

A TOTAL WRITE-OFF. ARISTOPHANES, CRATINUS, AND THE RHETORIC OF COMIC COMPETITION

The rivalry between comic poets remains one of the great gaps in our understanding of Old Comedy. We have lost a real sense both of the attendant competitive pressures and the implications for audience interpretation. Nothing illustrates this better than Aristophanes' various responses to the third place of *Clouds* at the Dionysia of 424/3 B.C. The complaints that feature in the revised *parabasis* of that play continue to serve as the basis for our literary histories.¹ The immediate aftermath, however, affords us a far more revealing glimpse of the realities of comic competition. In the *parabasis* of *Wasps*, the chorus dish out the now-familiar gripes about the audience, but the emphasis is on a rather different strategy. Praising their poet in terms that combine satirical force (as ἀλεξίκακον . . . καθαρτὴν, 'a purifying averter of evil', 1043) and conceptual innovation (καινοτάτας σπείραντ' . . . διανοίας, 1044), they build up to a reinterpretation of the previous year's event.

ὁ δὲ ποιητὴς οὐδὲν χείρων παρὰ τοῖσι σοφοῖς νενόμισται,
εἰ παρελαύνων τοὺς ἀντιπάλους τὴν ἐπίνοιαν ξυνέτριψεν.

but the poet has not lowered his reputation among clever folk
if he crashed his concept while trying to overtake his rivals. (*Wasps* 1049–50)

The chorus present *Clouds* as an adventurous failure that did not work, a metaphorical loss of control that ran out of road. The choice of metaphor is revealing. For once, the chorus cannot hide the fact that there was heavy competition as rivals strove to outdo each other. Indeed, if we press the metaphor, those rivals were more skilful at holding the reins of comedy. It is only marginal damage-limitation that the victorious competitors are not named. But there is a particular point here to both the elision and the rhetorical consolidation. For this passage is the result of a series of competitive, intertextual exchanges between Aristophanes and Cratinus, where the rhetoric and ideology of innovation was central. In these exchanges, as nowhere else, it is possible to trace the interaction between two comic poets in considerable detail. This paper seeks to take this interaction as the basis for a model for comic intertextuality, an intertextuality that permeates the narrative of Old Comedy from the level of plot to that of the individual joke.

I. COMIC INTERTEXTUALITIES

Discussion of comic intertextuality has hitherto been limited, and three approaches have predominated. Implicit similarities are assigned to a common stock or repertoire

¹ For example, J. M. Bremer, 'Aristophanes on his own poetry', in J. M. Bremer and E. W. Handley (edd.), *Aristophane. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité* 38 (Geneva, 1993), 125–66; A. H. Sommerstein, 'Old comedians on old comedy', in B. Zimmermann (ed.), *Antike Dramentheorien und ihre Rezeption. Drama 1* (Stuttgart, 1992), 14–33.

of jokes;² explicit abuse is a 'ritual game' in which all participants are engaged;³ or comic claims and allegations are to be taken more or less seriously. The latter category includes issues of literary history, such as claims of widespread authorial collaboration and the controversy over the nature of Aristophanes' earlier 'apprenticeship'.⁴ The silence about comic intertextuality has been challenged by Sidwell, who has argued strongly that there is a need to develop a more sophisticated approach. Accordingly, he has proposed a radical model of 'ventriloquial para-comedy', whereby plays are written *as if by a rival*; characters are comic poets 'in disguise', identified by portrait masks; all metatheatricality thus remains 'in character' and is not disruptive; and such 'intertheatricality' is always caricaturing and satirical of the opposition.⁵

This model is presented in the first place as a counter to the idea of widespread authorial collaboration, and Sidwell makes effective points. In particular, he points out that the rhetoric of self-fashioning in comedy tends towards an emphasis on the individual, whereas collaboration is a metapoetic *allegation* made, warded off, or excused. In its defence, though, the collaboration-theory is not really presented as an explanation of comic intertextuality as a whole, nor could it be. An acceptance of limited collaboration would not eliminate the need (for us or for the original audience) to interpret such intertextual connections as can be observed. However, Sidwell's model, which clearly has far-reaching implications, is by no means the only possible approach to comic intertextuality. Indeed, it rests on some highly questionable assumptions.

Firstly, Sidwell's grand narrative is presented as the solution to a lack of unity and logic that he believes bedevils current criticism of Old Comedy. Key problems to be resolved by his model are metatheatre and other forms of comic 'discontinuity'; structure, especially the relationship between *parabasis* and plot; and the lack of a consensus between critics on major issues of interpretation, such as Dicaeopolis' actions in *Acharnians*. A full-scale exploration of these problems is clearly beyond the scope of this article.⁶ However, I would observe that Sidwell's model is no less dependent on the same flexibility of comic anti-realism that he is attempting to explain away. By pushing comic metafiction back onto intertextuality and character, he avoids neither the 'problematic' self-reflexivity nor the multiplication of different levels of meaning. Likewise his model of caricature and parody demands both a strong referentiality, whereby, '... for *comedy* there must be a resonator in the audience's prior experience (of life, language, the theatre, etc.)',⁷ and a complete *inversion*. In other words, the audience are still 'reading double', exactly that which Sidwell deprecates. Incongruity theories of humour have long realized that this comic 'double standard', a

² M. Heath, 'Aristophanes and his rivals', *G&R* 37 (1990), 143–58, at 152; L. P. E. Parker, 'Eupolis or Dicaeopolis?' *JHS* 111 (1991), 203–8.

³ Heath (n. 2), cf. R. M. Rosen, *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition* (Atlanta, 1988).

⁴ For a survey of both questions, see P. Totaro, *Le seconde parabasi di Aristofane*. *Drama* 8 (Stuttgart, 1999), 197–207.

⁵ K. Sidwell, 'Authorial collaboration? Aristophanes' *Knights* and Eupolis', *GRBS* 34 (1993), 365–89; id., 'Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and Eupolis', *C&M* 45 (1994), 71–115; id., 'Poetic rivalry and the caricature of comic poets: Cratinus' *Pytine* and Aristophanes' *Wasps*', *BICS Suppl.* 66 (1995), 56–80; id., 'From old to middle to new? Aristotle's *Poetics* and the history of Athenian comedy', in D. Harvey and J. Wilkins (edd.), *The Rivals of Aristophanes* (London, 2000), 247–58.

⁶ See especially M. Silk, *Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy* (Oxford, 2000).

⁷ Sidwell (n. 5, 1994), 76.

tension between the plausible (in some form) and implausible, needs to be embraced, not argued away.⁸

Secondly, Sidwell makes caricature the dominant of Old Comedy, following Plato and Pseudo-Xenophon, *Athenaion Politeia* 2.18. Neither are disinterested critics, both are concerned to emphasize, and decry, comic abuse and to downplay other dramatic elements,⁹ while in the case of Ps.-Xen. there is demonstrable inaccuracy, such as in the claim that the demos did not allow itself to be abused.¹⁰ The evidence, I shall suggest, is rather that plot played a central role in comic (meta)poetics and intertextuality. Sidwell goes further and proposes extensive *allegorical* caricature. The twin pillars of this, as with other allegory-theories,¹¹ are the highly questionable Hellenistic claims of bans on *onomasti komoidein*¹² and the possibility that identifications could have been made by portrait-mask. The latter is impossible to disprove, although I doubt that portrait-masks would have been risked *by themselves* as sufficient for an identifier, even with some support from gesture and voice. As I shall argue below, when Old Comedy did do (political) allegory, it provided a much fuller range of cues; so indeed does modern satire.

Finally, Sidwell makes two questionable assumptions about the nature of parody, namely that parody is intrinsically satirical and critical, and that entire plays will be burlesques of another poet. Comparison with parody of tragedy shows that the reality is more complex. Even in plays such as *Acharnians*, *Peace*, or *Thesmophoriazousai*, parody of Euripidean plays is only one component of a complex mix of intertexts, themes, and issues. It seems more plausible to see parody of comedy likewise as a constituent rather than a dominant. And parody cannot be straightforwardly glossed as *satire*. It was recognized already in antiquity, even perhaps in Old Comedy itself, that the decision to parody, the choice of parodied target, and the aspect of the *oeuvre* parodied all implicated the parodist to some extent with the parodied—or could be represented that way. This has become a commonplace of modern theory after Bakhtin and Kristeva.¹³ Formal theories of parody, in terms such as repetition with difference (Hutcheon) or the minimal transformation of a text (Genette), stress the interplay of similarity and difference. Here, the gap and the incongruity are central for interpretation and for production of humour. The audience construct their fictional world both out of and against a secondary fictional world. There are implications for the decoding and ‘identification’ of character. Dicaeopolis could not be said wholly to ‘become’ Euripides’ Telephus in *Acharnians*. Nor could any possible onomastic association with Eupolis elide the parallel element of *disjunction*, however that is then interpreted.¹⁴

⁸ Cf. J. Palmer, *The Logic of the Absurd* (London, 1987).

⁹ For Plato’s complex relationship to comedy, see A. W. Nightingale, *Genres in Dialogue* (Cambridge, 1995), 172–92.

¹⁰ Sidwell (n. 5, 2000), 254, reinterprets this as ‘representatives of the demos’, but this goes against the sense of the passage.

¹¹ Cf. M. Vickers, *Pericles on Stage* (Austin, 1998), with bibliography.

¹² S. Halliwell, ‘Comic satire and freedom of speech in classical Athens’, *JHS* 111 (1991), 48–70, argues strongly that the overwhelming majority of these are misinterpretations of comic texts.

¹³ See M. Rose, *Parody Ancient, Modern and Post-modern* (Cambridge, 1993); S. Goldhill, *The Poet’s Voice* (Cambridge, 1991), ch. 3.

¹⁴ E. L. Bowie, ‘Who is Dicaeopolis?’, *JHS* 108 (1988), 183–5, with responses by Parker (n. 2) and I. C. Storey, ‘Notus est omnibus Eupolis?’, in A. H. Sommerstein et al. (edd.), *Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis* (Bari, 1993), 373–96.

In twentieth-century theory, moreover, parody has been redefined (or weakened) either towards a non-intentional and non-authorial intertextuality, or towards irony. It is in the latter sphere that I prefer to locate the interaction between comedians. For there are clear problems with identifying comedy's quotation of comedy: actual quotations are rarely marked as such in the text, either explicitly or implicitly,¹⁵ differences in stylistic register are not conspicuous, and the scholia are for the most part silent. Here, the question of formal and institutional genre seems central.¹⁶ In comedians' use of tragedy, lyric or dithyramb, an incongruous distance is built in, the 'quotation marks' are obvious, as they are not for interaction with other comedy. This suggests a weaker form of intertextuality, with outright incongruity (and the suggestion of satire) displaced towards irony.

Although it would be dangerous to restrict comic discourse to one band of the intertextual spectrum, I emphasize here a subtle form of agonistic intertextuality based around the comic structures of the capping routine and the running gag. Both are well-known from twentieth-century practitioners' reflections on their technique, and can also be paralleled from the wider Greek cultural context, not least the symposium.¹⁷ In these structures it is the interaction between repetition and innovation that is central. The discourses about love in Plato's *Symposium* each take off from the previous player's, using a new perspective and new resources to reinterpret the old material. So too with the running-gag—each new instance in a new context caps but equally depends upon the earlier deployment of the gag.

Frogs 1–30 is a classic instance of the intertextual running-gag. Embedded within and at the same time renovating a hackneyed porter-routine, we find firstly ironic complaints about rivals' hackneyed routines; then the introduction of a series of gags-to-avoid; and finally, after much business, the deprecated gag as the punchline. It is not the avoiding but the renovating or defamiliarizing of the old material that demonstrates Aristophanes' comic ingenuity and caps the production of the rivals, and which, importantly, produces the humour. Where the evidence permits, a similar process can be observed at the level of plot. One such example is a sequence of Golden Age plays that can be seen clearly to be picking up and developing the confections of predecessors.¹⁸ Another is the sequence of Hyperbolus plays that are alluded to in the *parabasis* of the revised *Clouds* (551–9). These plays are represented as doubly repetitive, in stealing the plot of *Knights* and constantly attacking the same target. In fact, each play seems to have presented significant twists on the allegory of *Knights*. Eupolis' *Maricas* borrows the slave-as-politician motif, substitutes Hyperbolus for Cleon and introduces a number of target-specific details; an unnamed play of Phrynichus depended in large part on burlesque of the Andromeda myth; finally, Hermippus' *Artopolides* inflated a specific part of the Hyperbolus caricature—his mother. At the same time, these interacted and overlapped with a tradition that Aristophanes does *not* mention in *Clouds*, namely non-allegorical demagogue comedy.¹⁹

¹⁵ Exceptions are *Knights* 529–31 (Cratinus) and *Lysistrata* 157–9 (Pherecrates); Cratinus, *inc. fab.* fr. 361 (Ecphantides).

¹⁶ O. P. Taplin, 'Fifth-century tragedy and comedy—a *synkrisis*', *JHS* 106 (1986), 163–74.

¹⁷ See Palmer (n. 8), 97–113, on 'topping' and 'milking' the gag in silent cinema. E. L. Bowie, 'Greek table talk before Plato', *Rhetorica* 11 (1993), 355–73, discusses agonistic elements at the symposium.

¹⁸ I. Ruffell, 'The world turned upside down: Utopia and Utopianism in the fragments of old comedy', in Harvey and Wilkins (n. 5), 473–505, with bibliography.

¹⁹ See A. H. Sommerstein, 'Platon, Eupolis and the "demagogue comedy"', in Harvey and

The capping-game, clearly, is a double-edged one. It could be open to a variety of attacks, and as such required constant consolidation and renegotiation. Both the explicit and the implicit claims for comic innovation, and the destructive criticism of the claims of the opposition, were a means of establishing a comic brand and a comic persona. This lies at the heart of the manifold 'double standards' that critics have detected in the *parabasis* of *Clouds*.²⁰ The complaints there about repetition are particularly rich in the light of Aristophanes' interaction with Cratinus from *Knights* onwards. There was, however, more at stake than new laughs for old. The interaction between Aristophanes and Cratinus shows the capping-game becoming extremely pointed, detailed, and personal. Ambitious metatheatrical claims are reinforced by sophisticated intertextual appropriations and manipulations. Aesthetics and politics are intertwined, and comic ingenuity becomes a double for the political contributions of individual and genre. In this display of comic and ideological virility, the younger poet was comprehensively outplayed.

II. CONSTRUCTING ARISTOPHANIC COMEDY

Although in important respects the entanglement of Aristophanes with Cratinus goes back to at least *Acharnians*, the story begins in earnest with *Knights* (Lenaia, 425/4 B.C.). The *parabasis* of the play features a set-piece discussion of the careers of poets of earlier generations, a discussion aimed above all at Cratinus. The rhetoric negotiates Cratinus' ongoing popularity in order both to engineer a space for an Aristophanic 'advance' in comic technique and to suggest further that Cratinus' career was over. These explicit comments are mirrored at the plot level in a complex intertextual relationship that establishes Aristophanic narrative ingenuity as the necessary double of his ideological significance.

Knights was Aristophanes' first production in his own name, and as such the *parabasis* is a particularly audacious piece of rhetoric. It is set up as an apology for Aristophanes not producing himself before (512–17) and concludes as a plea for support from the spectators (546–50). In fact, it picks up on a metapoetic agenda from *Acharnians*. The chorus's claim to be speaking τὰ δίκαια (510, cf. *Akh.* 501) and the hostility towards Cleon 'the Raging Whirlwind' (τὸν Τυφῶ . . . καὶ τὸν ἐριώλην, 511)²¹ both point in that direction. In the earlier play, there was principally a generic opposition, where *πρυγῳιδία* was set up to rival or even supplant *τραγῳιδία*. In *Knights*, the confrontation between poet(ry) and politician is presented in terms of rival comic personae. As such it could be said to complete the picture.

Rather than a discourse on the stagecraft (κωμῳιδοδοδιδασκαλίαν, 516) of tyros, we find instead a discussion of the audience's ostensible reception of his predecessors, in particular how they treated them at the end of their careers. Although the audience are described as intrinsically capricious (ἐπετειούς, 'annual', 518), the relationship between them and the chorus is set up as rather cosy. The Aristophanic version of literary history is presented as a response to a familiar question from spectators (ὕμῶν . . . πολλούς, 517); and any 'rebuke' is not for ditching earlier poets, but for the

Wilkins (n. 5), 437–51, who, however, argues that the Phrynichus burlesque was an earlier play not aimed at Hyperbolus.

²⁰ Cf. D. E. O'Regan, *Rhetoric, Comedy and the Violence of Language in Aristophanes' Clouds* (Oxford, 1992), 133–9.

²¹ The reference to Paphlagon/Cleon is established by the thematic imagery (341, 429–41, and 756–62). For the (enigmatic) references to the *Knights* in *Acharnians*, see 5–8, 202–4.

harsh manner in which they supposedly did so. On this basis, it serves to construct a literary heritage for Old Comedy, which culminates in and is surpassed by Aristophanic comedy.

In this heritage, Cratinus is clearly the principal point of reference, treated at greatest length and given the most vibrant invective.²² The order of poets is also significant. The move from Magnes, clearly the dominant figure of the first generation of κωμωιδία with eleven victories, to Cratinus sets up the idea of a succession of 'greats'. But the effect of moving from Cratinus to Crates is more subtle. Although the chronological sequence is superficially followed, according to the date of first production, there is exaggeration both of the extent of Cratinus' dominance and of the prominence of Crates. Cratinus and Crates were effectively in the same generation of poets who emerged in the 450s, and from this period onwards, competition was fierce. Figures such as Ecphantides, Telecleides (from the mid-440s), and Hermippus (mid-430s) are all ignored.²³ Moreover, while Crates does seem to have finished competing by the time of *Knights*, Cratinus was still performing strongly when the Bright Young Things of the 420s were starting. His *Kheimazomenoi* had been second to *Acharnians* and ahead of Eupolis' *Noumeniai* the previous year; he would also take second place to *Knights* itself, with *Saturoi*.

By putting the retired poet Crates last, the *parabasis* sets up both a sharp break between Aristophanic comedy and earlier generations, and the implication that Cratinus is over the hill. At the same time, as the argument develops, it is clear that Aristophanes is positioning himself to steal the Cratinean mantle. The element of political satire is central to this succession. In the move from Magnes to Cratinus, the chorus claim that Magnes was superseded by (ἀπελείσθη, 'fell short of', 525) the satirical technique of the generation of Cratinus. The chorus's remarks about Magnes himself are vague and do not seem to use or anticipate substantive knowledge of his *oeuvre* or its end. If anything, there is a suggestion of an emphasis on farce, perhaps associated with play-titles and/or animal choruses,²⁴ but the important point is that it sets up the critique of Cratinus.

In order to position himself as both successor and superior to Cratinus, Aristophanes wraps his rival's satire, popularity, and, from a modern (that is, Aristophanic) perspective, his flaws in a single, ambivalent phenomenon: sheer force.

εἶτα Κρατίνου μεμνημένος, ὃς πολλῶι ρεύσας ποτ' ἐπαίνωι
διὰ τῶν ἀφελῶν πεδίων ἔρρει, καὶ τῆς στάσεως παρασύρων
ἐφόρει τὰς δρῦς καὶ τὰς πλατάνους καὶ τὰς ἐχθροὺς προθελύμους·

²² So T. K. Hubbard, *The Mask of Comedy* (Ithaca and London, 1991), 74. For other recent bibliography on Aristophanes and Cratinus, see Heath (n. 2), 150–1; E. L. Bowie, 'Wine in old comedy', in O. Murray and M. Tecusan (edd.), *In Vino Veritas* (London and Rome, 1995), 113–25, at 120–1; Sidwell (n. 5, 1995); W. Luppe, 'The rivalry between Aristophanes and Cratinus', in Harvey and Wilkins (n. 5), 15–20; R. M. Rosen, 'Cratinus' *Pytine* and the construction of the comic self', in Harvey and Wilkins (n. 5), 23–39.

²³ According to the victor-lists (*IG* II².2325), between Euphronios' victory in 459/8 and Crates' in 451/0, three major poets won their first victories: Ecphantides (four), Cratinus (six Dionysian, three Lenaian), and Diopieithes (two Dionysian). Telecleides' first of three Dionysian victories came after 446/5 B.C., with five Lenaian. Hermippus won his first victory at the Dionysia of 437/6 B.C. (total unknown, four Lenaian).

²⁴ The scholia claim that the patercules at 522–3 represent play titles, although only one (*Ludoi*) is attested elsewhere. Sommerstein, following Spyropoulos, suggests more literally that Magnes is here presented as an *actor*.

ᾄσαι δ' οὐκ ἦν ἐν συμποσίῳ πλὴν “Δωροὶ συκοπέδιλε”
καὶ “τέκτονες εὐπαλάμων ὕμνων”· οὕτως ἤνθησεν ἐκεῖνος.

Then he remembered Cratinus, who once gushed with great praise, flowed through the naive plains, and, sweeping them from their roots, carried oaks and plane-trees and his enemies headlong; and there was nothing to sing in symposia except ‘fig-sandalled Bribery’ and ‘crafters of well-wrought songs’: so greatly did he flourish. (*Knights* 526–30)

Certainly, there is flattery. Cratinus’ dominance extends beyond the theatre to the wider culture. The sympotic pre-eminence is clearly hyperbolic, the comic (as we have seen) a plausible exaggeration. However, Cratinus’ magnificence is presented as intrinsically flawed. His satirical power is likened to a river in flood: out of control, it takes out everything in its path. This is praise, then, from the position of cool superiority. The flood imagery itself is ambiguous—in particular it may be associated with the elemental images of out-of-control demagoguery in the rest of *Knights*.²⁵ More specific details are added pointing up a lack of technique. ἀφελῶν, ‘naïve’, is a subtly transferred epithet, the insertion of τοὺς ἐχθροὺς complicates the metaphor—he takes out his enemies as well as a load of innocent trees. The implication is clearly that such lack of technique was perfectly adequate in its day, but hardly appropriate today.

At this point, Aristophanes moves from ambivalent praise of past glories to open attack. The apparently favourable mention of Cratinus at symposia sets up explicit abuse of his current abilities, elaborating the theme of loss of control. The chorus’s earlier concerns about the Athenian audience now turn into what is effectively a wish for the fate of his rival.

νυνὶ δ' ὑμεῖς αὐτὸν ὀρώντες παραληροῦντ' οὐκ ἐλεεῖτε,
ἐκπιπτουσῶν τῶν ἡλέκτρων καὶ τοῦ τόνου οὐκέτ' ἐνόντος
τῶν θ' ἁρμονίων διαχασκουσῶν· ἀλλὰ γέρων ὦν περιέρρει,
ὥσπερ Κοννάς “στέφανον μὲν ἔχων αἶον, δίψῃ δ' ἀπολωλώς”,
ὃν χρεὶν διὰ τὰς προτέρας νίκας πίνειν ἐν τῷ πρυτανείῳ,
καὶ μὴ ληρεῖν, ἀλλὰ θεᾶσθαι λιπαρὸν τῷ Διονύσῳ.

As it is, you don’t take pity on him, although you see him in the grip of dementia, with his pegs falling out, his lyre out of tune, and his strings hanging loose. Instead, the old man goes round town, like Konnas ‘with a withered garland and dying of thirst’, who for his victories of old should be drinking in the Prytaneion and not babbling but spectating, fresh-faced, next to Dionysus. (*Knights* 531–6)

The remarks are patronizing and *ad hominem*—the man is past it, his lyre has gone slack and out of tune, and is (like him) falling to bits. The play on age turns the lengthy, prestigious career back on its owner. Anyone that old really *ought* to be past it. Seniority becomes senility, the allegedly uncontrolled satire the ravings of a fool. And then there is the final insult, the famous charge of Cratinus’ alcoholism.

The caricature of the drunken Cratinus eventually led to him becoming a stock figure. Ultimately, Libanius (*Epistulae* 1477.5) could quote Cratinus as the exemplum of the drunk, in tandem with Herakles, the comic glutton *par excellence*. Critics have

²⁵ See n. 21 above.

generally accepted the allegation and interpreted *Knights* in the context of the later stereotype.²⁶ However, the abuse is actually *unusual* in terms of the prevailing abuse of Cratinus and is certainly rather pointed in this context. In *Acharnians*, we discover a very different caricature. As in the earlier part of the *Knights parabasis*, it presses on his old age, but it never gets as far as drunkenness and dipsomania. Thus at *Ach.* 848–53, Cratinus is ridiculed as a *μοῖχος*, cutting his hair in a ridiculously youthful, fashionable style, an old lecher who does not act his age. Later in that play, the antistrophe of the lyric passage 1168–73 ends on a *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* scatological joke with Cratinus as the butt. The strophe is highly metatheatrical: the chorus are moaning about their lack of a post-match meal by the *choregos*, Antimachus. Although we do not know the identity of the poet/producer that Antimachus was funding, I do not think we can connect the two theatrical victims with any confidence. It is more a case of settling two different theatrical scores with a *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* joke: aim a turd at Antimachus, hit Cratinus.²⁷

Finally, the chorus of *Knights*, in abusing Paphlagon, offer this wish:

εἴ σε μὴ μισῶ, γενοίμην ἐν Κρατίνου κώιδιον
καὶ διδασκοίμην προσάιδειν Μορσίμου τραγωιδίαι.

If I do not hate you, may I become a blanket in the house of Cratinus and be taught to sing in a tragedy of Morsimos. (*Knights* 400–1)

Critics have generally followed the scholia's reference to the 'standard' caricature.²⁸ However, incontinence suggests in the first place old age, which is consistent with other abuse of the poet. By itself, it does not immediately or necessarily point to a drunken state.²⁹ As a group, these examples suggest that by 425/4 there was not yet a static or dominant caricature for Cratinus. Indeed, there is (admittedly *e silentio*) no evidence that drunkenness had ever been a central feature. It is possible, then, that the *parabasis* of *Knights* was the first successful outing of the charge of drunkenness. In any case, we need to ask why this particular element was invented or foregrounded here.

We can make progress if we bear in mind the sympotic theme, the lack of control, and the alternative proposed by Aristophanes. He suggests a comfortable retirement in the Prytaneion and/or an honourable position in the theatre audience, toasting past victories next to Dionysus—presumably by extension the priest of Dionysus in the front row. Dionysus is here used metatheatrically, in the fullest sense the god of drama. The motive, too, for drinking rather than dining in the Prytaneion is that it is generically appropriate. But Cratinus instead keeps coming round with a garland that has seen better days, trying to get a drink. Here, I think, we see a sympotic metaphor.

²⁶ So Sommerstein ad loc., Heath (n. 2), 149. Rosen (n. 22), 27, is agnostic, but stresses the literary connotations.

²⁷ They are connected by van Leeuwen ad loc (with elaboration by Sidwell [n. 5, 1994], 106–8). In any case, the chorus's *base*-identity here as elsewhere is as an Aristophanic chorus. It is also possible that one should imagine Cratinus is in the street here in pursuit of either women or wine, but if so this is not made explicit.

²⁸ Σ vet. on 400. Cf. Sommerstein ad loc.

²⁹ Compare Philocleon in *Wasps*, e.g. 807–10; *Lys.* 402. The medical literature does not suggest a link between alcohol and incontinence, although it does note that white wine is more diuretic than other varieties. [Aristotle], *Problems* 876a15–25 says that young men are more prone to drunken incontinence than the old.

In contrast to his earlier welcome at parties, Cratinus (and his drama) are being presented as uninvited gatecrashers.³⁰ The shared Dionysiac associations of theatre and symposium make for an easy extension from theatre to symposium, spectators to symposiasts, dramatist to guest or performer.³¹ Cratinus' frustrated thirst is analogous to his insistence on turning up at the Dionysiac festivals (and supposedly failing), driven by addiction but not inspiration. In terms of personal qualities, the emphasis is actually on age rather than drink (the latter only in the second of two quotes attributed to 'Connas'). Like the ageing *μοῖχος* of *Acharnians*, he no longer has what it takes. Everything, we are told, is falling apart.

We can further situate the alcoholic elements in the context of the intertextual history of metatheatricality and metapoetics. In addition to the specific theatre-symposium link, wine was used readily as a metaphor for poets, their *music*, and their productions.³² As abuse of rival comedians, fr. 462 of Cratinus is particularly apt, where he accuses Ekphantides of being smokey or cloudy wine, *καπνίας*. The metapoetic use of wine, though, goes back even further, to Archilochus, in a well-known fragment:

ὥς Διωνύσοι' ἄνακτος καλὸν ἐξάρξαι μέλος
οἶδα διθύραμβον οἴνωι συγκεραυνωθείς φρένας.

I know how to lead off the fine song of Dionysus the dithyramb, when my mind is thunderstruck by wine.
(Archilochus fr. 120W)

Cratinus' satire, the *ἰαμβικὴ ἰδέα* that Aristotle ascribes to early comedy, was linked in later antiquity to the influence of Archilochus. It is suggestive that Cratinus wrote an *Archilochoi*—*Archilochus & Co.* (?)—but the extant fragments do not make it easy to see this as an *apologia* for an Archilochos-inspired comedian. Homer and Hesiod, and an anonymous swarm of *σοφισταί* seem to have played a larger part. It is not impossible that there is an allusion here to Cratinean self-positioning through Archilochus, although it needs emphasizing that both the iambos and Archilochus encompassed a range of techniques, not only abuse.³³ Another possible echo may be effected through 'Connas', a distortion of the kitharode Connus, son of Metrobius. In a fragment from an unknown play (perhaps *Archilochoi*³⁴), Cratinus represented the man and his gluttony. It may be that Aristophanes' is turning one of Cratinus' own caricatures back on to him, shifting from gluttony to alcoholism.

Above all, the passage can be situated against *Acharnians*. There, the figuring of comic satire as *τρυγωιδία* ('song of the lees'/'tragedy') embodied both comedy's Dionysiac connections and the ambivalence of typical comic structures such as parody

³⁰ The classic instance is Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium* 212c3–215a3.

³¹ See A. M. Bowie, 'Thinking with drinking: wine and the symposium in Aristophanes', *JHS* 117 (1997), 1–21, at 21.

³² For stylistic comment, compare Phrynichus fr. 68 on Polemon: οὐ γλύξῃς οὐδ' ὑπόχυτος, ἀλλὰ Πράμνιος. *Pace* Sommerstein (n. 1), 26, n. 75, this appears critical. The wine was notable for its dryness as well as for Homeric associations (e.g. *Il.* 11.639 with Hainsworth ad loc.). Pramnian wine is also used metapoetically in Aristophanes fr. 688.

³³ For general parallels between comedy and the *iambos*, see Rosen (n. 3) and E. Degani, 'Aristofane e la tradizione dell' invettiva personale in Grecia', in Bremer and Handley (n. 1), 1–36. It has proved very difficult to move beyond general comic techniques that they share. Even in Cratinus, direct use of Archilochus is noticeably rare.

³⁴ The father, Metrobius, is mentioned in fr. 1.

and metatheatricity. The construction of the genre was linked thematically to the libations which were central to the plot and which initiated and represented peace and prosperity, at least for Dicaeopolis.³⁵ For an exponent of *κωμωιδία-τρυγωιδία* in the terms that are set up by *Acharnians*, Cratinus no longer has the juice. Instead it will be Aristophanes who will deliver the requisite satire, invective, and political force, not only as a comedian against tragedy (or politicians) but as a comedian among comedians.

So far the critique has been of Cratinus in Cratinean terms. But the introduction of Crates puts a further spin on the portrait of Cratinus, and adds a supplement with which to build up the emerging Aristophanic brand.

οἷας δὲ Κράτης ὀργὰς ὑμῶν ἠνέσχετο καὶ στυφελιγμούς,
ὃς ἀπὸ μικρᾶς δαπάνης ὑμᾶς ἀριστίζων ἀπέπεμπεν,
ἀπὸ κραμβοτάτου στόματος μάπτων ἀστειοτάτας ἐπινοίας·
χοῦτος μέντοι μόνος ἀντήρκει, τοτὲ μὲν πίπτων, τοτὲ δ' οὐχί.

μόνος codd.: μόνον Sommerstein: μόλις van Leeuwen

[and he knows] what sort of anger and abuse Crates had to endure from you, who sent you away after giving you a meal at little expense, kneading ever-so-witty concepts out of his ever-so-dry mouth; this man, though, was the only one to hold out against (Cratinus)

[or, 'only just held his own': Somm./ van L.],
sometimes coming to grief, sometimes not.

(*Knights* 537–40)

Crates is used here to suggest that Cratinus' plots lacked innovation, ingenuity, and sophistication, for all that they were grandstanding masterpieces of comic hyperbole. Crates himself represents the opposite extreme. Continuing the sympotic/dining theme, he allegedly served up terribly elegant nibbles: (over)sophisticated devices or ideas lacking a gutsy laugh or satirical bite. His dry mouth suggests a lack of poetic talent. And if he did not provide enough for the audience to get their teeth into, his cheapness as a host suggests that he had low production values and was no showman.

Crates' long and rather mediocre career was successful enough to be known, but sufficiently unsuccessful to be labelled as a relative failure—this much seems to be accurate. The promotion of Crates and the suggestion of a major rivalry with Cratinus are, though, distortions of literary history. This half-truth serves to stress Cratinus' prominence, while suggesting he should by now have retired, but also weighs their relative merits: Crates had an overabundance of one element Cratinus lacked: *conceptual innovation*. The exiguous remains of Crates' output do not allow us to confirm the picture. His plots are not obviously distinctive. In at least one case (*Theria*) there are clear thematic continuities with the comic mainstream.³⁶ *Direct* political concerns and invective are perhaps lacking, but metatheatricity and farce are both present.³⁷

One tempting avenue here is to link the *Knights parabasis* to Aristotle's influential but frustratingly brief remarks on the history of the genre:

³⁵ For the thematization of wine imagery, see L. Edmunds, 'Aristophanes' *Acharnians*', *YCS* 26 (1980), 1–41.

³⁶ See Ruffell (n. 18), 481–3.

³⁷ Clearly metatheatrical are frs. 27–8. The titles *Samioi* and *Rhetores* might suggest more political content than is usually assumed. One testimonium records him as being responsible for bringing on drunken old women (*Anon. de Comoedia*, Prolegomena III Koster = test. 2a K-A). The same note, however, claims that Pherekrates followed Crates in his avoidance of *λοιδορία*, whereas his most famous fragment (*Kheiron* fr. 155) is a set-piece of invective against musicians.

τὸ δὲ μύθους ποιεῖν [Ἐπίχαρμος καὶ Φόρμις] τὸ μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκ Σικελίας ἦλθε, τῶν δὲ Ἀθήνησιν Κράτης πρῶτος ἤρξεν ἀφέμενος τῆς ἱαμβικῆς ιδέας καθόλου ποιεῖν λόγους καὶ μύθους.

Plot-construction initially came from Sicily, but of those at Athens Crates was the first to begin to move away from satire and construct stories and plots with unity. (*Poetics* 1449b5–9)

This could suggest two strands of comedy, a domestic product fuelled by invective, associated with Cratinus, and a plot-based one, drawing on the Sicilian comedy of Epicharmus.³⁸ Aristotle does not explicitly mention Cratinus, but the association with *iambos* points towards him. On the other hand, he only ascribes to Crates the *beginning* of the Sicilian influence. But, unlike Aristotle, *Knights* does not foreground the issue of unity. Rather, it is possible that Aristotle took the Cratinus–Crates opposition from *Knights*, and filtered it through his own formal concerns.³⁹ In this he perhaps took his cue from Cratinus' response to *Knights*, which, as we shall see, did explicitly link episodic technique to invective.

The rhetoric of the *Knights* parabasis is more limited. It is concerned to negotiate and relate innovation and satire. Crates, it is suggested, represented the positive attribute of sophisticated *ideas*, ἐπίνοιαι, but also the negative attribute of over-subtlety—both familiar elements of comic rhetoric outside of *Knights*.⁴⁰ The claims about Crates serve to make the allegations against *Cratinus* more specific: he has minimal ideas, a corollary perhaps of being carried away in his satire. With this supplement to the Cratinean brand, the positioning of the Aristophanic persona through literary history is complete. While satire is to remain the dominant element of his κωμωιδία, it will be carefully controlled, and with better concepts and ideas. As a whole, then, the explicit rhetoric of the *parabasis* promotes the political and ethical force of comedy, to which technical critique is allied. Satire needs to be complemented with ideas in order to entertain and instruct the audience. By contrast with Cratinus (or Crates), Aristophanes will be the complete political comedian.

III. REFLECTIONS OF CRATINUS

The plot of *Knights* becomes the exemplar for this bold claim, and it is the term ἐπίνοια that relates the intertextual claims of the parabasis to the metapoetics of plot in the outer play. The parabasis functions as an intertextual marker that invites us to relate Aristophanic and Cratinean plots through its prism. ἐπίνοια does point to comic narrative, but in distinctly non-Aristotelian terms, oriented around jokes. In other plays, it is implicated with, not opposed to, satire. It denotes anything from the general concept behind a play (*Wasps* 1050), to the rationale of a particular costume (*Wasps* 1070). Most commonly, it is used of the schemes of comic characters

³⁸ So Heath (n. 2), Rosen (n. 3), Degani (n. 33), 1–9, Sidwell (n. 5, 2000), 253–6.

³⁹ I follow M. Heath, 'Aristotelian comedy', *CQ* 39 (1989), 344–54, at 348–352, in taking καθόλου to refer to causal sequentiality, rather than a vaguer 'universal themes' (Sommerstein on 537). For Aristotle on unity and episodes, see especially *Poetics* 1451b33–1452a1. For the *Poetics* as selective and prescriptive, see S. Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (London, 1986), 37–41.

⁴⁰ For claims about ἐπίνοιαι and related terms (διάνοια, ιδέα) in Aristophanes, see *Peace* 739–60, especially 750 (contrasted with low jokes, but linked to satire), *Clouds* 537–60, especially 547–8 (opposed to repetitive plots). Cf. Bremer (n. 1), 160–4. For distancing from over-subtlety, see *Wasps* 54–66 (attacking rivals), 1044 (defending *Clouds*). Excess artifice is a common complaint against *tragedians*. See below for Cratinus' use of it against Aristophanes.

or the chorus—imaginative, usually absurd concepts (i.e. jokes) that engineer narrative developments.⁴¹ So too in *Knights*, the imaginative quality of its comic narrative is flagged in terms of ἐπίνοιαι at two critical plot developments.

The first appearance adds a further explicit association to its usual metapoetic range, divine inspiration from Dionysus.⁴² The two slaves of Demos are searching for an escape from the tyrannical new slave, Paphlagon. In order to come up with a killer idea, they decide to get radically drunk.

["Ni."] πῶς δ' ἂν μεθύων χρηστόν τι βουλευσάιτ' ἀνὴρ;
 "Δη." ἄληθες, οὗτος; κρουνοχυτροληραῖον εἶ.
 οἶνον σὺ τολμᾷς εἰς ἐπίνοιαν λoidορεῖν;
 . . .
 ἀλλ' ἐξένεγκέ μοι ταχέως οἶνον χοᾶ,
 τὸν νοῦν ἔν' ἄρδω καὶ λέγω τι δεξιόν.

['Nikias'] How could anyone come up with a good idea when drunk?

'Demosthenes' Really? That's what you think? You're just spouting bottles of shite.
 How dare you slag off wine, if you want a bright idea?

. . .
 Go and fetch me a bottle of wine, quick,
 so I can fortify my spirits and say something clever. (*Knights* 88–96)

This is the first decisive moment in the play and sets up a series of further twists: the Dionysiac inspiration leads the slaves to steal one of Paphlagon's oracles; the oracle (a series of allegorical jokes) reveals that someone even *worse*, a sausage-seller, will be his downfall; this sets up their next move, to find and recruit the man, train him and set him to displace Paphlagon. The main events of the play are thus set in train from a root ἐπίνοια.

The second instance occurs after the Sausage-Seller has decisively won the series of contests that take place after the *parabasis*, and Paphlagon has been forced to admit defeat. This is perhaps the more important instance, insofar as it follows the aggressive metapoetics of the *parabasis*. It also comes at the most controversial area of the play, often cited as the classic example of anti-logical and discontinuous plot construction in Aristophanes.⁴³ Instead of continuing the cycle of ever-increasingly bad politicians (suggested by Demos' lyrics at 1121–50), the Sausage-Seller unexpectedly comes up with a new twist.

Αλ. τὸν Δήμον ἀφεψήσας ὑμῖν καλὸν ἐξ αἰσχροῦ πεποίηκα.
 Χο. καὶ ποῦ 'στιν νῦν, ὦ θαυμαστὰς ἐξευρίσκων ἐπινοίας;

[S.-S.] I have boiled down Demos for you, and made him beautiful instead
 of ugly.

[Cho.] And where is he now, you inventor of wonderful conceits?
 (*Knights* 1321–2)

⁴¹ *Wasps* 346, *Peace* 127, *Birds* 405 (apparently, though the text is corrupt), *Thesm.* 776, *Eccl.* 574, 589.

⁴² Cf. *Ploutus* 45, *Frogs* 1528–30. A less specialized use (reflecting the varied meanings of ἐπινοέω) at *Birds* 994.

⁴³ See R. W. Brock, 'The double plot in Aristophanes' *Knights*', *GRBS* 27 (1986), 15–27, with bibliography.

The joke—and its plausibility, such as it is—derives in the first place from the character and trade of the Sausage-Seller, and continues a chain of images that relate cooking to politics throughout the play.⁴⁴ This particular ἐπίνοια sets up the final tableau of the rejuvenated Demos and the Sausage-Seller's establishment of a new, albeit nostalgic, Athens. There is more than a slight parallel here between the two opponents of Cleon—the Sausage-Seller, redeemed through his paradoxical move, and the poet. Just as Aristophanes is setting himself up as the successor to Cratinus, so the Sausage-Seller has established his conceptual credentials in earlier scenes by appropriating Paphlagon's own discourses and beating him at them. And in the scene where he and Paphlagon compete in the invention and analysis of a series of oracles in terms of metaphors, puns, and other jokes, the comic character, like the comic poet, highlights the formal and figural aspects of his discourse.⁴⁵ The concluding ἐπίνοια embodies the superiority over his rival in the political application of this formal imagination.

These alcohol-fuelled survival strategies and paradoxical acts of political salvation within the world of the play are prime instances of absurdist narrative. But they also confront the audience with comic takes on political and ethical propositions that need to be interpreted. What are the implications of trying to find a greater populist than Paphlagon? What could the boiling down of the fictional world represent in the real world? The ἐπίνοιαι, their comic imagination and their interpretative gaps, are the supplement to Cratinean satire that *Knights* claims to be offering: new ideas to fuel comic narrative and new questions to ask of the audience.

But *Knights* is in other respects also the *continuation* of Cratinean narrative technique. These self-reflexive ἐπίνοιαι exploit and are decisive moments in an allegorical fiction. By self-reflexively foregrounding this technique of allegory, *Knights* seems to be looking back in some way to a technique particularly associated with none other than Cratinus himself. This similarity in technique has been obscured, largely because of the assumption that Cratinus' allegory was implicit, whereas Aristophanes in *Knights* was completely open. This view is a misreading of both Aristophanes and Cratinus. In *Knights*, Demos is simultaneously the people of Athens *and* an old, slightly deaf, splenetic, and rickety householder of relatively low status and with a house on the Pnyx (40–5). He has a number of slave/politicians competing for his attentions and favours. Of his old slaves, the more important one seems clearly to have attributes in common with the historical Demosthenes (54–7). The second could be taken to refer to Nicias, but this is *textually* less clearcut. The matter may have been settled by a portrait mask.⁴⁶ There is no doubt that the new slave Paphlagon clearly suggests Cleon—principal pointers are his leather-selling and activity at Pylos, as well as his position in relation to Demos. As well as these circumstantial details of Paphlagon's career, the notorious *paraleipsis* about the lack of a portrait-mask (230–3) ensures that we get the reference and the joke.

Certainly, this is an open, and self-conscious, form of allegory, even if it stops well short of *naming* any of the participants. (Indeed, the name Cleon is only *mentioned* once in the entire play, 976.) However, we should be wary of using the language of 'identification' and say that Paphlagon 'is' Cleon in any straightforward sense. As

⁴⁴ Cf. H.-J. Newiger, *Metapher und Allegorie: Studien zu Aristophanes. Zetemata* 16 (Munich, 1957), 27–30, and J. Taillardat, *Les Images d'Aristophane*² (Paris, 1965), 348–50.

⁴⁵ Hubbard (n. 22), 77–8, stresses the parallel between poet and slave/politician.

⁴⁶ Cf. Sidwell (n. 5, 1994), 77.

possible-worlds theorists have stressed, even in the most 'realist' of genres, fictional worlds and their entities retain a strong degree of autonomy. Fictional characters might take off from prominent characteristics, properties, or associations (including the name), but the move back is not so easy.⁴⁷ In comic allegory, the implicit comparison between two semiotic ('real' and 'fictional') entities involved in any fictional reference becomes an openly double-sided structure. For both humour and *instructive*, cognitive value, the caricature of Cleon relies on this double-sidedness. Paphlagon has to be *both* a slave (and market-trader) *and* a politician.

If we can insist upon the full weight of allegory in *Knights*, as more complex than has sometimes been supposed, it can also be argued that Cratinus' use of allegory was broadly similar, that is less *allusive* than many have argued. Mythological burlesques in some form were a marked part of Cratinus' repertoire. The evidence suggests that some of these were allegorical attacks, with Pericles as the principal target. Although the extent of Cratinus' use of this technique has been much debated,⁴⁸ a parallel to *Knights* can be seen in at least the following cases, where a mythologized Pericles is central to the plot: *Dionysalexandros*, *Cheirones*, *Nemesis*, and *Ploutoi*.

The papyrus *hypothesis* claims that *Dionysalexandros* was an attack on the war policy of Pericles through the figure of Dionysus. In this play where multiple identities were foregrounded, Dionysus impersonated Paris (Alexandros) and was the cause of the Trojan War through his activities thus disguised. As such, we are told, there is the suggestion of Pericles' involvement in a rather later war:

κωμωιδείται δ' ἐν τῷ δράματι Περικλῆς μάλα πιθανῶς δι' ἐμφάσεως ὡς ἐπαγροχῶς τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις τὸν πόλεμον.

Perikles is the comic object in the drama, very persuasively through *suggestion*, for having brought war on the Athenians.
(*Dionysalexandros* test. 1.44–8)

It is unclear from this passage just how much the Hellenistic scholar had to go on, although the claim is made forcefully. It would be a mistake to take the phrase δι' ἐμφάσεως as implying that the Periklean allusions were less than clear. The context here is certainly one of 'allegory' and ἐμφασις can certainly be associated with figured speech, but the use in Hellenistic criticism suggests that the term supports (at least) everything short of outright naming—as in *Knights*. But it also suggests that there was critique (κωμωιδεῖν) of Pericles through the dramatic action, rather than direct invective, regardless of any allegorical context.⁴⁹ Certainty is impossible, but even the bare plot-summary is suggestive of Pericles' comic caricature and political context.

⁴⁷ On transworld identification, see U. Eco, *The Role of the Reader* (London, 1981); T. Pavel, *Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, MA, 1986); G. Currie, *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge, 1990), 127–81. For proper names, see especially R. Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge, 1994), 130–43.

⁴⁸ For an extreme allegorist position, see J. Schwarze, *Die Beurteilung des Perikles durch die attische Komödie und ihre historische und historiographische Bedeutung*. *Zetemata* 51 (Munich, 1971); for the more cautious pole, K. J. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972), 217–18.

⁴⁹ Demetrius, *On Style*, uses ἐμφασις in reference to a tone of lamentation created by certain particles (§57), or revelation of character through behaviour (the Cyclops, §130; low jokes, §171), or letting the facts speak for themselves (§288). It is often associated with, but not identical to, figured speech (§289). This is consistent with the distinction of the *Tractatus Coislinianus* (31–2 Koster) between κωμωιδία and λοιδορία as between ἐμφασις and outright invective. Sidwell (n. 5, 2000), 256, n. 11, and Vickers (n. 11), xv–xvi, favour oblique representation.

- Pericles is not elsewhere directly caricatured as Dionysus, but Hermippus' *Moirai*, which also seems to be from the early 420s and treated Periclean war policy (fr. 48), described him as 'king of the satyrs' (fr. 47). The emphasis on disguise and multiple identification generally in *Dionysalexandros* might encourage the acceptance of Pericles-as-Dionysus.
- The summary of the parabasis (test. 1.5–12) suggests a contemporary reference. The claim that the chorus talked 'about the production of sons', *π(ε)ρὶ υἱῶν ποιή(σεως)*, if it is not emended, could well be talking about the heirs of Pericles.⁵⁰ A political reference would also explain the chorus' supposed mockery of Dionysus (9–12). Although Dionysus can elsewhere play the buffoon (as in *Frogs*), it is less clear why a chorus would attack the god in a *parabasis*.⁵¹
- Above all, the offers made to the god-as-Paris (test. 1.5–19) seem less appropriate for the god, but more so for Pericles, his political circumstances, and his caricature in comedy. Hera's offer of *τυραννίδος ἀκινήτου*, 'unbroken autocracy', recalls the frequent abuse of Pericles in the comic fragments as a tyrant (and/or Zeus).⁵² Athena's offer of constancy in war might reflect other comic criticism of Periclean policy (above). Aphrodite's offer of good looks is less overtly political, but the Helen myth to which it is attached was exploited to explain the involvement of Pericles (and Aspasia) in *Acharnians* and perhaps elsewhere.

All these factors suggest that, while the degree of transparency might not perhaps have been as great as *Knights*, it was far from opaque in the light of the political and intertextual background. Moreover, as Revermann has emphasized, the frequent references to Pericles' oddly shaped head suggest that a portrait mask could easily have been and probably was often used. Indeed, Cratinus may elsewhere also have deployed a portrait mask for Cleon.⁵³

If some lingering doubt remains for *Dionysalexandros*, the evidence for open allegory of a very similar form is clear in the case of *Nemesis*. The mythical plot is evident enough:

λέγεται δὲ τὸν Δία ὁμοιωθέντα τῷ ζώῳι τούτῳ . . . καταπτῆναι εἰς
'Ραμνοῦντα τῆς Ἀττικῆς κάκει τὴν Νέμεσιν φθεῖραι. τὴν δὲ τεκεῖν ὠῖόν, ἐξ οὗ
ἐκκολαφθῆναι καὶ γενέσθαι τὴν 'Ελένην, ὥς φησι Κράτης ὁ ποιητής.

⁵⁰ W. S. Rutherford, 'The date of *Dionysalexander*', *CR* 18 (1904), 440, specifically related the comment to Pericles' attempt to obtain the citizenship for his son by Aspasia. Alternatively, Pericles' legitimate children might be involved (cf. Plutarch, *Pericles* 36). E. W. Handley, 'P. Oxy. 2806: a fragment of Cratinus?' *BICS* 29 (1982), 102–117, relates the parabatic remarks to P. Oxy. 2806, where a chorus describe the miraculous production of their sons. The popular emendation *περ(ὶ) τῶν ποιή(των)* would suggest instead a metapoetic *parabasis*.

⁵¹ The remarks seem to refer to the same part of the play. A difficulty is the phrase *παράφανεντα τὸν Διόνυσον* which might imply a Dionysus on-stage at the time, a possibility canvassed by Handley (n. 50), 112–13.

⁵² In addition to examples cited below, see Cratinus, *Thraittai* fr. 73, Hermippus, *Moirai* fr. 42, Telecleides, fr. 18 (cf. fr. 48), and related invective, *adesp.* fr. 701 (oratory), *adesp.* fr. 703, cf. Telecleides, fr. 45, Plut., *Per.* 7, 16 (tyranny).

⁵³ M. Revermann, 'Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros* and the head of Pericles', *JHS* 117 (1997), 197–200. For Cleon's eyebrows, see Cratinus, *Seriphioi* fr. 228 (mid-420s), cf. D. Welsh, *CQ* 29 (1979), 214–15.

. . . It is said that Zeus made himself look like this creature . . . and flew down to Rhamnous in Attika and there raped Nemesis. She gave birth to an egg, from which Helen was hatched and born, as Crates [*sic*] the poet says.

(Eratosthenes, *Catast.*, epit. c. 25, p. 30b Oliver = Cratinus, *Nemesis* test. 2)

After Nemesis produced the egg, Leda nursed it until Helen was hatched (fr. 119). So far, so mythical; but the identity of at least one of the key participants in this drama, Zeus, also happens to have definite Athenian connections. As Plutarch (*Pericles* 3) tells us, the play was one of the instances where Perikles' oddly elongated head was mocked:

καὶ πάλιν ἐν Νεμέσει·
μόλ' ὦ Ζεὺ ξένιε καὶ καραιέ.

And again in Nemesis:

Come, Zeus, hospitable and heady [lit. 'of Caria']. (Nemesis fr. 118)

For all that this is from lyric, this brief snatch clearly establishes the reference between fictional character and politician—the pun on *καρά* reinforces the inter-textual connections of Pericles with Zeus via an obscure Boeotian cult-title. The form and location of the myth also point to Pericles. The temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous was linked to Pheidias, who features in comedy as one of Pericles' ne'er-do-well entourage. The base of the cult-statue, by his pupil Agoracritus, depicted the same myth as the play.⁵⁴ More speculatively, Aspasia, who elsewhere is satirized variously as Hera, Deianeira, Omphale, and Helen, is a candidate for one of the female roles here.⁵⁵ The precise details remain a matter of speculation, but the general allegorical thrust is clear enough: Pericles (as Zeus) and perhaps some of his alleged associates are linked to the production of an offspring, Helen, who was linked to Sparta and was responsible for a war.

Moving away from the causes of war, the *Ploutoi* again clearly intertwines myth and Athenian political reality, and again does this by looking back at an established caricature of Pericles as Zeus (though since he is said to have been overthrown he presumably did not feature much in later plot developments). The basic scenario, preserved in the papyrus fragments of the *parodos* and subsequent scene (fr. 171), is that the overthrow of Zeus and the rule of the *demos* (fr. 171.22–3), has enabled the return of the *Ploutoi* (Wealth-Gods) and the Golden Age associated with Cronos (now apparently released from his imprisonment by Zeus). Subsequent events are set in contemporary Athens, as the chorus proceed to clean up Athenian politics through the trial of Pericles' associate, Hagnon.⁵⁶ The technique here is slightly different to that of the plays discussed above. It is less clear that any of the *dramatis personae* are allegorical characters as such. However, the back-story to the plot requires just such an

⁵⁴ On the statue and base (c. 430 B.C.), see A. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture. An Exploration* I (New Haven, 1991), 165, 269–270, with bibliography. For contemporary attacks on Pheidias, see *Peace* 605, with *Σ* ad loc., Plutarch, *Pericles* 31.

⁵⁵ Cratinus fr. *259 (Hera); Eupolis, *Prospaltioi* fr. 207 (Helen), *Philoï* fr. 294, (?Omphale); *adesp.* fr. 704. Most of these references are from Plutarch, *Pericles* 24.9, cf. *Pericles* 32 on Aspasia 'prosecuted' by Hermippus.

⁵⁶ See further Ruffell (n. 18), 475–81.

(intertextual) allegory, and the fictional world embraces the coexistence of mythical and political characters and reference. The two techniques are closely related.

A final mythological example, Cratinus' *Kheirones* (*Kheiron* and followers), seems to have a less immediately political context, and seems to have been more oriented towards social and *musical* elements (frs. 247, 248, 259), possibly targeted against some of Pericles' associates. At the very least, a mythological context is again directly intertwined with the contemporary Athenian scene. Moreover, the allegorical personae of Pericles and Aspasia are invoked. Two of the most remarkable surviving examples of this pair as divine entities come in two lyric fragments from this play: Pericles (fr. 258) as a thinly disguised Zeus (*κεφαληγέρταν*, 'head-herder'), son of *Στάσις* and *Χρόνος* (or *Κρόνος*); his 'dog-eyed tart' Aspasia (fr. 259), daughter of *katapugosune*.

These examples show that the close relationship between abusive, metaphorical satire and plot is central to Cratinus' comic technique. The plot of *Knights*, together with the positioning of Aristophanic comedy in the *parabasis* and the self-reflexive comments on the development of the plot by the Demosthenes slave and the Sausage-Seller, suggest that a link is being created with the older man's technique, and in particular its function in attacking a demagogue. In none of the plays are targets explicitly *named*, but even from what text is preserved, the references are clear. The examples suggest that Cratinus' 'allegory' was neither subtle nor flattering—and we would not expect anything else from a poet of his supposed eminence in the field of invective. As I have stressed, we can see the use of this technique not in terms of an opposition to *ὀνομαστὶ κωμωιδεῖν*, but in terms of an additional weapon, with rich potential for satire.

The implementation of the technique is different in the two authors. If it is possible to read the *parabasis* as marking and shaping comic intertextuality, then the move from mythological allegory to domestic allegory is where the claim for improvement over Cratinean comedy is based. It is worth asking, then, whether this move offers anything more than a new twist on an old style. We might emphasize the difference in target. Pericles' Zeus plays upon grandiloquence and unchecked political power and pre-eminence, whereas Cleon's Paphlagon sets up class-based jokes, and allegations of populism. This, though, would disguise some more far-reaching distinctions. By settling upon a domestic allegory, Aristophanes is coming down from the grandiose heights to a humbler level that analyses politics in terms of other everyday human concerns. It might be said to be more accessible and (paradoxically) realistic. But the allegory is as much about the *oikos*-like *polis* and the old coot Demos as it is about the slave-politicians. *Knights* can be said to be exploring the nature of the relationship between *polis* and politicians *in general* as well as satirizing individuals. It is not only Cleon *qua* Cleon, but Cleon *qua* politician, that is the target of the play. The domestic allegory raises the questions, 'How might we characterize the political process? What are the relationships between the people and their representatives? What outcomes to this process are possible?' The novelty would lie not only in the new implementation of allegory, but also the location of the political satire within the context of these more general issues.

Overall, then, Aristophanes' appropriation and capping of Cratinus takes off from the authority of the rival, but claims that *Knights* is going one better: renewing Cratinus' technique through its application to a new target, Cleon, formally combining aggressive satire with ingenious plotting, and embedding specific political concerns within more general concerns. This *is not* parodic; but *is* comparative and competitive. The drama plays off an intertextual *background* and is self-reflexively encouraging the

audience to construct certain intertextual relationships, but is not formally quoting Cratinean style or content (with or without distortion), and is certainly not caricaturing the rival. Rather the play piggy-backs on Cratinus' established comic reputation, while explicitly locating the best days in the past and suggesting that even that reputation had limitations. It is a double-edged strategy: although Aristophanes will complain in the revised *Clouds* that his rivals 'stole' his techniques, he is in one sense equally open to such a complaint here himself.

IV. ON DECONSTRUCTING COMEDY

Cratinus responded at the following Dionysia, with *Pytine* (*Wine-Flask*). It is an instructive example of how to respond to comic caricature. There are no explicit complaints about unfair treatment. Rather, Cratinus takes up the jokes—and plot—of his rival and gives them a savage twist in return. He uses them to introduce some radical innovations in comic narrative, to reassert his claim to comic allegory, to ratchet up comic metatheatricity, and, above all, to outdo Aristophanes in intertextual flair. The Aristophanic background, however, is never explicitly mentioned (as far as our evidence goes). To acknowledge his rival's successful jokes and ingenuity explicitly would shift the emphasis away from Cratinus' own technique and content. But the complex intertextuality, as in *Knights*, is predicated upon, indeed constructs, an intimacy and continuity between poet, performers, and audience. At the same time, Cratinus essays some explicit counter-attacks that exploit ambiguities in other aspects of Aristophanes' intertextual comedy.

In commenting on the insult against Cratinus at *Knights* 400, the scholia claim that he constructed *Pytine* in revenge. The details of their interpretation might cause us to hesitate. They take at face-value the claims in *Knights* about Cratinus' dead career and personal habits, and also viewed the personal abuse as Cratinus' prime motive.⁵⁷ However, the plot outline that they preserve, together with several fragments, shows quite clearly that Cratinus set about dismantling *Knights* piece by piece, deconstructing both the abuse of himself and the claims that were made for Aristophanic comedy.

ὅπερ μοι δοκεῖ παροξυνθεῖς ἐκεῖνος, καίτοι τοῦ ἀγωνίζεσθαι ἀποστὰς καὶ συγγράφειν, πάλιν γράφει δρᾶμα, τὴν Πυτίνην, εἰς αὐτόν τε καὶ μέθην, οἰκονομίαι τε κεκρημένον τοιαύτην. τὴν Κωμωιδίαν ὁ Κρατῖνος ἐπλάσατο αὐτοῦ εἶναι γυναικα καὶ ἀφιστάσθαι τοῦ συνοικεσίου τοῦ σὺν αὐτῷ θέλειν, καὶ κακώσεως αὐτῷ δίκην λαγχάνειν, φίλους δὲ παρατυχόντας τοῦ Κρατῖνου δεῖσθαι μηδὲν προπετέες ποιῆσαι καὶ τῆς ἑχθρας ἀνερωτᾶν τὴν αἰτίαν, τὴν δὲ μέμφεσθαι αὐτῷ ὅτι μὴ κωμωιδοίη μηκέτι, σχολάζοι δὲ τῇ μέθῃ.

I think he was annoyed by that, and although he had stopped competing and composing, he wrote another play, *Pytine*, on himself and his drunkenness, arranged as follows. Cratinus created a fiction that Comedy was his wife and that she wanted to stop living with him, and charged him with mistreatment; some friends who came by begged Cratinus not to do anything rash and asked what the reason was for his wife's hostility; and she blamed him for no longer writing comedy but dallying instead with Drunkenness.

([ΣVEΓ³Θ] *Knights* 400, 5–12 = *Pytine* test. 2)

⁵⁷ Σ^{vet}. on 531 tie Cratinus' response to the personal abuse in the *parabasis*.

The central theme, then, is Cratinus and his drunkenness. He himself is a character, as is his wife *Κωμωιδία*, who is trying to leave him. The scholia go on to give a little more detail on the opening scenario, and quote from what seems to be the beginning of the explicit revelation to the audience of the plot (*λόγος*, fr. 193), a technique paralleled in *Knights*, *Wasps*, and *Peace*. The passage is somewhat corrupt, but refers to his extra-marital liaison(s). She complains paratragically that she was his wife, but no longer (fr. 194); she bemoans, perhaps, her poverty (fr. 204); and above all describes how he is now running after younger, tenderer wine-containers and their contents. There are a series of jokes punning on wine and male flesh, drinking, and sex (frs. 195–6). Cratinus' preference is evidently for younger and more vigorous fruit than his wife, and is quite passionate for his chosen lads.

He takes a great deal of weaning from his alcoholic passions. The scholia point towards a formal debate of some sort and fr. 207 seems to represent the offer of a choice at its climax:

ἀπὸ ποτέρου τὸν καῦνον ἀριθμήσεις;

From which (urn?) will you choose your lot?

Either in the run-up to this, or perhaps in the aftermath of a failed *agon*, more forceful measures are threatened. Cratinus is represented as an overwhelming personality, with Gargantuan appetites. Someone, perhaps his wife, despairs of ever finding an end to his binges, and threatening to smash all his wine-vessels, elaborated at length in a comic list (fr. 199). Even more radically, there is talk of sending a woman to be a prisoner (fr. 201). This is no doubt drunkenness, *Μέθη*. The threat of tarring brings together both the language of imprisonment and the wine Jar (*Πυτίνη*) which symbolized her. From here onwards, reconstructions of the plot become more controversial. The crucial fragments are almost all in iambic trimeters and difficult to place. Before moving on to the possible outcomes of the play, however, we can already see how *Pytine* responds to *Knights* at a plot level.

The initial scenario and development takes up the *Knights parabasis*. As a combined response to the linked allegations of drunkenness and lack of inspiration, Cratinus pulls off a *coup de théâtre* by bringing on a fictional representation of himself, based on the Aristophanic caricature: drunk and out of action. This 'autobiographical' move is, as far as we can tell, novel, and this refutes Aristophanes' charge of failing abilities, as does the pointed development of Aristophanic invective into the basis of a plot. The role of *Κωμωιδία*, again probably a new figure for the comic stage,⁵⁸ represents a more forceful, if implicit claim. Despite his fictional obsession with a variety of wines of loose morals, *Κωμωιδία* is Cratinus' by a legitimate marriage link. In this context, any claims by Aristophanes can be no more than those of a *μοίχος*. Moreover, by locating *κωμωιδία* in part of the household, Cratinus has set up a domestic allegory that again caps the newcomer's domestic allegory in *Knights*, now presented with a further twist. Thus Cratinus reappropriates the allegorical technique, while refuting the allegation of jejune plots by his new take on the material.

As the play develops, we may be able to flesh this out further. It is commonly believed that Cratinus undergoes some form of rehabilitation, possibly as a consequence of the choice he is offered in fr. 207 (above). One couplet certainly seems to

⁵⁸ It has also been suggested that she is also involved in fr. 278 (*Horai*), but this is unlikely, cf. K-A ad loc.

present someone acknowledging the error of their ways (fr. 200). However, the terms in which his rehabilitation is couched are reminiscent of contemporary drugs debates: either pure abstinence or unwholesome dependency. The alcoholic Cratinus, it is usually suggested, goes cold turkey and becomes a better person, and a better comedian; thus in fr. 202, it is suggested, we see him dolefully addressing his beloved wine-jar, bereft of wine:

<ἀρ> ἀραχνίων μεστήν ἔχεις τὴν γαστέρα;

Is your belly full of spiders?⁵⁹

However, in Athenian culture, it was *excess* that was regarded as troublesome, not wine *per se*.⁶⁰ In fact, a notion of excess is implicit in μέθη, Comedy's main rival in this play, and, moreover, it has been explicit from the beginning that the task at hand is the prevention of *excess* drinking, τοῦ λίαν πότου (fr. 199.2). A moderation of Cratinus' habits, I think, is what we have in frs. 205 and 206, the inculcation of refined and sensible eating and drinking habits, and, as in *Wasps*, there is the possibility of a symposium being reported, off-stage. In the former, a metapoetic angle is suggested with a pun on 'lyre-string'.

ὥς λεπτός, ἦ δ' ὅς, ἔσθ' ὁ τῆς χορδῆς τόμος

How tender, he said, is this slice of black-pudding (Pytine fr. 205)

Refinement (edible, musical) is accompanied by a much reduced intake of wine. The wine containers seem to be pointedly diminutive:

τοὺς μὲν ἐκ προχοιδίου
τοὺς δ' ἐκ καδίσκου

some from the little pourer
some from the little jug (Pytine fr. 206)

Here too, drinking is not just a health issue. It is also one of inspiration, of meta-poetics, and it is in this sense that the character Cratinus uttered the classic line:

ὔδωρ δὲ πίνων οὐδὲν ἂν τέκοις σοφόν

If you drank water, you'd create not one clever idea. (Pytine fr. 203)

This could have been, and is usually supposed to have been, a protest by the poet against the removal of his beloved drink. However, given that this line, and this sentiment, seems to have been far and away the most well-quoted from the play in antiquity,⁶¹ we might suppose instead that the role of wine was ultimately in some sense *vindicated*, rather than maligned as on the usual interpretation. For what it is

⁵⁹ A half-starved Cratinus may also be speaking in fr. 204 (if it is not a maltreated Comoidia from earlier in the play).

⁶⁰ Bowie (n. 22); J. N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes* (London, 1997), 36–69.

⁶¹ See K-A ad loc. and Rosen (n. 22), 33–4. Another elaboration of the idea in *Pytine* might be *inc. fab.* fr. 319 οὐδ' ὕδατοπωτῶν, οὐδέ κοιλοφθαλμῶν. See also Phrynichos fr. 74; for sunken eyes, Phrynichus fr. 82, cf. Platon fr. 179.

worth, a Hellenistic epigram (Nikainetos 5 G-P) quotes the line in the context of a Cratinus strongly linked to Dionysus and reeking of wine, but overwhelmingly powerful in song—the younger Cratinus of the *Knights parabasis*. It is possible that the attempted sympotic and (meta)poetic (re)education of Cratinus failed, if not the rejuvenation *per se*,⁶² and that he ultimately reverted to his old exuberant self.

As such, he would anticipate the end of Philocleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps*—another antinomian but compelling character—and in the combination of alcoholics and metapoetics, the *exodos* would also be somewhat akin to that of Dicaeopolis in *Acharnians* after his performance at the Anthesteria.⁶³ Hints of such an ending are offered by the following passage of trimeters, where Cratinus is presented as poetically in full flood.

ἄναξ Ἀπολλων, τῶν ἐπῶν τοῦ ρεύματος
 καναχοῦσι πηγαί· δωδεκάκρουνον <τὸ> στόμα,
 Ἴλισός ἐν τῇ φάρυγι. τί ἂν εἵποιμ' <ἐτι>;
 εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἐπιβύσει τις αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα,
 ἅπαντα ταῦτα κατακλύσει ποιήμασιν.

Lord Apollo, what a flood of words
 the springs are pouring forth; truly he has a twelve-fountained mouth;
 he has an Ilissos in his throat. What more could I say?
 For unless someone puts a bung in his mouth,
 he'll overwhelm everything with his compositions. (Pytine fr. 198)

Although it cannot be from a formal *agon*, this has usually been assigned to his failed self-defence against the charges of *komoidia* and thus held to confirm the Aristophanic portrait.⁶⁴ The language suggests rather a Cratinus in his vigorous poetic prime—neither the clapped-out alcoholic of the start of the play, nor the man deprived of drink, nor the restrained and elegant diner of frs. 205–6. Certainly, it seems to be picking up the back-handed compliment that featured in the *Knights parabasis* (526–8), but it is much more than an echo or repetition. Rather it is another example of grandstanding, turning invective into dramatic representation, developing and extending the rival's rhetoric. In particular, the series of river-metaphors *inflate* the Aristophanic imagery.⁶⁵ If this *is* a failed self-defence, Cratinus is creating a powerful, and, I think, sympathetic portrait; but if we think ourselves out of the *Knights* paradigm, this may well apply to a vigorous and ultimately undefeated Cratinus, vindicated at the conclusion of the play and dramatically overwhelming the opposition (personal, and by implication, comic).

The 'raffish' appropriation of his rival's rhetoric, the manipulations of the fictional

⁶² Sidwell (n. 5, 1993) favours ultimate rejuvenation, albeit with a rather different construction of the play.

⁶³ Bowie (n. 22), 123–5, claims that *Acharnians* praised drunkenness in a festive context, whereas *Pytine* mocked it in a non-festive context. However, the metapoetic aspects of *Pytine* undermine this distinction.

⁶⁴ So Rosen, (n. 22), 39. A better candidate for a self-defence is fr. 197, a formal opening in the manner of a court speech.

⁶⁵ The scholia suggest that Cratinus was boasting (*μεγαληγορῶν*) and praising himself (*ἑαυτὸν ἐπῆνευσεν*). They also claim that the *Knights* passage was inspired by *Pytine* (S vet. et Tr., *Knights* 526a). Rosen (n. 22), 29–32, suggests that they derive this from an earlier Cratinean self-representation, but the commentator is explicitly basing an opinion on nothing other than *Pytine* itself. In a similar mistake of dating, the scholia claim that *Wasps* 1025–6 refers to Eupolis' *Autolykos*, produced in 421/20.

autobiography, and the possibility of a still-alcoholic Cratinus have all been argued for strongly by Rosen. For Rosen, though, the comic persona remains that of a misunderstood, misanthropic outsider and suggests that 'Cratinus' is a character of self-pity and 'heroic abjection'. This seems to me to be too strong. Cratinus' imbibing is funny not only because it can be represented in some sense as poetically plausible, but also because it has some cultural worth in itself. Although drinking could be deprecated in some contexts when it had led to socially undesirable behaviour (assault, herm-chopping), it is clear that the attractions of alcoholic 'excess' *per se* were hardly unknown in literature, art, or history. The characterization of Socrates and Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium* is a case in point.⁶⁶

Regardless, however, of whether wine triumphs over water, or vice versa, or neither, Cratinus is taking two contradictory sentiments that are central to Aristophanes' self-construction in *Knights* and setting them against each other for humorous effect. Thus *Κωμωδία* reproves the alcoholic, along the lines of the abuse of Cratinus in the *Knights parabasis* (533–6), while the character Cratinus espouses the inspiration claimed by the Demosthenes Slave, which formed the basis for the *Knights* plot (85–100). In *Pytine*, then, Cratinus creates a central point of dispute that shows up the contradictions at the heart of Aristophanes' rhetoric; the tension and the deconstruction in turn form the basis of the plot.

Cratinus reinforced this with more specific instances of self-promotion and/or play with Aristophanes' play. In parabolic as in non-parabolic contexts we find similar means of constructing and justifying Cratinus' poetic *persona*: the whole play, in some sense, becomes an *apologia*. In the *parabasis*, both the explicit poetic self-reference and the offering of political advice plays with Aristophanes' earlier claims and accusations. Thus in what seems to have been the opening of an *epirrhema*,⁶⁷ we find,

ὦ λιπερνῆτες πολῖται, τὰμὰ δὴ ξυνίετε.

poor citizens, listen to my words.

This line, quoting from Archilochus (fr. 109W), begs to be read as a piece of poetic self-promotion, locating Cratinus in the Arkhilokhian tradition. It is particularly neat, if, as I suggested, in the *parabasis* of *Knights* Aristophanes had alluded to Cratinus' own claim on his predecessor, and undermined it through his metapoetics of wine. Cratinus is here restating his case, and implicitly denying that he's lost his bottle. As we have seen, Archilochus himself appears to have celebrated the virtues of drunkenness for poetic composition.

When Cratinus turns to the political context, his language sneakily co-opts Aristophanes' own personification of the city's triremes in the second *parabasis* of *Knights* 1300–15. Whereas Aristophanes represented them grouching about the grandiose plans of Hyperbolus, Cratinus develops the image further, depicting his triremes as homeless, neglected by the state:

οὐ δύνανται πάντα ποιοῦσαι νεωσοίκων λαχεῖν
οὐδὲ κάννης

⁶⁶ Compare Aristophanes' self-deprecatory use of his baldness (*Clouds* 545, *Peace* 767–74), a caricature developed (if not necessarily started) by his rivals (Eupolis, *Chrusoun Genos* fr. 298, *Baptai* fr. 89; Telecleides, *inc. fab.* fr. 46).

⁶⁷ The metre is trochaic tetrameter catalectic. Compare *Peace* 603, Eupolis fr. 392.1–2.

Though they do everything, they can't get a dry-dock,
or even a bit of reed-fencing (Pytine fr. 210)

Again, the Aristophanic rhetoric is ratcheted up a further notch.

These responses to *Knights* have thus far been entirely implicit. Nevertheless, Cratinus does take the opportunity to abuse Aristophanes explicitly; the charge, unsurprisingly, is that Aristophanes owes his style and content to other poets. Not only is Aristophanes *not* a novel poet, as he claimed in *Knights* but he cannot even write his own material. Firstly, he accuses him of owing more than a little to Euripides (this unplaced fragment almost certainly derives from *Pytine*):

τίς δὲ σύ; κομψός τις ἔροιτο θεατής
ὑπολεπτολόγος, γνωμιδιώκτης, εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων.

Who are you? some spectator would ask,
an over-subtle-speechifier, an idea-peddler, a Euripidaristophaniser. (inc. fab. fr. 342)

This is likely to be looking back at Aristophanes' provocative self-positioning in *Acharnians*, in large part engineered through parody of Euripides' *Telephus*. Although some scholars have doubted the connection, it is clear, as I have argued, that parody is *constructive* as well as destructive and *Acharnians* is no exception. And both through his singling out of Euripides from the pack of tragedians and because of the importance of parodied Euripidean material for elements of his dramaturgy, Aristophanes could lie open to the charge of peddling Euripidean material.⁶⁸

At the same time, Cratinus neatly turns Aristophanic claims of subtlety and innovation on their heads, by accusing him of the same over-sophistication that he had ascribed to Crates. But he twists the knife further, and directly accuses him of ripping off a fellow comic poet—only not Cratinus, but Eupolis.

ταῦτα ἀκούσας ὁ Κρατῖνος ἔγραψε τὴν Πυτίνην, δεικνὺς ὅτι οὐκ ἐλήρησεν
ἐν ᾗ κακῶς λέγει τὸν Ἀριστοφάνην ὡς τὰ Εὐπολίδος λέγοντα.

After he heard this [that he was senile/drunk], Cratinus wrote the *Pytine*, proving that he was not past it: in the play he speaks of Aristophanes as speaking words of Eupolis.

(Pytine fr. 213 = Σ *Knights* 531a)

Eupolis was much later to claim that he 'co-wrote' *Knights* and 'made a gift of it' to him (συνεποίησα . . . κάδωρησάμην, *Baptai* fr. 89). I remain sceptical about this claim, although even on our current evidence there are hints of some sort of intertextual relationship between *Knights* and Eupolidean comedy, whether through direct quotation, or stylistically. Both *Knights* and Eupolis' *Khrusoun Genos* have a number of similarities in their assault on Cleon.⁶⁹ Whether the allegation in *Pytine* itself is plagiarism or collaboration remains open to dispute. In any case the under-

⁶⁸ The slander was taken as fact by ancient scholarship (Anon. *De Comoedia* 9, Prolegomena III, p. 7 Koster). Fr. 502 of Cratinus appears to use a similar compound to attack a rival as Χοιριλεκφαντίδης.

⁶⁹ Sidwell (n. 5, 1994), 108–12; Ruffell (n. 18), 490–3. Σ 1291 record a claim, based on 1288, that the second parabasis was written by Eupolis. Pohlenz and Colonna may be right to view this as a mistake stemming from similarities with a line in the later *Demoi* (fr. 99.33, cf. n. 65 above). A. Sommerstein, *CQ* 30 (1980), 51–3, plausibly identified a quotation from Eupolis' Heilotes in 1225, but now favours collaboration (Sommerstein [n. 1], 15–17).

lying rhetoric is the same. Aristophanes is not even original enough to come up with *his own* material, let alone new and exciting material. This is part of that rhetoric of innovation that all comic poets seem to have affected: the corollary of celebrating one's own originality is decrying that of others.

We can, however, go further. In *Knights* we saw that the rhetoric of comic innovation had an ideological component. Aristophanes' celebration of his poetic concepts was linked to his offering of political advice to the city, in particular through the Sausage-Seller's rejuvenation of *Demos*. A novel poet was a politically useful poet. It is in this respect that Cratinus delivers the *coup de grâce* on *Knights*. The second half of the play appears to have featured an epirrhematic (perhaps agonistic) scene on the writing of comedy itself:

ληρεῖς ἔχων· γράφ' αὐτὸν
ἐν ἐπεισοδίῳ. γελοῖος ἔσται Κλεισθένης κυβεύων
† ἐν τῇ τοῦ κάλλους ἀκμῇ.

You keep wittering. Write him
in an episode. Kleisthenes will be funny playing dice
at the height of his beauty.

(Pytine fr. 208)

and again

‘Υπέρβολον δ’ ἀποσβέσας ἐν τοῖς λύχνοισι γράψον

snuff out Hyperbolus and write him in among the lamps (Pytine fr. 209)

The prominence of the craft of *comedy* within the plot seems to be entirely novel, indeed unique, for Old Comedy. The technical element—and the importance of *text* and *script*—seems clear throughout. Writing is stressed in both fragments, and elsewhere (fr. 217). It is, however, frustratingly unclear who is doing what to whom. The majority view remains that it is *Cratinus* who is on the receiving end of a refresher course from *Comoidia* to accompany the new diet and health regime. If, as I have suggested, it is Cratinus who triumphs, then the instructions may be addressed by the poet to someone else.⁷⁰

Either way, this is a definitive exposé of the shallowness of Aristophanic claims for his own ingenuity in plot and Cratinus' imaginative (and comic) decrepitude. The poetics appear to be a defence or explicit theorization of the brand of satire that Aristophanes had deprecated in *Knights*. One victim to be included was Hyperbolus, here again playing off the second parabasis of *Knights* and in particular his representation as a lamp-seller. In addition, we can see—even from the limited number of fragments—that there were a range of figures lampooned in the play: Antiphon (fr. 212), Lycon (fr. 214), and Chairephon (fr. 215). Against the Aristophanic image of the poet out of control, Cratinus elaborates a theory of comic plot that links episodic technique and comic satire. Not only would this demonstrate to the audience that Cratinus had thought through the genre in a way that Aristophanes had not (and would not), but in his aggressive promotion of the comic episode, he would provide an influential statement for Aristotle, later, to react against.⁷¹ In terms of the immediate

⁷⁰ Sidwell (n. 5, 1993), 376–7, revives Pieters's idea of a debate between Eupolis and Aristophanes.

⁷¹ See also Metagenes fr. 15. Cf. Gilbert Norwood, “Episodes” in old comedy’, *CP* 25 (1930),

context, though, it is primarily a defence against Aristophanes' claims for pre-eminence as an exponent of comedy as a form of ideological production. He co-opts the Aristophanic image of re-education of Demos, an image that is central to Aristophanes' claim to political usefulness. Around a rejuvenated old man he builds his theory of political comedy, touching on satire, narrative technique, and the role of comedy within the *polis*. And in doing so, he cements his reputation as the most imaginative and useful comedian on the Athenian scene.

V. THE HANGOVER

The relationship between Aristophanes and Cratinus can be seen as paradigmatic of comic intertextuality in general. The interaction between the poets functions at both the microscopic, joke-based, level and the macroscopic, plot-based level. Both share the same comic dynamic of the running gag and the capping mechanism, phenomena that I suggested in the introduction are a cross-cultural feature of comic production. This is a dynamic where both the repetition and innovation have aesthetic value and add to the poet's reputation, as well as the audience's enjoyment. In *Knights*, elements are foregrounded that are implicit in the structure of capping itself. The explicit metatheatrical positioning in relation to Cratinus mirrors the intertextuality of the plot—taking up the Cratinean heritage and authority and adding a twist. Here, political value becomes the double of comic ingenuity. And the vehicle of comic ingenuity, the joke, functions as both the motor of the plot and the vehicle for cognitive and ideological significance.

In this model of comic interactions, there may be elements of a game, but it is a game with definite results—the establishment and maintenance of a stock of aesthetic and thereby ideological capital. In this environment, it is not so much maintenance or loss of 'face' that determines comic status as the creative riposte, put-down, or come-back. And this explains Aristophanes' response to the defeat of *Clouds*. Cratinus in *Pytine* decisively escalated the stakes in terms of cute intertextuality, sophisticated narrative devices, and downright abuse. By deconstructing *Knights* in order to celebrate his own comic technique and satirical vigour, he seriously undercut the Aristophanic brand and persona. This is more than enough to account for Aristophanes' evasions and half-truths about the defeat of *Clouds*, with which I began the paper. It would also explain why, as Sommerstein has noted, he never returned to demagogue comedy again after *Knights*.⁷²

But the game had to go on and Aristophanes took a new direction—again in response to Cratinus. The central conceit of *Wasps*, a mad old man and the attempts of a family member to cure him, can itself be seen as capping *Pytine*. The opening routines about Philocleon's mania, and the explicit statement that the play is *not* about an *alcoholic* (*Wasps* 78), all point the audience towards its competitive engagement with Cratinus' play. In a response to a mania being used as the vehicle for self-defence as a political comedian, Philocleon's mania is shifted towards the institutional frames of politics—the lawcourts and the symposium.⁷³ The vehicle for Cratinus' theory

217–29; M. Heath, *Unity in Greek Poetics* (Oxford, 1989), 49–55, 157–8. M. Heath, *Political Comedy in Aristophanes. Hypommēmata* 87 (Göttingen, 1987), 43–54, ascribes Aristotelian unity to Aristophanes.

⁷² Sommerstein (n. 19), 437–8.

⁷³ Sidwell (n. 5, 1995), 70–1; cf. F. D. Harvey, 'Sick humour in Aristophanes', *Mnemosyne* 24 (1971), 362–5.

of comic politics, then, becomes taken over as the basis of Aristophanes' political comedy.

As for Cratinus himself, he did such an effective job on his self-portrait that he had established his caricature for all time to come. In *Peace* (Dionysia 422/1), Aristophanes could claim that he died of a heart attack from seeing the Spartans destroy a barrel of wine (700–3). Likewise, in *Frogs* 357 he even assimilates him to Dionysus. The images derive, as the ancient commentators point out (*Σ Peace* 702) from Cratinus himself. In both plays, the generic importance of comedy and its relationship to tragedy is critical. It is a common thread in comic intertextuality that whatever the personal abuse or the criticisms of rivals' techniques, the ideological significance of the genre is never questioned—only the ability of rivals as exponents of it and thus their contribution to the *polis*. But for all that Aristophanes returns to his pet theme of *τρυγωιδία*, from 424/3 onwards it is clearly Cratinus who has the lock on wine, Dionysus, and political satire.

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