

Dionysus: Ancient and Modern

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This first image, by an unknown artist from the 6th century BC, is of Dionysus extending a kantharos, a type of ancient Greek pottery used for drinking. The kantharos is fitting because Dionysus is the God of wine and winemaking. He also requires that his worshippers indulge in drink while performing his rituals. The way that Dionysus extends the drinking cup reflects how Bacchus enables his Bacchae to produce springs of liquid from the Earth. "One took her thyrsus, struck a rock, and water leapt out, pure as dew. Another set her staff in solid ground and the god sent her a fountain of wine. If anyone was thirsty for a drink of milk she scabbled her sharp fingers in the earth and it came, spurting white." (*Bacchae* 704-710)



This second image is of Dionysus as depicted in the 1940 Disney film *Fantasia*. Dionysus is holding an iconic cup of wine, and has a headdress with grapes on it; his cheeks are red, indicating intoxication. Each are representative of him being the god of wine. Disney represents Dionysus' relation to indulgence by making him appear overweight. This is in opposition to his ancient sexualized representations, likely because this film was intended for children. His physical appearance in this film does not imply the same sexual prowess as the Dionysus in *Bacchae*, where Pentheus says "You're actually quite good-looking. I mean, to women. ... with your pretty face, for sex" (453-459).

