



# Frogs

*Aristophanes*

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## Frogs Aristophanes

The Frogs (Ancient Greek: Βῆτραχοί, Báterchoi) is a comedy written by the Greek playwright Aristophanes. It was performed at the Lenaia, one of the Festivals of Dionysus in Athens, in 405 BC, receiving first place.

## Frogs Details

Date : Published November 3rd 2006 by Hard Press (first published -405)

ISBN : 9781406936728

Author : Aristophanes

Format : Paperback 70 pages

Genre : Plays, Classics, Drama, Theatre, Fiction, Literature, Humor

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for such a dastard thing committed by the democratic oaf. When did speaking up become a felony? It is even today, in traditionalist societies, defying the norms of implemented morality code.

Euripides had died in 406BC, the year before Aristophanes wrote **'Frogs'**. Influenced by the writings of Socrates, Euripides tragedies were mainstream that were more appealing to masses making them 'human' in nature. The attachment to Socrates and the 'sophists' school of "thinkery" was perhaps the reason of animosity between Euripides and Aristophanes. In *Clouds*, one of the commendable works hovering over the raging debate of Aristophanes' holistic teachings and the Socratic existentialist contemporary radicalism, Socrates is condemned by outright mockery and berated for his sophism adherence. Aristophanes loathed the thought that the sophists taught their students to question every aspect of educational norms and held certain privileges of getting paid to impart their teachings (barring Socrates who taught free of charge). The sophists were not exactly the fêted conservative philosophers and taught varied subjects ranging from science, politics, history and etymology, giving more weightage to rhetoric and common sense than ethically constricted attitude. The sophists were the new voice in the education system. They challenged the foundations of religion, truth and justice adhering to the principle of *'one man's virtue is another man's vice'*.

Aristophanes always had a weak point when it came to dealing with the concepts of sophists which easily provoked his sensibilities in taking a defensive stand towards conservative school of thoughts, along with his other contemporaries as Plato and Aristotle. Similar display of attitude can be seen when during a roaring debate Aeschylus accuses Euripides for encouraging tales of incest and promiscuity on stage", thus blemishing the reputation of an honourable theatrical art. This became the point of perversity that led Aristophanes to belittle Euripides by labelling him 'immoral' who depicted his heroes as beggars in rags whining about vulgar affairs of life. Furthermore, the caustic wit of Aristophanes subjects the genius of Euripides to the crass monotony of his dithyrambic chorus, his effeminate traits of meddling in women affairs and the celebratory depiction of eroticism or to put in Aeschylus's astute words: **“creating whores like Phaedra and Sthenoboea.”**

Speaking of Euripides' dramatize characters, Aristophanes in his ongoing parody of Euripides , derides Dionysus by portraying him as a buffoon resorting to cowardice techniques by switching identities with his slave Xanthias and is a borderline cross-dresser preposterously primping himself in a yellow lion hide , club and buskin. Not satisfied by these meagre embellishment , Aristophanes further pushes the envelope by suggesting Heracles suggesting Dionysus the quickest way to Hades would be either to hang himself or get clobbered by a pestle, since the lengthy way would be too dangerous demeaning Dionysus' gallantry and streaks of subtle homosexuality.

*DIO. There as, on deck, I'm reading to myself  
The Andromeda, a sudden pang of longing  
Shoots through my heart, you can't conceive how keenly.  
HER. How big a pang.  
DIO. A small one, Molon's size.  
HER. Caused by a woman?  
DIO. No.  
HER. A boy?  
DIO. No, no.  
HER. A man?  
DIO. Ah! ah!*

What travesty of tragic heroism for a God who was a far cry from being fierce representation of laudable heroism in The Bacchae, worshipped in the sanctimonious arena Athenian theater. In this battle of **new education v/s traditionalists**, what then becomes the defining truth of morality? Is it the old-age tyrannical convention that chalk the salient features of ethics or the logic of the sophists that suggests that morals and justice changes according to the societal evolution and what may be right in one place may not be

appropriate in other. Aristophanes in his parody puts forth an intriguing stance on ethical sustainability. The moral laws never change, but what changes are customary circumstances and therefore the perception of the said morality. The case of Xanthias and Dionysus interchanging their identities to circumvent the wrath of Aeacus, simply suggest that the audacious Xanthias was a prisoner of societal mores and thus proclaimed the status of a slave. Thus, inferring that slavery was not moral at all, people just thought it was and this assertion stays true for other conservative norms of feminism, female infanticide, religious fascism, sexual abuse, freedom of speech and caste and class discrimination and other prevailing societal changes. In the clash between **orthodoxy v/s modernism**, the scales become the circumstantial victim to human fear and arrogance. There have been demographics of countries that rapidly swing between the two scales of rationality and irrationality due to the dodgy current affairs atmosphere. In the realm of tragic art oscillates the tensions between democratic ideologies and heroic legendary redefining institutions of morality and politics like repulsive droplets of oils and vinegar.

***If you pour oil and vinegar into the same vessel, you would call them not friends but opponents – Aeschylus.***

The effeminate Dionysus judges a comical battle of wits between Aeschylus and Euripides. Unlike the battle of sexes in *Lysistrata*, the centrality of this ‘agon’ in *Frogs* is to establish poetic supremacy. It is not a peace satire but more on the lines of acquiring political and societal stability. The literary contest that commences raises questions about the social and political atmosphere in Athens. The initial light poetic and intelligent banter spiraled into juvenile antics of name calling and ridiculous labeling overturning rationality into sheer ludicrous chaos. Aristophanes is still rolling in his pomposity by ridiculing Euripides on the prospects of religion. Dionysus suggestive remark on Euripides atheist convictions falls through when he solicits Euripides on praying to private newly minted Gods. The amusing rebuttal of Euripides takes the point further as he prays to the sustenance of his tongue, intelligence and olfactory nostrils and stoutly refutes any captured words by his psyche. The preposterous debate views two literary resorting to silly slapping each other with the metaphoric acrimonious taunt of “**a bottle of oil**” being enough to rid of all the written works and Euripides rebuttal to Aeschylus proclamation on how he would never write about whores or any eroticism, to which Euripides smartly suggest that only if Aeschylus knew any woman would be able to write about it, stating the obvious.

Aristophanes puts forth a **mêlée of “old ways v/s new ways”** and the need to go back to one’s roots become essential when the chaos of modernity pollutes the status quo. The three greatest playwrights-Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus who were responsible for the development of Greek tragic theatre were now mere pawn in the political game of morality. The failing of the Athenian society was blamed on the proliferation of the new school of sophisms. Why does it then become the need to go back to ethnic mores? We seen countries shuffling between conservative and democratic leaders with every fresh election? Is it that when societal fruition is seen as a threat by those who resist change, that the voices of opposition becomes stronger? And what about those, who want change in their country? Aristophanes emphasizes that traditional values become a naked truth that a country wants to witness. Dionysus who wants in the awe of Euripides now criticises the very ideologies that once he cherished to render nostalgia.

***CHORUS:- But if you’re both afraid that our spectators lack a certain amount of knowledge,  
So as, not to appreciate the fine points of what you say,  
Don’t worry about that, since that is no longer the case,  
For they are seasoned veterans and each one has a book and understands the clever stuff,  
Their minds are superior anyway,  
Out now they’re really sharpened. So far not, but,  
Scrutinize every topic for the audience sake at least, since they’re so sophisticated.***

This stanza outshines through the series of poetic line asserting the important of the political audience or

spectators in general and how they are mistakenly granted the title of being a bunch of mere fools. Similar to the position of Dionysus as a judge who gets to vote and choose the valued candidate, masses have the final word through voting banks and cannot be taken for a ride by sovereign leaders. This holds true for the Presidential debates and other related conversations. Although, several political analysts conjecture that Presidential debates are not that influential when it comes to voting, but at the end of it all it becomes easy to select the wise from a buffoon. Unfortunately, politics is a dirty game and sometimes it is just a race between two masturbating monkeys.

*AES:- You fiend! It is compelling power of the great thoughts and ideas to engender phrases of equal size. And, anyway it is proper that demigods speak in grander terms  
For they also wear finer clothes  
What I so nobly exhibited you defiled.*

In the pre-technological era, the written world was as powerfully influential like the monstrous media web of the present times. The words of poets, writers, musicians have the sharpness of a sword that can either dismember or restore mankind. Keeping in mind the words of Aeschylus, is the poets who have the compelling power of great thoughts and are spoken to be demigods, then what is the burden of their responsibility in order to sustain a stable society? Plato's Republic illustrate the fright that Plato harboured towards poets and poetry, stating, "*poetry feeds and waters the passions instead of drying them up; she lets them rule, although they ought to be controlled, if mankind are ever to increase in happiness and virtue*". According to Plato, poetry plays with a man's emotions signifying that poetry is indeed a learning institution. This confirms Aeschylus comment on how young boys have teachers and men have poets.

*AES:- But, a pet should conceal wickedness,  
Not bring it forward and teach it,  
For little boys, have a teacher who advised them and grown-up have poets,  
We have a serious obligation to speak of honourable things.*

What can be termed as "honourable things"? If poets are teachers of the adults, then isn't a teacher's prime job to teach to question the unjust and to different between the right and wrong? What ethics sets the teachers apart from poets who have the similar rank philosophical activity? Maybe, the fact that teachers work within a set of disciplinary censored syllabus while for the poets the world is their core curriculum. Now, that could be dangerous to politician lurking behind the egalitarian garb.

In Dionysus's quest to find "a worthy poet to save Athens" one is then compelled to question the **role of a poet/writer in the society?** Do really high thoughts need high language? And if so, how far the significance of that grand vocabulary read the masses and become human in nature? After all, aren't nations mostly made up of common men trying to breathe a liberated political air rather than those few privileged who dream of becoming fascist leader and oligarchs? How far can the truth be stretched to expose the societal fallacies and how much fraudulence is required to prevent the exposure of a country's thriving vulnerabilities?

Aristophanes' assertion on the conclusive result of Dionysus on choosing a poet who adhered traditional ways, illustrates the preference of conservative hard power over the modern usage of soft power. Many would not agree, but when a country is in turmoil and desperately needs a leader, 'High thoughts need high language'. A leader is chosen to protect the country and its people. In a time where sowing the seeds of assurance weighs more than exposing weakening susceptibilities, the truth is then pushed to a dishonest grave and the winds of change are obstructed by the orthodoxy barricades. It may not seem right to a person sitting in the warm comfort of his house, but it seems the solitary alternative to a homeless man. Nevertheless the burning question that generates heat is the dominancy of a particular societal dogma that somehow acquires a self-imposed Godly status and spread its fascist wings in censoring every aspect of freedom speech. Books are banned due to egotistical orgies, movies are thrown out of the theater, poets and

writers are penalized, news channels are expurgated and the democratic voices incarcerated bordering upon disgust. In a world, where most of the countries are plague by civil wars and revolution, what is the role of the written world?

The voices of frogs that do not cease from a chaotic chorus even to the extent of it annoying Dionysus, one voice that hangs around throughout this slapstick satire is who would be a superior redeemer of the social order – the “honourable” egoistic Aeschylus with his traditionalists vision or the “corrupt scoundrel” Euripides with his democratic ideologies? And who is to decide the ultimate answer?

Frogs croak..... Word has it that when Dionysus reprimanded the frog for creating a croaking menace.... the frogs replied:-

Brekekekex koax koax!!!!

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### **Manny says**

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### **Maud says**

Fine, but nothing special. You might enjoy this more if you know Aeschylus and Euripides and their works.

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### **Alex says**

Even though the play is called The Frogs, they only appear in one scene, and make quite a fuss, but still. Maybe the play should've been called Euripides vs Aeschylus. The main characters however are Dionysus (yes, *the* Dionysus) and his slave, Xanthias. Dionysus wants to bring back Euripides from the dead and after asking Hercules, a known sojourner to the underworld, how to get there, Dionysus and Xanthias set off on their quest.

I laughed several times throughout this and I have to give credit to R.H. Webb for letting the humor shine through so well in his translation. There's a lot of absurd situations here that provide plenty of opportunity for jokes. Hercules tells Dionysus that one of the easiest ways to get the underworld is the hang himself. Dionysus gets into an argument with the frogs and their famous Brekekekex ko-ax croaking. He's then afraid of disguising himself as Hercules because of the infamy the demigod left behind in his visit, so Xanthias has to put on the costume. Dionysus then regrets the decision when Xanthias disguised as Hercules attracts the attention of the underworld ladies. The pair also gets beaten up by the underworld police.

At the heart of the matter though this still is a political satire written in the context of the Peloponnesian War. There are a lot of targets here and I have to admit that many of the names went over my head. Then when the chorus appears to start lamenting that undeserving people have gotten suffrage and public offices it kind of seemed out of place to me.

The main target is actually Euripides, and this isn't even the only play Aristophanes wrote going after him. He's accused of corrupting the youth by desecrating the heroes and myths of Greece, and honestly Euripides *is* did have a reputation for attacking the traditional Greek religion inbetween the lines of his plays.

The key scene is when Euripides and Aeschylus face off for the privilege of getting to dine sitting next to Hades. My favorite joke was when Aeschylus points out that he is at a disadvantage since they are in the underworld and his own plays didn't die with him as they did with Euripides. They make fun of each other's plays, not just the content, but even the syntax, like Aeschylus' habit of adding anaphora to his introductions. Aeschylus ruins all of Euripides introductions by inserting the phrase "lost his oilcan." They even weigh each others verses with literal scales. In the end of course Aeschylus is the winner. Pluto allows him not only the privilege of sitting next to him, but also to go back to the world of the living with Dionysus, and is provided a list of prominent Athenians to bring back with him afterwards.

It really does help to be familiar with both the plays of Aeschylus and Euripides to get the most out of this play, and you can gauge their popularity by noting that the audience is presumed to be well versed in both of those playwrights. Who would've known that such a comedy could be made out of an essay in literary criticism.

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### Susan says

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### Lynne King says

Brekekekex koax koax – now what's that? It's a chorus of frogs, of course.

Well it wasn't until I heard "Frogs" mentioned on Goodreads a few months ago that I thought, well from the comments made this play is really worth reading. I accordingly purchased it, and the book re-surfaced last night. Why did it re-surface? In fact I had forgotten all about it; the trigger being my neighbor Michèle who was telling me how noisy the tree frogs are at the moment.

I must confess my ignorance in that I've never heard of Aristophanes and can only go by the historical note included in this play:

"Aristophanes (c. 456 BC to c. 386 BC) was the foremost writer of comic drama in classical Athens. His surviving plays are the only complete examples we have of Old Comedy.

'Frogs' was first produced in Athens in 405 BC. By this time Athens had been at war with Sparta for over twenty-five years."

I also don't know if this is a definitive translation. Mine is by Ian Johnson from Vancouver University, British Columbia, Canada and so if someone knows which translation is preferable, do let me know. The translator does admit that he would "like to acknowledge the valuable help of W.B. Stanford's edition of 'The Frogs' (London/Macmillan, 1963)." The translation is very modern in tone with some of its expressions. Is that the true translation? I thought a translator should translate according to the period?

Well, whatever the correct translation, I started this Greek comedy and I've never laughed so much in my life.

"The play opens on a street leading to Hades" and here we have Dionysus (also known as Iacchus), the god appearing in human form, (carrying a club, one that is commonly associated with Hercules) accompanied by his slave Xanthias, who is riding on a donkey and carrying a huge amount of baggage. There's an immediate awareness of the audience as Xanthias stated:

"Look master, an audience! Shouldn't I speak up? Tell them one of those jokes they always fall for?"

And Dionysus' response:

"Oh, all right – say what you like. Only no jokes about how you're dying to piss. I can't stand those – they're all so stale."

And from this point, it's fun galore, and continuous show time!

Dionysus gets the crazy idea that he must go down into Hades and bring back a playwright and after discussing this with Hercules, and tossing in various alternatives such as Euripides and Sophocles, he sets off for Hades in the hope of finding someone.

I've never even imagined having a conversation with a corpse but Dionysus does very well here and the corpse is so witty! The former tries to persuade the corpse to carry some luggage into Hades and you have to read the play to appreciate their conversation.

There's something so invigorating about a play, especially with the various notes stating what individuals are doing on and off the stage, plus "the shouting and roaring" as is the case with the frogs here. The players are wide ranging including Charon, Hercules, Aeacus, Pluto, various playwrights such as Euripides and Aeschylus, and a splendid chorus of initiates but it's the chorus of frogs that steals the "show" for me.

Also there are notes at the end of the book giving various explanations and it was interesting to see there that as regards the "chorus of frogs", there was uncertainty as to whether they remained on the stage or not. On stage, I'm sure that would have been difficult to portray...

In all, this Greek comedy is excellent and is definitely to be reread in the future. I loved it!

I really must read more about mythology. I often get confused with the Roman and Greek Gods...

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## **Sarah says**

*The Frogs* is another of Aristophanes' plays that is just top-notch for me as a Greek drama and as a general comedy- the plotline is just hilarious to behold, especially if the reader has understanding of the inside jokes like I did.

I read a post somewhere on Tumblr that described the plot of this play as follows: "Aeschylus and Euripides have a rap battle in the underworld while Dionysus croaks with a chorus of frogs". And I'd say that that's essentially it. I know that Aristophanes is known to mock real-life figures, but I've never read a more hilarious case of this. If one has read the plays of Euripides and Aeschylus before, the situation that comes up

is just so funny to read about, especially since I used to really see these two tragedians as very serious figures. I love Aristophanes' strange use of a frog chorus as well- he has a tendency to make very odd choruses.

All in all, this play is just great. Just one word of caution, however- it's hard to understand this play at all if you haven't read any other works of Greek drama, so I'd say that reading a bit of Euripides and Aeschylus would be recommended in this case.

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### **Brent says**

In reading a two-thousand year old satire of specific Greek poets, it might help to be familiar with the two poets, Greek culture, or even poetry in general.

Or you can just plunge in on the recommendation of other humorists, claiming that his guy still has the goods two Millennia after his prime.

I chose option two. And as such, most of the subtleties were wasted on me and I totally didn't get the ending. But the bit about the passive-aggressive servant is timeless and is still in use, in one form or another, today.

It is always interesting to find the first instance of a joke or trope and a couple seem to find their origin here.

Unless of course Aristophanes was also re-interrupting the work of earlier humorists.

Which is entirely possible, and given his view of writers in general, would not be surprising.

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### **Nesrazmerni says**

Aristofan je G E N I J E!

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### **Steve says**

Read in the Bollingen Poetry Translation Prize winning version of Richmond Lattimore

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### **Inkspill says**

In reading classics, I discovered that comedy once had a different meaning, to have a happy ending. I'd already read Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, subtitled *a comedy in four acts*, which turned out to be a light comedy and could easily be performed as a drama with little laughs. But I wanted to read something older to get a sense of what comedy first meant, that's why I read - *Frogs* by Aristophanes, dated about 400 BCE. I wasn't sure what I was going to find, it turned out to be a satire of two poets, Euripides and Aeschylus, battling it out to leave the underworld.

This doesn't sound funny, and I was not expecting it to be funny but I was surprised. I was not expecting to find slapstick amongst the wordy exchange, which was broken up with gross out and smutty innuendos. So, it had elements that would be found in today's movies, like Borat. And I realised that as I read this, unlike, Chekhov's idea of comedy, this one was overt in its comedy, wanting the audience to laugh by poking fun at both poets and their work.

I don't know enough about Euripides and Aeschylus or their works, so a parody of a line from their plays would just by-pass me. So, for me, most of this was like reading a document with interesting cultural facts. However, I can imagine Aristophanes' audiences just listening to this and falling over with laughter – in its time this must have been a very funny and entertaining play. For that I am tempted to give it 5 stars, but I wonder if today most audiences would find all the jokes funny? I'm thinking probably not, which is not down to Aristophanes skills in comedy but culturally it's just out of date. Hence, I am giving this 4 stars for having comical aspects that can be still recognisable today. Considering how old this is, to me this is impressive.

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## Jenny says

Αρκετ? διασκεδαστικ?,?χι κ?τι το ιδια?τερο!

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## David Sarkies says

### A satirical look at what makes a classic

16 June 2012

Before I start this commentary I must make reference to the translation that I am using, namely the 1987 David Barrett translation published by Penguin Classics. The reason that I am sourcing this book is because while the original text is not subject to copyright, the modern translation is. Even though I do have access to the original text (actually, I just checked my collection of Aristophanes plays in the original Greek and the Frogs is not included, however I am sure I can find it on the internet) it will take me a lot of time and energy to translate the passages that I want to quote, and as such it is better to cite Barrett's translation instead.

Anyway, enough of the legalese and onto the play itself. The Frogs was first performed in Athens in 405 BC, and that was a time of great distress for the city. The 30 year long Peloponesian War was coming to an end and Athens was on the losing side. Her allies had been overrun and captured, her fleet was in shambles, and the only person that could possibly save the city, Alcibades, had been exiled (as is prone to happen in a democracy). Yet, despite all of the doom and gloom, the festivals were still held, and Aristophanes was still writing plays.

The Frogs is about how the god Dionysius and his slave Xanthias go down to Hades in an attempt to bring one of the old poets back. One of the most insightful aspects of this play is that it gives us a really good insight into who the Athenians considered to be the greatest of the tragic poets. At this time both Sophocles and Euripides had died (and Aeschylus was long dead), and it is interesting to note that it is these three playwrights that Aristophanes names as being the best. This is probably why we have retained their plays and lost the rest (including Agathon, who in a way was also considered a good playwright, but not to the extent of these three). In many ways, the productions of tragedies at this time were nothing compared to the great writers, and in many cases, we can see a reflection of this in our own times. In my own opinion, I am almost ready to suggest that the last work of literature that I have read was American Psycho, which was published in 1989. In my view, there has been nothing written since that I would consider to be a classic or a literary masterpiece. Many of the Athenians of this time were probably thinking the same thing. In a way,

Aristophanes says it best:

HERACLES: But surely there are dozens of these young whippersnappers churning out tragedies these days: for sheer verbiage, if that's what you want, they leave Euripides standing.  
DIONYSIUS: Small fry, I assure you, insignificant squeakers and twitterers (is this an ancient reference to a popular social media site), like a lot of swallows. A disgrace to their art, If ever they are granted a chorus, what does their offering at the shrine of Tragedy amount to? One cock of the hind leg and they've pissed themselves dry. You never hear of them again. I defy you to find a really seminal poet among the whole crowd of them: someone who can coin a fine resounding phrase. (Page 159)

If we look through the preceding lines, we note a number of famous poets by name, including Sophocles, Euripides, and yes, Agathon as well, but the concern is that they are all gone, all dead, and there is nobody to take their place. So, what is it about these poets that makes them so important, and what sets them out from the other ordinary citizens? Well, once again, Aristophanes says it best:

AESCHYLUS: That is the kind of thing a poet should go for. You see, from the very earliest times the really great poet has been the one who had a useful lesson to teach. Orpheus gave us the mysteries and taught people that it was wrong to kill; Musaeus showed us how to cure diseases and prophesied the future; Hesiod explained about agriculture and the seasons for ploughing and harvest. And why is Homer himself held in such high esteem, if not for the valuable military instruction embodied in his work? Organisation, training, equipment, it's all there. (Page 194)

So, as we can see the idea is that the poet is the teacher of many things, like a jack of all trades. It reminds me a bit of the role of the Bard in Dungeons and Dragons: the one who can do everything, but not all that well. Granted, in those days, pretty much everybody wrote poetically, and it is our understanding that it was Herodotus that first wrote in prose (though I would heavily dispute this because there are a lot of writings that we don't have, and if we look away from the Greek world we discover that the authors of the Bible were writing in prose long before the Greeks). I also wonder if at this time the role of the poet was being replaced by the philosopher. After Aristophanes we have only a handful of plays, but a bucketload of Plato and Aristotle (among others). However, that again is not strictly true since the philosophers were performing their roles as far back as Thales. However, philosophy changed from being a primitive form of scientific exploration to an exposition of morality. This is what philosophy has become these days, a discussion and exploration of morality.

I want to finish off with a few comments on a number of the lighter aspects of the play. We note that slaves seem to play a role in many of Aristophanes' plays as the butt of many of the jokes. It is almost as if slaves are viewed comically, and the fall guy for many of the pranks. It is not strictly true since Dionysius gets his fare share of beatings in this play as well, but it is interesting to see the view of slaves from an Athenian point of view.

There are also some quite humorous anecdotes in this play as well. The first person Dionysius visits is Heracles, namely because Heracles has been to, and returned from, the underworld. However, the only advice that Heracles has for Dionysius is that if he wants to go to Hades then the quickest way there is to kill himself. It is amusing because we are aware that people would go into and come back from Hades in legend, Odysseus did so, as well as Heracles, however Heracles' suggestions are not what we expect. The other amusing part is when Euripides and Aeschylus are competing against each other for who the better poet is. From this play it is suggested that Euripides could have been quite an arrogant person, putting a lot of value in his own works, and considering them to be more literally significant than the works of Aeschylus. It turns out that we have more of Euripides' plays than we do of Aeschylus. However, Aeschylus goes to show that he can pretty much demolish all of Euripides' prologues through the use of the phrase 'lost his bottle of oil'. I

can almost imagine the entire audience breaking out in laughter at this, namely because we would do the same thing to our own filmmakers and playwrights (such as the Star Trek drinking game, where we skull a glass of beer whenever Captain Picard says 'make it so').

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