philosophical treatment in comparison to medical treatment for Plato is made clear. Meanwhile, Hippocrates laboured to free medicine 'from the yoke of philosophy' (Pellegrin 2009: 667).

METAPHYSICS (SEE ONTOLOGY)

METATHEATRE

MATEO DUQUE

Metatheatre refers to theatre that is self-reflexive; it 'demonstrates an awareness of its own theatricality' (Slater 1985: 14; Abel 1963). Some examples are: plays where characters address the audience directly; plays-within-plays and theatre that refers to acting, drama, audience and so on. Charalabopoulos (2012: 22; cf. 2001: 52) characterizes metatheatre in Plato's dialogue as 'the evocation of theatrical discourse in the framework of dialogic text and its impact on, and significance for the generic identity of the dialogue'. Metatheatre is closely related to metafiction, writing that emphasizes its own artificiality (Gass 1970; Nightingale 1995: 2). After specifying types of metatheatre in the Platonic dialogues, I will discuss their implications for Plato's philosophy.

Socrates speaks out from the dialogues

While not an instance of the more modern 'breaking the fourth wall' – when a character explicitly addresses the audience – there are moments in Plato's dialogues where Socrates seems to speak not only to internal interlocutors but also to an external audience. Two examples: at the end of *Crito* 54d7 Socrates says to Crito, "Nevertheless, if you think of something more that you will do, speak'; and Socrates' exhortation to philosophy to Crito at the end of *Euthydemus* (307b6-c4). Altman (2020: 470n421) argues for what he calls the 'Battle Hymn of the *Republic*' (7.534b8-d1) as addressed to the reader. One final example is Socrates' dying words in the *Phaedo*. In the first part, Socrates says, 'Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius', but the last part contains two second-person plurals imperatives: 'but (you all) repay and don't (you all) be careless' (118a8-9; cf. Madison 2002: 432–6). These last words are addressed to the 'all of you' of Socrates' auditors (that now includes Echecrates) – and not just Crito. Furthermore, Plato is calling on all of us (the audience of the *Phd.*) 'to repay (our debt to Socrates and Plato) and not be careless'. The use of second-person singular and plural hails – especially in questions and commands – by Socrates in dialogues narrated by him (*Protagoras*, *Euthd.*, *Lysis*, *Charmides*, *R.*,

Amatores) can give the illusion that Socrates is speaking directly to the readers/listeners of the dialogues.

Theatrum mundi

The artificiality of life is encapsulated in the slogan, 'All the world's a stage', and the idea is present in Plato's image of the cave (q.v.) in *R.*, where – almost as if in a cinema – chained prisoners watch a shadow puppet play (7.514a-521a; Puchner 2010: 73–5). This idea is also present in *Lg.* 7.817b1-c1 when the Athenian Stranger staging an imagined dramatic confrontation between a troupe of tragedians and the lawmakers of Magnesium has the lawgivers say:

> we're tragedians ourselves, and our tragedy is the finest and best we can create . . . our entire state has been composed as a 'representation' of the finest and noblest life – the very thing for us is most genuinely a tragedy. So we are poets like yourselves, composing in the same *genre*, and your competitors as artists and actors in the finest drama, which true law alone has the natural powers to 'produce' to perfection (of that we're quite confident).

If 'all the world's a stage', then here we see lawmakers as the true playwrights and dramatists, who put on a 'production' of the highest order: the well functioning of a state as an 'imitation' of the best and finest life.

Self-referencing dialogues

Metatheatricality destabilizes a discourse's own claim to realism. An example of this is when a dialogue refers to itself. Internal to the drama of *Tht.*, the account we are reading has actually been written by Euclides, and in the dialogue, a slave reads it aloud to him and Terpsion (142a-3c). *Lg.* similarly calls attention to itself; when the Athenian Stranger thinks of what books to teach the children of Magnesia, he resolves that the discussion they have been having (7.811c3-2a) – the *Lg.* itself – would be an appropriate text! Another example of undermining the realism of a dialogue is in the *Menexenus* when Socrates is recounting a funeral oration he learnt from Aspasia and he begins to talk about events that happened *after* his death (244d1-6a4). A related phenomenon is when a dialogue elaborates the chain of transmission necessary for its telling, for example, *Sym.* (Halperin 1992) and *Parmenides*.

Socratic mimēsis

There are moments in the dialogues when Socrates takes on a role and speaks as someone else. Some examples of this are: Socrates as 'Diotima' in the *Sym.*; the Palinode in the *Phdr.* as coming from 'Stesichorus'; 'The Laws' in the *Cri.*;

'Protagoras' in the *Tht.*; and 'Aspasia' in the *Mx.* (Duque 2020; cf. Blondell 2002: 32). These are metatheatrical because Socrates stages a mini dramatic dialogue within a Platonic dialogue, a play-within-a-play. Studying these closely can help us to better understand Plato's own *mimēsis*: Plato represents philosophical performance as happening in a dramatic context as opposed to bare assertions in a treatise.

Implications

Plato's dialogues are eminently theatrical and metatheatrical. In fact, the theatricality of *Prt.* leads Altman (2020: 48) to suggest that 'it was performed as a play, and was staged for what might be called "the Academy's incoming class," i.e., for its Freshmen' (cf. Charalabopoulos 2001; for the theatricality of the *Phd.*, see Jansen 2013). Metatheatre in Plato makes us reconsider or contextualize criticisms levelled against tragedy, comedy, poetry, writing, theatre, imitation and so on in the dialogues. Accepting Plato's metatheatricality does not entail an outright dismissal of these criticisms, nor is it a claim that Plato is merely being ironic. One can accept (with qualifications) parts of these attacks while holding that Plato's poetics, his literary style, undermines taking them unequivocally. Furthermore, close attention and study of them can reveal insights into Plato's method of teaching philosophy.

For metatheatre in the *Prt.*, see Charalabopoulos 2001 and Tanner 2021a, in *Gorgias*, see Trivigno 2009b, in *Sym.*, *R.*, *Lg.*, and more generally in Plato, see Charalabopoulos 2012: 71–103, in the *Hippias Major*, see Tanner 2021b, and in the *Ion*, see Tanner 2021c.

METHOD

EVAN RODRIGUEZ

At a minimum, a philosophical method contains a repeatable structure that is useful for achieving some aim or goal. Plato's dialogues show not only a first-order depiction of philosophical conversations with shared structures and aims but also second-order reflections on how those conversations do or should proceed. 'Method' and the various labels for individual methods discussed later are terms of art applied by contemporary interpreters to pick out these aspects of Plato's dialogues.

Talk of Plato's 'philosophical method' may obscure an underlying diversity in his approach. There may be, for example, different methods for philosophical enquiry and philosophical teaching, or even different methods for different types of philosophical enquiry. We may need to distinguish between Plato's