

〈Lecture〉

Imitatio Socratis: A Histrionic Reconstruction of Plato's Socrates

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Abstract

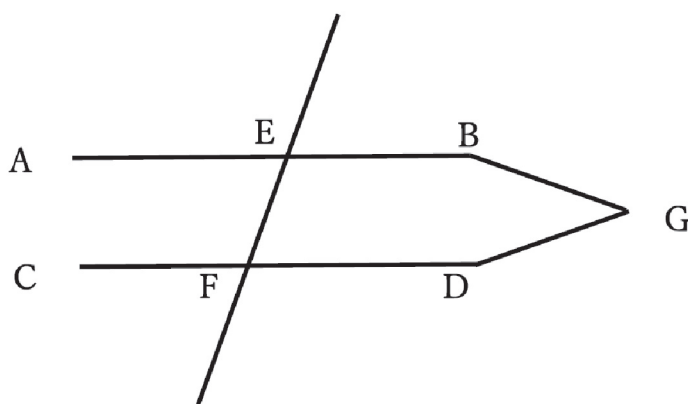
The *dramatis persona*, Socrates, in Plato's drama, appears either as a narrator of the past conversation he participated in or as a participant in the conversation going on as a drama. The first thing for interpreters of such dramas to do is not to extract Plato the author's doctrines or preconditioning conceptual scheme but to play the part of Socrates and his interlocutors and to reconstruct what they are doing interactively in the dramatized conversation.

Keywords: Plato; Socrates; drama; conversation; interpretation

1. *In medias res*: What Is It to Be Socratic?

First of all, let us practice the following two plays.

Script A: Monologue



‘If a straight line falling on two straight lines make the alternate angles equal to one another, the straight lines will be parallel to one another. For let the straight line EF falling on the two straight lines AB, CD make the alternate angles AEF, EFD equal to one another. For let the straight line EF falling on the two straight lines AB, CD make the alternate angles AEF, EFD equal to one another; I say that AB is parallel to CD. For, if not, AB, CD when produced will meet either in the direction of B, D or toward A, C. Let them be produced and meet, in the direction of B, D, at G. Then, in the triangle GEF, the exterior angle AEF is equal to the interior and opposite angle EFG: which is impossible. Therefore AB, CD when produced will not meet in the direction of B, D. Similarly it can be proved that neither will they meet towards A, C. But straight lines which do not meet in either direction are parallel; *therefore* AB is parallel to CD. Q.E.D.’¹

Script B: Dialogue

Fellow: If the straight line EF falling on the two straight lines AB, CD make the alternate angles AEF, EFD equal to one another, is AB parallel to CD? Socrates: I don’t know what to answer. Do you believe it is? Fellow: I am not certain. Socrates: Then, could we investigate together whether or not it is? Now, when AB and CD are produced, do you think that they will meet either in the direction of B, D or toward A, C? Fellow: Yes. Socrates: Then, let them be produced and meet, in the direction of B, D, at G. Then, in the triangle GEF, is the exterior angle AEF equal to the interior and opposite angle EFG? Please say what do you think. Fellow: Impossible, as it seems. Socrates: *Therefore* AB and CD when produced surely will not meet in the direction of B, D? Fellow: No, not at all.

How a performer should express the word ‘therefore’ (ὥγαρ in the Greek original text) each in the two scripts above and especially whether one should interpret that each speaker, ‘I’ in the monologue and ‘Socrates’ in the dialogue, utters it under the same intention, this is the central question I shall raise in what follows.

2. Where is Socrates?

How have modern readers encountered Socrates? I encountered Socrates in a Japanese translation of Plato’s *Apology of Socrates* in the second year of high school, secondary school in Japan, when I was sixteen. (Probably the translation I read as school assignment was by Masaru Kubo, who, as I mentioned in another lecture [16th April 2019, University of Debrecen, Hungary], was an ardent disciple of Master Koebel, philosopher and philologist born in Russia, a founder of the classical learning in Japan.) Considering the modern publications of Plato’s works according to Plato bibliographies, my experience is not unusual. In Plato’s *Apology of Socrates*, Socrates stands in his

trial at the Athenian citizens' court, accused of corrupting the youth, introducing a new religion, and teaching an art of eristic. In his autobiographical part in his defense, given the Delphi's oracle through his friend Chaerephon, purporting 'No one is wiser than Socrates', Socrates becomes an examiner of himself and his citizen fellows for his life. He heroically chooses philosophizing prior to his life and willingly accepts the death penalty. This is my encounter with Socrates. Socrates in Plato's *Apology* may have allured some other young readers to what Socrates there names philosophy, whatever it may have been interpreted to be in the Western history.

Let me ask the same question about Plato. How can modern readers usually encounter Plato? Plato does not speak in person in his works. He wrote dramas, not treatises. The character named Socrates appears in almost all of his works except in his last work the *Laws* and thirteen letters traditionally attributed to Plato. Readers can talk about Socrates in his works but it seems hard to talk about Plato at least to modern literary critics, if they are influenced by the theory of intentional fallacy² or readers-centered reading.³

Notwithstanding, Plato's doctrines may have seemed transparent to almost any modern reader, expert or non-expert in transforming Plato's dramatized interactions into his monologue in person. Modern university lecturers talk of the theories of forms, the tripartite soul, or the philosopher king as attributable to Plato.

Raffaello's famous painting, *The School of Athens*, raises some suggestion on the modern reading practice of Plato's works.⁴ In the center of the front of the school two masters stand, seen from the side of the viewer of the picture, Plato on the left hand side and Aristotle on the right hand side. If an observer looks over the whole of the painting, where can Socrates be found?

What figure Socrates is or whether Socrates is absent or not is controversial⁵ but most critics have agreed that Plato stands opposite to Aristotle at the center and that they were so arranged in what was regarded as philosophy when Plato's original texts were transmitted in manuscript to the West from the Byzantine Empire. Although it is arguable whether all the Neoplatonists were doctrinal readers or not,⁶ it is not felicitous that modern Western earliest readers of Plato's texts were interested in extracting Plato's doctrines or arguments and compared them with Aristotle's or Christian doctrines.⁷

Later modern philosophical readers have been armed with logical rigorism in criticizing arguments in general but they have kept silence in their way of eliciting arguments and attributing them to Plato's responsibility.⁸

Solving this riddle is not the main theme here but before developing the histrionic reading practice I just leave a hint. Before encountering Plato's original Greek texts in the 15th century the way of hearkening the author's voice from the written passage had been a very familiar and routinized practice in faithful people's reading of the sacred texts in Christianity, which is, for modern secularized literary critics, not a collection of speeches made directly to readers by the highest divinity in person.

If asked whether the author's message can be hearkened from the text with good reason, faithful readers would have been perplexed. Their reading way might have been the principle. If so, it could not have been committed to argument whether it should not be unapplicable to Plato's text.⁹

3. How to Approach Socrates' Intention in Plato's Dialogues

3.1. Plato's Characterization of Socrates the Questioner

The person called 'Socrates' is variously characterized in the literary vogue of the Socratic literature in the late 5th to 4th century BCE (*Sokratikoi logoi* (Aristoteles, *Poetica*, 1447b11))¹⁰.

Among them Aristotle (384-322 BCE) seems to have witnessed of the historical person Socrates (470/469-399) generically, though, as conjectured from his lifetime, not personally, saying 'Socrates used to ask questions and not to answer them; for he used to confess that he did not know.' (*Sophistici Elenchi*, 183b6-8).¹¹

This witness of Aristotle's, if true of the historical Socrates, is contradictory to Xenophon's. In the making of Socratic literature, as his *Memorabilia* (*the Recollection of Socrates*) shows (e.g., Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 1.4.1-2), his intention is to defend the historical person Socrates by reporting the fact in the past. If he had so intended in his *Apology of Socrates*, Socrates in his trial would have seemed to him to recognize himself to be a teacher of ethical doctrines.

In Xenophon's representation of Socrates' examination of his accuser Meletus on the suspicion of his corrupting of the youth, Meletus claimed to know whom Socrates had persuaded among the young to follow him rather than their parents whereas Socrates in reply agreed as common knowledge to people that he had conducted teaching (*paideia*), suggesting that he behaved like good speakers in the citizens' assembly or physicians.

Thus Xenophon seems to have intended to let his readers know that Socrates had teachings in ethics to impart to people, specifically, not asking questions but making statements. This is contrary to Aristotle's generic image of the historical Socrates.

Plato's representation in his *Apology of Socrates* — although Plato's characterization of Socrates, as is well known to readers of Plato's works, cannot be simplified — seemingly perfectly agrees with Aristotle's. Whether Socrates teaches or not is not crucial to Xenophon but *is* to Plato in his *Apology*.

"I must, as it were, read their sworn statement as if they were plaintiffs: "Socrates is a criminal and a busybody, investigating the things beneath the earth and in the heavens and making the weaker argument stronger and *teaching* [*didaskon* (emphasis and parenthesis is mine)] others these same things." (*Apologia Socratis*, 19b5-c1)¹²

Whether Socrates is teaching or asking questions is crucial in Plato's understanding and representation of Socrates in his *Apology*, if not throughout his career of writing Socratic literature.

In his explanation of the past unwritten accusation (*Apology*, 23c-d), Socrates emphasises his conduct not in teaching but in examining others, which his followers in the younger generation imitated, and he reasons that the sufferers of his examination were forced to invent the fact of his teaching by recourse to a popular slander from old times.

Then, did Plato perfectly acquit Socrates of teaching? His Socrates disavows but he is in the position to forestall his interlocutor's response in his usual practice of a question-and-answer bout against Meletus.

“But if I believe in spiritual beings, it is quite inevitable that I believe also in spirits; is it not so? It is; for I assume that you agree, since you do not answer.” (Fowler (tr.)) (Plato, *Apology*, 27c)

Also Socrates slips or riddles in a usual phrase for sophists' claim to know all: παρέρχω ἐμαυτὸν ἐρωτᾶν (33b), which Plato uses in other dialogues for sophists (*Meno*, 70b5-c3; *Protagoras*, 348a6-8).

3.2. Plato's Devices of Confirming His Character's Act of Questioning

Were there available any good additions to the text by which for Plato to offer readers to distinguish whether Socrates is teaching or asking questions?

Who invented the question mark in the ancient Greek literature and when? Let us take John 1:21 for an example of the rise of the question mark in the transmission of Greek literature, since there are no extant manuscripts in majuscule script for Plato's works.

The Gospel According to John, 1:21

καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτόν· τί οὖν; σὺ Ἠλίας εἶ; καὶ λέγει· οὐκ εἰμί. ὁ προφήτης εἶ σύ;
καὶ ἀπεκρίθη· οὐ. (Nestle-Aland, 28th ed. (2012))

And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. (The King James Version (1604-11))

The papyrus around 200 CE (P⁶⁶ Cologny, Bibl. Bodmer, ca. 200 CE) has no punctuation including a question mark;¹³ nor did the oldest *codici* in majuscule script in the fourth century (e.g. Codex Vaticanus graecus 1209 (B), Saec. IV;¹⁴ Codex Sinaiticus (London, Brit. Libr.) (x) Saec. IV¹⁵). However, a ninth century codex in majuscule script had a comma ‘,’, subjoined with a higher single

colon ‘ · ’ as the sign for interrogation at the end of the sentence ‘Art thou Elias?’ (Codex Parisinus graecus 62, saec. IX).¹⁶ Another ninth century codex in majuscule script has at the same place vertically doubly punctuated commata for interrogation (Codex Monacensis graecus 383, saec. IX).¹⁷

Hence it is conjectured that the original text was written in large characters (probably ancient writers would have dictated a slave in the making of their works); that the original text had no punctuation, including a question mark; that the question mark was invented in the ninth century.

This conjecture is applicable to the punctuation in the transmission of Plato’s works. For the question mark can be observed in the texts of the oldest of the extant manuscripts, *codici* Parisinus graecus 1807 (A), Oxoniensis Bodleianus MSS E.D. Clarke 39 (B) and Vaticanus graecus 1 (O) and even in the marginal addition (the scholion to *Laws* III 685b5) on the Patriarch’s Book in the Vatican, fol. 24^v *sinistra*, whereas almost no punctuation can be observed in a second century papyrus (e.g. POxy 228 (Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 228) 2C CE, Plato, *Laches*, 197c-d) or any others.

Hence one could safely say that Plato would have had no punctuation including the question mark or probably any other marks.

Which implies that (1) whether Socrates is asking a question or not in Plato’s text depends on readers’ interpretation; that (2) so does how the character Socrates there should be reconstructed finally.

However it would be less risky, before any good interpretation is conducted through, to explore what Plato’s art of writing was.

3.3. Plato’s Art of Writing in Creating the Character Socrates

Plato would have supposed that readers of the text of plays would have read aloud, or let someone else recite, the text, thereby imitating the characters and perhaps creating themselves true to one of them (*Republic*, II-III). How would Plato have played the part of Socrates and dictated a slave boy in the making of the characters in his dialogues? The referent ‘therefore’ ἄρα would have worked differently from that in a monologue such as Euclid’s demonstration (see above section 1). I would propose below some features in his character making.

First, one could, under meticulous scrutiny unusual to textual critics,¹⁸ learn some from medieval scribes’ stage-directions in their placing of question marks. Modern readers have learned much from modern linguistics and especially pragmatics such as Jacobson’s theory of functions in speech, Austin’s and Searl’s theory of direct and indirect speech acts, Grice’s theory of conversational implicature.¹⁹ In comparison, the medieval scribe scholars (such as the scribe and corrector of codex Parisinus graecus 1807 and Georgius Pachymeres (1242-ca. 1310) and Bessarion (1403-1472)) were surely silent in their theories but their readings were not simple or primitive (John Burnet’s enlightening proposals in his *apparatus critici* are often found to come from medieval scribes’

readings).

Medieval scribes did not use a question mark (usually a comma subjoined with the dicolon) at Wh-questions as in the modern texts, but Yes-No questions as a direct or indirect speech act.²⁰ Medieval scribes place a one at a sentence with:

- (1) οὐ / οὐδέ (a negative heralding a question expecting yes and no)
- (2) τί δὲ / τί οὖν (a question-heralding marker)
- (3) ἄρα / ἄρ' οὖν (a question-heralding marker)
- (4) οὐκοῦν (a question-heralding marker)
- (5) ἄρα (a marker referring to the precedent in speech and hence inviting the interlocutor's response)
- (6) ὥς ἔοικεν (an assertiveness-weakening marker indirectly working as question)
- (7) καί / δέ / οὖν (a marker referring to the precedent and hence inviting the interlocutor's response)
- (8) a direct or indirect referent to the interlocutor's intention such as an explicit performative verb

in the second person singular present indicative and the second person singular pronoun

and even at the end of a sentence with a parenthetical use of the performative opinion verb in the first person present indicative, 'I suppose' οἶμαι at the *Republic*, I. 335d9 in Parisinus graecus 1807 (Οὐ γὰρ θερμοτότητος, οἶμαι, ἔργον ψύχειν ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου. (signum interrogandi non interpunxerunt Burnet (1902) Slings (2003)).

These stage-directions are hints on how Plato could have represented the character Socrates in some of his dialogues as one who is intending to be asking questions but who appears committal to those examined.

Those referents above (4), (5) and (7), if placed in a conversational interaction, unlike in the monologue such as Aristotle or Euclid, appears to the interlocutor (and the audience and further the readers) ambivalent in referring only to the precedent respondent's, usually Socrates' interlocutors' commitment in their reply or his possible inexplicit commitment or to Socrates' commitment as well ---- although Socrates often proposes his opinion before asking a question as in the *Protagoras*, *Charmides* and others. The questioning character Socrates, when his interlocutor's downfall looms inevitable in the signs of the interlocutor's reply form 'it seems' (κινδυνεύει or φαίνεται), etc., sometimes emphasizes his previous non-commitment by reconfirming that he has played the role of the questioner, not the respondent (*Protagoras*, 330e3-a5; *Alcibiades I*, 113a1-10; see also *Meno*, 82b6-85c1 (a demonstration of self-learning); *Theaetetus*, 148e1-151e7 (Socrates' midwifery)) and sometimes suggests his collaboration in the failed investigation by his direct or indirect reference to his previous participation.

The ambivalence at least formally applies also to (9) the parenthetical phrase ὥς with an opinion verb in the second person singular, such as ὥς σὺ λέγεις, and his direct or indirect quoting of a word or phrase or perhaps idea of his interlocutor's or another concerned person's in the age of no quotation

mark (which raises the problem of Socratic irony).

One could add to this list (10) Socrates' report of his interlocutor's reply in the indirect speech, συνέφη, ὡμολόγει, συνέδοκει, etc., meaning 'He agreed', (11) Socrates' interlocutor's reply form to Socrates' question, ἀληθῆ λέγεις or ὀρθῶς λέγεις, and (12) Socrates' indirect speech act by εἵπετο ambivalent in interrogating or reconfirming the proposition established in the preceding conversation (e.g. *Euthyphro*, 8d9; *Phaedo*, 107c2; *Hippias minor*, 376b5).

All these features are closely related to Plato's making of the character Socrates.

3.4. Socrates' intention through Plato's Art of Writing

Neither Socrates' nor Plato the author's intention is unknowable. Readers can with good reason approach Socrates' intention, by reading the script of a dramatized dialogue backward and forward and thus by reconstructing Socrates' intention consistently in accordance with the explicit or inexplicit shifts of interactive situations. Hence readers also can with good reason tackle how Plato would have intended readers to play the parts of Socrates and the others. Put another way, although Plato the author *is* absent in his dramatized dialogue, he still now shows himself as the author when readers read the text. Plato is asking us, not unintended readers of his, what Socrates is intending not only within the dramatized conversation but even in the time expected to extend. The *aporia* or no way-out, at the end of the drama, a well-known feature of Plato's drama, is thus one of the questions Plato shows himself raising to his readers.

4. Conclusion

If Plato had intended to give these features above so much weight in creating a dramatized conversation, readers, ancient or modern, will mostly be in haste in eliciting from a given dramatized interaction Plato the author's own propositions or doctrines and in doing so even over a single work. Such reading practice has been continuing as a battle for Plato and probably will continue among future readers.

However, readers may well recognize again that Plato offered each work not as a series²¹ but as a drama well-contained with the beginning and the end. The first thing for readers to do is to interpret the whole of a single drama integrated with interactive elements working within, not without, the drama.

Even so one would reasonably ask why readers modern or ancient are mostly concerned with an absent author Plato's doctrines or teachings or, in defense of modern philosophical readers, why readers are concerned with propositional acts preconditioning the proceeding of a dramatized conversation, even if it is with so many interactive twists, and specifically whether it is a serious concern to a person

philosophizing in the real life whether Socrates is committal or not or to what extent Socrates is committal.

Reconstructing Socrates histrionically might be a matter for literary critics, but is not for philosophers or even Plato himself, some modern and ancient readers of Plato might well contend.

Of this position I would rather be skeptical, though. Would Plato have loved in his lifetime anything but creating Socrates' character? Did he really lecture on goodness?²² It may be risky to separate Plato from his life spent creating his characters and thereby asking readers to represent his characters histrionically.

For another support of my position, the authenticity of *the Seventh Letter* aside here, let us return to the histrionic practice proposed above at the beginning. Script B is truly far from the ideal type of a Socratic conversation as well as Socrates' and a slave boy's conversation in *Meno* 82b9-85b7 is. That is my, and perhaps Socrates' in the *Meno*, trick by which readers would likely come to see what preconditioning truth they should be led to share with the interlocutors in the drama and even the author outside. Under such an inducing setting some monologized set of propositions neutral to the interlocutors and their propositional attitudes and understanding seem to some readers already given when they read those demonstrations proved valid in the Euclidean axiomatic system. Should readers of Plato's dramatized conversation therefore assume that Plato intends to have some established axiomatic system already given as neutral to conversational interactions? With good reason?

One might reasonably conclude that the division of arts and sciences or the unity of virtues, for example, repeatedly embodied in Socrates' question and accepted by his interlocutor, will be the set of established propositions accepted by the characters, Socrates and his interlocutor, and the author Plato as well, thus the frame of reference preconditioning the conversational interaction prior to the interlocutors' propositional attitudes.

Some interlocutors surely fall into their self-contradiction by accepting this presupposition. Then is Socrates also in the position to accept it as his own principle and infers from it what proposition his interlocutor should withdraw from those directly or indirectly committed to. And is Plato in the same position as Socrates is? If he is, should readers interpret that such an established preconditioning presupposition as the Euclidean axiomatic system is common knowledge to the interlocutors and the audience inside the drama and the readers outside, and hence to Plato himself?

If such presupposition seems transparent to intellectual readers as in the case of mathematics or geometry, they will be disposed to practice the way of seeing through the author's established preconditioning presupposition neutral and prior to dramatised interactions.

I should be so much more skeptical here, however. If so, is Plato so simple as to ignore, when he is creating conversational interactions between Socrates and his interlocutor, a dual or perhaps multiple systematic difference working as it does between the Euclidean and other non-Euclidean systems.

Categorically no, I should like to say. Hence histrionic reconstruction would still be the key to battling through for Socrates and Plato.²³

Notes:

1. Heath (1908) I. 307-8; Euclid, *Elementa*, Book 1, Proposition 27.
2. Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946).
3. E.g., Hans Robert Jauss in the 1960's and 1970's.
4. Raphael (ca. 1510), *The School of Athens*, Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie, Vatican City.
5. Gombrich (1972); Most (1996).
6. Taki (2012).
7. FitzPatrick (1992) 158-168. See also a specific practice, e.g., Ficino's argumenta (1484); Bessarion (ca. 1469); Charpentier (1573).
8. e.g. Annas (1995).
9. For the ancient readers' criticism of the skeptical way of reading Plato's works, see Annas (1992); id. (1999); id. (2002).
10. See also Giannantoni (1990).
11. Pickard-Cambridge (1928).
12. Fowler (1914).
13. John 1:20-22 ΕΓΩ ΟΥΚΙΜΙ Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΡΩΤΗ[Σ]ΑΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΤΙΣ ΟΥΝ ΗΛΙΑΣ ΕΙ [ΚΑΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ] ΟΥΚ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΕΙ ΣΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΕΚΡΙΘΗ ΟΥ.
14. John 1:20-22 ΕΓΩ ΟΥΚ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΡΩΤΗΣΑΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΣΥ ΟΥΝ ΤΙ ΗΛΙΑΣ ΕΙ ΚΑΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΟΥΚ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΕΙ ΣΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΕΚΡΙΘΗ ΟΥ.
15. John 1:20-22 ΕΓΩ ΟΥΚ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΗΡΩΤΗΣΑΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΗΛΙΑΣ ΕΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΟΥΚ ΕΙΜΙ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΕΙ ΣΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΕΚΡΙΘΗ ΟΥ. (ΑΥΤΟΝ om. Ο om.)
16. John 1:20-22 ΕΓΩ ΟΥΚ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΡΩΤΗΣΑΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΤΙ ΟΥΝ ΗΛΙΑΣ ΕΙ; ΚΑΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΟΥΚ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΕΙ ΣΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΕΚΡΙΘΗ ΟΥ.
17. John 1:20-22 ΕΓΩ ΟΥΚ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΡΩΤΗΣΑΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΤΙ ΟΥΝ ΗΛΙΑΣ ΕΙΣΥ; ΚΑΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΟΥΚ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΕΙ ΣΥ; ΚΑΙ ΑΠΕΚΡΙΘΗ ΟΥ.
18. Taki (2013).
19. Austin (1961); Jacobson (1963; 1973); Searl (1969); Grice (1989).
20. Rijksbaron, A. (2003), 'A question of questions: peusis, erotesis and [Longinus] περὶ ὕψους 18.1' *Mnemosyne*, 56, 733-736.
21. Plato would have created the continuity in setting as among *Apology*, *Crito* and *Phaedo* or between *Meno* and *Apology*, *Euthyphro* and *Theaetetus*, *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, *Sophist* and *Politicus*, and *Republic* and

Timaeus, *Timaeus* and *Critias* but not in the arguments in the dramatized conversation.

22. Aristoxenus, *Elementa harmonica*, 39.8-40.12; Gaiser (1980).

23. I learned the word from Stokes' Preface (Stokes (1986) xii).

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ソクラテスに倣いて —プラトンのソクラテスを演劇的に再構成することについて

瀧 章 次

【要旨】

プラトンの作品形式は作劇として多様であるけれども、劇として対話が描かれているかぎりにおいては、登場人物が相互にどのように言語的に関係し合っているか、劇作としての対話の相互的な働きを分析して理解することが作品解釈上の重要な手続きである。そのためには、句読法が未発達であることなど歴史的な表現媒体の性格を理解した上で、相互に働きかけあっている様相を表すためのさまざまな表現形式について留意して、対話劇を再構成することが求められる。この手続きを省略して、対話している人物の思想体系や、劇作者プラトン自身の思想体系に、直ちにアプローチすることは危険な手続きである。

キーワード：プラトン、ソクラテス、対話、句読法、解釈法