



The Psychagogic Work of Examples in Plato's *Statesman*

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of examples (*paradeigmata*) as propaedeutic to philosophical inquiry, in light of a methodological digression in Plato's *Statesman*. Consistent with scholarship on Aristotle's view of example, scholars of Plato's work have privileged the logic of examples over their rhetorical appeal. Following a small but significant trend in recent rhetorical scholarship that emphasizes the affective nature of examples, this article assesses the psychagogic potential of *paradeigmata*, following the discussion of example in Plato's *Statesman*. I argue that by creating an expectation in the learner that he or she will find similarities, the use of examples in philosophical pedagogy engages his or her desire to discern the intelligible principles that ground experiential knowledge. Thus, examples not only serve as practice at the dialectician's method of abstraction but also cultivate a dialectical *ēthos*, characterized by the desire to know the *logoi* of all things.

KEYWORDS: example, method, paradigm, pedagogy, Plato

INTRODUCTION

Ever since Gerard Hauser's 1968 article "The Example in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: Bifurcation or Contradiction?" drew attention to the difficulty of interpreting Aristotle's asymmetrical descriptions of example (*paradeigma*), rhetorical theorists have engaged in a significant and broad discussion regarding the proper understanding of the role of examples in argumentation and inquiry. Originally, the scholarly discussion concerned what precisely Aristotle means by suggesting that examples proceed from "part to part" (1932, 14 [1357b28-29])—that is, whether he is asserting that they operate by means of a

Philosophy and Rhetoric, Vol. 49, No. 3, 2016
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“mediating generalization” (Benoit 1987, 261) or, instead, by what Hauser calls an “unmediated inference” (1968, 88). Although Hauser recognizes that argument through example makes a logical appeal to an abstract rule, he emphasizes the audience’s experience, asserting that the move from “part to part” is an immediate inference made by the listener, who recognizes the similarities among cases without thematizing the general principle. Focusing on the effect of rhetorical speech upon the “whole person” (Grimaldi 1958), Hauser argues that Aristotle sees the rhetoric of example as involving psychological and affective elements that operate independent of inductive reasoning.

By emphasizing the perspective of the audience and the process of reasoning over that of the speaker and the static logic of a completed argument, Hauser’s reading marked a significant departure from the orthodoxy of analytical assessments of argument by example. This dominant view is well represented in the standard manual of rhetorical argumentation, *The New Rhetoric*: “There is a tendency to lead the hearer from the example to a particular conclusion, without any rule being stated. This is termed arguing *from the particular to the particular*. . . . The notions used in describing the particular instance that serves as example implicitly operate as the rule enabling the passage from one instance to another” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 352). Note that the movement of thought in the listener is reduced to an implicit replication of the rhetor’s own argument, such that the listener’s motivation appears insignificant.

Other scholars have stressed the psychological and affective aspects of the rhetoric of example, applying this consideration to a variety of literary traditions (Consigny 1976; Arthos 2003; McCormick 2008; Stroud 2011). Clearly, interpretations of example are no longer limited to discussion of its relation to the logic of induction, and many interpreters agree that “there can be no separation of logic and psychology” (Arthos 2003, 338). In what follows, I too seek to assess the affective ground of reasoning by example, looking to the explicit methodological treatment of *paradeigma* as a pedagogical tool in Plato’s *Statesman*.

The *Statesman*’s main interlocutor, the Eleatic Stranger, introduces an extended discussion of example saying, “It is difficult to grasp the greater things without the use of *paradeigmata*” (Plato 1925, 77 [277d1–3]).¹ The Stranger thus emphasizes that examples are not simply a method of argument and exposition but, as Richard Robinson puts it, a “method of discovery” (1962, 211) whereby someone acquires new understanding based on the similarity of a novel case to a familiar one. While current scholarship on the dialogues offers substantial consideration of the logical strength of Socrates’ invocation of examples (the debate regarding the “Socratic fallacy”) as well

as interpretations of the relationship between the *Statesman's* discussion of examples and the dialectician's method of collection, scholars have provided no pedagogical account of the means by which a learner ascends from recognizing the similarity among cases (the example) to knowledge of the principle that grounds that similarity (the exemplarity of an example).²

To provide such an account, this paper studies what I term the “psychagogic” work of examples—whereby the desire to find similarities draws a soul toward concern for the intelligible. I take this term from Socrates' discussion of rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*: “Is not rhetoric in its entire nature an art which leads the soul (*technē psychagōgia*) by means of words?” (1914, 517–18 [261a10]). In this passage, Socrates is critiquing sophistical *psychagōgia*, which exploits similarities in order to move the beliefs of the listener steadily from one position to its opposite. However, Socrates subsequently asserts that true psychagogy requires one to know the nature of things, so a genuine rhetorician would of necessity practice the dialectician's “divine” methods of collection and division (1914, 525, 535 [263b7–9, 265d2–e4]). This seems to imply that a philosophical rhetoric and psychagogy employs similarities to reveal the truth, moving the soul not from opposites to opposites but from what is similar to the truth toward the truth itself.

In my study of the *Statesman*, then, I seek to reveal the philosophical psychagogy involved in the pedagogical deployment of example. I contend that by offering an example, a teacher directs a student's attention toward seeking out similarities, offering practice at conceptual abstraction. By inculcating a desire for finding the principle behind the similarity between familiar and unfamiliar cases, the pedagogical deployment of examples is one method for leading a soul (*psychē-agōgē*) to seek the intelligible residing within experience. I conclude, then, that in addition to their logical function examples play an important psychagogic role in inquiry, a view that, while more common among rhetorical theorists, has been largely neglected by interpreters of the dialogues. If this account is successful, it contributes to a deeper appreciation of the significance of the pedagogical context of the *Statesman's* discussion of examples, and it supports a deeper understanding of the affective basis for the rhetoric of example.

SCHOLARSHIP ON EXAMPLE IN PLATO'S WORK

One of the main interpretive difficulties related to the dialogues' view of the value of examples is highlighted by a comment Richard Robinson makes in

his treatment of the dialectical method of the early and middle dialogues: “The early [period],” he notes, “gives prominence to method but not to methodology, while the middle gives prominence to methodology but not to method” (1962, 61).³ This shift in emphasis is reflected in the two main lines of scholarly interpretation of the methodological significance of example in the dialogues: those who focus on Socrates’ argumentative employment of examples and those who offer readings of the “theory” of example articulated by the Eleatic Stranger in the *Statesman*. The former trajectory is pursued by scholars engaged in the debate about whether Socrates uses examples fallaciously, according to his own principle that examples cannot form the basis for a definition (Geach 1966; Santas 1972; Beversluis 1987; Vlastos 1990; Prior 1998; Wolfsdorf 2004; Ferejohn 2013). Following the latter trajectory are scholars of the later dialogues and of Platonic methodology who have provided interpretations of what Melissa Lane describes as “the longest and most detailed discussion of example as such [*paradeigma*], or any of its sisters—analogy, image, comparison—in Plato” (1998, 61). Many of these scholars identify important similarities between the method of example and the dialectician’s method of collection (Goldschmidt 1947; Robinson 1962; Bluck and Neal 1975; Kato 1995; Gill 2006; El Murr 2006; Sayre 2006; Gill 2012). Nonetheless, none of these scholars has given an account for the way examples facilitate such dialectical thinking.

Those focusing on Socrates’ *argumentative* use of examples have prioritized the persuasive deployment of examples over their value for inquiry, thereby neglecting the pedagogical potential of examples to illuminate what is not yet known. According to Robinson, the *Statesman’s own* discussion of *paradeigma* “justifies . . . the use of examples in teaching, not in suggesting new propositions to oneself or in proving such propositions. . . . By calling the learner’s attention to something he already knows, the teacher causes him to know something more” (1962, 211). Even those who have treated the pedagogical rather than argumentative purpose of examples have not addressed their attendant psychological and affective conditions, which are suggested by the educational scene invoked by the Eleatic Stranger in the *Statesman’s* description of the method of example. In the following analysis, I take up this underappreciated aspect of the *Statesman’s* account, arguing that examples not only offer a means of argumentative exposition and epistemological abstraction but serve the psychagogic role of encouraging the learner to desire the intelligible. My account also adds to prior interpreters’ view of example as practice in the method of collection by showing that

example may also serve to inculcate dialectical habits of mind, such as abstraction and the desire to discern the intelligible within experience.

THE MEANING OF *PARADEIGMA* IN PLATO'S DIALOGUES

Before diving into the dialogues' ambiguous use of *paradeigma*, it is worth considering Aristotle's explicit discussion of the term in the *Rhetoric* and in the *Prior Analytics*, since this has received more attention in scholarship on *paradeigma* and since his restriction of *paradeigma* to rhetorical argument seems directly related to the metaphysical implications of Plato's use of the term. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle describes *paradeigma* (regularly translated as "example") as the rhetorical counterpart (*antistrophē*) of dialectical induction (1356b1–5), called upon to corroborate (or, in its absence, substitute for) persuasion through enthymematic proof (1394a15–20). Aristotle's treatment of *paradeigma* in the context of its argumentative use is likely the source of the scholarly limitation of examples to their argumentative function. That said, Aristotle provides neither a purely logical nor unambiguous account of *paradeigma*.

First of all, Aristotle notes that "the example does not concern the relation of part to whole [particular to universal], nor of whole to part, but of part to part, of like to like" (1932, 14 [1357b28–29]). As I have noted, there is scholarly disagreement regarding the meaning of Aristotle's claim that *paradeigma* moves from part to part, with Benoit arguing that this includes an implicit, "mediating generalization" (1987, 262) and Hauser arguing that *paradeigma* can operate as an "argument based on an unmediated inference, a recognition" (1985, 179). In spite of this ambiguity, Aristotle does elucidate a fundamental relationship between these two "parts": "When two things fall under the same genus, but one of them is better known than the other, the better-known is the example" (1932, 14 [1357b29–30]). Thus, according to Aristotle, a *paradeigma* (1) is used in rhetorical persuasion in a way similar to that of dialectical induction; (2) can support or, when necessary, substitute for enthymematic proof; (3) involves the generic likeness between two instances; and (4) consists of an instance that is more familiar to the audience.

Given the scope of the *Rhetoric*, it is unsurprising that Aristotle's account of *paradeigma* describes the speaker's pattern of reasoning. However, this emphasis on *paradeigma* as the tool of the rhetorician leaves implicit any account of the way that one comes to know the principle for the sake of which the example is given. That is, although Aristotle describes *paradeigma* as the rhetorical correlate to dialectical induction, he does not

describe the epistemological or psychological mechanism of this movement of thought. This is certainly no failure on Aristotle's part and instead a feature of the restricted concern of the *Rhetoric's* inquiry.

Nonetheless, in the *Prior Analytics* (69a), where the logic of *paradeigma* is explicitly addressed, Aristotle is careful to distinguish it from *epagōgē*, or (dialectical) induction proper. The likeness of an example to what it exemplifies is one that is constructed by the speaker, and, although it may produce persuasion regarding something that is true, its likeness to the exemplified is not the cause of its truth. Minimizing the dialectical value of *paradeigmata* for discovering the truth of things may well be Aristotle's way of resisting Plato's metaphysics of mimesis, which proposes that the likeness of examples to forms is nonaccidental. However, eliminating the metaphysical association of *paradeigma* also limits Aristotle's ability to explain the way *paradeigma* can function as the starting point for inquiry, and as what follows demonstrates, this is the unique advantage of Plato's ambiguous use of the term.

As Kenneth Sayre notes, the meaning of *paradeigma* as example, or instance of a general type, is common throughout the dialogues: "In the *Apology*, Socrates suggests that the oracle's pronouncement about none surpassing him in wisdom is a matter of singling him out as an example (*παράδειγμα*: 23b1) to illustrate the wisdom of recognizing one's own ignorance. In the *Phaedrus*, he cites his speeches on Love as providing an example (*παράδειγμα*: 262d1) of how a knowledgeable orator can mislead his audience; in the *Philebus*, he alludes to examples (*παράδείγματα*: 13c8) of pleasures being at odds with one another; and so forth" (2006, 73). Whether or not Plato's own view of the proper sense of *paradeigma* is consistent across the dialogues, there is clearly a consistent pattern of use of the term to mean an instance of a principle or type. But this invocation is by no means limited to an argumentative function, as it seems to be in Aristotle's account. Indeed, the oracle has no need for persuasive argument and may use examples as warnings or enticements. In addition, though they contain many arguments, the dialogues are by no means purely argumentative. The vast majority of examples there are illustrative rather than evidential. Clearly, *paradeigma* in the dialogues involves more than argument alone.

In addition to the general sense of "example" as an instance of a type, the dialogues also invoke the term "paradeigma" to refer to that of which an example is an example. In the first instance noted by Sayre, Socrates would appear to stand as an example of what human wisdom looks like, just as

Socrates' speeches on love serve as negative examples of "what not to do" as a rhetor. While there are, then, both positive examples (examples given as ideals to emulate) and negative examples (examples of what to avoid), the "exemplarity" of each implicitly invokes reference to an ideal as the basis of its function qua example. Ironically, then, even the negative example references the "ideal"—precisely as its negation.

That the exemplarity of an example implies an ideal justifies the dialogues' other usage of *paradeigma* to describe the forms, which are the source of the exemplarity of each of their instances: "I think the most likely view is, that these ideas (*eidē*) exist in nature as patterns (*paradeigmata*), and the other things resemble them and are imitations of them" (1963, 219 [132d2–3]). Socrates can only be held up as an ideal example of human wisdom because of his likeness to the ideal of wisdom. Although the idealization of an example as a model is common, this metaphysical sense of *paradeigma* creates a productive ambiguity in the dialogues.⁴ As David Ambuel puts it, "A paradigm is a model for comparison, but the term is ambiguous. . . . A *paradeigma* might be an architect's or sculptor's model, an image (*eikōn*) of what is to be made, but it can also be an exemplar, the standard against which other things are measured" (2007, 8). That is, *paradeigma* operates, on the one hand, by appeal to sensible or particular instantiations of universal classes or rules and, on the other hand, by acting as exemplars or proxies for those very rules. As Ambuel notes, this sense of the term makes the translation of "paradeigma" as "model" often appropriately ambiguous. Samuel McCormick marks this same ambiguity in the Latin "exemplum", calling it "a *strategic resource* . . . introducing ambiguity into any given rhetorical situation" (2008, 274). In a later section, I return to this productive ambiguity when treating the Stranger's recursive *paradeigma* of *paradeigma*.

Although the relationship between the two senses of *paradeigma* (example and exemplar) are in some sense embedded within the structure of any example, these different senses need not constitute the grounds of an ontological difference. Indeed, Aristotle resists just such dualism by limiting his use of *paradeigma* to the sense of example (or part) alone.⁵ Despite this departure from metaphysical paradigmaticism, in his account of example Aristotle still emphasizes the relation of similarity as fundamental to *paradeigma*. In addition to recognizing the nature of *paradeigma* as similar to others of its kind and to its genus, the *Statesman* dialogue suggests that *paradeigma* offers access to otherwise unattainable truths. Analyzing the discussion of this aspect of *paradeigma* will provide insight

for determining the way that examples serve a psychagogic function in dialectical pedagogy.

*PARADEIGMA AS A MEANS FOR INQUIRY AND LEARNING
IN THE STATESMAN*

The Eleatic Stranger's discussion of *paradeigma* in the *Statesman* is simultaneously rich and opaque. The discussion begins with two metaphors that require careful interpretation. Understanding these as well as the pedagogical backdrop they introduce provides the necessary framework for interpreting the psychagogic implications of example described there. While most interpretations of this discussion focus on the role of the teacher's cognitive anticipation of the target of dialectical inquiry, my reading will focus instead on the way an inquirer may transform the learning of new cases into understanding of an abstract principle. I will argue that by mirroring the cognitive anticipation of the pedagogue, the learner's affective state of expectation orients the learner's desire toward finding the intelligible within experience.

The context within which the main speaker of the *Statesman*, the Eleatic Stranger, begins his discussion of *paradeigma* is inauspicious. Though the aim of the conversation is to define the statesman, each attempt made by means of the Stranger's characteristic "method of division" has somehow failed.⁶ Moreover, the Stranger's attempt to clarify the nature of their difficulty for his young interlocutor, Socrates, through use of a myth only produces more confusion.⁷ At this point, the Stranger stops to reflect on their predicament, likening it to two kinds of error in the arts:

In my opinion our figure of the king is not yet perfect, but like statue-makers who sometimes in their misapplied enthusiasm make too numerous and too large additions and thus delay the completion of their several works, we too . . . have taken up a marvelous mass of myth and have consequently been obliged to use a greater part of it than we should. . . . Our talk, just like a picture of a living creature, seems to have good enough outline, but not yet to have received the clearness that comes from pigments and the blending of colors. And yet it is more fitting to portray any living being by speech and argument than by painting or any handicraft whatsoever to persons who are able to follow argument; but to others it is better to do it by means of works of craftsmanship. (1925, 75–77 [277a5–c7])⁸

On the one hand, with the myth, they included too much, the way sculptors do when their work becomes busy with figures; on the other hand, with their divisions they also included too little, like a painter's first sketch, which while generally accurate lacks the clarity and specificity that comes from layering colors.⁹ This seems to suggest that both illustrations and logical analyses tend to inadequately represent the subjects they treat, one by including too many particulars and the other by including too few. Illustrations, like sculptures, may become overly complicated, thus obscuring the subject; definitions, like sketches, are accurate but only because they are lacking details. The Stranger seems to prioritize *logoi* here but recognizes that Young Socrates is unable to follow his logical analysis and thus knows he must instead "paint" him a picture of their problem. With this, the Stranger has not only introduced the fundamental rhetorical principle that a speech must suit both its subject and its audience but has also employed this principle with his use of craft comparisons for his inexperienced interlocutor.¹⁰

Having suggested that *paradeigmata* are a resource for those who cannot follow *logoi*, the Stranger immediately makes his claim stronger, saying that *paradeigmata* are indispensable to *all* who inquire into the "greater things":

It is difficult, my extraordinary friend, to point out sufficiently any of the greater things [*tōn meizonōn*] unless one makes use of examples [*paradeigmasi*]. For each of us likely knows everything as in a dream and again when awake, is unaware of it all.

—How do you mean?

In a very strange way, it seems like I have just now stirred up our experience [*pathos*] regarding knowledge.

—Why is that?

Comrade, my example [*paradeigma*] itself is again in need of an example (*paradeigmatos*). (1925, 77 [277d1–10])

Given this, it is puzzling that later in his discussion, the Stranger asserts that "the greatest and noblest conceptions have no image wrought plainly for human vision, which he who wishes to satisfy the mind of the inquirer can apply to some one of his senses and by mere exhibition satisfy the mind" (1925, 107 [285e5–286a4]). If the most important subjects of inquiry cannot be demonstrated through appeal to sensible examples, then why on earth are examples essential to exactly such inquiry? To understand this, I contend that we must abandon the notion that examples offer demonstrative evidence and turn instead to the view that they might offer

a psychagogic resource. Indeed, this interpretation is consistent with the Stranger's contention in the *Sophist* that "everyone has agreed long ago that if investigations of great matters (*tōn megalōn*) are to be properly worked out we ought to practice them on small and easier matters before attacking the very greatest" (1961, 271–73 [218c7–d2]). Rather than providing a demonstration, practicing with something simple and based on familiar experience *prepares the inquirer* to study something less conspicuous.

This emphasis on the way simple examples give us practice in the study of greater things accords with Victor Goldschmidt's identification of "exercise" as one of the primary functions of *paradeigma* in Plato's dialogues (1985, 15–22). Scholars differ, however, concerning what exactly is being practiced by means of *paradeigma*. Mary Louise Gill argues that when an example harbors a structure similar to a more abstract, less familiar target of inquiry, examples become models (2006, 9). Goldschmidt and Sayre go further, saying that treating examples as models accomplishes the same work as the dialectical method of collection (1985, 15, 18–19; 2006, 90). Clearly, then, examples are not simply illustrations but are tools for harnessing familiar experience in order to develop understanding of what can be "demonstrated by *logos* alone" (1925, 107 [286a7–8]). But how do examples accomplish this?

The Stranger explains that our dependency on examples is caused by a fundamental epistemological condition in which "each of us likely knows everything as in a dream and again when awake, is unaware of it all." Though what he means is not entirely evident, if we compare this statement to his earlier discussion of illustration and analysis, his explanation here becomes clearer. Just as illustration by appeal to sensible experience is engrossing and vivid but contains unnecessary and misleading additions, dreams also richly recall reality, and yet once we wake up, the dream world disappears. Our awakening to the intelligible has a similar character—while we begin to know the shape of things in their abstract outline (*eidōs*), we also seem to lose the colorful conviction that sensuous, "dreamy" experience provides. On this reading, our "waking" state corresponds to our explicit awareness and articulation of what we know, while dream knowledge is the inarticulate intuition that forms the foundation of our beliefs.

Scholars find support for this interpretation of the Stranger's dream claim based on its similarity to Socrates' invocation of dreaming in the *Meno* to describe the way that Meno's slave recollects the answer to the problem posed: "And right now, like a dream, these opinions were just

aroused in him” (85c1–11; my translation) (Goldschmidt 1947, 53; Robinson 1962, 214; Bluck and Neal 1975, 36–40; Sayre 2006, 77, 86). However, some appropriately express resistance to eliding the Stranger’s remarks with the discussion of recollection (Kato 1995, 163, 168; Gill 2006, 6n13). Regardless of whether recollection and dreaming can be compared, the Stranger’s claim, like Socrates’ in the *Meno*, clearly privileges the dream state as a starting point for knowledge.

However they do it, examples appear to be necessary because they are able to ferry us from our dependency on the vividness of our dreamy, sensible experiences to a wakeful recognition of what is common between the sensible and the intelligible. Rather than feeling we have lost touch with reality, as we often do when engaging in analytic abstraction, examples bring us down to earth, demonstrating not the ideas themselves but *our soul’s intimate connection to them*. Although the senses portray a world of things, this world is “all in our mind.” Just like a dream, the truth of sensation resides in its impact on the soul. By connecting to examples, however, we find ourselves drawn to see the forms’ expression in the world, reflected in the soul’s sensible affect. Let us turn now to a fuller exposition by considering the Stranger’s explanation of this “dreamy” knowledge in his appeal to the example of children learning their letters.

THE *PARADEIGMA* FOR *PARADEIGMA*

When Young Socrates asks the Stranger to explain his claim about the dreamlike lens through which we know the world, he receives, as we have seen, the following enigmatic response: “Comrade, my *paradeigma* itself is again in need of a *paradeigma*.” Although this response does not appear to address why we need examples in order to investigate the “greater things” nor our experience of lacking knowledge when awake, we should expect that this recursive claim will eventually address both of these issues. In addition, it is important to keep in mind the ambiguous usage of *paradeigma* in Plato’s dialogues, as this provides the basis for my interpretation of the passage as well as the grounds for my ultimate claim about the way the learner’s affective negotiation of an example can accomplish *psychagogia*, thereby laying the ethical groundwork for the practice of dialectical inquiry.

Before proceeding, I must first address the paradox of translating the Stranger’s recursive claim that his *paradeigma* is in need of a *paradeigma*. Since the term is ambiguous, it seems necessary to decide which of the two senses is being invoked in each position. When faced with this, one is

forced to translate in light of the explanation of *paradeigma*, but one can only accomplish this if one already knows the meaning of *paradeigma* as it is used in the very phrase in question.¹¹ Indeed, the particular *paradeigma* the Stranger offers is an instance that not only illustrates the use of *paradeigmata* for acquiring knowledge of unfamiliar cases but also describes how we come to know the paradigmatic as such. Thus, the ability to make the distinction between the two senses of *paradeigma* (as example and as exemplar) is itself founded on the movement from a comparative instance to an abstract model. As a result, in each use of “paradeigma,” both senses of the term are always already in play. Since the paradigm is meant to help us, let us consider the Stranger’s own example before proceeding.

To illustrate the way *paradeigmata* work, the Stranger draws on the familiar scenario of children learning their letters (*stoikheia*).¹² He describes the way a teacher helps students to leverage the correct opinions they already have so they may acquire correct opinions about new instances and build toward a general knowledge of the way each letter functions. According to the Stranger, the grammar teacher’s method is this:

Leading them first to those cases in which they had correct opinions about those same letters and then leading them and setting them beside the groups which they did not yet recognize and by comparing them to showing that their nature is the same in both combinations alike, and continuing until the letters about which their opinions are correct have been shown in juxtaposition with all those of which they are ignorant. Being shown in this way *paradeigmata* come about [παραδείγματα οὕτω γιγνόμενα] and make every letter in all syllables always the same, either by differentiation from the other letters, in case it is different, or because it is the same. (1925, 79–81 [278a8–c2])

As Sayre puts it, the premise of the lesson is “a situation in which certain letters are easily recognizable by the student in some contexts but not in others” (2006, 79). For example, a child just learning to read might recognize the *a* in “cat” but not necessarily the one in “bath.” By placing the two cases together, whether in speech (pronouncing each word in turn) or in writing (visually displaying the familiar word alongside the unfamiliar one), a teacher asks the student to compare the properties of the *a* in the known example to those of the new case (“paradeigma” literally means “show alongside”). The student who succeeds recognizes a sensible similarity—for

instance, between the sound of the *a* in “cat” and the sound of the *a* in “bath” or between the shape of the *a* in the visual depiction of each word. Thus, an example becomes an example when the learner sees its similarity to another case, in spite of differences of context. Consequently, knowledge of previously unrecognized instances is acquired through association by similarity to previously known instances. On this account, comparisons of familiar to unfamiliar cases seem to add to our dream knowledge rather than translate the “dream” into a “waking” *logos*.

In addition to acquiring new instances by assimilation, however, by repeating this exercise of recognizing similarities, the pupil begins to apprehend a set of typical properties that inhere in every instance of the letter, abstracted from the peculiarities of each of its instantiations. That is, examples give a learner the ability to acquire more and more correct opinions about sensible instances as well as a path by which he or she might ascend to the principle of the examples’ exemplarity: “Being shown in this way *paradeigmata* come about and bring it about that every letter is in all syllables always [seen to be] the same, either by differentiation from the other letters, in case it is different, or because it is the same.” Here, the Stranger is clearly trading on the double meaning of “paradeigma”: through this process of comparison, *examples* come to be *exemplars*. And once they do, we see that exemplars are the result of a process of abstraction from examples, whereby the example’s similarity to another example is purified of individuating differences and whereby the abstract features of one exemplar are distinguished from those of other exemplars, just as the painter’s sketch represents the simplest features of the work. Thus, at the same time that one comes to know the general feature of the letter *a*, which is shared by both “cat” and “bath,” one also comes to know that *a* is different from the other elements involved, even those that may not yet be recognizable in their own right. That is, part of knowing the abstraction *a* is knowing that it is not any of the other letters.

Given this, how might we understand the way the grammar lesson functions as a *paradeigma* of *paradeigma*? Although I find compelling Stanley Rosen’s argument that the grammar lesson is provided as a model for how examples work and not simply an instance or example of them, I also take seriously Shinro Kato’s suggestion that the *paradeigma* is internally multiple: “Simple syllables serve as *paradeigma* . . . for complex syllables. The whole process of children’s learning in turn serves as *paradeigma* . . . for what *paradeigma* itself . . . is, . . . *what* is regarded as *paradeigma* for *what* depends upon the context and the observer’s viewpoint” (1995, 169).¹³ I suggest, in

addition, that this number must be doubled, for *at each level* the *paradeigma* Kato distinguishes is simultaneously serving as both an instance of a model and a model for that instance—an example as well as an exemplar. In addition, as Kato himself notes, the Stranger introduces the *paradeigma* of children learning as an example and model of both our fundamental need for *paradeigmata* as well as of the dreamy basis of our knowledge. Let us now return to this primary motivation.

How does this *paradeigma* of the grammar student clarify the Stranger's original claim that *paradeigmata* are indispensable to inquiry into the “greater things” and that our knowledge is like that of a dream, which disappears when we wake? First, the student who learns letters is clearly in possession of a correct opinion, namely, that the letter *a* is in the word “cat”: “For could anyone, my friend, who begins with false opinion, ever attain to even a small part of truth and acquire wisdom?” (1925, 81 [278d8–e1]). Surely not. This access to true opinion in turn explains the Stranger's characterization of our general epistemic state as oneiric in nature:

Can we wonder, then, that our soul, whose nature involves it in the same uncertainty about the letters or elements of all things [τά τῶν πάντων στοιχεῖα], is sometimes in some cases firmly grounded in the truth about every detail, and again in other cases is all at sea about everything, and somehow or other has correct opinions about some combinations, and then again is ignorant of the same things when they are transferred to the long and difficult syllables of things? (1925, 81 [278c10–d6])

That is, when “awake” to the “long and difficult syllables of things” we seem to know nothing at all, even though what we seek is something with which we already have a great deal of experience. This is because of a lack of familiarity with these “greater things.” Examples, then, provide practice in reaching for such things, giving us practical experience with the intelligible, which has no inherent affective purchase on our souls.

This indeed appears to be the condition of most of Socrates' interlocutors—take Euthyphro, the seer who when posed with the disarmingly simple question “What is piety?” discovers that for all his ability to *use* the word, he seems not to be able to give a satisfactory definition of it. In this case, “to hosion” is that “same thing,” which, when treated abstractly, appears wholly foreign. For certainly it *is* foreign to Euthyphro to consider the *abstract* nature of “the pious” itself—*his* knowledge of piety is based on

experience. In this way, one who has extensive experience will have true opinions, but these will seem like dreams when “transferred to the long and difficult syllables of things,” and their truth evaporates when one tries to awaken to such inquiry. This is not because Euthyphro’s true opinions are *themselves* inadequate but because Euthyphro’s *soul* does not recognize that “the pious” (the abstract self-same nature that unifies all the things he recognizes as similarly “pious”) already resides within all his true opinions about pious things.¹⁴ The Stranger seems to be claiming that our problem (and, by extension, Euthyphro’s) is psychological and epistemological rather than ontological—that because we do not perceive the *stoikheia* that constitute the truth of our true opinions, we also fail to see the relationship between those opinions and the “greater things.” As a result, when we inquire into the “greater things,” we stand in need of some intermediary, an example that, through comparison with what is already known, can produce recognition of the similarity between what is known and what is not known. But this similarity must itself be “abstracted” from both of the examples in which it resides and through which we come to know it. This is how examples, through comparison, “become *paradeigmata*”—by becoming known as the *stoikheia* on the basis of which we might understand the complex syllables of things as the truth of *both* the “dream world” of our experience and the “waking world” that holds the intelligibility of that experience. Similarly, this is how *paradeigmata* act as both examples and exemplars: through the one we may transform our souls so they may be seen as the other. *Paradeigma* is, therefore, in *both* senses of the term, the agent of *psychagōgia*.

In this way, the Stranger’s *paradeigma* of *paradeigma* has indeed explained why we are in need of *paradeigmata* for investigating the “greater things” and the way *paradeigmata* intervene and conduce toward that knowledge. However, the Stranger does not explain the precise mechanism by which a student may finally recognize not simply the similarity among instances but the principle of that similarity, the abstract “structural features” (Gill 2006, 5), or *stoikheia*. That is, *how* does a student come to grasp not merely the many instances of *a* but the letter (*stoikheion*) *a* itself? How does one move from correct opinions about the experiential instances that comparisons generate to the intelligible *logos* that supports both the exemplarity of those examples and the correctness of the opinions formed on their basis? We need a psychological account for the epistemological transition from examples to exemplars, not just one from the point of view of the teacher but also from the point of view of the learner. That is, we need an

account of the *animation* of a student's inquiry into an intelligible principle based on the similarity among examples. Given the pedagogical context of the Stranger's account, such an explanation is served by assessing the affect that accompanies and facilitates this cognitive transition indicative of *psychagogia*. In my concluding section, then, I develop an account regarding the way examples serve such a psychagogic function, producing the conditions for an affective correlate to the method of collection that facilitates apprehension of the intelligible within experience.

CULTIVATING THE DESIRE FOR *LOGOI*:
THE DIALECTICAL *ĒTHOS*

Clearly, having a skilled guide in the study of grammar is imperative, for in the absence of formal training a student will likely never seek to know more than what is experienced. That is, the student in the example case is not seeking to know something about "the letter *a* in general," nor is the student likely aware that there is some "greater thing" or more abstract truth to be discovered. Until the student is aware that there is something to learn, she or he has no motivation to seek after it. Thus, essential to the student's learning is the presence of a teacher who already knows that there is a principle to be established and knows how best to harness the student's true opinions to create the opportunity for the student to engage in abstract inquiry.

Kato identifies having an "anticipative grasp" of the exemplarity of the selected example as key to the teacher's role (1995, 163). That is, because the teacher already knows the formal property implicitly embedded in the example, she or he may choose a fitting example for the comparison: "In so far as a *paradeigma* is grasped as a *paradeigma* for something, it has to contain, at least implicitly, a logical structure in itself" (1995, 164). But how is this principle, or *logos*, which is embedded within the instance, recognized *as such* by the learner? How do we recognize the basis for these similarities and thereby ascend to the abstract principle of the example? The answer, I believe, rests in an enlivened state of a learner's soul, which stands as the correlative to the "anticipative grasp" of the teacher.

One can see similarities only if one is *looking* for them, and this tends to happen only if one has been encouraged to look in the first place. Borrowing Socrates' reasoning that until we know we are ignorant we have no motive to seek after knowledge, we can say that a student likewise must first believe that there is a similarity to be discovered before seeking and finding it. By simply presenting the two cases together, a teacher creates

the possibility for the student to desire to discover the relationship that is already presupposed by the context of the comparison. In this way, a learner mimics the *cognitive* “anticipative grasp” of the teacher through an *affective* expectation that she or he will find similarities. Thus, the teacher prepares the learner for inquiry by guiding the learner’s expectation. The pupil’s expectation is thus a psychic condition that prepares the way for noetic ascent toward the principle that grounds the similarity of the example.

The movement from the true opinion that characterizes our dreamy understanding to knowledge of its intelligible cause depends on the soul being drawn to find the similarity that grounds the *paradeigma* as exemplary. Inspiring such a desire is the psychagogic aim of the pedagogue, and examples are, in this case, the means through which the soul is thus led. Therefore, the exercise that examples provide is not just one of recognizing similarities but also of seeking the principle of the intelligibility of what is already known. Because of their ability to motivate inquiry, examples can also serve to cultivate a dialectical *ēthos* oriented by the desire to know the intelligible embedded within experience and to become accurate “dream interpreters.”

I maintain that such an affective orientation is a prerequisite to engaging in the dialectical methods of collection and division. For one cannot seek to know the exemplarity of an example, what makes “every letter in all syllables always the same,” if one does not expect to find it. Though it is a sort of miming of the dialectician’s desire for the *logoi* of things, this affective expectation produces a psychological state conducive to apprehending the abstraction that reveals the principle of an example’s exemplarity. Although dialectical inquiry itself proceeds by reasoning, it requires a prior and ongoing desire to know “the greater things.” Thus, although the Stranger makes it clear that *paradeigmata* help us to acquire understanding of novel instances by means of our true opinions, no amount of reasoning could draw us toward the exemplarity of each example were it not for the pedagogical context within which *paradeigmata* are presented as worthy of consideration. The *presentation* of the example *as an example* is the occasion for a *psychagōgia*, where, by expecting to find similarities between the example and novel cases, one may also begin to desire knowledge of the principles that ground true opinions.

BENEFITS, LIMITATIONS, AND CONSEQUENCES OF READING EXAMPLE AS PSYCHAGOGIC

There are a few important advantages to this reading of the way examples contribute to dialectical inquiry. First, it provides additional evidence that

examples, as well as other “aesthetic” appeals, are not antithetical to dialectical inquiry but instead make possible the psychic disposition prerequisite to dialectical inquiry. Second, this view of the propaedeutic function of examples in the ascent from true opinion to knowledge offers an affective correlate to the cognitive preparation ascribed to the study of mathematics in book 7 of the *Republic*. Finally, by exposing the psychagogic work of examples, this reading explains the Stranger’s otherwise confusing claim that while the most important subjects are best investigated by means of *logoi*, examples are indispensable for such inquiry. In sum, although examples have primarily been regarded by some scholars of the *Statesman* as cognitive training in the method of collection, I assert that their primary function is to prepare the affective nature of the inquirer for dialectical study by inspiring a desire to find the intelligible cause of the similarity between a familiar and unfamiliar case.

Although the Stranger claims *paradeigmata* are indispensable to inquiry into the “greater things,” this does not mean that they are foolproof. As with arguments by analogy, inquiry through example has limitations. First, the selection of a suitable example is left to the teacher to determine. The virtue of a teacher resides in understanding the nature of what is being exemplified as well as in recognizing what experiences are in fact familiar to the student. Similarly, a teacher might choose an apt example but not be able to motivate the student to consider the salient similarity, or, given a recognition of the similarity, the student may not wish to understand what the teacher is doing and thus fail to mimic in affect the teacher’s cognitive grasp. Neither the example nor the teacher can independently stimulate the desire to mimic the teacher’s understanding; they can only create that opportunity. Finally, examples are not themselves a “dialectical” practice but rather an occasion for developing the dialectical temperament and desire for finding the intelligible basis for the truth of one’s experience. That is, examples may serve as practice at the dialectical method of collection but there is no reason to assert, as Sayre does, that they replace it (2006, 74).

I have argued that on the account of the *Statesman*, examples serve a psychagogic function by offering an opportunity for practicing abstraction in preparation for the dialectical method of collection and for developing a desire to know the intelligible principles of our experiential understanding, thereby cultivating the affective *ēthos* of the dialectician. This thesis is not a complement to the argumentative treatment of example in Plato’s work but rather a challenge to the view that the logical form of argument is separable from its psychological conditions. This study demonstrates, instead, the interrelatedness of the learner’s affective and cognitive negotiation

of examples. By integrating more explicitly the dialogues' discussions of pedagogy with those of methodology, my work complements Mitchell Miller's (2004) view of the *Statesman* as not simply a text that concerns political theory and philosophical methodology but also at its heart one that concerns philosophical pedagogy. In addition to developing an interpretation that integrates the rhetorical and philosophical aspects of the *Statesman's* treatment of *paradeigma*, by attending to its pedagogical frame, my argument reveals that contrary to Aristotle's own view of example, the *Statesman* privileges *paradeigma* as a means for producing *psychagōgia* and nurturing a dialectical disposition. Thus, even if the godlike dialectician (*Phaedrus* 266b) might have no need for examples in an independent pursuit of the "greater things," the true statesman, who must tend to the rearing and education of citizens, is bound to employ *paradeigmata* to awaken the dreamer to a desire for the knowledge of the *logoi* of experience. The psychagogic work of example, then, is a key feature of philosophical pedagogy and the rhetorical art of turning souls toward their own desire for the truth.

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NOTES

1. I quote from Fowler's translation throughout with slight modifications. This character from the Greek colony of Elea has traditionally been treated as a mouthpiece for Plato's views late in his career, but there are reasons to be wary of this assumption. First, though the Stranger is introduced as "divine" and a "philosopher" (216c1–2), the Stranger's method of division meets with difficulty in both the *Sophist* and *Statesman*. Secondly, the Stranger cannot simply be considered a substitute for Socrates, since in the *Sophist* his method of division is contrasted with Socratic elenchus, division being described as "value-free" (Dorter 1994, 174). That said, the Stranger's views are clearly significant enough to warrant extended demonstration and discussion, and his methodological discussions obviously shed light on the two forms of dialectical reasoning that Socrates identifies in the *Phaedrus*—collection and division (266b6–7).

2. The relation of *dialektikē* to philosophical inquiry in Plato's dialogues is of considerable importance and yet remains somewhat unclear. The verb "dialegesthai" is regularly found in the dialogues and refers to discussion and the exchange of *logoi*; thus, *dialektikē* is fundamentally the art of *logoi*. This definition immediately suggests the need to distinguish dialectic from rhetoric—a difficulty that animates several dialogues. In the *Phaedrus*, dialectic comes to be identified with the use of the methods of collection and division (see note 1).

3. While one might defend or reject the “developmental” interpretation that insists on a strict distinction between the methods of the various periods of the dialogues’ composition, it is clear that methods of all kinds are both practiced as well as theorized across them, making a firm assessment of the “Platonic” view of any method, whether rhetorical, literary, or philosophical quite difficult. For this reason, my interpretation is limited to a reading of the only explicit methodological discussion of example in the dialogues (that of the *Statesman*), although I find it useful to consult related discussions from other dialogues that evince similar epistemological and pedagogical concerns as those of the *Statesman*.

4. Victor Goldschmidt cites Georges Rodier as the first to articulate the metaphysical paradox of *paradeigma*: “Si les Idées sont les paradigmes des choses sensibles, les choses sensibles sont, à leur tour, les paradigmes des Idées” (1985, 7n1).

5. Edward Halper (2006) argues that far from disappearing, the metaphysical sense of *paradeigma* as exemplar occupies an important role in the first book of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.

6. There is scholarly debate regarding Plato’s own view of the method of division (Dorter 1987; De Chiara-Quenzer 1998; Lane 1998; Dorter 1999; Miller 2004). Its general form, as practiced in both the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, is this: a general class is posited and subsequently divided into sub classes, one of which is again divided, and so forth, until the target class is “trapped” within the net of divisions, its genus and species identified.

7. The Eleatic Stranger’s young interlocutor is not the famous Socrates, who is also in attendance, but his “look-alike” in name only. The concern with mistakes made based on the similarity of names is a thematic issue throughout the dialogue and seems to be a specification of the worries from the prior day’s conversation in the *Sophist* dialogue about the way even opposite things can appear similar (see 231a5–6).

8. The Stranger seems to endorse the notion that a king (*βασιλευς*) is the ideal political leader (*πολιτικός*).

9. The ability to recognize the mean (*meson*) will ultimately constitute a definitive skill of the statesman, but, we find here that this skill also characterizes the dialectician’s ability to define the statesman. This weaving of the identity of the dialectician and the statesman becomes more explicit in the discussion of the interweaving of the methods of collection and division (285a9–b8).

10. Jacob Klein examines the relation of this dramatic performance to the “demonstration” of the statesman that is sought (1977, 163–66).

11. This is the same problem Jacques Derrida identifies as the “pharmakon” in his interpretation of Plato’s *Phaedrus* in “Plato’s Pharmacy” (1981).

12. The ambiguity of the term “*stokheion*” is also rich. Having the generic sense of “element,” in the context of *grammatikē*, it refers to an element of language and thus not simply written letters but also spoken minima. On this ambivalence, see Ryle 1960. On the etymology of “*stokheion*,” see Burkert 1959.

13. Rosen argues that in the Stranger's formulation, the meaning of *paradeigma* shifts from its first invocation to the second: "A model of this kind exhibits what it is to be an example, and that is to say it shows how the example exhibits the general structure of a set of instances of the same kind" (2009, 84). Although this is an accurate rendering of what the *paradeigma* of *paradeigma* accomplishes, I contend that the recursive logic of this phrase cannot not be resolved by translating *paradeigma* first as "example" and then as "exemplar." For, by resolving the equivocity of the term, Rosen obscures the necessary relationship between the two senses of *paradeigma*, which, as I have argued is the main engine of the discussion.

14. This is not to say that *all* Euthyphro's opinions about what is pious are true—indeed, identifying those opinions of Euthyphro's that *are* true occupies the majority of Socrates' questioning.



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