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**Plato's *Ion* and Aristophanes' *Frogs* in
the context of contemporary literary
debates**

1. Plato and Comedy

a) Performances of Plato's dialogues

ὅς ὑπὸ πλούτου καὶ τρυφῆς τοὺς τοῦ
θαυμασιωτάτου Πλάτωνος διαλόγους
ἠνάγκαζεν ἐκμανθάνοντας τοὺς μαγείρους
φέροντάς τε τὰς λοπάδας ἅμα λέγειν « Εἷς,
δύο, τρεῖς· ὁ δὲ δὴ τέταρτος ἡμῖν, ὦ φίλε
Τίμαιε, ποῦ τῶν χθῆς μὲν δαιτυμόνων, τὰ νῦν δ'
ἔστιάτορων; » Ἔπειτ' ἄλλος ἀπεκρίνατο
« Ἀσθένειά τις αὐτῷ ξυνέπεσεν, ὦ
Σώκρατες. » Διεξήρχοντό τε τοῦ διαλόγου τὰ
πολλὰ τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον. (Ath. 381f)

"He, puffed up with wealth and luxury, used to
compel the cooks to learn the dialogues of the
most admirable Plato, and, as they brought in the
dishes, to say: 'One, two, three; but where, my
dear Timaeus, is he who was the fourth among
our guests of yesterday, who to-day are our
hosts?' Then another answered: 'Some illness has
fallen upon him, Socrates.' And so the slaves
would go through with most of the dialogue in this
manner." (trans. Burton Gulick)

b) Plato's dialogues and Aristophanes

ἦσαν δέ τινες καὶ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἐν τῷ χορῷ
(Pl. *Prot.* 315b)

2. *Ion* and *The Frogs*

a) Aristophanes lambasting Socrates

χαρίεν οὖν μὴ Σωκράτει / παρακαθήμενον
λαλεῖν, / ἀποβαλόντα μουσικὴν / τὰ τε
μέγιστα παραλιπόντα / τῆς τραγωδικῆς
τέχνης. (Ar. *Ran.* 1491-1495)
Cf. also: Ar. *Nub*; Av. 1280-1283; PCG fr. 392

b) Pompous greetings

τὸν Ἴωνα χαίρειν (Pl. *Ion* 530a)

ὦ πολυτίμητ' Αἰσχύλε (Ar. *Ran.* 851)

c) Euripides and the Magnesian Stone

ὥσπερ ἐν τῇ λίθῳ ἦν Εὐριπίδης μὲν Μαγνητῶν
ὠνόμασεν (Pl. *Ion* 533d)

ὥσπερ αἱ βάρκχαι ἀρύονται ἐκ τῶν ποταμῶν
μέλι καὶ γάλα κατεχόμεναι (Pl. *Ion* 534a)

ὄσαις δὲ λευκοῦ πάματος πόθος παρῆν, /
ἄκροισι δακτύλοισι διαμῶσαι χθόνα /
γάλακτος ἔσμούςς εἶχον: ἐκ δὲ κισσίνων /
θύρσων γλυκεῖαι μέλιτος ἔσταζον ῥοαί. (Eur.
Bacch. 709-712)

d) Incorrect citations

ἡ δὲ μολυβδαῖνη ἰκέλη ἐς βυσσὸν ἴκανε, / ἢ τε
κατ' ἀγραύλοιο βοὸς κέρας ἐμμεμανῖα /
ἔρχεται ὠμηστῆσι μετ' ἰχθύσι πῆμα φέρουσα.
(Pl. *Ion* 538d)

ἡ δὲ μολυβδαῖνη ἰκέλη ἐς βυσσὸν ὄρουσεν, / ἢ
τε κατ' ἀγραύλοιο βοὸς κέρας ἐμβεβανῖα /
ἔρχεται ὠμηστῆσιν ἐπ' ἰχθύσι κῆρα φέρουσα.
(ω 80-82)

γλῶτταν δ' ἐπιορκήσασαν ἰδίᾳ τῆς φρενός (Ar.
Ran. 101)

ἡ γλῶσσ' ὁμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος (Eur.
Hipp. 612)

3. Literary Debate

a) Divine inspiration?

Μουσᾶων θεράπων (Hes. *Theog* 100)
μαντεύεο, Μοῖσα, προφατεύσω δ' ἐγώ (Pind.
fr.150)
φύσις θεαζούσα (Democritus, DK fr. 21)

a1) Aeschylus

Δήμητερ ἢ θρέψασα τὴν ἐμὴν φρένα, / εἶναι με
τῶν σῶν ἄξιον μυστηρίων (Ar. *Ran.*
886-887)

"Demeter, who nourished my mind, may I be
worthy of your. Mysteries" (trans. Henderson)

μανίας ὑπὸ δεινῆς (Ar. *Ran.* 816)

a2) Euripides

αἰθὴρ ἐμὸν βόσκημα καὶ γλῶσσης στρόφιγξ
καὶ ξύνεσι καὶ μυκτῆρες ὀσφραντήριοι, ὀρθῶς μ'
ἐλέγχειν ὧν ἂν ἄπτωμαι λόγων (Ar. *Ran.*
892-894)

"Sky, my nourisher, and Pivot of Tongue, and
Smarts, and Keen Nostrils, may I correctly refute
any arguments I get hold of" (trans. Henderson)

στοματουργὸς ἐπῶν βασανίστρια (Ar. *Ran.*
826)

b) Is poetry a τέχνη?

κρείττων γὰρ εἶναι φημί τούτου τὴν τέχνην.
(Ar. *Ran.* 831)

ὦ Κρητικὰς μὲν συλλέγων μονωδίας, / γάμους
δ' ἀνοσίους ἐσφέρων ἐς τὴν τέχνην. (Ar. *Ran.*
849-850)

ἴτε δευρὸ νυν εἶπερ γε δεῖ καὶ τοῦτό με /
ἀνδρῶν ποιητῶν τυροπωλῆσαι τέχνην. (Ar.
Ran. 1368-1369)

νόμος τις ἐνθάδ' ἐστὶ κείμενος / ἀπὸ τῶν
τεχνῶν ὅσαι μεγάλαι καὶ δεξιαί... (Ar. *Ran.*
761-762)

c) Evaluation of poetry

τὸν γὰρ ράψωδὸν ἐρμηνέα δεῖ τοῦ ποιητοῦ
τῆς διανοίας γίγνεσθαι τοῖς ἀκούουσι τοῦτο δὲ
καλῶς ποιεῖν μὴ γινώσκοντα ὅτι λέγει ὁ
ποιητὴς ἀδύνατον. (Pl. *Ion* 530c)

"For a rhapsode ought to make himself an
interpreter of the poet's thought to his audience;

and to do this properly without knowing what the
poet means is impossible." (trans. Lamb)

οἰκεία πράγματ' εἰσάγων, οἷς χρώμεθ', οἷς
ξύνεσμεν, / ἐξ ὧν γ' ἂν ἐξηλεγχόμην
ξυνειδότες γὰρ οὔτοι / ἤλεγχον ἂν μου τὴν
τέχνην (Ar. *Ran.* 959-861)

"-by staging everyday scenes, things we're used to,
things that we live with, things that I wouldn't
have got away with falsifying, because these
spectators knew them as well as I" (trans.
Henderson)

Translations cited

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