INTERACTION IN THE *SYMPOSION*: AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH TO ATTIC BLACK-FIGURED EYE CUPS

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Archaic Greek ceramic kylixes with painted eye motifs are commonly known as eye cups, and date to 535-500 BCE. Due to the strikingly noticeable eye motifs on their outer surfaces, these cups are traditionally analyzed almost exclusively by interpreting their painted imagery. Such an approach does not, however, yield a complete understanding of the ways these objects functioned, appeared, and influenced the all-male drinking parties of the Archaic Greek symposion. This paper presents a new evaluation of eye cups by utilizing an experiential approach to reconstruct ancient experiences with these objects. Utilizing viewer response theory, affect theory, and object agency theory, three case studies focusing on the interactions between the ancient user and object are explored. The first eye cup features naval imagery on the exterior and a Gorgon on the interior; in this case, the eye cup compelled the user to take on a heroic role to lead in a naval battle and also conquer the Gorgon. The second eye cup features various mythological figures on the exterior with also a Gorgon on the interior. In this case study, the represented figures are generic mythological beings and allow the viewer(s) an open interpretation so that the cup could become an active participant in performance by possessing the characteristics of a theatrical mask. The eye cup analyzed in the final case study references sexual connotations on the exterior, with a plain interior. Creating a complete reconstruction of the interaction in the third case study finds a cyclical connection between object and the original context, the symposion, as well as creating levels of power based on the object one drank from. Through this experiential approach, I have found that eye cups were multi-functional contributors to the ancient Greek symposion and these ancient interactions are still accessible to modern scholars.
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INTRODUCTION

Almost all Attic cups created between 530-510 BCE were eye cups.¹ This popular style of drinking vessel was produced for use within the *symposion* for a fairly short period of time, between 535-500 BCE.² These were referred to as “eye cups” due to the painted depiction of two sets of eyes on the exteriors. This cup offers a unique insight into ancient Greek people due to the interactive and sociable qualities that this movement in pottery contained.

In this thesis, an examination will be made of the interactions that took place within the Archaic Greek *symposion* with specific attention to the eye cup and the engagement between the user of the cup and the collective group. It will be demonstrated how these interactions were multifaceted, consisting both between the Greek man and the object, outwardly through the physicality of the object in conjunction with the user’s corporeal body, and finally between the object and other people in the room. In doing so, it will be established how three examples of eye cups functioned as objects of agency, and how they affected the viewer(s). I argue that through these examples, it will be shown that eye cups had the capability to induce action through their own inherent agency.

In order to understand the object within the ancient context, first will be provided a concise background on the eye cup shape in Greek art history and also presented a description of the setting in which these objects were originally used. Next, previous scholarship on Greek eye cups will be highlighted. I advise a look beyond the traditional mode of analyses which was focused on purely representational qualities and instead suggest a more experiential approach that focuses on the interaction. These will be analyzed utilizing two interconnected theoretical approaches: viewer response theory and object agency and affect. In my methodology section, I

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will establish how useful viewer response theory can be to reconstruct an ancient interaction with an object, especially when few documented sources remain. Also expanding upon object agency and affect theories, it will be illustrated how these theories support one another and how they will be applicable to ancient Greek eye cups.

In the first of three case studies, all focusing on Archaic eye cups, a nautical scene is featured on the exterior with a shocking, even horrifying interior. In this case, with a focus on viewer response, a demonstration will be made of how the object invited the user to envision one’s self within the painted scene. In the second case study, which featured a plethora of mythological beings depicted on both the interior and exterior, emphasis will be put mainly on object agency. Through this approach, I will demonstrate how the object compelled the user to take both physical and mental control over the painted features. In the third and final case study, featuring two profile heads as the main component, viewer response theory and object agency will be combined in order to create a complete reconstruction of the interaction between the art object and ancient Greek user. A focus will be placed on the power relationships developed within the symposion and how the interaction with the eye cup constructed that power. Through these three case studies, I will demonstrate how eye cups actively contributed to the Greek symposion.
I. CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

Eye cups were an integral part of the sixth century BCE Greek symposion. Three major regions produced eye cups: Attica, Chalcis, and East Greece, the latter of which was known for eye-bowls. This paper will be focusing solely on eye cups from Attica. The term “eye cup” is a modern one and will be used throughout this paper to refer to the kylixes that contain painted images of eyes on the exterior surface. It remains unclear as to how the ancient Greeks referred to these objects. According to Toby Schrieber’s definition, “The kylix is a broad, shallow drinking cup with a stemmed or, rarely, stemless foot.” Kylixes have two adjacent handles connected to the cup, which slant upwards and lay horizontally. Eye cups are generally decorated on both the interior and exterior surfaces. It is believed that the kylix was the most popular drinking vessel in ancient Greece, though many other shapes of vessels were available.6 While several different styles and types of kylixes existed, this paper will focus on Type A kylixes, a class of eye cups defined by John Beazley as larger, lipless bowls, resting on a shorter stem.7 Type A was not the only ancient Greek vessel that featured painted eyes, though it was one of the more common shapes.8

While many in the field refer to pottery decoration as pottery painting, it was not actually paint that was applied to the surface. Also in contrast to modern ceramics that use glazes, ancient Greek pots were covered with liquid clay that changed color during the heating process.9

Applied to the surface of the vessel while it was still leather-hard, the liquid clay contained

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4 Attica was a geographical region in Greece that included Athens and the surrounding lands.
8 Type B kylixes are usually red-figured; Type C generally do not have stems; Jeanne Aline Jordan, “Attic black-figured eye-cups,” (PhD diss., New York University 1988), ix.
Depending on the nature of the firing of the vessel, the applied liquid clay turned either red or black. Additional color options at this time were white and also a reddish-purple.

The key component to these cups was the set of eyes. Almost all eye cups included two nearly identical sets of eyes on opposite sides of the exterior of the bowl. In having two sets, no matter which side of the cup one drank from, the eye motif was visible to observers. Eyes were generally drawn with one to four concentric circles colored in with white, red, and/or black.11 Attica vases had two distinct styles of eyes and they generally referred to two genders: male or female.12 Gloria Ferrari notes that the almond shaped eye, in combination with human or horse ears, refers to a female nymph and is thus considered the “female eye.”13 The “male eye” was much more common in Attica and can be determined by the pointed outer angle and prominent inner tear glands, given a gendered male term in reference to the god Dionysus or a male satyr.14

Other than eyes, the most common decorations of Type A cups were facial features consisting of ears, nose, eyebrows, and lips. Some features were painted on the exterior surface; others utilized the features of the cup as implied facial features, such as the rim of the base to represent a mouth. In other cases, a figure occupied the space between the eyes, rather than the nose and lips. Figures also appeared under and around the handles, conforming to the shape as if the handles were obstacles in their pictorial world.

The interior spaces of eye cups provided equally important areas to analyze in relation to the exterior decoration. Typically, one of three different designs appeared on the inside: (1) a solid color background with a series of rings in the center, (2) an image of a Gorgon, or (3) a

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10 Ibid., 306.
12 This is a modern referral, not an ancient one.
13 Ferrari, “Eye-Cup.” 11.
14 Ibid.
complete tondo painting. In the first example, the interior was very simple with either one or two rings centered in the middle, leaving the focus on the exterior decorations (Figure 25).\textsuperscript{15}

In the second example, the interior had an image of a Gorgon placed in the center (Figure 12). In Greek mythology, the Gorgons were sisters: Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa.\textsuperscript{16} They all had snakes in place of hair and could petrify anyone into stone who gazed into their eyes.\textsuperscript{17} Due to numerous unlabeled images of Gorgons on eye cups, scholars typically refer to them as images of a Gorgon, rather than by a specific name of one of the three sisters. Images of the Gorgon were inscribed on numerous surfaces, such as war shields, ships, and architecture, throughout Greece since the early 7\textsuperscript{th} century BCE.\textsuperscript{18} Scholars associated apotropaic meaning with the images of the Gorgon, and they sometimes refer to it as a “terror mask.”\textsuperscript{19} A terror mask was an apotropaic amulet that was so visually terrifying that it could avert evil.\textsuperscript{20} While Gorgons contained on eye cups did not function in precisely the same manner, a similarity in reaction will be found as I analyze two examples in sections IV and V of this thesis.

The third type of interior decoration on eye cups was a full tondo painting (Figure 1). A tondo is the name for a painting that consists of an image occupying the entire surface in a circular format and is found throughout many artistic styles and time periods, particularly during the European Renaissance.\textsuperscript{21} The subjects of the full interior paintings were diverse among eye cups, ranging from scenes of several warriors, conjoined Gorgons, or images of Dionysus.\textsuperscript{22} These full tondo paintings appeared infrequently, perhaps due to the difficulty in executing a circular composition.

\textsuperscript{15} Robert Manuel Cook. \textit{Greek Painted Pottery}. (London, Methuen, 1966), 85.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Rainer Mack, “Facing Down Medusa (An Aetiology of the Gaze).” \textit{Art History} 25, no. 5 (November, 2002), 572.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Also known as a \textsl{baskanion}. Ibid.
While eye cup decoration remains a crucial element to be analyzed, most eye cups functioned as drinking vessels within the *symposion* and, thus, it is equally significant to analyze the setting as well. A kylix was a *symposion* vessel, though some were found in Etruscan tombs likely due to trade or copying of the style. A *symposion*, literally translated as “drinking together,” refers to a collective party for men that offered a variety of entertainment that could be sexual, political, poetic, performative, or artistic in nature.\(^23\) Though women were allowed in the highly ritualized space as hired entertainment, servers, or sexual companions, the regular participants (*symposiasts*) were all men. It is for this reason that men were the primary (and likely only) users of eye cups. Thus, throughout this paper, I will be referring to the user of the eye cup in gender specific male pronouns.

In addition to the entertainers, symposium activities included political discussions, poetry readings, throwing-target games using wine remnants called *kottabos*, as well as discussions of mythology inspired by pottery paintings in the room.\(^24\) Many of these activities had elements of competition and engagement associated with them, with each man trying to out-smart the previous competitor (or performer) in the best poetry reading, or who could remember the myth most accurately. These friendly competitions had an undertone of power and control to them, for each man brought with him the same level of competition found in athletics, politics, and war.

The *symposion* took place in a designated space of the house known as the *andrón*, literally meaning the “men’s room”.\(^25\) Robert Garland writes that, “[This room] can be identified in the archeological record by its off-center doorway and rectangular shape, which enabled the room to accommodate couches that were arranged alongside one another and set against the

walls.” In this way, almost every man was able to gaze upon all other guests as they drank and ate. A level of hierarchy existed in this seating, with the highest power (host of the party or his honored guest) seated on the couch that did not have any other man’s feet facing him. The lowest level seat which had the worst view of the rest of the room and required that its occupant crane his neck to see properly was reserved for any newcomers or younger men. The couches were typically made of wood or stone and allowed the men to recline, rather than sit up throughout the duration of the night. This type of seating allowed for convenient relaxation, for the more wine one drank, the further they could recline in reaction to the alcohol. Two people could be accommodated on one couch, as seen in Figure 2 on the far right where one male and one female share a single couch, though a person could also sit alone.

Within this original setting, eye cups would have only been one component of the entire symposion vase set. The ancient Greeks almost always mixed wine with water to dilute it; as a result, specific vases held the mixed and unmixed wine, the water, the ladle to scoop the wine, as well as the individual drinking cups for each guest. While the amount of total pottery in one andrôn would have been vast, specific attention would have been paid by the symposiasts to both the decoration and shape of eye cups. This was mainly due to the fact that these vessels were held directly in front of the user for the majority of the event. Also, paying close attention to the pottery painting provided a major activity and a way to show off one’s education in the Greek symposion.

Typically in the symposion, a man held the eye cup by the base or stem whenever he was not actively drinking from it. In order to drink from such a large container, both hands were

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26 Ibid.
required to hold onto each handle to tip it up to the mouth. Keeping wine in the cup would have been fairly difficult, due to the wide and shallow shape of the bowl. This constant struggle would only get worse throughout the course of the evening, as the effects of alcohol would have started to impair balance and perceptions of depth.

Understanding the Greek symposion context is of crucial importance in analyzing the relationship between the original user and ancient eye cups. It is important to remember that eye cups did not sit in a vacuum-like space like they do now — behind museum glass in temperature-controlled boxes. Rather, the cups were moved and cradled by men while functioning as containers for wine. This distinction will remain a key element in discovering the experiential qualities of eye cups as they are reanalyzed through the lenses of viewer response, affect, and object agency. This multidimensional approach will be explicated in more detail in the methodology section, but first I must survey the research of scholars that discuss eye cups.

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II. PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

There has been much scholarship on eye cups throughout the past few decades. Several scholars have debated various interpretations of their visual appearance, their possible meanings, as well as more complex analyses of the objects. Beginning with explanations by scholars such as John Davidson Beazley and Robert Manuel Cook, to more contemporary scholars like Guy Hedreen and Richard Neer, this chapter will highlight the previous research on eye cups.

While not the first scholar of Greek vases, J. D. Beazley was the first to classify many ancient vases and ancient artists that were previously uncategorized and unnamed in the 1950s. Many of the artist’s “names,” such as the Berlin Painter, were coined by Beazley himself based upon style characteristics, and many of these names are still referenced today. Because of his revolutionary work, Beazley’s research is still recognized as the standard. While his contribution to scholarship was vast, Beazley did not devote much attention to the short-lived eye cup motif in his writings. In his 1951 text, *The Development of Attic Black-Figure*, Beazley defined the eye cup shape as type A, which replaced the Little Master Cup in popularity around 530 BCE.\(^{30}\) He also stated that black-figure eye cups were not as successful in decoration as the later red-figured cups of Attica.\(^{31}\) I believe that his favoritism towards the later style eye cups is a result of the standardization of many of the earlier models. Many black-figure eye cups look extremely similar to one another, while the red-figure cups have much more variation in style and decoration. I disagree with Beazley and believe that the black-figure cups are more successful than the later because of this consistent style. Many examples exist of the red-figure cups that do not even resemble eye cups as the eyes often appear in awkward locations or they blend in with the other shapes. Black-figured cups generally have similar motifs and overall compositions. As

\(^{30}\) Beazley, *The Development of Attic Black-Figure*, 62.

\(^{31}\) Beazley does not give detailed reasoning behind the success of each style.
a result of this similarity, it becomes easier to make more generalized statements about this class of objects without too many exceptions.

The classical scholar Robert Manuel Cook described the eye cup as a shallower bowl with a shorter, thicker stem in his text *Greek Painted Pottery.* Cook gives credit to artists in Attica for the invention of the eye cup, though he does note a group of East Greek cups decorated with eyes in the early sixth century. Giving another possible origin to the eye motif, Cook writes that “… Greek ships were often painted with great eyes, as were other things that had to find their way home.” While Cook does not make a detailed connection between eye cups and early Greek ships, I.K. Raubitschek agreed with this explanation and made the association more clear. Raubitschek illustrated his case through an example of a cup by Archaic Greek artist Exekias which includes the decoration of a ship on the interior surface (Figure 1). The eyes on the exterior of the cup may have mimicked the eyes on the exterior of the ship to aid in navigation. This is a useful starting point from which I will develop applications of agency theory to eye cups. A two-dimensional painting having the ability to “see” is the beginning of a much larger discussion in later scholarship and one that the argumentation of this thesis builds upon.

Gloria Ferrari greatly advanced the methodology of eye cups with her 1986 article, “Eye-Cup.” She mentioned the hypothesis first brought up by A. Furtwangler that suggested a connection between the Egyptian Eye of Horus, or Udjat-eye, with the motif found on eye cups. Ferrari noted that this hypothesis was “the most easily dismissed” due to the differences

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32 The main predecessor being the Little Master cup; Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery,* 84.
33 Ibid., 85.
35 Ferrari, “Eye-Cup,” 11 fn. 25.
in eye shape. Instead what Ferrari argued for was a connection to drama: “A case is made here for the interpretation of the eyes as masks, although not generic masks nor the mask-idol of Dionysus, but rather dramatic masks of different characters, most often silens [or satyrs].” She backed up her claim by analyzing the different shapes of eyes found on these cups, both “male” and “female” eyes.

According to Ferrari, the three variants of eye cups are: (1) those made in Attica, which are the most abundant and the longest produced, (2) Chalcidian (meaning from Chalcis), and (3) East Greek eye-bowls. The Attic and Chalcidian eye cups remain the most connected, with one possibly deriving from the other, though the directionality and details of this relationship are unknown. By examining Chalcidian vases, which most often include variations in eyes and ears, Ferrari concluded that depicted facial elements were intended to make up a face or mask of a silen, nymph, or Dionysus himself. She believes that Attic eye cups have similar connections to the Dionysiac figures and cult of drama. Her particular contribution to eye cup discourse was this connection to theater and theatrical masks, which was warranted by the fact that the invention of theater occurred around the same time as the introduction of eye cups. In common with previous scholars, Ferrari agreed that the eyes can be viewed as apotropaic. However, she believed that this only exists in connection to masks. I agree with Ferrari that masks can be apotropaic, but I also believe that the eye alone can have this function without the mask.

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36 This is in regards to the “male” vs. “female” eye shape; Ibid., 11.
38 Ferrari, “Eye-Cup,” 12.
39 Ibid., 18.
40 Ibid., 19.
41 Ibid., 20.
42 There are many instances throughout history in which eyes can avert evil without a mask, such as the ‘evil eye’ medallion.
Jeane Aline Jordan provided perhaps the most in-depth study of eye cups in 1988 with her dissertation *Attic Black-Figured Eye-Cups*. Jordan highlighted the significance of these objects by stating that “nearly all Attic cups [produced] between 530 and 510 B.C. are eye-cups and the popularity they enjoyed attests to their importance.”\(^4^3\) Jordan was thorough and noted much of the same previous interpretations and possible meanings of the eyes as was mentioned above by her contemporaries. She did not argue for one being more accurate than the other, nor did she offer any personal interpretations or opinions.

Jordan included in her analysis the views of another scholar, Michael M. Eisman, who suggested that the eyes merely constituted a form of decoration and that “no particular symbolic interpretation is warranted.”\(^4^4\) Near the end of the sixth century BCE the ornamentation was less defined on eye cups as already noted, particularly in the red-figure style. I agree with Eisman in that many later eye cup artists included eyes merely as a form of embellishment. I posit that the large majority of eye cups were meant to represent something more than just ornamentation, especially with the black-figure group.

Jordan also mentioned the connection between eyes and early Greek ships. Eyes painted onto ships first appeared on pottery in the eighth century BCE; these eyes referred to actual ships.\(^4^5\) Scholars have drawn a connection here with Dionysus and ships at sea, since as Jordan points out, “The god’s arrival from the sea was celebrated in the Anthesteria, a spring festival in Athens, where part of the ceremony involved a procession in which Dionysus’ ship was either carried or rolled on wheels.”\(^4^6\) Eye cups emulate the shape of a wheel, which emphasize a notion of transportation. In fact, one of the most famous and earliest Attic eye cups made by Exekias

\(^4^6\) Ibid., 37.
features Dionysus riding a ship through sea (Figure 1). In total, thirteen eye cups feature ships, indicating that there may be a symbolic or literal connection between the two.47 Jordan believes that this connection goes back much further in time, noting that the poet Homer referred to the sea as dark wine. As one drank the wine held within the cup, one was mentally transported through the wine like a boat at sea (or on wheels during the spring festival) would be physically transported.

The well known classical scholar, John Boardman, approached eye cups in the 1970s in the same way as many earlier scholars.48 More recently he has returned to the topic in his The History of Greek Vases. He was famously known for his description and image of the eye cup as a mask covering the user’s entire face in a way that the handles appear to be ears, while the base represents a mouth, and the eyes complete the visage (Figure 3).49 Though the user may have been unaware of this visual illusion, all others in the room would become keenly responsive, especially under the influence of wine. Richard Neer agreed with the interpretation of the eye cup as a mask, even stated that the user became an actor when drinking from it.50 In this way, a constant change in identity occurred as the user lifted the cup and set it down. Neer noted that there was “…a playful uncertainty as to just who is who and what is what.”51 I agree with both Boardman and Neer in that the effects from drinking from an eye cup were disorienting as one transformed before others.

One of the more theoretical approaches to interpreting eye cups comes from Guy Hedreen in his “Involved Spectatorship in Archaic Greek Art.” In this, Hedreen argued against many previous scholars on the mask function of the eye cup. Instead, he agreed with Rainer

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47 Ibid., 36 fn. 35.
48 John Boardman, Athenian Black Figure Vases. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
49 Boardman, The History of Greek Vases, 277.
50 Neer, Style and Politics, 42.
51 Ibid.
Mack in developing a new visual narrative where the viewer of the cup became a part of the mythical world as a Gorgon, silen, or nymph. He based this claim on formal analyses and interpretations of poetry performed during the *symposion*. Based on this evidence, he argued that the eyes on eye cups gazed outside of the two-dimensional surface of the vase and actively searched for something or someone to look at. Due to the typical company associated with Dionysian cults, he has argued that the eyes are most likely looking for another silen, nymph, or Dionysus himself. This in turn encouraged the viewer of the eye cup to adapt his response, “as if they were the person or type of figure that a silen, nymph, Dionysus, or Medusa would expect to see in the space before them.” In this way and according to his theory, the viewer became part of the overall scene and part of the mythology. I strongly agree with Hedreen’s theory of interaction between eye cup and participant(s), however I believe there exists a better way to approach the eye motif without assigning specific mythological characters to each contributor.

Although specific details about eye cup decoration have been debated, it has generally been agreed upon that the eyes on type A cups did not derive from Egyptian decorations of the Udjat eye; just as it is agreed upon that the Gorgon and Dionysus have a very significant connection to this motif. Scholars commonly dispute whether or not these cups represented theatrical masks and, more importantly, question whose face was portrayed on the exterior. Rather than trying to advocate for one suggestion over another, and because we lack access to the artist’s original intentions, I have found it more productive to move away from this method and toward a much more experiential approach. Shifting the focus from meaning to interaction and affect will provide deeper understanding of these unique art objects.

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53 Ibid., 218.
54 Ibid., 231.
55 Ibid., 232.
III. METHODOLOGY

Due to the lack of ancient sources, the specific intended meanings of decoration on eye cups may never be determined. Instead, I find it much more useful to focus on the experiential qualities of the object because a much clearer relationship can be drawn through interaction. Greek cups were objects that functioned, and in order to function they required use through the corporeal body. Since little has changed over the course of 2,500 years in terms of how the human body senses, feels, and relates to material culture, at a certain level the modern body is able to interpret how the ancient person experienced eye cups as well.\(^{56}\) This is helpful for the purpose of this paper in order to gain a greater understanding of eye cups that goes beyond the iconographical meaning. In this chapter, I will lay out my methodology for approaching specific eye cups throughout the remainder of this thesis.

Throughout my analysis, I will draw upon multiple approaches. Mark Stansbury-O’Donnell similarly advocates a multi-theoretical approach in his analysis of other ancient Greek artworks.\(^{57}\) He has stated that, “reaching a similar conclusion via multiple approaches provides a stronger argument that our interpretation has some validity and some chance for bridging the gap between the ancient experience of art and our own.”\(^{58}\) I will utilize two main approaches: (1) viewer response theory, and (2) agency and affect. I find that these two approaches work very well together in application, as each builds off the other as a way to create a deeper and more thorough analysis of eye cups.

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56 Plato wrote about the body as a medium and as a combination of different sensory modes, which has continued to influence modern thought. Richard Shusterman writes, “These ancient lines of critique, adopted by Neoplatonism and integrated into Christian theology and modern philosophical idealism, have waxed enormously influential in our culture, as has another Platonic argument to denigrate and alienate the body as instrument.” Shusterman, Richard. Body Consciousness: a Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 5.


58 Ibid.
Viewer response theory contributes to my overall analysis of eye cups by providing an account for the ancient viewer’s aesthetic experience. In this theory, the way one interacts with an art object can be “read” and tracked. This reading of one’s experience follows the personal engagement with the object.\(^5^9\) Since each viewer may identify and engage with an artwork in different ways, there can be multiple readings of one object and all can still be valid.\(^6^0\) Though the form and ornamentation will remain unchanged for each viewer, it is the experience that sets them apart. Hans Robert Jauss, one of the first writers of aesthetic reception, wrote on this act as, “… [The object’s] potential of meaning only becomes progressively visible and definable in the subsequent changes of aesthetic experience…”\(^6^1\) Thus, it is the ever-changing and personal experiences that each person has that further the meaning of the art object.

Rather than focusing solely on specific identifications of the painted image, as many scholars have done, I will instead focus on what the art does – the affect on the users and viewers – and how the interaction between eye cup and user/audience effected emotions, bodies, and thoughts. This approach allows us to go beyond standard analysis of iconography to investigate the experiences that an ancient Greek user would have when interacting with an eye cup. Affective reactions can be reconstructed to discover how one would react to holding the heavy vessel, drinking from the shallow bowl, how to deal with the intoxicating effects of alcohol, as well as the response to looking at a set of eyes. There are several things that are known about the interactions between ancient objects and their users, as well as about ancient Greek thoughts on aesthetics and vision that can help guide a contemporary understanding.

\(^5^9\) Ibid., 101-102.
\(^6^0\) Ibid.
\(^6^1\) Though initially applied towards literary analysis, a similar approach can be made for art; Hans Robert Jauss, Timothy Bahti, and Paul De Man. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 64.
Viewing, for the ancient Greeks, was an active and participatory process. One theory of vision declared that sight was a form of touch; another held that “there were rays that emanated from the eye itself to enable vision.” The Greek belief was that what one saw could enter the soul and affect behavior and emotion, rendering each observation unique. Engagement with the subject matter was also common, again emphasizing the active viewing process. By keeping all of this in mind and by utilizing the known information of the symposion, mythology, and art, an ancient response can be reconstructed. While the responses that I will create in this thesis are not the only possible responses, they are examples based upon ancient Greek thought, modes of viewing, as well as the setting.

The second approach to eye cups that this paper will follow is agency theory, or the exploration of an object’s ability to cause action. First developed by Alfred Gell in his posthumous text from 1998 as an anthropological theory, Gell utilized maps to follow an object’s agency. For the purpose of this paper, I am not as interested in mapping out agency’s path and source as much as I am focusing purely on the notion that art objects have agency. Whitney Davis has written a critique of Gell’s work and has argued that his model risks “abducting” the art history from art, meaning that the historical aspects of the object may be neglected and this risks losing the agency as well. Davis argues against Gell in the sense that “agency sticks to the artifact itself,” and the agency can never be separated from the object. I agree with Davis in this sense and will develop the ways in which agency can be found evident in three examples of eye cups, as well as by demonstrating what that agency does.

63 Ibid., 64
66 Ibid., 218.
Marian Feldman has also written on this theoretical approach and has stated, “…I am interested less in our terminology – whether we call it agency, affect, power, enchantment, or something else – and more in disentangling the specific means by which objects participate in and change social outcomes.” I agree with Feldman in that agency and affect theory are very closely related – they both argue towards art’s ability to cause action and impact the viewer.

Most theorists define affect theory in multiple ways, likely due to its diverse applicability. Affect is the experience and the notion that art can function, and in particular with my claim, art functioned as a participant in the symposion and influenced the thoughts and actions of those who came into contact with it. Simon O’Sullivan states, “…You cannot read affects, you can only experience them.” He, along with theorist Brian Massumi, also believes that affect relies on the human body to connect with it, perhaps both psychologically and physically.

It is necessary that the action associated with agency and affect is not confused with intentionality of the viewer. Feldman writes, “Cultural psychologists are demonstrating that much of what we might consider to be action or agency generated by our own intentions in fact derives from a vast field of stimuli that extends well beyond our individual body/mind.” For this thesis, I will not be able to determine the intentions of the original ancient Greek people – both the artists who created the work and the people who used the objects, and as Feldman suggested, conceivably the artist’s intentions may not matter. By moving beyond this, we can investigate the social and cultural implications of the object instead of focusing on the individual.

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68 Simon O’Sullivan, ”The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art Beyond Representation.” Angelaki: Journal Of The Theoretical Humanities 6, no. 3 (December 2001), 126.
I am able to discern the affective qualities of each eye cup through an analysis of perceived interactions, rather than rely on intentionality.

Ancient art can be difficult to study since there are many things that we do not know as sources and objects have been lost throughout the past two thousand (and more) years. Nevertheless, my approach gives scholarship a productive path forward. Through a multidimensional methodology involving viewer response, affect and agency, a new approach to eye cups will be utilized to further the understanding of these ancient objects. Individual objects will be analyzed using this approach as a tool to fill in the gap in scholarship of experiential relationships between eye cups and the ancient Greek men that used them. While all approaches could be utilized to analyze each object, I will focus mainly on viewer response for the first case, agency and affect for the second, and building upon both previous cases utilize a combination of all theories in the third case study to create a complete reconstruction of the interaction. This will allow for a more complex analysis of eye cups in my thesis. I will begin by analyzing an Attic eye cup in the next chapter to discover how the ancient viewer imagined himself within the scene painted on the surface and how he engaged and interacted with it.
IV. CASE STUDY 1: A HEROIC INTERACTION

In this chapter, I will focus primarily on viewer response and aesthetic reception theories as a way to develop a possible ancient reading. In conjunction with this reading of the cup, I will demonstrate how this object’s agency encouraged both private and communal interaction with the participants of the symposion.

The first case study presented in this thesis focuses on a terracotta eye cup from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figures 4 - 12). It dates from approximately 520 BCE. For the remainder of this paper I will refer to this object as Cup 56.171.36, based on its accession number. Though both artist and excavation information remain unknown for this object, it was thought to derive from Attica based upon its shape and decoration. The shape of the vessel closely relates to other black-figure eye cups with a very wide and shallow bowl, small handles attached to the bottom of the bowl that curve upwards a short distance, a short stem, and with a base about 1/3 the width of the bowl. The cup measures 9.5 cm tall, 28.8 cm in diameter (not including the handles), and 36.4 cm in total width.

The foot of this cup has what is known as a “Chalcidizing” shape: referencing the location with which this style was associated. Eye cups were produced in multiple locations throughout Greece in the Archaic period and those made in Chalcis are referred to today as Chalcidian eye cups. Sometimes Attic potters would borrow certain elements from the Chalcidian style and include it in their Attic creations, making a separate Attic style known as Chalcidizing. The eye cup being discussed in this chapter has a foot shaped in the same style as

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71 John Beazley, Attic Black-Figure Vase-painters. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 205, 14.
eye cups from Chalcis, which is concave rather than convex, while the remainder of the style and decoration is more strongly associated with Attica.74

While it is important to analyze all eye cups as one whole object, it was impossible for the ancient viewer to look at both the inner and outer surfaces simultaneously. For this reason, I will study each part separate from one another first, and later look at how the object as a whole functioned, including both inner and outer decorations.

Exterior

The exterior surface of Cup 56.171.36 will be analyzed first, since in the original setting of the symposion it was likely the user would notice this painted surface first. The interior was generally filled with wine in advance and handed out by a servant, blocking the view of the bottom surface until emptied by drinking the contents.75 The exterior was painted with four oared ships, two under each opposing handle (Figures 7-8). The ships rest on a black shape with a meandering line meant to represent the surface of the sea. A representation of ships on pottery was a fairly common motif, dating back to before the eighth century BCE.76 The Greeks had been familiar with ships for quite some time at this point in history, as they had utilized the oared warship as a key component for their military tactics.77 This was also the easiest form of long-distance travel for trading goods and was thus quite familiar to the common Greek person.78

Shown above the head and painted in red lies the bow compartment where the bow officer would normally stand; though not presented on this cup (Figure 9).79 The oarsmen also remain unseen on this ship as the ends of the oars enter inside the portholes to where the men

77 Ibid., 7.
78 Garland, Daily Life, 236.
79 Ibid., 92.
were typically located to row the oars. The oars on this ship point diagonally forward and penetrate the surface of the water.

Though the primary propulsion of Greek oared ships was created through rowing, most ships were also equipped with sails to help quicken the movement through the sea. All four boats on this eye cup have sails that appear to be catching the wind in divergent directions so that each boat appeared as if it actively traveled away from the handles of the cup. This connects further by the fact that the oars come out of each side of the boat in parallel alignment with one another, yet in an opposing line to that of the sails. This alignment mimics a boat in a forward motion as the oars dip past the surface of the water and are pulled through the water towards the back of the ship. In conjunction with the rocky surface of the water, this forward propulsion implies great movement and action. The movement in the ocean helps to provide an open invitation for the viewer to engage with the work. As in most narratives, either literary or visual, a level of anticipation usually develops in order to know what happens next. The ancient viewer explored this, sparked by the movement in the scene, and attempted to pull the narrative out from the painting in an effort to develop a complete story.

When gazing at the ships, the viewer noted the anthropomorphic bow of each ship, which portrayed an eye, ear, pointed mouth, jaw line, and a horn. This represented a ram’s head.80 This provided an example of what actual Greek ships looked like and many of the ram’s heads were sheathed in bronze and used as one of the main weapons in battle.81 Since the main intention of the bow consisted of battle, it implies that these boats were prepared for a certain battle. Yet, one of the requirements for battle, and what these boats lacked, was soldiers. The viewer would be keenly aware of the lack of people, since depictions of soldiered ships was a common practice.

80 Morrison and Williams, *Greek Oared Ships*, 7, 12.
81 Ibid., 339
and can be seen on multiple symposion pieces from this time and earlier. It was clear that these boats moved forward in the scene, but who manned them and who directed the oarsmen? The boats traveled in converging directions and an imminent crash awaited them unless guided to avoid each other. The anticipation of wanting to know the rest of the narrative became even stronger and the viewer looked further yet.

In the center between each handle, and on both sides of the cup, a warrior stands with his legs apart, holding a spear and a shield (Figures 10-11). One warrior was faced forward and the other peered behind. The armor of both warriors remains consistent with that of a Homeric warrior and perhaps in the context of the Trojan War. That armor was “comprised of greaves (leg guards), a corselet, and a helmet with a crest of horsehair… Heroes fought mainly with a pair of throwing spears or a single thrusting spear.” The two very similar warriors on Cup 56.171.36 also appear to be wearing greaves and a crested helmet, one shaded in black and the other red.

The warriors on this eye cup cannot be precisely identified as Homeric, nor can they be identified as particular people as they lack labels or precise attributes. I argue that ancient viewers would perceive them as Homeric since heroes from this mythology such as Achilles and Perseus were what most Greek men admired and hoped to emulate. Further, the style of armor and the view of the solitary hero about to duel were more congruent to a Homeric hero versus a

82 Ibid., 73-117.
83 Homeric meaning that it is in reference to the epics the Iliad and the Odyssey by Homer. For more information on these poetic works from the Archaic period, see Jonathan M. Hall, A History of the Archaic Greek World. (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub, 2007): 24-27.
84 Garland, Daily Life, 238.
85 Stansbury-O’Donnell writes about the construction of male identity and how an ancient Greek man would “strive to assume aspects of the warrior before him [in the painted scene]. For a man as viewer or group member, the gaze of the youthful spectators toward the adult ideal is desirable as a model for the glance of the youth in the symposion toward themselves. To the degree that they can command the attention of the youth in the group, either through their physical presence or their social standing, they can see themselves in a heroic light as elite members of the community.” Stansbury-O’Donnell, Vase Painting, Gender, 79. For a more specific reference to the ancient Greek male’s aspirations of heroism, see M. Gregory Kendrick, The Heroic Ideal: Western Archetypes from the Greeks to the Present, (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co, 2010): 5-8.
hoplite, an armored foot soldier.\textsuperscript{86} Depictions of an isolated figure did not become popular until the very end of the sixth century and early fifth century BCE, when red-figure pottery became more prominent.\textsuperscript{87} Prior to this, hoplites were almost never depicted in solitary scenes, but rather in groups of soldiers. Since this figure stands alone, I believe that he was a representation of a Homeric hero.

The ancient viewer, ever competitive and wanting to be the greatest Greek man within the spirited symposion, was invited to connect with this scene and picture himself in this fabricated tale. The scene read as an invitation for engagement, since the narrative remained unfinished. The viewer completed the story and became the unidentified warrior to claim himself as a Homeric hero: the ideal model. He could be the one to help guide the unmanned ships to conquer in battle. I believe that the agency of this cup allowed the viewer to picture himself in this scene as the warrior, as the unfinished and unknown story compelled him to complete it.

What may strike the viewer as odd about this same scene was the fact that the warrior appeared to be standing on water without sinking and simultaneously taking the place of where a nose should be, in between two eyes. There were two sets of eyes in total on this vessel, both in between the two sets of ships and on opposite sides of the cup. They were filled in with white and had two sets of rings alternating between black and red/purple to indicate iris and pupil.\textsuperscript{88} Above the eyes were thinly drawn eyebrows that followed the contour of the eye shape. The white filled eyes contrasted in comparison to the terracotta background in red-orange. They appeared to stare out of the two-dimensional surface and towards the viewer, opening up the possibility for engagement. As the viewer worked through the rest of the imagery, it was difficult

\textsuperscript{86} Skinner, \textit{Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture}, 47.
\textsuperscript{88} The shape of the eyes are classified by scholars as the gendered masculine eye, however this distinction is not imperative for the purpose of this paper and will not be examined further.
to ignore the eyes staring straight back. I believe that this engagement would further emphasize the fact that these ships lacked proper guidance. The association of eyes and ships was already mentioned in my previous scholarship section as the motif was believed to aid in navigation. In a similar manner, the eyes on Cup 56.171.36 could help guide the viewer to navigate the seas. Perhaps they represented the eyes of the ram’s heads on the bow of each ship, or they were possibly arbitrary and symbolic of this guiding presence. However the viewer interpreted this motif, I argue that it would coerce the viewer even more to imagine himself in the scene guiding the ships.

For the viewer to place himself within the scene as the hero was a logical product of the environment. Within the symposion, a plethora of stimuli existed from art, poetry, music, and discussion that would have had an effect on the participants by way of encouraging involvement in the activities. Considering that these events happened on a fairly regular basis, the average Greek man was being influenced regularly by stories of mythology, politics, theater and performance, as well as art. The thought that a Greek man placed himself in a scene as the hero does not necessarily come from his own intentions but rather from the affects of objects of agency within the symposion, this eye cup as well as others with similar themes included. Gathered over a period of time, and in conjunction with the agency of an eye cup which invited a participatory role, the viewer was easily able to envision himself in the scene.

Another aspect to consider with the exterior scene of this eye cup was the nearly identical image painted on both sides of the same vessel. In the andròn, it was possible for two men to gaze upon Cup 56.171.36 at the very same time, due to the layout of the room, and reach similar conclusions. This cup could have been very effective in creating a friendly competition among the symposiasts, since examination of pottery paintings was quite common and a main form of

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entertainment. The man holding the cup pictured himself within the scene; on the other hand, another man reclined near him may also have envisioned the same for himself. The two men might argue over who the warrior was, or who the hero was, as they might both want that role. This communal interaction was what made eye cups so unique, for only the mirrored scenes displayed within the symposion had the same effect.

Through this response, one can see how interactive the viewing of this ancient artwork was to the Greek viewer. The engagement with the painting and interactivity between the narrative of the scene and the viewer created a performative story. The viewer essentially became an actor in the viewing process by placing himself within it. He acted as the missing bow officer to direct the ships, and also acted as the warrior that was unlabeled and unidentified, conceivably for this specific purpose. By viewing the object in this way, the modern viewer can also experience a similar response to the artwork and ultimately expand upon the understanding of this eye cup.

Interior and Object as A Whole

After examining the exterior surface of the eye cup, and after drinking the contents of wine, the ancient viewer would have noticed that there was decoration on the interior surface as well. The interior of Cup 56.171.36 was much simpler in decoration with a solid black glaze surrounding an image of the Gorgon in the very center, painted in a red-figure tondo (Figure 12). The face of the Gorgon included two large, round eyes, highly arched eyebrows, two simple line-drawn ears, a clover-shaped nose, and an open mouth showing teeth with the tongue protruding. Curly hair and a thick beard were also represented, the textures highlighted with circular and parallel incised lines. This image was very popular, both on pottery and also architectural sculpture, and became a common image in Greek visual culture. In fact, with the

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exception of very early eye cups, the interior was almost exclusively of the Gorgon on Attic black-figure eye cups.  

As mentioned previously, the Gorgon instilled fear since anyone who was to lay eyes upon a “living” Gorgon turned into stone. Looking at a representation of the Gorgon image was just as frightening and contained apotropaic qualities as well. In Homer’s *Iliad*, both Athena’s aegis chest plate and Agamemnon’s shield portrayed images of the Gorgon as a defensive tactic in battle. The image was meant to evoke fear and startle the enemy to gain the offensive advantage. Thus, it was not just the actual Gorgon who could generate such strong affective reactions, but artistic representations of her as well.

First handed the cup full of wine filled up at the beginning of the *symposion* by a servant or slave, the interior painting was unknown to the user. As the man drank wine from the vessel, more and more of this image was revealed. Emerging from the depths of the bowl under dark and murky wine, a scary face appeared. No matter if the viewer could not identify with this image in common Greek visual culture, I argue that through interaction with the object, the horrific face of the Gorgon frightened him and possibly encouraged him to slow down his drinking. When in the relaxed setting of the *symposion*, men were amongst friends having an enjoyable time. This was not a threatening situation, so everyone’s guard was relaxed. For that reason, when the image of the creature that had the capability to turn a man into stone appeared merely inches in front of a man’s face, he was affected. There was a certain fear in the somewhat unknown, especially in Archaic Attic eye cups. As already mentioned, there were typically three different

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93 Slavery was a regular part of the Archaic Greek way of life and there was a clear distinction in identity and class between slave and free person. For more see Matthew Dillon and Lynda Garland. *Ancient Greece: Social and Historical Documents from Archaic Times to the Death of Socrates (c. 800-399 BC).* (London: Routledge, 994):325-326.
types of interior decoration: minimal circular designs or completely blank, full tondo paintings, or images of the Gorgon. Thus, even if someone were familiar with eye cups and have drank from them in the past, it was still unknown which of the three styles were going to be depicted on the interior of his own eye cup.

Another component to consider with the scariness of the Gorgon image was pleasure. There is a certain level of satisfaction and pleasure that can be found from being frightened, both ancient and modern; this is a human reaction. A similar, more modern, way of thinking about this would be to look towards horror films. Generally, there is expectancy of fear when viewing these types of films; one expects to encounter scary images, be shocked by them, and even possibly have a physical reaction to them by having an increased heart rate or jumping out of one’s seat. Having this type of reaction fuels the excitement in people, creating a pleasurable experience that feels closer to reality because it has physically affected their body. The ancient Greek viewer experienced a similar reaction with the interaction of the eye cup. Even though he knew that the painted image could not harm him, his body was still physically affected through his reaction, which created a more exciting and possibly pleasurable experience.

When analyzing the exterior and interior separately, two very different viewer responses were found. When examining the object as a whole, the two analyses can become more interconnected. After having been invited into the scene on the exterior as the hero, the viewer’s worthiness as a Greek warrior was challenged once he discovered the image of the Gorgon on the interior. As a warrior or hero, he should be able to face any challenges. One of the greatest challenges for the hero Perseus was battling the Gorgon Medusa and prevailing. The user of this eye cup was faced with an analogous challenge by overcoming his shock and fear of facing the Gorgon on the interior of the cup and conquering it. Instead of battling the Gorgon in the

95 Osborne, Archaic and Classical Greek Art, 60.
flesh, he mentally battled his own fears by continuously facing one of the scariest images in Greek visual culture. Drink after drink, he came face to face with the Gorgon by the act of his own body. He conquered his fear with every single drink and remained a hero even if only in his own mind. Physically, however, he endured the suspenseful moments leading up to the reveal of the Gorgon image through an increased heart rate and other corporal afflictions of fear.

In this section, I have analyzed Cup 56.171.36 within the scope of its original context and use. I have carefully constructed an ancient viewer’s response to the imagery depicted on the eye cup utilizing ancient understandings of vision and reception, and lastly I unpacked some of the more important affective qualities of this eye cup that were produced through the object’s agency. It was found evident that this object had the ability to compel the viewer to imagine himself in the untold narrative on the exterior as a hero. The eye motif furthered this analysis by the ancient association that eyes have with Greek ships and navigation. The interior of the cup was found to have a different affect on the viewer: shock. By looking at the object as a whole, it established that the exterior connected with the interior on a deeper, personal level. The user of the cup was able to overcome his initial fear with every gulp of wine, validating himself as a hero. Through this viewer’s response, the object’s agency was found to invite engagement with the scene and to develop a more individualized and heroic interaction.
V. CASE STUDY 2: THE MULTIFUNCTIONAL CUP, CONTROL AND PERFORMANCE

In this second object analysis, I will focus mainly on affect and agency as an approach. I will investigate an Attic eye cup, artist unknown, from the Cleveland Museum of Art (Figures 13-16). It dates from the early 500s BCE. For the remainder of this paper, this will be referred to as Cup 26.514, recalling to the object’s accession number. This cup measures 7.5 cm in height, has a diameter of 21.4 cm not including the handles, and 26.8 cm total width with the handles. This eye cup was a fairly common size in comparison to other black-figures from this time. By examining the painted pottery as well as the use within the context of the symposion, the affect and agency will be highlighted as a way to deepen the understanding of this eye cup as well as the interaction between object and viewer(s).

For this case study, I will be analyzing the object from the inside, then out. While this may seem counterintuitive, this particular eye cup sits shorter in height than many other cups, while still maintaining a similar dimension in diameter. Because of this, the shape of the bowl was more severely shallow than other eye cups, resulting in difficult viewing access to the exterior. The cup must be lifted well above the head in order to view the exterior, and if it was full of wine it would be quite a difficult task to do so without spilling. Therefore, I will analyze the interior surface of the vessel first. After the liquid contents have been drained, the exterior will become more accessible to the user and I will analyze that surface last.

Interior

Quite similar in representation to eye Cup 56.171.36 from the previous case study, eye Cup 26.514 also had a tondo painting of the Gorgon on the interior of the vessel (Figure 14). Many of the characteristics of the Gorgon representation remain the same, including the large

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eyes, swooping eyebrows, protruding tongue, and texture highlights in the beard and hair. Two major differences exist which result in quite a dramatic difference in the reception of the two.

First, the nose on Cup 26.514 was not in the shape of a clover like that of 56.171.36. Instead, the artist painted two rounded shapes of red with outlines in black, stacked on top of each other. The outcome assumes more of an abbreviation of a nose, rather than a full rendering. This depiction of a nose becomes less familiar and not as recognizable as a human nose.

The second major difference between the two representations of the Gorgon was in the mouth. While both have a slight smile, mouth open, and tongue lolling out, the teeth appear much more prevalent in Cup 26.514. The teeth were picked out in bright white against the black background and emerge quite largely; the largest of the teeth almost as big as or bigger than the nose. At the end of each row on the top and bottom, there exist large, sharp fang-like canine teeth that extend beyond the lips. This emphasized feature also functioned as one that makes the Gorgon appear less human, but rather more animalistic or beast-like. For as much as the image of the Gorgon from the previous eye cup might frighten the viewer, this Gorgon painting from Cup 26.514 was even more so.

Since the image of the Gorgon was so scary, I argue that the user of the eye cup would have purposefully tried to control the gaze of the Gorgon. If the user of the cup swayed it back and forth, the image of the Gorgon would have suddenly appeared and disappeared before his eyes as the wine moved around. As discussed in the previous section, one result of this occurrence was fear. However, once he was aware of what lurks at the bottom of the cup, the fear lessened over time, especially after having drained and refilled the cup a couple of times throughout the evening. Once he became more comfortable with the idea that he could look at an
image of the Gorgon without actually turning to stone, he became more confident in himself and less fearful.

This experience can be compared to that of playing with a modern child’s toy called a Jack-in-the-Box. The first time one plays with the toy it is frightening when the lid opens and a figure springs towards the viewer. After knowing what will happen following the turn of the handle, it becomes less scary. While the shock aspect may be dulled, the awareness of knowing what will happen next is comforting and it can become easier to handle the situation. For a Greek man with an eye cup, he may even aimlessly slosh the wine around in an effort to purposefully cover up and uncover the beast-like creature as the fear was dulled.

Though he may have encountered images of a Gorgon on a fairly regular basis, it was not as common for the regular Greek man to have control over the image and over the Gorgon herself. In Greek mythology, it was the Gorgon that had power and control over man, and in this context the roles have been reversed. The power of her gaze compelled the viewer to take control. Further, throughout Greek vase painting it has been found evident that frontal-facing figures were meant to interact with the viewer and invite them to participate in the scene.97 Through this, I argue that if the user of the eye cup felt fear, he was compelled to tell the servant at the symposion to never let his cup go empty in an effort to never let the Gorgon be revealed.98 Or, in an act of heroism and courage as referenced in the previous section, the user of the eye cup could let his drink dwindle down so as to reveal the face slowly, or at particular times.

Not only was the user of the cup in control of covering up the Gorgon’s image with wine, he also had the power to allow her to look out and to petrify someone else. By emptying his cup of wine, he was free to direct the Gorgon’s gaze in any direction and at any person within the

98 There were servants present at almost all symposions to serve the food and drink on a regular basis.
andrón to frighten them. This provided a great deal of power. The user of the cup felt in control of the painted Gorgon image and in his mind the Gorgon herself. This power of man over beast was only achieved through the object’s agency which allowed the user of the cup to feel in control.

The ancient Greeks did believe that artwork and objects could engage their viewers, functioning in a similar manner as agency and affect. Aristotle’s understanding of mimesis, or the re-presentation of art, according to P. Woodruff’s analysis on his work, tells us that it has “the power of engaging our attention and our emotions almost as if it were real.” With this understanding, the painted image of the Gorgon could affect the viewer in the same manner that the “real” head of the Gorgon could paralyze a person and turn them to stone. There would be no doubt that the user of the cup was eager to show control over the image and cover her face with wine by tilting the vessel, especially if he believed that he was stopping something real.

The interior of Cup 26.514 had a powerful affect on the user within the symposion through the interaction. In this case, the user took control over the Gorgon image by directing her gaze through the covering and uncovering of wine and also through the literal movement of the cup throughout the symposion space.

Exterior

Like many other eye cups from Attica, the exterior of this cup was almost exactly mirrored from one side of the handles to the other (Figure 15). On each side, there exist two eyes colored in with black then followed by white and red rings, with a black pupil. Above the eyes sit two subtle eyebrows painted in simple contour black lines. Rather than a nose and a mouth,

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99 For example, mimetic images of satyrs were defined in terms of, “their correspondence to a specific character and in their ability to evoke a sharp emotional reaction in the viewer.” Stansbury-O’Donnell, Pictorial Narrative, 113.
between each set of eyes there stands a winged woman holding branches of plants or ivy that looks off to the side. On the outer edges of each eye dwell two satyrs looking towards the winged woman. Under each handle, a single winged dolphin was depicted (Figure 16). Including all decoration on the entire exterior, there are two winged women, four satyrs, four eyes, and two winged dolphins, making the image almost uncomfortably packed and overwhelming with visual elements.

Looking at these features more closely, with particular focus on the eyes, more can be understood about the object in general. In the beginning of their invention, Attic eye cups mostly consisted of contour eyes and white-filled eyes. Black eyes did not appear until about 520 BCE, around the time that the red-figured eye cup became popular. Jordan notes that, “The subject matter on these [black eye] cups is more varied than the cups with contour eyes and white eyes, possibly because conventions were no longer strictly adhered to.” Possibly because of this change in artistic restrictions over time, eye Cup 26.514 contains a unique combination of elements in decoration.

Satyrs, winged females, eyes, and winged dolphins do not have any known, obvious connections, but perhaps their connection was not necessary. In fact, I argue that this eye cup’s agency remains contingent upon the fact that the figures and animals represent generic, non-specific beings from Greek mythology. To demonstrate this, first I will go through each figure to show that a specific character from mythology cannot be identified. Winged female figures on pottery paintings and sculpture were usually either Iris or Nike, identifiable by their

102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Most modern scholars are unaware of any connection.
105 This is other than the Gorgon on the interior of the cup. However, even there we do not know which of the Gorgon sisters was being represented. Many assume that it was Medusa, but there were two other Gorgons that could be portrayed as well and it is ultimately unclear.
attributes. Iris had winged boots and held a herald’s staff; Nike also held the herald’s staff and a fillet or garland in an extended hand. While we do know that this winged figure on Cup 26.514 was a female because she had white skin, she does not have any other identifiable attributes. Instead, she holds two strands of branches or vines closely to her body, which was not a usual representation of Iris or Nike. Another possible identification for this figure could be a Siren, another mythological creature that attempted to charm sailors by song. Sirens were sometimes depicted as bird-like females; however, the association with the figure on Cup 26.514 stopped at the wings. Therefore, I argue that the winged female painted on the exterior was simply a generic figure from Greek mythology.

The indication that the four satyrs and two winged dolphins depicted on this vessel were generic comes from multiple outlooks. First, satyrs, the goat-like creatures associated with Dionysus, were often represented on pottery. However, they very rarely portrayed a specific satyr, but rather a symbol of the wild. If the artist of this vessel wanted to depict a specific satyr, he could have included an attribute of a particular satyr, such as Silenus or Pan. A syrinx, or flute-like instrument was an attribute for the god Pan who was associated with the mountainside, sheep, and goats, though this has not been presented in visual form. In this case, all four satyrs are generic and unidentifiable other than common satyrs from mythology (Figure 16). The two dolphins were also non-specific. Most myths involving dolphins were associated with Dionysus or Poseidon. The dolphins in those myths do not have wings and appear as more naturalistic visions of the animal. Again in the case of this eye cup, it seems that the artist chose

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107 Ibid., 255 fn. 38.
108 Cotterell and Storm. The Encyclopedia of World Mythology, 60.
109 Jordan states similar analysis of the figure in regards to this particular eye cup; Jordan, “Attic Black-Figured,” 255.
110 Cotterell and Storm. The Encyclopedia of World Mythology, 81.
111 Ibid., 72.
to depict a creature that would appear to come from mythology, without actually referencing any specific myth.

The last features on the outer surface of this eye cup that remain are the two nearly identical sets of eyes. Many scholars have attempted to argue for an identification of the character that those eyes belong to, as I have highlighted in my previous scholarship section. There were even gendered classifications for different eye shapes; Cup 26.514 has masculine shaped eyes. As I have stated several times, this classification was not backed up by any ancient sources. Because of this reason, I argue that the eyes on this particular eye cup were not specific to any figure, but rather simply a set of eyes that could be identified by the viewer(s) as whomever they pleased. This provides the crux of my argument for the object’s agency requiring nonspecific figures.

Rather than picturing a specific figure gazing out through the painted eyes, the viewer was able to imagine any number of characters, even himself. When lifted to the face to drink from the cup, the man’s own features became covered by the facial features on the eye cup, both painted and implied. The handles of the cup replaced the ears, and the bottom of the base replaced an upturned mouth. The mask-like qualities allowed others in the room to picture different characters, even when the man using the cup seemed unaware of his transformation. When the user of the cup did become aware of the mask-like qualities, likely after his fellow symposiasts started snickering at the sight, he could use the cup to his advantage. The cup/mask becomes a tool to act with when reading poetry or retelling myths, common practices in the symposion. Just as in theater, one could transform himself into a different character simply by placing a mask over his face and changing the tone of his voice.\footnote{\textsuperscript{112} All characters were played by men in the theater, which is why I am still using the gendered pronoun when referring to the actors in theater.}
If the eyes on the cup were specific to a particular mythological being, the cup would not function in the same manner. Instead of having the ability to play any character from any myth, the user of the cup would be limited to one. While actual theatrical masks were often limited to one character and for specific roles, the cup/mask cannot function that limited way in the symposion since multiple myths, poems, and readings were discussed on a regular basis. As this provided one of their main forms of entertainment, the party would be quite dull if only one character could be acted out through a mask. So instead, the eye cup functioned as a tool for entertainment by allowing one mask to operate as multiple personas. This is the first reason that I argue that the object’s agency and functionality relies upon unspecific features.

While the eyes were the main element in my argumentation, the satyrs, winged figures and dolphins simply support it further. All of these represent mythological beings quite clearly, as none of them exist in our world. However, it remains unclear as to which myth they refer to, if any. Similar to the exterior decoration on eye Cup 56.171.36 from the previous section, the viewer envisioned his own interpretation of the figures. In this way, the figures could become more relatable to a greater variety of stories that were told within the symposion; opening more possibilities and allowing for imagination. While the cup was being used as a mask, the imagery surrounding the eyes enhanced the tale being told, rather than drawing away from or distracting from it by displaying a different, specific myth. Further, it would not even be necessary that all of the figures on the exterior were part of the story being told. Since they were all so generic, they became representative of mythology itself and could adapt and fit with nearly anything. With this in mind, I would like to note that if an eye cup did portray a specific mythological story, I think that it would function in a completely different manner within the symposion. It would be more difficult, though not impossible, for a cup with a specific scene to adapt with
every performance or story since the one on the cup and the one being told may be conflicting in nature. In a case like that, it would be more ideal that multiple *symposiasts* utilized eye cups for drinking vessels, so that each portrayed a different character depending on the cup’s decoration.

I believe that Cup 26.514 had several different layers of agency. First, the user of the cup was able to control and have power over the Gorgon by maintaining or drinking different amounts of wine within the vessel. Due to the unique shape and decoration of the Gorgon on the inside bowl, he covered and uncovered her powerful image. It was through the object’s agency that the user was able to feel this control. Secondly, through the combination of mask-like qualities and nonspecific mythological figures portrayed on the exterior of the cup, the object was able to function as a comprehensive entertainment piece for the *symposion*. The object both invited and allowed a response through its agency.

While this eye cup functioned as a whole and the inner and outer elements could never be separated from one another, the decorative elements on each portion operated in different ways. It was a tool, both in a practical sense to drink from as well as in a more leisurely sense; by this I mean for entertainment for both the user of the cup when in use (control over the Gorgon) and also the fellow men in the *symposion* (performance and discussion). I believe that this eye cup could not function as this particular tool if it were not for the inherent agency and the affect that it has upon its user(s). All eye cups have the capability to function in a similar manner; Cup 26.514 was just a great example. This exploration will be furthered in the next chapter where I will build upon these same ideas and reconstruct a complete interaction between man and object within the *symposion*. 
VI. CASE STUDY 3: CREATING POWER THROUGH A COMPLETE RECONSTRUCTION

In this third and final object analysis, I will build upon the previous two case studies by completely reconstructing the full interaction between man and eye cup. While I have hinted at this interaction, by developing a thorough and in-depth reconstruction, the modern viewer will be able to envision the situation more clearly. The object is from the Toledo Museum of Art and dates from around 520 BCE (Figures 17-21, 25). For the remainder of this paper, this Attic eye cup will be referred to as Cup 67.135, referring to the cup’s accession number. This eye cup is sized similarly to the previous two eye cups that have been analyzed, though sitting slightly taller at 10.5 cm; the width of this cup without the handles is 22.2 cm, and with the handles it is 29.3 cm. While the Nikosthenes Potter was originally thought to have been both potter and painter, Dietrich Von Bothmer argued in 1968 that Nikosthenes was only the potter and not the painter of this cup. The painter remains unknown to this date since this cup maintained no signature by the artist.

For this reconstruction, I will examine aspects of the object in the order in which I believe the ancient user would encounter them. I will begin with the painted exterior surface, and as I reconstruct the act of drinking from the cup to empty the contents of wine, I will conclude with the interior. As part of this reconstruction, I will build upon the previous results that I have found with most eye cups: they invited the user to engage with and envision the Greek user in certain scenes, they induced power and control, and they were also implemented as an inspiration and a tool for entertainment.

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114 Ibid.
115 While Von Bothmer was not working with this object at the Toledo Museum of Art, he was in correspondence with its curators at the time that he held the position of Curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and was an expert in the field; Dietrich Von Bothmer, letter to the Toledo Museum of Art, April 1, 1968; Munzen & Medaillen AG Basel, auction 34, May 6 1967, no 131, pg 2.
To begin, the symposion would likely commence with a libation to the gods and heroes. The host of the party, sometimes referred to as the symposiarch, was in charge of determining how much water to blend with the wine, so he would do this next. The host also instructed the servants on how much to ladle into each cup, and then the men would be brought their filled vessels to their couches around the room.

A man who received Cup 67.135 may be initially unaware of the fact that this eye cup is not perfectly mirrored on both front and back, like many other eye cups. However, over time and during interactions with the object, it would become quite obvious to him that the two sides differ noticeably. For the purposes of this analysis, I will refer to the two sides as Side A (Figure 18) and Side B (Figure 19) to tell them apart. Side A featured a youthful looking warrior in the center of the two eyes. Side B marked a similar scene, but with a masked warrior in the center. Connecting those two sides was a pecking rooster at the ground-line underneath each handle, both facing the same direction.

The eyes on this vessel were similar to previous examples, with a comparable shape consisting of red and black circles. There were figures painted in between the eyes in both previous examples, but both represented full figures. Cup 67.135 featured enlarged figures and they appear cut off at the shoulder-line. Both figures gaze out blankly at an arbitrary point, seeming quite lifeless. Both profiles likely represented actual full-body sculptures of high status citizens that existed in the ancient world.

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116 Garland, Daily Life, 149.
117 Ibid. 151.
118 Jordan, “Attic Black-figured” 44, 46 (C 49). Archaic Greek sculpture of the human form was almost always full-body depictions, most prominently in the Archaic period were the kouri. It was later in the Roman period when copies of Greek sculpture were made that they were rendered as profile busts, or cutting off the sculpture at shoulder level. Oswyn, Murray. Early Greece. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993) 236.
It was highly likely that the user of the cup would have recognize these profile heads as sculptures, since these have appeared on numerous other Greek vases, starting in Athens around 650 BCE. They were fairly common on drinking cups, and usually appeared on the exterior of vessels. Jordan writes, “Sometimes the figures [of profile heads] can be identified by inscription, attribute, or by association with a recognizable deity. In most cases, however, they remain anonymous, and the question of their meaning is raised.” In this case, the figures remain unlabeled; but I believe at the very least that the user of the cup recognized them as representations of sculptural work.

In the case of Cup 67.135, several interpretations have been suggested for these unidentified figures. In one auction catalog of the cup from Munzen and Medaillen, it was suggested that Side A depicted Athena, while Side B depicted the giant Enkelados. Cedric Boulter and Kurt Luckner, an art historian and the curator of the Toledo Museum of Art at the time, disagreed with this analysis in their *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* (CVA) entry. They do not find enough evidence to attribute the figure from Side A to Athena, or the figure from Side B to anyone. Another scholar to weigh in on the debate was Dietrich von Bothmer in a 1983 correspondence to the Toledo Museum of Art. In the letter to Mr. Luckner, he disagreed with the CVA essay, and instead argues that Side A was in fact of Athena, based on the long hair of the figure and the fact that one of Athena’s attributes was present on the cup: a rooster. Von Bothmer also stated that the figure on Side B was Ares, since he and Athena would be a normal

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119 Jordan, “Attic Black-Figured” 44.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid., 44-45.
124 Though usually she was associated with an owl for wisdom, sometimes she was shown with roosters; Dietrich Von Bothmer, letter to the Toledo Museum of Art, April 1, 1968.
confrontation to depict on a cup and they were also the only two divinities that ever wear helmets.\textsuperscript{125} What these scholars have not suggested was the association of sexual pursuit with the presence of the rooster (Figures 20-21). Roosters were favored gifts of Greek men typically given to one’s lover as a sign of sexual interest.\textsuperscript{126} An example of this can be found depicted on another Archaic vessel displaying Zeus and Ganymede from the fifth century BCE. Painted on obverse sides of each other, this bell \textit{krater} showed Zeus reaching out with his arm (Figure 22) towards a young man named Ganymede, who was twirling a hoop and holding onto a rooster (Figure 23). Zeus and Ganymede were lovers and this scene exploits this sexual pursuit onto the viewer by forcing him or her to pursue the image from one side to the other, begging the question of exactly who was being pursued.\textsuperscript{127}

I suggest that Achilles and Penthesileia might also be plausible identifications for the figures on Cup 67.135. Although this is not an identification proposed by earlier scholars, the visual evidence could support this identification. In Greek mythology, the battle between the Greeks and the Amazons culminated in the battle between Achilles and the Queen of the Amazons named Penthesileia.\textsuperscript{128} In the moment that Achilles’ gave the terminal strike upon her body, he fell in love with her.\textsuperscript{129} The Archaic artist Exekias has depicted this scene on an \textit{amphora} from the end of the sixth century BCE (Figure 24). In his rendition, Achilles wore a mask and Penthesileia’s face was exposed to display a slightly masculine, youthful appearance. Possibly, Cup 67.135 made reference to this tragic scene, especially in conjunction with the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Osborne, \textit{Archaic and Classical}, 148.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Beazley, \textit{The Development}, 59.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Osborne, \textit{Archaic and Classical}, 106.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
rooster found between the handles that brought sexual connotations between the two figures depicted.

Based on all of the above possible interpretations of the figures, I believe that it is too difficult to determine who these profile heads represent. There exist no clear indications that the figures were specific divinities and too many possibilities exist. Jordan even suggested that “they may have been intended to represent prominent local citizens in the guise of a warrior or in the company of a deity,” which would explain why they were not clearly recognizable as they might represent hybridizations of real people and mythological ones.\(^{130}\) I would like to suggest an alternate option to the quandary of the unidentifiable figures: rather than trying to attribute specific people to the profile busts on this cup, I think that it should be considered that these profiles were created as deliberately ambiguous as a way to encourage debate.\(^{131}\) I argue that the average Greek man and user of this eye cup would not be able to easily identify either profile bust; rather he recognized that they represent works of art.

The fact that the profile heads painted on the exterior surface are (1) not easily identifiable, and representations of unknown works of art, make it an ideal source of inspiration for discussion. I argue that the user of the cup, or even another man in the room, became inspired by the fact that he was looking at art depicted on art. This was the ultimate source of inspiration within the symposion for views of multiple representations and interpretations were available. The open-ended dialogue that Cup 67.135 created would not be possible if the profile heads were

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\(^{130}\) Jordan, “Attic Black-FIGured,” 45. For Jordan’s complete analysis of profile heads existing on Attic Black-FIGured eye cups see pages 45-54.

\(^{131}\) O. von. Vacano has suggested a similar understanding in that obviously unrecognizable profile heads may have no implication, other than being purely decorative, but my suggestion takes this implication further than this.; O. von. Vacano Zur Entstehung und Deutung gemalter Seitenansichtiger Kopfbilder auf schwarzfigurigen Vasen des griechischen Festlandes. (Bonn, 1973), 98-99.
of specific people or specific artworks, since many would be familiar with the work and may not be entertained by a common discussion.

I believe that a construction of power developed through the collective discourse and feedback related to this eye cup and the artwork it depicted. The participants in the *symposion* were expected to respond to one another frequently, marking opinions and personal views on almost everything.\(^{132}\) In this way, positive or negative feedback could either enhance or hinder an individual’s power in the discussion. This type of power could be categorized as influential and authoritative, as the men in power were likely the ones also leading the conversation.

As discussion and other affairs took place throughout the night, the man holding Cup 67.135 would have been drinking wine from it throughout. Drinking from an eye cup must have had its difficulties when considering all the surrounding elements. Boardman has noted that, “the commonest way of holding the stemmed cups was by [the object’s] feet, not their handles, except often when actually drinking.”\(^{133}\) The feet on almost all eye cups were quite short; Cup 67.135 had a foot of only 5.75 cm tall. The average man likely would not have been able to grasp the eye cup in the same manner that one grasps a wine glass, since the distance between the bottom of the bowl and the base of the foot was too narrow. Instead, he had to balance the cup’s base on the palm of his hand and reach around the edges with his fingers to stabilize it (see the central man in Figure 2). This was not an easy task.

To add to the difficulty, the ratio in measurement of depth of the cup to width of the cup was almost nearly 1:5, indicating an extremely wide and shallow cup.\(^{134}\) To put that into a modern perspective, an average martini glass today has only a 1:1½ ratio from depth to width,

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\(^{132}\) Stehle writes, “The participants must constantly respond to each other, but the full literary forms (riddle and answer, song and cap, variant heard against the known song) require the work of more than one contributor.” Stehle, *Performance and Gender*, 222.

\(^{133}\) Boardman, *The History of Greek Vases*, 247.

\(^{134}\) Ratio from measurements: 4.75 cm bowl height, 22.2 cm bowl width.
and even those lead to difficulties when trying to keep all the liquid in the cup.\textsuperscript{135} There is a definite reason that many scholars refer to eye cups as bowls, since they resemble more similarly to a large modern soup bowl than they do a drinking cup. Further adding to the difficulty of holding the eye cup at the \textit{symposion} was the reclined position of the body on the couch. Propping oneself on an arm at the elbow usually leads to numbing of the limb, as well as a lessening of balance. By the middle or end of the event, the effects of alcohol in the wine added with all of the above-mentioned hindrances made for a bit of a mess as some wine surely was spilt. The interaction between man and object was one of either extreme focus, in order to balance, or that of extreme frustration, with the failure to balance.

While drinking remained a main component to the \textit{symposion}, the ancient Greeks discouraged and disliked belligerent drunkenness. Rather, if a man could hold down an intelligent conversation after having drunk many cups of wine, he was a great Greek man.\textsuperscript{136} Thus, by spilling a drink and losing balance in front of the entire room, a man proved that he could not hold his alcohol well and appeared weaker and less in control. Any man who received an eye cup to drink from was therefore handed a disadvantage. Perhaps the sudden demise of the type A cup near the turn of the fifth century was related to the difficulties of drinking from the extremely shaped kylix.

With all of the difficulties that I have discussed in mind, I believe that because of the shape of Cup 67.\textsuperscript{135}, the user was keenly aware of his body in relation to the object. He became more responsive to the interaction with this cup than he would with any other shaped cup. If he wanted to sit up, he was forced to tighten his grip and pay closer attention to his personal balance.

\textsuperscript{135} Ratio from measurements: 3 inch depth of cup (not including stem), 4.375 inch width of cup.
\textsuperscript{136} See in this example: “But that man, notice, is unconquered who in drinking many (cups) says nothing thoughtless. You, too, speak well as you linger around the mixing-bowl, long staving off quarrels from one another, addressing the company at large, one and all at the same time; thus the symposium is not without joy.” 491-96, Attributed to both Euenos and Theognis; as translated in Stehle, \textit{Performance and Gender}, 223.
and the steadiness of the cup. If he did not do this, there was the fear of humiliation by his fellow symposiasts, especially if he was consistently being sloppy and spilling his beverage.\textsuperscript{137}

After having completely consumed his beverage, or completely spilling it, the user of the eye cup was finally able to gaze upon the interior surface. Unlike the other eye cups discussed in this paper, Cup 67.135 had very minimal interior decoration and did not include an image of the Gorgon on any of its surfaces. The majority of the interior was glazed in black, while the center of the bowl was reserved from glaze except for two concentric circles and one dot in black (Figure 25). This simple design on the interior mirrored the one on the exterior, where five concentric black circles begin at the base of the bowl, just above the foot (visible in Figures 18-21). Further, circles were also used to make up the image of the eyes, painted in red and black, found on both sides of the cup. The design allowed for a more cohesive association from the interior of the cup to the exterior. Unity between exterior and interior decoration for most eye cups, as I have demonstrated in the previous examples, were generally more conceptual and gained through specific interaction. In this case, however, there was a visual and conceptual connection. The circular decorative elements throughout the entire cup highlighted the circular shape of the bowl while also drawing on other circular components found throughout the event.

Just like the circle, certain elements presented in the symposion were also cyclical, and were experienced by the Greek man through his interaction with the cup. First, the act of filling and refilling a seemingly endless supply of wine created a pattern that was also followed by drinking and emptying the contents of the cup, repeated again and again. This repetitive act over time advanced the transportive qualities within the alcohol. The user of the cup was mentally transported through art scenes depicted on the pottery and also reminded of this through the

\textsuperscript{137} Though, symposions were known to get a little rowdy towards the end of the night and even spill out onto the street with disruptive behavior. However, in general there was a level of poise expected within the event.
circular shape of the eye cup that resembles a wheel. Specifically in this context through connections to the god of wine and the symposion, Dionysus, could be made to physical modes of transportation that he took during the spring festival (boat on wheels) and on the sea (sailing boat).138 Further, the user of the eye cup experienced feelings similar to that of sea-sickness while consuming the wine which supplemented the notion of transportation.

The circular connection continued through the room that these men were located in; while not an absolute circle, andrōns acted in a similar manner by having each man placed along the perimeter of the room, able to view all. Since this intimate space prevented too many private conversations, symposiasts took turns speaking.139 In many cases, the performances of song or spoken word by one man to the next took place in a circular order around the room.140 One had to wait his turn in the circle to speak, and he possibly traced the edge-line of his eye cup to follow in order.

While the simple black-outlined circles on the interior of this cup and others have warranted little review in the past, it must not be ignored. I consider the simplicity of the design to be the most effective in this case, since finding cyclical and circular connections throughout the ancient male’s world was fairly easy. As a result, the associations that I have made between the transportive qualities through wine and wheel, plus the circular format of the event, would not have been a difficult one for the average Greek man to make as well.

With Cup 67.135, I have shown how both the decoration and the distinct form shaped the interaction between user and object in the symposion. The unknown profile busts painted on the exterior allowed for an open-ended interpretation and discussion. The shape of the cup itself was shown to influence the way the man using the object interacted with it, altering his sense of

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138 See footnote 41.
139 Stehle, *Performance and Gender*, 218.
140 Ibid., 218-219.
balance. In both instances, power relationships were constructed over other participants in the ritual acts. In the highly competitive setting of the symposion, power was a key element. If one had the power to influence other’s actions or beliefs, he in turn had the power to control the attention of the room. The eye cup facilitated this construction of power within the original setting and enhanced the capabilities of dominance in conversation and other symposion activities.

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141 Stehle writes of the competitiveness within the symposion in regards to masculinity which relates to my discussion on power: “The aggressive, individualistic posture admired in men and identified with masculinity meant that self-representation as ‘male’ among equals could be provocative. To boast of being a man might convey the subtext ‘more man than you.’ A man who bragged of sexual conquests portrayed himself apart from his fellows, as well as inviting comparisons.” Stehle, Performance and Gender, 227.
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Having only been in creation for roughly 35 years, eye cups had a remarkable influence on other Greek art works during that time; depictions of eyes started to appear on other vessels including neck-amphorae, kraters, hydria, oinochoai, and many more.142 The eye cup’s influence did not stop there. When analyzing this style of Greek pottery through viewer response theory and object agency and affect, I have shown through three examples how eye cups induced action and thought from the user and others within the same setting.

In the first case study, which focused mainly on viewer response theory, I demonstrated how Cup 56.171.36 invited the user to envision himself within the painted scene as the unnamed hero depicted on the exterior. Someone was needed to fulfill the complete narrative being told by the painted scene and the eye cup compelled the user to take that role. On the interior of this cup, the user continued in his self-appointed role as hero by conquering the Gorgon that confronted him in painted form. Facing a Gorgon merely inches from one’s face, no matter if it was painted or physical, was frightening. I argued that the combination of these scenes on the exterior and interior purposefully encouraged this participation, making this eye cup an engaging participant of the symposion.

In the second case study, which featured a plethora of mythological beings depicted on both the interior and exterior of Cup 26.514, my analysis focused on object agency theory. Through this approach, I demonstrated how the object compelled the user to take both physical and mental control over the painted features. The interior decoration was quite similar to the first cup, both portraying images of a Gorgon, but I offered a different analysis and response with this object. I placed focus on the user’s power to control the Gorgon’s image by covering or uncovering her gaze. He was encouraged into doing this due to the unique shape of the cup, 

which completely covered the image when full of wine. Secondly, through the combination of
mask-like qualities and nonspecific mythological figures portrayed on the exterior, I
demonstrated how the object functioned as a comprehensive entertainment piece for the
symposion by offering a multitude of activity. The object both invited and allowed for a response
through its agency.

In the third and final case study, I combined both viewer response theory and object
agency in order to create a complete reconstruction of the interaction between Cup 67.135 and
the ancient Greek user. A focus was placed on the power relationships developed within the
symposion through discussion and physically interacting with the eye cup and how that
constructed authority. A man that was given an eye cup had a fairly difficult task of keeping the
contents of wine within his widely shaped cup. Since spilling wine was a sign of drunkenness,
not a characteristic one sought, I argued that the eye cup established different ranks of power.
Also analyzed in this case study was the circular motif found on the interior and exterior of this
cup, which in the past has been overlooked. I argued that these patterns are reflective of the
cyclical nature of the symposion, including: the layout of the room, repetition of actions, and also
the circular order of discussion.

This thesis paper has utilized three different examples from the thousands that existed in
the ancient world and the roughly 800 that are known of and remain today.\textsuperscript{143} With these
examples, I have argued that eye cups functioned as participants within symposion performances,
rather than simply as admired inert objects. While I cannot absolutely state that all Archaic eye
cups from Attica functioned in the exact same manner as the ones that I have closely analyzed, I
do present a new method of thinking about all eye cups: these objects performed with, and even

\textsuperscript{143} Jordan’s comprehensive study of Attic Black-Figured eye cups lists roughly 800 eye cups. This does not include
Red-Figure eye cups, or eye cups made in locations other than Attica, though this location does have the largest
induced action from, the male participants of the *symposion* to fit the type of entertainment being conducted. During dramatic retellings of mythology, an eye cup could become a theatrical mask to enhance the narrative; during poetry readings, an eye cup could become a source of inspiration for a poem that was created in that moment; and even during lulls in conversation, an eye cup could offer excitement when the user encountered a horrific mythological creature confronting him on the interior surface of their cup. Eye cups were not merely beautiful art objects, nor were they just vessels to hold a beverage. Instead, they were multi-functional contributors to the ancient Greek *symposion*. These ancient interactions are still accessible in the modern world as I have now provided a model for their construction.
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**Figure 4** - Artist Unknown, Cup 56.171.36, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 9.5 cm, D. 28.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available from: http://metmuseum.org, (accessed 12 Dec 2012).

**Figure 5** – Artist Unknown, Exterior Side A, Cup 56.171.36, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 9.5 cm, D. 28.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available from: http://metmuseum.org, (accessed 12 Dec 2012).
**Figure 6** – Artist Unknown, Exterior Side B, Cup 56.171.36, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 9.5 cm, D. 28.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available from: http://metmuseum.org, (accessed 12 Dec 2012).
Figure 7 – Artist Unknown, Exterior Handle A, Cup 56.171.36, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 9.5 cm, D. 28.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available from: http://metmuseum.org, (accessed 12 Dec 2012).

Figure 8 – Artist Unknown, Exterior Handle B, Cup 56.171.36, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 9.5 cm, D. 28.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available from: http://metmuseum.org, (accessed 12 Dec 2012).
Figure 9 – Artist Unknown, Close-up view of ship, Cup 56.171.36, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 9.5 cm, D. 28.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available from: http://metmuseum.org, (accessed 12 Dec 2012).
Figure 10 – Artist Unknown, Close-up view of Warrior Side A, Cup 56.171.36, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 9.5 cm, D. 28.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available from: http://metmuseum.org, (accessed 12 Dec 2012).

Figure 11 – Artist Unknown, Close-up view of Warrior Side B, Cup 56.171.36, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 9.5 cm, D. 28.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available from: http://metmuseum.org, (accessed 12 Dec 2012).
Figure 12 – Artist Unknown, Interior Gorgon, Cup 56.171.36, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 9.5 cm, D. 28.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available from: http://metmuseum.org, (accessed 12 Dec 2012).
Figure 13 – Artist Unknown, side view of Cup 26.514, early 500s BCE, terracotta, H. 7.5 cm, D. 26.8 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH. Available From: http://clevelandart.org, (accessed 20 Nov 2012).

Figure 14 – Artist Unknown, Interior Gorgon, Cup 26.514, early 500s BCE, terracotta, H. 7.5 cm, D. 26.8 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH. Available From: http://clevelandart.org, (accessed 20 Nov 2012).
Figure 15 – Artist Unknown, Exterior, Cup 26.514, early 500s BCE, terracotta, H. 7.5 cm, D. 26.8 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH. Available From: http://clevelandart.org, (accessed 20 Nov 2012).

Figure 16 – Artist Unknown, Close-up of Dolphin and Satyrs, Cup 26.514, early 500s BCE, terracotta, H. 7.5 cm, D. 26.8 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH. Available From: http://clevelandart.org, (accessed 20 Nov 2012).
Figure 17 – Nikosthenes as Potter, Painter unknown, Side view of Cup 67.135, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 10.5 cm, D. 29.3, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH. Photograph by Author.
Figure 18 – Nikosthenes as Potter, Painter unknown, Side A, Cup 67.135, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 10.5 cm, D. 29.3, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH. Photograph by Author.

Figure 19 – Nikosthenes as Potter, Painter unknown, Side B, Cup 67.135, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 10.5 cm, D. 29.3, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH. Photograph by Author.
Figure 20 – Nikosthenes as Potter, Painter unknown, Rooster 1, Cup 67.135, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 10.5 cm, D. 29.3, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH. Photograph by Author.

Figure 21 – Nikosthenes as Potter, Painter unknown, Rooster 2, Cup 67.135, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 10.5 cm, D. 29.3, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH. Photograph by Author.

Figure 25 – Nikosthenes as Potter, Painter unknown, Interior, Cup 67.135, c. 520 BCE, terracotta, H. 10.5 cm, D. 29.3, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH. Photograph by Author.