibly very informative, viewed closely, this introduction only answers the following questions about Philocleon's disease: the term for sufferer (φιληλιαστής, 88), its signs, its negative "prognosis,"[405] and useless methods for curing it.[406] The focus is entirely on the end result of a diagnosis and management of the condition, not at all on its etiology or development; we do not discover how it came about in the first place, or how it came to be so serious and intractable. In fact, this remains a conspicuous omission, an informational gap that becomes important in the course of the play and to which the chorus directs our focus a few hundred lines later.

In lines 273ff Aristophanes presents another instance of medical evaluation that seems largely irrelevant to Philocleon's jurymania. Nonetheless, its juxtaposition of conventional health problems with the hero's principal afflicition thematically connects this passage to the prior scene. Soon after the chorus of wasps makes their entrance, they have the audience imagine a very different side to their friend Philocleon: that of an ailing old man rather than the spry creature that the slaves had just described. While waiting for him to come out of the house, they speculate on a number of physical injuries and illnesses that Philocleon could have suffered: anything and anything, of course, but the condition of jurymania that the two slaves had mentioned before. It is the first, but far from last, mention of real diseases in the play:

> τί ποτ᾿ οὐ πρὸ θυρῶν φαίνετ᾿ ἄρ᾿ ἡμῖν ὁ γέρων οὐδ᾿ ὑπακούει;
> μῶν ἀπολώλεκε τὰς
> ἐμβάδας, ἢ προσέκοψ᾿ ἐν
> τῷ σκότῳ τὸν δάκτυλόν που,
> εἶτ᾿ ἐφλέγμηνεν αὐτοῦ
> τὸ σφυρὸν γέροντος ὄντος;
> καὶ τάχ᾿ ἂν βουβωνιῴη. (*V.* 273-277)
>
> Why isn't the old man appearing
> at the door or answering us?
> Maybe he lost his shoes,
> Or stubbed his toe somewhere in the dark

---

[405] Philocleon seems only to be getting worse. "The more he's chastised, the more he serves as on the jury:" νουθετούμενος δ᾿ ἀεὶ/ μᾶλλον δικάζει (*V.* 111-20).

[406] Which include ritual or religious healing: ritual washing (*V.* 118), dancing in Corybantic rites (119), and incubation at the temple of Asclepius (123).

> Then his ankle got swollen, since he's an old man,
> And maybe he would've gotten a swollen groin.

The chorus focuses on physical reasons for why Philocleon has not come, offering conjectures that increase in their degree of medical specificity and inferential reasoning. The chorus begins with their companion's feet, the part of the body most associated with locomotion and the logical starting place for explaining his lack of movement. They first wonder if he might have lost his slippers and, for that reason, could not go outside. They then move on to more specific, physiological impediments. Perhaps, because he had no slippers on, he stubbed his toe from walking around in bare feet. This minor health complaint would be direct result of a single, observable injury. Thereafter, however, Philocleon's proposed disabilities become considerably more theoretical. Maybe, as a result of stubbing his toe he has gotten a swollen ankle.[407] On the basis of this potential ankle injury, they make a much larger inferential and spatial leap all the way to his groin with the final physical ailment, "βουβωνιῴη." Its particular denominative suffix (-ιαω) lends the verb a distinctly medical connotation and indicates a pathological state which we understand to mean swelling of the groin (βουβών).[408] Surviving nowhere else from this time, the term is found twice more in Aristophanes. In both cases, as in the *Wasps* passages, characters imagine that it comes as an indirect result of physical trauma sustained elsewhere in the body. Dionysus says he has this condition (in his kidneys) from the word "striking" striking him. In *Lysistrata* a messenger is imagined to have a swollen groin from strenuous traveling on foot.[409] Aristophanes in this way presents the chorus as familiar with medical lexemes, and as I argue, medical ideas in addition.

MacDowell brings our attention to a modern medical explanation for the process that the chorus imagines: swollen lymph nodes could be an outcome of blood poisoning. Yet how would a Hippocratic doctor understand this disease that the wasps describe? There are analogous cases reported in contemporaneous medical writing which are relevant to our

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[407] Southard (1970, 133-4) notes how φλεγμαίνω "to swell/be swollen" is a common word in the HC. For instance, a joint dislocation can result in swelling; according to the author of *On Joints*, moreover, this kind of swelling occurs more often in dry, muscular patients than in cold and moist ones. Since he also associates this latter constitution with advanced age, this symptom may also be relevant for Philocleon's paradoxical *phusis* (Hipp. *Artic*. 8.54-70).

[408] Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.); Willi (2003, 84-5); Jouanna (2000, 173-5); H. Miller (1945, 76); Peppler (1921, 154).

[409] *Lys*. 987-8; *Ra*. 1280. As MacDowell (1971, ad loc.) and Southard (1970, 33-4) observe, in the *Lysistrata* passage, this condition is also linked to overexertion from walking a long distance, which also indicates that this condition was imagined as potentially originating in the feet. See also Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 152-3), who notes how the author of *On Breaths* states that swellings in the groin lead to fever (although this is excluded in some manuscripts of the treatise) (*Flat*. 6).

understanding of this passage. Zachary Biles and Douglas Olson point to a similar case in *Epidemics* in which a man quickly perishes from a toe injury.[410] For the conceptual parallel that it shares, I suggest an additional passage from this group of treatises where the author describes the migration of a disease (gangrene) up the body, spreading from a toe to the knee: Ἀρίστωνι, δακτύλου ποδὸς ἡλκωμένου, ξὺν πυρετῷ ἀσάφεια· τὸ γαγγραινῶδες ἀνέδραμεν ἄχρι πρὸς γόνυ.[411] These *Epidemics* passages and the chorus of wasps both describe a feature of internal disease that Hippocratic medicine was the first to emphasize: while the diseases' manifestations in various parts in the body are visible (stubbed toe, swollen ankle, swollen groin), its movement in between these spaces are not. This particular gap, whether physical or temporal, Holmes identifies with Dupréel's concept of "the interval."[412] The interval is the time or space between two bodily signs that invites speculation about causation. In the case of gangrene, the Hippocratic writer makes the sensible, but ultimately unprovable, inference that the disease in the injured toe spread up to the knee, that these two complaints (toe and knee) are part of the same disease. This kind of interference was central to understanding internal disease in Hippocratic medicine.[413]

While Philocleon's potential affliction and its *modus operandi* are not indicated in this song, a spatial progression is implied through the chorus naming the body's affected parts: we visualize it traveling upwards. The two passages from *Epidemics* also document the idea that injury can lead to the spread of disease in other, seemingly unaffected, parts of the body, inferring causes behind the signs. In their medical conjectures, therefore, these case-study writers and the chorus of wasps alike tacitly refer to the Hippocratic conception of some diseases as harmful substances which can build up and migrate around the body.[414] The chorus' prediction indicates their familiarity with this basic medical principle. In addition to its medical subject matter, the chorus' speculation itself resembles one of the most distinctive features of Hippocratic medicine, especially nosological treatises: the description of illnesses as a sequence of events with traceable causes.[415] The task of a Hippocratic physician is to identify and stop its progress. As the author of *On Regimen* illustrates: "For diseases do not come about suddenly among men; collecting themselves little by little (κατὰ μικρόν) they

[410] Hipp. *Epid.* I, case 9.
[411] Hipp. *Epid.* VII.110.
[412] Holmes (2010, 25-6); Dupréel (1933).
[413] See Holmes (2010, 119-20) on sign inference in ancient Greek medicine.
[414] Lonie (1977, 235) believes that rational Greek medicine is defined by its predictable nosology and dietetics.
[415] On causation in Hippocratic medicine, see Lloyd (1979, 53-8); on causation in ancient science in general, see Lloyd (1987, 286-91).

appear at all once."[416] The chorus appears to engage in this kind of thinking in their song, reasoning their way through two levels of medical causation: an injured toe could cause a swollen ankle and, in turn, a swollen groin. The "εἶτα" explicitly connects the injured toe with the inflamed ankle in sequence, if not in causation (although there is a naturally fine line between the two possibilities). Furthermore, the genitive absolute "γέροντος ὄντος" has a causal denotation; because he is an old man his ankle would become swollen. Thus the wasps offer the audience two reasons for his potential problem with his ankle. In line 277 the phrase "τάχ' ἄν" followed by a verb in the optative mood also indicates contingency, implying that the previous events in an oblique way constitute information from an implied protasis: if x and y happened, then perhaps he would now suffer from a swollen groin.

In the antistrophe the chorus muses further on Philocleon's absence, this time concentrating on his dedication to jury service rather than a freak injury: his agitation about yesterday's acquittal might have made him ill:

> τάχα δ᾽ ἂν διὰ τὸν χθιζινὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὃς ἡμᾶς διεδύετ᾽ πως,
> ἐξαπατῶν καὶ λέγων
> ὡς φιλαθήναιος ἦν καὶ
> τἀν Σάμῳ πρῶτος κατείποι,
> διὰ τοῦτ᾽ ὀδυνηθεὶς
> εἶτ᾽ ἴσως κεῖται πυρέττων.
> ἔστι γὰρ τοιοῦτος ἀνήρ. (*V.* 281-285)
>
> Maybe it's because of the man yesterday,
> Who got away from us
> By lying and saying
> That he was a lover of Athens
> And was the first to inform us about Samos.
> Then, pained because of all this,
> He perhaps is lying feverish in bed
> Because that's the kind of man he is.

Like the strophe, this antistrophe concerns itself with the cause of malady, but in this case the reason is emotional, rather than physical, trauma.[417] We hear two clear indications of causation: first, in the strophe's first line "διὰ τὸν χθιζινὸν ἄνθρωπον," and then, following additional information, the cause is reiterated at the beginning of line 283, "διὰ τοῦτ᾽": the acquittal of a dishonest man brings on the condition. At the beginning of the following line, we again hear the conjunction " εἶτα," this time explaining why he would now lie in bed with fever.[418] The final line, which metrically corresponds to the "καὶ τάχ᾽ ἂν βουβωνιῴη" of the

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[416] Hipp. *Reg.* I.2.63.
[417] Olson and Biles (2015, ad loc.) observe this contrast.
[418] H. Miller (1945, 83) notes that term "πυρέττειν" is rare in the fifth century outside of medical literature. Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 179) connects this fever that is caused by anger to the pathological phenomenon of overheated bile in the body.

strophe, also points to a causal factor in his falling ill: “because that is the sort of man he is.” Therefore, both the strophe and antistrophe include potential preexisting factors for the presumed illness in addition to its external causes. In the strophe they mention the fact that he is an old man, and in the antistrophe they refer to a distinctive character trait of his: the fact that perceived injustices distress him to this extent. His imagined recent trauma is cited as the proximate cause of his current indisposition, while his nature is imagined to be the ultimate cause.

At the level of the plot, these songs serve to introduce Philocleon’s character and, to some extent, the character of the wasps. The old men concern themselves with subjects stereotypical of their advanced aged and rustic walk of life, fretfully making forecasts about both the weather and Philocleon’s health. In these passages, however, Aristophanes also draws our attention to the practice of medical prognosis, if only by laymen. Moreover, he forges a parallel between Philocleon’s (imagined) conventional diseases and his fantastic, but diegetically real, disease of jurymania. The slave’s introduction of Philocleon’s mania and the wasps’ predictions about his health correspond to two practices in Hippocratic medicine: the former focuses on diagnosis, the latter, on prognosis. These two passages both share a concern with identifying and interpreting the signs of disease. They complement each other and thereby encourage the audience to understand each in terms of the other. The chorus’ strophes recall the prologue in that they involve conjectures about Philocleon’s ill-health, but they differ in that they highlight an issue which the slave’s speech lacks. When we compare Philocleon’s mania with his presumed health problems, we sense information that the slaves omitted: they never wondered about the etiology and development of the antihero’s jurymania. Bdelycleon only partially answers this question when he rails against Athenian corruption later in the agon, leaving the audience to make their own assumptions about the details of its cause. Yet we are not left completely without guidance; the strophe-antistrophe that the wasps sing offers a model for approaching this question.

The importance of these scenes for reading Philocleon’s illness becomes apparent when we compare his disease with those of tragic counterparts and notice a major difference: Euripides’ Ajax, Heracles, Pentheus and Agave all have in common a named and staged divine agent which has caused their illness. His *Orestes* (408 BCE) differs in that the cause of the titular character’s madness is significantly less clear; the audience does not know whether a guilty conscience or real Erinyes plague the matricide, and yet they are given these two

clear etiologies for consideration.[419] In Philocleon's case, by contrast, Aristophanes complicates our understanding of Cleon as the sole guilty party through the imagery of a distinctly Hippocratic disease, conceived of as a chain of events with potentially multiple causal factors.

This approach to pathology does not only address the immediate causes of disease, but also its underlying causes, such as a patient's physiological predisposition (*phusis*). The idea of *phusis* captured the interest of fifth-century thinkers in Greece and became especially integral for rational explanations of disease. In the *Wasps*, the playwright thematizes *phusis* as well. To understand its role in the play, one must consider in particular its meaning in a medical context as well as what medical writers mean when they refer to *phusies*, in the plural, as they often do. Hippocratics regularly espouse the idea that there are different human natures, finding Presocratic concepts of a universal Nature insufficient for the practice of their art.[420] The implication is, one can better diagnose and treat patients as individuals by considering different human *phusies*. As the author of *On Ancient Medicine* remarks, one cannot make the blanket statement that cheese is bad for one's health, but rather, one should take into consideration the patient's individual nature. For some people, cheese is healthful.[421] Concretely, *phusies* are determined by the body's components and its combination of these components: for the author of *On Ancient Medicine*, it is the mixture of the sweet, bitter, salty, etc.;[422] for the author of *On Regimen*, natures depend on the ratio of heat and moisture.[423] These components and their configurations vary by age, sex, race as well as bodily constitution, a factor which both heredity and lifestyle determine.[424] This first factor, age, is very relevant in Philocleon's characterization in the play. On several occasions characters allude to its role in his bodily constitution and its effect on his susceptibility to disease. As we heard in the wasps' song, his innate stubbornness as well as his old age could make him fall ill (*V*. 281-5). They thereby suggest that the concept of *phusis* might help us understand his mania as well.

The parabasis especially attunes the audience to the importance of *phusis* in the comedy. Here the wasps speak about the different features of their own nature. The "φύσιν"

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[419] Saïd (2013, 392-3) discusses the simultaneously divine and psychological nature of Orestes' insanity. See also Smith (1967).

[420] Lloyd (1991, 417-34); Jouanna (1999, 284,-5); Schiefsky (2005, 6; passim 304-18) for this idea in *On Ancient Medicine*.

[421] Hipp. *VM* 20.23-7.

[422] Hipp. *VM* 20.

[423] Specifically a mixture of "fire" and "water" make up a human body (Hipp. *Reg*. I. 3), and different types of "fire" and "water" are elaborated on at *Reg*. I. 32.

[424] Especially in Hipp. *Aër.*, *Sac. Morb*, *Salubr*., and *Reg*.

which concludes the first line introduces the focus of the rest of their song, which goes on to describe their different body parts, their origin, and their character. They have a stinger (*V.* 1073), a particular kind of animal backside (1075); they are natives and from the manliest stock (1076-7). Because of these qualities they have particular personality traits, including quickness to anger:

> εἴ τις ὑμῶν, ὦ θεαταί, τὴν ἐμὴν ἰδὼν φύσιν
> εἶτα θαυμάζει μ᾽ ὁρῶν μέσον διεσφηκωμένον,
> ἥτις ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ἡ ‘πίνοια τῆς ἐγκεντρίδος,
> ῥᾳδίως ἐγὼ διδάξω, “κἂν ἄμουσος ᾖ τὸ πρίν.”
> ἐσμὲν ἡμεῖς, οἷς πρόσεστι τοῦτο τοὐρροπύγιον,
> Ἀττικοὶ μόνοι δικαίως ἐγγενεῖς αὐτόχθονες,
> ἀνδρικώτατον γένος καὶ πλεῖστα τήνδε τὴν πόλιν
> ὠφελῆσαν ἐν μάχαισιν, ἡνίκ᾽ ἦλθ᾽ ὁ βάρβαρος,
> τῷ καπνῷ τύφων ἅπασαν τὴν πόλιν καὶ πυρπολῶν,
> ἐξελεῖν ἡμῶν μενοινῶν πρὸς βίαν τἀνθρήνια. (*V.* 1071-80).
>
> Spectators, if any of you has noticed our appearance and sees our wasp waists, and wonders what’s the point of our stingers, I can easily edify him, “be he ever so unversed before.” We who sport this kind of rump are the only truly indigenous native Athenians, a most virile breed and one that very substantially aided this city in battle, that time the barbarian came spewing smoke over all the city and incinerating it, intent at eradicating our hives. (trans. Henderson)

The chorus focuses on their bellicosity and attributes it to their autochthonousness, their Athenian origin which has allegedly determined their nature. This passage serves in part to demonstrate the extent to which a *phusis* determines how a person is, both physically and behaviorally. It also establishes a meaningful backdrop to Philocleon’s own bodily nature, which is a more complex topic and one more central to the drama. Despite the fact that the behavioral disease of jurymania stands in the fore, Aristophanes makes a point of having characters mention several other, strictly physical, afflictions which Philocleon has or might have. The chorus focuses on Philocleon’s nature as an old man in their speculation about his possible health problems; according to them, his advanced age makes him prone to dramatic progressions of a minor injury. Later too, Bdelycleon arranges Philocleon’s home court to allay the maladies of an old man.

In addition, Philocleon’s body has unconventional features which shape his *phusis* as much, if not more, than the fact that he is an old man. Citing symptoms like hyperactivity and insomnia, Ignacio Rodríguez Alfageme goes so far as to make a Hippocratic diagnosis of the character’s mania as an excess of bile,[425] yet the pathology need not be so literal. It is enough

[425] Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 58-61).

to consider descriptions of Philocleon's body and see what they indicate about his constitution and prognosis in general terms. One major characteristic is his physical intractability. Scattered throughout the play is evidence that Philocleon's obstinacy is curiously physiological as well as behavioral: on two occasions characters describe his toughness by alluding to boiling or digesting. When speaking of his resolution as a jury member, the chorus of wasps quote him as saying "you might as well try to boil a stone" (*V.* 280). Philocleon later reports to his son how another juryman tried to con him out of his share of three obols. In court the swindler said that Philocleon must have "boiled down (that is, eaten up) the silver quickly enough" and that this gastric feat would mean that the old man has the stomach of a rooster: ἀλεκτρυόνος μ' ἔφασκε κοιλίαν ἔχειν:/ 'ταχὺ γοῦν καθέψεις τἀργύριον,' ἦ δ' ὃς λέγων (794-5). This imagery illustrates that Philocleon is so physically unyielding that he cannot be boiled. On the contrary, his own stomach is so hot that it could boil coins itself.[426]

This internal hardness and digestive dynamism, however, would appear very strange to a Hippocratic doctor considering Philocleon's age. Older people have certain physiological qualities which affect their internal bodily functions and experience of disease. Because of their lack of internal heat, older bodies cannot digest (concoct) as much food.[427] According to Aristotle as well, the aged have difficultly processing matter in general.[428] Because of their lack of innate heat, they suffer less severe, but more chronic fevers.[429] Writers also discuss structural differences in the body in old age, concluding that diseases in older patients are more difficult to cure and more likely to be chronic rather than acute;[430] the authors of *On Diseases* and *Regimen in Health* attribute this fact to the physiology of aged bodies, which are soft (μαλθακά) and whose flesh is loose (ἀραία).[431] The Hippocratic physiology of old age, therefore, is soft and cold; this nature makes older patients prone to chronic ailments since their bodies cannot perfectly concoct, and thereby rid themselves of, diseases.

In a few ways, this medical understanding of geriatric nosology harmonizes with Philocleon's own experience with disease; his body has clearly not been able to escape the

[426] Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 252) also remarks that this line harmonizes with the Hippocratic conceptualization of digestion as cooking and in addition points to a scholion that mentions how the stomachs of roosters are especially hot.
[427] Hipp. *Nat. Hom*. 12.34-43; *Salubr*. 2.14 (cold temperature); Hipp. *Aph*. I.14; *Alim*. 34. (a reduced diet in old age).
[428] Aristotle *GA* 725b19-22.
[429] Hipp. *Morb*. I.22.
[430] For cases in which a condition is described as more chronic or intractable in older patients: Hipp. *Prorrh*. 2.8; 2.11; 2.39; 2.41; *Coac*. 139. Diseases that are themselves old are also more difficult to cure: Hipp. *Prorrh*. 2.39; *Loc. Hom*. 38.
[431] Hipp. *Salubr*. 2.14 (soft); Hipp. *Morb*. I.22 (loose); *Artic*. 8.47-50 (loose joints in aged oxen).

disease of its own accord, else his jurymania would be acute rather than chronic. On the other hand, the physiology is completely wrong. Characters repeatedly refer to the hardness and inflexibility of Philocleon's innards; he is also anything but weak, but rather, unrelentingly energetic up until the agon. Philocleon's body has a twofold stubbornness: he is tough and resistant to cures—the former because of his individual nature, and the latter because of his old age. Without giving any thought to medical accounts of geriatric physiology, the audience members are already aware of the comic incongruity of Philocleon's spryness in light of his years. Nonetheless, when taking this Hippocratic perspective into consideration, we find there is more depth to this incongruity and, in turn, more to be gleaned from it. The medical paradox of Philocleon underscores the complexity of a person's constitution, and therefore, the potential obstacles to interpreting their disease and treating them. With Philocleon's self-contradictory physiology, Aristophanes also insinuates the difficulty, if not impossibility, of a cure—a fact which he more fully reveals in the agon.

Philocleon's constitutional features and their consequences become apparent and relevant when Bdelycleon gives his famous speech that tries to demonstrate the corruption of the jury system arithmetically. This revelation of "the truth" and his preparation of Philocleon for a symposium are Bdelycleon's first two onstage attempts at a cure.[432] His two plans, though strategically quite different, are fundamentally similar in that they produce a physiological effect on his father. Furthermore, although the son does not use conventional medicine, both of his attempts are allopathic in their approach, that is, aimed at counteracting elements of Philocleon's *phusis*,[433] and both involve methods that metaphorically parallel medical practices.

Up until this point in the play, Philocleon's afflictions, both real and potential, other characters have described. Now, upon hearing his son's argument, the old man himself complains of a bodily ailment for the first time. Bdelycleon has just explained what he imagines is really happening in Athens. Far from being valued citizens, he argues, jurymen actually receive a paltry sum for their service compared to the total income of the city. Upon hearing the conclusion of this account, Philocleon reports that his hand is numb, and he is powerless and soft:

[432] His argument, however, is bogus. Konstan (1995, 23) believes his clever rhetoric here demonstrates how glib demogogues gain power.

[433] Hankinson (1998b, 53-4); Müller (1965). Hippocratic medicine was fundamentally allopathic in its approach, as demonstrated by the reoccurring idea that opposites cure opposites: Ἑνὶ δὲ συντόμῳ λόγῳ, τὰ ἐναντία τῶν ἐναντίων ἐστὶν ἰήματα (*Flat.* 1.25-6). See also Hipp. *Nat. Hom.* 9. Sidwell (1990) argues, by contrast, that Bdelycleon cures his father with homeopathic, ritual means.

οἴμοι τί πέπονθ᾽; ὡς νάρκη μου κατὰ τῆς χειρὸς καταχεῖται,
καὶ τὸ ξίφος οὐ δύναμαι κατέχειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη μαλθακός εἰμι. (*V.* 713-4)

Alas, what's happened? A numbness pours over my hand,
and I can't hold my sword, I'm already weak.

Biles and Olson remark that Philocleon's statement is more mock-epic than medical.[434] Yet, aside from a Homeric verse and examples from the Platonic corpus that scholars cite, this word and its cognates are not found outside of medical literature. Most of this line's epic flair is imparted through the metaphorical combination of the verb "to pour down over" (καταχεῖται) with an immaterial, abstract subject;[435] while it is similar to the sensation of sleep or pain, which is also "poured over" Homeric heroes, the word νάρκη denotes a more specific bodily phenomenon. This word describes a physical reaction which Philocleon experiences and, given the dramatic importance of his body and its dysfunctions, I argue that we may contextualize this passage within the larger narrative and consider its potential importance for the play's nosological theme in addition to epic parody.

This scene, furthermore, includes Philocleon's comic anagnorisis.[436] Aristophanes pointedly connects this critical moment in the plot with a critical moment in the course of Philocleon's disease. The chorus goads the young man to come up with an argument that could, through mechanical means, soften their anger:

Χο. πρὸς ταῦτα μύλην ἀγαθὴν ὥρα ζητεῖν σοι καὶ νεόκοπτον,
ἢν μή τι λέγῃς, ἥτις δυνατὴ τὸν ἐμὸν θυμὸν κατερεῖξαι.
Βδ. χαλεπὸν μὲν καὶ δεινῆς γνώμης καὶ μείζονος ἢ 'πὶ τρυγῳδοῖς
ἰάσασθαι νόσον ἀρχαίαν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐντετοκυῖαν.[437] (*V.* 648-51)

Ch. It's time for you to look for a good and newly made millstone for this,
if you have anything to say that's mighty enough to grind down our anger.
Bd. It's a difficult task to heal an ancient disease which has been inborn in the city,
and one for a clever mind that is beyond comedians.

It is difficult to overstate the significance of these last two lines in which Bdelycleon addresses the audience and speaks as the playwright. He directs our attention back to the theme of disease and thus indicates the therapeutic nature of what he is about to say. This moment metaphorically resembles a medical *krisis* (critical moment/sign) in Philocleon's

[434] Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.). *Contra* H. Miller (1945, 82), who considered it technical. Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 212-3) takes the passage quite literally, taking numbness to be a liquid in the body, and thus sees its pathology as humoral.
[435] For example, sleep, a dream, pain, charm and shame can be poured over Homeric characters (*Od.* 11.245, *Od.* 22.463, *Il.* 20.282, *Od.* 2.71, *Od.* 11.433, respectively).
[436] I use this term loosely without insisting on strong parallels with Aristotle's set of terminology for tragedy. Cf. Reckford (1987, 113; 213-13; 231-32; 272-75) and Reckford (1977). See Craik (2015, 73-75) for tragic elements in the Hippocratic treatises *Epidemics* I and III, e.g. *krisis* as kind of peripeteia.
[437] Here I diverge from the OCT edition, which has "ἐντετακυῖαν."

disease in that the audience members are attuned to the fact that his reaction to what Bdelycleon has to say will determine one of the major uncertainties introduced at the beginning of the drama: whether or not he can be cured. Such a medical *krisis* is not just a matter of timing, but also involves observed physiological events; salubrious excretions, for instance, often indicate a positive *krisis*, and thus positive outcome, of a disease.[438] These signs can either occur spontaneously, or in unpromising cases, can be induced through various techniques.[439] Bdelycleon finds he must resort to the latter. Having failed at containing both his father's illness and his father himself, he gives Philocleon a hefty dose of what he understands to be the ugly truth.[440]

The young man, however, does not grind the chorus' anger away by brute force as they had challenged him to do; the physiological effect which he has on his father is rather more obscure and internal. Ostensibly, Bdelycleon makes some gains with his speech. The revelation has rendered Philocleon weak and soft (μαλθακός, *V.* 714) as is physiologically fitting for a man of his age. As the double entendre of the sword indicates, the comment has also metaphorically robbed him of his virility: he has temporary lost both his strength and will to run off to the Heliaia. The playwright thus presents a glimmer of hope for Bdelycleon's hypothesis that taking measures to change Philocleon's physiology might change Philocleon's nature, and in turn cure him. In a weakened state, imply some Hippocratic writers, an old man might at least not suffer so acutely from his malady.[441] His disease's severity (ἰσχύς), directly correlates to his own strength.

Yet ultimately we witness the failure of Bdelycleon's attempt. He causes a physical reaction (νάρκη) in his deranged father, but nothing comes of it; no salubrious *krisis* is achieved in that the old man neither recovers nor succumbs to his disease. This outcome makes sense when we consider what Hippocratics say about Philocleon's new symptom which his son's speech brought on. The Corpus gives us only one potential example of numbness occurring on a critical day and leading to recovery.[442] Elsewhere νάρκη was very often associated with morbidity. Writers explicitly explain numbness as the stagnation and

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[438] For an explanation of the Hippocratic concepts of *krisis* and *apostasis* (especially in the *Epidemics*), see Langholf (1990, 82-8). See also Thivel (1981, 204-16) on the concept *apostasis* in other treatises.

[439] E.g. drugs, purging, bleeding, cauterization. Evidence for the theory and practice behind healthful secretions (*apostasies*) are found abundantly in the *Epidemics*, e.g. "Create apostases, leading the material yourself. Turn aside apostates that have already started, accept them if they come where they should and are of the right kind and quantity, but do not offer assistance." (Hipp. *Epid.* II.3.8, trans. Smith).

[440] For the theme of containment in the play, see MacDowell (1971, 149).

[441] Hipp. *Morb.* I.22.

[442] In one passage in *Epidemics*, however, a patient's numbness occurs on critical days (the seventh and ninth) and ends in a recovery (Hipp. *Epid.* IV.36).

build-up of a bodily substance (blood or air), or else they imply this kind of stagnation by noting that excretions from the affected body part would bring about a recovery. Using prolonged sitting or lying as an example, the author of *On the Sacred Disease* describes numbness as a result of the compression of veins which carry air throughout the body.[443] Thus the common idea behind these etiologies is a blockage as a result of pressure, whether caused by excess of fluid or by an external force. Unlike some bodily events such as fevers and excretions which can be considered either positive or negative depending on the circumstance and timing,[444] numbness is almost exclusively a bad sign, often among the most serious developments of a condition.

What could these medical explanations for numbness mean in this comic context? For the plot of the play, this symptom foretells not only the inevitable failure of Bdelycleon's treatment, but also the *way* in which it fails. While Philocleon is weakened by the bitter pill of his son's words, he does not experience any true catharsis. In fact, he experiences the physiological opposite of this, a blockage which results in temporary loss of sensation—a physiological impasse even worse than the deadlock between him and his son. It seems Bdelycleon cannot cure his father with this method because he cannot destroy the disease without destroying his father along with it. So intertwined are the two.

Later in the scene, when Bdelycleon dresses his father in fashionable clothes for his symposiastic debut, the young man's preparations also figuratively hearken to medical treatments.[445] Here the concoction theme which we have heard twice in relation to Philocleon's stomach reemerges and takes an interesting turn. The old man is disgusted with a fancy cloak, dismissing it as "loom sausage" (*V.* 1144). Referring to some kind of decadent excess of material, this joke attunes the audience to food metaphors to come.[446] With various culinary imagery, Philocleon complains of how hot the garment makes him. He compares wearing the cloak to wearing an oven (1153) and describes himself as a broiling piece of meat which Bdelycleon must remove with a meat-hook (κρεάγραν) before it dissolves away (διερρυηκέναι) (1155-6). This metaphor retroactively shapes the "loom sausage" comment and has us imagine Philocleon as the meaty contents of a woolen sausage-casing in addition to a piece of meat cooking in an oven. During these preparations Philocleon expresses a fear of being symbolically and literally softened, robbed of his characteristic toughness in body

[443] Hipp. *Sac. Morb*. 7.9-12.
[444] E.g. fevers or bodily excretions (bleeding, defecation, etc.) which occur on critical days.
[445] Telò (2016, 34-42) describes this cloak-exchanging scene as an instance of therapy as well, but he analyzes its symbolic significance for Aristophanes' poetry (in contrast to that of his rivals).
[446] See Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.) for discussion.

and spirit. From Philocleon's perspective, his son threatens to cook him down and make him disappear entirely, to lose himself along with his unruly nature.

These ideas regarding boiling and cooking are not stand-alone images in the play, but also have relevance for the nosological theme. According to one Hippocratic principle, both the act of digestion and the successful recovery from disease are dependent on the body's ability to concoct, and thereby overcome, potentially dangerous matter.[447] In the case of digestion, this process involves cooking food in the stomach. In the case of disease as well, an excessive or otherwise peccant humor is removed through concoction. Medical intervention can also help the body in this task. If the patient does not process a disease of their own accord, a doctor can induce salubrious excretions by warming the body with baths, fomentations, or warm clothing.[448] In the case of a tertian fever, a Hippocratic suggests as a last measure placing many cloaks on top of a patient to induce healthful sweating: κατακλίνας ἐπιβαλέειν ἱμάτια πολλὰ ἕως ἱδρώσῃ.[449] The *Wasps* scene resonates in this way with medical treatments: the son attempts to soften and heal his intransigent father through applications of heat.

Yet Philocleon is hilariously resistant to changing his nature, even to enjoying good health. When his son tries next to make him wear Laconian shoes, he objects not only to being shod by the enemy, but also to being deprived of chilblains: κακοδαίμων ἐγώ,/ ὅστις ἐπὶ γήρως χίμετλον οὐδὲν λήψομαι (*V*. 1166-7). The warm boots would prevent his feet from having this "blessing" in old age. Chilblains, which are caused by excessive cold, could be treated with the application of warmth and hot water according to *Epi*. V. 57.[450] Along with his jurymania, therefore, Philocleon also holds dear another affliction that doctors can alleviate with heat.

As he did earlier in his speech on the jury service, Bdelycleon thus again attempts to cure his father of his mania through strategies that Philocleon tells us have a softening, weakening effect on his body. The son's tough love, just as Hippocratic approaches, involves the underlying assumption that only through physically uncomfortable measures can an

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[447] This idea is most overtly expressed in *On Ancient Medicine*, esp. Hipp. *VM.* 19.

[448] Jouanna (1999, 169). E.g. Hipp. *Acut. Sp*. 37 (warm fomentation in the case of tetanus); Hipp. *Acut. Sp.* 9 (warm fomentations and cerate applied to the neck and wrapped in wool in the case of constriction of the jugular vessels).

[449] Hipp. *Morb*. II.42, also *Morb*. II. 43 (cloaks for fevers); *Morb.* III.13 (cloak for tetanus). Telò (2016, 37) points out this Hippocratic therapy in connection to this passage as well. Several years later, Aristophanes would write in the parabasis of his second *Women at the Thesmophoria* that he had spent the winter wrapped up in wool because of a fever (346 K-A). See Austin and Olson (2004), Butrica (2001, 46-9) and Cassio (1987) on this fragment.

[450] Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.); Southard (1970, 139).

intransigent disease be cured. The young man tries to help his father "cook off" the disease through metaphorically "cooking off" his father himself. Of course, they are all for naught because, just as the disease in the city which Bdelycleon describes, his father's jurymania is too deeply ingrained in his nature: Philocleon is too old to endure the necessarily severe cures for his mania, comically in the form of fine clothes, food, and entertainment.

It is only in the "atomized, domesticized" court of the law which Bdelycleon organizes for his father that Aristophanes stages the next best thing to a cure for Philocleon: the management and containment of his disease.[451] Here the play returns for a second time to the theme of conventional, personal health problems. Strangury and fevers are the ailments that characters mention, and they both stand in stark contrast to Philocleon's very unconventional and very political complaint of jurymania. Not caused by Cleon or the Athenian law courts, they are rather the old man's own, minor ailments which are particular to his age and affect individuals on an individual basis.

We learn in this scene that Philocleon suffers from the urgent and frequent need to urinate which he specifically describes with the Hippocratic term "στραγγουρία" (strangury).[452] So that his father may not be inconvenienced by this condition while hearing the trial at home, Bdelycleon presents the old man with a handy vessel for relieving himself as often as he needs. With gratitude Philocleon replies, "you've really lit upon an antidote to strangury here, one that's clever and useful for an old man" (σοφόν γε τουτὶ καὶ γέροντι πρόσφορον/ ἐξηῦρες ἀτεχνῶς φάρμακον στραγγουρίας (*V.* 809-10). In this statement, he emphasizes the correlation between chronic strangury and advanced age while de-emphasizing his personal experience of the disease. Instead of a personal pronoun (ἐμοί), "old man" (γέροντι) is the dative that benefits from the adjective "useful" (πρόσφορον). Although in medical writing the disorder can acutely affect any demographic, we find evidence for the strangury Philocleon describes as well. *Aphorisms* lists it among diseases of the elderly.[453] The author of *On Affections* also notes that older men tend to suffer more chronically from this ailment, which is caused by an overly dry bladder and should be treated with warm baths to soften the body.[454] This particular complaint of Philocleon's, therefore,

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[451] Konstan (1985, 71).

[452] Byl (2006, 196-7); Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 170); Southard (1970, 107-9); H. Miller (1945, 83). See López Férez (1990) for a survey of its presence in the HC. In *Women at the Thesmophoria*, the character Mnesilochus mentions this health problem in association with eating cresses (*Th*. 616), an effect also noted in the HC, where it is attributed to the food's warming tendency (Hipp. *Reg*. II. 54.18-20). Thus in both cases, the playwright takes advantage of the comic potential of this medical problem. See

[453] Hipp. *Aph.* III.31.

[454] Hipp. *Aff.* 28. This medical advice is interesting in conjunction with Philocleon's "treatment" in the agon.

seems to involve a physiological aspect of his advanced age.

The second ailment Philocleon mentions is fevers. He praises the convenience of his son's court, remarking, "Even if I have a fever, I'll at least get my pay because I'll stay here and slurp up soup." (κἂν γὰρ πυρέττω, τόν γε μισθὸν λήψομαι./ αὐτοῦ μένων γὰρ τὴν φακῆν ῥοφήσομαι, *V*. 813-4). These lines strongly hearken back to the chorus' song in which they wonder if a fever has prevented their companion from leaving the house (εἶτ' ἴσως κεῖται πυρέττων, 284). Thus, both the chorus and Philocleon himself cite fevers as something that could prevent him from attending a (normal) court of law. The comedy associates this ailment with old age as well, portraying only older people as potential victims of fever. Later, in the parabasis, the chorus speaks of fevers attacking the audience's "fathers and grandfathers," that is, the older demographic (1039). Despite the fact that there is no Hippocratic precedent for this correlation,[455] in the logic of the play, fevers seem to function as a synecdoche for disease in general, and thus emphasize the weakness and susceptibility of the aged to ill-health.

The portrayal of Philocleon's vulnerability to these two maladies highlights the nature of his physical constitution as an old man while drawing attention away from his cherished roles in the public realm as an Athenian citizen and veteran. Physiologically, Philocleon here resembles the weak, infantilized old men of tragic choruses more than the energetic old codgers of comedy.[456] Through these descriptions of minor ailments, Philocleon's health problems are reduced, along with his jury service itself, to the quotidian and private. While as a civic dicast he is harmful to himself and others, as a domestic dicast, he becomes moot, socially effaced and neutralized along with his mania itself. Although he may never have had any real power in the way that he imagined,[457] it is clear that Philocleon, as ring leader of the chorus, had at least played a role in enabling the ongoing success of the Cleon's puppet court. Part of the process of comic hero's political neutralization involves a shift of the focus from an endemic to personal affliction, from jurymania to strangury and fevers. For indeed, Philocleon might be the only character who personally suffers from the mania, but his disease

[455] Hippocratics at times even noted that older people were less susceptible to fevers (Hipp. *Morb*. I.22; *Prog*. 22.7-9), although one passage from *Diseases I* states that a certain fever is more likely to become chronic in the elderly (Hipp. *Morb*. I.22).

[456] Although in the play's dénouement Philocleon brilliantly defies this portrayal in his wild dancing. The medical terms he uses for his whirling joints echo back to the chorus' clinical-sounding doubts about his mobility: νῦν γὰρ ἐν <u>ἄρθροις</u> τοῖς ἡμετέροις / <u>στρέφεται</u> <u>χαλαρὰ</u> <u>κοτυληδών</u> (*V*. 1494-5). Lenz (1980, 39-40) interprets this scene as a transformation of Philocleon's jurymania into a dance mania; thus, while the comic hero is not cured, his obsession is channeled into a harmless dance competition.

[457] Olson (1996).

represents a larger civic problem.[458] Reckford rightly observes how Aristophanes confounds Philocleon's disease with that of the city at large by having Bdelycleon describe jurymania as an 'endemic' disease as he had in the agon: νόσον ἀρχαίαν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐντετοκυῖαν (*V.* 651).[459] According to his metaphor, the condition is not only old; it is also a sort of genetic predisposition (ἐντετοκυῖα), a part of the city's nature from the very beginning. This memorable remark invites the audience both to see Philocleon's disease as the city's affliction and to consider other factors besides Cleon which have brought Athens to its current condition.

When Bdelycleon sets up his home court, Aristophanes underscores Philocleon's "old-man" diseases which are particular to a certain facet of his *phusis* (old age) and have nothing to do with the civic ailment the young man describes; their sphere of damage is confined to *his* body, rather than the state body, and can be managed quite well with home remedies. Everything about his physical health and the dispensation of justice is microcosmed into the household. He does not need help, in fact, from any communal methods of healing such as incubating in the temple of Asclepius (which had already proved, in any case, to be of no use). This approach to Philocleon's jurymania is at least temporarily effective because Bdelycleon does not fight against Philocleon's intractable physiology by trying to weaken it, but instead, he focuses his father's nature as an old man, hoping to encourage one aspect of his *phusis* (his age) and downplay another (his unyielding body and behavior). Nonetheless, ultimately this trial fails too, and its failure likewise manifests itself in the old man's person. Philocleon feels himself grow soft towards the accused Labes (αἰβοῖ. τί τόδε ποτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὅτῳ μαλάττομαι;, *V.* 973). Soon after he learns that the dog has been acquitted, he loses consciousness and his son calls for water: πάτερ πάτερ τί πέπονθας; οἴμοι: ποῦ 'σθ' ὕδωρ;/ ἔπαιρε σαυτόν (995-6).

In this way, the court scene parallels these two spheres, body and state, just as Bdelycleon does with his extradiegetic comment about Athens' native disease of jurymania. Moreover, a re-examination of the passages previously discussed reveals further significance to this imagery and sheds more light on the political import of Philocleon's illness. The theme of diagnosis and medical inference emerges twice in the play and, in a more indirect way, in the emphasis that the playwright places on the concept of bodily *phusis*. As proposed at the beginning, the two "diagnostic" scenes work together; the wasps' own speculations about Philocleon's health make conspicuous the slaves' omission of the jurymania's progression

458 Konstan (1985, esp. 44-6).
459 Reckford (1977, 298).

and cause. The playwright develops this issue in the agon and parabasis of the play, but he has his audience wait largely in vain for a "φράσω ἤδη." The etiology of Philocleon's disease is more ambiguous than its symptoms.

Bdelycleon offers his own reasoning, his explanation of the mechanisms of municipal corruption, but his speech, perhaps despite itself, reveals more nuance to the issue. He does not even name Cleon,[460] but instead only alludes to him and the others whom Philocleon explicitly mentioned some hundred lines before. In Bdelycleon's argument there is no one bogeyman to blame, a lone Cleon, but a more generalized multitude: "those who say" (τούτους τοὺς, *V.* 666) and "these men" (οὗτοι, *V.* 669). To explain how Philocleon is a slave, he does name the son of Chaeres in particular, yet even here his accusation is diffusely directed at the generic and plural "officials." Political perversion is enabled not by an individual, but by the cooperation of individuals. Bdelycleon offers an especially illustrative, memorable comparison of how this corruption works:

> καὶ κοινωνῶν τῶν ἀρχόντων ἑτέρῳ τινὶ τῶν μεθ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ,
> ἤν τίς τι διδῷ τῶν φευγόντων, ξυνθέντε τὸ πρᾶγμα δύ᾽ ὄντε
> ἐσπουδάκατον, κᾆθ᾽ ὡς πρίονθ᾽ ὁ μὲν ἕλκει ὁ δ᾽ ἀντενέδωκε· (*V.* 692-4)
>
> And any bribe a defendant might offer he splits with one of his fellow office holders,
> the two of them teaming up on the case and keeping a straight face, then going to work
> like a couple of sawyers, one pulling while the other pushes. (trans. Henderson)

Three persons are involved in the bribe: the defendant and the two officials who orchestrate the plan. The two officials work like sawyers, pushing and pulling to achieve their aim. According to Bdelycleon, therefore, the Heliaia is completely rigged. This metaphor is rare, but not unique; the author of *On Regimen* uses this same metaphor to illustrate how the body functions:

> Πρίουσιν ἄνθρωποι ξύλον, ὁ μὲν ἕλκει, ὁ δὲ ὠθέει, τὸ δ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιέουσι, μεῖον δὲ ποιέοντες πλεῖον ποιέουσι. Τὸ δ᾽ αὐτὸ καὶ φύσις ἀνθρώπων, τὸ μὲν ὠθέει, τὸ δὲ ἕλκει· (Hipp. *Reg.* I.6.6-10)
>
> Men saw a log; the one pulls and the other pushes, but herein they do the same thing, while making less they make more. Such is the nature of man. One part pushes, the other pulls. (trans. Jones)

While the contexts of these similes are very different, the reason for its use in these respective passages is fundamentally the same. This comparison describes a kind of work which requires two simultaneous, opposing forces. Responsibility is shared and thus diffused; one action is futile without the other. It exemplifies a particular Hippocratic concept of the body

[460] The strangeness of which Storey has noted (1995, 15).

as a balance of forces, with disease indicating the failure of this cooperation.[461] While in Bdelycleon's account, this balance spells out successful corruption rather than good health, the common theme of pluralized responsibility is common to both. To the writer of *On Regimen* this mechanism constitutes the *phusis* of man; for Bdelycleon it constitutes the devious *phusis* of the Athenian court.

Outside of the court scene, the parabasis is the clearest criticism of Cleon in this play, but even here his role is couched in indefinite terms. The chorus presents the demagogue as the monstrous foe of Aristophanes and establishes an ostensibly black-and-white picture of centralized good and evil in those characters. At the same time, Cleon's monstrosity is, to a large extent, dependent on the plurality of his form. The chorus sings that "a hundred bawling heads of flatters encircle [Cleon's] head: ἑκατὸν δὲ κύκλῳ κεφαλαὶ κολάκων οἰμωξομένων ἐλιχμῶντο/ περὶ τὴν κεφαλήν (*V.* 1033-4). The repetition of the kappa (five in the first four feet) has the effect of breaking up the line into staccato segments in addition to making it sound raucous;[462] the evil of the city, even in the single form of Cleon, is subdivided to the extreme. This imagery recalls a number of mythical beasts with agglomerate anatomies, including a gorgon, the Hydra, and Typhoeus as described in Hesiod.[463] One of the primary difficulties in facing all of these adversaries, but especially the Hydra, is their supernumerary parts: the loss of one head, ten heads cannot destroy such a monster. In the *Wasps* Cleon is so dangerous because he takes on so many forms while having, in a sense, none at all.

Aristophanes has the chorus reformulate this idea soon afterwards. In line 1037 they switch imagery by restating the frame of the reported speech, "φησίν τε μετ᾽ αὐτὸν." Now they sing about how nameless collectors of oaths, indictments and witnesses attack their victims in the night, personified as daemonic disease. These vague evils are "agues and fevers," invisible and pernicious, as all internal disease fundamentally is. There is no mention of direct causation, only an indication that older people are prone to them. We are left with a tangled mass of perpetrators, instigators, and faceless, impersonal factors cited as reasons for the political *status quo*.

The playwright thus takes a very different tack for criticizing Cleon in this comedy

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461 Presocratics also describe complementary, rival forces as the basis of another, much larger system: the universe. Consider for example Empedocles' cosmic theory of Love and Strife (DK31 B6; A39; A42). Heraclitus' ideas as well seem to be echoed in some formulations in *On Regimen* (Thivel 1981, 404-7) believes this Hippocratic author was actually a follower of Heraclitus, while Joly (1984, 25-7) voices skepticism that *On Regimen* is materially indebted to the Presocratic, suggesting that the reminiscences are merely superficial and stylistic.

462 Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.); Macdowell (1971, ad loc.).

463 Biles and Olson (ibid.) suggest the gorgon connection; Macdowell (ibid.), the Hydra and Typhoeus (Hes. *Th.* 825).

than he had for the *Knights*. In the earlier comedy, Paphlagon exercised a direct, deleterious effect on the Athenian people, which were personified as the character Demos. In the *Wasps*, by contrast, the playwright opens up the possibility of multiple, complex causes which contribute to the current state of affairs, possibly also the insinuation that Athens itself might have a natural proclivity to this kind of corruption. In the diegetic world of the play, Cleon has enabled this sickness of the city, keeping older Athenian citizens under his thumb through offering jury pay and a sense of importance and purpose. Nonetheless, it is not a head-on indictment of the politician, as critics have long noted.[464] He bears only a portion of the blame, and yet the comedy implies that the problem at hand is hardly mitigated for that reason.

Philocleon's body and his various ailments help bring the audience to this conclusion. His malady results not from one man or daemonic force, but from an series of events, from multiple factors—even from his own *phusis.* The comic hero's characterization and portrayal convey ideas from contemporary medicine that are important for reading the play's political subject matter: physiological natures predispose a person to certain diseases and diseases are often a culmination of progressive bodily malfunctions; understanding this process, moreover, is not always straightforward, but often requires inferential reasoning. These concepts help shape, as well as complicate, how we understand the state of Athenian civic life in the comedy, especially regarding questions of cause and responsibility. To be sure, the Athens of *Wasps* is a "πόλις νοσοῦσα" cast from the familiar mold, but the audience had likely never seen such an elaborate revision of the metaphor. Informed by Hippocratic medicine, Aristophanes' presentation of disease brilliantly captures the complexity of the city in the late fifth century, and, for the playwright's political purposes, the nuanced, manifold, and surreptitious nature of its shortcomings.

[464] There are various theories as to why. Ruffell (2002, 162) sees it as a result of Aristophanes' literary rivalry with Cratinus. Storey (1995, 3-23) discusses how Aristophanes, after an agreement not to criticize Cleon so harshly, treats the subject of Cleon much more subtly in the *Wasps*. Konstan (1999, 17), however, finds it less strange because he sees the conflict in the comedy as concentrated on the father and son pair, rather than on Cleon himself.

2.3 The Patient's Responsibility to the Body (Politic) in the *Assemblywomen*

The *Assemblywomen*, produced in 392/3 BCE, stages a radical revolution in Athenian government. With the help of the bright and industrious heroine Praxagora, citizen wives band together to dress up as men and vote for a complete revamping of social order in the city. In accordance with Praxagora's vision, the city becomes communal, even communistic. Citizens share all possessions in common, including wives and children, and live together in the city as if in the same household. Moreover, women and men have unhindered access to each other as lovers on the condition that they do not sexually neglect the old and ugly. The play is famous for its reversal of gender roles as well as its compelling and topical political subject matter: the decades preceding its premiere had witnessed governmental upheavals whose financial and political effects were very much still felt in Athens. While the city's economic conditions had deteriorated, however, Athenian intellectual production had not at all slackened. The art of medicine had hit its stride; new ideas were emerging and theories from the fifth century became further solidified. In particular, prophylactic dietetics had become a cornerstone and hallmark of Greek rational medicine, setting it apart from its Egyptian and Near Eastern counterparts that focused mainly on prognosis and pathology.[465] With Hippocratic dietetics came the notion that an average person, when familiar with basic medical knowledge, can maintain and achieve health through regulating the minute inner-workings of the body in everyday life: dieting, exercising, and purging all in the right measure at the right time. In this section I illustrate the ways in which this aspect of Hippocratic medicine dovetails with the comedy's political themes.

The realms of politics and medicine were of course discrete in the real Athens, having virtually no functional resemblances beyond what a Hippocratic writer, or politician, could forge with metaphor. One principle, however, pertains to them both. At this time and place, two very similar ideas coexisted in statecraft and medicine: an Athenian layman had the capability and responsibility of engaging in civic life; he also had the capability and responsibility of maintaining a healthy regimen. It was the tacit assumption, even the linchpin, of Athenian democracy that everyone can and should effectively vote in the assembly and law courts as well as serve in the offices to which they are elected, whether by vote or sortition. Medical writers as well often directed their advice not just at other educated men, but also at the layman. Plato will later bring forward the argument that dietetics is not

[465] Van der Eijk (2004, 187-218).

actually an egalitarian practice since the average person does not have the leisure to perfect his routine,[466] but his sentiment is likely a reaction to a prevalent attitude in medicine that such regimens are in fact universally implementable. This common ground between medicine and politics could doubtlessly be traced to a more general attitude in Athenian society—an especial emphasis on personal agency and confidence in the capabilities of the individual. Nonetheless, my interest lies not in the actual origins of the idea, but in how it generates meaning in the text. I argue that the *Assemblywomen* introduces the Hippocratic idea that laymen are capable concerning, and responsible for, their own health, and that this theme reflects, and colors, our reading of the political subject matter central to the drama. In the following sections, I examine the "medical cases" of two characters in particular: Blepyrus' constipation and Neocleides' eye condition. Through examining the ways in which they draw from Hippocratic thought and analyzing their context in the drama, I show how these passages contribute to our overall understanding of the social questions and ideas which the *Assemblywomen* proposes.

[466] Pl. *Rep*. 3, 406d–e.

2.3.1 Blepyrus' Constipation

In the *Assemblywomen* the topic of social systems, from the household to the city, takes center stage. Aristophanes intimately connects these two spheres through myriad parallels. In her speech to the assembly, Praxagora famously compares the skill set required for managing a household and to that of statecraft (*Ecc*. 214-40).[467] Unsurprisingly, the play's compelling comparisons between domestic and political subject matter has attracted much scholarly attention.[468] The house, the traditional sphere of women's power, is both a microcosm of the *polis* and the *polis* itself writ large.[469] The correspondence, interplay, and tension between these worlds inform our reading of the play substantially. Yet, while it is certainly the most prominent, this analogy between the house and the city is not the only parallel between two systems in the drama. In this section, I discuss a passage in which the human body figures as another image that sheds light on a socio-political aspect of the play.

After Praxagora and her followers exit the stage, a relatively minor *bomolochus* figure provides the audience with a comic interlude while his wife, the heroine, secures her gynaecocracy on the Pynx. His womanly attire, his digestive troubles, and his colorful, crass language humiliate him in comic style and render him, and the situation, ridiculous.[470] Yet given the scene's position in the drama, it cannot be read as solely an insular, detachable episode. The monologue that he delivers throws yet another metaphorical microcosm of the *polis* into the mix. Using an extended metaphor of a house, he introduces his own body as a third space to map onto this *oikos-polis* parallel, thereby making his comic lament relevant to the larger issues at work in the play. His imagery, the action onstage, as well as the action occurring during this dramatic time all suggest that the human body features as another important schema for the audience to consider alongside the house and the state. As some scholars assert, Blepyrus' body is symbolic of the body politic and his struggle with constipation symbolizes the economic dysfunction in the city.[471] I propose in addition that the

[467] Similar comparisons of women's work to affairs of state are found in *Lysistrata* (e.g. the proposal to "card" the city of bad citizens as one cards wool *Lys*. 574-86). Xenophon's Socrates also espouses this idea (*Symp*. 2.9).

[468] The upshot of this mirroring between household and state has been read in different ways. Foley (1982) believes that the superimposition of the *oikos* on the *polis* draws attention to how these spheres mutually benefit each other. Conversely, Saïd (1979) argues that the female characters present the domestic model of social organization as superior to that of the city; the household in effect abolishes the state in the course of the play. Moreover, as Hutchinson (2011, 59-61) points out, the new state system that Praxagora establishes even supplants individual households; the heroine tells of her plan to convert the whole city into a single dwelling with individual families merged into a single family of the state (*Ecc*. 673-4; 635-40).

[469] Shaw (1975); Foley (1982); von Möllendorff (1995, 121-1).

[470] Rothwell (1990, 98) and Saïd (1979) highlight the aspect of degradation in this scene.

[471] Leitao (2012, 159-163); Foley (1982).

medical references in, and medical implications of, his constipation play a crucial role as well. Blepyrus' confused despair regarding his body and his medical condition represent the confused despair of an average citizen regarding his power and participation in Athenian government.

While Praxagora speaks out in the assembly dressed as a man, her husband Blepyrus comes onstage in a pitiful state. He begins with a soliloquy in which he explains his predicament: he is wearing his wife's yellow dressing gown and slippers out of desperation, unable to find his own cloak. We soon discover, however, that his problem has less to do with what is *on* his body than what is *in* his body:

> τί τὸ πρᾶγμα; ποῖ ποθ᾽ ἡ γυνὴ φρούδη 'στί μοι;
> ἐπεὶ πρὸς ἕω νῦν γ᾽ ἔστιν, ἡ δ᾽ οὐ φαίνεται.
> ἐγὼ δὲ κατάκειμαι πάλαι χεζητιῶν,
> τὰς ἐμβάδας ζητῶν λαβεῖν ἐν τῷ σκότῳ
> καὶ θοἰμάτιον· ὅτε δὴ δ᾽ ἐκεῖνο ψηλαφῶν
> οὐκ ἐδυνάμην εὑρεῖν, ὁ δ᾽ ἤδη τὴν θύραν
> ἐπεῖχε κρούων ὁ κοπρεαῖος, λαμβάνω
> τουτὶ τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς ἡμιδιπλοίδιον
> καὶ τὰς ἐκείνης Περσικὰς ὑφέλκομαι.
> ἀλλ᾽ ἐν καθαρῷ ποῦ ποῦ τις ἂν χέσας τύχοι;
> ἢ πανταχοῦ τοι νυκτός ἐστιν ἐν καλῷ.
> οὐ γάρ με νῦν χέζοντά γ᾽ οὐδεὶς ὄψεται. (*Ecc*. 311-322)
>
> "What's going on? Where has my wife got to? It's getting near dawn and she's nowhere to be seen. I've been lying awake for ages, needing to shit, trying to grab my shoes and cloak in the dark. I've groped everywhere but couldn't find it, and all the while the dung man kept pounding at my back door, so finally I grabbed my wife's slip here and put on her Persian slippers. Now where, where could a man find an out of the way place to take a shit? Well, anywhere is fine at night. At this hour's no one's going to see me shitting. (trans. Henderson)

Both the staging and the imagery that Blepyrus employs involve the household, the body, and their respective exits. He appears onstage, explaining how he has just left the house and why.[472] As it turns out, his real problem pertains to another, much more intimate, type of exit: the need to defecate. Despite the simplicity and crudity of this subject matter, Blepyrus hardly announces his situation in plain, simple language. He first personifies this bowel movement as a masculine substantive adjective derived from a word for feces: κοπρεαῖος, or, "the dung man," as Henderson translates. Blepyrus continues by likening his anus to a door on which this Dung Man knocks. The body serves as the house in this imagery, while the anus is the

[472] Ussher (1973, ad loc.) and Vetta (1989, ad loc.) inform us that relieving oneself outside was normal given the rarity of household latrines in Athens.

exit.[473] Blepyrus' feces is simultaneously an insider and outsider, a temporary resident of the house demanding in vain to exit. He describes himself as powerless to help this personified feces—after all, he himself had just struggled with leaving his own house. The implied action onstage further mirrors and enhances the imagery. In both cases, unusual external circumstances thwart an egress. Blepyrus cannot leave his house because he inexplicably cannot find his clothing, an inconvenience which has also, in turn, postponed his attempt to defecate. The traffic of the body and of the house are both problematically and unnaturally disrupted, presenting to the audience a strong visual and verbal parallel between these spaces.

His condition, however, quickly worsens. Not only do external factors hinder his defecating, but internal ones as well. In the course of a conversation with his neighbor, he discovers that he is also suffering from constipation. When his neighbor wonders out loud at the duration of Blepyrus' bowel movement, Blepyrus communicates his problem and speculates as to its cause. His first and only theory has to do with his diet: "at the moment some sort of wild pear's got my food blockaded inside" (νῦν δέ μου/ ἀχράς τις ἐγκλῄσασ' ἔχει τὰ σιτία).[474] Again, Blepyrus uses language that would be appropriate for a house, whose door one could literally bolt shut.[475] The piece of fruit thus actively seals off his digestive track as if it were a door. Up to this point, the agency which he attributes to the pear is only implied, but soon after it becomes explicit.

A few lines later, Blepyrus very vividly personifies this fruit, like the bowel movement, with a pun of a proper name.[476] Here he uses a pseudo-demotic form, ἄνθρωπος ἀχραδούσιος:[477] "Whoever this guy from Pear-ville is, he's just bolted my back door shut." (νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὗτος βεβαλάνωκε τὴν θύραν,/ ὅστις ποτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ἄνθρωπος ἀχραδούσιος, *Ecc*. 361-2). Blepyrus returns here to his domestic metaphor by identifying his anus once more as a threshold of his body which, this time, the personified pear has barred shut (βεβαλάνωκε). He understands his feces and one rogue piece of food to be in a state of conflict within his body. Yet he does not place himself, or his body as a whole, as the grammatical subject of the

[473] Taillardat (1965, 70-1) notes this metaphor of the anus as a door. It is also found in Apollodorus Com. fr. 13.9, as Sommerstein mentions (1998, ad loc.).
[474] *Ecc*. 354-5, trans. Henderson.
[475] In two of Sophocles' works we find a similar metaphorical application of this verb ἐγκλείω, albeit in reference to the mouth rather than anus (*Ant*. 180; 505; *Hec*. 1284). This phrase is in fact thematic in *Antigone*. Creon announces at the beginning of the play that fear holds the tongues of cowards (ἐκ φόβου του γλῶσσαν ἐγκλῄσας ἔχει, *Ant*. 180). Antigone later turns his words against him: "fear holds the tongues of those who believe it right that she buried her brother in defiance of Creon" (τούτοις τοῦτο πᾶσιν ἁνδάνειν/ λέγοιτ᾽ ἄν, εἰ <u>μὴ γλῶσσαν ἐγκλῄοι φόβος</u>, *Ant*. 504-5). With Blepyrus' line, therefore, Aristophanes parodies this familiar idea by replacing the upper with the lower orifice.
[476] Here Aristophanes puns on the demes Acherdous and Kopros (Kanavou 2011, 178-9).
[477] Vetta (1989, ad loc.); Ussher (1973, ad loc.).

statement. Rather, he describes this struggle by ascribing agency to both substances, food and feces, through personification. Blepyrus is simply caught in the middle, subject to the will of his bowel contents.

In the course of this scene, Blepyrus describes a twofold problem: both his internal bodily function and his ability to exit his home are hindered.[478] Along with Blepyrus' explicit metaphor, this onstage parallel of domestic and intestinal traffic draws substantial attention to the thematic overlap of these two spatial spheres. It is, in effect, a further instance of the micro- and macrocosm relationships that we find elsewhere in the play between the house and the state. The themes of conflict and impasse loom large not only in the diegetic city of Athens, but also in Blepyrus' body itself. His physical state thus relates to the play's subject matter, lending further import to the scene and inviting us to consider it in terms of the plot of the play.

We might say that the heroine's hapless husband experiences hypochondria, or more generally, anxiety. While this term "anxiety" is arguably anachronistic, a fundamental characteristic of this emotion applies to Blepyrus' situation. In essence anxiety is groundless fear, fear without a distinct or real object.[479] Blepyrus' bodily problems are unreal or indistinct in two ways: first, they occur within his body and are thus invisible and, secondly, as we are to learn, they are also beyond his intellectual ken. Yet it is not the case that Blepyrus has no frame of reference for his bodily functions; on the contrary, he appears to have knowledge of Hippocratic medicine, a familiarity which ironically proves to aggravate, rather than alleviate, his problem. The symbolism of Blepyrus' medical knowledge, and of the reaction that it produces in him, becomes relevant later in my discussion about political participation in Athens.

Blepyrus most clearly demonstrates his familiarity with Hippocratic thought with his mention of the pear and its digestive consequences. The association of a wild pear with constipation can be found in *On Regimen* in the context of a prodigious list of foods and drinks.[480] This medical writer mentions two possible effects that the wild pear have on digestion, both of which depend on its state: ripe pears pass easily and in fact clear out the bowels, whereas unripe, wild pears cause constipation. Of course, Blepyrus does not specify the ripeness of the wild pear; neither can we say that his acquaintance with the digestive effects of certain foods should necessarily have provenance in medical texts rather than

[478] Compton-Engle (2015, 74-82) focuses on how Blepyrus' lack of cloak and shoes are central to his portrayal as emasculated and politically impotent.
[479] See Konstan (2006, 149 n. 30, 31) on this differentiation in an ancient context.
[480] Hipp. *Reg.* II. 55.6-8, as noted by Sommerstein (1998, ad loc.), Byl (1990, 154), and Ussher (1973, ad loc.).

simply experience or common knowledge. Nevertheless, I argue that we are invited to consider the medical aspects of constipation because Blepyrus explicitly mentions his need for a doctor shortly afterwards in lines 363-4.

Again, Blepyrus is very keen on imagining in detail what is happening inside of his body and, although it is in a comic context, such an elaborate description of internal bodily dysfunction is typically only found in medical treatises.[481] The way is thus paved for creative engagement with scientific material. It is also clear that, although the audience can laugh at Blepyrus' plight with the knowledge that his condition is not serious, Blepyrus' character expresses great concern about his state. In this context, the verb form χεζητιάω perhaps recovers a hint of the original pathological connotation of its "-ιάω" suffix.[482] The speech itself as a whole likewise mixes morbid with comic material. Aristophanes' humorous interludes may be wacky, yet rarely decontextualized and meaningless. In Blepyrus' constipation we find references to a fundamental ideas in medicine from this time which are relevant for how we read the scene in the context of the play. As Cleon's body in the *Knights*, Blepyrus' body provides a space for political commentary effected in part through medical imagery.

According to the Hippocratic Corpus, diet or disease are potential culprits for Blepyrus' digestive condition. The topic of constipation mostly emerges in the discussion of dietetics, while elsewhere Hippocratic writers describe this complaint as part of a constellation of symptoms for a disease. Although Blepyrus' troubles seem to result simply from an isolated instance of poor dietary choice, a brief survey of constipation in the Hippocratic corpus offers us insight into the medical significance of this complaint. We learn why this character is so distraught, and what that means for the role of this scene in the comedy.

As the author of *On Regimen* makes clear, health is not just a concern for those who are already unwell. The successful prevention of disease also involved maintaining a proper diet and exercise routine that would keep the body balanced, neither too moist nor too dry, neither too hot nor cold. Hence he explains in detail the influence of certain foods, bathing habits and exercises on the body, mostly in terms of their effects on temperature and moisture. Underripe or otherwise naturally drying foods have a constipative (στάσιμος) effect

[481] Injuries are of course an exception, although bodily contents are actually visible in that case. There are also detailed descriptions of "physical" emotions, for example in *Agamemnon* 975-1034. Yet I would argue that such imagery falls into another category since these reactions are not generally regarded as pathological *per se*, but rather as proportionate responses to social events.

[482] Peppler (1921, 154-5); Willi (2003, 84-5).

on the body, as is the case with wild pears (Hipp. *Reg*. II.55.6-8). The focus of this text, however, is not on nosology, but rather on the ways in which different foods affect the body. The topic of constipation *per se* is not discussed.

In other treatises, however, medical writers list constipation as a symptom of serious acute diseases that result from an excess or blockage of substances of the body. Importantly, this condition does not even necessarily result from diet; in nosological treatises it often has nothing to do with ingested food or even fecal matter, but rather indicates a more generalized morbid bodily retention. The Hippocratic approach to pathology has a strong focus on the role of superfluous material in the body. Accordingly, as I mention in Chapter 2.2, recovery often follows excretions, whether natural or induced.[483] Later Galen would crystallize this concept more fully with the terms "plethora" and "cacochymia," but the idea is already very present medical texts of the fifth century.[484]

The author of *Internal Affections* notes constipation as a symptom of a disease caused by the blockage of vessels extending to the spine.[485] Other symptoms include pain along the spine, difficultly urinating, and swollen, ulcerous legs; the cure involves cleaning out the head and the use of laxatives. The additional symptoms, as well as the cure, reveal a basic assumption concerning this ailment: the body experiences a blockage and begins to accumulate matter of all sorts; treatment involves reopening the passages of the body to let it out. The author's description of a disease of the spleen also includes constipation and insinuates a kind of pathological retention: the belly and spleen become swollen; the patient's complexion turns dark and yellowish and his ears and gums smell foul.[486] Because the body is imagined as a series of interconnected passages through which material flows more or less

[483] In Hippocratic writing, both the circumstances surrounding spontaneous recoveries as well as prescribed treatments testify to the conceptual importance of excess substance in the body. As the author of *Regimen in Acute Diseases* categorically asserts, "all diseases are resolved through either the mouth, the cavity, or the bladder; sweating is a form of resolution common to them all." (Hipp. *Acut. Sp*. 39 = L 15, trans. Paul Potter.). This statement implies that some overabundant substance within the body causes disease and its removal will necessarily bring about recovery. Accordingly, in the case of ailing patients, the Hippocratics often describe excretions, even if they are not a part of normal bodily functions, as salubrious. Sweating, the formation of pus, even bleeding and diarrhea could constitute positive scenarios in which offending materials within the body exit. Excretions that restore health are mentioned in multiple Hippocratic texts. Throughout the series of case-studies in the *Epidemics* treatises, the writers often describe this resolution of disease as an *apostasis*, a "separation" of morbid substances in the body. If these *apostases* do not occur naturally, physicians could induce them by employing bloodletting, emetics, and laxatives as a means of ridding the body of these excess materials. Taking measures to relax and purge the bowels was also an oft-used treatment for these kinds of conditions. Jouanna (1999, 156-160).

[484] Kuriyama (1999, 208-17). In the Hippocratic Corpus, we find a similar notion in the word "πλησμονή" mentioned e.g. in Hipp. *Reg*. III. 70.12; 75.2; *Nat. Hom.* 9.2; *Aph*. II.4.

[485] Hipp. *Intern*. 13.

[486] Hipp. *Intern*. 31.

freely, the condition manifests itself in different ways throughout the patient's cavities.[487] Here the excess material presents itself most noticeably in the spleen because of its porosity and absorbency,[488] yet the retention is apparent throughout: spleen, belly and bowels are in a static, gorged state; even the darkened skin color betokens excess of fluids in the body.[489] The upper orifices emit an unnaturally foul smell because the bowels are blocked. The treatise *On Regimen* also mentions a disease wherein the bowels swell due to excessive dryness, which subsequently causes constipation. The author notes that the patient vomits up everything he has eaten and drunk and even ultimately disgorges his feces as well, a sign which the writer considers fatal.[490] In this case too, the division between the upper and lower halves of the body breaks down. Retained fecal matter is not merely a symptom of the disease, but even plays an active role in the progression of this sickness. In these situations, therefore, the patient's constipation forms part of a larger, very worrying pathological schema.

With this in mind, let us examine the second part of Blepyrus' soliloquy, when he breaks off his conversation with his neighbor and speaks again to himself. The audience members watch as he descends further into his comical crisis. Moving beyond the problem at hand, he wonders about the further effects that this constipation will have on his bodily traffic: if his usual exit for excrement is closed, what will happen if he eats more?

> ἀτὰρ τί δράσω; καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τοῦτό με
> μόνον τὸ λυποῦν ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν φάγω,
> ὅποι βαδιεῖταί μοι τὸ λοιπὸν ἡ κόπρος. (*Ecc*. 358-60)
>
> What am I going to do? This present predicament
> isn't my only anxiety: what's going to happen when I eat
> something? Where will the poop go? (trans. Henderson)

In the context of medical thought of the time, Blepyrus' concern becomes less improbable. He becomes focused, as a doctor might, on the spatial limitations of his own body and frets that his condition might make a turn for the worst. While internal bodily functions, including digestion, are inherently mysterious, Blepyrus understands that human body does not, after

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[487] The Hippocratics imagine the body as a series of interconnected passages. The upper and lower cavities, divided by the diaphragm, are understood to be separate; the upper cavity consists of the heart and bodily structures for breathing and consumption, while the lower cavity includes the stomach, intestines and bladder. Cf. Jouanna (1999, 311). However, these two cavities are connected by vessels, and upward movement is in fact possible in Hippocratic accounts.

[488] Gundert (1992, 459; 461-2).

[489] Later in the treatise, the author associates alterations in skin color with the presence of excess bile or phlegm in the body, which brings about a yellowish or whitish appearance of the skin, respectively (Hipp. *Intern*. 35; 38). He explicitly says that when bile settles under the skin, it causes the skin hue to change (*Intern*. 35). Thus it is likely that the writer understands the patient's darkened complexion as a direct indication of a superfluous substance in the body. For the diagnostic importance of skin, see Grundmann (2016, 22).

[490] Hipp. *Reg*. III. 82.1-9

all, have an infinite ability to store feces. He makes it clear that he sees his body as a closed-in system which functions properly when there is a quantitative balance between incoming and outgoing material. Retained feces can transform into a great threat with the potential to cause serious illness; excrement can even force its exit in ghastly ways. Blepyrus' view of his body, albeit comical, is relatively sophisticated and consistent with the focuses of Hippocratic medicine at the time.

The treatise *On Diseases IV* further contextualizes Blepyrus' worry. After explaining humoral theory, the author expounds on the traffic of food and feces in the body.[491] According to him, this system has a delicate balance, operating on a three-day cycle of ingestion, digestion and expulsion. This balance is an exact one in that the amount of food consumed should be equal to the amount of feces expelled. The body absorbs for its own purposes some of the matter, while producing an equal amount of morbid (νοσερός) material to be expelled in the stool. The body retains some "moistures" (ἰκμάδες), as he calls them, for two days, and others (the heavier, compounded moistures) for three days.[492] Aberrations in the quantity or timing of these substances turn them pathological: he names distension and overheating of vessels as the unhealthy consequences of retained stool.

> Ταῦτα δέ μοι εἴρηται ὅκως τε καὶ διότι τὰ βρώματα οὐχ οἷά τέ ἐστιν αὐθημερὸν ἐξιέναι. Ἢν δὲ ἐμμένῃ τὰ σιτία ἐν τῇ κοιλίῃ πλείονα τοῦ δέοντος χρόνου καὶ ἕτερα ἐς αὐτὰ πίπτῃ, τὸ σῶμα πληρωθείη ἄν, καὶ πιεζευμένων τῶν φλεβῶν ὑπὸ τῆς πληθώρης, θέρμη ἂν καὶ πόνος τῷ σώματι παραγίνοιτο… (*Morb*. IV 13 = L 44)
>
> I have explained above how and why food cannot pass out on the same day they are eaten. But if foods remain in the cavity for a longer time than they should, and others are added to them, the body will be overfilled, and the vessels will be compressed by the overfilling, and the body will become hot and painful… (trans. Potter)

The writer thus describes the balance that must be maintained and why, and he specifically mentions the scenario in which one continues to eat without making a bowel movement. The material in the body, not naturally morbid, becomes so when the balance is upset.[493] The author of *Places in Man* makes a similar observation in his introduction: when ingested food enters the cavity and does not exit, the entire body is inundated with this trapped liquid and suffers morbid fluxes.[494] In other words, this build-up in the body is nourishment "gone wrong," a change that can happen alarmingly quickly.

The author of *Diseases* IV focuses on the dynamics, the operation of the bodily

[491] Hipp. *Morb*. IV.11-14 = L 42-5.
[492] Ibid. 11 = L 42
[493] Holmes (2010, 137-8) describes food, like bodily humors, as material that can benefit, as well as threaten, the body (e.g. in Hipp. *Morb*. IV. 5 = L 36).
[494] Hipp. *Loc. Hom*. 1.

system, and in particular the two measurable factors of timing and mass. His science, at least by the standards of medicine at the time, is one that aims at exactness and measurability. For this doctor, there is much that might go awry in the distance between the mouth and the anus; he has indeed made a science out of the simple process of eating and defecating. In Blepyrus' speech we see this idea very clearly echoed. The wild pear was intended as nourishment, but became hazardous within his body. Consistent with the idea in *On Diseases* IV, his fundamental fear concerning his constipation is the imbalance of the input and output of his body: the superfluous *quantity*, the pathological imbalance, of material in his body which is the source of his medical problem and anxiety. The Hippocratic surveillance of the body in these alimentary-related pathologies is particularly relevant for the dramatic import of Blepyrus' digestive troubles.

We see, therefore, how this retention of feces according to the Hippocratic corpus is not a neutral situation, but in fact a potentially harmful one with consequences for one's whole body, particularly if the condition persists. Rather than merely disappearing, feces can in extreme cases even be regurgitated. Clearly ancient Greek medical writers considered fecal retention potentially morbid and associated it with the larger spectrum of diseases involving bodily excess. Constipation itself may be a minor, uncomfortable bodily disorder, but with his lament Blepyrus also speaks to a central concern in contemporary medicine which was likely to have found its way the households of Athens.

Especially by the time this play was produced in 393/2 BCE, fifth-century medical ideas had had ample time to circulate, and at least fundamental medical theories had become relatively familiar among the Athenian public, not least of all because many of the treatises were intended as speeches.[495] Many writings themselves from this time, moreover, show strong indications that they were intended for a lay readership; fourth-century treatises especially did not always solely function as educational material for doctors in training.[496] Those who could read and had access to books were in a position to, and did in fact enjoy, basic medical knowledge. [497] Uneducated Athenians for their part interacted with doctors, whether as a patient or bystander, and likely more frequently than they did with sophists or intellectuals of other fields.[498] Moreover, Aristophanes himself certainly did not lack the

[495] For the importance of rhetoric in many medical treatises, see Agarwalla (2010, 73-85), Jouanna (1999); (1990), Thomas (2003); (1993), and Lloyd (1979, 86ff). The treatise *on Articulations* makes a clear reference to the practice of public medical procedures, albeit to denounce doctors who only want to captalize on its entertainment value (Hipp. *Artic*. 42).

[496] Althoff (1993, 222-23).

[497] Schiefsky (2005, 36-45); Jaeger (1944, 3-45).

[498] Jouanna (1999, 80-1).

knowledge to use medical concepts in various ways in his works, as I have argued throughout this dissertation.[499] Of course, in the context of Aristophanic comedy, we cannot understand this passage as earnest. Blepyrus' medical problem and his question about the fate of his retained excrement are comically absurd. Nevertheless, a look at the Hippocratic Corpus reveals that these ideas are not purely made-up nonsense. The characters refer here to fifth-century medical ideas about the potential dangers of irregular bowels and the subsequent need for expert advice on diet and digestion.

Furthermore, this scene is not only about digestive troubles; the dramatic significance of Blepyrus' medical problem extends beyond his person. From the very beginning of his monologue, he has connected his body to larger social systems by presenting a strong metaphorical parallel between his body and house. In addition, Blepyrus' constipation has relevance for the additional, larger *macrocosmos* of the state. Even before he begins to speak, his appearance on stage in women's clothes has considerable symbolic significance. At this moment in dramatic time, Praxagora addresses the assembly as a man and gives birth to a new Athenian government. There is simultaneously a stark contrast and parallel between the husband and wife. In particular, Praxagora later explains her absence to Blepyrus by lying that she had gone to deliver a baby while she was actually delivering her gynaecocracy (*Ecc*. 549-50).[500] As a contrasting parallel, we hear Blepyrus call on Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth, while tormented by his constipation (369). David Leitao draws attention to strong verbal connections between how the two spouses talk about their respective "births." Husband and wife both use various verbs with μετὰ prefixes that denote summoning: μετέλθοι (Blepyrus of a doctor, 363) and μετεπέμψατ᾽ μεθῆκε (529; 534). The spouses both also use the phrase "by any means," πάσῃ τέχνῃ, to qualify these requests (Blepyrus, 366; Praxagora, 534).[501]

These complementary situations involve a number of inversions of social order and expectations. Both situations feature symbolic births, but the gender roles are reversed.[502] Blepyrus' delivery is entirely physiological and, moreover, concerns only one system: his own body. Praxagora's delivery is purely representational and ideological in nature; it has

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[499] Although I want to avoid circular reasoning, others have demonstrated this dissemination of medical knowledge through Aristophanes' texts themselves. My dissertation independently points to this conclusion as well by demonstrating that the playwright engages with medical ideas in addition to medical terminology.

[500] Sommerstein (1998, ad loc.). Henderson (1991, 189) briefly touches on this gender role reversal, while Leitao (2013, 159) goes into greater detail.

[501] Leitao (2012, 159).

[502] For Blepyrus' feminization in this passage, see McClure (1999, 246-8), Foley (1982), and Saïd (1979). Foley (1982, 14) and McClure (1999, 247-8) emphasize how Blepyrus' problem symbolizes the infertility of male governance.

nothing to do with her body, but rather concerns the political system in Athens; she has two discrete systems in her metaphor: her body and the body of the state. The tone and upshot of these situations also differ entirely. Unlike a baby, or a new civic order, Blepyrus' feces is pathological rather than regenerative or constructive.[503] Moreover, he starkly contrasts his wife's proactivity with his own passive confusion: he wonders what she is doing: "She can't be doing (δράσουσ᾽) anything respectable. Well, all the same, there's the need to crap" (οὐ γάρ ποθ᾽ ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ἐξελήλυθεν/ δράσουσ᾽. ὅμως δ᾽ οὖν ἐστιν ἀποπατητέον, *Ecc*. 325-6). He thus juxtaposes Praxagora's actions with his own predicament, reiterating the problem at hand with a verbal adjective in an impersonal construction.[504] Later, he again expresses the fear that she is doing (δρᾷ) something new (336). His worries relate in equal measure to his unknown health problems and to her unknown activities, thus paralleling the two issues yet again. Her name in itself denotes 'getting political things done,' which she lives up to very well.[505] Blepyrus, for his part, can only ask the audience for advice in vain, again with the same verb, but in the aorist subjunctive deliberative:[506] "What am I to do?" (ἀτὰρ τί δράσω?) (358). Praxagora is politically effectual, while Blepyrus is ineffectual—both regarding his own body and the body politic. This inaction is in part due to his medical anxieties and, paradoxically, in part due to anxieties about his lack of medical competence.

The constipation scene thus superimposes the body, house, and state on one another, whether through direct comparison or a parallel in dramatic time. Through these parallels between the husband and wife, these passages present a comparison between the human body and the state with the household as an intermediary system. It invites us to consider more closely the relationship between the two in this particular context. The differences between Praxagora's successful governmental delivery and Blepyrus' unsuccessful bowel movement highlight the contrast between her and her husband, but they also attune us to the points of parallel and in turn shed light on what Blepyrus' constipation means for the state. Moreover, with this deeper understanding of the medical context for Blepyrus' problem, we may now better consider its political significance and, more importantly for my argument, Blepyrus' reaction and understanding of it.

Scholars already have speculated on how Blepyrus' constipation reflects the politics of the play. Reckford has offered the general statement that the character's condition

[503] I disagree with Leitao (2012, 177) and Edwards (1991, 164) that the play valorizes feces, *pace* McClure (1999, 248 n. 156). Edward's (1991) argument for the positive portrayal of excrement in *Peace* is more convincing.
[504] Potentially also emphasized by the line's comical adaptation of a tragic line. Vetta (1989, ad loc.).
[505] Kanavou (2011, 172).
[506] *Pace* Ussher (1973, ad loc.).

represents civic gridlock.[507] Helene Foley elaborates on this principle, hinting at the character's body-*polis* parallel in her discussion of the political failure of the male characters in the play:

> The [Athenian] "welfare state" is destroying and dividing the public interest. Praxagora's husband Blepyrus' constipation becomes in part an image of this greedy individualistic hoarding of the Athenian male. Dressed in his wife's clothes, the now feminized-or privatized-Blepyrus calls on Eilethuia, the goddess of childbirth, to deliver not a child but a wild pear.[508]

She frames this observation as a mere aside, but it is nonetheless very revealing. According to this analysis, Blepyrus' physical condition represents and reflects the self-centered citizen who keeps his possessions for himself rather than sharing with the citizenry. Greed is part of the pathology of the Athenian state, the problem which Praxagora successfully cures with her new communal system of government.

David Leitao also views Blepyrus' constipation as relevant to Praxagora's scheme and offers a more specific, economic analysis of Blepyrus' constipation, connecting the character's ailment to current blockading of food supplies.[509] In their brief dialogue, Blepyrus' neighbor asks him whether the "blockade" is "the blockade that Thrasybulus told the Spartans about? (*Ecc*. 356-7). Misinterpreting Blepyrus' ambiguous turn of phrase, the neighbor understands Blepyrus' remark about the immobile pear in his bowels as a political matter. Commentators have theorized that Thrasybulus, a general from this time, potentially had disrupted, or threatened to disrupt, Spartan trade routes.[510] Leitao sees the culprit of Blepyrus' constipation, the choke pear, as another topical reference to actual economic issues: such poor sorts of foods were only eaten during times of famine, a fact that indicates that Blepyrus was in bad straits to begin with, not just after his digestive problems.[511] According to this reading, his body represents a constellation of *poleis* rather than just the city of Athens: Hellas is the sick, congested body. Blepyrus' constipation thus would not connote over-satiety in Athens, but rather malnourishment and dearth.[512] Leitao's analysis constitutes a different perspective from which to view Blepyrus' ailment, one which focuses on economic lack instead of personal greed.

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507 Reckford (1987, 346).
508 Foley (1982, 14).
509 Leitao (2012, 160). Ussher (1973, xxiv-v; ad loc.) also posits that the reference to Thrasybulus must have to do with a blockade against the Spartans which the general proposed at the assembly; he points to the additional denotation of "τὰ σιτία" (*Ecc*. 355) as soldiers' rations (ad loc.).
510 Van Leeuwen (1905, ad loc.); Ussher (1973, ad loc.).
511 Leitao (2012, 161).
512 Sommerstein (1984) discusses Aristophanes' interest in economic issues in the last two surviving plays.

The neighbor's comment on Thrasybulus, however, can also have another import, alluding instead to some way in which the politician had wronged the city. Praxagora had mentioned him in her history of Athens' recent failures to achieve salvation: σωτηρία παρέκυψεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὀργίζεται/ Θρασύβουλος αὐτὸς οὐχὶ παρακαλούμενος (*Ecc*. 202-3). Her reference is vague, but makes clear that she sees him as playing a role in preventing a good turn of events for the city, perhaps peace.[513] In this way the blockaded pear could allude to legislative, as well as military, prevention.

Blepyrus and his neighbor, therefore, freely mingle economic, military and political meanings into the metaphor of his constipated body. The social and political references are very apparent, particularly the direct reference to Thrasybulus as well as the puns on the demes Kopros and Acherdous with the personified bowel movement (ὁ κοπρεαῖος) and wild pear (ἄνθρωπος ἀχραδούσιος), respectively.[514] Nonetheless, the language of the two neighbors ultimately contains no straightforward sociopolitical critique. The lack of specificity for these metaphorical vehicles (Blepyrus' body and its blocked feces) leaves a very confused message. Just like Praxagora's ailing husband, the audience has notions about this constipation, but can decide nothing definitive about its significance.

This lack of clarity might precisely be the point. The most lasting impression of this scene—and incidentally its most amusing feature—is Blepyrus' reaction of confusion and distress itself. While there are a number of compelling symbolic interpretations for his constipation, Blepyrus' experience is also quite simply a doublet of his own mental blockage, the fear and perplexity which lead to inaction. Although it is quickly forgotten in the course of his long and colorful lament, his aim that morning was to leave in time to attend the assembly and get his three obols. He was hindered by metaphorical barricades at every turn: first unable to exit his house, then unable to make his feces exit his body. In the end, however, it was his panic at his constipation that immobilized him last and the worst, turning him into the stationary and dehumanized "chamberpot of comedy" that he prayed he would not become.

As I mentioned before, these passages about Blepyrus' constipation simultaneously feature his understanding and *lack* of understanding about this bodily function. They give the impression that medical knowledge itself causes his concern. In other words, his passing familiarity with medical theories of his day answers, but also poses, this question concerning

[513] Seager (1967, 107-8). See also Sommerstein's (1998, ad loc.), Vetta's (1989, ad loc.) and Ussher's (1973, ad loc.) analyses on the different possibilities.
[514] See note 476 above.

his digestive limitations. This perplexity leaves him with no other option but to cry out for help. He does not have the solutions himself, but requires external help in order to understand his own body, asking the audience if there are any anal experts among them:

> τίς ἂν οὖν ἰατρόν μοι μετέλθοι καὶ τίνα;
> τίς τῶν κατὰ πρωκτὸν δεινός ἐστι τὴν τέχνην;
> ἀλλ᾽ οἶδ᾽, Ἀμύνων; ἀλλ᾽ ἴσως ἀρνήσεται.
> Ἀντισθένη τις καλεσάτω πάσῃ τέχνῃ.
> οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἕνεκά γε στεναγμάτων
> οἶδεν τί πρωκτὸς βούλεται χεζητιῶν.
> ὦ πότνι᾽ Ἰλείθυα μή με περιίδῃς
> διαρραγέντα μηδὲ βεβαλανωμένον,
> ἵνα μὴ γένωμαι σκωραμὶς κωμῳδική. (*Ecc*. 363-71)
>
> Who will go for a doctor, and what kind?
> Any of you arsehole experts out there
> knowledgeable about my condition? Does
> Amynon know? But maybe he'll say no.
> Somebody call Antisthenes at any cost!
> When it comes to grunting, he's the man
> to diagnose an arsehole that needs to shit.
> Mistress Hileithya, don't let me down
> when I'm bursting and bolted;
> I don't want the role of a comic potty! (trans. Henderson)

The two layers of humor behind this request are apparent. First, the plea pokes fun at intellectualism and specialization, particularly medical specialization, by requesting experts of this particular body part.[515] The request also is clearly a sexual joke[516] and potentially functions as a jibe at the sexual preferences of the two men named.[517] Blepyrus' fundamental problem, however, remains.

From his cursory knowledge of dietetics, he sees that it is possible, even necessary, to understand and take good care of his body.[518] Sometimes even addressing them specifically, Hippocratics urge laypeople should take their health into their own hands.[519] *On Affections* begins with the remark that a patient must know how to help himself with his own knowledge:

> Any man who is intelligent must, on considering that health is of the utmost value to human beings, have the personal understanding necessary to help himself in diseases, and be able to judge

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[515] Ancient Egyptian doctors, on the other hand, were known for having medical specialties. This fact would perhaps lend another derisive shade of humor to the statement, since these foreign medical practices were perceived as strange. Sommerstein (1998, ad loc.). Herodotus remarks on this specialization (*Hist.* 2.84). Cf. Southard (1970, 188-90) who emphasizes the ambiguity of the term and indicates a scholion that glosses Antisthenes as an actual doctor who has that speciality: "ἰατρὸς θηλυδριώδης. καὶ οὗτος τῶν καταπρώκτων."

[516] Vetta (1989, ad loc.) comments on the sexual innuendo in these lines.

[517] A scholiast reports Amynon as being an "orator who spends time with men." McClure (1999, 214-5) points out the connection between the scatological and pathic elements of the passage.

[518] See my fuller discussion of Holmes' theory of "taking care" in the following section.

[519] Cañizares (2010, 87-99).

> and understand what physicians say and what they administer to his body, being versed in each of these matters to a degree reasonable for a layman. (Hipp. *Aff.* 1, trans. Potter)

He reiterates this stance after describing a number of diseases and their treatments:

> Through understanding these things, a layman will be less likely to fall into incurable diseases that tend, from minor provocations, to become serious and chronic. (Hipp. *Aff.* 33, trans. Potter)

The author of *Regimen in Health* also opens his work by referring to laymen: "laypeople should have a regimen as follows" (Τοὺς ἰδιώτας ὧδε χρὴ διαιτᾶσθαι) and he concludes with a verbatim quote of the above mentioned passage from *On Affections*.[520] This idea was clearly programmatic on some level.

Yet, perfecting one's regimen is a complex undertaking, especially alone. In *Ancient Medicine* we find a statement to this effect: "Now to learn by themselves how their own sufferings come about and cease and the reasons why they get worse or better, is not an easy task for ordinary folk; but when these things have been discovered and are set forth by another, it is simple."[521] As a layman without the help of a doctor, Blepyrus finds he is not up to the task and consequently grows anxious. This conclusion would not have surprised the Hippocratic doctors that directly and indirectly express the opinion that a patient cannot be expected to be their own physician. Medicine is a complicated *techne* after all. The author of *On the Art of Medicine* illustrates this well, and in a way that resembles Blepyrus' own situation:

> οἱ δὲ οὔτε ἃ κάμνουσιν, οὔτε δι' ἃ κάμνουσιν εἰδότες, οὐδ'ὅ τι ἐκ τῶν παρεόντων ἔσται, οὐδ' ὅ τι ἐκ τῶν τούτοισιν ὁμοίων γίνεται, εἰδότες, ἐπιτάσσονται, ἀλγέοντες μὲν ἐν τῷ παρεόντι, φοβεύμενοι δὲ τὸ μέλλον (Hipp. *Art*. 7)
>
> The patient knows neither what he is suffering from, nor the cause thereof; neither what will be the outcome of his present state, nor the usual results of the like conditions. In this state he receives orders, suffering in the present and fearful of the future. (trans. Jones)

The patient is ignorant of their disease and, in addition, their panic itself negativity affects rational thinking. How is Blepyrus to keep his body healthy without the prerequisite medical knowledge about the present and future of his disease? How should he make the best decisions for his health when he is in an anxious state of emotion? He is merely a layman, and yet must save a intricate and mysterious system: the human body. Blepyrus draws our attention to how Hippocratic medicine ironically transforms the most basic, instinctual human activities of eating and defecating into matters for intellectuals. The author of *On Breaths* seems to refer to this somewhat ironic facet of medicine: "only doctors can know the trivia of

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520 Hipp. *Salubr*. 1.1 and 9.4, respectively.

521 Hipp. *VM* 2.17-21, trans. Jones; Cf. Hipp. *Flat*. 1.

the *techne*, not laymen. For it isn't work of the body, but of thought (οὐ γὰρ σώματος, ἀλλὰ γνώμης ἐστὶν ἔργα)."[522] Although the art of medicine concerns the body, merely *having* a body does not qualify one to practice medicine.

If we remember, Blepyrus' lament presents the theme of competence for the second time in the play. In the previous scene, Praxagora makes the argument in the assembly that household expertise can be readily applied to political matters: "I say that the city must be handed over to the women, since we have them as administers and stewards in the households." (ταῖς γὰρ γυναιξὶ φημὶ χρῆναι τὴν πόλιν/ ἡμᾶς παραδοῦναι. καὶ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις/ ταύταις ἐπιτρόποις καὶ ταμίαισι χρώμεθα, *Ecc*. 210-12). Household management is figured as a qualification for civic management, thus turning traditional ideas about political competence on their heads. The question of expertise and ability indeed lie at the heart of the drama. Praxagora is new to civic engagement, but has made herself wise and clever (δεινὴ καὶ σοφὴ, 245) from listening to the orators' speeches at the assembly. She maintains that the state needs the kind of consistency of habits and values that women have in their private lives, proposing that this conservative attitude qualifies them to govern. She also mentions the more concrete skills that women have: they value soldiers' lives, send provisions the most effectively, and have fiscal savvy (233-8).

Blepyrus, by contrast, stages an elaborate failure of efficacy. His conundrum results from a mixture of internal and external factors. His constipation is an internal problem which external influences, such as foods, cause. However, his medical knowledge itself also plagues him and transforms an otherwise mild complaint into a potentially mortal crisis. Because he seeks the help of doctors, he finds himself in a paradoxical situation: these authorities on the body both invent, and treat, his problem. This scatological scene is a comic presentation of both a body and a mind paralyzed by opposing forces and unable to move forward. He recognizes the science of digestion, but ends up only confronting his own incompetence in the matter. The constipation is due to an excessively drying piece of food, the choke pear, while the mental constipation is due to excessively intellectual food for thought: the over-intellectualization, almost like hypochondria, of a simple bowel movement.

The sociopolitical interpretations of the constipation account for how Blepyrus' problem itself thematically fits into the play, but they do not account for these striking features in this scene. First, Blepyrus considers his constipation a very dire medical situation rather than a common discomfort as we might expect. He is also very preoccupied with the

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[522] Hipp. *Flat*. 1.15-6.

limited capacity of his body and the danger of bodily imbalance between bodily intake and output. Both of these concerns reflect medical ideas of the time and thus draw attention to some of the more absurd aspects of Hippocratic medicine. In particular, Blepyrus reacts to the grim prognoses of certain medial texts for constipation as well as the hairsplitting bodily balance that they aver is necessary for preserving health. The stakes are high for maintaining this proper order, and Blepyrus' uncertainty drives him to panic. He thus spotlights the practice of medicine, and by calling for a doctor, the figure and role of the doctor in turn. Furthermore, he despairs of his own ability to solve the problem, believing it to be a matter for a medical expert, someone who is "δεινός … τὴν τέχνην" (364). The childishly simple, natural action of defecation becomes impossible to execute properly without extensive knowledge. This abortive attempt at relieving himself is, moreover, aligned in the plot with his abortive attempt at voting at the assembly.

When the model of the body is mapped onto the state in this way, the government is presented as a delicate, automatic system of in- and outflow that only doctors fully understand. This comically morbid image of a constipated citizen hints at the perplexity and indecision of a citizen in Athens. Athenian democracy was indeed tacitly founded on the assumption that the average citizen had enough sense to participate in government more or less wisely and effectively.[523] The Blepyrus scene, however, communicates a certain skepticism about this attitude, which, if we look at the historical context of the drama, is not especially surprising. The *Assemblywomen* premiered in the long wake of a number of political events: the Thirty Tyrants, their subsequent overthrow (403 BCE), the reinstatement of democracy, and the added complexity that came with its new incarnation. A lingering anxiety about the potential for another oligarchic seizure of power fueled changes in the democratic system; new checks were instated to prevent snap votes, significantly curbing the power of the assembly to make lasting laws.[524] The practice of *nomothesia* "law-making" arose, wherein laws were submitted for review to a number of lawmakers (*nomothetai*) who were chosen from the standard jury pool.[525] The assembly could still pass decrees, which were regarded as more temporary solutions in comparison to *nomoi*. There was, however, no clear-cut difference between these decrees and laws. The new iteration of Athenian democracy thus had medial steps added in legislation, and in turn became less direct and more elaborate.

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[523] What Plato, however, was already starting to question. Sinclair (1988, 75; 216).

[524] Sinclair (1988, 83-4).

[525] On nomothesia, see Rhodes (1985) and Hansen (1985).

Seen in this light, Blepyrus' constipation does not so much represent the economic greed of the average Athenian citizen as express a helplessness in the face of unalterable political realities and a feeling of self-doubt regarding politics. Blepyrus does not retain his feces with Freudian glee. In this body-as-state metaphor, the Athenian state, and particularly the Athenian economy, is represented in terms of a self-regulating system. The human body ingests and processes foodstuff in an automatic and predictable way; a person has control over their diet, but once they have eaten the food, its fate is subject to internal processes that are both invisible and, except by medical intervention, uncontrollable. In the same way, a citizen might vote at the assembly, but his guaranteed place in politics often ends there. The ramifications of his vote, furthermore, once submitted, might also play out in unforeseeable ways in the cogs of the government.[526]

Similarly, Hippocratic medicine empowers a patient over their body, but also alienates them from it. With new knowledge about the correct regimen, patients can theoretically perfect their health, but through this knowledge and through its application, the patient's body becomes for them an externalized object of scrutiny. Hippocratic patients are responsible for their bodies from an outside perspective, similar to the way a doctor is.[527] A doctor can, at best, gain knowledge about the inner workings of the body and try to prevent or cure disease; he cannot reinvent the system which is already in place, but merely work around it. Praxagora's husband seems to find himself in this very paradox of knowledge and power. He is distanced from his own body as well as political processes: systems over which he should, as a freeman and a citizen, have an inalienable and absolute control. This scene's comical implication is that, for Athenians, voting is as frequent and easy a practice as passing a bowel movement. Or at least it should be.

This microcosm-macrocosm relationship between the body and state in Blepyrus' imagery highlights anxieties about personal competence and responsibility concerning the proper function of both systems. Athenian democracy grants the average, uneducated citizen the great responsibility of safeguarding the health of the state, regardless of whether he can do so adequately. It is also very clear that the state held private citizens responsible for their effect on Athenian politics, for which ignorance was no excuse. They could, for instance be ostracized, or be indicted for making an illegal proposal in the assembly.[528] With political power came political liability.

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[526] Of course, he could be chosen by lot to serve on a jury or in the *boule*, but this kind of political involvement is neither predictable nor guaranteed.
[527] Holmes (2010, 118-9).
[528] Roberts (1982, 142-160).

Yet average citizens were hardly left without guidance. They heeded more experienced men who lead and regularly address the assembly, whether in an official or unofficial capacity.[529] Both highly active, informed citizens and less active, less informed citizens had their role in preserving the health of the state. In a quite similar way, doctors of the time describe the cooperative relationship between the doctor, the patient, and the patient's body. The author of *On Affections* describes the very important role that a layperson has to their health, yet they cannot do it alone: it requires the help of a doctor.[530] At the same time, an educated patient is tasked with participating in, and evaluating, his own treatments. Ideally, doctor and patient work together against the common foe of disease through alterations in lifestyle. A balance is struck between the powers of the professional and the layperson; neither plays the tyrant nor servant.

In this way, this arrangement resembles Athenian attitudes about their own civic lives and the ideal cooperation, and blurriness, between leaders and average citizens. While there were of course no official qualifications for doctors or orators, iatric and political expertise was established through public opinion, as both their pursuits had a very public nature. At this time especially, the tensions between the roles of the individual and the "expert" public figure must have hit home particularly hard so soon after the dissolution of the Thirty. The potentially opaque new distinctions between decrees and laws in Athenian legislature inevitably would also have left many with an uneasy, perplexed feeling. Although the *nomothetai* were, like most other Athenian offices, selected by lot and had frequent turn-over, the added complexity of the new government also likely alienated more than a few citizens. Thus one's role and power in this new democracy was in many ways less clear, even as the troubling political background of its restoration raised the stakes for its success—and anxiety about its failure.

As we have seen, the metaphor of Blepyrus' constipation alludes to the socio-economic system of Athens and portrays it in a negative, even pathological light. His condition hints at potential social and fiscal risks of perpetuating the state's *status quo*. Just as in the human body, the body politic can suffer from an imbalance and improper distribution

[529] For instance, orators (ῥήτορες) could be professionals, whether in name or deed (Hansen 1987, 61-3). There was also the informal concept of "democratic leaders" (προστάται τοῦ δήμου); *prostates* was a flexible term for a leader or supervisor in some capacity and it could also be a positive synonym for a demagogue. Sinclair (1988, 15-16; 37); Connor (1971, 111-19).

[530] The author of *Regimen in Acute Diseases* has an especially pessimistic view of laypeople's abilities: "Common people surpass themselves in ignorance when it comes to understanding how to cure these diseases" (Hipp. *Acut*. 6.4-6 = L 2). Yet this treatise, like *Ancient Medicine* too, has a skeptical attitude towards the abilities of physicians as well.

of stuffs, which is precisely what Praxagora seems to understand as the city's problem. As I have argued, however, the real crux of Blepyrus' laments does not lie in a critique of current political issues, but lies rather in questions about civic responsibility and ability, and the gap that might exist between the two. Despite the fact that he eventually seems to fare well in Praxagora's new government, Blepyrus in no way has his inquiries about the prognosis of his constipation answered, thus leaving us with a very ambivalent message about his political efficacy.

The tone of the constipation passage is humorous and flippant; we know that Blepyrus is only overreacting and that his fears are absurd. One element of the scene's humor is based on the concept of digestive expertise, to which Hippocratic doctors certainly had a claim. Yet Aristophanes exploits this medical idea not just for its comic potential, but also for its potential as socio-political critique. The mere idea of an "intestinal professional" satirizes the nature of Athenian democracy: every citizen should have the power and ability to take part in governing the city, just like every citizen should be able to master and understand his own body and the fate of the food he consumes. Blepyrus' soliloquies make us wonder whether it is a farce that civic participation should require expertise, or if it is a farce that a layman could adequately play the politician in the first place.[531] The answer is perhaps both. After all, by its very nature, the gynaecocracy established in the play upsets the common belief that the traditional body of voters (adult males) is adequate for the safekeeping of the city.

Later in the play, we encounter Blepyrus quite content, on his way to the feast that the women have prepared. He has no more physical complaints; in fact, he is well enough to enjoy sexual companions. Leitao takes Blepyrus' final triumph and regained masculinity to mean that he did in fact relieve himself, otherwise this all would not have been possible.[532] Yet, in the context of the play, a more ambiguous reading of his reappearance onstage as a healthy, content man arguably makes more sense. While we do not know if Praxagora's husband ever produced a successful bowel movement, it would appear that his fears concerning constipation have either been assuaged, or, more likely, rendered moot.[533] At the end of the play we watch him happily exit, planning to eat more. No doctor comes to his aid and we never discover what would happen to him if kept eating without ever defecating; it is simply an image which Aristophanes leaves hanging.

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[531] Pointing to *Knights* and *Acharnians*, Nelson (2014, 111) sees the political incompetence of the average citizen as one of the self-contradictory aspects of Athenian democracy that Aristophanes explores.

[532] Leitao (2012, 159; 162-3).

[533] Ussher (1973, ad loc.) also does not believe Blepyrus managed to defecate by the end of his conversation with his neighbor.

This lingering image colors our reading of the exodus, reminding us again about the issues of governmental participation and competence. These two ideas are central to the comedy and in fact drive its plot. Women unexpectedly, and even legally, seize power through one woman's oratory skill and organization. The play is essentially a mediation on the following questions: What makes one politically capable? What sort of ability is required to propose, or vote to pass, a law? Does the traditional Athenian wisdom hold true that every citizen can? Blepyrus' medical crisis symbolizes an acutely ill body politic, but his perplexity concerning this crisis draws our attention to the larger issue of civic engagement. He ironically requires an expert to understand something as personal and instinctual as defecation. It would not be surprising, given the political presentation of Blepyrus' body, if this comic interlude reminded the audience of their own democracy.

Shortly before or after the premiere of *Assemblywomen*, Plato wrote his *Protagoras*, in which Socrates and the titular rhetorician debate the teachability of virtue, and thus, of good citizenship. Socrates observes that Athenians must think that all citizens naturally have political competence, or else they would not tolerate laymen speaking in the assembly; they must not consider politics a technical skill (*techne*).[534] He thereby draws attention to a key element of Athenian democracy which had hitherto been largely undisputed. In the course of the dialogue, this assumption is called into question and ultimately rejected: both interlocutors agree that virtue is knowledge and consequently can be taught. It is clear, therefore, that the notion of inborn political ability underwent a reexamination in the first quarter of the fourth century, a glimmer of which, I believe, is already visible in *Assemblywomen*, and particularly in Blepyrus' metaphor-laden medical crisis.

The political landscape of Athens had changed by this time, and was still changing. Expertise, already long established in other areas (including, of course, medicine), would slowly gain more relevance for holders of government offices in the fourth century. Military experience and competence had already been an unofficial qualification for generals for some time, and financial expertise in addition would be the next desirable skill in a leader, as we see a couple of decades later with the Athenian politician Callistratus.[535] This late play of Aristophanes' could not have anticipated these eventual developments and probably did not directly engage with Plato's philosophical writings. Nonetheless, this issue had obviously become a point of interest and anxiety towards the end of the 390's, and ready fodder in turn for the playwright's comic genius.

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[534] Pl. *Prt*. 319c7-d6.
[535] Sinclair (1988, 43-7) discusses the fourth-century trend towards specialization in political leaders.

2.3.2 Neocleides’ Eyes

Directly following Blepyrus’ lament, a messenger, Chremes, appears onstage. He has returned from the assembly to report on its proceedings, which include Neocleides’ speech, or attempt at a speech. According to him, Neocleides came in front of the assembly to speak on the issue of the salvation, planning to give a proposal for political reform, just as Euaeon and Praxagora would after him. What immediately became the subject of concern, however, was not how to cure the city’s ailments, but Neocleides’ own notorious health problem. Aristophanes thereby makes a relatively brief *ad hominem* joke about an apparently irksome, gormless political figure who was famous for obstructing the passage of laws. In the comic justice of the playwright, he ironically finds his own speech obstructed.[536] Except for a few words in his own defense, Neocleides never speaks. The people of the assembly dismiss him, the people listening to Chremes’ story dismiss him, and finally, modern commentators for the most part as well.

This lack of scholarly interest is unsurprising considering the passage’s apparent insularity and the character’s obscurity. In this section, however, I argue that the Neocleides passage in fact offers insight into the issue of civic engagement that is central to the play. Like the Blepyrus’ passage only a few lines prior, Chremes’ account engages with contemporary medicine. Its content and context likewise allude to the notion of personal responsibility for one’s health and suggest a political parallel. I turn to the passage in question, first explaining the background necessary for its interpretation and then provide my reading of its significance within the play:

> τί δ᾽ ἄλλο γ᾽ ἢ
> ἔδοξε τοῖς πρυτάνεσι περὶ σωτηρίας
> γνώμας προθεῖναι τῆς πόλεως; κᾆτ᾽ εὐθέως
> πρῶτος Νεοκλείδης ὁ γλάμων παρείρπυσεν.
> κᄄπειθ᾽ ὁ δῆμος ἀναβοᾷ πόσον δοκεῖς,
> “οὐ δεινὰ τολμᾶν τουτονὶ δημηγορεῖν,
> καὶ ταῦτα περὶ σωτηρίας προκειμένου,
> ὃς αὐτὸς αὑτῷ βλεφαρίδ᾽ οὐκ ἐσώσατο;”
> ὁ δ᾽ ἀναβοήσας καὶ περιβλέψας ἔφη,
> ‘τί δαί με χρῆν δρᾶν;’ (*Ecc*. 395-444)
>
> The magistrates decided to move the issue
> Of the salvation of the city—what else? Right away
> bleary-eyed Neocleides crept up and the people
> yelled out loud as you can imagine, “Isn’t it terrible that
> this man dares to address the people, and about a proposal for
> *salvation*, when he himself didn’t save his own eyelids?’
> Then calling back and peering around he said,

[536] *Pl*. 274-5.

Because they seem inscrutable at first blush, the audience's reaction and objections require further analysis. A modern reader might think Chremes perhaps has a valid point: what does the "salvation" of his eyes have to do with his political life? Secondly, what *can* he do about his condition? To address the first question, I consider a fourth-century speech important for our understanding of ancient Athenian attitudes about public and private life. My analysis of the second question, which is key to my analysis of this passage, builds on the first issue and brings in evidence from medical writing in addition. I argue that Hippocratic attitudes about the relationship between a person and their health help us read the relationship between the personal and political in this scene, and thereby establish a framework for interpreting Neocleides' role in the comedy.

It is possible that this connection between (what some today might consider) private matters and one's public conduct must have been a common argument, and even that the assembly's comment, "how terrible that he dare to speak about matters about salvation when he hasn't saved his own eyelids?" was a kind of stock phrase: how can someone do x, when they cannot do y?[537] Whether or not this specific turn of phrase was in vogue at the time, it is reasonable to assume that it was a familiar way of thinking. While ancient Greeks demarcated public life from the private life of the *oikos*,[538] these spheres were not only rhetorically flexible, but in certain cases one's private life could be legally relevant for their participation in politics.[539] A famous example is the fact that a citizen could be forced to forfeit his political rights and privileges (*atimia*) if he prostitutes himself.[540] Indeed commentators have noted a basic resemblance between this sentiment and an argument in Aeschines' *Against Timarchus* a few decades later, in which this law regarding prostitution comes into play.[541] In the logic of this speech, Timarchus' alleged self-prostitution directly affects his right to address the assembly: he should not only be barred from speaking in public; he should be punished for illegally having done so. In particular, the speaker argues that the audience cannot trust Timarchus not to prostitute the state if he has already prostituted his own body, thus making very clear the potential relevance between one's body and the political realm.[542] One's bodily

[537] Sommerstein (1998, ad loc.).
[538] Vernant (1991, 323-4).
[539] Cohen (1991, 70-97). See also a list of examples from oratory at V. Hunter (1994, 118-19). Note also the metaphorical connection between the state and household. Brock (2013, 25-42).
[540] The deprivation of citizen rights. See MacDowell (1978, 73-5; 126) and Halperin (1990, 94-5).
[541] Sommerstein (1998, ad loc.), Vetta (1989, ad loc.), and Ussher (1973, ad loc.).
[542] Halperin (1990, 88-112) in fact argues that the anxiety about (sexual) integrity of the body became a central aspect of Athenian democracy. Cf. Sissa (1999, 147-68).

affairs, therefore, could theoretically have an effect on one's ability to participate in public affairs.

Of course, no one tries to impose the punishment of *atimia* on Neocleides for his failure to take care of his body, and certainly medical and sexual matters cannot be unproblematically compared. Nevertheless, both cases involve the preservation of one's person and how this obligation relates to one's public life.[543] Furthermore, the assembly (along with Chremes) unofficially vetoes Neocleides' speech. Chremes does not report any more of what Neocleides might have said, which indicates either that Neocleides had stepped down in response to his poor reception, or that Chremes did not think the rest of what Neocleides had said worth repeating. Either case results in a kind of censorship of Neocleides from the perspective of Aristophanes' audience. The assembly therefore gives the impression that they consider it rhetorically valid to equate Neocleides' treatment of his own body to his public, political participation.

The assembly audience and Chremes' audience, however, take a step beyond the orator of *Against Timarchus*. The proof of Neocleides' ineptitude is immediately apparent to all: the claim can be verified by simply looking at his body, on which his failure is written. Unlike in Aeschines' speech, we are to judge Neocleides' private life by his disease rather than by his alleged private life. The comedy, furthermore, makes the connection between body and state extremely explicit. The people of the assembly directly map Neocleides' body onto the body of the state by making both Neocleides' eyes and the city the object of "salvation" (*Ecc*. 401-2). This metaphorical relationship between body and state itself was already a familiar literary trope at hand for Aristophanes' creative implementation.[544] The implications in this particular context, however, are further-reaching than the standard metaphor: the speech has another layer of complexity involving the Hippocratic concept of personal responsibility for one's health. This first element of Chremes' speech, the interrelatedness of the personal or bodily and the political, is important for understanding how this aspect of medical ethics is relevant to his attempts at political engagement. I argue that his eye condition has an ethical connotation: we can glean information for reading his character simply because he is portrayed as suffering from a disease, and in particular, a disease that the assembly perceives as curable.

Before considering Neocleides' situation in particular, let us first take a brief look at the social implications that health problems can have in other ancient Greek literature.

[543] Winkler (1990, 45-70) on the importance of sexual self-control for political life in Classical Athens.
[544] See Chapter 2.1 notes 344-5.

Aristophanes hardly invents the idea that one can be blamed for having a disease; we find the causative relationship between wrongdoing and health even in the most archaic extant Greek texts. Disease has the potential to bring social implications in tow arguably in all cultures and time periods, including today.[545] While some diseases are understood as random, others are perceived as consequences of the victim's transgressions. In earlier Greek writings in particular, we have ample evidence for this way of understanding disease;[546] the phenomenon of plague especially tends to invite explanations that involve the commitment of an offense, particularly against the gods. The *Iliad* begins with an account of the events leading up to the plague that ravaged the Achaean camps, a pestilence which Apollo sent as divine retribution for Agamemnon's refusal to return the daughter of one of his priests. Sophocles also famously explores this theme in his Oedipus trilogy, causally linking the plague of Thebes to the murder of its king. In their historical accounts as well, Herodotus and Thucydides regularly mention explanations of plagues and disease as retribution alongside alternative, rational hypotheses. For example, in his description of the plague of Athens, Thucydides notes how some Athenians believed it occurred in accordance with an oracle given to the Spartans concerning victory, thus attributing the pestilence to Apollo.[547]

We find this assignment of blame in the case of individual disease as well as plagues. Herodotus gives a double explanation of Cambyses II's 'sacred disease:' it is either a divine punishment or has strictly physical origins.[548] Some decades later, the author of *On the Sacred Disease* considers fundamentally the same question but offers a definitive answer: the sacred disease is actually due to an overabundance of phlegm in the brain.[549] He criticizes those who treat victims of the disease as if they were unholy in some way, remarking that such people purify the patients with blood as if they had a *miasma*, were bewitched, or had committed a crime. Attacking their faulty logic, the Hippocratic author asserts that if the disease were divine, these methods would be inappropriate since the gods would not cause defilement.[550] In this passage, if we are to believe his reports of these practices, we find two attitudes towards the causes of this particular disease. One is based on supernatural explanations; the other is the author's own opinion, that the disease arises from natural

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[545] Weiner (1995, 53-84); Murdock (1980, 88-98); Sontag (1978).
[546] R. Parker (1983, 235-56) argues for the (non-naturalistic) Greek understanding of disease either as a divine punishment or random event.
[547] Thu. *Hist*. 2.54.4-5.
[548] The sacred disease of Cambyses II: Her. *Hist*. 3.33; Herodotus also distances himself from religious accounts of the madness of the Spartan king Cleomenes (*Hist*. 4.75-76).
[549] Hipp. *Sac. Morb*. 5-6.
[550] Hipp. *Sac. Morb.* 1-4.

causes. Although the author disavows the notion that a *miasma* causes the sacred disease, he does not say that no diseases result from *miasma*. Furthermore, he specifically states that the sacred disease is no more or less divine than others, leaving room for alternate causes of illness.[551] The casual connection between transgression and disease is clearly present in classical Athens even after the emergence of natural accounts of disease; the two kinds of explanation coexist.

While he does not suffer from a Sophoclean *miasma*, Neocleides is presented as somehow guilty or responsible for his condition. We know that Aristophanes encourages a judgemental, rather than sympathetic, attitude towards him. Before Chremes makes any comment about Neocleides, the comic context primes the audience to think critically of him. In his *Wealth*, the playwright also includes Neocleides in the narrative of the messenger speech. Although the politician never appears on stage nor has his speech reported, all the characters of the play clearly consider him a public nuisance, accusing him of being a liar and a thief. Neocleides' moral failings, moreover, are presented as a doublet with his eye disease.[552] We only have the second *Wealth* performed a few years after *Assemblywomen,* not the original from 408 BCE, so discrepancies between the two versions are possible. It is nonetheless likely that, with this other portrayal in mind, the audience was even readier to understand Neocleides as an unsavory character and to associate his unlikability and culpability with his medical problem.

Yet Aristophanes diverges from the traditional causal link between wrongdoing and disease. The assembly people do not speculate that some god must have punished Neocleides' bad behavior with bad eyesight; they refer to an entirely different model for understanding the social significance of disease. Neocleides is, in this case, not so much blamed for whatever he has done against the city of Athens, although his troublesome political antics linger in the background and reinforce the justification of his treatment in the assembly.[553] Rather, the crowd faults him for not preserving his eyesight, and then wrongly presuming that he is still politically effective. His health failure is the primary cause for blame. Chremes' report thus strongly implies that a person has a certain obligation to maintain or correct his own health. After all, Neocleides' characteristic of purblindness is the *sine qua non* of his negative portrayal in the *Assemblywomen*.

Neocledies weak reply to the assembly's criticism (what should I do?) characterizes

[551] For a full discussion of the author's attitude about the relationship between religion and rational medicine, see van der Eijk (1990).

[552] Perhaps most overtly in *Wealth* 665-6, which is discussed in full in the following section.

[553] This issue, however, becomes more relevant in *Wealth.* See Chapter 2.4.

him as incompetent rather than pathetic. His incompetence, moreover, is his own fault. Blepyrus' (however sarcastic) suggestion for a curative recipe drives home the point: Neocleides *should* know what to do to save himself. Even Blepyrus does and, as we learned, he cannot even defecate without the help of a professional. The assembly people's use of the aorist form ἐσώσατο, furthermore, sheds further light on their attitudes and assumptions. The verb's tense implies that there was a critical moment at which Neocleides' eyes could have been saved, but he failed to act; it thereby hints at the Hippocratic principle of timely medical detection and intervention (*kairos*).[554] The ideal fifth-century patient recognizes when their body shows signs of dysfunction and, through consulting a doctor and taking measures, seizes the opportunity to divert the course of disease. Well-timed intervention not only saves patients' lives, but also, in less acute cases, prevents a disease from turning chronic. If one waits too long before treatment, an affliction can become incurable and thereby beyond the reach of a physician.[555] Neocleides' illness is clearly a chronic one, otherwise Aristophanes would not present it as the politician's enduring, recognizable characteristic. The moral wrongdoing is located in the past, and yet his blameworthiness is a current affair.

Moreover, the audience seems to imply that he might regain his right to speak in the assembly if he regained his eyesight, but this outcome is unlikely since the politician does not even accept that he had, or has, any control over the situation. Neocleides' objection, his only quoted speech in the play, reveals that he fundamentally disagrees with the others' assessment of his condition. He rejects the idea that his neglect caused (or perpetuated) his eye problem and therefore also rejects others' attribution of blame to him. He does not see his own actions as a cause in the development of his disease. There are no factors to mitigate the bad opinion that the diegetic audience has of him.

In order to understand the reasoning in this scene, we have to consider the idea of "taking care" that Holmes demonstrates was a current, and very generative, idea from Hippocratic medicine. This concept, which I touched on in the previous section, involves the ethical responsibility for the maintenance of one's own health.[556] In part qualifying and refining Foucault's concept of the care of self,[557] she attributes this concept to developments in medicine during the fifth century which paved the way for a new framework for understanding disease. While in archaic Greek literature, disease was often attributed to

[554] E.g. in Hipp. *Reg*. I. 2.14-8; *Morb*. I.5; 12 ; 25; *Aff*. 50; *Artic*. 9; *Ulc*. 2; 25.
[555] Von Staden (1990).
[556] Holmes (2010, 177-82).
[557] See also Foucault's (1986) problematic but influential account of self-care in later antiquity. He briefly discusses the importance of dietetics from this time period at Foucault (1985, 99-108).

external, daemonic agents, as in the example from the *Iliad* above,[558] in the rational medicine of the fifth century, an alternative presented itself: Hippocratic disease generally originates within the body and results from impersonal forces (whether environmental or humoral).

Theories about how to have a healthy lifestyle abound in medical texts, particularly in *On Regimen.* These regimens serve not necessarily to optimize athletic abilities (athletic regimens were not a new subject at this time), but rather to help people of different ages, genders, and constitutions stay healthy and stave off illness. Hippocratics describe the inner-workings of the body and the unseen effects of certain external influences such as diet, exercise, heredity, and climate. While some of these factors are unalterable, these writers are very optimistic about a patient's ability to counteract insalubrious forces within and outside their body through adjusting their daily habits. As I mentioned in the previous section, some texts, such as *On Affections* and *Regimen in Health*, even direct themselves at laymen; they explicitly express the expectation that laypeople understand medicine and participate in their treatments.[559]

The patient's actions very often play an instrumental role in both natural and supernatural accounts of disease, but each in different ways. To avoid supernatural disease, one would appease the gods and conduct oneself correctly in society, whereas, to avoid a Hippocratic disease, one would engage in intense self-maintenance. The latter situation is, on the surface, considerably less socially oriented that the former; such diseases do not result from an unpropitious encounter between two personal agents. Nonetheless, the Hippocratic ethics of "taking care" has its own social implications: if a person is held accountable for their health, they could also be blamed for their ill-health.[560] In this way, Hippocratics emphasize personal control over disease prevention; the patient becomes the "ethical subject," entrusted with the care of his or her own health and in turn liable for its disorder.[561]

This very specialized, hands-on approach to health and disease was well-developed by the time *Assemblywomen* was produced. It is probable, but not definite, that *On Regimen* had been written by this time, the Hippocratic text most demonstrative of the importance of patient responsibility.[562] In any case, we have sufficient evidence for this idea in other texts. As I have already contended, while the majority of Greeks did not read Hippocratic treatises,

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[558] Holmes (2010, 52-6).

[559] See Chapter 2.3.1, notes 514-5.

[560] Holmes (2010, 175) notes that the physician and patient can both shoulder the blame for the patient's health, but the patient, Neocleides, is the focus here.

[561] First proposed by Foucault (1986), then refined and qualified for this time period by Holmes (2010, esp. 182-91).

[562] Jouanna (1999, 410) dates it from the end of the fifth to the first half of the fourth century.

medical terminology and ideas had reached the general public, particularly the educated;[563] a significant part of the population was conscious of the moral aspects of this new ethical dimension of health. In this context, therefore, we not only see how the assembly audience could connect something as innocuous and ostensibly random as an eye condition to one's moral behavior; we also see how the failure of the patient to remedy his own condition, with or without the help of a physician, could also expose a kind of moral failing as well. When empowered with medical knowledge, a person assumes medical responsibility.

At this point in the messenger's story, Blepyrus interrupts him to make a comment that further informs our reading of Neocleides. Echoing the disgust of the assembly people, Blepyrus eagerly registers his own disapproval of the politician in the form of a pharmaceutical threat. He describes a prescription with ingredients which are arguably the worst eye irritants native to Greece: fig-sap, Spartan spurge (both known to cause skin rashes, or worse), and garlic.[564] His proposal is hardly earnest, but is rather a joke whose mechanism involves lacing an apparent favor with a threat of violence:

> "σκόροδ᾽ ὁμοῦ τρίψαντ᾽ ὀπῷ,
> τιθύμαλλον ἐμβαλόντα τοῦ Λακωνικοῦ,
> σαυτοῦ παραλείφειν τὰ βλέφαρα τῆς ἑσπέρας,"
> ἔγωγ᾽ ἂν εἶπον, εἰ παρὼν ἐτύγχανον. (*Ecc*. 404-7)
>
> "Grind some garlic along with fig-sap,
> add spurge from Sparta and rub your eyes with that in the evening"
> —that's what I'd have said had I been there.

Despite its fundamentally malevolent intent, the statement has medicinal content and language which is germane to our discussion. Blepyrus criticizes Neocleides for the same reason that the assembly people do, and even takes it a step further. By showcasing his own medical know-how, Blepyrus substantiates the assembly's tacit claim that the near-blind speaker should know how to heal himself, but does not. In his joke he displays some medical familiarity: spurge and (fig) juice are mentioned in Hippocratic writing, albeit not for an eye treatment, and similarly acerbic prescriptions for eye diseases can be found in other medical treatises.[565] Blepyrus' proposed manner of treatment also clearly hearkens to medical treatises. Prescriptions often involve the kind of preparation described: grinding, mixing and

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[563] See Introduction.

[564] A similar eye treatment for Neocleides is described in *Wealth* 716-22, which I discuss in the following section.

[565] Totelin (2016, 296-304) gives a detailed account of the pharmaceutical background of the ingredients. See also Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 417-20; 423-5) on the medical background of garlic and spurge in Greek comedy, respectively.

application.[566] Blepyrus suggests that Neocleides apply the recipe in the evening (τῆς ἑσπέρας). In Hippocratic writings too, doctors consider timing to be important and very often indicate the time of day at which one should apply treatments.[567] Therefore, even as Blepyrus gives a fantastical and harmful remedy, he lends a marked verisimilitude to it.

The immediate and clearest import of Blepyrus' comment is violence,[568] but the medical content adds a second layer to Blepyrus' insult: it suggests that medical knowledge and medicinal substances are readily available, that even an average citizen such as himself would be able to find himself help. He criticizes Neocleides for what he portrays as a willful ignorance and thereby paints an unflattering image of a hapless man. Because of Neocleides' presence in the assembly and the assembly's reaction to him, we also readily apply that ineffectiveness to his engagement in the public sphere. The connection of the political and medical is solidified through their reproaches. It draws attention, moreover, to the larger issues of citizen responsibility and efficacy which I address later in this section.

I have already discussed the ways in which personal or bodily matters can be related to public life in ancient Greece. Neocleides' eyesight and imagined inability to save the city are part of this kind of relationship. However, the significance of the passage becomes fully apparent when we consider medical ideas about a patient's obligation to their health. Aristophanes grafts this topical concept of moral responsibility for one's health onto an otherwise familiar critique of a public figure for his physical defects or private behavior.[569] According to the historical timeline of this concept that Holmes establishes, this criticism about Neocleides would not have made sense even a half a century prior. Earlier, Neocleides might have been an object of ridicule for his disability, but in this *Assemblywomen* passage, the criticism leveled against his body is much more nuanced: it is very much a product of the age of Hippocratic dietetics.

Aristophanes' readers are, of course, already attuned to the political nature of the body; as I have argued throughout this dissertation, his plays regularly depict socio-political functions and dysfunctions with bodily imagery. There is nothing unusual about the playwright's poetic penchant for making fun of the physical attributes of public personas

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[566] E.g. in Hipp. *Acut. Sp*., esp. 29-34; *Nat. Mul*. 15, etc. *Morb*. II.26, etc. (grinding). Hipp. *Mul*. I.105; *Ulc*. 16; 22, etc. (anointing, ὑπαλείφειν). See Totelin (2009, 111-39) on the importance of pharmacology in Hippocratic dietetics and "haute médicine," not just in the gynecological treatises, as Hansen (1990, 310) once argued.

[567] Vetta (1989, ad loc.). For the instruction "in the evening," see e.g. Hipp. *Acut. Sp*. 17 = L 8; *Morb*. II.15; 42; 61, etc.; *Reg*. III. 83.13; *Nat. Mul*. 15, 38, etc.

[568] On the purpose of violence in Aristophanes, see Ruffell (2013).

[569] Dover (1972, 34 n. 5) reminds us that the Greeks did not scruple to ridicule politicians for their physical flaws.

along with their political beliefs and actions. Fourth-century orators also make it very clear that any aspect of a person's life was fodder for critique in the public sphere. For example, Cleon's alleged obesity does not actually have direct relevance to his political activity, yet in Aristophanes' political parody, this feature suddenly becomes central and meaningful. His corpulence represents political voraciousness and includes a series of concomitant signifiers, including incontinent speech and sexual passivity.[570] By contrast, in this *Assemblywomen* passage, the playwright does not merely mock a public figure's physical defects and mobilize them as symbols of character flaws. Viewed superficially, Neocleides' speech simply constitutes another jab at the purblind politician which focuses on his eye condition. Yet upon closer inspection, we see that Aristophanes directly addresses and employs this issue thematically, grounding the matter in an ethical framework borrowed from medicine that he metaphorically mobilizes for his purposes. This critique of Neocleides is rooted in a contemporaneous medical dialogue about one's duty both to maintain one's health and to restore it should something go awry.

Chremes not only reports how the audience judges Neocleides for his medical condition, but also how the audience understands the politician's own role in correcting his health. Again, it is not the affected eyes themselves that puts Neocleides at fault, but his failure to seek a cure for them. Taking Cleon once more as a counterexample, we remember that no charge of self-negligence was leveled against him in *Knights*; he was not remiss with dieting and exercise, but rather, his character is called into question because of his active, aggressive consumption of food. Cleon's fatness recalls Alcaeus' archaic songs about his "potbellied" political enemy Pittacus, or Semonides' profile of the "pig woman" who does nothing in the house but grow fat.[571] This more conventional reproach involves the association between excess weight and overreaching one's socially determined allotment. By contrast, it is Neocleides' ignorance and negligence that lie at the root of his wrongdoing because, according to Hippocratic dietetics, he can treat his disease. The distinction between the characters' physical flaws is subtle, but crucial.

Therefore, contemporaneous ideology, not just decontextualized medical terminology, is integrated into Chremes' report. The background of Hippocratic ethics strongly characterizes this account of Neocleides and can furthermore be contextualized in, and inform, our understanding of the comedy. Because of the relevance of his political life in this scene, we can also understand Neocleides' medical problem as having more symbolic

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[570] Worman (2008, 83-92).
[571] Alc. fr. 129.21 L-P; Semon. 7.2-6.

potential than is immediately apparent. Blepyrus and the audience in the assembly express disgust at Neocleides' health condition which they see as a moral defect.

I argue that this social reaction has relevance not only for this scene, but also for the political issues in the play. Praxagora wrests control of the government because she sees that the men are not effective leaders; the diegetic city is not only stagnant with corruption, but also with incompetence. Praxagora's name itself suggests the ways in which she differs from the men previously in power. Neocleides' perceived ineptitude at politics is, therefore, a piece of a larger picture depicting a political landscape of ignorant politicians. The ethical dimension of Hippocratic medicine, moreover, offers the playwright a metaphorical model for holding them accountable for this ignorance. The politician, like the patient, has an obligation to take care. Neocleides' conduct as a patient is taken as a predictive model for his conduct as a politician. The objects in his care, body and state, suffer.

Although he ends his description of Neocleides there, Chremes continues to give us information for how we are to read this heckling episode. In Neocleides' abortive speech there is no actual, direct political subject matter. The people of the assembly, however, give the next speaker a chance to say his piece and try his hand at saving the city. A beggarly figure, Euaeon, addresses the crowd with a proposal for alleviating poverty in the city, which he sees as the city's greatest affliction. His plan is a welfare measure at heart: the distribution of cloaks to the needy and allowing the poor to sleep in tanneries. By presenting concrete ideas about the nature of Athens' problem in this way, Aristophanes invites us to consider how the content of this speech fits into the social issues raised in the play. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the two speeches signals the potential importance of Neocleides' own attempt at addressing the assembly and offers a complement to Euaeon's. I argue that the two episodes can in fact be read together:

> μετὰ τοῦτον Εὐαίων ὁ δεξιώτατος
> παρῆλθε γυμνός, ὡς ἐδόκει τοῖς πλείοσιν·
> αὐτός γε μέντοὔφασκεν ἱμάτιον ἔχειν·
> κἄπειτ᾽ ἔλεξε δημοτικωτάτους λόγους·
> "ὁρᾶτε μέν με δεόμενον σωτηρίας
> τετραστατήρου καὐτόν· ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἐρῶ
> ὡς τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοὺς πολίτας σώσετε.
> ἢν γὰρ παρέχωσι τοῖς δεομένοις οἱ κναφῆς 415
> χλαίνας, ἐπειδὰν πρῶτον ἥλιος τραπῇ,
> πλευρῖτις ἡμῶν οὐδέν᾽ ἂν λάβοι ποτέ.
> ὅσοις δὲ κλίνη μή 'στι μηδὲ στρώματα,
> ἰέναι καθευδήσοντας ἀπονενιμμένους
> ἐς τῶν σκυλοδεψῶν· ἢν δ᾽ ἀποκλῄῃ θύρᾳ
> χειμῶνος ὄντος, τρεῖς σισύρας ὀφειλέτω." (*Ecc* 408-21)

> After him, the extremely clever Euaeon

came forward without a cloak, so the crowd thought,
anyway, *he* said he was wearing one,
then he gave this very democratic speech:
"You see I myself am in need of saving,
to the tune of four staters: nevertheless I'll say
how you can save the city and the citizens.
If they provide blankets to those needing them,
then *pleuritis* wouldn't ever seize any of us.
Whoever doesn't have a bed or mattress,
they would go to the tannery to sleep after washing up.
If he should bar the door in winter,
fine him three coverlets."

In many ways, Euaeon serves as different sort of target than Neocleides, but the two speakers resemble each other in some important respects. Both have a pathetic appearance: Euaeon wears shabby clothes, and Neocleides' eye problem is presumably also immediately apparent, either from eye secretions or squinting. Yet neither of them, of course, is supposed to elicit strong feelings of pity,[572] but rather, amusement.[573] Although Euaeon's poverty and lack of warm clothes likely hit a nerve at this difficult economic time, the audience knows by now that Aristophanes does not scruple to make fun of the plight of his fellow Athenians.[574] While the identity of the actual Euaeon parodied here remains a mystery to modern scholars, we have sufficient evidence for how we should read his poverty. Euaeon's portrayal is largely unsympathetic for a number of reasons. He prefaces his ostensibly democratic proposal by unashamedly informing his audience of what he personally stands to gain from it: "you see, I too am in need of saving" (412). Chremes also heavily guides his listeners' responses to Euaeon's speech with his sarcastic commentary.[575] He ironically, or even derisively, calls the speaker "extremely clever" (*Pl.* 408) and his speech "very democratic" (411). After all, Euaeon's idea has to come across as either bad or inadequate in order to set up Praxagora's successful proposal that follows.

He is characterized, therefore, more as a stereotypical wheedling beggar who is adept at speaking. We do not get the impression that he has done his utmost to relieve his condition, but rather, that he seeks a government handout for himself, even as he presents his measure as universally beneficial. Pericles' funeral oration from Thucydides' *Histories* offers us a frame of reference for the traditional view on this matter. The general makes a marked distinction

[572] Ehrenberg (1962, 243-4) sees Aristophanes' representation of beggarly poverty as very unsympathetic. See Hands (1968, 77-88) for a discussion of the qualified, quid-pro-quo nature of Athenian pity for the destitute.

[573] The audience's reaction to Euaeon, however, is probably multifaceted, as much of Aristophanic humor is. Feelings of pity could in fact be present, which nonetheless would not diminish the humor or cancel out Chremes' reproachful tone (Ruffell 2011, 249).

[574] The chorus of *Acharnians* famously explains in the parabasis how Aristophanes considers it his duty to chastise Athenians. (*Ach.* 628-64).

[575] See Ussher (1973, ad loc.) on how we should read Euaeon and his proposals skeptically; Huber (1974, 90-1 n. 408; 411) on the irony of the phrases "δεξιώτατος" and "δημοτικωτάτους λόγους."

between the noble and ignoble poor: poverty is nothing to be ashamed of admitting, he asserts, but it is shameful not to work to escape it.[576] Based on his portrayal here, Euaeon could easily fall into the latter category. In this way too, his situation echoes and parallels Neocleides' own. Both men are explicitly or implicitly shamed for failing to intervene in, and improve, their personal afflictions.

Their failures, moreover, are not presented as an innocent mistakes or bad luck, but as preventable errors for which they seem unwilling to accept accountability. Chremes insinuates that both men engage in willful denial of some kind. Neocleides did not heal himself despite the fact that he had the knowledge and resources to do so: as Blepyrus demonstrates to his audiences on and off the stage with his "prescription," Hippocratic medicine was well-developed and well-known by this time. Euaeon comes across as equally witless at best, or deceptive at worst: he insists that he is wearing a cloak, when he manifestly is not (or least no proper one).[577] This second speech, moreover, solidifies our interpretation of Neocleides' eye disease as a consequence of negligence. In both cases, Chremes reports that the crowd's perspective is at odds with the orators' own ideas about their personal business.[578] The two men think they are in a respectable enough state for addressing the assembly: Euaeon thinks he is dressed and Neocleides does not see his eye condition as a reflection of his incompetence. The crowd, however, appears to know better.

Foley has established how understanding this passage is important for reading the political issues in the drama; she interprets Euaeon's proposal as the wishes of the masses writ large and maintains that it is an example of the unviability of this type of democracy.[579] As she observes, Euaeon's proposal centers on the relationship between self and city. Setting aside any desire to assess the validity of his political motion *per se*, we can consider the fundamental question that it raises: how does the good of the city concern the well-being of individuals? Even though Blepyrus approves of Euaeon's idea, in the course of the drama it becomes clear that his proposal was impracticable, merely an extension of personal desires onto the state of Athens rather than the full communistic overhaul that, in the fantasy world of the play, it needed.

Towards the end of his speech, Euaeon engages with the issue of health as well, but he concerns himself with the health of the Athenian populace rather than the health of one

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[576] *Hist*. 2.40.1-2: καὶ τὸ πένεσθαι οὐχ ὁμολογεῖν τινὶ αἰσχρόν, ἀλλὰ <u>μὴ διαφεύγειν ἔργῳ αἴσχιον</u>.

[577] Compton-Engle, among others, has also interpreted this passage to mean that he was in fact wearing a cloak, but it was threadbare (Compton-Engle 2015, 81). For her fuller discussion on the role of cloaks in the play, see Compton-Engle (2015, 74-82).

[578] Whether reported as comments or thoughts: ὁ δῆμος ἀναβοᾷ (*Ecc*. 399); ὡς ἐδόκει τοῖς πλείοσιν (409).

[579] Foley (1982, 14).

person. He argues that his plan is beneficial to the city because no one would fall victim to pneumonia if citizens were protected from the cold (*Ecc*. 417). Thus his welfare measure is simultaneously a public health measure. The particular disease he mentions, *pleuritis*, is also relevant; it is mentioned throughout the Hippocratic Corpus and is often described as an acute affliction.[580] One medical writer sums up why it is so important for a doctor to be able to treat such diseases:

> Ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα ὀξέα, ὁποῖα ὠνόμασαν οἱ ἀρχαῖοι πλευρῖτιν, καὶ περιπλευμονίην, καὶ φρενῖτιν, καὶ καῦσον…Ὅταν γὰρ μὴ λοιμώδεος νούσου τρόπος τις κοινὸς ἐπιδημήσῃ, ἀλλὰ σποράδες ἔωσιν αἱ νοῦσοι καὶ πολλαπλάσιοι ὑπὸ τούτων τῶν νουσημάτων ἀποθνήσκουσι ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν συμπάντων. (*Acut*. 5 = L 2)
>
> "Now the acute diseases are those to which the ancient have given the names of pleurisy, pneumonia, phrenitis, and ardent fever…. For whenever there is no general type of pestilence prevalent, but diseases are sporadic, acute diseases cause many times more deaths than all other put together." (trans. Jones)

As this author confirms, *pleuritis* affects very many people.[581] It is especially prevalent in winter and exacerbated by cold winds.[582] Excepting plagues, this affliction discriminates the least in its victims: all those living in the same climactic conditions are at risk. As the author of *Airs, Waters, and Places* establishes, every city has their own endemic diseases as a result of the direction it faces and its water sources.[583] Thus, *pleuritis* is in fact a potential concern of the state in so far as all Athenians experience the same weather, the same winters and winds, and the same types of climate-determined diseases in turn.

We see now how Euaeon's and Neocleides' juxtaposed speeches both address a connection between politics and prophylaxis. Neocleides' situation anticipates and complements Euaeon's welfare measure; his inattention to his health, which effectively bars him from speaking in public, establishes the relevance of this Hippocratic idea in the first place. His health failure represents, by extension, his unfitness for the public life. The vigilant self-care of Hippocratic dietetics is metaphorically fashioned as a requirement for successful participation in politics; the politician's eye problems serve as a dramatic proxy for his political faults which are not even mentioned. By relating Neocleides' eyes to the city of Athens, the assembly invites us to consider the metaphorical relevance of contemporary dietetics for political affairs.

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[580] Byl (1990, 157); Southard (1970, 94); H. Miller (1945, 82). Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 164-6) notes the disease's connection to cold weather in the HC.

[581] Acute diseases in general cause the most deaths and require the greatest watchfulness according to Hipp. *Aff*. 13.

[582] Hipp. *Aph*. III.23; *Aër.* 4; *Aff*. 6.

[583] Hipp. *Aër.* 3-7.

Afterwards, Euaeon proposes a measure that would ostensibly improve public health, thereby implying that the government has certain obligations concerning the physical well-being of its citizens. By giving an example of the Athenian government playing the role of the caregiver to the people, he confirms the dramatic link between medicine and politics in the play. In these two speeches, therefore, prudence regarding health functions both as a metaphor of, and an instance of, prudence regarding politics. At the same time, the negative characterizations of both men lead us to believe that, first and foremost, it is the individual citizen that shoulders the greatest responsibility for his own health, and the health of his city as well. Thus these passages do not assign blame for the condition of the state *as it is*. Rather, by alluding to the watchful diligence of Hippocratics in the detection and prevention of disease, the scene's medical imagery brings into focus the failure of citizens to continuously recognize, prevent, and solve the problems of this democracy—the process by which political change occurs.

When we read this Neocleides passage closely and understand the extensive background of ethics and disease behind it, we see just how hard this seemingly inconsequential part of the comedy is at work. Chremes' report of these two other speakers does not just set up a foil to Praxagora's successful proposal, but also presents some major ideas itself. It looks both back and forward in the play, developing our reading of Blepyrus' panic over his constipation and of the political coup that follows. The playwright picks up the Hippocratic idea of responsibility for one's own health in his exploration of the relationship (and boundary) between self-interest and state interest which we see peppered throughout the play. This tension between self and state subsequently develops into a central theme in Chremes' account as we witness Blepyrus' hesitation to follow through with his wife's plan and then refusal of the "Selfish Man" to give away his belongings.

To conclude this discussion, let us now return to the issue of salvation, a topic central to the play's plot and the assembly meeting that day. As Chremes remarks, what else (τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἢ) would it be? What salvation does he mean? The city itself had undoubtedly seen better days, finding itself in the Corinthian war while not yet having economically recovered from the very recent Peloponnesian War.[584] Yet the term salvation was quite commonly thrown about among proponents of oligarchy and, following the failure of the Thirty, was subsequently adopted by those supporting democracy.[585] Aristophanes himself used this term

[584] Strauss (1986, 42-69); David (1984, 3).
[585] David (1984, 23 n. 99); Bieler (1951). See also a discussion on the topic in *Lysistrata* in Faraone (1997)

frequently in his previous plays, exploiting its fluidity.[586] Here too it serves a flexible purpose, conceptually linking the medical and political realms: the city and Neocleides' eyes both require saving.

The political situation in Athens at the time of this play's production also aids our understanding of the passage and the drama as a whole. After political upheaval and the restoration of democracy, it is fitting for Aristophanes to meditate again on democracy, but differently than in his earlier works. There are no big-mouthed demagogues at whom we are to point fingers. Neocleides is not a monster, but a pathetic figure whom we do not blame so much for what he has done, but what he has not done. In Hippocratic medicine, all patients are tasked with the knowledge and care of their own bodies, just as all citizens are tasked with the care of the state in a democracy. Thus the Hippocratic ethics that Aristophanes grafts on this scene directs the audience to focus on the individual's accountability to, and role in, government—the quotidian actions and preventative measures such as regular voting and political participation that sustain the Athenian democratic process and might have the cumulative power to ward off its (second) demise. Although we vaguely hear about some politicians and "bad leaders,"[587] the play focuses more on assigning political responsibility to citizens rather than reveling in blaming particular personas, as we saw in the *Knights*, or a particular subset of citizens, as we saw in Aristophanes' "anti-war" plays. It demonstrates yet again how the playwright not only uses medical ideas for jokes, but also to buttress major social themes in his plays.

[586] E.g. in *Pax* 93; 301, *Ra*. 1419; 1501; *Lys*. 30. Faraone (1997) argues that the word salvation in *Lysistrata* alludes to a myth in addition to military or political salvation.

[587] The two figures Thrasybulus (202-3) and Agyrrhius (183-4) are mentioned; Praxagora also complains generically of bad leaders (*Ecc*. 176-82).

2.4 Asclepius' Role as Public Physician in *Wealth*

Because *Wealth* offers one of the earliest and most descriptive accounts of Asclepius, the god of healing, it has attracted many researchers of ancient Greek medicine and religion. Yet these scholars naturally aim to extract information about faith healing from the play rather than to understand its import within the dramatic context. Scholars interested in *Wealth* as a literary text, on the other hand, have focused the lion's share of their attention on the play's much more prominent theme of economic and social justice. Combining these two approaches, I argue that there is also a way in which medicine, in particular Asclepius' practice of medicine, does not merely serve to further the plot, but also has relevance for the social issues at the heart of *Wealth*.

In this section I propose an interpretation of Aristophanes' choice to have Asclepius, rather than a mortal physician, heal Plutus in his *Wealth*. Analyzing a character's eye-witness account of the god, I argue that Asclepius subsumes, and redefines, the role of an Athenian doctor in this play. More specifically I assert that the god is metaphorically figured as a *public (*δημοσιεύων) physician, that is, a doctor officially recognized by Athenian state who has obligations to the citizenry.[588] Yet Asclepius' role and duty as a "public doctor" is quite different in kind and scale than Pittalus' office in the *Acharnians*, which I discussed in detail in the first section of this chapter. Instead of merely helping individuals, Asclepius administers a two-part treatment to the city itself by healing Plutus, who is good for the state, while impairing the abilities of a political nuisance, Neocleides. The healer-god assumes several aspects of human doctors, yet, unlike them, he can apply his power to the greater public good.

At the beginning of the play, Chremylus narrates his visit to the temple of Apollo at Delphi, where he asked the god whether it would be in his son's best interests to become a criminal considering the current state of affairs (*Pl*. 48-50). His answer comes in the form of Plutus himself, a blind old wanderer, whose unfortunate eye condition has brought about the unjust distribution of financial goods because, without his eyesight, he cannot distinguish between good and bad men (87-92). The eye condition is specifically named with the medical term "ὀφθαλμία" (115),[589] thus already attuning us to the theme of rational, pratical medicine

[588] See Chapter 2.1 note 378.

[589] Jouanna (2000, 175); H. Miller (1945, 82). See Chapter 2.1, note 355. Southard (1970, 178) remarks that "unlike Neocleides, Plutus is neither a mortal nor afflicted by a mortal eye condition." I argue, however, that this term indicates that he is in fact afflicted by a mortal eye condition, but one whose cure and economic implications are supernatural.

even in this fantastic diegetic world. Chremylus quickly conceives of a simple solution to the god's health problem and, in turn, his own monetary troubles by deciding to cure Plutus with the help of the healer-god Asclepius (112-6). In a brief exchange which would tantalize historians of medicine to come, Chremylus and his neighbor Blepsidemus ask themselves where exactly they should seek medical help, and Chremylus vetoes his neighbor's idea of going to a conventional Athenian physician:

Βλ.	οὔκουν ἰατρὸν εἰσαγαγεῖν ἐχρῆν τινά;
Χρ.	τίς δῆτ᾽ ἰατρός ἐστι νῦν ἐν τῇ πόλει;
	οὔτε γὰρ ὁ μισθὸς οὐδὲν ἔστ᾽ οὔθ᾽ ἡ τέχνη.
Βλ.	σκοπῶμεν.
Χρ.	ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν.
Βλ.	οὐδ᾽ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ. (*Pl.* 406-9)

Bl.	Shouldn't we bring a doctor in, then?
Ch.	*Is* there any doctor in the city? There are no wages, so, no practice.
Bl.	*(scans the audience)* Let's take a look.
Ch.	There aren't any.
Bl.	I don't think so either.

Chremylus then reveals that he already had another method of healing in mind, suggesting they take Plutus to the temple of Asclepius to receive a divine cure. It is not immediately clear how the audience is to understand this conversation in the context of the play. We hear no more about mortal doctors: Blepsidemus' suggestion seems to do nothing more than set up a quick joke. Furthermore, Chremylus' statement has confused commentators since it appears to be patently untrue that real-life Athens lacked doctors at this time.

Although it is not clear how many physicians there were in ancient Athens, Hippocratic treatises indicate that there were many residing in the city.[590] As mentioned in Chapter 2.1, Athens even had a special office (or perhaps multiple offices[591]) for "state physicians." This measure, at least in smaller towns, existed in part to ensure that a sufficient amount of medical experts were in fact available.[592] Contrary to Chremylus' account, furthermore, physicians (probably even public ones) did receive wages.[593] As indicated in other sources, doctors appear to have fared quite well socio-economically and nowhere else do we find ancient references to a doctor who is hard-up.[594] Consequently, if we were to take

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[590] Cohn-Haft (1956, 58).
[591] Jouanna (1999, 76-8).
[592] Cohn-Haft (1956, 46-55). It is unlikely Athens had this problem, but smaller towns seemed to retain public physicians (also with a stipend) for this very reason.
[593] Nonetheless, it is disputed whether the state maintained them or patients paid them. See Chapter 2.1, note 389.
[594] This passage would be our only evidence that public physicians received less pay during this time of economic downturn. Gil (1972, 51-2). Cordes (1994, 53-5). Cordes, however, takes this comment at face-

Chremylus' statement at face-value, this passage would stand alone as evidence that the number of medical practitioners in the city had actually waned at this time.[595] It is more plausible that Aristophanes presents this idea about the city's dearth of doctors as a fantasy element in the play, or as a reference to the general economic instability in Athens at this time.[596] Both possibilities very comfortably accord with the playwright's dramatic strategies and jokes in his other works.

Since this statement is inaccurate, it must have another purpose in the text. The ready answer is that the comment serves as plot device that doubles as a joke about mercenary physicians. Chremylus says there are no doctors in the city because he has to justify to the audience why he chose this divine method of healing over a doctor's visit. If this is the case, in order for this statement to function as a plot device at all, the audience members would also necessarily have to consider both methods of treatment more or less equally viable.[597] Chremylus' objection, after all, was not that physicians were ineffective (a criticism which might have functioned just as well), but that they were simply not available. This remark, and its obvious inaccuracy, have two effects: first, because of the disconnect between the real Athens and this fictional Athens devoid of doctors, the audience considers these two methods of healing, miraculous and conventional, in tandem. Furthermore, telling the audience to ignore conventional medicine for the duration of the drama of course only focuses their attention more keenly in that direction.[598]

I suggest that Aristophanes has Chremylus bring up this question in order to draw attention to particular similarities and differences between Asclepius and mortal physicians that become important in Carion's story about his incubation at the god's temple.[599] In that passage (*Pl.* 653-747) Asclepius assumes the role of physician by behaving in some ways like a doctor, yet he effects a cure which is both beyond the ability and ethical code of a human physician: while he cures the god Plutus, he harms a political miscreant by worsening his eyesight. This statement about the lack of doctors in the city has a function which extends beyond both humor and matters of the plot. It anticipates, and sets up, the account of the

value. Cf. Cohn-Haft (1956, 21 n.61).

[595] Cohn-Haft (1956, 18-21).

[596] See Olson (1990, 223-242) and Konstan and Dillon (1981, 371-394) for analyses of how *Wealth* reflects Athens' economic and social situation at this time. Jouanna (2000, 188-9) suggests that the statement was a comic exaggeration of the fact that the Corinthian War had impoverished Athens (and thereby made doctors less affordable).

[597] Wickkiser (2008, 20).

[598] Conceptually similar to the common rhetorical trope of paralipsis, wherein a speaker mentions a topic by saying they will not mention it. Aristophanes famously employs this device in his *Frogs* (*Ra.* 1-11).

[599] Incubation was the practice of sleeping overnight in a temple in order to receive a divine cure for an ailment or information about a cure in the form of a dream.

healer-god which offers us insight into the themes of individual and societal healing in the play.

To understand Asclepius' role in *Wealth*, we must consider the external evidence available about the god himself. Asclepius arrived relatively late on the scene in ancient Greece, and even later to Athens specifically. For both political and social reasons, Athenians had imported the cult of Asclepius from Epidaurus thirty-something years before *Wealth*'s production date.[600] A god with great popular appeal, he reportedly cured the diseases of suppliants who came and lay in his temple overnight. Not only was this type of healing commonly accepted and considered efficacious in Aristophanes' time and thereafter; ancients also did not see any fundamental conflict between religious healing and the rational medicine found in Hippocratic treatises from this era. Religious and medical healing were not at all mutually exclusive, but rather, the two types of care complemented and reinforced the authenticity of the other. Asclepius himself is figured as a learned physician figure and a forefather of Hippocrates.[601] According to epigraphical evidence, he performs cures which often involve what would be considered medical treatments, including surgeries and poultices.[602] In exactly this way Aristophanes presents Asclepius in *Wealth*. Despite Chremylus' comment, religious healing neither trumps nor supplants medical healing in the play. Just as in reality, the two approaches very much dovetail each other.[603]

In *Wealth*, audience members do not directly witness Asclepius' cures. We instead hear a lively account of the events from Chremylus' slave, Carion. He describes several physician-like activities in which Asclepius engages. First, Asclepius attends to the patients in a very organized way. In fact, Carion's somewhat redundant language reflects and emphasizes the god's scrupulous circumambulation: the god walks around in a circle observing all the diseases in an orderly fashion (*Pl.* 708-9). Asclepius also has a physician's tools: a pestle and mortar for grinding up ingredients (710-1). Chremylus' wife does not even

[600] Wickkiser (2008, 62-76).

[601] Edelstein and Edelstein (1998 vo1. 1, 102-3). On the persistence of traditional beliefs after Hippocratic medicine, see also Lloyd (1979, 29 n. 98).

[602] Edelstein and Edelstein (1998 vo1. 2, 139-58).

[603] Soleil (2010, 42-5), however, contends that the play has little to do with Hippocratic medicine; she notes that the term ὀφθαλμία is used as a general term for blindness in *Wealth* (*Pl.* 115–6), rather than the specific eye condition that it denotes in the HC. Unlike medical treatises, she adds, the comedy also illustrates the disease's treatment and cure. I disagree that this discrepancy justifies a whole-sale rejection of potential allusions to Hippocratic medicine in the play, although I agree of course that Plutus' condition is primarily symbolic. We need not concern ourselves with Chremylus' (mis)use of the term ὀφθαλμία because it does not seem to have any further resonances in the text; the exact medical nature of Plutus' disease is not important. I argue that the aspects of Hippocratic medicine that are in fact relevant for reading the comedy are found in the account of Asclepius, where they serve to characterize the god as a mortal (in addition to divine) healer.

spare the god from an aspersive epithet that one would use for a mortal doctor. When she learns that Carion's malodorous flatulence did not faze him, she calls the god a scatophage. This insult is simultaneously generic and specific, insinuating that he is crude,[604] but also referring to the medical practice of smelling and tasting bodily excretions which is attested in the Hippocratic corpus.[605] The eating of excrement, however, is likely comic hyperbole of this fact.[606]

According to the report, Asclepius first turns his attention to Neocleides, apparently the *persona non grata* at the temple. The narrator Carion had already made his opinion of Neocleides clear from the beginning, quipping that Neocleides was "blind, but has a sharper eye than the sighted when it comes to stealing."[607] For this undesirable patient Asclepius prepares a suitable treatment. The god grinds him up a poultice (φάρμακον) containing ingredients which are documented in medical treatises:[608] fig juice,[609] mastic,[610] three cloves of garlic, and vinegar.[611] He applies this medicine as a plaster, which is a manner of administering treatment that we also find in the Hippocratic corpus.[612] The god even turns Neocleides' eyelids inside out before the application; this additional measure Carion interprets simply as a way to cause even more discomfort (*Pl*. 721-5), but it had a practical explanation as well: it is (albeit in much later sources) described as an painful but effective medical measure. Thus, with this method too, Asclepius appears to behave like a doctor.[613] In response to the patient's exclamations of pain, Asclepius laughs good-naturedly and gives him the following instructions as "doctor's orders:"

> "ἐνταῦθα νῦν κάθησο καταπεπλασμένος,
> ἵν᾽ ὑπομνύμενον παύσω σε τὰς ἐκκλησίας." (*Pl*. 724-5)

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[604] Cf. the reference to scatophagia in Menander (*Sam.* 427; *Dysk*. 488; *Perik*. 394). See Sommerstein (2013, ad loc.).

[605] E.g. in *Epi*. IV.43. Jouanna (1999*,* 292-4).

[606] Jouanna (1999, 300-1). Kazantzidis (2017, 45-9) views this passage as an important example of the contrast between how Hippocratic doctors and laymen react to bodily functions.

[607] *Pl*. 665-6, trans. Henderson.

[608] See Totelin's (2016) discussion of garlic, vinegar (300-1), and fig juice (301-2) for eye treatments. Her sources, however, come centuries later, so she proposes lost medical treatises from Aristophanes' time which contain recipes for eye diseases with these ingredients (2016, 303). See also Southard (1970, 175-6).

[609] Vegetable juice is commonly prescribed throughout the Hippocratic corpus. E.g. Hipp. *Morb*. II.42; *Acut.* 23.5 = L 7; *Acut. Sp*. 48 = L 18.

[610] Rodriguíz Alfageme (1981, 421-3). Eg. in Hipp. *Mul*. II. 201.

[611] Garlic and "very acrid vinegar" (which we assume the qualification "from Sphettus" implies) are also the contents of a mixture that the author of *On Diseases* recommends for inducing vomiting (*Morb.* II.55) (Sommerstein 2001, ad loc.).

[612] Hipp. *VC* 13.9-11.

[613] The scholiast Tzetzes remarks that the application of drugs was more effective this way. Hirschberg (2000, 103). Byzantine physician Aëtius of Amida describes this method himself in the seventh volume of his *Books on Medicine*, chapter 69. Totelin (2016, 302-3), however, points out that Hippocratics would not apply an ointment with spurge to the inside of eyelids.

> "Now sit here with that poultice on,
> so I can stop you from barring proceedings in the assembly."

He does not subject Carion to ordinary violence (which as a god he very well could have), but rather presents his actions as medical necessities which he performs with a sort of knowing good humor.[614]

This medicine that the god makes also has very specific ingredients. There are four items in all, and we are even told from what town two were imported (garlic from Tenos and vinegar from Sphettus).[615] For the garlic Carion also gives an exact amount: three cloves. This level of description enhances the passage's verisimilitude and highlights the practical and medical nature of Asclepius' cure. There are no supernatural elements in this mixture; all of these items (if we ignore their origins) could be found in the market and are either edible or used in preparing meals. This recipe thus also reflects the Hippocratic practice of prescribing patients with largely ordinary foodstuff.[616] Carion's detailed account demonstrates how similar Asclepius is to a worldly physician in his ingredients, tools, way of working, and professional demeanor.

Yet his concoction of course does the exact opposite of what medicine should: it makes Neocleides' condition worse, exactly as the god intends. Despite the fact that Asclepius appears to be quite a bit gentler-natured and forgiving than some of his divine peers, we know that he did not exclusively effect cures, but also meted out punishment: testimonia of Asclepius' cures include a few accounts of divine vengeance scattered among the typically positive reports. For example, a stele from the second half of the fourth century (some decades after the play was produced), mentions Asclepius blinding a man for attempting to spy on his suppliants.[617]

In contrast to this cautionary tale, however, the passage in *Wealth* has a very light and

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[614] Holzinger's (1940, ad loc.) interpretation of Asclepius' laughter as purely derisive is unconvincing, especially when we consider the god's largely amiable nature. This laughter also recalls the well-meaning response of those with superior knowledge (parents, gods, doctors, etc.) to those with inferior knowledge, e.g. when a patient is needlessly afraid of an unpleasant treatment. It also seems to be part of the god's friendly character. Asclepius is reported in a fourth-century inscription to have laughed at a boy's meagre offering before curing him of a bladder stone: *IG* IV^2 i.121.70-1.

[615] Totelin (2009, 164-77) describes the Hippocratic practice of naming the geographical location of ingredients. Examining these two ingredients from this *Wealth* passage, she notes that they are not found in the Hippocratic corpus, but that Aristophanes could be mocking medical men for endowing mundane ingredients with special powers by indicating their specific provenance; she grants that they (conversely, or in addition) both could be political allusions. Totelin (2016, 299-300).

[616] The use of hellebore as a purgative is a notable exception. Jouanna (1999, 157). See, e.g. Hipp. *Acut.* 23.3 = L 7.

[617] *IG* IV^2 i.121.55-67; 90-94; 122.95-101.

jovial tone befitting the comic genre. The audience experiences schadenfreude along with the characters onstage rather than identifying with Neocleides or fearing for themselves. The god has clearly done something good, and this good deed is fundamentally political in nature. With this in mind, we also can further contextualize Asclepius' recipe for Neocleides. The provenance of the garlic and vinegar serves as a political joke about the presumably harsh or prickly reputations of the people from Tenos and Sphettus.[618] Thus even in the ingredients for the god's poultice there are hints that the mixture involves much more than simply an assortment of material ingredients: it also contains metaphorical elements which allude to the greater social relevance of this scene. Because of Asclepius' treatment of Neocleides, Athens will be spared of his negative influence on public affairs.

After administering to Neocleides, Asclepius goes to see Plutus, who likewise suffers from a vision problem. Nonetheless Asclepius' treatment for, and treatment of, Plutus involve very different methods and produce a very different result. Even from the beginning, in contrast to his behavior towards Neocleides, Asclepius deals with Plutus much more intimately and kindly. Asclepius sits down beside Plutus and touches his head. For mortal doctors as well, touching a patient was an important part of assessing their illness.[619] Yet the remedy for Plutus' condition is markedly more miraculous in nature. The healer-god does not prepare any drugs; he simply cleanses Plutus' eyes with a white linen cloth and works a fantastic and nearly instantaneous cure. One of Asclepius' daughters wraps Plutus' head with a red cloth; the god then summons his snakes to come and lick the suppliant's eyes underneath the cloth, whereupon he can see perfectly (*Pl*. 727-40). In Carion's description of Plutus' cure, Asclepius plays the role of a gentle, divine healer with none of the unpleasantness associated with a mortal doctor: no medicine, surgery, or even pain. The god's *modus operandi* in this case is much more divine in nature, establishing yet another contrast between the two patients.

With both these accounts of "healing" Carion presents two parallel, yet opposing, procedures which Asclepius follows. The two cases work as a pair in the play, complementing each other. The similarities serve both to strengthen the parallel between the two patients and cast in high relief their differences. Both Plutus and Neocleides have the same condition and simultaneously seek the same treatment from the same god; in both cases the Asclepius dispenses treatments that are satisfying to the audience. The god's actions

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[618] Sommerstein (2001, ad loc.). We hear this notion from scholiasts, e.g. scholia vetera *Pl*. 720.

[619] Jouanna (1999, 298-9); H. Miller (1945, 78) thinks the phrase "to lay hands on" (τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐφάπτεσθαι) became technical.

appeal to the kind of justice native to Aristophanes' works, namely the humiliating punishment of those who commit what the playwright portrays as political or social misconduct. The divergence of the two stories, however, lies in the patients themselves and the type of treatment they receive. Carion presents Neocleides as a kind of villain from the very start of his tale, and he does so to the unanimous agreement of his interlocutors. Carion even expresses resentment that Neocleides came to Asclepius' temple to be healed at all. This objection implies that Neocleides should not be allowed to receive the god's help on moral grounds. The ethical nature of this objection in fact plays a crucial role for the interpretation of this scene.

In order to assess the meaning of his role in this passage, let us review what we know about the real Neocleides. As I explained in the previous section, although we have no evidence about this person independent of Aristophanes' works, he was clearly a recognizable figure to the playwright's audience. According to the insinuations in the Aristophanic corpus and scholia, he was an Athenian citizen who prevented laws from being passed by constantly claiming that the voting process had been somehow compromised. In doing this, he naturally would have been a keen source of annoyance to other citizens; he also apparently had chronic eye inflammation which resulted in poor eyesight.[620] In his *Assemblywomen* a few years earlier, Aristophanes had referred to these two alleged attributes of Neocleides together as well.

The similarity of content and intent in Neocleides' "cameos" in these two plays indicates that each helps us interpret the other. In *Assemblywomen* Chremes narrates the events that occurred during a meeting of the assembly at which various speakers, including Neocleides, address the public and make proposals. This passage strongly emphasizes the relevance of Neocleides' health failure for his political failure, perhaps best encapsulated in the sentiment that the assembly people, according to Chremes, express amongst themselves: "Isn't it terrible that this man dares to address the people, and about a proposal for *salvation*, when he himself didn't save his own eyelids?" (*Pl*. 400-2). In his *Wealth* Aristophanes reemploys this joke about the politician's eyesight, thereby turning it into a running gag. As we already know from the earlier play, therefore, Neocleides' health and political life come together to form an unflattering image of the politician.

Furthermore, as we saw in the previous section, Aristophanes had also written a similarly pungent recipe for Neocleides' eyes into *Assemblywomen*. In response to

[620] Sommerstein (2001, ad loc.).

Neocleides' remark that he cannot do anything about his vision, the character Blepyrus says that he would have given Neocleides the following medical recommendation:

> "σκόροδ᾽ ὁμοῦ τρίψαντ᾽ ὀπῷ,
> τιθύμαλλον ἐμβαλόντα τοῦ Λακωνικοῦ,
> σαυτοῦ παραλείφειν τὰ βλέφαρα τῆς ἑσπέρας,"
> ἔγωγ᾽ ἂν εἶπον, εἰ παρὼν ἐτύγχανον. (*Ecc*. 404-7)
>
> "Grind some garlic along with fig-sap,
> add spurge from Sparta and rub your eyes with that in the evening"
> —that's what I'd have said had I been there.

As in *Wealth*, the recipe consists of acerbic ingredients which, when applied to his eyes, would have caused considerable irritation and pain. Just as in Asclepius' treatment, Blepyrus mentions the origin of one of the ingredients; the fact that the spurge is from Sparta metaphorically implies that this variety of spurge is especially pungent and strong. This humorous reference to another city, especially one with which Athens had a fraught past and present,[621] necessarily lends a wider scope and significance to the mixture. Thus political matters are inherently involved both in the means and effects of Blepyrus' "cure." The tone of this passage also matches that in *Wealth* quite closely. Aristophanes presents Neocleides as an unattractive, feckless type whose involvement in the city's affairs at best perturbs, and at worst harms, the public. The audience members are meant to side with Blepyrus; his heckling of Neocleides and proposed home remedy aim to appeal to the audience's presumed dislike of this character.

Returning to the incubation narrative in *Wealth*, we can better understand Asclepius' actions and his paralleled treatments of two cases of eye disease. As I have already observed, Asclepius' treatment of the two patients was received very well by the characters listening to Carion's story. Chremylus' wife even goes so far as to call the god "φιλόπολις", a patriot, or lover of the city, for what he did to Neocleides (*Pl*. 726). If Asclepius' punishment of Neocleides is indeed an act of patriotism, another link is forged between health and politics. Just as in the *Assemblywomen*, the audience members are invited to consider the conjunction of Neocleides' eye problem with his public involvement. Yet this time, the focus is not on the relationship between self-care and care of state, that is, the question of how a person could help the city who cannot even help himself: now we are to consider the way in which Asclepius' character could be performing a public service by making Neocleides blinder than he found him.

As I have mentioned, it was quite unusual for Asclepius to cause injury. He was

[621] Rothwell (1990, 3-5).

remarkable in that he was a largely beneficent god; unlike his father Apollo, with whom ancient Greeks associated health as well, he did not send disease.[622] His attested punishments of mortals were relatively mild and were, in some cases, later reversed if the patient subsequently supplicated him.[623] Aristophanes' *Wealth* is no exception to this representation of the god: Asclepius plays a very positive and sympathetic figure in the drama. The audience members are thus left to make sense of the fact that Asclepius is presented as manifesting his goodwill in such a way.

I argue that, rather than demonstrating loyalty to individual suppliants, Aristophanes' Asclepius has more far-reaching intentions in mind. Outside of Aristophanes' works, Asclepius is reported to have used his divine ability for more than treating the sick. While his range of power is largely confined to healing suppliants, we find two testimonia which are outliers: in one dedication on a fourth-century stele, Asclepius restores a suppliant's broken goblet, making it whole again.[624] In another non-medical case, he helps a man find his lost son.[625] These passages have an element in common with Asclepius' normal practice of medicine: they are both instances of the god restoring order, making whole what was previously broken. The god thus helps suppliants in a variety of ways other than treating individual bodies. In the comedy, the character Asclepius does in fact perform a healing miracle, but its scope is exceptional: the miracle goes beyond Plutus, a single suppliant, and benefits the community as a whole. His treatment of Plutus' personal ailment certainly has effects beyond Plutus' own well-being; when the god of wealth can see again, the entire city reaps the benefits. In the dénouement of the play, righteous, poor citizens rejoice in their newly found good fortune while those that are unjustly rich are driven to poverty. Plutus' recovery is necessarily at once personal and public. Yet Asclepius does not help the city only by healing Plutus; if this were the extent of his aid, he would have no interest in punishing Neocleides, who had not offended him personally as a god.

Asclepius' two treatments in Carion's account likewise diverge from his usual treatment of suppliants, transcending the patients' individual fates. By meting out a twofold justice, he cures the body of the state itself. A Hippocratic physician encourages salubrious substances in the body and rids the body of the bad in order to achieve the proper

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[622] Wickkiser (2008, 50-1).
[623] *IG* IV^2 i.121. 90-94.
[624] *IG* IV^2 i.121.79-89. Analyzing dedications and votive body parts, Hughes (2008) argues that Asclepius' mode of healing is fundamentally conceptualized as making broken bodies whole again. According to this analysis, the story of the broken goblet is actually not eccentric.
[625] *IG* IV^2 i.122.19-26.

physiological balance which is synonymous with good health.[626] In the same way, Asclepius aids the good figure, Plutus, and discourages Neocleides, the harmful element of the city. The healer-god thereby not only fulfils the role of a healer *in* the city, he becomes, in addition, a healer *of* the city itself.[627] This portrayal would, moreover, be in keeping with current trends of Asclepian worship. By the fourth century Greek cities, including Athens, had begun to attribute to the god the ability to protect the state in addition to curing bodily disease.[628] Thus the fact that Asclepius, rather than a human doctor, healed Plutus serves an important purpose in the play. The healing powers of a mortal physician may only extend to the individual and, furthermore, strictly exclude the possibility of harming a patient.[629] Asclepius was, by contrast, at liberty to consider the larger picture. In his *Wealth* Aristophanes uses this aspect of the god by having him work two treatments which, in combination, have a healthful effect on the entire citizenry.[630]

In earlier Greek works as well, we find political discord described in terms of bodily discord. A city with social strife is, metaphorically, a diseased city.[631] Here Aristophanes presents a particularly well-developed variation on this metaphor. In his book *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, Robin Mitchell-Boyask offers an answer to Chremylus' question about the state of medical practice in the city, suggesting that the playwright himself is the physician. As evidence he cites the fact that the playwright presents poets in his *Frogs* as healer figures, responsible for curing the city of immorality.[632] I argue that we find another, arguably more straightforward, solution to this rhetorical question in the form of the character Asclepius: he functions as a symbolic stand-in for the conspicuously absent public physicians and invites a much more political interpretation of the phrase "δημοσιεύων ἰατρός," that is, "a doctor in service to the state."

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[626] See e.g. Hippocrates *Reg.* I.2. For balance as the ancient definition of health, see Nutton (2004, 80-82) and Jouanna (1999, 156-9).

[627] In the following (third) century BCE we have evidence that public physicians were required to sacrifice to Asclepius twice a year (*IG* II^3 1 914). Aleshire (1989, 94-5). Therefore, there was a strong connection between the function of public doctors and the healer-god.

[628] Wickkiser (2008, 151 no. 3).

[629] Nutton (2004, 92-3). See, e.g. Hipp. *Artic.* 63.61-5, *Epid.* I. 11.11-2, and the Hippocratic Oath in its entirety.

[630] Less than a decade later, Plato will characterize Asclepius as an especially civic-minded god, "πολιτικός" in his *Republic* (*Rep.* III 407c-d.).

[631] Wickkiser (2008, pg. 83 n. 39); Brock (2000, 24-34). Also from the same volume, Kosak (2000, 35-54).

[632] Mitchell-Boyask (2008, 188).

3. The Arts of Medicine and Dramaturgy

3.1 Dirty Jobs: The Playwright as Doctor in the Parabasis of the *Wasps*

As I discussed in Chapter 2.2, the theme of disease, and Hippocratic disease in particular, features prominently in the *Wasps*. Here I argue that we find this trope not only in the plot proper, but also in metatheatrical moments in which characters ostensibly speak on the playwright's behalf. While Aristophanes often mobilizes Hippocratic ideas for political commentary, here he mobilizes them for his own art of dramaturgy. In the play's parabasis, Aristophanes has the chorus make especially grand claims for his poetic persona. Through the mouthpiece of the wasps, he fashions himself as a hero, specifically Heracles, who is responsible for defending the people of Athens against its home-grown enemies. The metaphor, however, undergoes a change in the course of the song. The chorus abandons the hero figure as the vehicle of the metaphor and exchanges it for another: the enemies of the city become diseases and the poet, in turn, becomes the city's healer.

Certainly Aristophanes' poetic forbearers had already dealt in this kind of metaphor, basing the connection between poet and doctor on the purported therapeutic effects of poetry. I argue, however, that the playwright presents his own idiosyncratic take on this trope; drawing from Hippocratic reflections on the medical profession, he adapts the traditional poet-healer imagery to his own comedy. It is his first, but not last, extant play in which he directly links healing with literature; he would later return to, and greatly elaborate on, this idea in his *Frogs*, which I explore in the following section.

The *Wasps'* parabasis teems with various themes and threads of imagery, so I first focus on a particular metaphor in lines 1037-42 which involves the personification of diseases. The other passages in the play that shed light on our reading of these lines I draw into the discussion as they become relevant:

> …φησίν τε μετ᾽ αὐτὸν
> τοῖς ἠπιάλοις ἐπιχειρῆσαι πέρυσιν καὶ τοῖς πυρετοῖσιν,
> οἳ τοὺς πατέρας τ᾽ ἦγχον νύκτωρ καὶ τοὺς πάππους ἀπέπνιγον
> κατακλινόμενοί τ᾽ ἐπὶ ταῖς κοίταις ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ἀπράγμοσιν ὑμῶν
> ἀντωμοσίας καὶ προσκλήσεις καὶ μαρτυρίας συνεκόλλων,
> ὥστ᾽ ἀναπηδᾶν δειμαίνοντας πολλοὺς ὡς τὸν πολέμαρχον. (*V.* 1037-42)
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> In addition [Aristophanes] says that he set his hands last year to the agues
> and fevers that choked your fathers and strangled your grandfathers

> at night, and, while lying in their beds,[633] kept gluing together affidavits
> and summons and witnesses against the peace-loving among us,
> so that many leapt up and ran to the Polemarch in fear.

In this part of the parabasis, the chorus continues the playwright's account of his good deeds, referring to the production of a play in the previous year, his lost *Merchant Ships*.[634] Aristophanes organizes these two lines (*V.* 1038-9) in a pointed and pleonastic fashion. He speaks of two medical conditions: one generic, fevers, and one specific, agues. Unlike "fever," "ague" is an uncommon term, lending medical specificity to the imagery. Outside his plays, ἠπίαλος appears in only two contexts from this time period: once in Theognis' elegies alongside two other evils, poverty and old age,[635] and once in the Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, and Places* in which it is listed among diseases that are endemic to cities exposed to hot winds but sheltered from the healthful north wind.[636] Here too, the author places ἠπίαλος directly before the more common "πυρετός." In later occurrences of the term ἠπίαλος as well, πυρετός is in accompaniment more often than not.

Thus, because of their frequent appearance as a pair, πυρετός seems to help contextualize ἠπίαλος. This fact holds true for Aristophanes' comedies themselves: a fragment from the second *Women at the Thesmophoria* and a scholion to *Wasps* that refers to the first *Clouds* likewise present these words as a set.[637] In any case, the "fevers" mentioned at the end of line 1038 appear to be somewhat superfluous alongside the "agues" which open the line. The chorus therefore begins with the more obscure term "ἠπίαλος," and then clarifies its meaning by tautologically ending the line with "τοῖς πυρετοῖσιν," thereby reinforcing the deliberately specific medical imagery and, in turn, the verisimilitude of the metaphor without sacrificing comprehensibility. Yet these two terms have more than one purpose in bookending the verse.

The qualification of "τοῖς πυρετοῖσιν" at the end of the line not only helps the audience contextualize the term "ἠπίαλος" as a medical one; it also highlights this

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[633] Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.) accept this reading. Conversely, Wilson (2007b, 92-3) transposes the line to make the victims lie in bed, following Hamaker's emendation.

[634] Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.). *Merchant Ships* frr. 416-57 K-A.

[635] Theognis *El.* 173-4: ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν πενίη πάντων δάμνησι μάλιστα/ καὶ γήρως πολιοῦ, Κύρνε, καὶ ἠπιάλου.

[636] Southard (1970, 42); H. Miller (1945, 79). Hipp. *Aër.* 3.23-6: τοῖσι δὲ ἀνδράσι δυσεντερίας καὶ διαῤῥοίας καὶ ἠπιάλους καὶ πυρετοὺς πολυχρονίους χειμερινοὺς καὶ ἐπινυκτίδας πολλὰς καὶ αἱμοῤῥοΐδας ἐν τῇ ἕδρῃ. Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 176-7), however, does not see ἠπίαλος as a Hippocratic term, but rather a popular one.

[637] *Thesmo*. II 346 K-A and *Nub*. I 399 K-A. For more information on 346 K-A and its context, see Olson and Austin (2003), who argue against MacDowell (1971, ad loc.) that the mention of these two terms (agues and fevers) in the *Wasps* and first *Clouds* could help date the second *Women at the Thesmophoria*. The *Wasps* scholion (*Nub*. I 399 K-A) understands the chorus' mention of agues and fevers as a reference to Socrates and his morbidly pasty students in the *Clouds*. Today, however, their metaphorical tenor is interpreted to be citizens that engage in certain political activities.

pathological imagery in the presence of another, competing metaphorical vehicle. The chorus draws a parallel between the word ἠπίαλος and the similar-sounding ἠπιάλης (nightmare).[638] The fact that these agues attack at night (νύκτωρ) and that strangulation is their *modus operandi* indeed encourages us to understand "nightmares" here. This personification of nightmares, moreover, is not necessarily poetic artifice. 'Ηπιάλης, or more commonly, Ephialtes/Epialtes (Ἐφιάλτης/Ἐπιάλτης) is imagined as a demon that throttles its victims.[639] The playwright thereby confounds the two denotations to produce complex, overdetermined imagery. The fever metaphor insinuates the clandestine, daemonic nature of the attackers. Diseases, just as nightmares, can come at night when their victims are asleep, unable to anticipate or fend them off. By mixing different interpretive cues into these lines, the playwright has us register both definitions simultaneously, emphasizing the similarities between fevers and this nocturnal demon.

The tenor of the metaphor, however, is as clear as its vehicles are ambiguous. Commentators agree that these nightmare-fevers represent *sykophantai*, "informers," based on the legal actions attributed to them later: "They kept gluing together affidavits, summons and witnesses" (*V.* 1041). Here in line 1041, the *sykophantai* become gumptious craftsmen in addition to daemonic diseases. With this characterization, the playwright underlines the contrast between innocent, unobtrusive citizens (ἀπράγμονες) and busybody informers (πολυπράγμονες). Nonetheless, the playwright does not let this passing metaphor of relatively harmless crooks overshadow the more frightful imagery of the parabasis: these politicians are also horrible monsters in various forms.

Aristophanes shapes the next line (*V.* 1039) into a chiasm with two additional pleonasms: these two types of fevers strangle (ἄγχειν) and choke (ἀποπνίγειν) fathers (πατέρας) and grandfathers (πάππους). The chorus thus accuses two redundant agents (fevers) of two redundant actions (strangulation) against two redundant victims (older male family members).[640] This poetically formulated repetition accentuates the danger and horror of informers' actions even as it colors the description with a comical prolixity. In keeping with the specificity of their own classification, the agues and fevers do not assault their

[638] According to a scholion, Didymus made this connection (vet. tr. 1038a). Taillardat (1965, 425) conflates the two images, taking agues to be a type of incubus. Mastromarco (1989, 421-2) mentions the role of this monster in a fragment of Sophron (fr. 68 Kaibel) as an adversary of Heracles, which reinforces Aristophanes' association with Heracles in these lines.

[639] The comic playwright Phrynicus wrote a play of the same name, Ἐπιάλτης/Ἐφιάλτης, although it is unclear if the title is the titular character's proper name or if the titular character is in fact a nightmare (Phryn. Com. Epialtes/Ephialtes 1 K-A).

[640] Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.) describe "τοὺς πάππους ἀπέπνιγον" somewhat differently as a hyperbolic repetition of "πατέρας…ἦγχον."

victims in a general way; the chorus qualifies the fevers' methods of violence (ἐπιχειρῆσαι, 1038) through more, and more precise, verbs in the following line (ἄγχειν; ἀποπνίγειν, 1039). This manner of attack itself, strangulation, suits both vehicles of the metaphor (fevers and Ephialtes),[641] since personal agents and diseases alike can strangle their victims in the Greek idiom. Several Hippocratic treatises note choking as part of the disease's pathology, using both ἄγχειν and ἀποπνίγειν.[642] Thus, although these words "choking" and "strangling" are not particular to medical writing, this action is a common and important mechanism of certain diseases.

The citizens' fearful reaction also underscores the medical imagery. In line 1042 the citizens leap up out of terror and run to the Polemarch. MacDowell suggests that the fevers themselves make their victims delirious;[643] Hippocratics in fact indicate delirium as a symptom of fevers and often attribute similarly irrational behavior to disease. The author of the *Sacred Disease* also mentions people who behave strangely in their sleep, crying out, choking, jumping up and out of doors. Throughout the *Epidemics* especially, but also in other treatises, doctors frequently note fear (*phobos*) as a symptom of a sickness.[644] *Aphorisms* 4.67 specifically mentions that night terrors (οἱ ἐκ τῶν ὕπνων φόβοι) are a bad sign when one is suffering from a fever. Of course, the reaction of the fathers and grandfathers need not be included on a list of medical symptoms, but the medical imagery opens up the possibility that this fear could be delirious as well as rational, thus potentially fleshing out the disease metaphor with more detail.

In these ways, Aristophanes metaphorically superimposes the figures of the *sykophantai* with diseases and nocturnal demons. He encourages us specifically to view these undesirable citizens in pathological terms by clarifying the word ἠπίαλος with πυρετοί, describing strangling as their mode of violence, and suggesting that these beings induce delirious terror. Yet, why does the chorus use this seemingly superfluous medical imagery when personified nightmares suit the macabre imagery and anapestic meter just as well?[645] An answer presents itself when we consider how Aristophanes characterizes his poetic self in the larger context of the parabasis. In the previous lines, he has already established himself as a semi-divine figure that can rout evil, fantastical beings. If the fiends come in the form of

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[641] Another Sophron fragment (fr. 67 Kaibel) describes Nightmare as a father-throttler.

[642] Hipp. *Mul. Aff.* 7; 32; 60; *Nat. Mul.* 35; *Prog*. 23.9; *Acut.* 17 = L 5; *Acut. Sp.* 9 = L 6; *Morb*. II. 10, 29 (ἀποπνίγειν); Hipp. *Sac. Morb*. 10.3 (πνίγειν); Hipp. *Virg.* 1 (ἄγχειν). See Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 183-5) on the mention of this symptom in Greek comedy and Southard (1970, 95) in Aristophanes.

[643] MacDowell (1971, ad loc.).

[644] E.g. in Hipp. *Epid.* I. 18.11; II.2.10; III, case 11.239; V.81; *Aph*. III.24; IV.67; VI.23; *Hum*. 9.14; *Morb*. II.72.

[645] I.e. "τοῖς ἐφιάλταις" rather than "τοῖς ἠπιάλοις" for the first metron.

diseases, however, he must adopt a new approach and demonstrate a new type of virtuosity. These lines (*V.* 1037-42) are a transitional point in the parabasis for the representation of Aristophanes' artistic persona and its nature; the imagery of the comedian as a Heraclean hero gives way in part to a much more mundane, but equally powerful, metaphor of the physician-poet. The implications of his emphasis on medical imagery for his artistic claims become clearer as we examine other elements of the passage.

At the beginning of the parabasis, Aristophanes chronicles what he has done for his audience, beginning with a short history of his artistic development. First, the chorus reports that he secretly helped other poets by inspiring them, just as Eurykles practices ventriloquism (*V.* 1017-20). Later, he was emboldened to take control of the mouths of his own Muses, rather than another's (1021-2). He speaks of his artistic integrity and his refusal to take advantage of his fame by seducing boys in the wrestling school (1023-5). He famously compares himself to Heracles battling a monstrous being made up of various horrible and grotesque parts of other monsters (1029-37);[646] the canine imagery of the monster as well as the comparison of its mouth to a torrent (χαράδρα) identify it unambiguously as Cleon. The poet then asserts that he was responsible for cleansing the city: "such a purifier of the land and deflector of evil you have come upon" (τοιόνδ' εὑρόντες ἀλεξίκακον τῆς χώρας τῆσδε καθαρτήν, 1043). Thus Aristophanes' self-presentation focuses on his superhuman ability and imperturbable constitution in the face of horrible and revolting monsters.

This fact is not only relevant for our interpretation of the parabasis as a whole, but also for a pithy, extradiegetic comment which Bdelycleon makes earlier in the play which I discussed in Chapter 2.2. In lines 650-651, amid an agon with the chorus, Bdelycleon suddenly addresses the audience and unambiguously speaks on "Aristophanes'" behalf:[647] "it is a difficult task to heal an ancient disease which has been inborn in the city, and one for a clever mind that is beyond that of comedians" (χαλεπὸν μὲν καὶ δεινῆς γνώμης καὶ μείζονος ἢ 'πὶ τρυγῳδοῖς/ ἰάσασθαι νόσον ἀρχαίαν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐντετοκυῖαν). The ancient disease in the city to which Bdelycleon refers is the diegetic disease of the play, but it also applies to the bigger problems which perpetuate, as well as accompany, this addiction: how Philocleon and other citizens are bamboozled into delighting in paltry jury pay while ignoring the decay of traditional Athenian values and Cleon's usurpation of political power. The disease, moreover, has not simply attacked the city; it is an inextricable, "inborn" (ἐντετοκυῖα) affliction and

[646] *V.* 1015-36.

[647] On the connection between his character and Aristophanes' poetic persona, see Olson (1996, 144), Reckford (1977, 296-7, 301-2, 310), Paduano (1974, 71), and Russo (1962).

thus, as I have argued, perhaps even part of the nature of Athens or the Athenian people. Importantly, even in expressing doubt about the power of comedy, Bdelycleon presents it as a potential medicine, alluding to a connection between healing and poetry. As Mitchell-Boyask argues, song has therapeutic effects in the works of Aristophanes' poetic predecessors and contemporaries: Homer, Pindar, Sophocles, and Euripides among others.[648] The *Wasps* uses, and in turn develops, this trope as we see later in the chorus' address of the audience. Anticipating the parabasis, Bdelycleon's two short lines carve out a place for comedy in this tradition through the playwright's apparent modesty about his own work. They implicitly refer to "τραγῳδία" with Aristophanes' coined term for comedy, "τρυγῳδοῖς," and thus set in relief his own art against the ostensibly more august tragic genre.[649]

I suggest that the medical imagery and the metapoetics present in both Bdelycleon's ventriloquization and the parabasis encourage us to interpret them jointly. Lines 650-1 look forward to the fever metaphor of the parabasis in which Aristophanes essentially contradicts, or at least qualifies, this very notion that comedy cannot help rid the city of its affliction. As Aristophanes has his chorus report, he does in fact bravely combat the city's sickness of sycophancy in his role as playwright with comedy as his weapon of choice (*V.* 1038-9). Read together, the two passages suggest that it is beyond the power of *average* comedy to effect real political change. As we learn in the parabasis, however, neither the playwright nor his plays are average; they are extraordinary, combining the acme of human technical expertise and the supernatural aid of the Muses. Bdelycleon's original statement thus primes the audience for the parabasis. This dissembling lament exists only for the *Wasps* to later confute: the counterpoints are found in the chorus' claims in the parabasis as well as the self-evident artistic achievement of the play itself.

Just as Aristophanes describes his enemies with different types of imagery, he represents himself as multiple figures in this parabasis: both as a healer and as the demigod Heracles in two different roles. He ascribes to himself the Heraclean epithet "ἀλεξίκακος," thereby presenting himself as a warrior, a "guard against evil."[650] The playwright also calls

[648] Provenza (2016); Mitchell-Boyask (2008, 14); Nünlist (1998, 126-34). See Laín Entralgo (1970, 1-107) on the power of words in Hippocratic medicine (139-170) as well as poetry (1-107). Flashar (1956) discusses the physiological, Hippocratic context of Aristotle's account of the *katharsis* effect of tragedy. Examples of the connection between music or poetry and healing include Homer *Od.* 19.455-88, Bacchylides 13.228-31 (Nünlist 1998, 129)), Pindar *P.*3 and *N.* 4 (Nünlist 1998, 127) (Cordes 1994, 25-31) (Machemer 1993), S.*Trach.*1100, and E.*Med.* 199-200 (Pucci 1977, 167-8).

[649] Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.). See Taplin (1983) on the relationship between these words. Wright (2012, 19-20) argues that Aristophanes uses the term to highlight the social purpose of comedy versus tragedy.

[650] Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.).

himself a purifier of the city, a service that the hero performed.[651] The Heraclean metaphor presents the playwright as two beings in one superhuman form. In speaking of battling Athens' fevers, agues, and endemic disease (*V*. 1038; 651), Aristophanes also manages to telescope his duty as a doctor of the state into these images of heroic warrior and purifier.[652] I disagree with Jouanna's remark that Aristophanes aligns himself more with Heracles in this passage and favors images of magical healing over Hippocratic medicine; the playwright neither needs to, nor does, settle on one image for himself.[653] I argue, nonetheless, that the comparison to the Hippocratic doctor is the most interesting and original part of his poetic self-characterization in the song.

All these three roles are indeed not difficult to reconcile. The work of healers and purifiers make for a natural comparison because both engage in a type of "purification/cleansing" (κάθαρσις).[654] While the similarities between a warrior and healer are less immediately apparent, the audience already had a solid basis for imagining this connection as well. First, the plague was one of the evils that Heracles *Alexikakos* was believed to keep at bay.[655] Secondly, some medical writing make a connection between healing and fighting: Hippocratic healers employ antagonistic treatments for disease.[656] The incorporation of the doctor figure into this warrior-purifier amalgamation thereby falls naturally into place, each having metaphorical or conceptual ties to the other.

Now we might consider where the poet, the tenor of the metaphor, fits into this image. For an ancient Greek audience, the most logical link between poet and healer would be found in the archaic concept that words and music have curative powers; if a song can cure its

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[651] Biles and Olson (2015, ad loc.). Evidence for Heracles as a purifier can also be found in Sophocles (*Tr*. 1012) and Euripides (*Her*. 225).

[652] The relationship between Heracles and healing becomes more interesting in post-Classical legends which biologically connect Hippocrates and the demigod. Centuries later, Hippocrates became a descendent of Heracles and is sometimes described very similarly. Jouanna (1999, 16-7).

[653] "L'auteur comique est plus proche d'une conception populaire qui conserve une représentation démonique de la maladie et ne voit pas de contradiction majeure entre médecine rationnelle et médecine religieuse. En définitive, pour Aristophane, le modèle médical n'est pas tant Hippocrate qu'Héraclès. A la subtilité de la médecine météorologique d'un Hippocrate qu'il devait ranger au nombre des partisans des Nuées comme Socrate, il devait préférer le combat d'un Héraclès purificateur de monstres." Jouanna (2000, 195).

[654] Of course, the author of *On the Sacred Disease* argues specifically against any relationship between medicine and ritual purification, so the connection is certainly not universally acknowledged. Nonetheless, the very fact that he argues against the legitimacy of purifiers as healers indicates that they were viewed as competition. See Lloyd (1979, 44-9) on the continuum between rational and "irrational" purification. See R. Parker (1983, 207-34) on the practice of purification and cathartic medicine in general.

[655] Mitchell-Boyask (2008, 89-90).

[656] *Epid.* I.11.14-5; *Nat. Hom*. 9.6-9; *Flat*. 1.33-4. See Jouanna (1999, 141) on the agonistic conception of the physician-disease relationship. Elsewhere of course, writers describe disease not as a bellicose entity, but rather as an abstract imbalance of bodily materials. To some extent the choice of imagery was almost certainly a matter of rhetoric—how the Hippocratic wanted to present himself and his relationship to medicine.

listeners, then a poet metaphorically becomes a healer. Yet, when Aristophanes fashions himself specifically as a Hippocratic doctor fighting to cure the city, his presentation of his work and method differs markedly from descriptions of other and earlier poet-doctor figures.[657] The divergence becomes clear when we first consider what the common ground traditionally is between medicine and poetry: they both have palliative effects and magical means of achieving them.[658] In the Odyssey the sons of Autolycus bandaged the hero's wound and "stayed the dark blood with an incantation" (ἐπαοιδῇ δ᾽ αἷμα κελαινὸν/ ἔσχεθον).[659] In his fourth Nemean, Pindar describes festivity as the best doctor "ἄριστος εὐφροσύνα…ἰατρός (1-2), saying that "warm water does not touch moisten limbs so softly as praise accompanying a lyre" (3-4). Elsewhere he writes that incantations render labor painless.[660] Poetry miraculously enchants and charms; its effects on diseases are as obscure as the diseases themselves.[661] Such methods of course have neither a rational explanation nor mechanism, a fact to which the author of *On the Sacred Disease* directs his reader's attention. According to him, charlatans who pretend to understand the sacred disease apply purifications and incantations (καθαρμοῖσί τε ἰῶνται καὶ ἐπαοιδῇσιν). He argues that the disease is actually caused by a bodily imbalance and recommends putting the patient on a regimen that would correct this problem "without purifications or magic" (ἄνευ καθαρμῶν καὶ μαγείης).[662]

Thus, "music therapy" in the form of an incantation (ἐπῳδή) is relevant for magio-religious treatments, but lies outside the purview of Hippocratic medicine. A healer of the Hippocratic ilk is likelier to have a strictly hands-on interaction with the human body and its constituent stuffs. Like those Homeric healers, a Hippocratic bandages a wound to stop the blood. Instead of employing incantations, however, he might hold the affected limb in the direction opposite the flow of blood, apply a double-folded compress soaked in wine, then clean oiled wool on top.[663] His technical expertise is practical and his means are material; a skilled enchanter also has a technical expertise, but their way of working is uncanny and is

[657] Telò (2016, 34; 174 n. 20) also identifies Aristophanes as a specifically Hippocratic healer in this passage.
[658] Nünlist (1998, 126-34).
[659] Hom. *Od.* 19.457-8.
[660] Pi. *N.* 8.49-50.
[661] Laín Entralgo (1970, 32-107): αἱ γὰρ ἔνθεοι διὰ λόγων ἐπωιδαὶ ἐπαγωγοὶ ἡδονῆς, ἀπαγωγοὶ λύπης γίνονται. Gorgias (*Hel.* 10).
[662] Hipp. *Sac. Morb*. 1.10 and 21.26, respectively. Speaking metaphorically of the necessity of his suicide, Sophocles' Ajax also expresses a critical sentiment about song therapy versus surgery: οὐ πρὸς ἰατροῦ σοφοῦ/ θρηνεῖν ἐπῳδὰς πρὸς τομῶντι πήματι. Soph. *Ajax* 581-2.
[663] Hipp. *Ulc*. 26.

often physically removed from the ailing person.[664]

In rational medicine, therefore, the application of song therapy is absent, eliminating the conceptual link between poets and doctors. Other types of healing, of course, were still alive and well; the association of poetry with palliative effects certainly remained in the cultural conscious, but distinctively Hippocratic images of medicine were simply absent from instances of this poet-doctor trope. Aristophanes, however, presents an exception. The *Wasps* forges new links between the arts of healing and rational medicine by comparing the work of a comic playwright to that of a Hippocratic, rather than magical, healer. I argue that, with the Hippocratic healer as the vehicle of the metaphor, Aristophanes reworks the imagery to characterize producing comedy as both difficult and revolting.[665]

In the *Knights* years earlier, while explaining why he has not yet produced his own plays, Aristophanes had the chorus cite the special difficulty of composing comedy: "because he believes that producing comedies is the most difficult work of all." (ἀλλὰ νομίζων/ κωμῳδοδιδασκαλίαν εἶναι χαλεπώτατον ἔργον ἁπάντων, *Eq*. 515-6). I argue that Aristophanes returns to this particular *captatio benevolentiae* in the *Wasps*, where he describes his obligations as a playwright as extremely difficult—once explicitly and once implicitly. The salvation of the city is not only so challenging that it demands more than comedy can deliver (or at least more than comedies can normally deliver). Writing political comedies is also, in part, a disgusting and thankless public service, a fact that he makes clear in his description of the grotesque monsters with which he grapples:

> οὐδ᾽ ὅτε πρῶτόν γ᾽ ἦρξε διδάσκειν, ἀνθρώποις φήσ᾽ ἐπιθέσθαι,
> ἀλλ᾽ Ἡρακλέους ὀργήν τιν᾽ ἔχων τοῖσι μεγίστοις ἐπιχείρει,
> θρασέως ξυστὰς εὐθὺς ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ τῷ καρχαρόδοντι,
> οὗ δεινόταται μὲν ἀπ᾽ ὀφθαλμῶν Κύννης ἀκτῖνες ἔλαμπον,
> ἑκατὸν δὲ κύκλῳ κεφαλαὶ κολάκων οἰμωξομένων ἐλιχμῶντο
> περὶ τὴν κεφαλήν, φωνὴν δ᾽ εἶχεν χαράδρας ὄλεθρον τετοκυίας,
> φώκης δ᾽ ὀσμήν, Λαμίας ὄρχεις ἀπλύτους, πρωκτὸν δὲ καμήλου.
> τοιοῦτον ἰδὼν τέρας οὔ φησιν δείσας καταδωροδοκῆσαι,
> ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἔτι καὶ νυνὶ πολεμεῖ· (*V.* 1029-37)
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> And when he first began to produce, he says, he didn't attack ordinary

[664] Lantralgo (1970, 158-70) shows, however, that words and rhetoric have a role in the Hippocratisc approach to healing as well.

[665] In the language of conceptual metaphor theory, the target, domain, and generic space of Aristophanes' version of the comparison remain the same: healers (target) are compared to doctors (source). The "generic" space involves an agent, their passive subject, an affliction, and method of addressing the affliction. The blended space, however, diverges in key ways. The first two elements of the blend are poet/healer and audience/patient in both cases, but the target affliction and the target method of addressing the affliction are different. In the traditional metaphor, the audience's sorrow is often the affliction, while here in the *Wasps*, the audience's affliction is political corruption; both, however, are still blended with the source 'medical disease.' Ultimately the conceptual blending of "poetry + medicinal incantation → salubrious poetry" in the original idiom becomes "obscene comic poetry + practical, Hippocratic medicine → salubrious comedy."

> people, but in the very spirit of Heracles he came to grips with the greatest monsters, boldly standing up right from the start to old Jagged Teeth himself, whose eyes like the bitch Cynna's flashed terrible beams, and all around his pate licked a hundred heads of damned flatterers; he had the voice of a death dealing torrent, the smell of a seal, the unwashed balls of a Lamia, and the arsehole of a camel. On seeing such an apparition, he says, he didn't get cold feet and take bribes to betray you, but fought then as he fights now on your behalf. (trans. Henderson)

The monster has especially obscene physical features that are almost hyperreal; in particular its seal odor, unwashed testicles, and camel's anus give a strong olfactory impression. These monsters are indeed frightening, just as all of the monsters that Heracles battled. Perhaps they are even worse, the chorus implies, because they are offensive to one's sense of smell in addition to sight. The physical contest thus appears to be one that requires more than brawn: it also demands a strong stomach. Here is where we remember, and anticipate, the images of Aristophanes as a doctor.

For the medical profession too, one cannot have a delicate constitution. Aristophanes himself garners comic material out of the reputation of physicians for dealing with disgusting bodily stuffs. In *Wealth* Carion reports that the god Asclepius was not at all affected by the smell of his flatulence. When Chremylus' wife expresses wonder at this reaction, Carion explains that the god is, after all, a scatophage: Γυνή: λέγεις ἄγροικον ἄρα σύ γ᾽ εἶναι τὸν θεόν./ Καρίων: μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἔγωγ᾽, ἀλλὰ σκατοφάγον. (*Pl*. 705-6). This "accusation" suits Aristophanes' description of the god as a mortal physician; his Asclepius uses medicines, methods and tools that a normal doctor would, which would include intimate interactions with unpleasant substances.[666] While scatophagy itself is probably an exaggeration, medical writers themselves discuss the importance of evaluating different bodily excretions with the different senses of the body: sight, smell, touch, and even taste. Sometimes Hippocratics, like the author of *Breaths*, mention this practice explicitly, while sometimes it is merely implied through the descriptions themselves of bodily substances: a doctor could only describe how salty tears are if he himself tastes them.[667] Moreover, the medical writers' suspension of disgust is a distinguishing characteristic of their practice and view of the body; they remark on bodily excretions and disfigurements without revealing their own physical reactions to them.[668] They often assume a "disembodied" authority in their writing, which is free from, although not unaware of, the reactions of disgust and fear of pollution that embodiment

[666] See Chapter 2.4 for further discussion of this scene.
[667] Jouanna (1999, 300-1). E.g. in Hipp. *Coac.* 621; *Int.* 47; 49; *Mul*. II. 115; *Mul. Aff.* 2; 28 etc.; *Morb*. II. 46; 49; 57 etc.; *Prog*. 13.9-10 (smelling); *Epid.* VI 8.8 (tasting).
[668] Kazantzidis (2017).

entails.[669]

Although these aspects were simply a reality of Hippocratic healing, not all its practitioners were silent about their profession's unpleasantness. One writer mentions this very idea to argue for the value of doctors. In the late fifth-century treatise *On Breaths*, the author specifically speaks about how difficult it is to be a physician:

> There are some arts which to those that possess them are painful (ἐπίπονοι), but to those that use them are helpful, a common good to laymen, but to those that practise them grievous (τοῖσι δὲ μεταχειριζομένοισι σφᾶς λυπηραί). Of such arts there is one which the Greeks call medicine. For the medical man sees terrible (δεινὰ) sights, touches unpleasant things (ἀηδέων), and the misfortunes of others bring a harvest of sorrows that are peculiarly his (ἰδίας… λύπας); but the sick by means of this art rid themselves of the worst of evils, disease, suffering, pain and death. (Hipp. *Flat*. 1.1-10, trans. Jones)

This treatise was probably delivered to an audience rather than being simply read; it is sophistic in nature and its purpose is to convince the audience of not only the importance of the art of medicine in general, but also this particular practitioner's expert knowledge on the subject.[670] The ideas in the text, perhaps the text itself, which is markedly influenced by Gorgias' style, clearly had some popular appeal.[671] Scholars have seen similarities between passages in *On Breaths* and in drama (in particular, Euripides' and Aristophanes' works).[672] Phaedra's nurse in fact echoes this very notion about the difficulty of caring for the sick in Euripides' *Hippolytus*.[673] The catchiness of the treatise's preamble, both its ideas and prosody, also would have had difficulty escaping the notice of these playwrights had they heard it; the writer decorates this dramatic introduction of a doctor's duty with an iambic lilt: ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἰητρὸς ὁρῇ τε δεινὰ, θιγγάνει τε ἀηδέων.[674]

The treatise opens with a proem, where a Hippocratic writer would remark on his art and ability, just as a playwright might in his parabasis.[675] In the *Wasps* Aristophanes' poetic persona makes a similar assertion of bravery, and thereby distinguishes his *techne* from other *technai* and his own work from that of his rivals. Both the playwright and medical writer claim they perform self-sacrificing tasks for the good of others through their respective

[669] Holmes (2010, 118) argues for the disembodied medical authority in Hippocratic writing. Kazantzidis (2017, 49-53) describes how medical writers note disgust as a symptom while not admitting of it themselves.
[670] Craik (2015, 98-10).
[671] Craik (2015, 102).
[672] Eur. *Tro*. 884; Ar. *Nu*. 264.
[673] Eur. *Hipp*. 188. Kosak (2004, 50-1; 62-3) discusses the relevance of *On Breaths* for the nurse's attempts at healing Phaedra.
[674] Observed by Craik (2015, 102).
[675] Similar prefacing can be found in especially Hippocrates' *On the Art* (Mann 2012, 8-20). Also in *on Ancient Medicine* (Schiefsky 2005, 36-46), *On the Sacred Disease* (Laskaris 2002)*, on Diseases I, The Law*, and elsewhere.

arts.[676] It is, in itself, not remarkable that both texts have an agonistic approach and make rhetorical appeals to the audience's sympathies; competition and its spectacle are, one could argue, native to their cultural milieu.[677] In addition, however, they also cite the same reason for why their duty is so taxing: the experience of directly handling and interacting with things that are unpleasant to the senses, in short, things which provoke disgust. Furthermore, the author of *On Breaths* and Aristophanes alike oxymoronically establish their worth and worthiness through the very lowliness of the material with which they work.

To understand Aristophanes' move in implicitly aligning himself with this kind of rhetoric, we must consider why this Hippocratic author and others assume this kind of defensive stance while expounding on their own art in the first place.[678] As I have discussed earlier, doctors in ancient Athens did not automatically enjoy high social status; educated and ad hoc healers worked alongside each other and, much like any other undertaking in Greece at the time, success depended on skill and self-advertisement. Moreover, a doctor was in the first place a craftsman rather than a man of letters. The scientific/philosophical elements of some Hippocratic writing are less intrinsic to the medical profession of Aristophanes' time than we might imagine,[679] not least of all because they ultimately were fifth-century influences on an archaic art. Aristophanes seems to refer to this aspect of Hippocratic medicine, or at least this particular posturing on the part of the Hippocratic speaker of *On Breaths*. Later in the parabasis as well, a chorus leader glorifies manual labor, complaining about men who receive pay from the state without ever 'having an oar, spear or blister' (μήτε κώπην μήτε λόγχην μήτε φλύκταιναν λαβών, *V*. 1119). Thus this imagery of healing in part supports an apologetic attitude about the value of working with one's hands.

Simply because of its self-evident value in the gravest moments of human experience, the healing art had perhaps especially poignant metaphorical potential alongside other crafts. In the *Iliad* Idomeneus' statement that "a healer is worth many men," still rang true a few hundred years later.[680] Whatever accusations of sophistry were leveled against the practice of medicine (also by the playwright himself), they did not negate the fact that this *techne* was a practical necessity for everyone, regardless of their identity or station. The same could not be said for other intellectual products of the sixth and fifth centuries such as natural philosophy

[676] This assertion, however, should not be interpreted as an altruistic sentiment.
[677] Dover (1974) 229–34; Poliakoff (2001).
[678] The author of *The Law* responds to an accusation of medicine's lack of respectability by blaming incompetent doctors and the lack of legal punishment for frauds (*Lex* 1). *The Art* defends physicians by directing blame back on patients (among other factors) (*Art* 7).
[679] Horstmanshoff (1990).
[680] Hom. *Il.*11.514.

or mathematics. Among other craftsmen, moreover, a doctor was also conspicuous both for the life-or-death urgency of his work and for the unusual possibility that he is a man of letters in addition to a craftsman. What other fifth-century Greek who works with his hands would have any need of literacy or philosophy? The medical art is thus a vocation that straddles a strange and paradoxical middle ground between vulgarity and erudition and whose worth is essentially inalienable. Comedy, or at least good comedy, the playwright seems to suggest, belongs in the same privileged position. The causes of Athens' suffering is so frightful and revolting only he, a comic playwright *cum* doctor, could match himself against them.

When we consider these commonalities, the irony of Bdelycleon's comment earlier in the drama becomes even more pronounced. Drama actually *must* be obscene to grapple successfully with the banal, everyday sorts of evil that come in the form of politicians and political busybodies, just as a physician must grapple with unsavory, but quotidian, sensory stimuli in order to heal a patient. According to these metapoetic moments in the *Wasps*, this task of curing the city is not only well within the scope of the comic genre; comedians are perhaps the ones best equipped to rid the city of evils. Through his parallel between comedy and medicine, Aristophanes insists on the gravity of the comic genre and ironically justifies his often disgusting and sordid subject matter by purporting that it serves a noble purpose. In the logic of the parabasis, the comic emphasis on bodily subject matter is not only for laughs; it is a necessary evil that a physician and comic poet alike must take on in their line of work.

Furthermore, this imagery offers the audience a new perspective not only on the playwright's relationship to the politics of Athens, but also to its dramatic products. His apparent cheap shots at rival poets that focus on their various unsightly and embarrassing afflictions are presented in a fresh and positive light. Cinesias' diarrhea, Cratinus' incontinence, Melanthius' diseased skin—they are all unpleasant medical conditions which he must confront for the good of his audience who, the jocular implication is, deserve better.[681] Aristophanes elsewhere hints that a playwright must have the cleverness and purity of purpose for such distasteful images, lest he, as his chorus of clouds tells us, simply present a gluttonous Heracles and pendulous red phalluses for easy laughs instead of for a higher artistic aim.[682] Like a learned physician, therefore, he handles disgusting material for a noble, self-sacrificing purpose. Nevertheless, how seriously we are to take these claims for comedy and Aristophanic comedy itself is, of course, another matter.

[681] *Ecc*. 326-30; *Ra*. 366; *Gerytades* 156 K-A (Cinesias); *Eq*. 400-1 (Cratinus); *Av*. 150-1 (Melanthius); the chorus of *Peace* also recommends that the Muse of Comedy spit at him (*Pax* 815). These passages are discussed by Wright (2012, 120-3).

[682] *Nu*. 534-9.

The medical and iatric imagery ostensibly serve to promote the value of the playwright and his work. They communicate that Aristophanes is a brave healer, a purifier of evils. In the end, however, this straightforward message is not the necessarily, or actually, the point. The poet's artistic achievement lies rather in the imagery itself, that is, in his creative reworking of the trope of the diseased city. He therefore adapts Hippocratic ideas and opinions not only for the political subject matter of the *Wasps*, but also for his metapoetic account of his art. The elements drawn from contemporary medicine are also different, and have different purposes. For the politics of the *Wasps*, we find Hippocratic notions about the human *phusis* and the insidious and complex causations of internal disease. For his presentation of his poetic persona, he seems to find a parallel in a Hippocratic practitioner himself, the doctor's own posturing and description of his unappetizing work. It is a move in perfect keeping with Aristophanes' familiar *modus operandi*, an ingenious and hilarious response to his literary predecessors, that as a comic poet-healer he would not sing sweet incantations to ease the pain, but get his hands dirty with the stink and excretions of hideous and sickly bodies.

3.2 Embodied Poetry and the Ethical Dimensions of Dramaturgy in the *Frogs*

> *"There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all."*
>
> *– Oscar Wilde, preface to The Picture of Dorian Grey*

The poetic association between the arts of medicine and dramaturgy of which we first saw hints in the *Wasps* truly takes flight in the *Frogs*. Imagery of the body and its care are found in every permutation throughout the comedy in metaphors involving body parts, bodily functions, disease, medicine, and doctors. This emphasis on the body is, of course, in itself not unusual for Aristophanes or his genre, but in the *Frogs* the human body also becomes instrumental for the presentation of two central themes: literary criticism and the moral responsibility of the poet. In this section, I argue that the playwright draws strong metaphorical parallels between the human body and literary work. In mapping multiple aspects of the former onto the latter, he highlights the issue of bodily flaws and failures as well as the question of accountability which they inevitably bring in tow. This figurative language in turn also informs how we read the process and end result of literary critique in the play as well, especially regarding the question of the purpose and value of literature.

Focusing on these themes of corporeality and medicine, moreover, my study proposes a thematic link between the first and second half of the *Frogs*, roughly delineated by the beginning of the famous poetic agon. At first blush these two parts of the play appear to be more or less discrete, especially with regard to Dionysus' role and character portrayal. Yet scholars have noted strains of continuity in the social and religious subject matter which Dionysus' character plays no small role in presenting.[683] In addition to these aspects, I contend that there is another element of Dionysus' representation that bridges the two halves of the *Frogs:* the theme of embodiment in general and of the god's body in particular. While its significance only first becomes apparent in the agon, Aristophanes introduces this imagery at the very beginning of the play.

Dionysus' Physical Reactions to Poetry

The *Frogs* opens with a fantastically metatheatrical scene. Xanthias and Dionysus

[683] Focusing on social and religious aspects, Segal (1961) establishes how Dionysus' character and its development unify the play. He argues that, in the play's conclusion, comedy and tragedy appear as equals; both the didactic purpose of drama and the religious functions of Dionysus emphasize the communal importance of the theater. Without concerning herself with the issue of unity *per se*, Lada-Richards (1999) analyzes the connections to Dionysian ritual throughout the play.

clearly know they are in a play and speak as actors instead of characters. The audience members also get very little information about the comedy itself; until Dionysus reveals his identity in line 22, they only see one actor dressed as Heracles and another as a slave. With respect to the plot, the beginning stands comfortably alone and functions as a warm-up for the audience. An in-depth reading, however, reveals more complexity to this introductory scene and makes apparent its relevance for some of the load-bearing content of the play. In a series of opening jokes, these two travelers argue about the three parallel discomforts that annoy Xanthias: laboring under carrying a pack, laboring under full bowels, and laboring under the repressed desire to tell a joke.

In this scene Dionysus already shows himself to be a kind of literary critic, a role which he officially assumes in the agon.[684] In this case, however, the genre in question is comedy rather than tragedy, and the focus is on a certain type of comic fare: a gag involving baggage and defecation. This joke, which Xanthias doggedly insists on telling (along with any and all of its variants), unfurls into an array of imagery and ideas which presage ideas developed later in the play:

Ξα. Εἴπω τι τῶν εἰωθότων, ὦ δέσποτα,
ἐφ᾽ οἷς ἀεὶ γελῶσιν οἱ θεώμενοι;
Δι. νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ὅ τι Βούλει γε, πλὴν "πιέζομαι,"
τοῦτο δὲ φύλαξαι· πάνυ γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἤδη χολή.
Ξα. μηδ᾽ ἕτερον ἀστεῖόν τι;
Δι. πλήν γ᾽ "ὡς θλίβομαι."
Ξα. τί δαί; τὸ πάνυ γέλοιον εἴπω;
Δι. νὴ Δία
θαρρῶν γε· μόνον ἐκεῖν᾽ ὅπως μὴ 'ρεῖς
Ξα. τὸ τί;
Δι. μεταβαλλόμενος τἀνάφορον ὅτι χεζητιᾷς.
Ξα. μηδ᾽ ὅτι τοσοῦτον ἄχθος ἐπ᾽ ἐμαυτῷ φέρων,
εἰ μὴ καθαιρήσει τις, ἀποπαρδήσομαι;
Δι. μὴ δῆθ᾽, ἱκετεύω, πλήν γ᾽ ὅταν μέλλω 'ξεμεῖν. (*Ra.* 1-11)

Xa. Shall I make one of the usual cracks, master, that the
audience always laugh at?
Di. Sure, any one you want, except "I'm hard pressed!" Watch
out for that one; by now it's *χολή*.
Xa. Then some other urbanity?
Di. Anything but "I'm getting crushed!"
Xa. Well then, how about the really funny one?
Di. Go right ahead, only make sure it's not the one where—
Xa. You mean—
Di. where you shift your baggage and say you need to shit.

[684] Halliwell (2011) and Rosen (2004) remind us, however, that the literary critique present in the *Frogs* is itself not a serviceable model, arguing rather that Aristophanes sets it up to be problematized and effectively scrapped. Rosen (2004, esp. 306-9) arrives at this conclusion in part through exploring the intertextual connection between Dionysus *qua* judge in the *Frogs* and Panedes in *The Contest of Homer and Hesiod.* For Dionysus' characterization as a theater-goer in particular, see Lada-Richards (1999, 279).

Xa. Can't I even say that I've got such a load on me, if
someone doesn't relieve me my rump will erupt?
Di. Please don't! Wait till I need to puke. (trans. Henderson)

To Dionysus, the joke is not just bad: it is actually vomit-inducing. The god's very explicit mention of vomiting also retrospectively colors his initial reaction to Xanthias' proposal, "but watch out for that one because it utterly galls me now" (τοῦτο δὲ φύλαξαι: πάνυ γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἤδη χολή, *Ra*. 4). Rather than expressing his hatred of the joke in plain terms, the god literally calls it gall (χολή), which is the regular word for this bodily substance (as opposed to the similar word χόλος whose meaning tends to be metaphorical).[685] While the term commonly denotes anger and vexation, the context of disgust reanimates the literal meaning of this common phrase, bringing its bodily connotations to the fore. Already we see the very physical nature of Dionysus' reaction: the joke not only provokes disgust, but nausea as well.[686]

The scene is therefore set for a peculiarly *physiological* reception of literary material, which is a trope not entirely new to the playwright. In his other plays too, Aristophanes mentions disgust in relation to bad poetry; revulsion and repulsive stuff play a substantial role in literary critique throughout his corpus. In the *Frogs* as well, Dionysus complains that playwrights these days "piss on tragedy," implying their work itself is urine and consequently, unappealing.[687] As Matthew Wright describes, various poets are lampooned for their bodily products and lack of control over them; these substances are of course representative of their artistic products: Antimachus, Morsimus, and Melanthius' spit, Cinesias' liquid feces, Cratinus' urine *and* feces.[688] Dionysus' reaction, therefore, fits well in the larger context of this kind of imagery. Yet importantly, Aristophanes refers to a physical, bodily reaction of disgust to literary material rather than simply describing poetry itself with disgusting imagery. We heard this statement before in *Clouds*, in which the Just Argument expresses disgust and the need to vomit in response to the Lesser Argument's rhetoric (*Nu.* 906-7), but here in *Frogs* Aristophanes applies it to literature for the first time. In this way the playwright prepares the audience for a type of literary critique that focuses more on what poetry *does*

[685] As opposed to the word χόλος whose sense is primarily metaphorical and refers to emotions rather than liquids, although Padel (1992, 23-4) argues for more semiotic overlap between the two words. For a discussion on the use of χολή in Attic comedy and possible relation to medical theories, see Rodríguez Alfageme (1995, 569-70).

[686] See also Halliwell (2011, 100) "This expression of comic disgust is Dionysus' first critical judgement in the play, a preliminary instance of a kind of instinctive, quasi-physical response which reappears on several later occasions in the work. Specifically on disgust, see Halliwell (2011, 100 n. 12).

[687] Wright (2012, 120) comments on these lines (*Ra*. 93-5).

[688] Wright (2012, 120-1).

than what it *is*. This distinction becomes more relevant later in the play when we see characters start to emphasize the issue of agency, and therefore, personal responsibility, for the evaluation of literature.

Next Dionysus speaks of another bodily consequence of listening to this stale joke. He explains to his slave that he cannot hear it again because whenever he hears such a joke he leaves the theater a year older:[689]

> μή νυν ποιήσῃς· ὡς ἐγὼ θεώμενος,
> ὅταν τι τούτων τῶν σοφισμάτων ἴδω,
> πλεῖν ἢ 'νιαυτῷ πρεσβύτερος ἀπέρχομαι. (*Ra.* 16-18)
>
> Don't make it now: at the theater
> whenever I see one of those ingenious crocks,
> I leave more than a year older!

The god speaks of himself as an audience member whose experience of such scenes in other plays has the direct effect of aging him. Despite the quirkiness of this statement, its meaning does not present interpretive problems: this kind of joke is bad; aging is bad—the connection is clear enough. Yet in terms of its generic context, the sentiment in fact makes a great deal more sense. Old comedy features regeneration and renewal as one of its central plot elements. We can clearly see these transformative processes take place in the bodies of main characters, most notably in Demos, Philocleon, and Plutus.[690] Dionysus himself becomes renewed in the dénouement of the play, in a sense even re-deified, shedding the ugly trappings of his bodily existence which Aristophanes emphasizes so strongly in the first half of the drama.[691] From this perspective, the god's reported experience inverts the proper function of comedy: if good comedy rejuvenates, a bad joke does the very opposite.[692] Just like nausea, this second effect is also entirely bodily, causing rapid senescence. These two particular instances, therefore, focus on physiological consequences that drama has on the god, much more of which the audience sees throughout the comedy.

Dionysus' concern with bodily subject matter also manifests itself in his banter with his slave; he troubles himself with a particular question about the logic of physicality, even physics. The few scholars who have examined this scene in detail see at its core an inverted

[689] Sommerstein (1996, ad loc.) and Del Corno (1985, ad loc.) have noted that Dionysus would have been symbolically present with a cult-image in the theater as well as through the priest of Dionysus who sits in the first row. This realization would be retrospective, however, since the audience does not yet know he is Dionysus.

[690] See Whitman (1964) on Philocleon (157-8) and on Demos (102). In *Peace* Trygaeus also undergoes a kind of rejuvenation by marrying in his old age.

[691] Padilla (1992); Segal (1961, 213-4).

[692] Whitman (1964, 235) makes this observation *passim*.

master-slave dynamic aided by pronounced metatheatrical elements.[693] In addition, I argue, the apparent obsession the characters have with the issue of physical weight is also very thematically important, looking forward to the heart of the play. In the poetry contest, we not only hear comparisons between literary texts and the human body; we also witness the role that this "textual physicality" plays as a prerequisite for the practice of literary critique. Here already at the beginning of *Frogs*, we get a taste of what is to come.

Xanthias' body stands (or sits, rather) at the center of this scene. He wants permission to complain, by means of a joke, of an internal and external load which he carries. The slave's visible burden is the pack,[694] an external encumbrance which increases an internal imperative: the need to defecate. His suppressed joke, moreover, constitutes a third, non-physical burden. The two bodily discomforts, external and internal, are in turn mapped onto this desire to tell the joke. Holding onto the joke, his pack, and his feces are all parallel, compounded processes that have the effect of enhancing and literally adding weight to the one-liners which Xanthias only with difficulty contains. By telescoping these three "loads," Aristophanes has comic material become *material,* capable of exerting a physical force on the slave. Xanthias' insistent and disobedient cracking of these jokes similarly indicates that he attributes a kind of physical relief to comic relief. In this way as well, the joke is likened to feces because its release has the same beneficial effect on a person. This poetic equivalence of defecation and cracking wise further explains Dionysus' own reaction of disgust and adds another layer of depth to Aristophanes' metaphors of bodily excreta as literary creations.

All these elements of the scene help to depict Dionysus' paradoxical statuses as both god and mortal, master and slave, masculine and feminine. As I argue, however, this opening introduces other themes that run through the play: the imagery of literary material as a physical object as well as the physiological impact of good and bad literature. The former theme is characteristic of the late fifth century,[695] with roots in Pindar and Simonides' descriptions of poetry as physical monuments which emphasize their commemorative power.[696] Democritus and Gorgias also use metaphors of words as of physical objects, but with different aims;[697] they employ the image of embodied words instead to illustrate the

[693] Compton-Engle (2015, 105).
[694] Xanthias refers to "this here," a deictic which Sommerstein (1996, ad loc.) sensibly reads as an indication of this prop.
[695] See Wright (2012, 116-20) and Newiger (2000, 53-4) for craft metaphors in comedy; for such metaphors in general, see Porter (2010, 261-75) and Nünlist (1998, 83-125); in lyric, see Svenbro (1976, 127-36) and Ford (2002, 93-112).
[696] Pi. *Olympian* 6.1-1, *Nemeans* 3.45; 4.81; 5.1-3; Bacchy. *Odes* 1.184; 5.9-10; 10.10; Simon. fr. 581.5-6 PMG, concisely treated by Wright (2012, 116), and more in depth by Ford (2002, 93-130).
[697] (DK68) B21; Gorg. *Helen* 8.

impact that words have on the listener, which in fact falls more closely in line with what we see in *Frogs*. This particular concept becomes more pertinent as I reach the end of my discussion, but for the moment I concentrate on how Dionysus figures into this presentation of materialized literature. In the *Frogs* Aristophanes has these "literary forces" surround and affect Dionysus' body in particular. This first scene, therefore, in part constitutes an extended prefiguring of the importance of Dionysus' physiology for the subject of literature in the play.

Later in the drama, Dionysus has other strong physical reactions to literature. The bodily reaction of nausea is later be mirrored, yet contrasted, in his longing for Euripides that he expresses to Heracles. Stephen Halliwell too (albeit in more conservative terms) considers this scene another instance of what he calls Dionysus' "quasi-physical" reaction to poetry.[698] I propose, however, that the physical nature of Dionysus' other literary experiences in the *Frogs* should embolden us to remove the qualification "quasi." Here the genre of Dionysus' assaulter of course is different: the god speaks of a tragedy instead of gags from a comedy.[699] Nonetheless, these texts are both creative literary products and, through this physiological imagery, are more closely aligned:

> καὶ δῆτ᾽ ἐπὶ τῆς νεὼς ἀναγιγνώσκοντί μοι
> τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν ἐξαίφνης πόθος
> τὴν καρδίαν ἐπάταξε πῶς οἴει σφόδρα. (*Ra*. 52-4)
>
> And then on the ship as I was reading *Andromeda*
> a longing struck suddenly me in the heart—you
> don't know how intensely.

His mention of a physical book in fact becomes a central point later in the agon when the chorus characterizes the audience as clever book-owners, yet it is also relevant for our current discussion. Scholars have focused on the remarkableness of this phrase for our understanding of the state of, and attitude towards, literacy in classical Athens; it is unusual that Dionysus should read a book to himself given that orality still dominated the literary world and books were not especially common.[700] It is logical, however, that Dionysus should have a physical reaction to a physical, rather than oral, object; the poetry he reads in the book is tangible and fixed. These qualities of the written word bring an intensified, literalized sense to his comment that he was struck in the heart. His reference to reading thus accords with how he

[698] Halliwell (2011, 100-2). With the qualifier of "quasi" Halliwell avoids the messiness of ancient Greek conceptions of emotion and physiology. I am interested, however, in addressing this issue and arguing for further significance of this imagery.
[699] For the coalescence of the tragic and comic genres in the play and Dionysus' part in it, see Lada-Richards (1999, 321-5) and Segal (1961).
[700] Havelock (1982); Thomas (1989, 1992); Harris (1989, 65-115); Wise (1998) 15-70. For this issue in the *Frogs* specifically, see Woodbury (1976), M. Griffith (2013, 26-7), and Thomas (1989, 19-21).

responds to literature.

His physiological reaction is, more specifically, sexual in nature. Heracles' subsequent question makes these hardly veiled undertones explicit: does Dionysus long for a boy or a woman (*Ra.* 56)? Dionysus himself also describes and re-describes this desire in a way very typical to the *modus operandi* of erotic love: it strikes his heart, victimizes (διαλυμαίνεται, 59), and devours him (66). These images depict physical violence to the body: the first comment describes an injury to his heart; the second verb, διαλυμαίνεται, also implies corporeal harm in this context; the third action, "devour" is a familiar metaphor for a bodily symptom of love. Like love, his desire for Euripides' poetry, and for Euripides himself, physically assails Dionysus.[701] This lament parallels, yet diverges from, the god's comment in the opening scene a few dozen lines earlier. A stale joke from Phrynichus, Lycis, or Ameipsias provokes a similarly corporeal reaction in him, but it affects him in his stomach rather than his heart: instead of erotic desire, it aids regurgitation.

In the contest Dionysus experiences several other negative physical reactions to poetry. He deplores Aeschylus' (poetic and poietic) construction of helmets, complaining that these materialized bits of poetry wear him down: κρανοποιῶν αὖ μ' ἐπιτρίψει (*Ra.* 1018). According to the god, Aeschylus' ponderous poetry can also give Euripides brain damage (853-5). Nevertheless, most of the physical damage incurred during the contest is collateral: Dionysus, the judge, bears the brunt of the poetical blows. Euripides' poetic faults are also detrimental to Dionysus' physical well-being, having much less pleasant effects than the sexual arousal which *Andromeda* inspires. The elder playwright points out a weakness in Euripides' openings, demonstrating that one can always insert the words "little oil flask" at the end of his lines. These redundant, cacophonous oil-flasks likewise "destroy" the god (1213; 1245). The following example is particularly demonstrative of literary violence against the Dionysus' body. In the underworld Euripides recites a few verses, repeating the line "Ai, ai—stricken, advancest thou not to their succour?" (ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν;).[702] These lines assault even Dionysus' internal organs:

> ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὸ χρῆμα τῶν κόπων ὅσον.
> ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἐς τὸ βαλανεῖον βούλομαι·
> ὑπὸ τῶν κόπων γὰρ τὼ νεφρὼ βουβωνιῶ. (*Ra.* 1278-80)
>
> Oh lord Zeus, what a load of striking,
> well, personally, I want to go to the bath:

[701] Euripides serves as a metonymy for his own works. See Wright's (2012, 123-5) analysis of Euripides in *Acharnians* and Agathon in *Women at the Thesmophoria*.
[702] *Ra.* 1275; 1277, trans. Sommerstein.

from all this striking I've gotten carbuncles in both my kidneys.

The god thus imagines the word "blow" repeated in the verses as literal blows to his flanks, injuring him internally. The degree of anatomical detail and the medical knowledge in his response also give the impression that the poetry's effect is anything but superficial: as in the case of his stricken heart and upset stomach, the impact reaches the inside of his body rather than merely bruising the surface. His language comes across as quite anatomically specific: he refers to his kidneys in the dual. His expression of a wish to go to the bath house conforms with prescriptions found in *Internal Affections* of vapor and hot water baths for kidney complaints—a detail which has the effect of intensifying and clinicizing the anatomical nature of his injury.[703] As commentators observe, because of the dual number of the article (τώ), the audience might well anticipate "testicles" instead of "kidneys." This anatomical ambiguity furthermore connects this passage to Dionysius' sexual reaction to *Andromeda*. It seems Euripides' works tend to affect the god's sexual organs and subsequently cause bodily symptoms, whether positive or negative. Aeschylus' works, on the other hand, aptly cause the kind of injuries sustained in massive collisions.[704] Thus poetry affects the god deeply, physically, even *physiologically*. It has a power akin to love, but its effects are both more varied in type and more specific in location.

Dionysus' Body and the Body of the Text

In addition to, and because of, these physiological metaphors which directly concern literature, Dionysus' body is central to our understanding of the theme of literary critique in the play. In addition, other passages prior to the agon situate corporeality *per se* squarely in the foreground. In lines 38-164 Dionysus consults Heracles, an experienced traveler to the underworld, to help him plan his journey. As I have analyzed in Chapter 1.2, the god is keenly aware of his condition of embodiment throughout the interaction. He even presents himself as capable of dying, or at least has the same concerns for the well-being and comfort of his body as a mortal would. He inquires after an easy way down to Hades and, with each of Heracles' successive suggestions, reveals greater physiological detail in his reasoning for why they will not do. He demurs for the sake of his neck, his knees, and finally, his brain, which he describes with some additional anatomical information: it is diploid and encased in

[703] Hipp. *Int*. 14-7. Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 153-4).

[704] Elsewhere Aristophanes has characters use the verb ἐπιτρίβειν to describe War crushing people with a mortar (*Pax* 246) and Strepsiades attacking a symposium performer (*Nu*. 1376). While the term often has a metaphorical denotation, the playwright clearly plays with the literal meaning of the verb in this scene.

a membrane.

Furthermore, the rowing scene (*Ra.* 184-268) famously demonstrates the god's lack of physical conditioning, indicated by the damaging effects which exertion has on his body. First Charon draws our attention to Dionysus' comic paunch (probably much larger than the other actors')[705] by calling him "belly" as synecdoche for his whole person (200). The god struggles with the task of rowing (ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ ἀλγεῖν ἄρχομαι/ τὸν ὄρρον ὦ κοὰξ κοάξ, 221-2) and soon complains of a seeping anus:

> ἐγὼ δὲ φλυκταίνας γ᾽ ἔχω,
> χὠ πρωκτὸς ἰδίει πάλαι,
> κᾆτ᾽ αὐτίκ᾽ ἐκκύψας ἐρεῖ— (*Ra.* 236-8)
>
> But *I* have blisters,
> and my anus has been oozing awhile,
> next thing it'll peep out and say—

The level of specificity and obscenity only increases: first he sings of his painful behind, then later he mentions blisters, which one would normally get on the hands when rowing. [706] Their location becomes ambiguous, however, when he goes on to describe his anus, its excreta, and its imminent distension. In this way it follows the same crescendo pattern of physiological information and trauma as his conversation with Heracles. In addition to the god's femininity and lack of masculine fortitude on which scholars tend to focus, the scene also puts on display Dionysus' (very detailed) physical susceptibilities.

Upon docking in the underworld, furthermore, Dionysus has a terrible reaction to fear which he describes in quite specific anatomical detail and for which he requests a medical treatment. The gatekeeper of Tartarus threatens him with dreadful physical violence, believing the god to be Heracles. Beasts of the underworld are to rip out and ravage his innards (σπλάγχνα), lungs (πλεύμονες), both his kidneys (τὼ νεφρώ), and guts (ἔντερα) (*Ra.* 473-6).[707] He reacts to these threats on his various internal organs with corresponding specificity. First, he tells his slave that he has evacuated his bowels (ἐγκέχοδα· κάλει θεό, 479) and seems to announce that he is having a health emergency. He claims he is growing

[705] Compton-Engel (2015, 40).
[706] This word "φλύκταινα" is, of course, not a technical medical term. Willi (2003, 84), *contra* Byl (1990, 158). What interests me, however, is how it helps build up this very visceral description.
[707] Lada-Richards (1999, 179-187) argues that this listing of innards evokes sacrifice and that this scene thus presents a commingled (and therefore perverse) image of the hunt and sacrifice, antithetical to civic order. I believe, however, that the anatomical language of this threat also sets up Dionysus' "heart" complaint that follows. Language for internal body parts, especially from the torso, are inevitably sacrificial as well as anatomical in nature. Aristophanes exploits the overlap between sacrificial and medical imagery in this scene rather than exclusively evoking one or the other.

pale and specially asks for a sponge for his heart as a remedy.[708] The mention of the sponge is a reference to the practice of applying cold water when one is faint. Along with Xanthias, the audience gets a surprise, however, when the god makes clear that his problem is a bit different than he had first presented:

Δι.	ἀλλ᾽ ὠρακιῶ.
	ἀλλ᾽ οἶσε <u>πρὸς τὴν καρδίαν</u> μου σφογγιάν.
Ξα.	ἰδοὺ λαβέ, προσθοῦ. ποῦ 'στιν; ὦ χρυσοῖ θεοὶ
	ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἔχεις τὴν καρδίαν;
Δι.	δείσασα γὰρ
	ἐς τὴν <u>κάτω</u> μου <u>κοιλίαν</u> καθείρπυσεν. (*Ra*. 481-5).[709]

Di.	But I'm growing pale.
	Bring a sponge for my heart.
Xa.	Look, take it, apply it....where is it? Oh golden gods!
	here is where you have your heart?
Di.	It was scared, so it crept down to my lower cavity.

According to Sommerstein's stage directions, which I believe fit the dialogue best, Dionysus takes the sponge and uses it to wipe himself—but for hygienic, not medical, purposes. Either out of genuine slow-wittedness or out of a sardonic desire to expose the cowardly god's lie, Xanthias does not yet reveal that he has revised his understanding of the situation, but continues to refer to the problem as Dionysus originally presented it: in the logic of the gag, it is a heart problem, not a gastro-intestinal one.[710] Thus he responds in (potentially feigned) shock at the location of Dionysus' heart: "*here* is where you have your heart?" Dionysus then explains that his heart has wandered down to his bowels, circuitously reformulating the scatological accident that he had announced in plain words in line 479. His diction remains "clinical" in these lines and even intensifies through his use of a term which has a strong medical flavor: "ἡ κατὰ κοιλίη," the lower cavity. Dionysus also chooses the eta, rather than alpha, ending for the noun, using the ionic dialect which characterizes medical writing.[711] Thus in several ways, the god avails himself of ideas in contemporaneous medicine, the application of which builds up and sets up a comical, obscene revelation.

This passage parodies both medical language and how psychological organs behave in high genres. Such dramatic movement of the heart was distinctly within the realm of epic and tragedy; the heart leaps and moves according to Greek metaphorical conventions. Despite his medical references, what Dionysus purports to experience unsurprisingly has no basis in

[708] Del Corno (1985, ad loc.).

[709] I follow Sommerstein's emendation as it makes more sense for Xanthias, not Dionysus, to ask where the sponge is (considering the following lines).

[710] *Contra* Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 189-91) who understands the sponge to be applied as a medical treatment for the heart rather than used for wiping.

[711] Van der Eijk (1997, 99-100).

medical accounts of the time; the Hippocratic *kardia* only palpitates.[712] Thus Dionysus telescopes both conceptualizations of the heart, Hippocratic and tragic, into one. His bodily (dys)functions in this way are over-defined, mixing poetic exclamations with clinical observations to take advantage of the whole range of the Greek imagination concerning the bodily interior. The scene debases (quite literally, lowers) the god's plight; instead of his heart sinking to his feet like that of an Iliadic hero, it relocates to his bowels.[713]

As in the consultation scene with Heracles, this joke exaggerates the god's physical body and performs a verbal dissection on him.[714] While with his brother, the god spoke of his heart, neck, shins, and the two hemispheres of his brain, from the gatekeeper's threats we hear of four of the god's internal body parts. The audience hears about his heart for the second time—this time in association with fear and in relation to its placement in the body. The heart, the center of his erotic feeling for Euripides, becomes much more anatomical through this localization. His incongruous description invites us contemplate his anomalous, comic anatomy. Along with Xanthias, we follow, with our eyes and imagination, his heart from his chest, where we and Xanthias rightly expect it to be, down to his "lower cavity." The whipping scene in Hades also highlights Dionysus' body—specifically his ability to feel pain. The gatekeeper in the underworld assumes (apparently very erroneously) that a true god would not experience such a thing. Xanthias suggests torturing Dionysus in a number of ways; the god (along with his slave) partially strips in order to be beaten, thus revealing his back; in the course of the scene Dionysus' flanks (*Ra.* 662) and belly (663) are indicated, and if we are to take Sommerstein's suggestion, a foot as well (658). Thus in this scenario too Dionysus' body and its discrete parts are the center of attention.

In brief, the amount of references to Dionysus' body parts and their level of detail by far surpass that of other characters in Aristophanes. In a more global analysis of the plot, this emphasis can be read quite simply. Dionysus is tantamount to an effeminate mortal at the beginning, but in the course of the play undergoes a transformation, a renewal and reaffirmation of his power,[715] which is generically in keeping with the playwright's works and ritualistically in keeping with the cult of Dionysus.[716] Nevertheless, if we contextualize the passage with the themes that dominate the play up until the god's final judgment, we can

[712] D. Griffith (1998, 234), however, sees a parallel between the movement of his heart and that of a Hippocratic wandering womb
[713] Sommerstein's (1996, ad loc.) observation of a parody on Hom. *Il.* 15.280.
[714] For the ritual importance of Dionysus' dismemberment in the play, see Lada-Richards (1999, 72-3).
[715] Padilla (1992).
[716] For the *Frogs* as a rite of passage that rejuvenates the city, see Lada-Richards (1999, 45-122); for the theme of renewal in general in the *Frogs,* see Reckford (1987, 40-1) and Zeitlin (1985, 82-3).

tease yet more out of this type of imagery. In three instances discussed above, Dionysus suffers physiological effects from literary material: nausea, erotic desire, and injury; his body is the primary medium through which literary effects manifest themselves in the play. Moreover, throughout the play, Dionysus' body itself serves as an important symbol through which Aristophanes presents a corollary to the imagery of embodied poetry. Dionysus becomes the corporal manifestation of the very realm of his divine power: he does not only preside over and critique drama in the play, his body itself even represents drama.[717] Thus the metaphor works both ways: Dionysus' body is a metaphor for literary work, and literary work, in turn, becomes metaphorically embodied. The audience's examination of Dionysus' body during the first half of the play parallels the god's own examination of the tragedians' works in the agon.

Embodied Literature

We find this emphasis on corporeality not only in Dionysus' characterization, but also in the characterization of literature itself in the *Frogs*. It is unsurprising that the god of theater has bodily reactions to literature considering how frequently the comedy figuratively describes literature itself as embodied. Dionysus famously judges lines of verse from Aeschylus and Euripides in very concrete terms: the poetry is literally weighed with a scale onstage. Aristophanes presents this metaphor fundamentally through the double meaning of *barus*: weighing serves as a method of evaluating the heaviness, that is, the gravity of the text. Poetry with ponderous subject matter thus wins the day in this assessment.[718] Yet this strategy of evaluation does not merely reflect the qualities of the text—it transforms it. The metaphor inevitably and immediately has us imagine words as concrete objects. From the perspective of the audience, literary material, when it is physically measured, becomes *material*, and remains so for most of the play. [719]

This is, however, far from the first time we hear this kind of imagery. In fact throughout the whole agon, characters attribute physical characteristics to immaterial verses. The chorus in particular compares verbal poetry with physical objects. Words become tangible in, for example, the construction metaphors which pervade the contest; the

[717] See Lada-Richards (1999, 321) for Dionysus' identification with Old Comedy.
[718] Newiger (2000, 53-4).
[719] Porter (2010, 262-575) surveys imagery of physically measurable poetry in other authors. He argues that, in using these metaphors, Aristophanes refers to, makes fun of, the "evolving discourses of aesthetic description and evaluation in late fifth-century Greece" (261).

tragedians can glue together and build up pieces of syntax. The chorus imagines how the poetry competition between the tragedians will play out, speculating that Aeschylus will fashion words out of wood: he will "hurl words bolted together, tearing them off plank-wise with a bellow of a giant" (ῥήματα γομφοπαγῆ, πινακηδὸν ἀποσπῶν/ γηγενεῖ φυσήματι, *Ra*. 824-5). The phrases are thus made out of (very concrete) building material. The chorus predicts that there will be linchpin-shavings and carvings as Euripides defends himself: σχινδαλάμων τε παραξονίων σμιλεύματά τ᾽ ἔργων,/ φωτὸς ἀμυνομένου (819-20).

Later the chorus again mentions something similar, remarking that there is sawdust of words (ῥήματα καὶ παραπρίσματ᾽ ἐπῶν, *Ra*. 881). These shavings and sawdust are of course byproducts of the production of words or other segments of text. Here again, the chorus represents words and phrases as if they were as physical as wood. As Wright has observed, Aeschylus' words are described as a magnificent work built with bolts and beams. In contrast, the little phrases of Euripides are like finely carved works or, negatively viewed, simply splinters. In both cases, however, the audience images a physical objects for evaluation. These kinds of metaphors can be found elsewhere in Aristophanes, but nowhere else are they more frequent and consistent than in the *Frogs*.

In a related and intensified version of this imagery, words are also endowed with another sort of body: not of wood, but of flesh. Although construction metaphors are very common in the agon, I argue that these metaphors of "embodied" text are ultimately more important for the play as a whole, and in particular, for the literary criticism presented. Here the chorus describes words and expressions as warriors on horseback wearing horse-hair helmets:

> ἔσται δ᾽ ὑψιλόφων τε λόγων κορυθαίολα νείκη
> σχινδάλαμοί τε παραξονίων σμιλεύματά τ᾽ ἔργων,
> φωτὸς ἀμυνομένου φρενοτέκτονος ἀνδρὸς
> ῥήμαθ᾽ ἱπποβάμονα. (*Ra*. 818-20)
>
> We'll have helmet-glinting struggles of tall-crested words,
> we'll have linchpin-shavings and chisel-parings of artworks,
> as a man fends off a thought-building hero's galloping utterances. (trans. Henderson)

Although the craft imagery is still very present,[720] these lines offer a very strong, plastic personification as well. The words move like living fighters and attack each other. That they are wearing helmets and are riding horses implies that the words do not just behave like people, but also that they have specific human body parts: heads and legs, which produces an especially lively image of embodied poetry. Aeschylus also personifies Euripides' works by

[720] See Porter's (2010, 267-9) discussion of this passage along with a similar metaphor in Hesiod.

reproaching him that his poetry died with him (συντέθνηκεν, *Ra*. 868-9).[721] This verb is not the usual term for "go extinct" or "be forgotten;" elsewhere its grammatical subject is exclusively a person or people. The tragedian's comment, therefore, constitutes another evocative personification of poetry since literature cannot die unless we imagine it to be alive in the first place. Soon afterwards, Euripides continues the mud-slinging by criticizing Aeschylus' poetry with his own grotesque personification:

> κἄπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὴ ταῦτα ληρήσειε καὶ τὸ δρᾶμα
> ἤδη μεσοίη, ῥήματ᾽ ἂν βόεια δώδεκ᾽ εἶπεν,
> ὀφρῦς ἔχοντα καὶ λόφους, δείν᾽ ἄττα μορμορωπά,
> ἄγνωτα τοῖς θεωμένοις. (*Ra*. 923-25)
>
> And after he'd faffed about until the middle of the play,
> He'd say twelve-oxhide words with eyebrows and crests
> What terrible gorgon-faced ones, unknown to theater-goers.

Aeschylus' words here are monstrous, but humanoid, figures with faces and eyebrows; they clearly have heads and arms as well because they wear helmets and bear ox-hide shields. As the chorus had before, Euripides describes the words as armored warriors threatening violence.

Furthermore, the personification is not limited to entire persons; we also hear of the subdivisions of poetry in terms of bodily subdivisions. In two cases literature is figured as an anatomical part of the poet. Euripides refers to their contest with another military metaphor: Aeschylus and he are to bite each other, not in their actual bodies, but rather in their works:

> ἕτοιμός εἰμ᾽ ἔγωγε, κοὐκ ἀναδύομαι,
> δάκνειν, δάκνεσθαι πρότερος, εἰ τούτῳ δοκεῖ,
> τἄπη, τὰ μέλη, τὰ νεῦρα τῆς τραγῳδίας,
> καὶ νὴ Δία τὸν Πηλέα γε καὶ τὸν Αἴολον
> καὶ τὸν Μελέαγρον κἄτι μάλα τὸν Τήλεφον. (*Ra*. 860-4)
>
> I'm ready, for my part, and I won't hesitate
> to be the first to bite and be bitten—if he'll agree—
> in the words, the songs, the sinews of our tragedies
> even, by God, my Peleus, my Aeolus, my Meleager,
> and my Telephus most of all.

With accusatives of respect, Euripides refers to the words, songs, and sinews of their works. He verbally divides his tragedies into bodily parts, offering them for critical examination in ascending order of metaphorical degree: τἄπη, τὰ μέλη, τὰ νεῦρα τῆς τραγῳδίας. The sentence begins with a literal term, transitions to an ambiguous one, and ends purely metaphorically. "Words" (ἔπη) have a non-figurative denotation, but there is wordplay in the

[721] Cf. the opposite situation in a Matro of Pitane fragment in which Persephone enables a poet to continue chattering in death (fr. 7.4-6).

μέλη that follows: it is "songs" as well as "bodily limbs." Sinews (νεῦρα), of course, are entirely figurative; it is a fool's errand to try and find a direct referent for the *neura* of dramatic works (although it has been undertaken more than once). While *neura* do not exactly correspond to our modern "sinews" or "tendons," in this context the term can only indicate an internal body part. Thus Aristophanes presents another clear personification of text. Through this mixture of literal and verbal descriptions, bodily and literary vocabulary are likewise mixed. It is a metaphorical anatomy of drama.[722]

In the lines that follow, Euripides offers four of his works up for scrutiny: his *Peleus*, *Meleager*, *Aeolus,* and *Telephus*; by referring only to his plays with one specific character in the title, he also figuratively alludes to a dissection of each of their bodies in addition to the body of the text.[723] This statement is in fact the second time we hear of Euripides' *Telephus*. On an earlier occasion, the chorus warns the playwright to watch out that he does not get injured and lose his *Telephus*, "lest he strike your temple with a heady words/ out of anger and spill out your Telephus!" (ἵνα μὴ κεφαλαίῳ τὸν κρόταφόν σου ῥήματι/ θενὼν ὑπ᾽ ὀργῆς ἐκχέῃ τὸν Τήλεφον, *Ra.* 854-855). In that passage and in Euripides' taunt a few lines later (864), his *Telephus* is described as a part of his body which can be damaged through physical trauma just as any other body part.

Therefore, while the beginning of the play focuses on Dionysus' physicality, the agon introduces a seemingly endless host of imagery of embodied poetry. There are other kinds of metaphors present which likewise figure poetry as a physical object, yet their usefulness for the evaluation of literature is relatively limited; through such comparisons, only aspects such as size, shape, and quality can be described. They cannot convey issues of ethics or agency, criteria which become crucial in the *Frogs* as we near the end of the competition. Especially when Euripides describes himself as the healer of the tragic genre, we discover how much more mileage personifications and bodily metaphors offer. I explore in the following pages why this is the case.

Critique of the Body as Critique of Literature

Now that we have reviewed the various uses of bodily imagery, let us look more

[722] Bagordo (2002, 320-2) discusses this passage and other instances of such puns, e.g. μέλη in Cratinus' fr. 276 K-A. There are also similar metaphors involving other terms; personified Music seems to play on the double meaning of χορδαὶ in Pherecrates' *Cheiron* 155.25 K-A.

[723] Dickerson (1974, 180-2) also analyzes these anatomical metaphors, but focuses on how τἄπη hint at the male member through a parallel pun in *Women at the Thesmophoria.*

specifically at their relation to the play. Literary criticism is one of the major issues which Aristophanes explores and problematizes in *Frogs*. As the judge of the agon, Dionysus becomes a kind of literary critic, exposing and dissecting the lines of the poets in order to determine their literary value. The language in this agon involves a dizzying display of different vehicles for the common tenor of literature. While bodily and medical metaphors for literature do not actually constitute the majority of the metaphors, I argue that this particular figurative language (unlike the military, pugilistic, architectural, and cooking metaphors) has a more global relevance which extends beyond the agon. Because Aristophanes has already introduced and established this imagery and language earlier in the play, they have an especial precedence here in the poetic contest, where the playwright resumes and culminates them.

In the competition Aristophanes directly compares the analytical gaze on literature to the likewise analytical (sometimes even medical) gaze on and into the body; earlier this comparison is implicit, but during the contest, it becomes very explicit through Euripides' physician conceit. Up until the agon proper, in which characters examine actual lines rather than make personal attacks, the chorus sings an introductory song colored with metaphors of combat. They include, however, a curious image:

> ὅ τι περ οὖν ἔχετον ἐρίζειν,
> λέγετον, ἔπιτον, ἀνά <δὲ> δέρετον
> τά τε παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ καινά… (*Ra*. 1105-7)
>
> Whatever you two have to quarrel over,
> State, attack and flay
> both the old and the new (material)...

This verb "ἀναδέρω" translated here as "flay," "strip the skin off" is worth examining more thoroughly in order to understand its use in this song and its relation to the themes in discussion. In his translation Sommerstein renders this word as "dissect," which is clear to the modern English reader who is familiar with the metaphorical meaning of dissection as a careful examination. Nonetheless, from what we know about this word, the translation "dissection" is, strictly speaking, anachronistic; this verb only denotes the removal of skin during a dissection in later centuries.[724] Noticing some kind of strangeness, scholiasts have also hesitated at this word and have glossed it in different ways to clarify its figurative meaning of "lay bare."[725] The verb, while violent, does not perfectly fit into the militaristic

[724] For instance, in Galen *On Anatomical Procedures* IX.719.
[725] In the scholia vetera a scholiast glosses it as "ἀνακαλύπτετε." Tzetzae glosses it: ἀνακινοῦτε, ἀπογυμνοῦτε, ἐκδέρετε, ἀπογυμνοῦτε, φανεροῦτε τά τε παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ νέα.

imagery of the rest of the strophe and has a conspicuously ambiguous meaning. Scholiasts have tidied up this apparent inconsistency by suggesting that it means to denude or strip of armor, a regular practice in war. Yet the action makes little sense chronologically: one strips the enemy after the battle is won, not as *part* of combat. It is the skin itself that should be denuded. With this verb, the chorus indicates that successful literature does not merely prevail through brute force. The lines must also be able to withstand subcutaneous scrutiny, a gaze that penetrates the surface. Mêlée combat between the embodied poetics of Aeschylus and Euripides will not define the victor. Now, according to this imagery, it is not what the verses do, but what they contain, that is important. Only through removing the exterior layer of a body can one properly evaluate what is inside; the chorus likewise implies that only through careful, in-depth examination can one properly judge poetry.

With this metaphor of flaying, the chorus also echoes Euripides' suggestion that the contenders examine each other's works piece by piece, or rather, body part by body part. That imagery too evokes an anatomical evaluation of what lies below the surface. Limbs (μέλη) can be externally examined, but sinews are less superficial. Euripides in fact values this kind of inspection, not just in the realm of literary critique, but also in daily life. He later boasts that his plays have made average Athenians excellent observers:

> Τοιαῦτα μέντοὐγὼ φρονεῖν
> τούτοισιν εἰσηγησάμην,
> λογισμὸν ἐνθεὶς τῇ τέχνῃ
> καὶ σκέψιν, ὥστ' ἤδη νοεῖν
> ἅπαντα καὶ διειδέναι
> τά τ' ἄλλα καὶ τὰς οἰκίας
> οἰκεῖν ἄμεινον ἢ πρὸ τοῦ
> κἀνασκοπεῖν, "πῶς τοῦτ' ἔχει;
> ποῦ μοι τοδί; τίς τοῦτ' ἔλαβε;" (*Ra.* 971-9)
>
> I introduced to them such things,
> Adding logic and observation to my art,
> So that they can now perceive everything
> And discern other things, even how to run
> a house better that before, to interrogate,
> "How's that going? Where's this? Who took that?'

Here his language brims with references to examining and viewing. One alleged purpose of his dramas is to teach audience members to make critical observations and to cross-examine the audience; the imagery brings to mind a courtroom interrogation, but it also recalls Euripides' earlier anatomical references and his status as a metaphorical doctor. As with other fifth-century *technai*, examination was key to the development of the art of medicine. The author of *Ancient Medicine* explains, "the discovery (of medicine) was great and involved

much art and observation” (τό γε εὕρημα μέγα τε καὶ πολλῆς σκέψιος τε καὶ τέχνης, *VM* 4.5-6). Euripides makes a similarly programmatic claim for his *techne*, saying that he added the two aspects of logic and observation. When Euripides fashions himself as a physician of the dramatic art, therefore, we have an image of this penetrating bodily examination, or even flaying, in mind. It appears to be a central aspect of his approach to playwriting.

This reference to flaying, furthermore, draws another a parallel between Dionysus' body and the textual body. It echoes a suggestion which Xanthias makes for torturing the god in lines 617-22.[726] Here as well we find a connection between corporeal and judicial scrutiny. Among a number of gruesome options he offers the gatekeeper, the slave lists flaying (δέρων *Ra*. 619). We see another link between the whipping scene and the literary evaluation in the mention of striking. Aeacus hits Dionysus in the abdomen (663ff). Later the god claims that Aeschylus' verses strike him too, although he mentions in addition what internal bodily part was affected: the kidneys. Despite the radically different roles that the god plays in the two scenes, the whipping scene and the poetic competition actually serve the same fundamental purpose. This process of torturing Dionysus should provide evidence with which Aeacus can pass judgement. The approach in both cases is also similarly systematic: Aeacus will administer the whipping “blow by blow” (πληγὴν παρὰ πληγὴν, *Ra*. 643) and Euripides wants to measure “word for word” (ὁ γὰρ Εὐριπίδης/ <u>κατ᾽ ἔπος</u> βασανιεῖν φησι τὰς τραγῳδίας, 801-2). Through putting the two tragedians to the test, Dionysus reaches a verdict, as Aeacus hoped to do through beating. Characters copiously use cognates of the word βάσανοι in both scenes, and indeed the torture scene and the agon scene are a type of inquiry and trial.[727] Both Xanthias and the chorus view this action of flaying, stripping off the skin, as useful for these respective inquiries: for Aeacus, a test of Dionysus' true nature, while for the chorus, a test of the aesthetic value of the Aeschylus' and Euripides' works. In this way, Dionysus' body is thematically juxtaposed, not just with the theater itself, but also with the body of these tragedians' texts.

This parallel contextualizes our understanding of the extensive descriptions of Dionysus' body in the play. With their words Aristophanes' characters flay and dissect him: the audience members are made to watch both the inside and outside of Dionysus' body in detail, laughing at its obscenity and comic shortcomings. Yet this penetrating gaze, this x-ray vision with which Aristophanes endows his audience, inevitably is also analytical in nature.

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[726] A parallel which Halliwell (2011, 133 n. 68) observes in passing. Del Corno (1985, ad loc.) also mentions this double meanings for lines *Ra*. 801-2.

[727] *Ra*. 618; 625; 629; 642 (torture); *Ra*. 802; 826; 1121; 1123; 1367 (the agon).

Dionysus encourages this quasi-medical scrutiny through his anatomical, medical descriptions of himself: the hemispheres of his brain, his "heart" problems, his lower intestine, and his two kidneys. The audience participates in the task of literary evaluation in the agon by critiquing lines of tragedy along with the characters on stage. As I have argued, a similar kind of spectator scrutiny also takes place before the agon: before inspecting embodied lines from drama, the audience inspects drama, embodied by the god of theater.

In a famous antistrophe in the agon (*Ra.* 1108-1119), the chorus encourages the playwrights to say clever things, assuring them that modern audiences are sufficiently educated for anything. 'Don't fear that they won't know (γνῶναι, 1111) the subtleties you say,' the chorus sings, 'they all have books; they understand (μανθάνει, 1114) clever things.' The metaphorical flaying which they suggest in the prior strophe has much to do with the antistrophe here: the audience members, as educated laypeople, are capable of penetrating insight and competent inspection of the material.[728] Just as the audience gazes on Dionysus' body, laid bare, dissected into parts, they will also gaze on tragic texts with a critical eye, probing past the surface.[729]

Central to the practice of examining both the body and of poetry, moreover, is the issue of determining *value*.[730] The play primarily features negative value: the badness of poetry as revealed through a close inspection, and the potential badness of Dionysus as should have been revealed through torturing him. Dionysus' physiological reactions to literature indicate their worth: he responds to a bad joke as if it were a rotten piece of food; Euripides' *Andromeda*, well-regarded by the god, inspires erotic longing in him. Aeschylus' verses can be criticized for their heaviness, figuratively indicating their excessive gravity.[731] We also find an extreme evaluation of bodily "goodness" in Euripides' physician metaphor which compares bodily health and attractiveness with aesthetic value of tragedy. As opposed to the aesthetic and/or practical evaluation of, for instance, wood carvings, this type of medical evaluation of bodily health introduces the ethical element to the art of dramaturgy which becomes more apparent as the play progresses.

[728] We also see the layman's potential for the medical expertise in the *Assemblywomen* (*Ecc*. 404-7).
[729] Perhaps there is also a parallel between the fixity of the text as found in a book and the anatomical catalogue which we hear of Dionysus' body. Through his sometimes detailed, even quasi-medical, descriptions, the god presents his body as canonized and Hippocratic with internal bodily parts that are determined and localized.
[730] Rosen (2008, 143-4).
[731] As opposed to the "thin" style of Euripides; this rhetorical "thinness" would of course only later become programmatic in Hellenistic poetry, although O'Sullivan (1992, 133-142) argues that it can be found in the fifth century as well.

The Poet as Ethical Subject

This comparison of poetry with the physical beings, and especially with humans, anticipates Euripides' physician conceit which I argue has the greatest significance for how we interpret the connection between literature and ethics in the play:

> οὐχ ἱππαλεκτρυόνας, μὰ Δί᾽, οὐδὲ τραγελάφους, ἅπερ σύ,
> ἃν τοῖσι παραπετάσμασιν τοῖς Μηδικοῖς γράφουσιν·
> ἀλλ᾽ ὡς παρέλαβον τὴν τέχνην παρὰ σοῦ τὸ πρῶτον εὐθὺς
> οἰδοῦσαν ὑπὸ κομπασμάτων καὶ ῥημάτων ἐπαχθῶν,
> ἴσχνανα μὲν πρώτιστον αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ βάρος ἀφεῖλον
> ἐπυλλίοις καὶ περιπάτοις καὶ τευτλίοισι λευκοῖς,
> χυλὸν διδοὺς στωμυλμάτων ἀπὸ βιβλίων ἀπηθῶν·
> εἶτ᾽ ἀνέτρεφον μονῳδίαις, Κηφισοφῶντα μιγνύς. (*Ra.* 937-4)
>
> Certainly not horsecocks or goatstags, like you [Aeschylus],
> the sort of things they embroider on Persian tapestries.
> No, as soon as I first inherited the art from you,
> bloated with bombast and obese vocabulary,
> I immediately put it on a diet and took off the weight
> with a regimen of wordlets and strolls and little white beets,
> administering chatter-juice pressed from books;
> then I built up its strength with an admixture, mixing in Cephisophon. (trans. Henderson)

The passage's imagery very clearly makes use of medical diction and ideas.[732] The approach and in particular the dietetic elements of Euripides "cure" bring to mind Hippocratic treatises. He personifies the *techne* of tragedy as an unwell, unfit woman; [733] responsibility for her care, as he explains, first fell on the elder playwright and then on him, because he inherited her from him. She was apparently not in good condition under Aeschylus' care and therefore needed a course of treatment in order to regain her health. Through this language, therefore, Euripides fashions himself as a doctor whose duty it is to diagnose her problem and prescribe her treatment. As a doctor he identifies not just the physical state of tragedy, but the cause of her problem. He reports that tragedy was heavy and swollen from bragging and heavy diction. Because of (ὑπό) these two insalubrious aspects of Aeschylus' poetic style, the *techne* became obese. Euripides consequently brought down the swelling in order to make her healthy again. He had her diet (ἰσχναίνειν), literally "dried" her out (the Greeks associated thinness with dryness and obesity with excess moisture). Connecting his extended metaphor to the trope of embodied poetry, Euripides says he took away her weight (βάρος), referring simultaneously again to both poetic as well as bodily heaviness.

[732] Jouanna (2000, 191-3); Rodríguez Alfageme (1981, 193-6); Southard (1970, 191-4); H. Miller (1945, 80). Rodríguez Alfageme (1997) discusses the sophistic and rhetorical, in addition to medical, elements of the passage.

[733] Newiger (2000, 130-2) emphasizes the importance of the term *techne* here and throughout the comedy.

Fittingly for a disease that is both poetic and bodily (and in characteristic Aristophanic style), Euripides treats her pathological condition with a mixture of literal and figurative methods. Euripides mentions small verses, walks, and a particular vegetable, white beets, as his treatment. According to Hippocratic writings, these last two treatments have a reducing effect, and so we may assume that the "little verses" do as well. The "little white beets" echo with their diminutive form the "little verses," and so connect the literal with the figurative treatments. Walks (περίπατοι) as well are a cornerstone of Hippocratic treatment in both preventative and acute care, as we see especially in *On Regimen* and *On Diseases* II.[734] Just as today, this physical exercise was imagined to heat up the body and melt away excess weight.[735] The beets likewise do not constitute tragedy's new, healthy regimen, but were rather a purgative remedy. The author of *On Regimen* remarks that the juice of these beets has a laxative effect (*Reg*. II. 54.44-5). The focus of lines 941-2 is, therefore, the treatment of her acute, morbid condition.

The younger playwright's general approach reflects the reoccurring recommendation in *On Regimen* for someone suffering from overindulgence in food or some other kind of surfeit: a doctor must first prescribe a diet then gradually and systematically return the patient to average eating habits: a process of ἀφαίρεσις and subsequent προσαγωγή.[736] Accordingly, the next step after the reduction is her restoration to health. After she lost weight, Euripides nourished her with what he deems healthy fare. These two liquids which he administers to her are also literary in nature: the juice of the chatter of books and the monodies for which he was famous. Like a druggist he mixes the potion, adding in Cephisophon who serves as a metonymy for his own writing. Here too Euripides remains medical in his diction; the use of juice (χυλός) in itself was a characteristic element of Hippocratic medicine rather than a culinary delight.

In borrowing from Hippocratic ideas, in particular from *On Regimen*, Euripides also taps into their assumptions about, and implications for, patients and the patient-doctor relationship. In *On Regimen* the author characterizes patients as fallible, prone to making poorly founded conclusions about their own health:

> "But the sufferer always lays the blame unjustly on the thing he may happen to do at the time of the illness. In such a case food overpowers exercises, and the surfeit gathering together little by little brings on disease. One ought now, however, to let things drift to this point, but to realise, as

[734] Byl (1990, 152). E.g. in Hipp. *Reg*. II.62; III.82.6-7. *Epid.* VII. 119. *Mul. Aff.* 110; 116; Morb. II.48; 49. For remarks on walking in the HC, see Jouanna (1999, 167-8).
[735] Hipp. *Reg*. II.62; 66.
[736] Hipp. *Reg*. II.66; *Reg*. III.70; 73; 74; *Reg*. IV. 89; 93.

> soon as one has recognized the first of the signs, that exercises are overpowered by foods that gather little by little, whereby comes surfeit." (Hipp. *Reg.* III. 70.11-9, trans. Jones)

The physician, therefore, must apply his expert knowledge in order to keep the patient healthy and act quickly in order to intervene when he sees the first signs of illness. A strong emphasis is placed on sound prediction:

> "The wise man, however, should not let things drift, but as soon as he recognizes the first signs, he should carry out a cure by the same remedies as in the first case" (Hipp. *Reg.* III. 71.19-22, trans. Jones)
>
> "But what is necessary is to exercise forethought before the diseases attack, and to adopt the following treatment:" (Hipp. *Reg.* III. 72.10-1, trans. Jones)

Perhaps the patient even acts on his false assumptions and tries to heal himself, whereby he only makes matters worse for his doctor:

> "The ache resembles the pain of fatigue. Accordingly, under the impression that they are suffering fatigue pains, these patients adopt a treatment of rest and over-feeding, until they fall into a fever. Even then they fail to realise the true state of affairs, but indulging in baths and food they turn the illness into pneumonia, and fall into the direst peril. (Hipp. *Reg.* III. 72.4-12, trans. Jones)

While it is important to have a sensible regimen, the author implies, the best course is for a patient to heed their doctor's advice. A patient's knowledge about their body is limited; their limited understanding can even be dangerous, leading them astray to a more sickly condition. If a doctor is present, then ultimately it is he who is responsible for the fate of his patient. He must steer his imprudent patients in the right direction, make the correct predictions, and administer the correct treatment at the correct time (the Hippocratic concept of καιρός). In this way, Euripides places the blame squarely on Aeschylus, rather than the tragic art "herself." The two playwrights, after all, are supposed to be her experts and keepers.

This personification of the dramatic art is, of course, not the first and certainly not the most lengthy and developed example from fifth-century Athenian theater.[737] Some twenty years prior Cratinus presented his *Wineflask*, a self-deprecatory characterization of his poetic persona, and possibly a cheeky answer to Aristophanes' portrayal of him as a washed-up drunk in the *Knights* (526-36).[738] In his play Cratinus stages Comedy, personifying her as his disgruntled wife who wants to divorce him on the grounds that he neglects her in favor of wine.[739] This metaphor has some notable similarities with Euripides' medical conceit in the *Frogs* and we can well imagine the audience recalling *Wineflask* when they hear it. In both

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[737] Bakola (2010, 277-81). E.g. Pherecrates' *Cheiron* 155.25 K-A.

[738] For analyses of Cratinus' poetic strategy in *Wineflask* and its relation to Aristophanes' own work, see Bakola (2010, 59-64), Biles (2002), Ruffell (2002), and Rosen (2000).

[739] Illustrated in Cratinus' *Wineflask* test. ii K-A = scholion ad Aristophanes *Eq*. 400; frr. 194; 195; 199 K-A.

the comedies, a literary genre is personified as a woman that depends on the poet and requires his care and attention. Cratinus' metaphor of course implies sexual, instead of medical, attention, but a similar dependency is attributed to both metaphorical women.[740]

These two comparisons both express the idea that the playwright has a legal or moral obligation to his work in a way that Pindar, for example, would not have had to his poetic monuments. Pindaric artifices, once erected and erected properly (as he claims to have), should withstand the test of time. Living beings, on the other hand, need to be constantly maintained; bodily health is markedly more fragile, unpredictable, and elusive. A difference between Cratinus' comedy and Euripides' tragic *techne*, however, lies in what the metaphor of a patient-doctor relationship suggests for the relationship between a poet and his poetry. Specifically, Euripides the doctor must have expertise, intelligence, and training, while Cratinus the husband need only be male and sufficiently well-off. The image of Tragedy-cum-patient necessarily communicates an ethical message as well: it is not enough merely to practice the art, but a doctor has the duty to practice it well and effectively because lives are at stake. Euripides' conceit is therefore laden with ethical implications for "practitioners" of the dramatic art and for the role that expertise plays in its composition.

In this way Euripides' doctor conceit culminates, and embellishes on, the imagery of embodied text throughout the play. It crowns this imagery by offering a lengthy and developed metaphor, specifically a personification, whose tenor is not simply words or phrases, but the entire art of tragedy herself. Euripides furthermore proposes a model for the relationship not only between a playwright and his work, but also between a playwright and the work of other playwrights. This model in turn contributes to our understanding of the play's theme of literary critique. According to the metaphor, the playwright does not so much create text whole cloth, but rather maintains a dramatic art that already exists. The author, as doctor, "reads" the body of the text and diagnoses its weaknesses. For whatever ails the genre, the doctor prescribes his own style and content as a remedy. This proposal of a doctor-patient relationship between a writer and his work inevitably alters how we conceptualize the playwright's task and duty. Composing is less akin to constructing ships or helmets, Euripides suggests, than to perfecting the health of human bodies. As we are soon to discover, however, the Aristophanic Euripides perhaps comes up short here as well. Nevertheless his imagery, once proposed, stays relevant for the remainder of the *Frogs*.

Later, Dionysus turns against Euripides, picking up the playwright's own medical

[740] Bakola (2010, 276-8) points to a Solonian law that requires the husband of a heiress to sleep with her three times a month (Plutarch *Sol*. 20.3).

metaphor and twisting it around to make a similar criticism of him. After the contest has turned to a critique of Aeschylus' and Euripides' prologues, the god diagnoses Euripides' lines as Euripides himself had diagnosed Aeschylean tragedy. The elder dramatist criticizes Euripides' prologues for being so repetitive that they could all end with the same words: "lost his little oil flask." Sufficiently convinced of Aeschylus' claim, Dionysus calls an end to Euripides' attempts to prove his rival wrong and reproaches his lines with a nosological simile: τὸ ληκύθιον γὰρ τοῦτ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖς προλόγοισί σου/ ὥσπερ τὰ σῦκ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἔφυ (*Ra.* 1246-7).[741] The "little oil flask" grows on his prologues like growths on eyes. In this way his prologues are not only embodied; they suffer one of the major vagaries of this very embodiment: disease. Just as Euripides claimed to have played the physician, diagnosing and curing the pathological state of Aeschylus' tragedy, Dionysus in turn identifies a susceptibility to disease in Euripides' prologues. The criticism is absurd, but not totally meaningless in the context of the play's medical themes;[742] it imputes to Euripides the failure to create a "healthy" art, that is, one capable of withstanding the inbound onslaught of critique, metaphorically fashioned as an opportunistic ailment.[743] As in Euripides' medical conceit, this second nosological analogy inevitably lends an ethical tone as well. Aeschylus was remiss in letting the physical fitness of tragedy deteriorate, which makes his drama not just unpleasant according to Euripides, but in a sense also an instance of moral failure. Now Dionysus observes that Euripides too falls short in his care of the objects of his *techne*.

Euripides' conceit and the metaphor of diseased poetry suggest a link between two duties of a playwright. The human body, like a body of work, is an object of aesthetic critique and contemplation; at the same time it is a site for issues of morality and ethics. As we saw in the *Assemblywomen* as well, disease raises issues of agency and blame, and both doctors and patients are possible culprits. A doctor for his part must maintain and protect the body in his care, and when he fails to do so, he becomes subject to censure. Medical writers address and respond to this anxiety in their treatises, mostly famously in the Hippocratic Oath, but also elsewhere.[744] Thus buttressed by the extensive bodily imagery he employs through the play,

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[741] The author of *Epidemics* mentions this eye condition as well in a catalogue: ἐπιφύςιες βλεφάρων ἔξωθεν, ἔσωθεν, πολλῶν φθείροντα τὰς ὄψιας, ἃ σῦκα ἐπονομάζουσιν (*Epid.* III.7.5-7).

[742] Halliwell (2011, 136-8) argues that this scene demonstrates how it is senseless to take discrete phrases out of context for evaluating works as a whole. Be that as it may, I suggest that the metaphor fits into other medical imagery in the play, and thus is meaningful within the logic of the comedy even as it remains, in reality, an impracticable farce.

[743] Growths on eyes can be seen as "opportunistic" in the sense that poor environmental conditions apparently make the body susceptible to them, for example the Hippocratic author of *Epidemics* III believes that they emerged in a population because of weather conditions (cold waves in early spring) (*Epid.* III.7).

[744] Hipp. *Iusj*. 16-8; 24-6. See also *Epid.* I. 11.11-2 for the famous statement "to do good or do no harm;" On the

Aristophanes maps the importance of social morality which we find in the medical *techne* onto the dramatic *techne* at the end of the agon. Yet the interconnection between literature and morality can also be found throughout the play in the material which I have already examined and which I propose also insinuates the relevance of ethics for the evaluation of literature in the *Frogs*.

This focus on "poetic ethics" might seem somewhat out of place in what purports to be a contest primarily concerned with matters of literary aesthetics. Nevertheless, the theme of the social effect of poetry is an issue (both latent and explicit) throughout the agon. Dionysus' criterion for judgement, moreover, wholly changes at line 1418 when he decides to jettison the poetical nit-picking and probes the tragedians instead with political questions.[745] In the end, the contest seems to devolve into an argument about which poet best supports the moral integrity of Athens.[746] According to this standard, Aeschylus carries the day, not the tragedian whose sensuous dramas drove the god to his *katabasis* in the first place. While the significance of Aeschylus' victory remains debatable and recent scholarship dissuades us from understanding the comedy unironically as a manifesto for literary ethics,[747] Aristophanes thematizes both the aesthetic and moral aspects of drama, in that order, and medical imagery is present in the discussion of both these criteria. The moral undercurrent of the medical imagery in the previous examples thus serves a fitting segue into this development of the contest and is, I argue, instrumental to the play as a whole.

The Poetry as Ethical Subject

The poet is not the only ethical subject we find in the *Frogs*; poetry itself takes on agency and, in turn, ethical responsibility. In this model the literature is critiqued on its own merits rather than those of the poet. We get a clearer picture of this type of metaphor and its implications when we consider Gorgias of Leontini's *Helen*, a speech which also portrays

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responsibility of the physician to his patients, see Jouanna (1999, 128-131; 140) and von Staden (1996).

[745] Halliwell (2011, 142) rightly sees these priorties as inconsistent and believes one should not gloss over this fact when interpreting the ultimate outcome of the contest, as e.g. Worman (2008, 105) and Konstan (1995, 74) do.

[746] We are thereby reminded of the intertexual connection to Aeschylus' *Weighing of the Souls*, where measuring moral worth is conceived of in terms of measuring physical weight.

[747] Halliwell (2011) and Rosen (2004). *Contra* Lada-Richards (1999, 216-33), who believes that Dionysus has in fact meaningfully realigned his poetic sensibilites for the sake of the *polis*. Cf. Harriott (1969, 148-61) who argues that the *Frogs* reflects its fifth-century context in which literary critique was inchoate and inseparable from moral critique.

speech as an embodied object and, incidentally, most likely predates the *Frogs*.[748] I do not suggest that that there is an intertextual connection between the *Helen* and the comedy, but there is evidence for this sophist's latent relevance in the drama that establishes a basis for bringing this image into our discussion in the first place.

Frogs reminds its audience of Gorgias in a few ways: first in a general sense, in that stereotypes about sophistic oratory feature prominently in the agon; scholars have also hypothesized a parallel between Euripides' verbal displays in the underworld and sophists' performances.[749] Specifically, however, Gorgias appears to be stylistically associated with Aeschylus' character in the *Frogs*.[750] Most importantly the literary "materialism" which Aristophanes foregrounds in this play has a recognized precedent in Gorgias' work.[751] As I mentioned before, the rhetorician famously employs construction metaphors for oratory and refers to the art of rhetoric as a *techne*; in much the same way, Aristophanes describes, and refers to, drama in the *Frogs*.[752] With these points of contact in mind, I want to go a step further and suggest that Aristophanes not only uses a similar metaphor, i.e. embodied speech, but also that this imagery coincidentally has the same fundamental *function* in the *Frogs* as it has in Gorgias' encomium. The rhetorician's particular conceptualization of *logos* and its relationship to the assignment of blame shed light on the role of embodied literature in the comedy.

While unlike Aristophanes, he nowhere thematizes the imagery of embodied words, Gorgias on one occasion employs this metaphor in a rather extraordinary way in his *Helen*. He personifies *logos* as a "potentate" who effects wonders with the smallest and obscurest of bodies: λόγος δυνάστης μέγας ἐστίν, ὃς σμικροτάτωι σώματι καὶ ἀφανεστάτωι θειότατα ἔργα ἀποτελεῖ.[753] With this sentence, Gorgias demonstrates the insidious power of words—yet it is

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[748] Donadi (1978, 76). Nonetheless this would be the latest date suggested. The last quarter of the fifth century is more comfortable. Basta Donzelli (1985, 402-4); Orsini (1956).

[749] Sommerstein (1996, ad loc.) and del Corno (1985, ad loc.) point in particular to the use of the word ἐπεδείκνυτο (*Ra*. 774), which R. Hunter (2009, 12-3) discusses in greater detail.

[750] Segal (1962, 129-132); Rosenmeyer (1955). O'Sullivan (1992, 16-20) proposes that Gorgias was the specific source for Aristophanes' phrase "full of Ares": Ἄρεως μεστόν (*Ra*. 1021; (DK82) B24) with regard to *Seven against Thebes*. Wright (2012, 114) and Dover (1993, 31-3) do not find the connection convincing, but for my point it is not necessary that it is a direct allusion. For potential Gorgianic references to Aeschylus, see Gorg. *Helen* 2, 16 (MacDowell 1982, ad loc.).

[751] Ford (2002, 162-5) speaks of Gorgias as a scientific materialist, drawing his conceptualizations of speech and its mechanism from natural philosophers, namely Democritus. On the materiality of Greek poetry more generally, see Svenbro (1976, 186-93). Porter (2010, 275-98), however, advises against understanding Gorgias simply as a linguistic materialist, considering such elements of the *Encomium of Helen* as a (perhaps ironically curated) product of the intellectual milieu rather than a practicable theory of language.

[752] (DK82) A2; A4. Testimonia as well seem preoccupied with attributing this definition of rhetoric to Gorgias. Both fragments are discussed in Löbl (1997, 175-6) with regard to the use of the word *techne*.

[753] Gorg. *Helen* 8. I heed Holmes' (2010, 212), and MacDowell's (1982, ad loc.) warning in interpreting this passage: Gorgias does not actually mean to say that speech, as a "potentate," has a physical body. Porter

the figurative language itself that is instrumental for Gorgias' aim rather than its superficial meaning. Holmes gives us a convincing argument for the rhetorician's reason for attributing a body to speech: human bodies are key for the conceptualization of agency. In other words, having a body means having the power to act.[754] Gorgias' strategy to characterize speech as embodied, therefore, bolster well his argument about the efficacy, even intrinsic agency, of words. According to this image, words are independent, powerful actors.[755]

Moreover, only embodied things can be properly subject to moral censure. By representing speech as having a *soma*, Gorgias can offer a legitimate alternative culprit for Helen's abduction. Tellingly, the other possible responsible parties which Gorgias suggests are the abductor himself or other gods (Fortune and Necessity specifically are named), all of which are understood as embodied and/or intentioned agents.[756] Consequently Gorgias insinuates that a body is a prerequisite for the attribution of both agency and blame. The effectiveness of this passage depends on the fact that bodies are always and ineluctably social and political; they cannot help but be ethical subjects. Related to this idea is the sociological explanation for why the gods are anthropomorphized: if they did not have corporeal forms, the gods could not participate in the social interactions and therefore would have no community with humans.[757] Thus, when imagined to have a body, a *logos* can become a social agent and theoretically also be guilty of a crime, as Gorgias cleverly proposes might be Helen's case.

When we consider how the function of this imagery in the *Helen* might apply to the *Frogs*, we find a parallel which aids our understanding of the bodily metaphors in the play.

(2010, 289; 298-301) argues in particular against the taking the "σμικροτάτωι σώματι" as evidence that Gorgias proposes a materialist model of *logos* because, among other reasons, these "bodies" cannot be identified with *logos* itself (289). Nonetheless, I disagree with Holmes that this is not an instance of personification (*pace* MacDowell). One of the fundamental purpose of personifying an object or concept is to assign agency to it, which is exactly what Gorgias does here. On this well-attested function of personification, see Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 33-4)).

[754] Holmes (2010, 212).

[755] I purposely say "according to this image" as opposed to "according to Gorgias" in order to avoid the issues that Porter (2010, 275-307) addresses concering how we are ultimately to understand these kinds of images in the *Helen*. The image of *logos* as a "potentate," that is, as autonomous, he considers to be a logical contradiction to the materialist image of *logos* that Gorgias seems to present in the speech simultaneously (276-84).

[756] Gorg. *Helen* 6. Importantly, Fortune and Necessity have plans (βουλήματα) and statutes (ψηφίσματα), thus confirming their status as deities within Gorgias' framework. For the interpretation of personification in Greek religion see Stafford (2000) and Burkert (1985, 184-7). While not actually worshipped as a deity until the Hellenistic era, Tyche was vividly personified before Gorgias, notably in Pindar's *Olympian* 12. Race (2004, 376-7) explains how Tyche's presentation as a goddess highlights her agency and role as the "efficient cause" for the events in the honoree's life. Personification is key for this effect, Maslov (2015, 153) notes. So too in his *Helen* does Gorgias demonstrate how personification paves the way for ascription of autonomous will.

[757] Holmes (2010, 94-5); Vernant (1991, 46ff); Lloyd (1966, 210).

By metaphorically giving words, phrases, plays, and even the dramatic genre itself a human form, Aristophanes makes literature in turn an object of social and ethical scrutiny. When outfitted with bodies, texts can be judged for their aesthetic, as well as moral, value. They can be vulnerable to critique for being thin, fat, or even diseased. With bodies, furthermore, words can also perform actions which influence their listeners for better or worse and can themselves in turn be appraised for their moral worth.

This poetic strategy of embodying words helps clarify and reinforce the kinds of issues that emerge throughout the drama concerning literature. The central action of the *Frogs* is, after all, first the aesthetic, and then the moral, judgement of literature. A common thread between the two seemingly very distinct methods of evaluation thus emerges when we follow the bodily imagery in the play. Upon this closer analysis, it makes sense why Aristophanes scattered this literature-as-body metaphor throughout but left the architectural and handicraft metaphors a relatively circumscribed space in the contest: the latter are more limited than the former. Text, materialized as a monument or handiwork, can only be aesthetically evaluated,[758] whereas embodied text can in addition be subject to moral or social judgement.

Returning yet again to Euripides' pivotal medical conceit, we find we now ourselves in a better position to understand his medical treatment of tragedy. Euripides' personification of the patient tragedy has a dual effect: it places the blame on Aeschylus, and yet, as in Gorgias' description of embodied *logos*, the imagery also invites the judgement of tragedy herself for her physical attributes and condition.[759] Through the use of this imagery, Euripides inextricably links social and aesthetic criticism. The aesthetics and health of the text-as-body itself are central to his evaluation of literary value. A playwright fulfills the role of the trainer or doctor, promoting these texts to be "healthy," capable of withstanding external criticism, and beautiful. Yet through Tragedy's personification, the audience, as critics, also are given the means to perform an evaluation of literature itself; the language they already have for describing bodily aesthetics can simply be mapped onto this now visible, hypostatized art form in order to judge its shortcomings.

Later, when the contest turns from questions of aesthetics to the effect that the playwrights have on their audiences, we also must think of the passage about the obese torchbearer whom Dionysus, along with the rest of the spectators at the race, ridicules.

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[758] Wright (2012, 117) remarks that comic poets use these metaphors in an evaluative (rather than merely descriptive) sense.

[759] Encouraged by the thematic link of embodied text, perhaps we even are reminded of another passage in the *Helen* in which Gorgias compares the effect of drugs on the body to the effect of words on the soul. This would enhance the distinctly ethical flavor of Aeschylus' poetic and therapeutic failures.

Aeschylus accuses Euripides of turning the citizens bad with his immoral plays, ending with a critique on the physique of modern citizens. This type of comment recalls the agon of the *Clouds* in which the Just Argument lays out an inverse relationship between physical fitness and smart talking: following him one develops “a shiny chest, glowing skin, broad shoulders, a little tongue, prodigious bum and modest dick,” but through training with the Lesser Argument one develops “narrow shoulders, a big tongue, small bum, and great “decree.” (*Nu*. 1010-19). Euripides’ dramas have a similar effect on their audience.

This torchbearer passage has been labeled as evidence for Dionysus’ increasing disinterest in the salient points of the argument and desire instead to make some obscene jokes. I read this passage, however, as an important part of Aristophanes’ illustration of the relationships between the playwright, the art, and the city. Dionysus becomes fixated on Aeschylus’ point about bodily fitness, despite the fact that he himself played the physically unappealing object of ridicule in the first half of the *Frogs*. The god seems to show an indifference to the issue of dramatic aesthetics as well as an unawareness of his own aesthetic shortcomings in his role as the embodiment of drama:

Aἰ. κᾆτ᾽ ἐκ τούτων ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν
ὑπογραμματέων ἀνεμεστώθη
καὶ βωμολόχων δημοπιθήκων
ἐξαπατώντων τὸν δῆμον ἀεί,
λαμπάδα δ᾽ οὐδεὶς οἷός τε φέρειν
ὑπ᾽ ἀγυμνασίας ἔτι νυνί.
Δι. μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ δῆθ᾽, ὥστ᾽ ἐπαφαυάνθην
Παναθηναίοισι γελῶν, ὅτε δὴ
βραδὺς ἄνθρωπός τις ἔθει κύψας,
λευκὸς, πίων, ὑπολειπόμενος
καὶ δεινὰ ποιῶν· κᾆθ᾽ οἱ Κεραμῆς
ἐν ταῖσι πύλαις παίουσ᾽ αὐτοῦ
γαστέρα, πλευρὰς, λαγόνας, πυγήν,
ὁ δὲ τυπτόμενος ταῖσι πλατείαις
ὑποπερδόμενος
φυσῶν τὴν λαμπάδ᾽ ἔφευγεν. (*Ra.* 1083-98)

Ae. And now our city is filled with clerks
and rabble-monkey buffoons always deceiving the people,
and there’s no one who can carry the torch anymore
because of their lack of fitness.
Di. By Zeus, they can’t! It’s so bad, I withered away
laughing at the Panathenaia, when some slow
man—pale, fat, doubled over the whole time—
dragged behind and labored terribly:
and then at the gates people from Cerameis
hit his belly, ribs, flanks, rump,
and from these open-handed slaps
he farted, blowing out his torch as he ran away.

Here Dionysus, as all Greeks, clearly places aesthetic and moral value on citizen bodies. He

speaks disdainfully of the physique of the torchbearer in these lines. He is pale, (λευκὸς), fat (πίων), and clearly has very little in the way of aerobic endurance. Dionysus also revels in listing all the runner's body parts that were struck; his "belly, ribs, flanks, rump" take up a whole line and are uninterrupted by conjunctions. These lines recall the whipping scene where Xanthias and Aeacus threatened Dionysus' belly and flanks with blows, and thus enhance the ironic connection between the god and the man he ridicules. Furthermore, they again draw attention to the issues of observation and evaluation of the body—now in relation the torchbearer's body in addition to Dionysus'. The audience of the *Frogs* participates in the judgement and ridicule of the god's physique, particularly earlier in the play, and the spectators at the festival do the same to the runner. As the god implies, this torchbearer symbolizes the downward moral trajectory of the city itself. After all, he is on display as part of a meaningful ritual and his physical mediocrity reflects badly on Athens. [760] He symbolizes the direct effect of Euripides' poetry on the citizenry, metonymized as one flabby and dissipated body.

In some basic ways, the hapless runner resembles tragedy herself, who, according to Euripides, was likewise in need of a reductive diet and regimen. They are both bloated and out of shape; Tragedy's and the torchbearer's bodies, although subject to popular criticism, are themselves not blamed for their condition. Again, by employing bodily imagery, Aristophanes forges a link between the Athenian state and contemporaneous drama as emblematized through Euripides' work. Yet there is a crucial difference. When we consider Tragedy's diet and the torchbearer's run together, the issue of literary and social criticism and blame become more complicated. Who is more blameworthy? Aeschylus for making his *own* drama fat, or Euripides for making the people fat *with* his drama? Euripides' character of course highlights the attributes of drama. His claim that a poet's duty is to make people good members of their community (1009-10) is not borne out,[761] and so it is in his interest to keep our focus on the art itself; when the dramatic *techne* is metaphorically embodied and its qualities are described in terms of corporeal aesthetics, his works appear in better light. In contrast, it behooves Aeschylus' character to direct our attention rather to the audience's

[760] Lada-Richards (1999, 227-9) draws a parallel between this passage and his comment about Cinesias' alleged degradation of the Pyrrhic dance (*Ra.* 152-3). Her word choice too is (inadvertently) interesting for my argument: "Furthermore, sharing, as they did, the same liminal space 'in between' the 'sacred' and the 'secular', both the *lampadephoria* and the *pyrrhiche* were not simply spectacular displays of physical endurance, discipline, and skill but, most importantly, constituted an integral part of the city's 'rhetoric' of self-assertion and self-definition as a *healthy* and dynamic politico-religious unit." (italics mine) (Lada-Richards 1999, 228).

[761] Sommerstein (1996, ad loc.).

physical condition and how one's poetry effects it—never mind that the verses and words themselves might be grotesque and oversized. Aristophanes poses the question, yet, despite the contest's clear-cut conclusion, does not give a clear-cut answer.

With these two passages, therefore, Aristophanes has us consider in tandem the aesthetics of literature itself and the supposed effects that literature has on both the aesthetics and morality of Athenians. Nevertheless, this presentation of embodied text and its ethical implications seem ultimately to collapse upon themselves. We can actually see in the drama where this break-down plays out. In the weighing scene, Aeschylus has the advantage. Instead of mere, metaphorically weightless "persuasion," Aeschylus' lines are not only physical heavy, they are also bodies (in this case, dead ones): ἐφ᾽ ἅρματος γὰρ ἅρμα καὶ νεκρῷ νεκρός (*Ra.* 1403). Yet the elder tragedian becomes peeved at Euripides' failure and wants to abandon this tack. As soon as Aeschylus calls a halt to the weighing, all of the imagery of embodied poetry suddenly and permanently ceases:

> καὶ μηκέτ᾽ ἔμοιγε κατ᾽ ἔπος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐς τὸν σταθμὸν
> αὐτὸς, τὰ παιδί᾽, ἡ γυνὴ Κηφισοφῶν,
> ἐμβὰς καθήσθω, συλλαβὼν τὰ βιβλία·
> ἐγὼ δὲ δύ᾽ ἔπη τῶν ἐμῶν ἐρῶ μόνον. (*Ra.* 1407-10)
>
> No more for this word-by-word for me,
> let him, his children, wife, and Cephisophon,
> step onto the scale, with his books all collected up:
> and I will only say two words.

Aeschylus makes a critical move in these lines. He verbally replaces his "corpses," these embodied lines of poetry, which were occupying the scale with a number of real people. An important shift takes place in that these invisible words cannot help but to melt away in our imagination when set on the same diegetic plane as Euripides, who is actually on stage, his children, his wife and Cephisophon (all of whom are real, if not also alive at the time).[762] His objection not only draws an end to the weighing scene, it also gives elegant closure to the fantasy world of embodied texts in which the audience was participating. Now the audience is faced again only with Euripides, a visible body on stage, rather than his lines. Moreover, this tragedian, along with his rival and those among the living, are the only subject with which the characters concern themselves for the remaining hundred-odd lines of the comedy. In the absence of their imagined bodies, the text can logically no longer bear any criticism or

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[762] Looking at certain examples of Roman poetry, Paxson (1994, 83) proposes a theory: "within a single diegetic field or plane, human figures that are physically juxtaposed with personification figures cause the prosopopoetic "neutralization" of each other." While this suggestion is (by Paxson's admittance) speculative and addresses texts from a different time and place, it may still be interesting for understanding the abrupt abandonment of the embodiment metaphors that follows Aeschylus' statement.

be understood as a rational agent. The blame, therefore, can only default back onto the poet, back to where Euripides had placed it in his medical conceit. Thus in the dénouement, Aristophanes seems to backpedal away from his analogy between literary and bodily criticism; literature cannot actually be responsible for what it does, because, unlike in the fantasy world built up in the poetic contest, it in fact has no body, and so no ethical agency.

This conclusion is what we are left with, perhaps unsatisfyingly, at the end of the contest. Aristophanes performs an experiment designed to self-destruct. Through his imagery of embodied drama as well as through the character of Dionysus, symbol of the theater, he presents a model for the critique of literature; when grafted onto a human form, the literary material, by nature abstract and representative, becomes subject to judgement by the same aesthetic and moral criteria that the body is. This comparison gives the audience a farcical framework for reading literature: to engage in literary critique one must have a sense of bodily beauty and health, ideally with some medical background for the purposes of "diagnosing" bad art as well; a playwright himself must be especially good at all of the above, with the ability to cure, not just analyze.

As with most all of his propositions, explicit or implicit, Aristophanes takes care to abandon this model of literary critique before the exodus. Consequently, my assessment of the bodily and medical imagery in *Frogs* leads me to agree with the Halliwell's and Rosen's conclusion that we should take neither the outcome of the contest nor the comedy's presentation of the purpose and aesthetic of literature at face value.[763] This conclusion, however, remains a byproduct of my analysis, since I am more interested in what has happened along the way. *Frogs* ingeniously showcases the meaning and implications of embodiment in general, and of the medical examination of the body in particular; it draws parallels between medical and literary evaluation and mobilizes these ideas for an exploration of literary critique. Thus the comedy uses medical subject matter, most obviously present in Euripides' doctor conceit, to complement its larger themes. Dionysus' love for obscenities and medical details alike bears out this assertion, as do the drama's conflation of beauty with health and, conversely, ugliness with poor health. The inherent social and ethical relevance of the body, as well as the particular ways in which it manifested itself in late fifth-century medicine, left their mark on the *Frogs*, probably not least of all because of uncanny suitability that these ideas had for exploring the relationship between the poet, his city, and the literary *techne*.

[763] Halliwell (2011, esp. 148-54); Rosen (2004).

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have demonstrated the value of taking Hippocratic models into account not only for understanding Aristophanes' portrayals of the body and disease, but also for understanding his literary treatment of more abstract issues such as causation, responsibility, and the distinction between experts and laymen. Chapters 1.1 and 1.2 explained the presence of certain scientific images of the body within their literary contexts: the model of the body as a man-made vessel and "material" models of the intellect, respectively. Chapters 1.2 through 2.4 demonstrated the relevance of Hippocratic medicine for reading the implicit and explicit references to the body, diseases, and doctors in *Knights*, *Clouds*, *Acharnians*, *Wasps*, *Assemblywomen*, and *Wealth*. I argued that these plays' allusions to contemporary healing are connected to, and in turn shed light on, their social and political subject matter. Finally, my third chapter examined the influence that this science had on Aristophanes' portrayal of dramaturgy. In *Wasps* and *Frogs*, many of the same Hippocratic concepts found in other plays are mobilized for literary critique and the presentation of the playwright's own poetic persona. The virtues and accomplishments of playwrights are figured as those of Hippocratic doctors: in the *Wasps*, the chorus praises Aristophanes as a symbolic doctor of the city. In the *Frogs*, the failures of dramatists, regarding both their art and audience, become the failures of a doctor to their patient, or even of a patient to their own body.

A number of themes common to both comedy and medicine have reoccurred throughout my study. Aristophanes, for instance, explores the issue of personal agency and the anxiety about a lack thereof through references to Hippocratic concepts. Rational medicine tends to present an image of an "involuntary body," one that is affected by its environment and determined by its inborn nature. This notion in turn entails a particular kind of vulnerability, a vulnerability not to personal forces, like the gods, but to impersonal forces such as climatic changes. We witness this in the *Acharnians*, along with other plays, with the imagery of the body as an earthenware vessel. This comparison deemphasizes personhood and, in Aristophanic comedy, often serves to negate or invalidate someone socially or politically. The *Clouds* has an even more direct focus on this idea; here Aristophanes spotlights the tension between the traditional gods and the impersonal forces of contemporary science, presenting the social implications of both through the particular vulnerabilities of Strepsiades' body. In my discussion of the seat of the intellect too, I demonstrated how

Aristophanes adroitly plays with different models of the mind, focusing especially on the physical vulnerability that a material model of the mind implies. A physical, localized mind, such as the brain, is one susceptible to physical trauma that potentially damages one's cognitive powers, the part of a person most central to their identity.

In the motif of physical vulnerability, Aristophanes also finds a metaphorical expression for moral corruptibility. When Nicarchus is objectified as a pot, he also adopts its structural frailties and susceptibility to the same kind of violence. He is broken in the kiln, bad by nature—a mere vessel for the corrupting influence of ill-advised Athenian policies. In describing the bodily interior as a series of vessels, Hippocratic writers communicate a message that is in some ways similar: the body's hollowness is the underlying reason that internal disease exists in the first place. The corrupting influence is unhealthful environmental conditions which cause morbid imbalances and fluxes in the body. Strepsiades too is exposed to these kinds of harmful forces in the *Clouds*, both literally and metaphorically. Drawing from contemporary medical theories, Socrates and his pupils paint the body as an empty interior subject to the whims of the winds. Later the old man learns, however, that the initiates at the Phrontisterion have a similarly insidious influence on their pupils' moral fiber; it is only his inflexible senility that keeps them from manipulating his mind. In addition to bodily cavities, Aristophanes also explores the issue of corruptibility with material and immaterial models of the mind in this comedy, alluding to the traditional *noos* and *phren(es)* as well as the brain. These portrayals likewise illustrate the ways in which a person's cognitive faculties can be described as vulnerable, whether literally, as in the case of a head injury, or metaphorically, as in the case of Socrates' regimen of mental gymnastics which succeeded in corrupting the young Pheidippides.

Related to the theme of personal agency and corruptibility are issues of causality and personal responsibility, ideas which are central to the plays and which Aristophanes likewise explores through the framework of Hippocratic medicine. *Wasps* thematizes the diffuse and insidious nature of internal disease as described in Hippocratic medicine, metaphorically grafting it onto the current political state of Athens in order to complicate our understanding of Cleon as the unambiguous villain. In *Assemblywomen* and *Frogs*, the notion of personal responsibility is much more elaborately explored with the help of Hippocratic ideas concerning the ethical relationship between a doctor and their patient, and between a patient and their body. The idiom of rational medicine indeed proved to be extremely productive for responding to certain social and political concerns of Athens in the late fifth and early fourth centuries: in a democracy, who is accountable when the state suffers? The answer is not

always the most convenient, odious busybody. Employing metaphors from Hippocratic medicine, Aristophanes seems to address the issue with increasing nuance throughout his career. Allusions to intellectual and ethical ideas borrowed from contemporaneous medicine obliquely respond to critical questions about political participation as well: what are the powers and responsibilities of average citizens? What is their relationship to people of superior authority or expertise? The *Assemblywomen* in particular presents the responsibility of a Hippocratic patient to their body as a model for a citizen's responsibility to his state. In these and other ways, the comedies engage with ideas from the healing art and its practitioners.

Despite the fact that Aristophanes does not stage any doctor characters, I have also argued that the figure of an modern, rational healer often has symbolic import in the comedies. In Chapter 2.1, I described how the public doctor Pittalus functions both as metonymy for all officials appointed by the government, but also as a metaphor for the care-taking of the state in a larger sense. For the Blepyrus scene in *Assemblywomen*, I showed how the figure of the physician represents the political expertise and authority on which Blepyrus, as a layperson, relies. I suggest that, through mentioning rational medicine and a rational practitioner in this passage, Aristophanes raises the issue of the competency of the average citizen in contemporary Athenian politics. In Chapter 3, the doctor figure becomes relevant for Aristophanes' adoption and creative adaptation of the poet-as-healer motif. Both the methods and ethical obligations of the Hippocratic physician are points of contact which the playwright innovatively emphasizes. Thus, although in Middle Comedy the doctor would become a proper stock character, a quack or incompetent,[764] I argue that the figure of the doctor had already played a significant, if very different, role in Aristophanes' comedies. The playwright largely casts doctors as useful people, both in their role as public physicians and as fellow practitioners of a *techne*. As we see in *Wasps*, he in fact sees fit to compare himself to a Hippocratic doctor, thereby valorizing his own art and the art of rational medicine simultaneously. Later, in *Wealth*, even the god Asclepius assumes the same kinds of Hippocratic attitudes and approaches to his treatment of the body politic.

Throughout my thesis, I have also explored how Aristophanes mobilized the conventional metaphor of the "diseased city" in new and different ways in his comedies (Chapters 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2). I proposed that his plays revise this conceit to incorporate elements of Hippocratic medicine and in turn take into account how physicians and patients

[764] Gil and Rodríguez Alfageme (1972, 67-74).

fit into this new paradigm. Later of course we find Plato using medical imagery and its ethical implications to discuss political issues; in one Platonic metaphor, the city is a patient: a government seeks political advice or creates laws in vain if it is not well-ordered to begin with, just as a patient seeks medical advice and panaceas in vain if he does not have a good regimen.[765] I have asserted that contemporary medicine played no lesser role in Aristophanes' own writing, albeit in service to his poetics rather than philosophy.

Studies that explore the influence of fifth-century medicine on tragedy often emphasize its relevance for one of the most pressing questions that the genre explores: the reason for human suffering. I have shown how Aristophanes engages with this issue as well. Through primarily focusing on its metaphorical potential, he brings Hippocratic ideas to bear on the current and quotidian facets of Athenian life that concern Old Comedy. In *Wasps* for example, Philocleon's mania is not the doubled-determined mania of Euripides' titular Orestes, whose symptoms we are invited to diagnose either as the external vengeance of the gods or internal vengeance of conscience. Instead, the comic hero's body represents the state, and what we deduce from his illness, we deduce about the condition of, and the reason for the condition of, Athens.

We saw too how Strepsiades' body stages a social and intellectual conflict of his generation in the *Clouds*. During his education, he imagines his body is under the influence of solely impersonal forces such as air, but he ultimately suffers divine retribution in the form of his son's blows. In a essentially similar way, Euripides' Phaedra at first thinks it is possible to curb her god-inflicted passion through material means—through weakening her body with starvation.[766] Both the Aristophanic Socrates and Phaedra's nurse exert a bad influence on their anxious listeners by underestimating and dismissing traditional gods. Yet, while allusions to rational (and even magical) medicine in *Hippolytus* only serve to demonstrate the futility of pitting human against divine will, the *Clouds* gives fifth-century science a treatment that is in many ways subtler. There is a place for these Presocratic gods in the *Clouds*, and in fact they are the ones who dispense justice. Aristophanes' plays are thus interwoven with ideas from contemporaneous science that underpin the kinds of social and political themes that are relevant to his genre of Old Comedy.

Scholars of Aristophanes often quote an observation that Aristotle makes about comedy which establishes a contrast between disfigurement caused by suffering and

[765] Plato *Rep*. 425e-6c; *L*.7. 330c-d.
[766] Euripides *Hipp*. 399. Discussed in Holmes (2010, 254-5); for the nurse's pseudo-Hippocratic approach to Phaedra's disease, see Kosak (2004, 49-65).

disfigurement which causes laughter:

> Comedy is, as we said, the imitation of inferior people—not people entirely wicked to be sure—but ridiculousness is a part of baseness. The ridiculous is some shortcoming or embarrassment that is neither painful (ἀνώδυνον) nor dangerous (φθαρτικόν); just as, for example, a funny face is ugly and twisted, but without pain (διεστραμμένον ἄνευ ὀδύνης). (Arist. *Poet*. 1449a32-7)

Aristotle sees a connection between pain and comedy, but he regards it as a superficial, aesthetic one: comical portrayals and portrayals of suffering both happen to be ugly. Aptly he uses the term twisted/distorted (διεστραμμένον), which is used in medical contexts, but also several times in Aristophanes.[767] Distortion of the eyes in particular can be a very serious sign of illness, but can also merely be a harmless, if undesirable, physical attribute (cross-eyedness),[768] or a temporary face one pulls, or mask one wears, to induce laughter. Aristotle ultimately believes that genuine depictions of pain belong to the realm of tragedy, and scholars today seem tacitly to agree. Yet perhaps it is not so simple.

Through offering a fuller and more complex illustration of the material, I have sought to qualify this assumption. While they may be hilarious, the bodily dysfunctions and afflictions in Aristophanes' comedies operate in a fantasy world neither entirely divorced from real suffering nor isolated from developments in fifth-century science. In particular, they draw from contemporary medicine which aimed at combating disease in new ways and which, in the process, forged new ethical frameworks for positioning itself in relation to human suffering. This fact, however, indicates neither that the playwright sought to lend additional gravity to his comic genre, nor that he was unusually versed or interested in medicine.[769] Rather, it means that some essential aspects of Hippocratic thought, not just medical terminology, befriended Aristophanes' comic Muse.

[767] In Aristophanes: *Eq*. 175; *Ach*. 15 (eyes); *Av*. 177 (neck). In Hippocrates: *Epid.* V.40; *Prorr*. II.10; *Aph*. IV.49 (eyes); *Artic*. 38.9 (nose).

[768] Hipp. *Aër.* 14.23-4.

[769] We do not, in any case, know to what extent his contemporaries engaged with this material, but we can assume their comedies were as strongly influenced by such intellectual developments.

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