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Karissa Kang April 12, 2020

Disgust and Discernment in Aristophanes' *Knights*

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Abstract

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Many scholars have puzzled over the ending of Aristophanes' *Knights*, but few have analyzed the role that disgust plays in the ending's apparent incongruity. I myself am puzzled by this inattention to disgust, for I believe that the emotion of disgust is central to the play's ending. The ending of the *Knights* so confounds scholars because it glorifies a character who, prior to the play's final scene, seems utterly disgusting. For much of the play, this character, the Sausage-Seller, openly touts his repulsiveness, and he presents himself as more disgusting than even the play's villain, Paphlagon. In this thesis, I explain that, despite their superficial similarities, the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon are actually fundamentally different with respect to repulsiveness. I further argue that an understanding of these differences allows the ending of the *Knights* to become much more coherent in the context of the play as a whole.

In Chapter One, I show how, as is evident in their early competitions of repulsiveness, the Sausage-Seller seems at first to be just as disgusting as, if not more disgusting than, Paphlagon. In Chapter Two, I analyze a passage from the Chorus's second parabasis and argue that this passage provides guidance both about the nature of disgust in the play and about the discernment that one needs to differentiate the repulsiveness of Paphlagon from that of the Sausage-Seller. In Chapter Three, I explain how selfishness in particular distinguishes Paphlagon's repulsive behaviors from those of the Sausage-Seller. In Chapter Four, I argue that, by presenting Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon as similar but fundamentally different in their repulsiveness, Aristophanes is suggesting how he, a comic poet, differs from demagogues.

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Introduction

The *Knights*, often heralded as Aristophanes' most political play, is not the poet's best-known work, nor is it the play most robustly studied. Recently, however, there seems to have arisen a renewed interest in the *Knights*. Just last year, Robert Bartlett produced a new translation of the play, and Carle Arne Anderson and T. Keith Dix produced the first full commentary on the *Knights* since 1901.[1] Further, the 2016 United States presidential election seems to have animated mainstream interest in the *Knights*. As the election approached, headlines such as "Trump Versus Clinton, according to Aristophanes" and the rather heavy-handed "The 2016 Election Is Literally Aristophanes' *Knights*" flooded the internet.[2]

I am not surprised that Americans turned to the *Knights* in order to make sense of the 2016 election. The *Knights* lends itself well to contemporary political adaptation in part because it is itself a work of political satire. At the center of the *Knights* is Paphlagon, a pernicious, self-interested slave who dominates, controls, and exploits his master, the old man Demos. Two of Demos's other slaves are especially distressed by Paphlagon's exploitation of their master, so they recruit the Sausage-Seller, a man who seems repulsive enough to overthrow Paphlagon. Allied with the slaves and the Sausage-Seller are the eponymous Knights, who comprise the Chorus of the play. The Knights themselves are young, aristocratic Athenian men who ride and fight on horseback. The play satirizes political competition in Athens, and, in particular, it excoriates the demagogue Cleon. Scholars agree that Paphlagon is, at least on some level, a

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[1] Robert Bartlett, *Against Demagogues: What Aristophanes Can Teach Us about the Perils of Populism and the Fate of Democracy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020); and Carle Arne Anderson and T. Keith Dix, *A Commentary on Aristophanes'* Knights (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020). The 1901 commentary was written by R. A. Neil. R. A. Neil, ed., *The Knights of Aristophanes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901).

[2] James Romm, "Trump Versus Clinton, according to Aristophanes," *New Yorker*, October 12, 2016, accessed March 19, 2021, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culturedesk/trumpversus-clinton-according-to-aristophanes; and Ross Chapman, "The 2016 Election Is Literally Aristophanes' *Knights*," *Bwog*, September 29, 2016, accessed March 19, 2021, https://bwog.com/2016/09/the-2016-election-is-literally-aristophanes-knights/.

representation Cleon, and some scholars go as far as to refer to Paphlagon as Cleon.[3] I do not think it appropriate, however, to equate Paphlagon fully with Cleon, so I will refer to Paphlagon in this thesis as Paphlagon and not Cleon. There has been much scholarly discussion about the identities of Demos's two other slaves, and some scholars believe that the slaves represented Athenian generals Demosthenes and Nicias. Like Jeffrey Henderson, I am not convinced that Demosthenes and Nicias were the true identities of the two slaves, so I will simply refer to them in this thesis as the first slave and second slave.[4]

My interest in the *Knights* was motivated in part by recent responses to the play, but, more than this, it was motivated by simple perplexity. When I first read the *Knights*, I found myself confused by the play's ending, which subverted my expectations about the repulsiveness of the Sausage-Seller. Because the Sausage-Seller proves himself at the end of the play as more demagogic than even Paphlagon, I had assumed that he was also more repulsive than Paphlagon. After all, the play consistently describes demagogues in damning terms: they are repulsive, uneducated villains who manipulate the Athenian people for their own gain. This, however, does not prove to be the case. At the end of the play, after he has out-screamed, out-thieved, and out-sleazed Paphlagon and thus won the affection of Demos, the Sausage-Seller undergoes a tremendous transformation. He is no longer loud-mouthed and repulsive; now, he conducts himself with nobility and restraint. The Sausage-Seller is not the only one who undergoes a

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[3] For example, Lowell Edmunds, Leo Strauss, and David Welsh, three scholars whose research on the *Knights* has been vital to this thesis, refer to Paphlagon almost exclusively as Cleon. Lowell Edmunds, "The Aristophanic Cleon's 'Disturbance' of Athens," *The American Journal of Philology* 108 (1987): 233-263; Edmunds, *Cleon, Knights, and Aristophanes' Politics* (Lanham: University Press of America); Leo Strauss, *Socrates and Aristophanes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and David Welsh, "The Ending of Aristophanes' 'Knights,'" *Hermes* 118 (1990): 421-429.

[4] Henderson argues that, although the two slaves sometimes do resemble Demosthenes and Nicias, there is not enough evidence to simply label the slaves as the generals. Jeffrey Henderson, "When an Identity Was Expected: The Slaves in Aristophanes' Knights," in *Gestures: Essays in Ancient History, Literature, and Philosophy presented to Alan L Boegehold*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bakewell and James P. Sickinger (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2003), 63-73.

transformation at the end of the play. With an air of formality, he informs those around him that he has transformed Demos:

> εὐφημεῖν χρὴ καὶ στόμα κλῄειν καὶ μαρτυριῶν ἀπέχεσθαι,
> καὶ τὰ δικαστήρια συγκλῄειν, οἷς ἡ πόλις ἥδε γέγηθεν,
> ἐπὶ καιναῖσιν δ᾽ εὐτυχίαισιν παιωνίζειν τὸ θέατρον.
> […]
> τὸν Δῆμον ἀφεψήσας ὑμῖν καλὸν ἐξ αἰσχροῦ πεποίηκα. (1316-1318)
>
> It is necessary to hold a holy silence and to close our mouths and to stop calling witnesses,
> and to close down the courts, which have delighted this city,
> in order to chant a paean for the fresh successes at the theater.
> […]
> Having boiled Demos off for you, I have made beauty from his ugliness.[5]

Through some magical process of cooking, the Sausage-Seller has turned old, ugly Demos into a young, handsome, vigorous man. The transformation is not merely superficial, either. When the Sausage-Seller tests Demos's moral compass, his answers reveal that the Sausage-Seller's boiling has restored his moral, as well as physical, beauty. In response to hypothetical situations that tempt him with short-term gratifications, Demos declines bribes and refuses to be corrupted. "αἰσχύνομαί τοι ταῖς πρότερον ἁμαρτίαις" ("I am ashamed at my past failures" 1355), he says, and his remorse seems sincere. The Sausage-Seller then reports that he has issued Paphlagon a fitting punishment. Now, Paphlagon occupies the Sausage-Seller's former role as maker and vendor of sausages. Demos recognizes what a sublime and noble task the Sausage-Seller has accomplished by rejuvenating him, and he rewards him for it. Most notably, Demos offers the Sausage-Seller free meals at the prytaneum—the same privilege that he once endowed to Paphlagon.

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[5] All translations are my own. The Greek texts, both of the *Knights* and, later, of the *Frogs*, are those of Henderson. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); and Aristophanes, *Knights*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

This ending is satisfying in its distribution of just desserts, but I do nonetheless feel that it is incongruous with the rest of the play. In this final scene, the Sausage-Seller, whose utter, foul repulsiveness was once his defining characteristic, emerges as the savior of the city. His ability to improve Demos actually exceeds the skills of a typical hero and dips instead into the realm of the magical and the divine.

I am far from the first person who has noticed the apparent incongruity of the ending of *Knights.* Scholars have puzzled for decades about why Aristophanes, who despises demagogues, would seemingly attribute, at the end of a play that otherwise seems to completely condemn demagoguery, such incredible success to the Sausage Seller, a man so demagogic that he beats even the Paphlagonian at the game of demagoguery. Leo Strauss states the problem well:

> That sausage seller proves to be not only not worse than Kleon but better than all earlier statesmen: He proves to be a godlike man. […] At the beginning he seems to be a fellow whom a decent man would not touch with a ten-foot pole and would use only in a desperate situation; eventually the unsavory means becomes a resplendent end […].[6]

Many scholars have tried to explain the apparent paradox that Strauss observes. Larry J. Bennett and William Blake Tyrrell suggest that, in order to make sense of the play's final scene, one must treat the *Knights* "as one instance in an ideology or cultural discourse [that they] call the '*pharmakos* complex.'"[7] R. W. Brock argues that the "elements of inconsistency" at the end of the play arise from "the operation in the play of a double plot structure."[8] A particularly useful interpretation of the play comes from Cedric Whitman in his 1964 book *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero*. Whitman argues that there exists in the *Knights* "the complex of the grotesque, beast-man-god, running covertly beneath the action of the play and making possible, if not

[6] Strauss, *Socrates and Aristophanes*, 106-107.
[7] Larry J. Bennett and William Blake Tyrrell, "Making Sense of Aristophanes' *Knights,*" *Arethusa* 23 (1990): 1.
[8] R. W. Brock, "The Double Plot in Aristophanes' *Knights*," *Roman and Byzantine Studies* (1986): 1, 1-2.

inevitable, the final scene."[9] This complex, Whitman explains, appears first in Paphlagon and, later, after he usurps Paphlagon as demagogue, in the Sausage Seller. By identifying what he calls the beast-man-god complex, Whitman astutely observes how quickly the Sausage Seller shifts in *Knights* from disgusting to divine. He fails, however, to successfully delineate why the beast-man-god complex produces such different fates in two seemingly similar characters.

I find most useful in Whitman's interpretation his attention to the emotion of disgust, for I believe that disgust is at the center of the *Knights*' apparently incongruous end. The ending of the *Knights* so confounds scholars because it glorifies a character who, for much of the play, has seemed completely disgusting. Indeed, I believe that, once one understands how the Sausage-Seller differs from Paphlagon with respect to repulsiveness, the ending of the *Knights* seems much more coherent in the context of the rest of the play.[10] For these reasons, I am surprised at how little scholarship has explicitly considered the emotion of disgust in the *Knights*. Even Whitman lingers on the topic of disgust only long enough to shallowly explain the beast-man-god complex. Other pieces of scholarship engage with the topic of Aristophanes and disgust more deeply, but these are relatively few in number. The introduction to the 2017 anthology *The Ancient Emotion of Disgust* briefly analyzes Aristophanes' manipulation of disgust in one particular section of the *Knights.*[11] Also in *The Ancient Emotion of Disgust* appears "Disgust and Delight: The Polysemous Exclamation Aiboi in Attic Comedy," in which Daniel Levine

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[9] Cedric Whitman, *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 103.
[10] Scholars have studied what differentiates the Sausage-Seller from Paphlagon, but none have analyzed repulsiveness as their primary point of difference. G. O. Hutchinson, for example, argues that the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon are similar in their lack of principles but different in their levels of ferocity. As I explain later, I disagree with Hutchinson that the Sausage-Seller is as unprincipled as Paphlagon. Lowell Edmunds focuses less on how the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon differ and more on how they are similar, particularly with respect to their shared ability to disturb Athens. G. O. Hutchinson, "House Politics and City Politics in Aristophanes," *The Classical Quarterly New Series* 61(May 2011): 48-70; Edmunds, "Cleon's 'Disturbance' of Athens," 233-263; and Edmunds, *Cleon, Knights, and Aristophanes' Politics*.
[11] Donald Lateiner and Dimos Spatharas, ed., *The Ancient Emotion of Disgust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 25-27.

discusses Aristophanes' use of "αἰβοῖ," an exclamation that typically expresses disgust. In his article "Excrement, Sacrifice, Commensality: The Osphresiology of Aristophanes' *Peace*," Robert Tordoff discusses the odors, including disgusting ones, that permeate the *Peace*. These pieces of scholarly literature are all valuable, but, unfortunately, they are among the very few sources that explicitly consider the emotion of disgust in Aristophanic comedy, and only one of them focuses on the *Knights.*

Although there remains a dearth of research on disgust in Aristophanes, research on disgust in general has expanded greatly in the past few decades. Martha Nussbaum has contributed to the canon of disgust research the terms "primary disgust" and "projective disgust." Primary disgust, Nussbaum explains, "is standardly felt toward a group of primary objects: feces, blood, semen, urine, nasal discharges, menstrual discharges, corpses, decaying meat, and animal/insects that are oozy, slimy, or smelly."[12] She elaborates that primary disgust "is then extended from object to object in ways that could hardly bear rational scrutiny."[13] Nussbaum calls this sort of extended disgust "projective disgust."[14] She draws the concept of projective disgust from psychologist Paul Rozin, whose work demonstrates that contamination is the central idea of disgust—that those who become disgusted feel contaminated by the object that disgusts them.[15] Nussbaum elaborates that "behind this idea of personal contamination lies the idea that 'you are what you eat': if you take in something base or vile, you become like that yourself."[16]

In the introduction to *The Ancient Emotion of Disgust*, editors Donald Lateiner and Dimos Spatharas borrow the terms "primary disgust" and "projective disgust" to describe the

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[12] Martha C. Nussbaum, *From Disgust to Humanity: Sexual Orientation and Constitutional Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Paul Rozin et al., "Disgust," in *Handbook of Emotions*, ed. Michael Lewis et al. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2008), 757-776.
[16] Nussbaum, *From Disgust to Humanity*, 15.

work of various ancient authors, including Aristophanes.[17] They also utilize two other terms, "core" disgust and "moral" disgust, which figure largely into their understanding of projective disgust. Core disgust is elicited by material things, such as "vile substances, disease vectors, or decay," while moral disgust is elicited by immaterial things, such as "morally ambivalent behavior, ideologies, or criminal actions."[18] Lateiner and Spatharas discuss Aristophanes' use of projective disgust in the second parabasis of the *Knights*. They explain that, in this passage, the Chorus conflates core and moral repulsiveness in Ariphrades, a man whom they find especially disgusting. Instead of merely mocking Ariphrades for his love of cunnilingus, the Chorus claims that Ariphrades' penchant for this polluted activity renders him morally polluted. Lateiner and Spatharas argue that, in this passage, Aristophanes presents cunnilingus as a sort of contagion; the physical act of cunnilingus contaminates Ariphrades' character and the character of anyone else who associates with him.[19] In this attack on Ariphrades, Lateiner and Spatharas explain, "core and moral disgust are indistinguishable."[20] They then broaden their point and claim that the genre of comedy "shrewdly telescopes 'core' and 'moral' disgust to besmirch poets, politicians, and military strategy."[21]

I agree with Lateiner and Spatharas that Aristophanes deftly blurs the boundaries between core and moral disgust, particularly in his efforts to besmirch his enemies. The *Knights* contains several of these such efforts, the most obvious of which is directed against Paphlagon. In order to illustrate Paphlagon's villainy, corruption, and general moral repulsiveness, Aristophanes attaches to Paphlagon myriad elicitors of core disgust, such as his repulsively loud voice. The

[17] Lateiner and Spatharas, *Ancient Emotion*, 1-42.
[18] *Ibid.*, 23.
[19] *Ibid.,* 26-27.
[20] *Ibid.*, 27.
[21] *Ibid.*

concept of projective disgust does much to illuminate why Aristophanes attaches behaviors and traits that elicit core disgust to Paphlagon. Projective disgust does not, however, explain why Aristophanes attaches many of these same behaviors and traits to the Sausage-Seller. The final scene of the *Knights* suggests that the Sausage-Seller, unlike Paphlagon, is a hero and a good man; his moral character is not thoroughly repulsive. It must follow then that the Sausage-Seller's repulsive behaviors and traits do not signal the repulsiveness of his moral character. In other words, although Aristophanes does masterfully utilize projective disgust in the *Knights*, he does not intend every elicitor of core disgust to also elicit moral disgust. It is for this reason that the same disgusting behaviors can mark Paphlagon's character as disgusting but not necessarily mark the Sausage-Seller's character as disgusting.

It might seem obvious that the same disgusting behaviors can signify different things about Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller, but, as I explain in Chapter One, characters in the *Knights* sometimes obscure this point, especially in the play's first half. For much of the play, the Chorus and the slaves insist not only that the Sausage-Seller can exhibit the same repulsive behaviors as Paphlagon but also that he is as morally repulsive as Paphlagon. Despite the claims of the Chorus and the slaves, I believe that, ultimately, the *Knights* reveals to its audience that the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon are fundamentally different with respect to their repulsiveness. The final scene of the play most clearly demonstrates this difference, but, even before this scene, the *Knights* hints at it.

In this thesis, I seek to explain how the difference between the Sausage-Seller's repulsiveness and Paphlagon's repulsiveness emerges over the course of the *Knights*. I also seek to explain the significance of this difference. In Chapter One, I show how, as is evident in their early competitions of repulsiveness, the Sausage-Seller seems at first to be just as disgusting as,

if not more disgusting than, Paphlagon. In Chapter Two, I analyze a passage from the Chorus's second parabasis and argue that this passage provides guidance both about the nature of disgust in the play and about the discernment that one needs to differentiate the repulsiveness of Paphlagon from that of the Sausage-Seller. In Chapter Three, I explain how selfishness in particular distinguishes Paphlagon's repulsive behaviors from those of the Sausage-Seller. In Chapter Four, I argue that, by presenting Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon as similar but fundamentally different in their repulsiveness, Aristophanes is suggesting how he, a comic poet, differs from demagogues.

A Note on Disgust Vocabulary

The *Knights* brims with words that connote disgust, including "βδελυρία," "μιαρία," and "πανουργία." None of these words means precisely what "disgusting" means in English, but each of them represents a different dimension of repulsiveness. "βδελυρία" and its cognates were often used to denote disgusting people, acts, and objects. Aristophanes himself used the word often and sometimes very prominently, as he did in the *Wasps*, a play whose protagonist is named "Βδελυκλέων" ("Loathecleon").[22] In the *Knights*, forms of "βδελυρός" and "βδελύττομαι" appear several times, and, almost every time, they describe demagogues or demagoguery. As the two slaves read Paphlagon's oracles, the second slave asks the first slave the fate of the sheep-seller, a demagogue who precedes Paphlagon. The first slave responds, "κρατεῖν, ἕως ἕτερος ἀνὴρ βδελυρώτερος αὐτοῦ γένοιτο" ("To rule until another man more disgusting than him should arise" 134-135). This quotation implies that the sheep-seller is "βδελυρός," that Paphlagon is even "βδελυρώτερος," and that the entire enterprise of demagoguery is "βδελυρός." The first slave's observation here explicitly concerns the fate of the sheep-seller, but it also describes well how the *Knights* presents the fate of demagogues in general. As I explain in Chapter One, for almost the entirety of the play, the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon compete in order to determine who of the two of them is "βδελυρώτερος."

"μιαρία" and its cognates convey a sense of moral pollution, particularly when they are applied to people. In the *Knights*, "μιαρία" most often appears in its adjectival form, "μιαρός," and it is almost always directed at Paphlagon.[23] Once Demos finally understands the extent of Paphlagon's unsavoriness, the Sausage-Seller, who is also disgusted by Paphlagon's behavior,

[22] Anderson and Dix write that Aristophanes often used "βδελυρώτερος," usually to insult demagogues. Anderson and Dix, *Commentary on* Knights, 88.
[23] According to Anderson and Dix, "μιαρός" was a colloquial insult commonly used in various Aristophanic comedies. Anderson and Dix, *Commentary on* Knights, 87.

tells Demos, “μιαρώτατος, ὦ Δημακίδιον, καὶ πλεῖστα πανοῦργα δεδρακώς” (“This is a most polluted man, my dear Demos, and he has pulled on you a great many wicked things” 823). Here, the Sausage-Seller actually uses the superlative form of “μιαρός,” perhaps because he now finds Paphlagon especially repulsive.

Embedded in the Sausage-Seller’s comment to Demos is the word “πανοῦργα,” which also conveys disgust. “πανοῦργα,” an adjectival form of the abstract noun “πανουργία,” appears quite a few times in the *Knights*. The word conveys a sense of wickedness, knavishness, and villainy about the person to which it is attached. To no surprise, “πανοῦργος,” like “μιαρός,” is used most often in the play against Paphlagon. The Chorus in particular uses “πανοῦργος” to describe Paphlagon. Early in the play, the Chorus leader calls Paphlagon “πανοῦργος” four separate times in the span of just four lines (247-250).

“βδελυρία,” “μιαρία,” and “πανουργία” are not the only three words in the *Knights* that convey disgust, but they are the three that appear most regularly. Context dictates whether I translate them as “disgust,” “repulsion,” “pollution,” “villainy,” or something else entirely.

Chapter One: Competitions of Repulsiveness

There are many ways to categorize the competitions between Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller.[24] I prefer to think of them as competitions of repulsiveness. These early competitions set the stage for the play to raise its most vital questions about the nature of disgust. The very first conversation between the slaves and the Sausage-Seller makes it clear that repulsiveness is the basis of the competitions between Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller. When the Sausage-Seller expresses confusion as to how he, a lowly sausage-seller, could possibly become a powerful man (178-179), the first slave informs him that his lowliness is actually his greatest strength against Paphlagon:

> δι᾽ αὐτὸ γάρ τοι τοῦτο καὶ γίγνει μέγας,
> ὁτιὴ πονηρὸς κἀξ ἀγορᾶς εἶ καὶ θρασύς. (180-181)
>
> It is because of this very thing that you are going to be great—
> because you're wicked, down market, and audacious.[25]

After the Sausage-Seller questions him further, the slave elaborates:

> ἡ δημαγωγία γὰρ οὐ πρὸς μουσικοῦ
> ἔτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ χρηστοῦ τοὺς τρόπους,
> ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ἀμαθῆ καὶ βδελυρόν. (191-193)
>
> Demagoguery is no longer a job for a man of education
> nor for a man good character
> but, rather, for the ignorant and disgusting. [26]

The slave restates his perceived criteria for demagogues before the Sausage-Seller's first competition with Paphlagon. He reassures the Sausage-Seller:

> τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα σοι πρόσεστι δημαγωγικά,
> φωνὴ μιαρά, γέγονας κακῶς, ἀγοραῖος εἶ·

[24] Andrew Scholtz, for example, frames them as erotic competitions. Andrew Scholtz, "Friends, Lovers, Flatterers: Demophilic Courtship in Aristophanes' 'Knights,'" *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 134 (2004): 263-293.
[25] "θρασύς," which I translate here as "audacious," was a quality admirable in epic heroes but undesirable in fellow citizens. Anderson and Dix, *Commentary on* Knights, 93.
[26] Anderson and Dix note that the abstract noun "ἡ δημαγωγία" was originally without pejorative connotations. It was simply a term associated with debating in public. Anderson and Dix, *Commentary on* Knights, 94.

ἔχεις ἅπαντα πρὸς πολιτείαν ἃ δεῖ. (217-219)

You have all the other tools of demagoguery:
a repulsive voice, low birth, marketplace morals—
you've got everything you need to pursue a political career.

This early exchange establishes both to the Sausage-Seller and to the audience that the requirements for demagoguery differ considerably from what one might expect. Common sense might dictate that the best man—or, at the very least, a competent one—is best suited for an endeavor as consequential as demagoguery. According to the first slave, however, competence will serve the Sausage-Seller poorly in his quest to become a demagogue. Indeed, the slave tells the Sausage-Seller that his greatest political obstacle is not his ineptness at basic reading and writing but, rather, his ability to read and write anything at all ("τουτὶ μόνον σ᾽ ἔβλαψεν, ὅτι καὶ κακὰ κακῶς" 190). The first slave believes that basic education is not at all a prerequisite for political leadership; instead, a lack of education and of etiquette are desirable for the job. According to the first slave's criteria, demagogues should not be the best and noblest of men; rather, they should be the worst and most repulsive.

The Sausage-Seller quickly understands that his most disgusting attributes are his most powerful tools for beating Paphlagon. Equipped with this knowledge, the Sausage-Seller begins to vie with Paphlagon in a competition of repulsiveness. The slaves are not the only characters who characterize the Sausage-Seller's fight with Paphlagon as competitions of repulsiveness. The Chorus, too, acknowledges that, in order for the Sausage-Seller to beat Paphlagon, the former must prove that he is more repulsive than the latter. In a taunting comment to Paphlagon, the Chorus Leader explains:

ἀλλ᾽ ἐὰν μέντοι γε νικᾷς τῇ βοῇ, τήνελλά σοι·
ἢν δ᾽ ἀναιδείᾳ παρέλθῃ σ᾽, ἡμέτερος ὁ πυραμοῦς (276-277)

Well, if you can beat him with your shouting, hooray for you;

but if he outdoes you in brazenness, we take the cake.

For the next two hundred lines, Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller attempt to do exactly what the Chorus Leader describes: outdo each other in brazenness. Their vulgar insults and accusations against each other are punctuated by interjections from the Chorus, most of which serve to emphasize the repulsiveness of both competitors. When the Chorus emphasizes Paphlagon's repulsiveness, their tone seems very different, however, from their tone when they emphasize the Sausage-Seller's repulsiveness. Towards the beginning of the fight, the Chorus says mockingly to Paphlagon:

> ἀλλ᾽ ἐφάνη γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἕτερος πολὺ
> σοῦ μιαρώτερος, ὥστε με χαίρειν,
> ὅς σε παύσει καὶ πάρεισι, δῆλός ἐστιν αὐτόθεν,
> πανουργίᾳ τε καὶ θράσει
> καὶ κοβαλικεύμασιν. (328-332)

> But another man has appeared, much
> fouler than you, so that it pleases me—
> one who will put an end to you and outdo you, it is manifestly clear,
> in repulsiveness and brazenness
> and roguish tricks.

This comment exemplifies how differently the Chorus views the Sausage-Seller's repulsiveness from that of Paphlagon. To the Chorus, the Sausage-Seller's repulsiveness is a good thing; it is something that delights them. Paphlagon's repulsiveness, on the other hand, is a bad thing, and he is a bad person; the Chorus rejoices that someone new has come who, as they gleefully tell Paphlagon, "σε παύσει καὶ πάρεισι" ("will put an end to you and outdo you" 330). The word "μιαρώτερος" ("fouler" 329) serves an especially interesting role in this passage, for it simultaneously signals that Paphlagon's repulsiveness is a bad thing while the Sausage-Seller's repulsiveness is not. When the Chorus says that there has come a man fouler than Paphlagon, they are necessarily calling Paphlagon foul and thus insulting him. Their insult does not end

there, however. The Chorus seems to understand that, although foulness is not usually a desirable trait, Paphlagon's foulness allows him to successfully maintain his power as demagogue. Because they understand this, the Chorus's claim that the Sausage-Seller is fouler than Paphlagon presents the Sausage-Seller as someone capable of undermining Paphlagon's authority as demagogue. If Paphlagon's foulness makes him well-suited for demagoguery, then someone fouler than him would be even better suited. Because the Sausage-Seller's foulness makes him a threat to their enemy Paphlagon, the Chorus's declaration about the Sausage-Seller's foulness is triumphant and laudatory.

The Chorus seems to understand that the only person who can oust Paphlagon is someone viler and more repulsive than him. One cannot compete with Paphlagon in a contest outside of the realm of repulsiveness. This is why, although the Knights who comprise the Chorus are good, virtuous men, they cannot oust Paphlagon themselves and must rely instead on the Sausage-Seller to do so. They know that it would be meaningless to defeat Paphlagon in a contest of virtue, but they also know that they cannot outdo him in a contest of vulgarity. It is for these reasons that the Chorus rejoices at the rise of the Sausage-Seller, whose status and behaviors seem, if anything, even more vulgar than those of Paphlagon.[27]

At first, the Sausage-Seller merely matches Paphlagon's volume and vulgarity.[28] When Paphlagon shouts at him:

> τουτονὶ τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἐγὼ ᾽νδείκνυμι, καὶ φήμ᾽ ἐξάγειν
> ταῖσι Πελοποννησίων τριήρεσι ζωμεύματα. (278-279)

I am informing against this man here, and I am accusing him

[27] On the necessity of repulsiveness to beat Paphlagon, see Bennett and Tyrell, "Making Sense of *Knights*"; A. M. Bowie, *Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 45-74; Brock, "The Double Plot in *Knights*"; Douglas MacDowell, *Aristophanes and Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 80-113; James McGlew, *Citizens on Stage: Comedy and Political Culture in the Athenian Democracy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 97-111.

[28] Jon Hesk writes extensively about the parallel rhetoric of the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon in their competitions. Jon Hesk, "Combative Capping in Aristophanic Comedy," *The Cambridge Classical Journal* 53 (2007): 124-160.

of smuggling soups for the triremes of the Peloponnesians!

Promptly, the Sausage-Seller responds:

ναὶ μὰ Δία κἄγωγε τοῦτον, ὅτι κενῇ τῇ κοιλίᾳ
εἰσδραμὼν εἰς τὸ πρυτανεῖον, εἶτα πάλιν ἐκθεῖ πλέᾳ. (280-281)

By Zeus, *I* denounce this man, for running with an empty gut
into the prytaneum and then running out again with a full one!

His rejoinder closely resembles Paphlagon's initial insult, and, for the next few lines, the Sausage-Seller continues to mimic and parry Paphlagon's rhetoric. The Sausage-Seller's insults become more extreme, obscene, and outlandish, however, after Paphlagon protests to the Sausage-Seller, "οὔκουν μ᾽ ἐάσεις;" ("So you won't let me speak first?" 336). The Sausage-Seller stands his ground and responds, "μὰ Δί᾽, ἐπεὶ κἀγὼ πονηρός εἰμι" ("No, by Zeus, because I'm a villain too" 336).

The Sausage-Seller displays his repulsiveness so effectively that Paphlagon seems to fear that the Sausage-Seller will overtake him. Frustrated, Paphlagon exclaims to the Sausage-Seller:

οὗτοί μ᾽ ὑπερβαλεῖσθ᾽ ἀναιδείᾳ μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ,
ἢ μήποτ᾽ Ἀγοραίου Διὸς σπλάγχνοισι παραγενοίμην. (409-410)

There's no way you're going to outshoot me in shamelessness—no, by Poseidon—
or may I never again attend the feast of Marketplace Zeus!

The Sausage-Seller, too, acknowledges that the primary criterion of his competition with Paphlagon is repulsiveness. He says:

ἔγωγε, νὴ τοὺς κονδύλους, οὓς πολλὰ δὴ ᾽πὶ πολλοῖς
ἠνεσχόμην ἐκ παιδίου, μαχαιρίδων τε πληγάς,
ὑπερβαλεῖσθαί σ᾽ οἴομαι τούτοισιν, ἢ μάτην γ᾽ ἂν
ἀπομαγδαλιὰς σιτούμενος τοσοῦτος ἐκτραφείην. (411-414)

I, at least—I swear by the knuckle-punches, which many times indeed
I endured since childhood, and by the slashes of knives—
I know that I will overshoot you in these things, or else in vain
will I have grown so big eating only scraps.

In his efforts to overshoot Paphlagon, the Sausage-Seller calls upon two details of his childhood that highlight the coarseness of his upbringing: the beatings that he endured and the scraps that he ate. To Paphlagon, he flaunts as virtues these traits that, in other contexts, would be too shameful to share. Although Paphlagon does not admit that he has lost to the Sausage-Seller in this competition of repulsiveness, his actions reveal how threatened he feels by the Sausage-Seller's displays of marketplace vulgarity. When he notices that the Sausage-Seller's threats and insults are gaining intensity, Paphlagon abruptly announces that he's going to the Council ("ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αὐτίκα μάλ᾽ εἰς βουλὴν ἰὼν" 475), and, like a petulant child, he storms off the stage.

Paphlagon's decision to go to the Council backfires. The Sausage-Seller reports to the Chorus that he completely won over the affection of the Council. In this competition, too, the Sausage-Seller used vulgarity and repulsiveness to outdo Paphlagon. By his own account, he prayed:

> "ἄγε δὴ Σκίταλοι καὶ Φένακες, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ,
> Βερέσχεθοί τε καὶ Κόβαλοι καὶ Μόθων,
> ἀγορά τ᾽, ἐν ᾗ παῖς ὢν ἐπαιδεύθην ἐγώ,
> νῦν μοι θράσος καὶ γλῶτταν εὔπορον δότε
> φωνήν τ᾽ ἀναιδῆ". (634-638)
>
> "Come on, you demons of Impudence and of Quackery," I was saying,
> "and of Foolery and of Knavishness and of Licentiousness,
> and you, Marketplace, in whom as a child I was reared,
> now give me boldness, a glib tongue,
> and a shameless voice."

Propelled by the power of these forces, he shouted over Paphlagon and announced to the Council that sprats in the marketplace were the cheapest that they'd been since the war started ("ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ πόλεμος κατερράγη, οὐπώποτ᾽ ἀφύας εἶδον ἀξιωτέρας" 644-645). Although Paphlagon tries to win back the Council with promises of peace treaties, they're too distracted by

the thought of cheap anchovies to respond positively to him. The Sausage-Seller's decision to buy coriander and leeks for the Council completely ensures his victory. Once he does so, the Councillors praise and applaud him magnificently ("οἱ δ' ὑπερεπῄνουν ὑπερεπύππαζόν τέ με" 680).

The Chorus rejoices at the Sausage-Seller's victory, but, along with their approval, they also offer him an admonition:

> πάντα τοι πέπραγας οἷα
> χρὴ τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα·
> ηὗρε δ' ὁ πανοῦργος ἕτε-
> ρον πολὺ πανουργίαις
> μείζοσι κεκασμένον
> καὶ δόλοισι ποικίλοις
> ῥήμασίν θ' αἱμύλοις.
> ἀλλ' ὅπως ἀγωνιεῖ φρόν-
> τιζε τἀπίλοιπ' ἄριστα·
> συμμάχους δ' ἡμᾶς ἔχων εὖ-
> νους ἐπίστασαι πάλαι. (683-690)
>
> You have accomplished all things
> necessary for a fortunate man;
> and that repulsive man has met
> another man who very much surpasses him
> in greater repulsiveness
> and in intricate trickeries
> and in wheedling words.
> But take thought as to how best you will fight
> the remaining rounds;
> you've long known that
> you have us as your well-minded allies.

These remarks conclude the first "round" of the Sausage-Seller's competition with Paphlagon, and they encapsulate well what their competition is really about. The Chorus celebrates that the Sausage-Seller has outdone Paphlagon in repulsiveness. Their celebration accomplishes two things: first, that repulsiveness is the primary criterion of this competition and

second that the Sausage-Seller is more repulsive than Paphlagon. The play thus far has been a battle of disgusting behaviors, and the Sausage-Seller is the winner, at least of this round.

Straightforward as the Chorus's message might seem, there lie beneath it undercurrents of tension that illustrate the duality with which the Chorus views repulsiveness (πανουργία). When they refer to Paphlagon as "that repulsive man" ("ὁ πανοῦργος" 685), they are insulting him for his repulsiveness. In the very same sentence, however, the Chorus cheer on the Sausage-Seller precisely because he far exceeds Paphlagon in greater repulsiveness ("πανουργίαις μείζοσι" 686-687). The word that the Chorus uses to insult Paphlagon is the same one that they use to praise the Sausage-Seller. The Chorus continues its praise of the Sausage-Seller's repulsiveness in the next few lines. By referring to the Sausage-Seller's deception as "καὶ δόλοισι ποικίλοις ῥήμασίν θ' αἱμύλοις" ("intricate schemes and wheedling words" 688-689), the Chorus casts a sort of weighty, even epic, elegance to behaviors that they would disparage and despise in Paphlagon.

The Chorus's disparate treatments of the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon bring to mind the central question of this thesis: how do the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon differ with respect to disgust? As I explain in the next chapter, I believe that the beginnings of an answer lie in the play's second parabasis.

Chapter Two: Disgust in the Second Parabasis

The *Knights* offers its most explicit guidance about the emotion of disgust in the Chorus's second parabasis. I am not surprised that this important piece of information occurs in one of the play's two parabases. Generally speaking, parabases performed several crucial, varied functions in Aristophanic comedy. All but two of Aristophanes' eleven extant plays feature at least one parabasis. The word "parabasis" literally means "step aside," and the comic parabasis typically allows the chorus to "step aside" and address the audience directly. As Thomas Hubbard observes, "The parabasis offers a self-reflective interlude in the middle of the play, in which the identities of both chorus and poet are displayed, thematic threads relevant to the play are drawn together, and the play's significance within its social and historical context is often clarified."[29] Although parabases comprise fewer lines than other components of an Aristophanic comedy, the insight that they provide tends to illuminate the meaning of the play as a whole.

The comic parabasis can offer a space in which the categories of Chorus, character, and poet dissolve. It is the Chorus that performs the parabasis, but, when they perform the parabasis, they sometimes speak for themselves, sometimes for a different character, and sometimes for the poet himself. Hubbard argues that, in Aristophanes' early work, which included the *Knights*, parabases "help set up a parallelism between the poet's glorified persona and major characters involved in the dramatic action of each play."[30] Affirming and elaborating upon this idea of poet-character parallelism, A. M. Bowie writes:

> [The parabasis] serves to identify the poet with his hero: what Aristophanes says of himself in the parabasis coincides with what happens to his hero in the play, and both are seen to be involved in the same sort of problems and engaged in the same sort of attempts to put them right.[31]

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[29] Thomas K. Hubbard, *The Mask of Comedy: Aristophanes and the Intertextual Parabasis* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 220.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] A. M. Bowie, *Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 29.

In the case of the *Knights*, the Sausage-Seller must presumably be the hero with whom the parabasis identifies the poet. Like Bowie, Hubbard observes that the parabasis facilitates this sort of poet-protagonist identification:

> Aristophanes' early plays can be called 'autobiographical,' not because they actually portray events in the poet's life, but inasmuch as they project the poet's personal wishes and fantasies into a fictionalized confrontation with the political, social, and intellectual currents of his day.[32]

The parabasis provides a medium uniquely well-suited to the projection of Aristophanes' personal wishes and fantasies, for, in the parabasis, the chorus explicitly and directly addresses the audience.

I do not believe that the second parabasis in the *Knights* is a repository for all of Aristophanes' personal wishes and fantasies. I do believe, however, that, as Hubbard and Bowie suggest, Aristophanes uses this parabasis to convey some of his most important ideas to the audience. Hubbard and Bowie both agree that comic parabases can often help elucidate the overall meaning of a play. The first parabasis of the *Knights*, which is especially useful for elucidating the relationship between Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller, will play a large part in the fourth chapter of this thesis. The play's second parabasis, which is especially useful for elucidating how Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller differ with respect to their repulsiveness, will serve as the primary object of my analysis in this chapter.

Disgust is at the forefront of the second parabasis. Almost as soon as they begin, the Chorus defend their decision to verbally abuse those whom they find repulsive:

> λοιδορῆσαι τοὺς πονηροὺς οὐδέν ἐστ᾽ ἐπίφθονον,
> ἀλλὰ τιμὴ τοῖσι χρηστοῖς, ὅστις εὖ λογίζεται. (1274-1275)
>
> It's not at all invidious to revile the repulsive.
> Rather, the act honors good people, if you think about it correctly.

[32] Hubbard, *Mask of Comedy*, 220.

Before the Chorus mentions the particularly repulsive man whom they are about to insult, they take care to differentiate this bad man, Ariphrades, from his good brother, Arignotus:

> νῦν δ᾽ Ἀρίγνωτον γὰρ οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐκ ἐπίσταται,
> ὅστις ἢ τὸ λευκὸν οἶδεν ἢ τὸν ὄρθιον νόμον.
> ἔστιν οὖν ἀδελφὸς αὐτῷ τοὺς τρόπους οὐ συγγενής,
> Ἀριφράδης πονηρός. ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν καὶ βούλεται· (1278-1281)
>
> Everyone knows Arignotus
> who knows white from black or the Orthian mode from others.
> This man has a brother who is not akin to him in character,
> Ariphrades the repulsive. And Ariphrades actually wants to be repulsive in this way.

To those of us today who do not know Arignotus and who cannot readily discern the Orthian mode of music from others, the first sentence in this passage might be confusing. The Chorus's point seems essentially to be that Arignotus is a musician of considerable enough quality that any discerning listener of music should recognize his name. The goodness of Arignotus, both in his moral character and his musicianship, marks him as starkly different from his brother, Ariphrades the repulsive. By attaching the word "πονηρός" ("repulsive" 1281) to Ariphrades, the Chorus explicitly includes him among the "τοὺς πονηροὺς" ("repulsive people" 1274) whom they consider worthy of revulsion. Indeed, the Chorus suggests that Ariphrades is especially worthy of revulsion because he actually enjoys his repulsiveness. The Chorus's implication here seems to be that it is especially repulsive for someone to enjoy and benefit from his own repulsiveness. Almost immediately after the Chorus calls Ariphrades repulsive, however, they modify their description:

> ἐστὶ δ᾽ οὐ μόνον πονηρός, οὐ γὰρ οὐδ᾽ ἂν ᾐσθόμην,
> οὐδὲ παμπόνηρος, ἀλλὰ καὶ προσεξηύρηκέ τι. (1281-1283)
>
> He isn't just repulsive, or else I wouldn't have noticed him at all,
> nor is he even thoroughly repulsive. Rather, he's revised something new altogether.

The "something new" ("τι") is, according to the Chorus, an act so repulsive that they cannot describe it with any preexisting words. After whetting the audience's curiosity about the "something new," the Chorus reveals what it is in great detail:

> τὴν γὰρ αὐτοῦ γλῶτταν αἰσχραῖς ἡδοναῖς λυμαίνεται,
> ἐν κασωρείοισι λείχων τὴν ἀπόπτυστον δρόσον,
> καὶ μολύνων τὴν ὑπήνην […]. (1284-1286)
>
> He ruins his own tongue with shameful gratifications,
> licking the detestable dew in brothels,
> defiling his beard […].

In other words, the act that renders Ariphrades so novelly repulsive in the eyes of the Chorus is cunnilingus, specifically performed on prostitutes. Although cunnilingus might not strike us now as especially repulsive, Aristophanes' audience likely understood the Chorus's repulsion. Lateiner and Spatharas explain, "Oral sex was conceived as demeaning for the partner who gave it and, more importantly, vaginal secretions were viewed in antiquity as a defiling substance, sometimes equated to menstrual blood; furthermore, Ariphrades sucks on vaginas of prostitutes, that is, women who receive the semen of limitless numbers of men."[33] It seems then that the Chorus is repulsed by Ariphrades' consumption of vaginal secretions on account of two things: the secretions themselves are disgusting and the act of oral sex is demeaning.

The particular words that the Chorus uses to describe Ariphrades' cunnilingus underscore the disgust that they feel towards him. Their description is peppered with insulting adjectives. Ariphrades' gratifications are shameful ("αἰσχραῖς" 1284) and the dew that he licks is detestable ("ἀπόπτυστον" 1285). "ἀπόπτυστον," the Greek word that I translate as "detestable," is an especially potent word, for, although it does often mean "detestable," it most literally means "spat out." By using this word, the Chorus could be implying a number of things—that a

[33] Lateiner and Spatharas, *Ancient Emotion*, 26.

woman's body spits out vaginal fluids, that a prostitute's secretions contain the remnants of semen spat out by the bodies of their customers, or that Ariphrades should spit out, not consume, the dew of prostitutes. In the raw vividness of their description, the Chorus induces in the audience sensations of secondhand repulsion that are both physical and moral. Ariphrades does not merely use his tongue; he ruins ("λυμαίνεται" 1284) it. He does not merely consume the detestable dew; he licks it ("λείχων" 1285). He does not merely dirty his beard; he defiles it ("μολύνων" 1286). This graphic diction induces in the audience a feeling of uneasiness—queasiness, even—about Ariphrades.

The Knights end their attack on Ariphrades by condemning not only Ariphrades himself but also anyone who fails to find Ariphrades disgusting. Disdainfully, they say, "ὅστις οὖν τοιοῦτον ἄνδρα μὴ σφόδρα βδελύττεται, οὔ ποτ᾽ ἐκ ταὐτοῦ μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν πίεται ποτηρίου" ("Anyone who doesn't loathe such a man will never drink from the same cup with me" 1288-1289). This statement is noteworthy for two reasons. It intensifies the Knights' initial statement that "it's not at all invidious to revile the repulsive" ("λοιδορῆσαι τοὺς πονηροὺς οὐδέν ἐστ᾽ ἐπίφθονον" 1274) by implying that there *is* something invidious in *not* reviling the repulsive. For, according to the Knights, invidious are the people who do not loathe men like Ariphrades. Further, the Knights' comment about cup-drinking strikes me as noteworthy in what it implies about the transmission of repulsiveness. If the Knights had merely asserted that Ariphrades himself should not drink from their cup, the comment would be far less remarkable. The Knights are disgusted by Ariphrades because he pollutes his tongue with vaginal secretions. It follows logically that they would not want his mouth upon their cup. The Knights are disgusted by those who do not loathe Ariphrades, on the other hand, not because of their physical consumption but because of their moral indiscretion. The Knights nonetheless refuse to share a physical cup with

those who do not loathe Ariphrades, as if one could transmit moral repugnance through physical means.

In the section that I have examined of the second parabasis, neither Paphlagon nor the Sausage-Seller appear, nor does the Chorus even mention them. I nevertheless believe that this section is crucial to unlocking questions about the two characters. In particular, I believe that the section provides insight into how the disgusting behaviors of Paphlagon differ from those of the Sausage-Seller.

At the forefront of the second parabasis are the topics of dissimilarity and discernment. The Chorus begins by differentiating those who are worthy of mockery from those who are not, it then differentiates Arignotus from Ariphrades, and, after this, it declares not only Ariphrades himself but also those who associate with him as repulsive. The Chorus seems in each of these moments to be modelling discernment—particularly discernment of people who might initially seem alike. When they distinguish Arignotus from Ariphrades, the Chorus first acknowledges that the two men are similar in that they are brothers ("ἔστιν οὖν ἀδελφὸς αὐτῷ" 1280), but they ultimately conclude that the men are not akin with respect to their character ("τοὺς τρόπους οὐ συγγενής" 1280).

Framing the Chorus's attack of Ariphrades are two other examples of discernment. At the beginning of the second parabasis, the Chorus takes time to establish why it is important to distinguish bad from good. They put it simply: "λοιδορῆσαι τοὺς πονηροὺς οὐδέν ἐστ' ἐπίφθονον, ἀλλὰ τιμὴ τοῖσι χρηστοῖς, ὅστις εὖ λογίζεται" ("There's nothing invidious about calling bad people names; it's a way to honor good people if you stop to think about it" 1274-

1275). They imply here that one should be able to distinguish bad from good so that one can then insult bad people and, in doing so, honor good people.[34]

After their attack of Ariphrades, the Chorus reinforces their initial comment about the discernment of bad from good. "ὅστις οὖν τοιοῦτον ἄνδρα μὴ σφόδρα βδελύττεται, οὔ ποτ᾽ ἐκ ταὐτοῦ μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν πίεται ποτηρίου" ("Anyone who doesn't loathe such a man will never drink from the same cup with me" 1288-1289), they say. If someone were unable to discern whether Ariphrades is good or bad, he would not necessarily know whether to loathe Ariphrades or not. If that person, misled by his lack of discernment, did not loathe Ariphrades, the Knights would refuse to share a cup with him. In other words, without the ability to discern good from bad, one might inadvertently render himself disgusting. Fairly high, it seems, are the stakes of discerning good from bad.

Throughout the play, the Knights practice what they preach. They mercilessly mock and condemn one the play's most disgusting characters: Paphlagon. In the span of merely three lines, they call him insults as vivid and wide-ranging as "ταραξιππόστρατον" ("harrrier of the horse troops" 247), "τελώνην" ("tax collector" 248), "φάραγγα" ("the chasm" 248), and "Χάρυβδιν ἁρπαγῆς" ("Charybdis of rapacity" 248). In these same three lines, they three times call him "πανοῦργον" ("repulsive" 249, 250), concluding, "πολλάκις γὰρ αὖτ᾽ ἐρῶ" ("I cannot say the word too often" 249). These insults, harsh as they are, seem fitting for Paphlagon, a man who, among his many disgusting behaviors, screams vulgarities, threatens to cannibalize his enemies, and steals from the Athenian people to provide for himself. By reviling Paphlagon, a repulsive

[34] Helping friends and harming enemies was one component of traditional Greek moral code. In Plato's *Republic*, Polemarchus suggests this moral formula as the definition of justice. Mary Whitlock Blundell discusses how the formula appears in the works of Sophocles. Plato, *Republic Volume I: Books 1-5*, ed. Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 334b; and Mary Whitlock Blundell, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

man, the Chorus, according to what they themselves say in the second parabasis, are not only *not* engaging in invidious behavior; they are actually honoring good people.

The Chorus's treatment of Paphlagon aligns well with their guidance to the audience in the second parabasis. Curiously, however, their treatment of the Sausage-Seller does not. Although the Sausage-Seller exhibits many of the same disgusting behaviors as Paphlagon, including screaming, threatening, and thievery, the Knights do not condemn him as they do Paphlagon. Quite on the contrary, they openly support him and praise his vulgarity. Merely a few lines after they criticize Paphlagon for his repulsiveness, the Knights say that the Sausage-Seller's repulsiveness delights them (329).

It is puzzling that the Chorus, who call so vehemently for the condemnation of disgusting people, not only praise the Sausage-Seller's repulsiveness but also urge him to intensify it. Despite my bemusement, I do not believe that the Chorus's treatment of the Sausage-Seller is inconsistent with their statements in the second parabasis. Rather, I believe that the Chorus treat the Sausage-Seller so well because, despite his disgusting behaviors, he is not a disgusting person. In their second parabasis, the Chorus stresses the importance of discernment—the differentiation of those worthy of mockery from those who are not, of Arignotus from Ariphrades, of the merely repulsive from the indescribably disgusting. I believe that, in doing so, the Chorus implicitly invites the audience to discern how the Sausage-Seller is different from Paphlagon. For, although the Sausage-Seller resembles Paphlagon in some ways, just as Arignotus resembles Ariphrades, the Sausage-Seller ultimately differs from him, just as Arignotus differs from Ariphrades.

One might argue that it matters very little why the Chorus considers Paphlagon disgusting and the Sausage-Seller not. Such a person might contend that the Chorus cares about

the Sausage-Seller's character traits and behaviors only insofar as they allow him to defeat Paphlagon. The Sausage-Seller could be the vilest and most villainous man in Athenian history, but, if he is able to oust Paphlagon, the Chorus would support him.

I am sympathetic to this line of reasoning, but I nonetheless disagree with it. As I have discussed, the Chorus take a substantial amount of time to discuss how one should discern good from bad. They do not use any specific word in Greek that means "discern" or "differentiate," but they do use a form of "οἶδα" ("to know") in the context of knowing one thing from others—knowing white from black, for example, and the Orthian mode from others (1279). To know one thing from another thing is essentially to discern that thing from others. In their attention to the topic of discernment, the Chorus suggests that the audience and, more broadly, the Athenian people should make an effort to discern good from bad. The discernment of good political leaders from bad ones seems an especially important task for the Athenian people. For this reason, I hesitate to accept that the Chorus would think it unnecessary to discern the Sausage-Seller's moral character from that of Paphlagon. If the Chorus believes, as I think that they do, in the importance of discernment, they must also think it important to distinguish the Sausage-Seller from Paphlagon.

Particularly in their attack of Ariphrades, the Chorus offers insight into how one might differentiate the disgusting behaviors of Paphlagon from those of the Sausage-Seller. Certain elements of their attack correspond strikingly well with elements of Paphlagon's behavior but not with elements of the Sausage-Seller's behavior. Like Ariphrades, Paphlagon relies primarily on his tongue to accomplish his disgusting deeds. Just as Ariphrades "pollutes his tongue" ("γλῶτταν […] λυμαίνεται" 1284), Paphlagon also pollutes his tongue—he pollutes it with lies, with vulgar obscenities, and with disgusting categories and quantities of food. At the end of the

play, the Sausage-Seller reveals that Paphlagon, in his new role as sausage-seller, continues to use his tongue for disgusting purposes—he exchanges abuse with prostitutes and drinks bathwater (1400-1401). In his association, particularly through his tongue, with prostitutes, Paphlagon further resembles Ariphrades.

Although I do find these various similarities interesting and useful, I believe that the similarity between Ariphrades and Paphlagon most fertile for my analysis is the self-gratification that they both experience from their respective acts of repulsiveness. The Chorus make it clear that Ariphrades enjoys behaving in a disgusting manner; according to them, he *likes* to be repulsive ("ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν καὶ βούλεται" 1281). Further, although cunnilingus might seem like an act that gratifies the one receiving it more than the one giving it, Ariphrades seems to perform cunnilingus primarily for his own enjoyment. The Chorus never mentions the gratification of the prostitutes who receive Ariphrades' cunnilingus, but they do make a point to say that Ariphrades ruins his tongue with shameful *pleasures* ("αἰσχραῖς ἡδοναῖς" 1284). Paphlagon, too, might seem to do everything—including behave repulsively—on Demos's behalf. The truth, however, proves to be quite the opposite. Despite his pretentions otherwise, Paphlagon does almost everything for his own benefit. As I will explain in the next chapter, Paphlagon cares very little about what is good in the long-term for Demos; he only lures Demos with short-term pleasures that tantalize the latter to remain under the former's sway. The Sausage-Seller, on the other hand, hardly ever seems motivated by self-interest. Instead, he proves as the play unfolds that he is genuinely committed to improving Demos.

Chapter Three: Paphlagon's Selfishness and the Sausage-Seller's Selflessness

Although Paphlagon tries to hide his own selfishness, other characters in the play lay it bare. Fairly early in the play, the leader of the Chorus explains the nature of Paphlagon's selfishness. In response to Paphlagon's exclamation that conspirators are physically attacking him him ("ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρῶν τύπτομαι ξυνωμοτῶν" 257), the Chorus leader says:

> ἐν δίκῃ γ᾽, ἐπεὶ τὰ κοινὰ πρὶν λαχεῖν κατεσθίεις,
> κἀποσυκάζεις πιέζων τοὺς ὑπευθύνους σκοπῶν
> ὅστις αὐτῶν ὠμός ἐστιν ἢ πέπων ἢ μὴ πέπων.
> καὶ σκοπεῖς γε τῶν πολιτῶν ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀμνοκῶν,
> πλούσιος καὶ μὴ πονηρὸς καὶ τρέμων τὰ πράγματα.
> κἄν τιν᾽ αὐτῶν γνῷς ἀπράγμον᾽ ὄντα καὶ κεχηνότα,
> καταγαγὼν ἐκ Χερρονήσου, διαβαλὼν ἀγκυρίσας,
> εἶτ᾽ ἀποστρέψας τὸν ὦμον αὐτὸν ἐνεκολήβασας. (258-265)
>
> And justly, too, since you devour the common funds before you're even elected to office.
> You pick treasury officials like figs, squeezing them and eyeing them,
> whichever of them are still green and which are ripe and which unripe.
> You search for whoever of the citizens is sheep-minded,
> rich, innocuous, and fearful of trouble.
> And whenever you perceive someone of them as simple and gaping,
> leading him away from Chersonese and seizing him by the middle, you hook him,
> and then, twisting his shoulders back, you gulp him up:

The Chorus leader's description of Paphlagon's victims as food—and of Paphlagon himself as the consumer of this food—is telling. Paphlagon does not merely use up the common funds; he "κατεσθίεις" ("devours" 258) them. He does not simply exploit the treasury officials; he "κἀποσυκάζεις πιέζων τοὺς ὑπευθύνους σκοπῶν" ("picks them like figs, squeezing them and eyeing them" 259). He pays careful attention to which ones "ὠμός ἐστιν ἢ πέπων ἢ μὴ πέπων" ("are still green and which are ripe and which unripe" 260). After identifying his easiest targets, he wrestles with them and "ἐνεκολήβασας" ("gulps them up" 265).

This description paints Paphlagon as someone who, despite his ostensible concern with the fullness of Demos's stomach, is far more concerned about the fullness of his own stomach.

In order to deny these accusations, Paphlagon feigns selflessness, a strategy that he will employ again several times before the end of the play. Frantically, Paphlagon tells the Chorus:

> ξυνεπίκεισθ᾽ ὑμεῖς; ἐγὼ δ᾽, ἄνδρες, δι᾽ ὑμᾶς τύπτομαι,
> ὅτι λέγειν γνώμην ἔμελλον ὡς δίκαιον ἐν πόλει
> ἱστάναι μνημεῖον ὑμῶν ἐστιν ἀνδρείας χάριν. (266-268)
>
> Are you joining in attacking me? But I, oh gentlemen, am being beaten on your behalf,
> because I was about to announce a proposition that it is right
> to erect a monument in the city as an homage to your courage.

Seeing straight through Paphlagon's over-the-top performance of altruism, the leader of the chorus replies:

> ὡς δ᾽ ἀλαζών, ὡς δὲ μάσθλης. εἶδες οἷ᾽ ὑπέρχεται
> ὡσπερεὶ γέροντας ἡμᾶς κἀκκοβαλικεύεται; (269-270)
>
> What a quack! How slippery he is! Do you see how he tries to beguile
> and bamboozle us as if we were old men?

This interaction from the beginning of the play illustrates the nature of Paphlagon's self-interestedness. Although he claims to love and protect Demos, he actually exploits him. When the Chorus calls him out for his selfishness, Paphlagon attempts shamelessly to dupe them. He claims that he is working for their benefit and not his own. His excuse arouses in the Knights an even stronger sense of contempt towards him. "ὡς δ᾽ ἀλαζών" ("What a quack" 269), they say, disgusted by Paphlagon's feeble attempt at trickery.

The Chorus, the slaves, and the Sausage-Seller all seem to recognize Paphlagon's selfishness. For much of the play, Demos, however, fails to see Paphlagon's exploitation as exploitation; unlike the Chorus, Demos falls for Paphlagon's performances of altruism. Eventually, even Demos learns that Paphlagon cares more about himself than he has ever cared about Demos. The event that awakens Demos to Paphlagon's selfishness occurs towards the end of the play, when the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon, both vying for Demos's affection, each give

to him a series of elaborate and luxurious foods. After the two have presented their gifts, the Sausage-Seller asks Paphlagon:

> τί οὐ διακρίνεις, Δῆμ᾽, ὁπότερός ἐστι νῷν
> ἀνὴρ ἀμείνων περὶ σὲ καὶ τὴν γαστέρα; (1207-1208)
>
> Why not decide, Demos, which of us is
> the man more favorable for you and your stomach?

In order to make his decision, Demos examines the baskets of both the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon. When he looks into the Sausage-Seller's basket, it is completely empty. The Sausage-Seller explains to Demos, "ἅπαντα γάρ σοι παρεφόρουν" ("I set everything upon your table" 1215). Demos is impressed that the Sausage-Seller has given Demos everything and saved nothing for himself. Gesturing towards the empty basket, the visual representation of the Sausage-Seller's selflessness, Demos exclaims, "αὕτη μὲν ἡ κίστη τὰ τοῦ δήμου φρονεῖ" ("This basket sure is well-minded towards Demos!" 1216).

Moving to Paphlagon's basket, Demos is shocked. He shouts:

> οἴμοι, τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὅσων πλέα.
> ὅσον τὸ χρῆμα τοῦ πλακοῦντος ἀπέθετο·
> ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἔδωκεν ἀποτεμὼν τυννουτονί. (1218-1220)
>
> Oh dear, it's full of so many goodies!
> He stowed away so big a piece of cake
> but gave to me a piece *this* tiny!

In the midst of Demos's outrage, the Sausage-Seller explains that Paphlagon's selfishness extends far beyond cake:

> τοιαῦτα μέντοι καὶ πρότερόν σ᾽ ἠργάζετο·
> σοὶ μὲν προσεδίδου μικρὸν ὧν ἐλάμβανεν,
> αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἑαυτῷ παρετίθει τὰ μείζονα. (1221-1223)
>
> He was doing these sorts of things to you before, too;
> he gave to you just a little piece of what he was taking,
> and he was putting aside more of it for himself.

Demos, now fully enraged, yells at Paphlagon:

ὦ μιαρέ, κλέπτων δή με ταῦτ᾽ ἐξηπάτας;
ἐγὼ δέ τυ ἐστεφάνιξα κἠδωρησάμαν. (1224-1225)

You scum, did you really, stealing from me, deceive me in these ways?
Me that that crowned and endowed you?

Attempting the same sorry excuse that he tried earlier on the Knights, Paphlagon argues, "ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔκλεπτον ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθῷ γε τῇ πόλει" ("But I stole for the good of the city!" 1226). Not falling for it this time, Demos orders Paphlagon to lay down his crown so that he can now place the crown on the Sausage-Seller's head (1227-1228).

It is worth noting that, of all Paphlagon's unsavory qualities, it is his selfishness that leads Demos to become irrevocably disgusted by him. "ὦ μιαρέ" ("You scum" 1224), Demos calls Paphlagon. "μιαρέ" ("scum") connotes the same sense of pollution with which the Chorus characterizes Ariphrades, and, indeed, in this moment, Paphlagon seems especially similar to Ariphrades. For, just as Ariphrades ruins himself with shameful pleasures (1284), so too does Paphlagon. Ariphrades' "shameful pleasures" are, of course, the vaginal secretions of prostitutes. Paphlagon's "shameful pleasures" are the resources of the Athenian people, which he filches for himself. Paphlagon gratifies himself by stealing food from Demos, but, in doing so, he inadvertently pollutes himself. Although his selfishness benefits him in the short term, it, in the long term, marks him as worthy of the contempt and disgust of others.

One might argue that, at various points in the play, the Sausage-Seller performs the same selfish actions as Paphlagon and is thus equally as selfish as him. To be fair, it is true that Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller overlap in some of their selfish behaviors. In the very contest that I discuss above, the Sausage-Seller performs a shameless act of thievery for his own benefit. Lamenting that Paphlagon has prepared a stewed rabbit for Demos while he himself has not, the

Sausage-Seller devises “some ribald trick” (“βωμολόχον” 1194) that would allow him to acquire one. The trick turns out to be a simple combination of diversion and thievery. The Sausage-Seller tells Paphlagon that, in the distance, he sees some men approaching—"ambassadors who have sacks of silver” (“πρέσβεις ἔχοντες ἀργυρίου βαλλάντια” 1197). Overcome by greed, Paphlagon turns to look, and, while Paphlagon is distracted, the Sausage-Seller steals his hare and offers it as his own gift to Demos (“ὦ Δημίδιον ὁρᾷς τὰ λαγῷ᾽ ἅ σοι φέρω;” 1199).

Furious, Paphlagon, addressing the Sausage-Seller as “τάλας” (“rascal” 1200), accuses him, “ἀδίκως γε τἄμ᾽ ὑφήρπασας” (“Unjustly you have stolen from me” 1200). He then protests to Demos, “ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐκινδύνευσ᾽, ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὤπτησά γε” (“I’m the one who took the risk, and I’m the one who roasted it” 1204). Demos, however, takes no mind of Paphlagon’s comment and seems entirely indifferent to the Sausage-Seller’s self-serving trickery. “ἄπιθ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ τοῦ παραθέντος ἡ χάρις” (“Get out of here: I give no thanks except to the one who places it before me” 1205), Demos says coldly. At this point, Paphlagon merely concedes to the Sausage-Seller, “οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ὑπεραναιδευθήσομαι” (“Woe is me! I’m going to be surpassed in impudence” 1206).

Paphlagon’s concession is significant; prior to this moment, he denied that the Sausage-Seller could ever surpass him in impudence. “οὐ δέδοιχ᾽ ὑμᾶς, ἕως ἂν ζῇ τὸ βουλευτήριον” (“I’m not afraid of you—not as long as there exists a Council” 395), he once called out to the Sausage-Seller and the Chorus, “καὶ τὸ τοῦ δήμου πρόσωπον μακκοᾷ καθήμενον” (“and not as long as the face of the people sits mooning” 396). Now, however, in a moment of despair, he admits that the Sausage-Seller will overtake him. In doing so, Paphlagon suggests that the Sausage-Seller is playing—and winning—Paphlagon’s own game. According to this suggestion, the Sausage-Seller’s impudence is different from Paphlagon’s impudence only in degree and not in kind.

The slaves' conversation in the first scene of the play affirms that Paphlagon has himself employed the strategy of distraction and thievery that the Sausage-Seller uses to steal a hare for Demos. The first slave recounts to the second:

> ὅ τι ἄν τις ἡμῶν σκευάσῃ τῷ δεσπότῃ
> Παφλαγὼν κεχάρισται τοῦτο. καὶ πρώην γ᾽ ἐμοῦ
> μᾶζαν μεμαχότος ἐν Πύλῳ Λακωνικήν,
> πανουργότατά πως παραδραμὼν ὑφαρπάσας
> αὐτὸς παρέθηκε τὴν ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ μεμαγμένην. (53-57)
>
> Paphlagon, should one of us prepare something,
> gives this thing freely to our master. Even just yesterday, when I
> had kneaded a Spartan barley-cake in Pylos,
> in a most villainous fashion, somehow running around me and snatching it away,
> he himself served up the thing which had been kneaded by *me*!

Paphlagon's theft of the first slave's barley-cake almost perfectly corresponds to the Sausage-Seller's theft of Paphlagon's stewed rabbit. Paphlagon, who was once "ὑφαρπάσας" ("stealing away" 56) the foods prepared by others, accuses the Sausage-Seller, "τἄμ᾽ ὑφήρπασας" ("You have stolen from me!" 1200). Further, in both the slave's speech and in Paphlagon's dialogue with the Sausage-Seller, personal pronouns emphasize the sense of ownership that both the first slave and Paphlagon feel towards the food that they have prepared. The first slave says that "*ἐμοῦ* μᾶζαν μεμαχότος" ("*I* had kneaded a barley-cake" 54-55), and, a few lines later, he again refers to the cake as "τὴν ὑπ᾽ *ἐμοῦ* μεμαγμένην" ("the thing kneaded by *me*" 57). Similarly, Paphlagon repeats "ἐγὼ" emphatically when he says, "*ἐγὼ* δ᾽ ἐκινδύνευσ᾽, *ἐγὼ* δ᾽ ὤπτησά γε" ("But *I* was the one who took the risk, and *I* was the one who roasted it" 1204). Through their use of personal pronouns, both the slave and Paphlagon imply that *they* deserve credit for their respective foods because *they* created them. When their culinary creations and their credit are stolen away, the two thus experience righteous indignation in the face of unjust thievery.

If, as the first slave suggests, Paphlagon's thievery is unjust, then it might seem to follow that the Sausage-Seller's thievery is equally unjust. I believe, however, that it is not. By the point in the play when the Sausage-Seller plays on Paphlagon the same trick that Paphlagon played on the first slave, the Sausage-Seller has emerged as someone with motivations entirely different from those of Paphlagon. Like Paphlagon, the Sausage-Seller works hard to win the affection of Demos, and he goes to great, sometimes unsavory, lengths to do so. The Sausage-Seller differs from Paphlagon, however, in what he hopes to accomplish once he does win Demos's affection. As I have already explained, Paphlagon seeks to exploit Demos for the benefit of his own stomach. The Sausage-Seller's motivation, on the other hand, is somewhat less clear, especially at the beginning of the play. It is possible that he is persuaded by the rewards that the first slave lists:

> ὦ μακάρι᾽, ὦ πλούσιε,
> ὦ νῦν μὲν οὐδείς, αὔριον δ᾽ ὑπέρμεγας,
> ὦ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ταγὲ τῶν εὐδαιμόνων. (157-159)
>
> Happiness, riches…
> Now you have nothing, but tomorrow you will have everything,
> You: Chief of blessed Athens.

If, however, these rewards do actually motivate the Sausage-Seller to pursue demagoguery, he does not say so. Every time that the first slave explains to the Sausage-Seller how he would personally benefit from becoming a demagogue, the Sausage-Seller reacts not with avarice or excitement but with disbelief and irritation. Cantankerously, he asks the first slave:

> τί μ᾽, ὦγάθ᾽, οὐ πλύνειν ἐᾷς τὰς κοιλίας
> πωλεῖν τε τοὺς ἀλλᾶντας, ἀλλὰ καταγελᾷς; (160-161)
>
> Why don't you let me wash my tripe
> and sell my sausages instead of making a laugh out of me?

When the slave presents to the Sausage-Seller an even grander vision of demagoguery's rewards, the Sausage-Seller remains more confused than compelled. "ἐγώ;" ("Me?" 167) he asks. He and the slave continue back-and-forth like this for several lines. The slave coaxes the Sausage-Seller to accept his destiny, and the Sausage-Seller responds, "οὐκ ἀξιῶ 'γὼ 'μαυτὸν ἰσχύειν μέγα" ("I don't deem myself worthy of wielding great power" 182). The slave uses an oracle to demonstrate why the Sausage-Seller is fit to govern, and the Sausage-Seller insists:

> τὰ μὲν λόγι᾽ αἰκάλλει με: θαυμάζω δ᾽ ὅπως
> τὸν δῆμον οἷός τ᾽ ἐπιτροπεύειν εἴμ᾽ ἐγώ. (211-212)
>
> The oracles flatter me—but I'm incredulous as to how
> I could be able to rule over Demos.

It is possible that the Sausage-Seller's reluctance to pursue demagoguery is a deceptive pretense. He might actually covet the riches and the power that demagoguery would offer him despite his show of modesty. This interpretation is plausible, but I think that it is unlikely. If nothing else, the Sausage-Seller's first interaction with Paphlagon demonstrates the reality of his reluctance. When Paphlagon comes onstage, the Sausage-Seller does not shed his reluctant guise; instead, he tries to run away. Not even the rewards—the wealth, the power—that the first slave listed to him are enough to stop him from attempting to abscond. As the Sausage-Seller tries to run away, the first slave shouts to him:

> οὗτος τί φεύγεις; οὐ μενεῖς; ὦ γεννάδα
> ἀλλαντοπῶλα μὴ προδῷς τὰ πράγματα. (240-241)
>
> Hey, you, why are you running away? Oh, noble
> sausage-seller, don't abandon us to these troubles.

Interestingly, this second sentence—not the promise of material wealth nor of political power—seems to compel the Sausage-Seller to stay and battle Paphlagon. Because the Sausage-Seller does not verbally respond, I cannot say with certainty that the slave's command caused the

Sausage-Seller to stay. I do nonetheless find it significant that, after the first slave articulates this plea that the Sausage-Seller not abandon him, the Sausage-Seller actually does stay. Perhaps the Sausage-Seller is moved by the first slave's appeal to his sense of duty because he already possesses a sense of altruism; perhaps it is also because of his altruism that he is unmoved by the slave's earlier appeals to his avarice.

Soon after the first slave makes his plea, the Chorus comes onstage. The speech of the Chorus leader seems in some ways to support my argument about the Sausage-Seller's altruism. The Chorus leader commands:

> παῖε παῖε τὸν πανοῦργον καὶ ταραξιππόστρατον
> καὶ τελώνην καὶ φάραγγα καὶ Χάρυβδιν ἁρπαγῆς,
> καὶ πανοῦργον καὶ πανοῦργον: πολλάκις γὰρ αὖτ᾽ ἐρῶ.
> καὶ γὰρ οὗτος ἦν πανοῦργος πολλάκις τῆς ἡμέρας. (247-250)
>
> Strike, strike that repulsive man, that harrier of horses,
> that tax-collector, that chasm, that Charybdis of thievery,
> that repulsive, repulsive man. I'll say it many times again,
> for this man here is repulsive many times a day.

This speech makes it clear that the Chorus is on the side of goodness and nobility. It also makes it clear that Paphlagon is bad, repulsive, and worthy of battery. In some ways, there is a comically reductionistic quality to the Chorus leader's black-and-white description of Paphlagon as bad and those who oppose him—including themselves—as good. His use of these stark terms does, however, convey to the Sausage-Seller that Paphlagon is truly a menace—to the Chorus, to the slaves, and, perhaps most importantly, to Demos. Although the Chorus leader does not yet say so outright, he does imply that Paphlagon is harmful to Demos. Paphlagon is a "tax-collector, a chasm, and a Charybdis of thievery" ("καὶ τελώνην καὶ φάραγγα καὶ Χάρυβδιν ἁρπαγῆς" 248); he steals from Demos to benefit himself. By presenting Paphlagon as a threat to Demos, the

Chorus leader gives the Sausage-Seller a more compelling reason than simple self-gain to take the risk against Paphlagon.

The Sausage-Seller's desire to do good for Demos becomes increasingly evident as the play unfolds. At first, the Sausage-Seller's intentions do not seem particularly different from those of Paphlagon. When he first interacts with Demos, the Sausage-Seller's compliments are so effusive that they seem insincere. He borrows his effusive, saccharine tone from Paphlagon, whose comments and demeanor he has been so careful to mimic in every contest before this one.

Paphlagon professes to Demos, "φιλῶ σ᾽ ὦ Δῆμ᾽ ἐραστής τ᾽ εἰμὶ σός" ("I love you, Demos, and I am your *erastes*" 732), so, mirroring the erotic quality of Paphlagon's comment, the Sausage-Seller says, "ἀντεραστὴς τουτουί, ἐρῶν πάλαι σου" ("I am the rival *erastes* of this man, and I have desired you for a long time" 733-734).

The Sausage-Seller mimicry of Paphlagon's fawning insincerity does not last long. Immediately after he establishes to Demos that he is Paphlagon's rival *erastes*, the Sausage-Seller pivots to a statement that far better encapsulates his actual intentions towards him:

> βουλόμενός τέ σ᾽ εὖ ποιεῖν,
> ἄλλοι τε πολλοὶ καὶ καλοί τε κἀγαθοί.
> ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ οἷοί τ᾽ ἐσμὲν διὰ τουτονί. σὺ γὰρ
> ὅμοιος εἶ τοῖς παισὶ τοῖς ἐρωμένοις:
> τοὺς μὲν καλούς τε κἀγαθοὺς οὐ προσδέχει,
> σαυτὸν δὲ λυχνοπώλαισι καὶ νευρορράφοις
> καὶ σκυτοτόμοις καὶ βυρσοπώλαισιν δίδως. (734-740)
>
> I have wished to do you well—
> both I and many other men of both the good and noble varieties.
> But we are not able to do so because of this man here, Paphlagon. For you
> resemble the boys who are *eromenoi*:
> you do not accept good and noble men,
> but you give yourself only lamp-sellers and cobblers
> and leather-cutters and leather-sellers.

This speech reveals the Sausage-Seller's genuine concern for Demos, as well as his keen-eyed understanding of the problems that plague Demos. Prior to this speech, the Sausage-Seller and his allies emphasized his repulsiveness, as well as the other traits that he had in common with Paphlagon. Here, however, the Sausage-Seller stresses that he shares the same goal as "καὶ καλοί τε κἀγαθοί" ("the good and the noble" 735). Like them, he wishes to do Demos well ("βουλόμενός τέ σ᾽ εὖ ποιεῖν" 734). The Sausage-Seller thus presents himself as one of the good and noble ones whom Demos does not accept. In the same vein, he seeks to differentiate himself from the "λυχνοπώλαισι καὶ νευρορράφοις καὶ σκυτοτόμοις καὶ βυρσοπώλαισιν" ("lamp-sellers and cobblers and leather-cutters and leather-sellers" 739-740), whom Paphlagon does accept. On one hand, it seems ironic that the Sausage-Seller attempts to distinguish himself, the "ἀλλαντοπώλης" ("sausage-seller"), from "λυχνοπώλαισι" ("lamp-sellers") and "βυρσοπώλαισιν" ("leather-sellers"), two groups of people who, like him, are crass, lower-class vendors. These are sellers who pawn their cheap, seedy wares to the Athenian people. Perhaps the Sausage-Seller recognizes that, to the eyes of most people, including Demos, he does very much resemble the lamp-sellers and leather-sellers who have treated Demos badly before. It is possible then that his understanding of this superficial resemblance informs his attempt to emphatically differentiate himself from them.

The Sausage-Seller's attempt to differentiate himself from other sellers continues in the next scene, a contest with Paphlagon at the Pnyx. How the Sausage-Seller mirrors Paphlagon's rhetoric matters less than how he diverges from it. Paphlagon begins with a melodramatic self-curse:

> εἰ δέ σε μισῶ καὶ μὴ περὶ σοῦ μάχομαι μόνος ἀντιβεβηκώς,
> ἀπολοίμην καὶ διαπρισθείην κατατμηθείην τε λέπαδνα. (767-768)
>
> If I hate you and if I don't fight on your behalf, alone in your defense,

may I perish and may I be sawn asunder and may I be cut into leather thongs.

As expected, the Sausage-Seller borrows the structure of Paphlagon's self-curse and fills it with imagery slightly more grotesque:

> κἄγωγ᾽ ὦ Δῆμ᾽, εἰ μή σε φιλῶ καὶ μὴ στέργω, κατατμηθεὶς
> ἑψοίμην ἐν περικομματίοις: κεἰ μὴ τούτοισι πέποιθας,
> ἐπὶ ταυτησὶ κατακνησθείην ἐν μυττωτῷ μετὰ τυροῦ,
> καὶ τῇ κρεάγρᾳ τῶν ὀρχιπέδων ἑλκοίμην ἐς Κεραμεικόν. (769-772)
>
> And I, Demos, if I don't love and feel affection for you, may I, after I'm cut up,
> be cooked into mincemeat: and if you're not persuaded by these things,
> may I be grated into this hash with cheese,
> and may I be pulled with a meat-hook through my testicles to Ceramicus.

By this point in the play, the audience likely expects the Sausage-Seller to follow his formula of mimicry and amplification—a formula to which this back-and-forth exchange adheres well. They might, however, be surprised when the Sausage-Seller brings into his appeal to Demos something entirely different from what Paphlagon says in his appeal. Addressing Demos, the Sausage-Seller says about Paphlagon:

> ὡς δ᾽ οὐχὶ φιλεῖ σ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἔστ᾽ εὔνους, τοῦτ᾽ αὐτό σε πρῶτα διδάξω,
> ἀλλ᾽ ἢ διὰ τοῦτ᾽ αὖθ᾽ ὁτιή σου τῆς ἀνθρακιᾶς ἀπολαύει.
> σὲ γάρ, ὃς Μήδοισι διεξιφίσω περὶ τῆς χώρας Μαραθῶνι,
> καὶ νικήσας ἡμῖν μεγάλως ἐγγλωττοτυπεῖν παρέδωκας,
> ἐπὶ ταῖσι πέτραις οὐ φροντίζει σκληρῶς σε καθήμενον οὕτως,
> οὐχ ὥσπερ ἐγὼ ῥαψάμενός σοι τουτὶ φέρω. ἀλλ᾽ ἐπαναίρου,
> κᾆτα καθίζου μαλακῶς, ἵνα μὴ τρίβῃς τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι. (779-785)
>
> He does not love you, nor is he well-intentioned. I will demonstrate to you this very thing first.
> On account of this very fact, he takes advantage of your fire.
> You, who saved by sword this land from Medes at Marathon,
> and you, who, because you prevailed, allowed us to greatly celebrate,
> he does not care that you are sitting stiffly on these rocks,
> whereas I, having sown this pillow, bring it to you. Rise,
> and sit comfortably, in order that you not chafe your bottom at Salamis.

Here, the Sausage-Seller reiterates even more emphatically the point that he made to Demos earlier. Paphlagon is not one of Demos's good and noble suitors. The Sausage-Seller

claims that Paphlagon does not love Demos at all. The key idea, it seems, is that Paphlagon takes advantage of ("ἀπολαύει" 780) Demos. The Sausage-Seller's most damning criticism of Paphlagon is not necessarily that he behaves repulsively but, rather, that he behaves repulsively at the expense of Demos. The Sausage-Seller presents himself, on the other hand, as someone genuinely dedicated to Demos's wellbeing. He does, after all, take the time to sew and bring a pillow to Demos.

One could argue that the Sausage-Seller's altruistic gesture towards Demos here is insincere. Perhaps the Sausage-Seller is treating Demos well only for as long as it takes to gain control of him, and perhaps the Sausage-Seller *is* as self-interested as Paphlagon. I believe that Sausage-Seller's actions at the end of the play undermine the plausibility of this argument. After he gains power over Demos, the Sausage-Seller uses his power not for his own benefit but for the benefit of Demos.[35] By boiling Demos down, the Sausage-Seller turns Demos's agedness into youth, his ugliness into beauty, and his unhealthiness into vigor. For his efforts, the Sausage-Seller does not receive much. Demos offers him meals at the prytaneum but little else. Nor, however, does the Sausage-Seller use his power to exact self-gratifying revenge on Paphlagon. The Sausage-Seller punishes Paphlagon only by relegating him to the Sausage-Seller's former post. I take the Sausage-Seller at face value when he says that Paphlagon's punishment is "οὐδὲν μέγ'" ("no big deal" 1398). Indeed, the Sausage-Seller seems to find Paphlagon's punishment unimportant enough not to mention it to Demos until Demos prompts him to do so. What the Sausage-Seller *does* give to Demos unprompted is a thirty-year truce ("τὰς τριακοντούτιδας

[35] James McGlew observes that, in his decision to use his victory not for his own benefit but for the benefit of Demos, the Sausage-Seller differs not only from Paphlagon but also from other Aristophanic heroes. James McGlew, "'Everybody Wants to Make a Speech': Cleon and Aristophanes on Politics and Fantasy," *Arethusa* 29 (1996): 339-361.

σπονδὰς" 1388-1399), which comes onstage in the form of a young woman. On the topic of the truce, the Sausage-Seller tells Demos:

> οὐ γὰρ ὁ Παφλαγὼν
> ἀπέκρυπτε ταύτας ἔνδον, ἵνα σὺ μὴ λάβῃς;
> νῦν οὖν ἐγώ σοι παραδίδωμ᾽ ἐς τοὺς ἀγροὺς
> αὐτὰς ἰέναι λαβόντα. (1392-1395)
>
> That Paphlagon
> was hiding her away in his house so that you could not have her.
> But now, I give her over to you
> for you to take with you when you go to the countryside.

Why did Paphlagon hide the truce from Demos? He must have understood that a truce would have pulled Demos away from his control. On one level, Paphlagon's control of Demos depended on his role as Demos's *erastes*. By the standards of Aristophanes' audience, the truce, personified as a young woman, is a much more appropriate sexual object for Demos than is Paphlagon. If Paphlagon would have allowed Demos to acquire the truce, Demos would not have needed Paphlagon as his *erastes*, and Paphlagon's influence over Demos would have waned. On another level, Cleon was a war hawk whose popularity with the Athenian people depended on war. This fact, too, explains why Paphlagon hid the truce from Demos.

The Sausage-Seller, on the other hand, does not seem to care that the truce will pull Demos away from his control. Indeed, the Sausage-Seller seems to want Demos out of his control almost as soon as he gains control of him. This desire to get Demos out of his control seems to motivate the Sausage-Seller's decision to give Demos the truce and send him to the countryside. The truce and relocation are gifts that pull Demos away from the Sausage-Seller's influence, but, for the same reasons that they pull him away from the Sausage-Seller, they also pull Demos away from other politicians and thus away from potential corruption. Despite the power and wealth that the Sausage-Seller could amass from maintaining his sway over Demos,

the Sausage-Seller cares more about Demos's wellbeing than about other rewards, so he decides to let him go.

Chapter Four: Discernment and the Good

It seems then that the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon differ not only with respect to repulsiveness but also with respect to other things, such as their desire to do what is truly good for Demos. Paphlagon seems to possess no such desire, whereas the Sausage-Seller seems totally committed to Demos's betterment. This difference is significant within the context of the play, but I believe that it also has ramifications on people and things outside of the play. In this chapter, I argue that, by presenting—and allowing his audience to piece together—the core differences between Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller, Aristophanes is making a larger point about how he, a comic poet, differs from demagogues. In particular, he seems to be claiming that he, unlike demagogues, seeks to do what is truly good for the Athenian people.

Aristophanes never says outright that the Sausage-Seller represents him, nor does he ever even say that Paphlagon represents Cleon. I believe that this ambiguity is a good thing. It allows the play to function beyond the realm of mere allegory, and it also forces the audience to discern the real-word implications of the play for themselves. Although Aristophanes avoids drawing explicit parallels, he does seem to leave his audience hints about the allegorical dimensions of his work. As I discussed in my introduction, scholars generally agree that Paphlagon is, on some level, a representation of Cleon. It is less clear that the Sausage-Seller is a representation of Aristophanes, but there are nonetheless moments throughout the play that suggest that this might be the case.[36] In particular, the first parabasis provides significant evidence that there is some

[36] Robert Bartlett and Hubbard both address the affinity between Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller, but they differ somewhat in their conclusions. Bartlett argues that, although Aristophanes has something in common with the Sausage-Seller, the two cannot be equated; Hubbard, on the other hand, reads the Sausage-Seller as a sort of double for Aristophanes. Both arguments are convincing, but I side in my own analysis more with Hubbard. Bartlett, *Against Demagogues*, 262-263; and Hubbard, "Aristophanes and the Poetry of Hate," in *The Mask of Comedy*, 60-87.

affinity between Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller. Referring to Aristophanes, the Chorus says:

> τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἡμῖν μισεῖ τολμᾷ τε λέγειν τὰ δίκαια,
> καὶ γενναίως πρὸς τὸν τυφῶ χωρεῖ καὶ τὴν ἐριώλην. (510-511)
>
> He hates the same men as us and he dares to say righteous things,
> and nobly he advances against the typhoon and the hurricane.

These words—the first ones that the Chorus uses to describe Aristophanes and his stance against demagogues—bear some resemblance to the words that they use to describe the Sausage-Seller and his stance against Paphlagon. The Chorus first calls attention to Aristophanes' dependence on speech. They could have said that Aristophanes dares to *do* or *accomplish* righteous things, but, instead, they say that Aristophanes dares to *say* ("λέγειν" 510) righteous things. Similarly, the Sausage-Seller relies on his ability to speak in order to accomplish righteous things. In his first contest with Paphlagon, the Sausage-Seller depended on his ability to speak more loudly than Paphlagon, and, in his second contest, he depended on his ability to speak more persuasively. Of course, as I discussed earlier, Paphlagon too relies greatly on his ability to speak, and his tongue is his most valuable weapon. Paphlagon differs, however, from Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller with respect to his motivation. Both Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller use speech to accomplish righteous things; Paphlagon, on the other hand, uses speech to acquire anything that will benefit him.

The next line includes two words that equate Paphlagon to some sort of natural disaster: "τὸν τυφῶ" ("the typhoon" 511) and "τὴν ἐριώλην" ("the hurricane" 511). The Chorus describes Aristophanes as someone who battles against these natural disasters, and, elsewhere in the play, they describe the Sausage-Seller in the same way. During the Sausage-Seller's first skirmish with Paphlagon, the Chorus paints Paphlagon as a malevolent whirlpool. As the Sausage-Seller

commences his physical assault on Paphlagon, the Chorus leader verbally attacks him. "Χάρυβδιν ἁρπαγῆς" ("the Charybdis of plunder" 248), the Chorus leader calls Paphlagon.

The Chorus leader is not the only character who likens Paphlagon to a natural disaster and the Sausage-Seller as its conqueror. Just before the first parabasis, the first slave advises the Sausage-Seller about Paphlagon:

> ἄθρει καὶ τοῦ ποδὸς παρίει:
> ὡς οὗτος ἤδη καικίας καὶ συκοφαντίας πνεῖ. (437-438)
>
> Look and pull down your sail:
> Here now blows a slanderous wind.[37]

Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller have in common not only their stance against stormy demagogues but also their initial unwillingness to take this stance. Aristophanes' reluctance comes to the forefront in the next section of the first parabasis:

> ἃ δὲ θαυμάζειν ὑμῶν φησιν πολλοὺς αὐτῷ προσιόντας
> καὶ βασανίζειν ὡς οὐχὶ πάλαι χορὸν αἰτοίη καθ᾽ ἑαυτόν,
> ἡμᾶς ὑμῖν ἐκέλευε φράσαι περὶ τούτου. φησὶ γὰρ ἀνὴρ
> οὐχ ὑπ᾽ ἀνοίας τοῦτο πεπονθὼς διατρίβειν, ἀλλὰ νομίζων
> κωμῳδοδιδασκαλίαν εἶναι χαλεπώτατον ἔργον ἁπάντων:
> πολλῶν γὰρ δὴ πειρασάντων αὐτὴν ὀλίγοις χαρίσασθαι:
> ὑμᾶς τε πάλαι διαγιγνώσκων ἐπετείους τὴν φύσιν ὄντας
> καὶ τοὺς προτέρους τῶν ποιητῶν ἅμα τῷ γήρᾳ προδιδόντας. (512-519)
>
> He [the poet] says that many of you who are present wonder at these things
> and that you inquire why he has not for a long time presented a chorus as his own.
> He asked us to speak to you about this. For the man says
> that not suffering this in vain has he spent his time, but, rather, recognizing
> that the rehearsing of a comedy is the most difficult task of all
> (for indeed, although many try, few please her)
> and discerning both that for a long time you've been fickle by nature
> and that you already put aside the ones of the poets who are in their old age.

[37] Edmunds explains that Aristophanes might have employed this passage and other ship-of-state metaphors in order to inflame Athenians' fear of tyranny. Ship-of-state metaphors, Edmunds writes, traditionally served to describe the conditions that effect tyranny. Edmunds, *Cleon, Knights, and Aristophanes' Politics*, 10-17.

As I discussed more extensively at the end of Chapter Three, the Sausage-Seller is reluctant to pursue a political career, even after the first slave informs him that the role would offer him great wealth and recognition (159-212). His reluctance culminates in his attempt to run away from Paphlagon instead of facing him in a competition (240-241). Aristophanes' reluctance to produce a comedy in his own name resonates nicely with the Sausage-Seller's reluctance to pursue demagoguery. In their feelings of reluctance, Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller differ starkly from Paphlagon, who is shamelessly eager to maintain sole control of Demos.

The second half of this passage also suggests that Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller are trying to win over similar audiences. The Chorus describes Aristophanes' audience as fickle; Demos, too, comes across as fickle for much of the play. It is, of course, one of the play's central jokes that Demos is susceptible to flattery and happy to abandon one suitor for another. When the Chorus asks Demos why he allows demagogues to so readily exploit him, Demos himself acknowledges his capriciousness. He explains in an especially cynical speech:

> […] ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἑκὼν
> ταῦτ᾽ ἠλιθιάζω.
> αὐτός τε γὰρ ἥδομαι
> βρύλλων τὸ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν,
> κλέπτοντά τε βούλομαι
> τρέφειν ἕνα προστάτην:
> τοῦτον δ᾽, ὅταν ᾖ πλέως,
> ἄρας ἐπάταξα. (1123-1130)
>
> I willingly
> act in this foolish manner.
> For I myself enjoy
> crying out for drink the whole day long,
> and I desire to maintain a thief
> as my one ruler:
> and this man, whenever he is full,
> I, carrying him off, strike him down.

It is thus Aristophanes' task to please a fickle audience and the Sausage-Seller's task to please fickle Demos. Although their tasks are slippery, they both fare better than their predecessors. Indeed, it is another similarity between Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller that they both succeed a clearly defined line of predecessors.[38] The Chorus describes in great detail Magnes, Cratinus, and Crates, three poets who precede Aristophanes (520-537). This schain of succession brings to mind the slaves' interpretation of Paphlagon's oracles early on in the play. According to the first slave, the Sausage-Seller succeeds a hemp-seller ("στυππειοπώλης" 130), a sheep-seller ("προβατοπώλης" 132), and a leather-seller ("βυρσοπώλης" 136), Paphlagon.[39] These parallel successions serve not only to draw a parallel between Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller but also to distinguish both Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller from their predecessors. It is significant that Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller appear at the end of their respective chains of succession. Their placement in their respective chains of succession seems to imply that the two have outdone and outlived their predecessors; those before them have passed, and they alone endure.[40] A later section of the first parabasis explains how Aristophanes has benefitted from his comic predecessors:

> ταῦτ᾽ ὀρρωδῶν διέτριβεν ἀεί, καὶ πρὸς τούτοισιν ἔφασκεν
> ἐρέτην χρῆναι πρῶτα γενέσθαι πρὶν πηδαλίοις ἐπιχειρεῖν,
> κᾆτ᾽ ἐντεῦθεν πρῳρατεῦσαι καὶ τοὺς ἀνέμους διαθρῆσαι,
> κᾆτα κυβερνᾶν αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ. τούτων οὖν οὕνεκα πάντων,
> ὅτι σωφρονικῶς κοὐκ ἀνοήτως ἐσπηδήσας ἐφλυάρει,

[38] For more on the parallel successions that precede Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller, see Hubbard, "Aristophanes and the Poetry of Hate," in *The Mask of Comedy*, 77-78.

[39] According to Anderson and Dix, the scholiast identifies the sheep-seller as the general and demagogue Lysicles. Anderson and Dix themselves infer that the hemp-seller is a reference to Eucrates of Melite, a contemporary politician. Anderson and Dix, *Commentary on* Knights, 88.

[40] To be clear, at the point in time when the *Knights* was first performed, Aristophanes had not outlived Cratinus either literally or professionally. In fact, Aristophanes was competing with Cratinus in this very competition. For this reason, it seems particularly insulting that Aristophanes refers to Cratinus as a washed-up predecessor. See Zachary P. Biles, "Aristophanes' Victory Dance: Old Poets in the Parabasis of 'Knights,'" *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (2001): 195-200; Biles, "Intertextual Biography in the Rivalry of Cratinus and Aristophanes," *The American Journal of Philology* 123, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 169-204; Neil O'Sullivan, "Aristophanes' First Critic: Cratinus Fr. 342 K-A," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* (2006): 163-169; and Ian Ruffell, "A Total Write-off: Aristophanes, Cratinus, and the Rhetoric of Comic Competition," *The Classical Quarterly* 52 (2002): 138-163.

αἴρεσθ᾽ αὐτῷ πολὺ τὸ ῥόθιον […] (541-546)

> Fearing such things, [the poet] wasted time, and he said to himself
> that one must first become a rower before putting his hands to the rudder,
> and that one must then keep watch at the prow and then examine the winds,
> and that then—only then—he will himself captain the ship. So, on account of all these things,
> because, with self-control, he did not start spewing nonsense, jumping in mindlessly,
> raise for him a great round of applause.

This passage illustrates several things that have resulted from Aristophanes' position at the end of a comic succession. His position has allowed him to carefully observe his predecessors and their fates. Fearing the things that he observed, he delayed from writing a play in his own name. These observations did not, however, serve only to scare Aristophanes off. Indeed, Aristophanes' observations allowed him to learn an important lesson from the fates of his predecessors. To use his own analogy, Aristophanes learned that, in order to best captain the ship of comedy, he needed to familiarize himself with every role on that ship. This was a lesson that, had Magnes, Cratinus, and Crates not preceded him, Aristophanes might not have learned. Similarly, the Sausage-Seller learns many of the behaviors that he uses to fight Paphlagon from Paphlagon himself. Throughout the play, the Sausage-Seller pays careful attention to how Paphlagon speaks and acts, and he learns from Paphlagon the same tools that he then uses to outdo him.

For the entirety of the play, Paphlagon employs a straightforward combination of flattery, dishonesty, and intimidation. Once he realizes that his efforts are falling short against the Sausage-Seller, Paphlagon does not try to employ a different strategy; rather, he simply gives up and accepts that the Sausage-Seller will overtake him. The Sausage-Seller employs a more complicated, sophisticated strategy. He somehow manages to condemn Paphlagon's disgusting character while simultaneously behaving and speaking in a disgusting way himself. Like the

Sausage-Seller, Aristophanes accomplishes this careful balancing act. In the *Knights*, Aristophanes criticizes Paphlagon—and, by extension, Cleon—on account of his repulsiveness. In order to best express his condemnation, Aristophanes himself writes and presents disgusting, offensive jokes. The ability to condemn some particular thing while nonetheless practicing that particular thing is not unique to comic poets, but it certainly seems particularly well-utilized in comic poetry, or at least in the work of Aristophanes. The opening scene of the *Frogs* exemplifies Aristophanes' ability to do so:

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
εἴπω τι τῶν εἰωθότων, ὦ δέσποτα,
ἐφ᾽ οἷς ἀεὶ γελῶσιν οἱ θεώμενοι;

ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ
νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ὅ τι βούλει γε, πλὴν "πιέζομαι."
τοῦτο δὲ φύλαξαι· πάνυ γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἤδη χολή.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
μηδ᾽ ἕτερον ἀστεῖόν τι;

ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ
πλήν γ᾽ "ὡς θλίβομαι."

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
τί δαί; τὸ πάνυ γέλοιον εἴπω;

ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ
νὴ Δία
θαρρῶν γε· μόνον ἐκεῖν᾽ ὅπως μὴ ᾽ρεῖς—

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
τὸ τί;

ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ
μεταβαλλόμενος τἀνάφορον ὅτι χεζητιᾷς.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
μηδ᾽ ὅτι τοσοῦτον ἄχθος ἐπ᾽ ἐμαυτῷ φέρων,
εἰ μὴ καθαιρήσει τις, ἀποπαρδήσομαι;

ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ

μὴ δῆθ᾽, ἱκετεύω, πλήν γ᾽ ὅταν μέλλω ᾽ξεμεῖν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
τί δῆτ᾽ ἔδει με ταῦτα τὰ σκεύη φέρειν,
εἴπερ ποιήσω μηδὲν ὧνπερ Φρύνιχος
εἴωθε ποιεῖν; καὶ Λύκις κἀμειψίας
σκεύη φέρουσ᾽ ἑκάστοτ᾽ ἐν κωμῳδίᾳ.

ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ
μή νυν ποιήσῃς· ὡς ἐγὼ θεώμενος,
ὅταν τι τούτων τῶν σοφισμάτων ἴδω,
πλεῖν ἢ ᾽νιαυτῷ πρεσβύτερος ἀπέρχομαι. (1-18)

Xanthias:
Should I tell some one of the usual jokes, master,
at which the audience members always laugh?

Dionysus:
By Zeus, say whatever you want, except “I’m hard pressed.”
Avoid this one, for it’s very much irritating.

Xanthias:
And not some other urbane thing either?

Dionysus:
Anything but “How I chafe.”

Xanthias:
What then? Should I say the funny one?

Dionysus:
Sure, by Zeus, go ahead: but just don’t in any way say this one particular thing.

Xanthias:
What’s that?

Dionysus:
That, shifting your pack over, you must relieve yourself.

Xanthias:
Can’t I say then that I carry so great a load on my own body
that unless someone takes it off, I’ll bust my gut?

Dionysus:
Please don’t, I beg you, except when I’m ready to puke.

Xanthias:
Why is it necessary for me to carry this gear,
if I can make none of the jokes which Phrynichus
was accustomed to make? Lysis and Ameipsias, too,
for someone is carrying baggage in all of their comedies.

Dionysus:
May you not do so now: since I, when I'm at the theater,
whenever I should see some one of these oh-so-clever jokes,
I go away older by a year.

This interaction masterfully demonstrates Aristophanes' ability to condemn a certain thing—here the crass, bodily humor that he attributes to Phrynichus and Lycis—while nonetheless practicing it himself. It is important to note, however, that, by allowing Dionysus and Xanthias to voice the very jokes that Dionysus hates, Aristophanes is not merely telling the same jokes that he condemns. Rather, because Aristophanes presents these jokes in a different, more self-aware context than they usually appear, he ultimately changes the nature of the jokes themselves. Yes, on some level, the jokes still derive humor from their crassness, but, because Aristophanes frames them with sophisticated self-awareness, they are more than just crass. Dionysus is being sarcastic when he calls low-brow humor "τούτων τῶν σοφισμάτων" ("these oh-so-clever jokes"). When Aristophanes delivers them as he does here, however, the jokes really are oh-so-clever.

I believe that a similar process of transformation occurs when the Sausage-Seller borrows Paphlagon's disgusting behaviors. For, on one level, the Sausage-Seller is literally exhibiting the same behaviors as Paphlagon, but, on another level, the implication of these behaviors is changed by the context in which the behaviors appear and by the intentions with which the Sausage-Seller performs them. As I discussed in Chapter Three, Paphlagon's primary motivation for behaving repulsively is simple self-gain. He steals and screams in order to scare away his rivals. He knows that, so long as he is Demos's sole suitor, he can exploit him as he pleases.

When the Sausage-Seller adapts Paphlagon's repulsive behaviors, he performs the same behaviors as Paphlagon, but his intentions, which differ from those of Paphlagon, distinguish his behaviors from those of Paphlagon. Paphlagon uses his repulsive behaviors to gratify his own selfish desires. The Sausage-Seller, on the other hand, uses his repulsive behaviors to overthrow Paphlagon. Because Paphlagon is harmful to Demos, this act of overthrowal is righteous. Just as context transforms low-brow, bodily humor into something much cleverer in the *Frogs*, context transforms repulsiveness from a tool for self-gratification to a tool for the improvement of the city in the *Knights*.

Why does Aristophanes stress to the audience the importance of discernment, particularly with respect to the repulsiveness of the Sausage-Seller and the repulsiveness of Paphlagon? Why does Aristophanes present himself as somehow similar to the Sausage-Seller and his craft? I believe that the answers to these two questions are connected. Aristophanes seems to be arguing that, just as the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon appear similar but are fundamentally different, Aristophanes and Cleon too appear similar but are fundamentally different. The Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon are similar in their use of certain behaviors, including repulsive ones, as tools; Aristophanes and Cleon, too, are similar in their use of certain tools. The Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon are similar in their desire to win Demos's affection; Aristophanes and Cleon both seek to win the affection of the Athenian people. The Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon differ, however, in what they seek to gain from Demos. Paphlagon seeks to glut his appetite at Demos's expense, and the Sausage-Seller wants only to benefit Demos. Aristophanes seems to be implying that he and Cleon also differ in this way. Cleon, like Paphlagon, is exploiting Demos for his own benefit. Aristophanes, like the Sausage-Seller, wants to benefit the Athenian people.

What exactly does it mean to benefit the Athenian people? The *Knights* helps us answer this question, as well. While I do not share Strauss's position that the Sausage-Seller is and always has been the natural ruler of the demos, I do agree with him that "at the end of the play the sausage seller has acquired self-knowledge."[41] Indeed, I believe that the Sausage-Seller has also acquired many things other than self-knowledge throughout the course of the play. He has learned that repulsiveness is the most effective tool with which to beat Paphlagon, and he has, as Strauss affirms, developed a keen understanding of what is best for Demos.[42]

It is hard to say whether, at the beginning of the play, the Sausage-Seller is oriented towards what is best for Demos and thus best for the Athenian people. By the end of the play, however, it is clear that he is oriented in this way. The Sausage-Seller articulates that he knows what is best for Demos, he acts upon this knowledge by boiling and rejuvenating Demos, and he ensures that Demos himself knows what is best for him. The Sausage-Seller accomplishes this last action by asking Demos a string of questions:

ΑΛΛΑΝΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ
ἐάν τις εἴπῃ βωμολόχος ξυνήγορος·
"οὐκ ἔστιν ὑμῖν τοῖς δικασταῖς ἄλφιτα,
εἰ μὴ καταγνώσεσθε ταύτην τὴν δίκην,"
τοῦτον τί δράσεις, εἰπέ, τὸν ξυνήγορον;

ΔΗΜΟΣ
ἄρας μετέωρον εἰς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβαλῶ,
ἐκ τοῦ λάρυγγος ἐκκρεμάσας Ὑπέρβολον.

ΑΛΛΑΝΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ
τουτὶ μὲν ὀρθῶς καὶ φρονίμως ἤδη λέγεις·
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα, φέρ᾽ ἴδω, πῶς πολιτεύσει; φράσον.

ΔΗΜΟΣ

[41] Strauss, *Socrates and Aristophanes*, 108.
[42] Other scholars support the suggestion that the Sausage-Seller's political skills grow as the *Knights* unfolds. John Zumbrunnen, for example, argues that, over the course of the play, the Sausage-Seller hones his latent political skills to challenge the existing elite. John Zumbrunnen, "Elite Domination and the Clever Citizen: Aristophanes' 'Archarnians' and 'Knights,'" *Political Theory* 32, no. 5 (2004): 656-677.

πρῶτον μὲν ὁπόσοι ναῦς ἐλαύνουσιν μακράς,
καταγομένοις τὸν μισθὸν ἀποδώσω ᾽ντελῆ.

ΑΛΛΑΝΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ
πολλοῖς γ᾽ ὑπολίσποις πυγιδίοισιν ἐχαρίσω.

ΔΗΜΟΣ
ἔπειθ᾽ ὁπλίτης ἐντεθεὶς ἐν καταλόγῳ
οὐδεὶς κατὰ σπουδὰς μετεγγραφήσεται,
ἀλλ᾽ οὗπερ ἦν τὸ πρῶτον ἐγγεγράψεται.

ΑΛΛΑΝΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ
τοῦτ᾽ ἔδακε τὸν πόρπακα τὸν Κλεωνύμου. (1358-1372)

The Sausage-Seller:
If some buffoonish advocate should say,
"There is no barley-meal for you jurymen
unless you vote guilty in this case,"
tell me, what will you do to this advocate?

Demos:
After lifting him up from the ground, I would fling him into the Barathrum,
hanging Hyperbolus around his neck.

The Sausage-Seller:
Indeed, you say this rightly and prudently.
But in what other ways will you be governed? Give me an idea; tell me.

Demos:
First, to all the men who row long ships,
when they come to land, I will give their payment in full.

The Sausage-Seller:
Many a flat-bottomed buttock are you making happy!

Demos:
Also, no foot-soldier on the list for service
will through a favor be transferred to another list.
Instead, he will remain just as was written in the first place.

The Sausage-Seller:
Now that bites the shield-handle of Cleonymus!

This back-and-forth exchange continues for several more lines. Initially, the exchange struck me as odd in the context of an Aristophanic comedy. Indeed, the question-and-answer

structure of the exchange reminded me less of an Aristophanic comedy and more of a Socratic dialogue. Any similarities between the Sausage-Seller's dialogue with Demos and Socrates' dialogues with his interlocutors might only be coincidental, but I nonetheless find it useful to compare the Sausage-Seller and Socrates. Such a comparison, I believe, reveals that Socrates' strategy for improving his interlocutors is remarkably similar to the Sausage-Seller's strategy for improving Demos and, by extension, Aristophanes' strategy for improving the Athenian people.

Like Aristophanes and the Sausage-Seller, Socrates sometimes spoke to his interlocuters in a manner that they found disgusting. In Book I of Plato's *Republic*, Thrasymachus, furious at Socrates' method of argumentation, calls him "βδελυρός" ("disgusting").[43] Thrasymachus calls Socrates "βδελυρός" because he finds it repulsive that Socrates twists Thrasymachus's argument into something that, in Thrasymachus's eyes, it is not. In this moment, Thrasymachus does not understand the value of Socrates' prodding, but, to someone reading or witnessing the dialogue, its value soon becomes clear. By articulating to Thrasymachus an uncharitable interpretation of his argument, Socrates goads Thrasymachus to refine his point and ultimately present a stronger argument.

Socrates' interaction with Thrasymachus exemplifies Socrates' usual strategy for orienting his interlocutors towards the good. Instead of telling them outright what is good and what is not, he helps them to discern what is good for themselves. This, I believe, is also Aristophanes' strategy. Although he never explicitly says so, Aristophanes does suggest that the best way to improve the Athenian people is to help them discern what is good for themselves. To some extent, Aristophanes articulates his position negatively. Through Paphlagon, he offers

[43] Plato, *Republic*, 338d.

myriad examples of how *not* to treat Demos. The Sausage-Seller astutely identifies why Paphlagon's treatment of Demos is so problematic:

> κᾆθ᾽ ὥσπερ αἱ τίτθαι γε σιτίζεις κακῶς·
> μασώμενος γὰρ τῷ μὲν ὀλίγον ἐντίθης,
> αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἐκείνου τριπλάσιον κατέσπακας. (716-718)
>
> You feed him just like the nurses: badly.
> After chewing up his food, you feed him just a morsel,
> and you yourself scarf down thrice as much as him.

The most obvious problem that the Sausage-Seller identifies here is Paphlagon's selfishness. Paphlagon feigns to care about Demos, but, in reality, he cares only about benefitting himself. He makes a great show of chewing up food and feeding a bit to Demos, but the amount of food that he allocates to Demos barely compares to the amount that he has taken for himself.

Selfishness is not, however, the only flaw that the Sausage-Seller identifies in Paphlagon's treatment of Demos. The Sausage-Seller finds problematic not only that Paphlagon swallows what he chews for Demos but also that Paphlagon chews up Demos's food at all. "κᾆθ᾽ ὥσπερ αἱ τίτθαι γε σιτίζεις κακῶς" ("You feed him just like the nurses: badly" 716), the Sausage-Seller says. The Sausage-Seller does not accuse Paphlagon of feeding Demos like a bad nurse; instead, he says that, like a nurse, Paphlagon feeds Demos badly. This particular phrasing implies that there is something inherently bad about treating Demos as a nurse would treat him. Further, when the Sausage-Seller refers to nurses, the word that he chooses ("αἱ τίτθαι") most literally means "wet nurses," so, on a literal level, the Sausage-Seller is criticizing Paphlagon for babying Demos. The verbs in this passage, especially "μασώμενος" ("chewing up" 717), also suggest that Paphlagon babies Demos.[44] Babying, coddling, and spoon-feeding are not, the Sausage-Seller suggests, the best ways to care for Demos. Although the Sausage-Seller does not say outright

[44] Anderson and Dix observe that the metaphors of chewing and feeding suggest Paphlagon's treatment of Demos as an old man and as a baby. Anderson and Dix, *Commentary on* Knights, 155.

what he believes *are* the best ways to care for Demos, he demonstrates an alternative method of care in the final scene of the play.

Unlike his predecessor, the Sausage-Seller opts not to infantilize Demos. He does not chew up Demos's food and feed the macerated remains back to him. He does not spoon-feed Demos what he, the Sausage-Seller, believes is best for him. Instead, the Sausage-Seller encourages Demos to decide what is best for himself, and he restores Demos to a condition in which Demos is best able to do so. Before the Sausage-Seller boils him, Demos is bloated, corrupt, and disinclined to desire anything beyond his own immediate gratification.[45] Paphlagon reveled in and benefited from Demos's mindlessness, so he never sought to ameliorate it. The Sausage-Seller, on the other hand, seeks to transform Demos as soon as he has the power to do so. After his transformation, Demos's mind is sharper, and he seems better able to make important decisions about his own governance. Noticing Demos's mentally acuity, the Sausage-Seller tests Demos's ability to decide what is best for himself. Only after Demos proves that he is capable enough does the Sausage-Seller seem content. The Sausage-Seller's contentment at Demos's self-sufficiency suggests that, unlike Paphlagon, the Sausage-Seller actually wanted Demos to become self-sufficient.[46] It follows then that, in the eyes of the Sausage-Seller, Demos cannot acquire what is truly best for him if he is unable to discern for himself what he needs. If Demos is incapable of distinguishing his long-term needs from his short-term pleasures, he is far more likely to fall prey to any new demagogue who flatters and gratifies him.

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[45] Victoria Wohl similarly argues that, despite Demos's claim that he knowingly exploits demagogues for his own benefit, he mistakes his true self-interest and thus trades long-term prosperity for immediate gratification. Victoria Wohl, *Love among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 78.

[46] If the *Acharnians* advocates, as Paul Ludwig argues, for the demos's material self-sufficiency by agrarian means, then the *Knights*, which advocates for the demos's mental self-sufficiency, seems an appropriate successor to the *Acharnians*. Paul W. Ludwig, "A Portrait of the Artist in Politics: Justice and Self-Interest in Aristophanes' Acharnians," *The American Political Science Review* 101 (2007): 479-492.

The Sausage-Seller is not simply a stand-in for Aristophanes and Demos not simply a stand-in for Aristophanes' audience, but, when Aristophanes portrays the Sausage-Seller's transformation of Demos, he does seem to be implying how he hopes to influence his own audience. Like Paphlagon, Cleon and other demagogues seek to impose on the Athenian people what they, the demagogues, think that the people should do. Even when their impositions seem beneficial to the people, they more often serve to benefit the demagogues themselves. Demagogues seek to coddle the people and discourage them from thinking critically about what is truly best for them, for the demagogues recognize that what is best for them differs from what is best for the people.

In the *Knights*, Aristophanes criticizes demagogues for coddling the people and dulling them into mindless submission. In order to make this criticism, Aristophanes, true to his point, embeds his argument into the *Knights* in such a way that his audience must think deeply and critically in order to understand what he means.[47] Aristophanes does not feed his audience as if he is a wet-nurse; even in his two parabases, he does not use the Chorus to articulate his point directly to the audience. Instead, he gives his audience hints and pieces of his argument so that, ultimately, it is up to them to fill in the gaps and discover his meaning. In order for Aristophanes' audience to understand his criticism of demagoguery, they cannot observe the *Knights* mindlessly, attuned only to the points that work to their advantage. Rather, they must work hard to learn it for themselves; they must learn to discern good from bad, true repulsiveness from the

[47] Andrew Hartwig also observes what he calls self-censorship in the work of Aristophanes. Hartwig attributes Aristophanes' self-censorship to Athenians' aggrieved response to the *Babylonians*. Andrew Hartwig, "Self-Censorship in Ancient Greek Comedy," in *The Art of Veiled Speech: Self-Censorship from Aristophanes to Hobbes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 18-41.

guise of it, and the Sausage-Seller from Paphlagon. It is up to them to differentiate these pairs and others, too, that, although they seem alike, are fundamentally and significantly different.[48]

[48] Zumbrunnen argues that, although Aristophanes' comedies do not necessarily provide clear answers, Aristophanes does suggest to his audience the disposition with which to broach questions about democratic politics. Bartlett, too, writes that, in the *Knights*, Aristophanes is saying something not only about politics itself but also about the education and disposition that one needs to properly understand politics. John Zumbrunnen, "Democratic Possibilities," in *Aristophanic Comedy and the Challenge of Democratic Citizenship*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012), 123-136; and Bartlett, *Against Demagogues*, 271-275.

Concluding Remarks

When I first began researching and writing this thesis, I chose the *Knights* as my primary object of study because I thought that it would be a straightforward example of projective disgust. I assumed that the play was using obscene language and vulgar imagery in order to convince the audience that certain people, particularly Cleon, were disgusting. In this way, the play struck me as markedly different from Socratic philosophy, which, at the time, I had wanted to examine in tandem with Aristophanic comedy. The play's reliance on disgust seemed contrary to Socratic ideas about rationality and argumentation. In the moment, I was disappointed by what I perceived as a fundamental mismatch between the two ancient figures that I loved most.

I am happy to report that, through writing this thesis, I have proven myself wrong. On one level, the *Knights* does use projective disgust to attack the poet's enemies, but it also accomplishes much more than that. The play presents Aristophanes' enemies as disgusting, but it also presents its own protagonist as disgusting and thus forces the audience to discern how hero and villain differ in their repulsiveness. It makes it clear to the audience what sorts of people and things are bad, but so too does it orient them towards what is good and provide them the tools to come closer to the good themselves. I certainly maintain that, in many ways, Aristophanes and Socrates differ in their philosophies and ideologies, but I now believe that, in their insistence that the Athenian people discern for themselves what is truly good, the two are similar.

To some, this point about discernment might seem trite or obvious. Despite this point's ostensible obviousness, however, we seem to have forgotten it today. Although we live thousands of years after the *Knights* was first performed, the era that we inhabit is as saturated with demagoguery, baseless conspiracy, and cults of personality as the setting of the *Knights.* On a more personal note, I feel that, as a college student on the cusp of graduation, Aristophanes'

message comes to me at a particularly propitious time. In the fall, I will matriculate at law school. When I contemplate the power and the responsibility that my legal education will endow me, I feel particularly attuned to the necessity of discernment in my future. In the abstract, the discernment of good from bad sounds simple enough. In reality, however, just as the *Knights* illustrates, the promise of money, prestige, and short-term gratification can cloud and complicate decisions that might have otherwise seemed easy. In the face of this uncertainty, I even more tightly embrace Aristophanes' *Knights*, a work of art and a piece of enjoyment that doubles as a puzzle, an exercise, through which one can practice the subtle task of discernment.

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