

Theatre of the Mind: Plato and Attic Drama¹

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I.

ACCORDING to the Neoplatonist Olympiodorus in his *Life of Plato* (prefixed to his commentary on *Alcibiades*, Test. 53a PCG), Plato reputedly had a very high regard for the comic poet Aristophanes, as well as for Sophron.² The characterization of the participants in his dialogues is supposed to have owed much to their work. There is even a tradition that appears to illustrate Plato's esteem for these two authors, namely the story that an edition of Aristophanes' and Sophron' comedies was found beside the philosopher's death bed. He is also said to have composed an epigram on Aristophanes: "The Graces were searching for an eternal grove, one that would never perish, and they found the soul of Aristophanes" (Test. 130 PCG).³ At the same time, Plato supposedly also ridiculed (κωμωδεῖν) Aristophanes in the *Symposium* through the use of comic techniques: a sudden fit of hiccoughs prevented the comic poet from delivering his speech in praise of Eros.

Even if the story of texts found on Plato's death bed were untrue, although appealingly invented, and even if the charming epigram on Aristophanes is actually not by Plato, the tradition referred to by Olympiodorus can be seen as a reflection of the issues facing ancient literary criticism vis-à-vis the genre of Σωκρατικοὶ λόγοι, as Aristotle (*Poet.* 1, 1447b11) termed the Socratics' new form of representation that flour-

¹ Translated by Benjamin Millis.

² Aristophanes, Test. 53a PCG (Olympiod. *Vit. Plat.* (commentario in Alcib. pr. praemissa) p. 3,65 West): ἔχαιρεν δὲ πάνυ καὶ Ἀριστοφάνει τῷ κωμικῷ καὶ Σώφρονι, παρ' ὧν καὶ τὴν μίμησιν τῶν προσώπων ὠφελήθη. λέγεται δὲ οὕτως αὐτοῖς χαίρειν ὥστε καὶ ἠνίκα ἐτελεύτησεν εὐρεθῆναι ἐν τῇ κλίνῃ αὐτοῦ Ἀριστοφάνη καὶ Σώφρονα. καὶ ἐπίγραμμα δὲ τοιοῦτον εἰς Ἀριστοφάνην πεποίηκεν (test. 130)...ἐκωμώδησε δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ Συμποσίῳ τῷ διαλόγῳ ὡς κωμωδίαν ὠφελήθεις· καὶ γὰρ ποιήσας αὐτὸν ὕμνουντα τὸν Ἔρωτα εἰσάγει αὐτὸν μεταξὺ λυγγὶ περιπεσόντα καὶ μὴ δυνάμενον πληρῶσαι τὸν ὕμνον.

³ Aristophanes, Test. 130 PCG (Plat. epigr. 14 P): Αἱ Χάριτες, τέμενός τι λαβεῖν ὅπερ οὐχὶ πεσεῖται / ζήλοῦσαι, ψυχὴν εὐρον Ἀριστοφάνους.

ished after the death of Socrates in 399.⁴ On the one hand, an origin was sought and found in the prose mimes of Sophron;⁵ on the other hand, ancient scholars appear not to have missed the obvious connections between Plato's dialogues and the comedies of Aristophanes and Attic comedy of the late 5th and early 4th century BC as a whole.

New literary genres as the Σωκρατικοὶ λόγοι do not appear out of nowhere—this was recognized in ancient literary criticism just as much as in modern literary studies—but rather develop from other, earlier or contemporaneous forms, which they build on, which they open up in form, structure and content, and which they combine with elements from different genres. The prime example of this kind of genre history is, without doubt, Aristotle's reconstruction of the development of tragedy (*Poetics* 4, 1448b3-1449a31) or—to use an example outside the scope of ancient poetics—the origin of the novel as a typical literary mixed form. In general, new genres show a number of dominant and subdominant factors borrowed from other literary forms; these borrowings do not obscure their origins even within the new organism into which they are incorporated and which gains its genre characteristics from their interplay. Implicitly or explicitly (e.g. by use of quotations), authors make the different origins of these building blocks reverberate in the literary memory of their recipients, thereby referring to their 'Sitz im Leben', or 'original position', and thus creating a specific mood that emanates from the text, while at the same time using these reception signals to suggest a certain stance that the recipient is meant to take toward the text. The poets render their work 'transparent' by making various 'subtexts' constantly shine through the actual text, that is, the 'main text'. As illustrated by his brief history of lyric forms in *Laws* (700a–701b3), Plato was well aware that new genres could arise from the interaction between author and audience and could originate in the urge of poetic talent not to contend with tradition but instead to create something new.

But the proximity to comedy, and specifically to Aristophanes, shown repeatedly in the Platonic dialogues posed a problem for ancient Platonists. How can the accusation that Socrates levels at Aristophanes in the *Apology* (18a7–d7)⁶—albeit without mentioning him by name—

⁴ Cf. LUCAS 1968, 60; ERLER, 2007, 68.

⁵ Cf. HORDERN 2004, 26f., 197.

⁶ Plato, *Apology* 18a7-d7: Πρώτον μὲν οὖν δίκαιός εἰμι ἀπολογήσασθαι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πρὸς τὰ πρῶτά μου ψευδῆ κατηγορημένα καὶ τοὺς πρώτους κατηγορούς,

be reconciled with the respect Plato is supposed to have had for the comic poet?⁷ Olympiodorus solved the dilemma by viewing the *Symposium* as Plato mocking Aristophanes in the style of ὀνομαστί κωμωδεῖν. Plato beats Aristophanes at his own game and at the same time takes revenge—even if harmlessly—for the portrayal of Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. More on this later; first, some considerations on what starting points Plato may have found in the comedy of his day that would have appealed to him, and aided him, when producing his dialogues.

II.

Plato shares with the comic poets of the late 5th and early 4th centuries BC an interest in appropriate education and, like comedy, analyses traditional means and ways of παιδεία. This analysis focuses especially on whether and how παιδεία improves human beings themselves and makes them able, and even more so willing, to use their qualities for the benefit of society. Comic poets, like seismographs as it were, frequently pick up on societal changes and crises and critically interrogate these supposedly dangerous new trends that threaten to implant themselves in the polis by grotesquely distorting, obscenely pillorying or fantastically exaggerating them or by juxtaposing desolate reality with a utopia. For this purpose, they developed a special type of play, the 'intellectual comedy', which focuses on the effects of the sophists on life in Athens.

ἔπειτα δὲ πρὸς τὰ ὕστερον καὶ τοὺς ὑστέρους. ἐμοῦ γὰρ πολλοὶ κατήγοροι γεγόνασι πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πάσαι πολλὰ ἤδη ἔτη καὶ οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς λέγοντες, οὓς ἐγὼ μᾶλλον φοβοῦμαι ἢ τοὺς ἀμφὶ Ἄνυτον, καίπερ ὄντας καὶ τούτους δεινοὺς· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνοι δεινότεροι, ὧ ἄνδρες, οἱ ὑμῶν τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐκ παίδων παραλαμβάνοντες ἔπειθόν τε καὶ κατηγοροῦν ἐμοῦ μᾶλλον οὐδὲν ἀληθές, ὡς ἔστιν τις Σωκράτης σοφὸς ἀνὴρ, τὰ τε μετέωρα φροντιστῆς καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς πάντα ἀνεζητηκῶς καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιῶν. οὗτοι, ὧ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, <οἱ> ταύτην τὴν φήμην κατασκεδάσαντες, οἱ δεινοὶ εἰσὶν μου κατήγοροι· οἱ γὰρ ἀκούοντες ἠγοῦνται τοὺς ταῦτα ζητοῦντας οὐδὲ θεοὺς νομίζειν. ἔπειτὰ εἰσὶν οὗτοι οἱ κατήγοροι πολλοὶ καὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἤδη κατηγορηκότες, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ἡλικίᾳ λέγοντες πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ἧ ἂν μάλιστα ἐπιστεύσατε, παῖδες ὄντες ἔνιοι ὑμῶν καὶ μεράκια, ἀτεχνῶς ἐρήμην κατηγοροῦντες ἀπολογουμένου οὐδενός. ὁ δὲ πάντων ἀλογώτατος, ὅτι οὐδὲ τὰ ὀνόματα οἷόν τε αὐτῶν εἰδέναι καὶ εἰπεῖν, πλην εἴ τις κωμωδοποιὸς τυγχάνει ὦν. ὅσοι δὲ φθόνῳ καὶ διαβολῇ χρώμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀνέπειθον—οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ πεπεισμένοι ἄλλους πείθοντες—οὗτοι πάντες ἀπορώτατοί εἰσιν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀναβιβάσασθαι οἷόν τ' ἔστιν αὐτῶν ἐνταυθοῖ οὐδ' ἐλέγξει οὐδένα, ἀλλ' ἀνάγκη ἀτεχνῶς ὥσπερ σκιαμαχεῖν ἀπολογούμενόν τε καὶ ἐλέγχειν μηδενὸς ἀποκρινόμενον.

⁷ Cf. HEITSCH 2002, 62, 64.

The 420s in particular feature a high concentration of sophist comedies: in 427, Aristophanes made his debut with *Banqueters* (*Daitales*), in 423 his *Clouds* took third place behind Cratinus' *Wineflask* (Πιτυίνη) and Ameipsias' *Konnos*, which revolves around Socrates' music teacher, followed by Eupolis' *Flatterers* (*Kolakes*) in 421 and *Autolykos* in 420.

The common thrust of Aristophanes' and Eupolis' plays was probably that sophistic rhetoric shakes the foundations of the family and leads to the dissolution of the order of the polis, the καθεστῶτες νόμοι. A strong indicator of this breakdown is seen in the fact that young people who had visited the school of the sophists were no longer guided by the classics—Simonides, Alcaeus or Aeschylus, who would be recited at the symposium—but rather by the modern, decadent verses of Euripides. In order to render this criticism dramatically, comic poets choose the path of 'personalization' that is closely linked to a typical technique of Old Comedy, namely 'mocking individuals by name'—ὄνομαστὶ κωμωδεῖν. Individuals who are well known throughout the polis are put on stage as representatives of a particular lifestyle and attitude, of a particular 'profession' or τέχνη, while few, if any, of the details attributed to them by the comic poets tally with the real-life individual. The best known example is of course Aristophanes' Socrates in the *Clouds*, onto whom Aristophanes projected everything associated with idle intellectuals, in addition to everything popularly considered as philosophy. Protagoras in Eupolis' *Kolakes* probably received a similar treatment. Philosophers concern themselves with pointless theories, they are 'out of touch', are dubious characters and actual freeloaders. In addition, there is Meton, who represents mathematicians and astronomers in the *Birds* (992–1000), Euripides in almost all the comedies from *Acharnians* to *Frogs* and Agathon in the *Thesmophoriazusae* as representatives of new tragedy, and Cinesias again in *Birds* (1372–1409) as a typically modern choral poet. The common denominator linking all these individuals is the sophistic influence that guides them as literary artists, as is documented in the 'catalogue of intellectuals' in *Clouds* (331–334):⁸

οὐ γὰρ μὰ Δί' οἶσθ' ὅτι πλείστους αὐταὶ βόσκουσι σοφιστάς,
 Θουριομάντεις, ἰατροτέχνας, σφραγιδουχαργοκομήτας·
 κυκλίων τε χορῶν ἄσματοκάμπτας, ἄνδρας μετεωροφένακας,
 οὐδὲν δρῶντας βόσκουσ' ἄργούς, ὅτι ταύτας μουσοποιοῦσιν.

⁸ Cf. ZIMMERMANN 1993.

In the same way that the comic poets develop their respective ‘comic theme’ that determines the concept of the play on the basis of the ‘critical idea’, i.e. a critique of the sophists, Plato develops his ‘philosophical’ topic from a comparable critical approach and connects particular attitudes with particular individuals who were regarded as experts in their field. The difference from comedy is that, on the one hand, in contrast to comedy, Plato uses the respective manners of speech of the characters in his dialogues to bring forth actual, life-like, realistic characters rather than place-holders for particular trends who may bear a well-known name but could just as well bear a different one. On the other hand, he does not subject his characters to exclusionary laughter and verbal violence, borne by spitefulness and an aversion to everything beyond one’s comprehension and against all those with abilities in any way out of the ordinary. Ultimately, many of Plato’s dialogues expose the claims confidently stated by experts as pretensions and ἀλαζονεία.⁹ At the same time, the Platonic ἀλαζόνες are not unmasked ungraciously, but instead humour is used to show their limitations, their pseudo-knowledge and pseudo-competency. This is expressed particularly well in Laches’ speech, in the dialogue of the same name (183c8–184a7), that recounts the disastrous performance of ability in battle once displayed on a war ship by a teacher of the martial arts. This man could pass as the quintessential caricature of a sophist: in the face of the comical epideixis, friend and foe alike forget both war and battle and break out in applause and liberating laughter.¹⁰

⁹ Cf. RIBBECK 1882.

¹⁰ Plato, *Laches* 183c8-184a7: δεδυστυχήκασιν. ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτον τὸν Στησίλεων, ὃν ὑμεῖς μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐν τοσοῦτῳ ὄχλῳ ἐθεάσασθε ἐπιδεικνύμενον καὶ τὰ μεγάλα περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντα ἃ ἔλεγεν, ἐτέρωθι ἐγὼ κάλλιον ἐθεασάμην ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐπιδεικνύμενον οὐχ ἔκοντα. προσβαλοῦσης γὰρ τῆς νεῶς ἐφ’ ἣ ἐπεβάτευν πρὸς ὀλκάδα τινά, ἐμάχετο ἔχων δορυδρέπανον, διαφέρον δὴ ὄπλον ἅτε καὶ αὐτὸς τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρων. τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα οὐκ ἄξια λέγειν περὶ τάνδρος, τὸ δὲ σόφισμα τὸ τοῦ δρεπάνου τοῦ πρὸς τῇ λόγχῃ οἶον ἀπέβη. μαχομένου γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἐνέσχετό που ἐν τοῖς τῆς νεῶς σκευεσιν καὶ ἀντελάβετο· εἶλκεν οὖν ὁ Στησίλεως βουλόμενος ἀπολύσαι, καὶ οὐχ οἴος τ’ ἦν, ἡ δὲ ναῦς τὴν ναῦν παρήει. τέως μὲν οὖν παρέθει ἐν τῇ νηὶ ἀντεχόμενος τοῦ δόρατος· ἐπεὶ δὲ δὴ παρημείβετο ἡ ναῦς τὴν ναῦν καὶ ἐπέσπα αὐτὸν τοῦ δόρατος ἐχόμενος, ἐφίει τὸ δόρυ διὰ τῆς χειρός, ἕως ἄκρου τοῦ στόμακος ἀντελάβετο. ἦν δὲ γέλως καὶ κρότος ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκ τῆς ὀλκάδος ἐπὶ τε τῷ σχήματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπειδὴ βαλόντος τινὸς λίθῳ παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ κατάστρομα ἀφίεται τοῦ δόρατος, τότε ἦδη καὶ οἱ ἐκ τῆς τριήρους οὐκέτι οἰοί τ’ ἦσαν τὸν γέλωτα κατέχειν, ὀρώντες αἰωρούμενον ἐκ τῆς ὀλκάδος τὸ δορυδρέπανον ἐκεῖνο. ἴσως μὲν οὖν εἴη ἂν

It is not without reason that Plato, in two passages where he addresses comedy and the delight in comic topics, refers to ‘envy’ (φθόνος) as the driving force behind the laughter set off by comedy (*Apology* 18d1; *Philebus* 48b11, 49a8).¹¹ This analysis of comic mockery in terms of reception agrees completely with the description of the technique of ὀνομαστί κωμωδεῖν given by the so-called Old Oligarch (pseudo-Xenophon, *Constitution of the Athenians* 2, 18): the Athenians will not allow the demos as a whole to be mocked in comedy; at the same time, they enjoy watching individuals who are out of the ordinary in wealth, lineage, or abilities be subjected to ridicule.¹² Plato’s statements regarding mockery in comedy and comedic laughter may thus be read metapoetically: although he shares certain points of criticism with comic poets, he rejects their route of personalizing matters via ὀνομαστί κωμωδεῖν, which he terms defamation (διαβολή) (*Apology* 18d1); instead, he employs ironic winks like the hiccoughs that assail Aristophanes when he is preparing to give his speech in praise of Eros. Unexpectedly, the comic poet is overcome by an attack perpetrated by his body—but which is harmless in comparison to those often incurred by characters in his comedies.

Aristophanes’ praise of Eros, whose δύναμις he seeks to illustrate via the myth of the double-gender round people (189c2–193d6), may indeed represent an allusion by Plato to the frequent use of popular, fantastical stories by the comic poets in their plays. The myth that Plato has Aristophanes recount shows clearly the close familiarity of the philosopher with the techniques used by Aristophanes to illustrate abstract issues or introduce his audience to theories: besides ‘personalization’, there is also ‘metaphorical dramatization’. This comic technique, arguably the most important for Aristophanes, consists of representing abstract issues as characters on stage or inserting them in the action. Thus the chorus in *Clouds*, to stay with this play, represents everything an average Athenian associates with philosophy and rhetoric or, more gen-

τι ταῦτα, ὡσπερ Νικίας λέγει· οἷς δ’ οὖν ἐγὼ ἐντετύχηκα, τοιαῦτ’ ἄτα ἐστίν. ὁ οὖν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἶπον, εἴτε οὕτω σμικράς.

¹¹ Cf. n. 6. – Plato, *Philebus* 48b11: ΣΩ. Ἄλλα μὴν ὁ φθονῶν γε ἐπὶ κακοῖς τοῖς τῶν πέλας ἠδόμενος ἀναφανήσεται.

¹² κωμωδεῖν δ’ αὐτὸ καὶ κακῶς λέγειν τὸν μὲν δῆμον οὐκ ἐῷσιν, ἵνα μὴ αὐτοὶ ἀκούωσι κακῶς, ἰδίᾳ δὲ κελεύουσιν, εἴ τις τινα βούλεται, εὖ εἰδότες ὅτι οὐχὶ τοῦ δήμου ἐστὶν οὐδὲ τοῦ πλήθους ὁ κωμωδούμενος ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ, ἀλλ’ ἢ πλούσιος ἢ γενναῖος ἢ δυνάμενος, ὀλίγοι δὲ τινες τῶν πενήτων καὶ τῶν δημοτικῶν κωμωδοῦνται, καὶ οὐδ’ οὕτοι ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πολυπραγμοσύνην καὶ διὰ τὸ ζητεῖν πλεόν τι ἔχειν τοῦ δήμου· ὥστε οὐδὲ τοὺς τοιοῦτους ἄχθονται κωμωδομένους.

erally speaking, with intellectuals. The audience is supposed to activate all the personal associations with ‘clouds’ in their memory and transfer them to the object of criticism, sophistic rhetoric and rhetorical philosophy. In this way, sophism and philosophy are accorded the epithets ‘dubious, out of touch, unfathomable and dark, constantly changing shape, deceptive’, much like Cinesias’ dithyrambs.¹³ Plato uses his myths and similes in a similar manner—in so doing, he comes very close to Aristophanes’ ‘metaphorical dramatization’. Issues that are, or could be, clarified via dialectical argument, are presented as an image in a myth, thus becoming immediately intelligible.

III.

Closely linked to the quest for the best manner of education is inspection of the literary forms that play a significant role in traditional παιδεία. “Young children have a teacher who guides them, adults have poets”—thus Aeschylus in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (1054f.) in his plea in defence of his style of tragedy that culminates with the following demand: “So it’s vitally necessary for us to tell them things that are good”.¹⁴ Like Plato, Aristophanes imagines poetry as having an immediate, didactic effect on the audience, especially when it is mimetic and performative. The analysis of Homeric verses at the beginning of Book 3 of the *Republic*, like Aeschylus’ criticism of the content and style of Euripides’ tragedies in *Frogs* (1060-1088), shows that the young people hearing or watching such things are corrupted since they imitate the behaviours presented in literature, and this in turn has lasting, negative effects on the polis as a whole. This is especially apparent in the *Clouds* (1352–1451): sophistic influence leads young Pheidippides to ignore the classics, such as Simonides (1356) and Aeschylus (1365), and to prefer Euripides instead—with the result that the young man threatens to beat his mother and father.

Literature can cause these formative effects because it—entirely in line with the *logos*-theory developed by Gorgias in his *Helen*—has the ability to trigger a multitude of emotions and to do so in the context of purely fictional circumstances that do not personally affect the audience. Plato’s *Ion* shows the development of quasi-mass hysteria, driven by the

¹³ Cf. NEWIGER 1957, 50-74.

¹⁴ AI. Μὰ Δί, ἀλλ’ ὄντ’ ἀλλ’ ἀποκρύπτειν χρῆ τὸ πονηρὸν τὸν γε ποητὴν, / καὶ μὴ παράγειν μηδὲ διδάσκειν. Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν / ἔστι διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖσιν δ’ ἥβῳσι ποηταί. / Πᾶνυ δὴ δεῖ χρῆστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς.

rhapsode's impressive singing and powerful acting; in his *Thesmophoriazousae*, Aristophanes demonstrates—in an obscene manner appropriate to comedy—the erotic effect of Agathon's effeminate song on his listeners (130–133).

Both Plato and Aristophanes perceive a particular danger in the mimetic excesses demonstrated by tragedy (and probably also dithyramb) in the late 5th century. Plato provides a list of such depraved imitations of natural sounds of all kinds in his *Republic* (3, 397a), while Aristophanes repeatedly parodies these tendencies in his comedies—e.g. in the hoopoe's song in *Birds* (227–282), the singing contest between Dionysus and the frogs in *Frogs* (209–268), or the vocal imitation of the cithara's sound in *Frogs* (1285–1295) and *Plutus* (290).

If a mimetic all-rounder of this sort were to arrive in the polis as designed by Plato, and if he were to offer to perform his poetry, he would be shown out in a firm but friendly manner and with all honour, as there is no place in the polis for this type of poetry (*Republic* 3, 398a1–b4).¹⁵ Cinesias suffers the same fate in *Birds* (1372–1409) when, via his dithyrambs, he attempts to enter cloud-cuckoo-land but is brusquely turned away,¹⁶ whereas the traditional, anonymous lyric poet writing in

¹⁵ Plato, *Republic* 398a1–398b4: Ἄνδρα δὴ, ὡς ἔοικε, δυνάμενον ὑπὸ σοφίας παντοδαπὸν γίγνεσθαι καὶ μιμεῖσθαι πάντα χρήματα, εἰ ἡμῖν ἀφίκοιτο εἰς τὴν πόλιν αὐτὸς τε καὶ τὰ ποιήματα βουλόμενος ἐπιδείξασθαι, προσκυνοῖμεν ἄν αὐτὸν ὡς ἱερὸν καὶ θαυμαστὸν καὶ ἡδύν, εἴπομεν δ' ἄν ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν τοιοῦτος ἀνὴρ ἐν τῇ πόλει παρ' ἡμῖν οὔτε θέμις ἐγγενέσθαι, ἀποπέμποιμὲν τε εἰς ἄλλην πόλιν μύρον κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς καταχέαντες καὶ ἐρίψι στέψαντες, αὐτοὶ δ' ἄν τῷ αὐστηροτέρῳ καὶ ἀηδεστέρῳ ποιητῇ χρώμεθα καὶ μυθολόγῳ ὠφελίας ἔνεκα, ὃς ἡμῖν τὴν τοῦ ἐπιεικοῦς λέξιν μιμοῖτο καὶ τὰ λεγόμενα λέγοι ἐν ἐκείνοις τοῖς τύποις οἷς κατ' ἀρχὰς ἐνομοθετήσαμεθα, ὅτε τοὺς στρατιώτας ἐπεχειροῦμεν παιδεύειν. Καὶ μάλ', ἔφη, οὕτως ἄν ποιοῖμεν, εἰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἴη. Νῦν δὴ, εἶπον ἐγώ, ὦ φίλε, κινδυνεύει ἡμῖν τῆς μουσικῆς τὸ περὶ λόγους τε καὶ μύθους παντελῶς διαπεπεράνθαι· ἅ τε γὰρ λεκτέον καὶ ὡς λεκτέον εἴρηται.

¹⁶ Aristophanes, *Birds* 1372–1409: ΚΙ. Ἀναπέτομαι δὴ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον πτερύγεσσι κούφαις / πέτομαι δ' ὄδον ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλαν μελέων – / ΠΙ. Τοῦτι τὸ πρᾶγμα φορτίου δεῖται πτερῶν. / ΚΙ. ἀφόβῳ φρενὶ σώματι τε νέαν ἐφέπων. / ΠΙ. Ἀσπαζόμεσθα φιλύρινον Κινησίαν. / Τί δεῦρο πόδα σὺ κυλλὸν ἀνά κύκλον κυκλεῖς; / ΚΙ. Ὅρνις γενέσθαι βούλομαι λιγύφθογγοσ ἀηδῶν. / ΠΙ. Παῦσαι μελωδῶν, ἀλλ' ὅ τι λέγεις εἰπέ μοι. / ΚΙ. Ὑπὸ σοῦ πτερωθεὶς βούλομαι μετάρσιος / ἀναπτόμενος ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν καινὰς λαβεῖν / ἀεροδότητος καὶ νιφοβόλουσ ἀναβολὰς. / ΠΙ. Ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν γὰρ ἄν τις ἀναβολὰς λάβοι; / ΚΙ. Κρέματα μὲν οὖν ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῶν ἡ τέχνη. / Τῶν διθυράμβων γὰρ τὰ λαμπρὰ γίγνεται / ἄερια καὶ σκοτεινὰ καὶ κυαναυγέα / καὶ πτεροδόνητα· σὺ δὲ κλύων εἶσει τάχα. ... ΠΙ. Οὐ γὰρ σὺ χαίρεις πτεροδόνητος γενόμενος; / ΚΙ. Ταῦτι πεπόηκασ τὸν κυκλιοδιδάσκαλον, / ὃς ταῖσι φυλαῖς περιμάχητόσ εἰμ' αἰε; / ΠΙ. Βούλει διδάσκειν καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν οὖν μένων / Λεωτροφίδη χορὸν πετομένων ὄρνέων / Κεκροπίδα φυλήν;

the style of Pindar is received more graciously and returns home with the gift of a coat (904–955), even if he too does not gain entrance to Peisetairus' bird-state.¹⁷ Aristophanes' 'processing' of the two poets shows similarities with the passage in *Republic* Book 3 that are too great to be attributed to chance and thus suggest a direct reference to Aristophanes' *Birds* by Plato.

Aristophanes, on the one hand, makes clear in his parodies that the mimetic mannerisms of Euripides or Agathon violate the decorum of the sublime genre of tragedy—whereas they are permissible in comedy with its adherence to different norms—and that they pervert the educational mission of the genre, while Aeschylus' 'old' tragedy occupies an important place in the education of citizens. Plato, on the other hand, banishes 'Homer and the tragic poets'¹⁸ from his state altogether because of their deleterious effects on the soul of the audience (*Republic* 10, 606e1–607a7), especially if this poetry is considered a serious matter, and performed accordingly, rather than a mere game (602b παιδιά τις). But the institutional framework within which plays are performed—the

/ ΚΙ. Καταγελάς μου, δήλος εἶ. / Ἄλλ' οὖν ἔγωγ' οὐ παύσομαι, τοῦτ' ἴσθ' ὅτι, / πρὶν ἂν περωθεῖς διαδράμω τὸν ἄερα.

¹⁷ Aristophanes, *Birds* 904–955: ΠΟ. Νεφελοκοκκυγίαν τὰν εὐδαίμονα / κλῆσον, ὦ Μοῦσα, τεαῖς ἐν ἕμνων ἀοιδαῖς. / ΠΙ. Τοῦτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα ποδαπόν; Εἰπέ μοι, τίς εἶ; / ΠΟ. Ἐγώ; μελιγλώσσω ἐπέων ἰεὺς ἀοιδᾶν / Μουσᾶων θεράπων ὀτρηρός, / κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον. / ΠΙ. Ἐπειτα δῆτα δοῦλος ὦν κόμην ἔχεις; / ΠΟ. Οὐκ, ἀλλὰ πάντες ἐσμὲν οἱ διδάσκαλοι / Μουσᾶων θεράποντες ὀτρηροί, /κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον. / ΠΙ. Οὐκ ἐτός ὀτρηρὸν καὶ τὸ ληδᾶριον ἔχεις. / Ἄτάρ, ὦ ποιητά, κατὰ τί δεῦρ' ἀνεφθάρης; / ΠΟ. Μέλη πεπόηκ' εἰς τὰς Νεφελοκοκκυγίας / τὰς ἕμετέρας κύκλια τε πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ / καὶ παρθένεια καὶ κατὰ τὰ Σιμωνίδου. / ΠΙ. Ταῦτὶ σὺ πότε ἐπόησας; Ἀπὸ πόσου χρόνου; / ΠΟ. Πάλαι, πάλαι δὴ τήνδ' ἐγὼ κλήζω πόλιν. / ΠΙ. Οὐκ ἄρτι θύω τὴν δεκάτην ταύτης ἐγώ, / καὶ τοῦνομ' ὥσπερ παιδίω νυνδὴ θέμην; / ΠΟ. Ἀλλὰ τίς ὠκεῖα Μουσᾶων φάτις / οἷάπερ ἵππων ἀμαρυγὰ. / Σὺ δὲ πάτερ, κτίστορ Αἴτνας, / ζαθέων ἱερῶν ὁμώνυμε, / δὸς ἐμὶν ὅ τι περ / τεᾶ κεφαλᾶ θέλεις / πρόφρων δόμεν ἐμὶν τεῶν. / ΠΙ. Τοῦτὶ παρέξει τὸ κακὸν ἡμῖν πράγματα, / εἰ μὴ τι τούτῳ δόντες ἀποφευζόμεθα. / Οὗτος, σὺ μέντοι σπολάδα καὶ χιτῶν' ἔχεις, / ἀπόδυθι καὶ δὸς τῷ ποιητῇ τῷ σοφῷ. / Ἔχε τὴν σπολάδα· πάντως δέ μοι ῥιγῶν δοκεῖς. / ΠΟ. Τόδε μὲν οὐκ ἀέκουσα φίλα / Μοῦσα δῶρον δέχεται· / τὴν δὲ τεᾶ φρενὶ μάθε Πινδάρειον ἔπος – / ΠΙ. Ἄνθρωπος ἡμῶν οὐκ ἀπαλλαγθήσεται. / ΠΟ. Νομάδεσσι γὰρ ἐν Σκυθαῖς ἀλάται στρατῶν / ὅς ὑφαντοδόνητον ἔσθος οὐ πέπαται. / Ἀκλεῆς δ' ἔβα σπολάς ἀνευ χιτῶνος. / Ζύνες ὅ τοι λέγω. / ΠΙ. Ζυνήμ' ὅτι βούλει τὸν χιτωνίσκον λαβεῖν. / Ἀπόδυθι· δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ποιητὴν ὠφελεῖν. / Ἄπελθε τουτοῖσι λαβῶν. / ΠΟ. Ἀπέρχομαι, / κάς τὴν πόλιν ἀπελθῶν ποιῆσω τοιαδί· «Κλῆσον, ὦ χρυσόθρονε, τὰν τρομεράν, κρυερᾶν· / νιφόβουλα πεδία πολύπορά τ' ἤλυθον. Ἄλαλα!» / ΠΙ. Νῆ τὸν Δί' ἄλλ' ἤδη πέφευγας ταυταγί / τὰ κρυερὰ τονδί τὸν χιτωνίσκον λαβῶν.

¹⁸ Cf. MURRAY 1996, 188.

Greater Dionysia, the polis' most important festival—and the didactic claim made by the two sibling genres preclude this sort of interpretation of polis literature, the Dionysian genres and the Homeric epics, as a game. The consequence is that Plato's state has no place for this kind of literature, but only for edifying hymns and encomia.

IV.

But this does not mean that Plato strictly rejects literary genres, since he is in fact able to appreciate the aesthetic attraction of the ἡδυσμένοσ λόγος and to evaluate very competently the literary techniques of these genres, as is illustrated by his criticism of the dramatic genres and epic. He instead exploits these forms and techniques to communicate his genuinely philosophical concern in a quasi-purified manner—free from the deleterious effects of polis literature—and on this basis creates a new literary form. This new form is not written for a mass audience like that present at the Dionysia, Lenaea or Panathenaia, and it is not embellished with the optical and acoustic effects that accompany dramatic texts for the sake of appealing to the public; it is instead addressed to the small circle of people who wish to engage seriously with the topics of Socratic-Platonic philosophy and who above all are aware of the means employed by performative literature and the effects they can evoke, and who thus possess antidotes (395b6 φάρμακα) against the damaging effects such poetry inflicts on the human soul (395b7).

This new form of literature, which incorporates the old genres of the polis, purifies them and leads them towards a philosophical goal, can be best observed in the *Symposium*.¹⁹ All theatrical forms of the 5th century are present in the *Symposium* as clearly recognizable subtexts. The occasion for the narrative is Agathon's first tragic victory in 416, the host is the tragic poet himself, the comic poet Aristophanes is a guest, and Socrates terms Alcibiades' encomium that concludes the symposion—eminently comparable to the schedule of the Dionysia—a σατυρικὸν δράμα τοῦτο καὶ σιληνικόν, i.e. a 'satyr and Silenus play' (222d2f.).

This Dionysian framework, visible in the *Symposium* via the dramatic genres that are constantly evoked, is present right from the start in the guise of the institution of the symposium to which Agathon has invited his guests and is continuously recalled in the terminology from

¹⁹ Cf. ZIMMERMANN 2014.

the mysteries that pervades the *Symposium*. Alcibiades, an uninvited guest (ἄκλητος), is likewise part of the Dionysian ambiance, as are the komasts who accompany him and cause the orderly symposium to end in Dionysian chaos (223b): the wine is now to be enjoyed without order. One thinks of Dikaiopolis' hymn to Phales in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (263–280), which describes similar Dionysian orgies. On a side note, right at the beginning Apollodorus' μανία²⁰ lifts the Dionysian, orgiastic curtain, contributing a dithyrambic colouring.

Within its microstructure, the text itself also shows numerous links with dramatic genres on a number of levels. The introductory section is arranged in accord with techniques from comic prologues: it begins *me diis in rebus*. It is unclear who is speaking, and whom the speaker is addressing. The hetairoi who are mentioned remain anonymous throughout the work, much like a chorus, and in the introduction they are represented by the leader of the chorus in two brief throwaway remarks. Apollodorus' identity as the narrator is revealed in line 5, although the fact that he comes from Phaleron had already provided a hint. Consider the prologues to Aristophanes' *Knights*, *Wasps*, or *Birds*, where the *dramatis personae* are assigned names only late; in general, naming a character late in the action appears to have been a comic technique.

Aristodemus, who is Apollodorus' informant, and the narrator Apollodorus himself are types who appear to have stepped from the pages of an intellectuals comedy. They bear epithets that would have served to mock them in 5th century comedy—Aristodemus is short and 'unshod' (173b2 μικρός, ἀνυπόδητος)—while Apollodorus, who has a reputation of being weak and sentimental (173d7f. μαλακός), seems to be a Socratic reincarnation of Euripides' servant in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, of Socrates' student in *Clouds*, or of Agathon's slave in *Thesmophoriazousae*: all these servants make excessive use of their masters' diction and mannerisms.

The encomium of Alcibiades turns Socrates into an epic-tragic-comic hero. It opens by comparing Socrates to Ajax, a tragic hero (219e2), followed by comparisons with Achilles, Nestor, Antenor and Pericles (221c). Within this group, Socrates surpasses all in stamina, which is underlined by a quote from Homer (220c2), but he is also invincible in the consumption of wine: no one has ever seen him drunk (220a). He thus combines the properties of both epic-tragic and comic heroes.

²⁰ For μανία cf. DODDS ²1960, XI-XX; ZIMMERMANN ²2008, 44-50.

Alcibiades, addressing Aristophanes directly, uses his encomium to correct the latter's image of Socrates by quoting line 362 from *Clouds* "swaggering and casting his eyes sideways" (βρενθυόμενος καὶ τῷ φθαλμῷ παραβάλλον) and reinterpreting it positively as a reference to Socrates' behaviour in battle. He similarly corrects Aristophanes' caricature of an intellectual by portraying Socrates thinking while on campaign (220c1–d5). Throughout the night, Ionian soldiers watch him thinking, and they do this without bursting into laughter; they instead display a simple man's admiration for the mental dedication of a philosopher. What may appear comical and has been portrayed in a comically distorted manner in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (133-219)—particularly in the report of Socrates' student regarding his master's absurd and pointless experiments—is revealed as the profession and confession of an intellectual and it is accepted and perceived with admiration by the crowd.

The poetological conclusion that Plato has Socrates deliver at the end of the *Symposium* is well prepared for: both tragedy and comedy should be written by the same poet, who would then be able to create a comic-tragic hero like Socrates, but not for the purpose of entertainment and for mocking, exclusionary laughter, as was the custom in comedies of the time, or to trigger "shivering full of fear and tearful pity and a painful longing" (φρίκη περίφοβος καὶ ἔλεος πολύδακρυς καὶ πόθος φιλοπενθής), as Gorgias describes the effects of poetry in his *Helen* (8). Rather, the purpose is to provide a benefit to the audience. But this benefit cannot be conveyed in the theatre of Dionysus, in front of an audience of thousands of people, but only within a small circle of like-minded people, as may be the case at a symposium like the one described by Plato. In this new literature as created by Plato, there is also room for a new type of myth in which there are not old-wives tales or gruesome stories (*Republic* 3, 337c–381e), but rather narratives animating fantasy and flights of thought, and which is capable of abridging the long dialectical path to the truth. This Platonic, elitist theatre lacks the dimensions that Aristotle terms ἄτεχνοι, 'not part of the art', in his *Poetics*—the ὄψις and μελοποιία, the staging and setting to music, which are particularly able to rouse the emotions. Plato's texts address the intellect alone. In the best sense of the word, they are pure theatre of the mind.

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Θέατρο του Νου: Ο Πλάτωνας και το Αττικό Δράμα

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Περίληψη

Η ΠΑΡΟΥΣΑ μελέτη διερευνά τις σχέσεις ανάμεσα στην αττική κωμωδία του 5ου και του πρώιμου 4ου αι. π.Χ. και τους διαλόγους του Πλάτωνα. Βασικό στοιχείο συσχετισμού των δύο είναι το γεγονός ότι τόσο οι κωμικοί ποιητές όσο και ο Πλάτωνας προσέδωσαν ιδιαίτερη βαρύτητα στον διδακτικό-παιδαγωγικό ρόλο των δραματικών ειδών στο πλαίσιο της αθηναϊκής δημοκρατίας. Ωστόσο, αντίθετα προς την κωμωδία και την τραγωδία, οι πλατωνικοί διάλογοι δεν απευθύνονται στα συναισθήματα του κοινού. Μάλλον “αποκαθαίρουν” τις παραδοσιακές δραματικές τεχνικές και τις ενσωματώνουν σε μία νέα δραματική-διαλογική μορφή, η οποία απευθύνεται στη λογική.

