LUDIC LESSONS: ROMAN COMEDY ON STAGE AND IN CLASS

Abstract: *This afterword offers further reflections on the pedagogical value of using performance in the classroom. It expands the volume's discussion of this topic by situating the 2012 NEH Summer Institute on Roman Comedy within the wider development of Performance/Theatre Studies as a university discipline. In addition, it examines the methodology that underpins various approaches to performance, and suggests further ways of implementing the ideas proposed in the preceding chapters.*

The pedagogical and research aims that underpin the 2012 NEH Summer Institute on Roman Comedy are part of a broader academic trend towards analyzing dramatic works in terms of performance, not just in terms of literary genre. This "performative turn," as it is now known, began in the early twentieth century with Herrmann, a German literary historian and theatre theorist who argued that the ephemeral act of staging a play was the most crucial element of any play's meaning. Herrmann differentiated between drama, which he defined as "the literary creation of one author," and theatre, which for him resembled a game involving both actors and spectators, with each group participating in equal if different ways to develop the play's various and ever-shifting connotations.[1] Under this rubric, the study of "drama" implied traditional, author-centered literary criticism, founded on assumptions about the intent of individual playwrights and the primacy of the written word. By contrast, the interconnected disciplines of theatre and performance studies treated plays as physical and temporal events, in other words, as performances. These same disciplines emphasized the audience's role in producing the overall aesthetic experience that constitutes a "play."

A similar division, between theatre as text and theatre as event, emerged in U.S. universities during the 1910s and 20s.[2] It has led over time to the development of independent Theatre and/or Performance Studies departments, most of which offer practical training in dramatic production alongside more theoretical study.[3] Courses in Drama, on the other hand, approach plays primarily as texts, and are more likely to be offered as a subset of English or Comparative Literature. The 2012 NEH Summer Institute is best understood against this historical background, because by conducting empirical research into the performance of Roman *palliatae*, the scholars involved in this project have made a definite methodological statement about the value of staging dramatic literature, for pedagogy and for research. To engage in performance for the purpose of academic analysis is to believe that besides comprising a script, theatre also comprises costumes, props, actors, sound, light, stage space, and audience. Moreover, using performance as a pedagogical tool has two major advantages: it offers a means of bridging the divide between teaching and research, and it helps students develop their own research projects by encouraging them to engage with Roman Comedy at a personal as well as theoretical level.

As the various contributions to this volume demonstrate, examining the visual and experiential dimensions of theatre is a valid pursuit in its own right, as well as one that may be used to supplement dramatic texts. In the specific case of Roman comedy, there are many good reasons for taking performative elements into account when discussing or teaching a play. The main reason is simply that Plautus and Terence wrote for the stage, which means that their surviving play scripts are more properly transcripts, skeletal remains of what were

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[1] Herrmann's observations are cited by Fischer-Lichte (2014) 12-18, whose chapter on "The History of the Discipline" provides a valuable introduction to Performance Studies.

[2] Fischer-Lichte (2014) 14-15.

[3] Theory and practice do not always coalesce harmoniously in Performance/Theatre Studies departments; see Roach (1999) 5-8 on the conflicting demands of these two approaches.

once fully realized theatrical events.[4] As Taplin observes, "great playwrights have been practical men of the theatre...they have supervised the rehearsal, directed the movement of their works, overseen their music, choreography, and design, and have often acted themselves."[5] Taplin's remarks are especially true of Plautus, who is believed to have worked as an actor of mime or Atellan farce, and who was probably involved in the technical side of dramatic production as well.[6] In addition, the distinctive features of Plautine comedy are so closely bound to theatrical performance that they achieve their full effect only when presented on stage: slapstick humor, improvisation, musical and rhythmic variation in the speech of individual characters; even Plautus' verbal virtuosity gains the further quality of aural silliness when performed. For example, lines such as *Pseud.* 134 – *quorum numquam quicquam quoiquam venit in mentem ut recte faciant* (in Smith's masterful translation: "you never do no good nohow") – were written, above all, to be spoken aloud.[7] All of this is not to suggest that Plautus' and Terence's extant play scripts cannot profitably be read and analyzed *as texts* – they can be, and many scholars have done so.[8] Dialogue, however, is just one aspect of theatre, and the fact that it survives in the form of scripts has created an artificial division between theatre's literary qualities and its physical ones. Thinking in terms of performance allows us to reunite the abstract and concrete elements of drama, and to understand how they interact with, complement, sometimes even contradict, one another. The papers in this volume show that the act of staging a script can give rise to new interpretive questions or bring into sharper focus issues that seemed less apparent – or less important – on the page.[9] Here again, pedagogy and research can be combined to great effect, because performance not only affords scholars new insights into dramatic texts, but also introduces students to dramaturgy by allowing them, literally, to play with it. Even the more restricted activities, such as examining a text for dramaturgical clues or discussing possible staging options, will demonstrate to students just how easily enactment can alter the tone of a scene. From here it is a short step to interrogating the social dynamics of Roman comedy, that is, studying how men and women, masters and subordinates, interact and define their roles. The value of performance, in this last regard, is that it permits social dynamics to be presented and evaluated in a very nuanced manner. It also leads students into deeper engagement with Roman values and societal norms by encouraging them to recognize their own historically conditioned perspectives. A couple of examples will suffice to illustrate my point.

Plautus, *Bacchides* 109-69 demonstrates that dramaturgy can have an artistic as well as purely practical purpose. The scene is an exchange between the *adulescens* Pistocleros and his erstwhile *paedogogus*, Lydus. Pistoclerus is on his way to the house of the Bacchis sisters, attired in his best party outfit and accompanied by a group of servants carrying all manner of edible delicacies. Throughout the scene, Lydus occupies the role of the agelast, criticizing the young man's pursuit of pleasure and lamenting his lack of discipline.[10] The exchange between

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[4] On play scripts as "transcripts," see Taplin (2003) 1-2. In regard to Plautus, Marshall (2006) 245-79 takes the idea one step further and suggests that extant Plautine play texts are *post eventum* records of largely improvisational performances.

[5] Taplin (1978) 1.

[6] The name Titus Maccius Plautus suggests affiliations with Atellan farce, because the clown, *Maccus*, was a stock character in that genre. Gratwick (1973) examines in full the various connotations of Plautus' name. For an overview of how native Italic and particularly Atellan theatrical practices may have influenced Plautus' work, see Petrides (2014). Manuwald (2011) 226 cites Aulus Gellius *NA* 3.3.14 (*in operis artificum scaenicorum*) as evidence that Plautus worked in the theatre in a technical or organizational capacity, besides writing plays.

[7] Wright (1974) 36 detects in Roman comedy "a concentration on language as an object of interest in itself." The translation by Smith (1991) captures the alliterative quality of *Pseud.* 134.

[8] A recent example is Sharrock (2009), who concentrates on the specifically literary aspects of Roman comedy rather than its performance.

[9] Goldhill (2007) 1-5 makes a similar point with reference to staging Greek tragedy.

[10] The agelast is typically an ill-humoured individual who disdains or tries to prevent others' joviality. In his "Essay on Comedy", first published in 1877, Meredith defines the agelast as a core element of comic plots. For analysis of the agelast in Plautine comedy, see Segal (1987) 71-98, and especially 71-4, where he discusses the character Lydus.

these two characters maps neatly onto Segal's theories of Saturnalian inversion: the young man uses his wit to outsmart the older man; the student presumes to know more than the teacher; festive indulgence triumphs over grim restraint.[11] Pistoclerus even puns on his tutor's name – *non omnis aetas, Lyde, ludo convenit* ("not every age is suited to school, Lydus" 129) – by which he draws attention to the competing claims of 'school' (*ludus*), 'childish play' (*ludus*), and public festivities (*ludi*).[12] The conditions of temporary freedom created by the *ludi* allow Pistoclerus to invert the tutor-pupil relationship.[13] How, then, does Plautus' dramaturgy contribute to the scene? Twice during the exchange, Pistoclerus commands Lydus to shut up and follow him (*tace et sequere, Lyde, me*, 137; *sequere hac me et tace*, 169) and Lydus himself grumbles at the outset that he has been walking behind Pistoclerus for long enough (*iam dudum, Pistoclere, tacitus te sequor*, 109). In one respect, these stage directions fulfill the purely practical purpose of moving two characters across the stage. Yet they acquire further significance in the particular context of *paedogogus* and ex-pupil, because the *paedogogus* traditionally lead the pupil to school, which means that he walked ahead of his charge.[14] By having Lydus *follow* Pistoclerus across stage rather than *lead* him, Plautus uses physical movement to reflect the hierarchical inversion of these two characters. The scene has thus been composed in such a way that its enactment symbolizes its main themes.

Not all stage activity is this transparent, however. To take another example of cross-stage movement, I turn to a scene from Terence's *Eunuchus* (225-91), in which the parasite Gnatho arrives, vaunts, and taunts Phaedria's slave, Parmeno, before entering Thais' house to deliver a gift. That "gift" is the young girl Pamphila, who is present on stage as a silent character throughout the entire exchange. Although she never speaks, Pamphila is far from invisible, since both Parmeno and Gantho treat her as a figure worthy of attention. As soon as Parmeno catches sight of her, he declares that the girl's beauty surpasses Thais' (229-31); later, Gnatho invites Parmeno to appraise the girl, and Parmeno agrees that she's "not bad" (*non malum, hercle*, 274). Even here, performance raises questions about characterization and actors' delivery: is Parmeno's tone grudging or admiring? Gnatho's aside, *uro hominem* ("I'm burning the man" 274) implies that Parmeno is indeed jealous; Parmeno's subsequent aside, *ut falsus animist!* ("How wrong he is!" 274) announces the opposite. Which character, if any, do we believe? The point, in this instance, is not that enactment *resolves* such issues, but that it *creates* them, adding further layers to the text and warning us against too rigid an interpretation of the scene.

To return to Pamphila: what is she doing while Parmeno and Gnatho speak, and how might her behaviour affect the tenor of this exchange? As the NEH Institute scholars were well aware, *comoedia palliata* often combines comic fun with troubling social issues: Pamphila will be raped by Chaerea later in the play, and will respond to the event with evident distress (659-60).[15] Should the actor playing Pamphila choose to draw attention to the girl's pitiable state in this earlier scene as well? Or should the scene be played purely for laughs, with Pamphila posing to show off the beauty that excites so much comment from Gantho and Parmeno? Would the effect be different if, as was the case in the play's original context, the role of Pamphila was played by a man, or a young boy? These are the sorts of questions that arise, and become more pressing, when a dramatic text is performed as opposed to being read. They are also precisely the sorts of questions that catch the interest of

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[11] Segal (1987). Other influential treatments of Roman comedy's Saturnalian aspects include Slater (1985) and Parker (1989).

[12] For the pun on Lydus' name, see Barsby (1986) *ad loc.* and Fontaine (2010) 34 and 94. I am also indebted to Ziogas' unpublished paper, "*Non omnis aetas, Lyde, ludo covenit*: A Comic Subversion of Social Hierarchies in Plautus, *Bacchides*" delivered in Athens, May 2011, at the 11th Pan-Hellenic Symposium of Latin Studies.

[13] The inversion also points to the fact that Pistoclerus has outgrown his tutor's control.

[14] Figurines of boys with their tutors – such as the one discovered at Pella, or the one in the Walters Art Museum – provide evidence for this arrangement, since they tend to portray the tutor walking ahead, leading the young boy who lags slightly behind.

[15] James (1998) 38-46 argues that Terence presents this rape in particularly distressing terms, especially by allowing female characters to express their view of the deed.

undergraduates by presenting them with the opportunity to discuss Roman gender roles and social expectations. Such topics likewise guided the NEH Summer Institute scholars in their empirical research. At the core of the Institute's aims was the need to understand how ancient and modern audiences could approach the more disturbing elements of Roman comedy, whether each group would necessarily have approached them in the same way, and how performance could affect the reception not only of particular scenes, but also of the social and sexual issues those scenes involved.[16] Further, as many of the papers in this volume contend, both ancient and modern audiences are composed of multiple groups, which means that individual spectators may be inclined to react differently depending on their status, gender, or general social background.[17] By exploring the various ways in which a Roman audience may have judged a scene, students become more aware of their own social context and the influence it exerts upon their opinions. Analyzing the permutations of a scene's performance also leads students to think about how much social interaction is based on, and communicated through *physical action*. Depending on something as simple as her pose, Pamphila may be interpreted as a victim, a provocative beauty, an example of gender-bending, or simply a comic character.

By combining performance with pedagogy, both the NEH Summer Institute and the papers in this volume of *Classical Journal* touch upon problems at the heart of the Performance Studies discipline, namely, how to merge the practical with the theoretical, and how to derive educational value from staging – or merely thinking about staging - a play.[18] Broadly speaking, there are two ways to go about performing ancient drama. One is to aim for nominal authenticity, that is, to reconstruct as minutely and faithfully as possible a play's original performance conditions. The other is to eschew nominal authenticity in favor of re-contextualizing the work for a modern audience, in the hope of reproducing an analogous version of the work's original – or intended – effects. Gamel calls this latter option "inductive authenticity", defining it as an updated version of ancient material that aims to engage the audience "as the original production might have done."[19] A classic example is putting contemporary political references into Aristophanes.

Each of these two options – reconstruction versus reinterpretation – has slightly different aims and results. Theatrical productions that aspire to "nominal authenticity" are, in general, concerned with being faithful to the original technicalities of performance – stage space, masks, costumes, music etc – even if the effect these technicalities produce on a modern audience diverges wildly from the effects we assume they produced on an ancient one. As a rule, reconstructive performances appear to be more "academic" than modernized ones, because they adhere to ideals of "accuracy", which they hope to achieve through painstaking research and careful consideration of archaeological, textual, and art historical evidence. To some extent, however, such authenticity is an illusion, because theatrical performance itself is

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[16] The Institute website states its aims as follows: "Our institute will seek answers to a problem that has too often been ignored: how can a genre that is so incredibly fun also sometimes be so troubling? The driving questions that motivate this Institute include: Would Romans have responded the same way we do to scenes we find funny or disturbing? What effects would aspects of performance have on how those scenes were received? What do these ancient plays have to say to our own society?"

[17] Richlin (2013) and (2014) is in favor of a heterogeneous Roman audience that comprised not only slaves and women, but also people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Moore (1998) 19-20 similarly remarks that characters in Plautus' plays address particular lines to particular segments of the audience, implying a varied group of spectators. However, such conclusions have not gone uncontested: Fontaine (2010) 184-5 argues in very persuasive terms that audiences attending *palliatae* were predominantly elite.

[18] This tension between the practical and the theoretical, the physical and the analytical, lies at the heart of a lot of academic work on theatrical performance. Describing the difficulty involved in 'capturing' a performance, Hardwick (2010) 193 remarks, "academic analysis does not easily map onto the practices and experiential aims of theatre"; it is just as true that the experiential aims of theatre do not always harmonize with the research or pedagogical aims of the academy.

[19] See Gamel (2010) 153-70. Although a viable solution to the challenges of re-staging ancient drama, "inductive authenticity" is a self-contradictory concept because it makes assumptions about authorial intent and original meaning even as it seeks to expose them as intellectual mirages.

an inherently unstable, unpredictable medium. Even a play staged in its original context can shift and change its meaning according to the actors' choices, to their skill and to the audience's mood (or moods!) and, in the case of Rome's outdoor theatres, to the weather. We may paraphrase Heraclitus and go as far as claiming that one cannot watch the same play once. The variability of theatrical performance is an argument often cited in favor of modernizing or reinterpreting ancient dramatic texts. Because enactment is such a multivocal and contingent event, many scholars believe that authenticity and accuracy are virtually impossible goals; these same scholars see great intellectual value in acknowledging that all reconstructions of ancient drama, no matter how nominally authentic, always involve some element of reinterpretation.[20] As the papers in this volume make clear, students and scholars can learn just as much from modernizing or adapting ancient drama as they can from reconstructing it. In fact, a major benefit of modernizing ancient dramatic texts – and performances – is that it prompts students to consider how plays affect audiences and how context affects meaning. Whereas reconstruction tends to divide the past from the present, reinterpretation/adaptation aims to unite the two (or, at least, to show that the two cannot really be divided). Although each approach is necessarily selective, both are immensely valuable for academic research and for pedagogy.

Looking Back on the Volume: Summary and Conclusions

The translation of ancient drama is an endeavor that tackles head on the ever-present issues of "authenticity" and reinterpretation. It is, moreover, such a normal classroom activity that it makes an obvious starting point for the volume. Moodie's paper explores the competing claims of original text versus contemporary audience: should we aim to present a linguistically faithful version of the scene between Ballio and his slaves (*Pseud.* 133-229), or a version that generates similar *effects*? And how do we know what effects it would, originally, have generated? Although Morrison overstates the problem when he claims that "literalism is a lifeless corpse," it is true that translating an ancient play for performance represents a particular challenge, and that challenge tends to escalate in the case of comedy, which derives its impact from a very specific linguistic and cultural context.[21] If one keeps too close to the original, one risks losing the joke; if one strays too far in the aim of provoking some laughs, one risks losing Plautus and Terence. To negotiate this difficulty, Moodie recommends having students produce two translations: one literal, one adapted. This is a useful approach, because it teaches students that there is no one-to-one correspondence between languages, and that translation is far more than just a linguistic enterprise. Equally helpful in this regard – both in the classroom and in research – is the burgeoning discipline of Translation Studies, and in particular, the General Theory of Verbal Humor developed by Attardo and Raskin in 1991.[22] The theory isolates and analyzes core elements of jokes, thereby proposing ways of rendering them into another language if not literally then at least in a culturally equivalent form. Although the approach has been applied, briefly, to Roman satire, scholars working on Roman comedy have yet to exploit its academic value.[23]

Tackling issues of translation in the classroom is also a way of drawing attention to the development of *comoedia palliata* as a distinct genre in ancient Rome. As Moodie points out, Plautus and Terence themselves employed a lot of creative license when modifying and reshaping Greek New Comedy for a Roman audience. An obvious and fruitful way to begin discussion on this topic is to have students compare Plautus *Bacchides* 494-561 with the

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[20] See, for instance, the essays in Hall and Harrop (2010).

[21] Morrison (2010) 253. Aristophanes' work is an obvious example of comedy that relies heavily on a specific cultural context, and presents a challenge to translators because of its "profusion of Athenian topical allusions" (Gamel 2010, 160).

[22] Attardo and Raskin first proposed the theory in their co-authored essay, "Script theory revis(it)ed: joke similarity and joke representation model". See also Raskin 1985.

[23] Vincent (2011) examines how the General Theory of Verbal Humor could affect translations of Juvenal.

corresponding fragment of Menander's *Dis Exapaton* (*POxy* 64,4407), and to ask them whether and how Plautus' text diverges from this earlier version.[24] From here, students can be invited to analyze the sliding scale of difference between "translation" and "adaptation", and to consider how the purpose of any given translation will inevitably affect its form.

While translating ancient texts is a familiar philological activity, the physical and aural aspects of Roman comedy are further from most classicists' areas of expertise. The mask is a case in point. Essential to almost all forms of ancient drama apart from the mime, masks are so unfamiliar to contemporary audiences in the theatre and at the cinema that we are inclined to forget about them when reading the texts of ancient plays.[25] Yet, as recent work by Meineck demonstrates, masked performance deeply affects actors' movement on stage, and spectators' responses to that movement.[26] Lippman's contribution to this volume likewise emphasizes the importance of masks in the physical presentation and acting styles of *comoedia palliata*. By dividing the body into three physical "centers" – the intellectual (head/neck); the aesthetic (chest); and the vital (stomach/groin) – Lippman creates a neat schema whereby students can construct a stage character from a series of individual gestures. Even before they don their masks, students can be asked to think about which kinds of movements are used to communicate specific emotions: does someone in a hurry take big steps or small ones? Do bowed shoulders indicate old age, or sadness, or fear? This exercise is particularly beneficial for students who feel nervous about performing in front of their peers, because it distills the process of acting into a number of small, manageable *actions*. Another advantage of movement-based exercises is that they create opportunities for students to discuss characterization, and in particular the role of stock characters in Roman comedy.

Accurate reconstruction of the Roman comic mask is virtually impossible due to lack of contemporary evidence.[27] Given this unfortunate fact, scholars using performance as a medium for teaching and research may wonder what sort of masks should be employed when staging a *palliata* scene, whether to aim for nominal authenticity – however ultimately unattainable – or to draw on equivalent traditions of masked theatre such as *commedia dell'arte* or Japanese Noh. In the end, both options are equally defensible, because all masks will, in general, have a similar effect upon the wearer's movement. Lippman argues that even a basic, paper mask can do the trick. And if experimenting with masks is simply not feasible – for instance, in a large lecture class – it is still useful to have students imagine what a masked drama looks like (perhaps with the aid of the Institute's videos) so that they can realize more fully its potential visual effects.

Music, like masks, is another feature of Roman comedy that may feel foreign to contemporary theatre-going audiences. Despite the ubiquity of soundtracks in films and the fact that most people own portable music devices, it often surprises students to learn that Roman comic actors sang their parts as frequently as, if not more frequently than they spoke them. Once the musical component of these plays is acknowledged, *comoedia palliata* does not seem so strongly to resemble the modern sit-com (to which it is frequently compared), but appears to have more in common with comic opera, Broadway musicals, and further in the past, the tradition of *commedia dell'arte*.[28] Music affects both the tone and speed of scenes in performance, and brings out the metrical as well as the aural complexity of Plautus' and Terence's language. It also punctuates the physical action on stage, and as Moore has shown,

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[24] A useful resource in this regard is Fontaine (2014) 519-26, who compares the two scenes in a very engaging and accessible manner.

[25] Although scholars have sometimes questioned whether masks were used in Roman comedy, it is now generally agreed that they were: see Wiles (1991) 132-33 and Petrides (2014) 433-40. The observation of Duckworth (1952) 92 is a sensible guide: "one would naturally assume that the Romans, in adapting the Greek plays and preserving the settings and costumes of the originals, would likewise have taken over the convention of masks."

[26] Meineck (2011).

[27] Recent work on this topic includes McCart (2007) 262-4 and Manuwald (2011) 79-80; see also Lippman in this volume.

[28] On the role of music in *commedia dell'arte*, see Heck (2015), 255-67.

specific motifs can even serve to introduce individual characters, rather like a theme tune.[29] Recreating the music of Roman comedy is, however, a task involving even more uncertainty than the reconstruction of *palliata* masks, with the result that any musical performance of these plays must rely heavily on adaptation and innovation, as Moore and Gellar-Goad demonstrate in their contribution to this volume. Introducing music to classroom study of Plautus and Terence may seem an especially daunting challenge for traditionally trained classicists, although the videos created by the NEH Summer Institute along with Moore and Gellar-Goad's suggestions make a valuable starting point for this particular pedagogical move.[30] Moreover, the benefits derived from acknowledging Roman comedy's musical qualities need not pertain to stagecraft alone, because thinking in terms of musical notation may help students comprehend Latin meter, with its reliance on syllable length as opposed to stress. In fact, the most immediate value of incorporating music – or even basic recitation – into the study of *palliata*, is the emphasis this activity places on speaking metrical passages aloud and thereby appreciating their fundamentally acoustic properties.

One of the simplest and most effective methods of prompting students to think about performance is to present them with the text of a scene and ask them to insert stage directions according to verbal clues within the text itself. The benefits of this activity are twofold: first, it alerts students to the absence of original, paratextual stage directions in Greco-Roman drama, and second, it requires students to pay close attention a scene's language, noting where characters use plural verbs or imperatives, or describe one another's movements. As Klein notes in her article, it is also particularly useful for detecting the presence of mute characters, who can easily – literally – go unheeded when a play is read rather than performed. Though relatively inconspicuous in the text, the conduct of these mute figures can radically alter a scene's tone, as demonstrated by the multiple NEH Institute versions of Ballio's *canticum* (*Pseud* 133-234), by Klein's piece, or by the example discussed above from the *Eunuchus* (225-91).[31] Klein is right to point out that, in performance, the visual presence of silent characters has the potential to contradict or undercut a scene's verbal elements. Yet their relative invisibility on the page begs the question of how to present them on stage. A possible solution is to have students investigate the evidence for acting styles during the time of Plautus and Terence. We can, for instance, surmise that Roman comic acting was more physical and fast-paced than its tragic counterpart, both because the *soccus* allowed for greater and speedier movement than the *cothurnus*, and because the characters themselves often describe their own rapid actions as they are performing them: it would be very incongruous if the actor delivering Acanthio's speech at *Mercator* 111-19 were to walk at a leisurely pace instead of running frantically.[32] In addition, it is probable that comic actors performed in a quasi "realistic" style, replicating the gestures and movements of everyday life.[33] While this information does not entirely solve the problem of mute characters, it does at least provide some clues as to their behavior.

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[29] Moore (2012) *passim*.

[30] Other useful studies of music in Roman comedy are Moore (2012) and Deufert (2014).

[31] The various NEH Institute versions of Ballio's *canticum* can be found on YouTube: "01 Pseudolus Latin" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLk5FqsqfDE); "02 Pseudolus Commedia" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJNPK-wche4); "03 Pseudolus All Female Cast" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZiFOTA3Rn08); "04 Pseudolus HipHop" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITyO5i1udIQ); "05 Pseudolus Slapstick/Mocking Slaves" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAa8hOSoUp0).

[32] Quintilian *I.O.* 11.3.112 remarks that youths, old men, soldiers, and matrons move more solemnly on the stage, while slaves, handmaids, parasites, and fishermen move more rapidly (*itaque in fabulis iuvenum senum militum matronarum gravior ingressus est, servi ancillulae parasiti piscatores citatius moventur*). The description at *Mercator* 111-19 is obviously a self-conscious parody of Acanthio's role as the *servus currens*. As regards footwear, the *cothurnus* had developed into such a high boot (virtually a platform shoe) by the imperial period that it must severely impeded actors' movements.

[33] This attractive hypothesis has been suggested by Csapo (2010) 117-39. Marshall (2006) 92-3, drawing on Quintilian *I.O.* 11.3.178-80, similarly argues for individual styles of performance, that actors would have tailored

A second option, which Klein proposes in her article, involves using mute characters to investigate the power dynamics that prevailed in in 3rd- and 2nd-century B.C.E. Roman society. Silent characters are perfect material for such a project, since they belong overwhelmingly to menial or marginalized social groups, and by situating them within their broader historical context, students can examine how – and if – their stage roles diverge from their actual roles in everyday Roman life. Not only does this activity encourage students to think more critically about Roman status and social practice, it also deepens their awareness of their own social *mores* and the way they employ those *mores* to make judgements about Plautus and Terence's plays.

Following Klein, the last three papers in this volume likewise address Roman comedy's social dimension: Bungard investigates the various ways in which master-slave relationships may be played out on the Plautine stage; Safran argues for the use of "breakout scenes" to facilitate students' engagement with the troubling or unfamiliar aspects of *palliata* plots; Sultan reflects on how to stage Roman comedy in a recreated ludic context, and what kinds of reactions this enterprise elicited from the students involved, either as audience members or as actors. All three pieces demonstrate how performance can inspire students to engage with Roman comedy actively and personally.

Performing a role means, to some extent, stepping inside a character's life to evaluate his or her motivations.[34] As such, enactment is a powerful way of prompting students to empathize with and thereby enhance their understanding of the *dramatis personae* that populate the Plautine and Terentian stage. Bungard's contribution to this volume uses Ballio's *canticum* (*Pseud.* 133-234) as a model for exploring power relations between masters and slaves in Roman comic drama and in Roman society more generally. The performance he describes renders the scene in particularly dark colors, accentuating Ballio's violent tendencies and reinforcing his dominance by having his slaves react in fear. The scene can, of course, be rendered differently, and when students experiment with lighter or darker versions they will come to see that every directorial choice implicitly offers an opinion on what a scene means. In turn, this activity may be used to introduce students to the most enduring academic debate about Plautine comedy, namely whether it supports or subverts prevailing Roman social hierarchies.[35] A funnier rendition of Ballio's *canticum*, for instance, may seem more in line with the "Saturnalian" model, in which the slaves acquire sufficient autonomy to mock the "blocking character" of the pimp.[36]

Classicists are understandably reluctant for any class-based performance to stray too far from the text, even in the name of experimenting with power relationships or Roman social practices. While a hip-hop version of the *Pseudolus* may seem like a lot of fun, its lack of authenticity may equally be perceived as negating or severely impairing its pedagogical value. Yet creative forms of re-enactment can in fact be used as effective teaching tools, especially because they allow students to explore the central issues of Roman comedy *via analogy*. Granted a hip-hop version of the *Pseudolus* is far from being faithful to the extant play script, nonetheless it emphasizes the aggression and violence that punctuates relationships between social groups in *comoedia palliata*; at the same time, it demonstrates the musical and verbal richness of Plautine drama. In other words, performance remains "good to think with" even when it is not one hundred percent accurate.

A further benefit of performance is that it grants students more control over the reception of the text/theatrical play, permitting them to express their personal reactions to the material

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to suit both their own skills and their preferred comic roles. On the possible connection between Roman oratorical gestures and Roman acting styles, see Moore (2012) 114-19.

[34] This may also have been an ancient Roman practice, since Quintilian *I.O.* 6.2.31 describes the need for orators to create emotional appeals by imagining themselves in their victim's place. On the other hand, psychological realism is far from the only way to approach characterization, and Lippman's paper in this volume demonstrates how a stage *persona* can emerge simply from a collection of physical actions.

[35] Because scholarly work on this topic is so broad, two brief examples will suffice: Segal (1987) represents the subversive model, McCarthy (2000) a more conservative one.

[36] On *palliata* pimps as "blocking characters", see Segal (1987) 79-92.

in question and from there, to formulate their own arguments and research topics. In this regard, the "breakout scenes" described by Safran in her article become a particularly productive class activity. In contrast to most contemporary theatre, which turns audience members into actors, the "breakout" technique achieves the opposite inasmuch as it allows actors to step out of character and reflect on their roles, behaving, momentarily, as an audience for their own performance. This method is the dramatic equivalent of reading a text with a commentary, only far more fluid and multivocal. Safran recommends it especially for helping students confront the more ethically disturbing aspects of Roman comedy – violence; rape; exploitation – and as a way of showing students that *palliata* plays can be simultaneously funny and serious. Obviously, "breakout" techniques do not aim at precise re-enactment of original performance conditions. They can, nevertheless, be used to elucidate the specific socio-historical context of Roman comedy, both for the students themselves and for anyone else who happens to attend such performances as an audience member. Even the process of creating a "breakout scene" conveys significant pedagogical benefits, since it compels students to think carefully about the text's reception, what they believe are the most pressing issues in any given scene, and what they feel the audience needs to know. To consolidate knowledge following such an activity, students can be asked to defend their choices in writing or use their "breakout" experience as an initial step towards developing an essay topic.

The final paper in this volume revisits ideas of authenticity and accuracy as it recounts Sultan's attempt to recreate the *ludi Megalenses* at Illinois Wesleyan University, complete with a reading of Plautus' *Pseudolus*. While Klein, Bungard, and Safran, in their various ways, use performance to explore the social context of *comoedia palliata*, Sultan examines spatial and ritual context as well. Such considerations are crucially important to Roman comedy. To cite just one well known example: Goldberg argues that the relatively cramped space in front of Cybele's temple on the Palatine would have affected not only the size of the audience attending the initial performance of Plautus' *Pseudolus*, but also the mood and style of this theatrical event.[37] Restaging an entire festival is a way of testing these and similar hypotheses; as Marshall remarks, productions are experiments that allow us "to corroborate and modify conclusions that would otherwise have remained theoretical."[38] All the same, full reconstruction of the *ludi Megalenses* is a Herculean task and Sultan admits needing to adapt or reinterpret certain elements – such as public animal sacrifice! The issue at the heart of this project is how students negotiate between the oft-competing concerns of accuracy and accessibility, scholarly opinion and personal belief, objective and subjective forms of knowledge. Scholars are increasingly coming to recognize re-enactment as a means of forming personal connections with the past, and acquiring a corporeal or emotional knowledge that cannot be gleaned from the more distanced and regulated act of reading.[39] Preparing and participating in the *ludi Megalenses* requires students not only to contemplate scholarly issues such as historical accuracy, but also to step into the role of Romans at a 2nd-century B.C.E. festival. This dual perspective grants students fresh, personal insight into ancient practices while keeping them aware of the very real academic challenges we face in studying Roman comedy.

The contributors to this volume of *Classical Journal* argue strongly for employing performance as a pedagogical tool in classes about *comoedia palliata*. Although it tends to occupy the margins of current classroom practice, dramatic re-enactment can enhance students' understanding of Plautus' and Terence's plays in deep and vital ways, from recreating and thereby exploring the technical aspects of theatre, to situating play scripts in their social, historical, or ritual contexts. Certainly, classroom performances require effort, but they do not have to entail any great expenditure; as many of the papers in this volume make clear, significant advantages may be derived even from the simplest activities, such as getting

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[37] Goldberg (1998).
[38] Marshall (2006), xi.
[39] See, for instance, Schneider (2011).

students onto their feet or having them read aloud. Moreover, the role-play that performance involves has long been a staple element of education, one that the Romans themselves pursued – to remarkably similar ends – when they trained young boys in the art of public speaking by having them impersonate and rehearse the authoritative roles they would assume later in life.[40] Central to Roman rhetorical training were issues of identity, hierarchy, violence, and social interaction – much the same topics as those addressed by Klein, Bungard, and Safran in their various theatrical undertakings. [41] Since the Romans themselves used performance to articulate and negotiate power dynamics, it makes sense for those teaching or studying the social roles of Roman comedy to adopt equivalent techniques, at least on occasions.

It also makes sense to acknowledge that modernized and authentic performances lay equal claim to pedagogical value even though they employ divergent methods that often originate from conflicting scholarly attitudes. Theatrical productions that remain faithful to the script can generate insights into the original performance conditions of Plautus' and Terence's plays; productions that engage in creative reinterpretation, on the other hand, tend to highlight the socio-historical factors governing any audience's response to Roman comedy, whether that audience is ancient, modern, or anywhere in between. Theatre is such a multifaceted medium that it warrants multiple approaches. And if those approaches succeed in raising the profile of Roman comedy, both in the classroom and in scholarly research, then so much the better.

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[40] On rhetorical training as a performance of upper class masculinity in Rome, see Richlin (1997), Bloomer (1997), and the broader study by Gleason (1995). Although most of the evidence for these declamatory exercises comes from the late republican and early imperial periods, it is likely that Romans in Plautus' day were pursing, or at least developing, similar educational practices.

[41] Bloomer (1997) investigates the social issues involved in Roman declamations.

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