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Performing Philosophy: The Pedagogy of Plato's Academy Reimagined[2]

The overarching question of this paper is "How did Plato teach in his Academy?" I take as an uncontroversial premise that Plato taught the dialogues in the Academy.[3] So, a follow up question is, "How were the dialogues read in the Academy?" The verb "read" can be taken in a figurative sense to mean how the dialogues were interpreted and understood, or it can be taken in a much more basic, and literal sense. I turn to instances of reading in the dialogues in order to begin to answer the question more literally. While admittedly speculative, thinking about the performance of the dialogues in the Academy can help us to think about their *pedagogical* function: "how did Plato use the dialogues to educate?" Drawing primarily on evidence internal to the Platonic dialogues, I will argue that in the Academy the dialogues were probably performed *rhapsodically*, with one speaker reading all the roles, as opposed to performed *dramatically*, with several actors. I propose that the dialogues were read aloud by someone; after which, listener-students could ask that parts be re-read, ask questions about the dialogue, or enter into a discussion about topics discussed in the dialogue. I also contend that the structure of certain dialogues can tell

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[3] William H.F. Altman, "The reading order of Plato's dialogues," *Phoenix* 64.1 (2010): 21; see also William H.F. Altman, *Ascent to the Beautiful* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020), xiv.

us about *how* Plato taught, and additionally, *how* Plato's pedagogy may have found its way into the dialogues.

Other views on Platonic pedagogy

I want to acknowledge some alternative methods of answering the question, "How did Plato teach in the Academy?"[4] One can look at the "program of studies" for the education of the philosopher rulers in *Republic* 7: the study of mathematics (arithmetic, plane and solid geometry, astronomy, and harmonics) as well as dialectic. John Burnett defended the pedagogy of the *Republic* as the one Plato practiced in the Academy.[5] Others, like Paul Shorey, add to the "program of studies" from the *Republic* other lessons from other dialogues, like the *Parmenides*, *Philebus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman*.[6] Another possibility is to look at the education of the young in the *Laws*. There are skeptics of these kinds of approaches that try to extract a pedagogy directly from some of the dialogues. For example, Henri-Irénée Marrou argued that the utopian educational schemes in the *Republic* or the *Laws* were not meant for the Academy.[7]

There are others who have offered speculative proposals reimagining Plato as performing the dialogues as theatrical dramas in the Academy. In fact, the theatricality of the *Protagoras* leads William Altman to suggest that the *Protagoras* "was performed as a play, and

[4] John Glucker, "Plato in the Academy: some cautious reflections," in *Plato's Academy: Its Workings and Its History*, eds. P. Kalligas, C. Balla, E. Baziotopoulou-Valavani, and V. Karasmanis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 90-3, identifies three types of answers to what Plato taught in the Academy. The first is some pedagogical program that is described in the dialogues; the second is Plato taught the dialogues themselves as textbooks; and, finally, the third is similar to the second, Plato taught the dialogues as "exercise-textbooks" along with training in Platonic philosophy.

[5] John Burnet, "The Programme of Studies," *Greek Philosophy, Thales to Plato* (London: Macmillan, 1914), 223-9.

[6] Paul Shorey, *What Plato Said* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 29-31.

[7] Henri I. Marrou, *Histoire de l' Éducation dans L' Antiquité*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965), 114–16; *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 102-4.

was staged for what might be called 'the Academy's incoming class,' i.e., for its Freshmen."[8] While I am deeply fascinated by these kinds of proposals—and I would like them to be right—I will argue that evidence from the dialogues seems to suggest that instead of a dramatic reproduction of the dialogues there was a rhapsodic recitation. Furthermore, I do not think that merely reproducing a dialogue as theatrical drama would be sufficient to count as philosophical pedagogy. Similar to the discussion on rhetoric that follows the three speeches of the *Phaedrus*, to properly engage with the dialogues, I believe that the students in the Academy would have to actively interact with them and question them (from within and without). So, even *if* Plato staged the *Protagoras* as a play, *then* Plato's pedagogy was not over when the play was over. The students could not just passively take in the drama of the dialogue, they would have been asked to study it by playing with it.

Before turning to the dialogues, I would like to lay out some of my presuppositions, which are meant to be plausible, but are worth spelling out.

1) Plato was a consummate teacher. For example, as a writer, he tries to teach his listeners/readers even if these lessons are not immediately clear or explicitly didactic.
2) Plato's dialogues are eminently teachable.
3) Plato's dialogue formed the curriculum of the Academy; he most likely taught the dialogues in the Academy. (Plato's teaching was incorporated into the dialogues).
4) A corollary of (3), Plato's dialogues reflect his teaching.[9]

Also, since my view hinges on reading practices in ancient Greece, it is worth explicating what is at stake.

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[8] Altman, *Ascent to the Beautiful*, 48. On the theatricality of the *Phaedo*, see Nikos Charalabopoulos, *Platonic Drama and its Ancient Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 66-8 and Gilbert Ryle, *Plato's Progress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 23-4.

[9] Although I may have come to some of these points independently, I am deeply indebted to William Altman, and to his presentation of these points in his five-volume work on "Plato the Teacher." For more on Plato the educator, see A.K. Cotton, *Platonic Dialogue and the Education of the Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Reading in ancient Greece

There is a performativity to reading Greek in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE that was determined, in part, by the method of writing that was used. I will discuss the performativity and the materiality of writing in turn. In order to attempt to comprehend the extent of "performance culture" in ancient Greece, I propose a thought experiment.[10] Imagine a world with no recordings of any kind—no cassette tapes, records, movies, DVDs, YouTube, Spotify, Netflix, etc. In the ancient world, if you wanted to recall a piece of media (like a poem, song, or drama), you needed to bring it back from memory, back to life, by performing it and most likely singing it aloud. Performance, memory, and the ability to recall were so important that one historical episode can illustrate this broader experience. Plutarch, talking about the Athenian soldiers captured in the Sicilian Expedition in 413 BCE, writes:

> A few were rescued because of their knowledge of Euripides, for it seems that the Sicilians were more devoted to his poetry than any other Greeks living outside the mother country. Even the smallest fragments of his verses were learned from every stranger who set foot on the island, and they took delight in exchanging these quotations with one another. At any rate there is a tradition that many of the Athenian soldiers who returned home safely visited Euripides to thank him for their deliverance which they owed to his poetry. Some of them told him that they had been given their freedom in return for teaching their masters all they could remember of his works, while others, when they took to flight after the final battle, had been given food and water for reciting some of his lyrics (Plutarch, *Life of Nicias* 29.2-3).[11]

This example makes vivid the stakes of performance and shows how alien that kind of mind and memory are from our contemporary

[10] The term "performance culture" is a nod to Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne, eds. *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[11] Plutarch, and Ian Scott-Kilvert, *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1960).

world, where if we want to listen to a song, watch a TV show or a movie, all we have to do is pull up a recording on our electronic devices. If we were to be caught in a similar situation, most of us, if we were forced to recall, would not be able to remember—and sing or act out—our favorite media. We might memorize one song or scene, but not entire epic poems and plays, like many of the ancient Greeks did.

Another big difference between us and the ancient Greeks is our writing systems. We do not realize it but the spaces in between words and certain punctuation marks are innovations that have contributed to the ease and spread of literacy. These would not have been available to a reader in the 5th and 4th century BCE Greece. Even many classicists do not pay close enough attention to ancient readers' actual material writing system. How would someone have read a text? It would be through their writing system, which was "scriptio continua." Scriptio continua is a style of writing that forgoes spaces and punctuation marks between words or sentences. The following is an example of the very first line of Hesiod's *Theogony* 1-4 in scriptio continua:

> ΜΟΥΣΑΩΝΕΛΙΚΩΝΙΑΔΩΝΑΡΧΩΜΕΘΑΕΙΔΕΙΝΑΙΘΕΛΙΚ
> ΩΝΟΣΕΧΟΥΣΙΝΟΡΟΣΜΕΓΑΤΕΖΑΘΕΟΝΤΕΚΑΙΠΕΡΙΚΡΗ
> ΝΗΙΟΕΙΔΕΑΠΟΣΣΑΠΑΛΟΙΣΙΝΟΡΧΕΥΝΤΑΙΚΑΙΒΩΜΟΝ
> ΕΡΙΣΘΕΝΕΟΣΚΡΟΝΙΩΝΟΣ[12]

With more modern punctuation, the difference in cases between miniscule and majuscule (which was developed later), and line breaks for ease of scansion, the line would appear as:

> Μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ᾽ ἀείδειν,
> αἵ θ᾽ Ἑλικῶνος ἔχουσιν ὄρος μέγα τε ζάθεόν τε
> καί τε περὶ κρήνην ἰοειδέα πόσσ᾽ ἁπαλοῖσιν
> ὀρχεῦνται καὶ βωμὸν ἐρισθενέος Κρονίωνος.

And now an English translation by Hugh Gerard Evelyn-White: [13]

> From the Heliconian Muses let us begin to sing,
> who hold the great and holy mount of Helicon,

[12] This particular example is from "Scriptio continua," *Wikipedia*, June 3, 2022.

[13] Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (London: Heinemann, 1914), 78-9.

> and dance on soft feet about the deep-blue spring
> and the altar of the almighty son of Cronos.

This is my attempt to recreate the feel of Scriptio continua in English:

> COULDYOUREADTHISEASILYIFYOUWEREFORCEDTO

While this last line is something that a contemporary reader *can* read, it is not a form of writing that comes easily to us because we have become accustomed to the spaces, punctuation, the difference between lower and upper case, and the line and paragraph breaks of our modern writing system.[14] To better understand the contrast, Gregory Nagy, writes that in ancient Greece:

> the text was meant not only for *reading* […] It was also meant for *performance* […] The ancient Greeks, including Aristotle himself, regarded *reading* as a *reenactment* of live speech. Such a sense of reenactment was driven by their writing system […] The experience of seeing words run together in scriptio continua impedes not so much the general process of reading but the specific process of 'silent reading.'[15]

So, while scriptio continua does not facilitate "silent reading"—a kind of reading that is most common in our modern times—it is a writing system that was developed primarily for reading aloud. Scriptio continua is developed and utilized in a society in the crux of

[14] For poetry, poetic meter could be helpful in reading scriptio continua, but this technique would not be available in prose writers, such as in Plato, Xenophon, or Thucydides.

[15] Gregory Nagy, "Performance and text in ancient Greece," *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*, eds. George Boys-Stones, Barbara Graziosi, and Phiroze Vasunia (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009): 419-21 (emphasis in original; available online at chs.harvard.edu). Nagy says that when "Aristotle in the *Poetics* (1456b20-38) speaks about syllables and about the consonants and vowels that delimit them […] he is demonstrating a remarkably accurate linguistic understanding of the sound system or phonology of the Greek language as spoken in his time […]. Just as remarkable is the phonological accuracy of the writing system inherited by Aristotle and his contemporaries in reproducing the language that went into the texts they produced" (419-20).

converting and adapting from an oral/aural culture to a literary one. So, using some external evidence we can see that when Plato's dialogues were read they were read aloud, and (most likely) as a kind of performance. Furthermore, it is likely that the reader of a Platonic dialogue would want to change his voice, his tone, and also his body, in terms of gestures and facial expressions, to better represent the change in characters in a dialogue. This is so that the different characters can be heard and distinguished by the listeners, and not to fall into a monotonic background where everyone sounds the same.

With these presuppositions in hand, we can turn to look at some of the instances of reading in the Platonic dialogues, which begin to help us answer how they may have been read in the Academy (like a rhapsode, I will argue). I propose to look at evidence from within the dialogues that evoke what Plato may have been doing while teaching in the Academy. I want to read certain scenes with "Plato the teacher" in mind; and to see his dialogues as metatheatrical/metaphilosophical, that is, as Plato possibly commenting on his own methods.[16]

The depiction of reading in the dialogues

Let us reconstruct the possible performance of dialogues in the Academy by examining three instances of reading out loud in the Platonic dialogues themselves.

[1] There is only one instance in the Platonic corpus where a *Socratic* dialogue is read: *Theaetetus*. At the beginning, in the frame narrative of the dialogue (142a-3c), a slave reads aloud a book written by Euclides to both Euclides and Terpsion. The action depicted in the inner frame of the *Theaetetus* is a dialogue that records the conversation that Socrates had with Theaetetus, Theodorus, and another young man also named Socrates who was present as well. Euclides mentions that he cannot recall the conversation from memory, the one that Socrates had with Theaetetus, but that he made some notes immediately after getting home, and then later at his leisure he wrote the things he remembered. We can only assume that because the action does not shift back to the frame narrative—as it

[16] For metatheatre in Plato, see Mateo Duque, "Metatheatre," *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Plato*, eds. Gerald A. Press, and Mateo Duque, (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 287-9.

does, for instance, when Phaedo is recounting Socrates's last day (*Phaedo* 88c-89b; 102a; 118a)—that the slave reads the book all the way through uninterrupted.[17]

From this instance of reading, I reconstruct what a recitation of a Platonic dialogue may have been like in the Academy. Someone, perhaps even a slave as depicted here in the *Theaetetus*, reads the dialogue aloud for a group of listeners. The speaker could also have been Plato or one of his students. It would have to have been someone "musical" enough to read and perform the scriptio continua writing, and to imitate different characters in such a way as to make them distinct from one another when speaking. Imagine what a speaker would have to do for a dialogue like *Symposium*, which calls for twelve different speaking roles: Apollodorus; Glaucon; Appollodorus's friend; Socrates; Aristodemus; Agathon; Pausanius; Aristophanes; a slave; Eryximachus; Phaedrus; Diotima; and Alcibiades.

[2] Another instance of reading in the dialogues is at *Parmenides* 127c-d when Zeno reads his book to a group gathered in Athens. Socrates was quite a young man at the time (around eighteen years old). Socrates and others had been wanting and waiting to hear Zeno's writings, which Zeno had brought to Athens for the first time. Zeno himself read them aloud. After Socrates had heard Zeno read his book, he asked Zeno to read the first hypothesis of the first argument again. After Zeno rereads it, Socrates initiates him in a series of back-and-forth questions (dialectic) about his ideas. From this instance of reading, I reconstruct that a student may have been allowed to ask the reader to go back and re-read portions of the text, as well as to interrogate those earlier portions of the dialogue.

[3] A final instance of reading a text in a dialogue is the *Phaedrus* (there's an irony here because Socrates criticizes writing in the

[17] For framing in the Platonic dialogues, see: David Halperin, "Plato and the Erotics of Narrativity," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* supplement (1992): 93-129; Anne-Marie Schultz, *Plato's Socrates on Socrates Socratic Self-Disclosure and the Public Practice of Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2020); Margalit Finkelberg, "Frame and Frame-Breaking in Plato's Dialogues," *Framing the Dialogues: How to Read Openings and Closures in Plato*, eds. Eleni Kaklamanou, Maria Pavlou, and Antonis Tsakmakis (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 27-39.

Phaedrus). Although Phaedrus would love to try to recite Lysias's speech by heart to Socrates, Socrates notices that Phaedrus has a scroll of the actual speech hidden in his cloak. Socrates orders Phaedrus to read Lysias's speech of a non-lover trying to persuade a youth to be with him (230e-4c). Afterward, Socrates gives two of his own speeches; a first speech as the non-lover (237a-41d) and then another speech, the palinode, as the lover (244a-57b). After these speeches, Socrates and Phaedrus turn to discussing rhetoric. This post-performance discussion is *crucial*. The speeches are not allowed to stand on their own and just go uninterrogated.[18] Socrates and Phaedrus examine many topics and themes that are raised by the three previous speeches.

We also see here that Socrates asks Phaedrus to re-read a work that had just been read aloud, like we saw Socrates ask Zeno to re-read the first hypothesis of his work. Socrates twice asks Phaedrus to re-read the beginning of Lysias's speech (262d; 263e-4a). Socrates is making a point about the disordered nature of Lysias's speech and wants Phaedrus to see it. And yet there is a performative contradiction here; if writing continues "to signify [*sēmainei*] just that very same thing forever" (as Socrates claims at *Phaedrus* 275d-e; cf. *Protagoras* 329a), then there would be no use, no purpose, to Socrates having Phaedrus re-read the beginning of Lysias's speech—it would just say

[18] While I cannot argue that this was a Socratic innovation, I can contend that Socrates's practice of "debriefing" after speeches was in deep tension with rhetorical practices in other spheres. For example, in Athenian courtrooms cross-examination of witnesses was not allowed, and there was no collective deliberation after the hearing of both sides in a legal case (see Kelly Lambert, "Law and Courts in Ancient Athens: A Brief Overview" at https://kosmossociety.chs.harvard.edu/law-and-courts-in-ancient-athens-a-brief-overview/). Socrates's cross-examination of Meletus in *Apology* 24c-28a seems to be an exceptional circumstance. In addition, in a sympotic setting it was considered bad form/rude to interrupt a speaker or to go back and question a previous speaker. Again, Socrates in the *Symposium* 199b-201c is an exception to this general rule and is granted a *brief* exchange with the previous speaker, Agathon. However, Phaedrus, the symposiarch, calls out Socrates for his crosstalk in between speeches at 194a-d.

the same thing over and over again forever.[19] And yet Socrates wants Phaedrus to see something new, something different, when re-reading those lines that he had previously missed.[20]

So, to recap, I am hypothesizing that in order to educate, a Platonic dialogue would be read aloud in Plato's academy. Who would do the reading? This might be too difficult to say with any kind of certainty. Some possibilities are: (i) a slave (like in the *Theaetetus*), (ii) a student in the academy (but it is hard to say if this would have been a novice or experienced one); (iii) a teacher in the academy (like Aristotle); or (iv) maybe even Plato himself. The number of speakers is unknown. All of the examples from the Platonic corpus are of one person reading aloud, but there could have been various readers functioning as "actors." The polyvocal suggestion leads to a more theatrical or dramatic performance of the dialogues, whereas a monovocal suggestion to the rhapsodic performance.[21] Following the internal evidence gathered so far, after the reading, a student could: ask to have one of the passages reread (like in the *Parmenides* and the *Phaedrus*); ask a question concerning a passage from the text (like in the *Parmenides*); and, finally, enter into a more far-ranging discussion surrounding issues brought up by the dialogue (like the second half of the *Phaedrus*). There Socrates and Phaedrus look back at the three speeches given in the first half of the dialogue especially with an eye to what is a good art of speaking and writing (*rhetorikē*). In order to argue that Plato's teaching informed his writing and rewriting of the dialogues, and vice versa, that Plato's writing informed his teaching, I will first give evidence that Plato was a reviser.

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[19] Woodruff and Nehamas's translation of the *Phaedrus* in *Plato: Complete Works*. All quotes from the *Phaedrus* come from this translation.

[20] See Mateo Duque, "(Re)-reading without Writing?: A performative contradiction in Plato's *Phaedrus*" (2021 manuscript).

[21] The single rhapsodic speaker seems to be also mirrored in how the dialogues will have only a single narrator. For more on the role of the narrator in Plato, see Anne-Marie Schultz, *Plato's Socrates as Narrator: A Philosophical Muse* (Lanham: Lexington, 2013).

Plato the Reviser

My third presupposition that Plato's dialogues were shaped by his teaching relies, in part, on the premise that Plato revised his dialogues. For some, this point would not even need to be argued for. It would seem evident that the dialogues, as master literary-philosophical works, evince tremendous care and attention to detail that can only come from careful revision. Moreover, we have some ancient testimony of Plato's habit of revising. Jacob Howland has gathered the ancient evidence for Plato as a consummate reviser; and I am indebted to him for the following quotes.[22] Diogenes Laërtius reports that "Euphorion and Panaetius have said that several revisions of the opening of the *Republic* have been discovered" (3.37).[23] And Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes (*On Literary Composition*, 25):

> Plato, even at the age of eighty, never let off combing and curling [*ktenizōn kai bostruxizōn*] his dialogues and re-plaiting [*anaplekōn*] them in every way. Of course, every scholar is familiar with the stories told about Plato's industry, especially the one about the writing-tablet which they say was found after his death, with the opening words of the *Republic* arranged in various orders ("I went down yesterday to the Piraeus with Glaucon the son of Ariston").[24]

There are also references to revision within the dialogues. In the *Theaetetus,* Euclides discusses how he rewrote his dialogue:

> I have not made Socrates relate the conversation as he related it to me, but I represent him as speaking directly to the persons with whom he said he had this conversation […] I

[22] Jacob Howland, "Re-Reading Plato: The Problem of Platonic Chronology," *Phoenix*, 45. 3 (1991): 189-214. Another scholar who has collected the evidence for Plato's revision is Holger Thesleff, *Platonic Patterns* (Las Vegas: Parmenides, 2009), 230-5.

[23] This and other quotes from *Diogenes Laërtius* are of Pamela Mensch's translation of *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, ed. James Miller, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[24] Dionysius of Halicarnassus: *Critical Essays, Volume I. Ancient Orators. Lysias. Isocrates. Isaeus. Demosthenes. Thucydides,* translated by Stephen Usher, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974).

> wanted, in the written version, to avoid the bother of having the bits of narrative in between the speeches—I mean, when Socrates, whenever he mentions his own part in the discussion, says 'And I maintained' or 'I said,' or, of the person answering, 'He agreed' or 'He would not admit this.' That is why I have made him talk directly to them and have left out these formulae. (143b-c)[25]

Here, we have Euclides admitting that he has revised his written account in order to take out what we would call 'dialogue tags' and have a more direct narrative, almost like a theatrical or dramatic play. This is something that Plato himself may have done with the *Theaetetus*.[26] One last example is from the *Laws*. It is also interesting, and telling, that within this work that was reported *not* to have been revised, there are at least two mentions of the revision of writing.[27] A necessary corollary of my third presupposition, that Plato integrated particular pedagogical moments from his teaching in the Academy into his dialogues, is that Plato revised his dialogues. I have given external historical evidence as well as internal evidence for this.

Plato's teaching likely informed his dialogues

I want to provide some evidence for my third presupposition, namely, that Plato's teaching could have informed the dialogues. I think Plato wrote and re-wrote his dialogues as he was teaching in the Academy, and as he was teaching earlier versions or drafts of the dialogues. As a result, I think Plato incorporates selected "teachable moments" from his teaching in the Academy into the dialogues. It is highly likely that good points brought up by Plato's students in discussions in the academy may have been written into revised versions of dialogues. Some examples of this are the following.

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[25] M.J. Levett translation from *Plato: Complete Works*.

[26] Thesleff, *Platonic Patterns*, 207.

[27] For evidence that the *Laws* were not revised, most scholars point to *D.L.* (3.37): "Some say that Philip of Opus transcribed Plato's *Laws*, which were preserved on wax tablets." However, see Howland, "Re-reading Plato," 201-2 for skepticism. For revision of writing in the *Laws* see: "*to d'epaneromenon epirruthmizein*" (802b5-6) and "*epanorthōtea"* (809b5).

(3a) There is an intervention by Clitophon and Polemarchus during Socrates's and Thrasymachus's discussion about justice that talks about rulers in the precise sense at *Republic* 1.340a-1c. The dispute arises from whether or not Thrasymachus thinks that the rulers, the stronger, can make mistakes. That is, are the strong, the rulers, able to enact a law that might actually be detrimental to them, that is, to their *dis*advantage? In order to deal with this problem, Thrasymachus has to stipulate that he means "rulers in the precise sense [*kata ton akribē logon*]," which turn out to be infallible rulers, who cannot make mistakes, and can only pass laws to their advantage. I can imagine students in the Academy reading an earlier draft of the *Republic* and discussing Thrasymachus's proposal that "justice is the advantage of the stronger," and someone questions whether or not rulers might ever err and pass a law that might *not* be to their advantage. Plato likes this line of questioning that complicates Thrasymachus's theory and re-writes it into a revised version.

(3b) At *Euthydemus* 290b-1a, Clinias or someone else distinguishes generalship from the statesman's art, and mathematical arts from the dialecticians' art. The point comes from an earlier analogy, just as hunters and fishermen must hand over their prey to cooks, likewise geometers, astronomers, and calculators must hand over their discoveries, their "prey," to dialecticians. Later the idea is extended to the division of labor between generals and statesmen. The point arises from an exchange supposedly between Clinias and Socrates. However, Crito, who is listening to Socrates recount the conversation of the confrontation with the sophist-brothers Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, does not believe Socrates when he says that it was Clinias who made this point, but thinks it was someone else. Perhaps one of Plato's students used this metaphor in a discussion about the difference between dialectics and mathematics and he liked it so much that he wrote it into the *Euthydemus.* Plato marks off the point in an unusual way (by alluding to some "superior being"), almost seeming to highlight that something special is happening, as if he is quoting.[28]

[28] At 290e-1a, the story that Socrates has been telling Crito gets interrupted and Plato returns to the frame with which the dialogue began:

In addition to brilliant contributions, Plato could also have included the mistakes or missteps of his students in the dialogues.

(3c) For example, Young Socrates makes a mistake at *Statesman* 262a-3a of not dividing a category (animals) properly (that is, in half). Instead of dividing a class in half, Young Socrates tries to separate off a smaller part, rational animals, from a much larger part, non-rational animals. The *Xenos* compares this kind of lopsided division to dividing up humanity into Greek and Barbarian (262c-d). One of Plato's students may have tried to divide up the kind "animal" into the rational and the non-rational, or the kind "human" into Greek and Barbarian, and Plato catches this mistake, but he still likes it as a pedagogical tool for teaching listeners of his dialogue what not to do, so he writes it into the *Statesman*.

(3d) At *Statesman* 268a-c Young Socrates has problems again, this time in comparing the ruler to a shepherd. As the *Xenos* explains later, the mistake was in having the wrong model, the ruler as shepherd (274e-9a). Instead of excising an entire part of the dialogue because it was operating with a wrong paradigm, Plato instead keeps it as an important lesson for the reader/listener of the dialogue of how one can

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CRITO: What do you mean, Socrates? Did that boy utter all this?

SOCRATES: You're not convinced of it, Crito?

CRITO: Good heavens no! Because, in my opinion, if he spoke like that, he needs no education, either from Euthydemus or anyone else.

SOCRATES: Dear me, then perhaps after all it was Ctesippus who said this, and I am getting absent-minded.

CRITO: Not my idea of Ctesippus!

SOCRATES: But I'm sure of one thing at least, that it was neither Euthydemus nor Dionysodorus who said it. Do you suppose, my good Crito, that some superior being was there and uttered these things—because I am positive I heard them.

CRITO: Yes, by heaven, Socrates, I certainly think it was some superior being, very much so.

(Quoted from Rosamond Kent Sprague's translation of *Euthydemus* in *Plato: Complete Works.*) Another, less exciting, suggestion is that Plato could instead be referencing himself. Perhaps, all the flourish surrounding this point is just meant to allude to Plato's own discussion of the difference between mathematics and dialectics in the *Republic* 7.

go wrong. We can envision that Plato was perhaps inspired by overhearing one or several of his students using the "bad analogy" of a political ruler as a shepherd, but he thought the error fruitful enough to depict in the *Statesman.*

The structure of dialogues as indication of Platonic pedagogy

I turn from looking at specific passages to the overall structure of some dialogues to consider how (4) Plato's pedagogy in the Academy may be represented in the architectonics of some of the dialogues. One can imagine Plato having had "guest lecturers" that came to speak at the Academy and his students were allowed to ask questions in much the same way that in the dialogues Socrates interrogates traveling sophists (Gorgias, Protagoras, Hippias). Perhaps students or heads of other schools would have come to the academy to present their work and to answer questions on their views. We know of one impromptu "guest lecture" from Diogenes the Cynic via Diogenes Laertius (6.40):

> When Plato had defined man as an animal with two legs and no feathers, and was applauded, Diogenes plucked the feathers from a cock, brought it to Plato's school, and said, 'Here is Plato's man.' (This was why 'having broad nails' was added to the definition).

I love bringing up this (possibly apocryphal) anecdote, which is meant to support the plausible idea that Plato may have had speakers from outside the Academy come and present their views (although in the case with Diogenes the Cynic, he was not invited).

One can also imagine that Plato held "tag-team" philosophical debates. Perhaps he staged two-on-one contests like modern professional wrestling matches. I can see Plato or another instructor at the Academy (such as Aristotle, Speusippus, Xenocrates, or Heraclides of Pontus) holding his own against two alternating bright young students. This kind of two-on-one debate/discussion is similar to the ones represented in the dialogues: Socrates vs. Glaucon/Adeimantus (in the *Republic*); Socrates vs. Cebes/Simmias (in the *Phaedo*); and Socrates vs. Euthydemus/Dionysodorus (in the *Euthydemus*). The very structure of some of the dialogues can also give us insight into how Plato may have taught; I gave the two examples of the guest lecture and the two-on-one tag-team debate.

Plato's broadmindedness, both in and out of the dialogues

An aspect of Plato's pedagogy that is evident both within the dialogues and outside of them is his tolerance for opposing views, or better his "broadmindedness."[29] Plato allowed for diverse viewpoints to flourish within the Academy, often allowing for students to take positions that went against his own teachings. In addition, Plato often represents views that he most likely disagreed with in the dialogues. The most famous examples are: Thrasymachus in the *Republic*; Callicles in the *Gorgias*; Protagoras in the *Protagoras*; and Euthydemus and Dionysodorus in the *Euthydemus*. And within his school,

> general tolerance was one of the chief hallmarks of the Platonic Academy. Eudoxus, Speusippus, and Aristotle, for example, were able to propound teachings in it which were diametrically opposed to those of Plato. Plato expressed objections to these views — on occasion even in his dialogues — but it never occurred to him to ban them.[30]

Plato teaches in two distinct but related ways, first as a writer through the dialogues and second as an educator in the Academy. Plato the writer teaches his listeners through the staging of pedagogical philosophical theater. The internal audience (the interlocutors of the dialogue) often do not learn or recognize this lesson properly, but this heightens Plato's provocation to his external audience, the listeners. Plato does not write in his own voice, but speaks through the characters in the dialogues. Plato the writer hides himself. It is likely that Plato the teacher used a form of mimetic pedagogy in teaching and discussing the dialogues in the Academy. Instead of giving "tyrannical" authoritative readings or interpretations, Plato would call on his students to come up with their own views. Thus, Plato did not hand down his direct teachings. Plato the teacher hides himself.

Plato's openness to various (and often conflicting or competing) views (both within his Academy and in his dialogues) is a kind of

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[29] For the suggestion that "Plato" (which, regardless is a nickname) means "broadmindedness," see David M. Robinson, "The Greek View of Life," *The Mississippi Quarterly* 7. 1 (1953): 34.

[30] Baltes, "Plato's School, the Academy," 9.

pedagogy on its own. By not trying to merely reproduce partisans of his own views but instead by encouraging others to develop their own ideas (even if they go counter to his own), Plato teaches the proper generosity of spirit that a good educator should have in spurring his students' own projects.

Socratic *mimēsis* as a hint to Platonic pedagogy

Students in the Academy after reading a dialogue may have been called upon to think and play with dialogues. The student would be called to consider things from within the fiction of the dialogue and also from a perspective outside of it. On the one hand, they would have been asked to role-play with the characters in the dialogues. That is, to think from within a character's role in a dialogue *as that character*—to inhabit, take up, and defend that character's point of view. Plato might have asked a student who was role-playing as a character to explain the character's psychology, and the reasons for the character's actions. At *Phaedrus* 271d, Socrates explains how philosophical rhetoric is about directing the soul, and the rhetorician must know: the kinds of soul, their number, of what sort each person is, how individuals have a certain sort and others another sort. Plato is describing the psychology and art of typology, i.e., the ability to understand an individual as a type or as a kind of person. This is the sort of investigation at work in playing with the dialogues.

On the other hand, students may have been asked to take a position outside of the dialogue and to criticize or defend a character's words or actions. That is, the students would be invited to essentially "re-write" extemporaneously a character's lines, to make them say what the students believe to be correct. Plato often has Socrates engage in textual criticism that ignores the possible intentions of the author/poet or even dismisses the motivations of the characters. Plato represents Socrates as instead interested in what is true, in what is really the case.[31] Both of these ways of playing with the dialogues I call pedagogical *mimēsis*.

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[31] *Charmides* 161c: "the question at issue is not who said it, but whether what he said is true or not." Another example is Socrates's tendentious strong "re-interpretation" of Simonides's poem in the *Protagoras* 339a-347a. Additionally, Socrates will often quote Homer out of context.

These two ways of playing with dialogues are exemplified by phenomena in the dialogues I have called Socratic *mimēsis*. These are moments in the dialogues when Socrates role-plays, when he speaks in another voice as a different persona. In the *Crito*, beginning at 50a, Socrates takes on the role of "the Laws" and performs a play within a play. Socrates acts out a drama between "the Laws" and another character, "Socrates." In performing this vignette, Socrates engages his interlocutor, Crito, in a completely different way than he did previously. Earlier, Socrates was trying to rationally convince Crito that the just and right thing for him to do is to stay in jail rather than escape. At various moments in this scene Socrates draws Crito in by asking him questions about how the character "Socrates" should reply to "the Laws" (50b, 51c, 52d, 54d). Another example is in the *Theaetetus* when Socrates and Theaetetus have been criticizing Protagoras and his *homo mensura* view. At 166a2-168c2, however, Socrates in the so-called "Defense of Protagoras," impersonates Protagoras and defends Protagoras and his views *as* Protagoras. By imitating Protagoras, Socrates is also finally able to bring a reluctant Theodorus into the discussion and get Theodorus to criticize his former deceased teacher.[32]

I want to provide some examples of what this playing with the dialogues may have looked like. I can imagine Plato calling upon one of his students to take on the role of Crito in the *Crito*, and asking the student "why did Crito act and speak the way that he did?" "Why was Crito so silent during the speech of "the Laws"?" Then, Plato may have asked, "How would you have convinced Socrates to escape from jail, if you were called upon for the job?" After reading the *Republic*, Plato may have asked the students, "If you were in Adeimantus's or Glaucon's place, what objections would you have to 'the *Kallipolis*'?" Or another question: "If you were Thrasymachus how would you defend the view that 'justice is the advantage of the stronger" in Book 1 of the *Republic*?" After reading the *Parmenides*, he could ask, "If you were not as tractable as Aristotle in the *Parmenides*, what interventions

[32] For a defense and more elaborate treatment of the points in this paragraph, see Mateo Duque, *In and out of Character: Socratic Mimēsis*, PhD diss., The Graduate Center of The City University of New York (CUNY), 2020.

would you make and what questions would you have of Parmenides's deductions in the second half?"

While somewhat speculative, my ideas about Plato's pedagogical performances are not merely theoretical proposals, they are *also* backed up by practice. In Spring 2021 I taught a graduate level philosophy course on Plato called "Platonic and Socratic *Mimēsis*" where I divided the class into groups that would meet outside of the classroom. Each group read aloud various passages from the dialogues (that they had selected) and then they would discuss them before meeting for a discussion with the class as a whole, including me, the instructor. One of the exercises I encouraged was this imaginative role-playing of characters within the dialogues. I asked students to imagine themselves *as* the characters in the dialogue in order to better understand and explore a character's psychology and motivations.[33] I also asked them to imagine themselves in the role of some of the characters that they read. What would they have said or done in the place of those characters?

Conclusion

I used passages from the dialogues (supplemented with some ancient testimonia) to answer the question, "How did Plato teach in the Academy?" My reconstruction of Plato's pedagogy in the Academy is that there was a single person who read the dialogue aloud like a rhapsode (this is in contrast to the dramatic theatrical hypothesis, in which several speakers function as actors in the performance of a dialogue); and after this, students were allowed to ask that portions of the text to be re-read, to ask a question about the text, and were encouraged to enter into a broader conversation about the topic and themes brought out by the text. This later pedagogical method of interrogating and investigating a dialogue is of more importance than the mere reading of a dialogue. I made complimentary claims: that Plato's experiences teaching were woven into some of the dialogues, and that Plato's pedagogy reflects some of the ways that he taught in the Academy. I proposed that excellent points made by students may have been written into revised forms of the dialogue. And not only good points, but also mistakes in reasoning

[33] And as Heather Reid reminded me, I am surely not the first to do this.

may have been added into the dialogues. I suggested that the way certain dialogues are organized with "guest lecturers" and "tag-team" philosophical debates reflect Plato's pedagogy in the Academy. Plato's broadmindedness, his openness to various and opposing viewpoints, is also evident from both outside and inside of the dialogue. Lastly, drawing on the idea of Socratic *mimēsis*, I gave a plausible curriculum for how Plato may have used the dialogues to teach them: he had his students "play" with them. Plato may have asked his students to enter into the roles of the characters in the dialogues to better understand them and the type of person they represent. Plato may have also asked students to take over from the position of the character in the dialogue and to suggest a better, truer account of things than what the characters said or did.