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Philosophy becoming Para-Textual

Plato's *Phaedrus*, a memory pharmacy

AARON FINBLOOM

[W]hy is it that today, given the way the history of philosophy is usually taught, philosophy is presented as above all a discourse, which may be theoretical and systematic, or critical, but in any case lacks a direct relationship to the philosopher's way of life?

Pierre Hadot (2004:253)

Thinkers such as Pierre Hadot (1995, 2004) and Alexander Nehamas (2000) have shown that theoretical philosophy was not always opposed to a more practical philosophical method; only recently can theory be understood as that which is purely contemplative and abstract. As these thinkers and others have begun exploring *how* theory has come to occupy this position today, I am invested in exploring one method by which theory can become a living practice – by turning philosophy into a game.

For my practice, this shift into a game occurs by displacing a purely theoretical mode of reading and writing focused on textual, semantic issues. Turning philosophical practice into a game requires one to alter the *site* of a text's encounter with a reader – the place where a text is read, its duration, voicings, the mechanisms by which readers generate response and the rules that determine these factors. In other words, this paper is calling for a transformation of what it means for a philosopher to be a writer and reader. Writing need not be a practice of responding with words to a text's ideas, style, valuations and implications. Writing can become a practice of re-structuring texts, adding instructions, altering the situations in which a text is received by a reader or changing the environment in which a reader generates content. This is achieved by locating textual moments that

begin to ask something of a reader and radicalizing these moments through playful extensions, via repetition, so that they can begin to form a game as they gather a coherent structuring around a set of actions whose boundaries are set by the game's rules.

BECOMING-GAME

The becoming-game of philosophy – from text, through playful extension and duration, to rule-bound structuring – begins as a textual encounter within a discursive philosophical practice. It pushes a reader to act outside or alongside of the activity of reading. Hadot's commentary on Descartes' *Meditations* is an excellent site to locate this beginning. Hadot remarks:

Each *Meditation* is indeed a spiritual exercise – that is, work by oneself and upon oneself which must be finished before one can move to the next stage.... For although Descartes speaks in the first person (evoking the fire before which he is sitting, the robe he is wearing, and the paper in front of him), and although he describes the feelings he is experiencing, what he really wishes is that his reader should traverse the stages of the inner evolution he describes. In other words, the 'I' used in the *Meditations* is in fact a 'You' which is addressed to the reader. (Hadot 2004:264)

What makes each meditation a spiritual exercise is its relation to that which lies outside of it – an individual. Only when this individual undergoes a reading that is also an 'inner evolution', will they be moved and ready to advance to the next Meditation. There is a time outside the text when the text acts. The text points to this time, works on it and within

¹ My use of the term 'para-textual' plays off of Gérard Genette's, however my usage is a significant departure. Genette defines a para-text as the 'accompanying productions' of a text such as 'an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations' (Genette 1997: 1). My use of para-textual retains Genette's interest in textual boundaries, outsides and exteriors, but focuses on the moments inside and around a text that explicitly or materially implicate a reader to act alongside implicit discursive practices of reading.

it. Descartes points to this time as well, as he calls for 'at least some weeks' to consider each Meditation (ibid.). This time is one of gestation and familiarization, of a becoming-one with the object of contemplation. The Meditations aim for a reader, as the weeks pass, to consider the ideas of the text and for these notions to enter into a relation with the lived life of the reader.

This temporal operation within Descartes' *Meditations*, this germination of ideas away from the act of reading, bears striking resemblance to various Stoic spiritual exercises, and yet differs radically in the conditions of its textual encounter. Hadot points to Stoic texts such as the *Discourses of Epictetus* whose instructions on the practice of giving attention (*prosoche*) to the present moment were meant to induce a spiritual vigilance throughout one's day such that one always had the practice 'at hand' (Hadot 1995: 84). Likewise, the Stoic study of physics was meant to operate in all instants of one's day by making a reader aware that 'we are parts of the cosmos, and ... must make our desires conform to this situation' (192). It is important to note that these 'texts' of Epictetus were, in fact, transcriptions of discussions written by Arrian, a student in one of Epictetus's schools (191). The text itself was not solely responsible for disseminating its directives; rather, verbal teachings and instructions within the school of Epictetus assisted one in exercising these practical dimensions. Descartes' *Meditations*, existing in a context far removed from the philosophical schools of the ancient Greeks, were practised in a more socially isolated setting. We see this in Descartes' constant invocation of his solitary wintry environs when he writes, 'I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a winter dressing-gown, holding this piece of paper in my hands' and 'this sensation or idea of heat comes from something other than myself, namely the heat of a fire by which I am sitting. (Descartes 2006: 10, 21)

This isolation accounts for Descartes' need to provide explicit instructions in his text that indicate the duration by which one should gestate with his ideas in-between readings.

Descartes' *Meditations* are an example of what I will call 'para-textuality' – namely, the quality of a text demanding, indicating or implicating a reader, as a living being, to act alongside and/or outside of the given text.¹ Other philosophical examples of para-textuality include provocative Nietzschean aphorisms such as, 'anyone who despises himself will still respect himself as a despiser', which, in their quick explosive punch, cause a reader to break from the act of reading, reflect on the passage's implications, and then move onward (Nietzsche 2002: 60). Or Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, a text written after a series of long walks, whose joyous musings and uplifting reflections implicitly invite one to question their own relationship between walking and thinking. Or a Zen Koan such as, 'the pure wind skims the bright moon, the bright moon skims the pure wind', in which the allusive and allegorical language disguises a deeper relationship between form and emptiness (Sögen Hori 2006: 199) and that require a sustained reflective repetition and gestation in order for this deeper relationship to emerge. In each of these examples an author uses text to carry a reader outside of the moment of the sentence's encounter, in efforts to extend this encounter's duration and site to include a wider and more sustained set of actions that accompany the semantic act of reading.

This para-textuality, already in place in many theoretical texts, can be playfully extended beyond its current function by an author or reader. This 'para-textual extension' involves explicitly altering the text itself or changing the environmental factors around the reading of the text such that the text more radically implicates another. Since a para-textual text is already asking something of the reader, to extend para-textually is to enable a text's indications to be more easily achievable, or to push these indications even further, towards a series of actions and directions that unfold from the brief para-textual moment within the text.

One method of para-textual extension is to alter a text by providing explicit instruction for how one should interact with it. A paradigm

of this can be seen in the instructions or stage directions of a dramatic script. We see this in Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano*, as he instructs Mr and Mrs Martin to 'sit together in the same armchair, their arms around each other, and fall asleep' (Ionesco 1958: 13). Or Beckett in *Waiting for Godot*, giving descriptive indications saying how Vladimir 'halts before the boots, picks one up, examines it, sniffs it, manifests disgust, puts it back carefully' (Beckett 1976: 429). Instructions, usually written, are advantageous in their ability to persist across spatial and temporal distances, but they are disadvantageous in that one can never ensure that graphic instructions will be performed and in what way they will be performed. It is quite common for a reader to overlook or misread an instruction, or to read it without enacting it.

One way to overcome this obstacle is to push para-textual extension towards making physical alterations to the text itself or the environment around the text. If a text is always embedded in a concrete situation, a setting or an environment, then to make changes to this environment as a site for the text to act is to increase the relationality between the text and its concrete situation. There are countless technical, material and environmental methods that one may use to mediate a reader's relationship to the text. An example of this would be to mail Descartes' *Meditations* to a colleague, one section at a time, asking for confirmation of inner transformation before the next meditation is sent. Such an extension would assist in the *Meditations*' ability to gestate in the reader by creating conditions for reading that force the text to operate on a particular reading timeline.

As one continues to play with para-textual extension, the repeated structuring of this extension has the potential to create a game: a work that stands on its own. Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method* provides an ontological analysis of play in which he suggests that the movement from 'play' to 'game' is motivated by 'the fact that the game masters the players' (Gadamer 2004: 106). For Gadamer, play is understood as a series of

actions; a game is that which structures these playful actions. This mastering of the players means that when one moves from playing to playing a game, a shift in the location of agency occurs: once located in the player's playful actions, this agency is now located in the game itself, the structuring of the actions. It is this 'structure that determines the movement of the game itself' drawing and holding a player into the game (107). And so as the playful actions of para-textual extension move towards a game, the subject who has created these extensions recedes and the structural qualities of those playful acts of extension take precedent.

This structuring of the game occurs through iteration; it is where play gains iterability that 'play' meets 'game'. For Schechner, both theatre and games are understood as middle-grounds between the individualistic free activity of play and the authoritative strictness of ritual (Schechner 1988: 13). Theatre becomes a game when 'rules replace plot' – when instead of following a dramatic arc, theatre explores a set of permutations (21). Each dramatic repetition is slightly different, yet each iteration moves around a centre that is set by a game's rules or structure. For example, 'the game of "waiting for Godot"' (ibid.) entails a series of actions, each somewhat distinct, yet all defined by a certain anticipation or expectation. Similar to drama, a theoretical text moves towards a game when rational explication is replaced by permutations around a set. When these iterations follow from the playful para-textual extensions noted above, a philosophy game is born.

Much like the movement from para-textual to para-textual extension, the movement from para-textual extension to game is a movement away from a focus on semantic content and towards a focus on generating the conditions, either textual or actual, of this content. It is a movement away from the word and its given meaning. If the contents of the *Meditations* describe ontological doubt, then to operate para-textually is not to try to understand this doubt, nor even speak towards it; it is to think of the textual doubting as a script. This is a movement away from a 'mode of thinking'

² *Plato's Phaedrus*: A memory pharmacy is one example of a philosophy game whose creative process involves a particular para-textual procedure. Other examples of philosophy games that implicate different methods of textual play include a series of performative lectures I created whereby I use interactive performance coupled with textual exposition to lead a group of participants through a theoretical textual encounter. One of these was an exposition of Gadamer's *Ontology of Play* performed at Elsewhere Residency Program in Greensboro, North Carolina in 2013. Another was of Hegel's *Master Slave Dialectic* performed in 2010 at The School of the Future in Brooklyn. Additionally, recent research with my adviser, Sandeep Bhagwati, has produced a series of game-like Philosophical Conversation Scores. One of which is called *Exegetical Reading Machine*, a score based on a Fluxus piece by John White that guides performers down a cycle of nuanced repetitions of textual commentary on a philosophical text of their choice. Another of which is titled *Question Animals*, a work that takes a quote from Deleuze and Guattari's *Thousand Plateaus* and runs it through a multiplicity of performative dialogical enactments.

■ Figure 1. Phaedrus's Critique of Writing, w/ Initial Act of Erasure".
Image Aaron Finbloom

and towards 'patterns of doing' (Schechner 1988: 69). Where should the Cartesian doubt occur? Perhaps in a room with a comfortable couch? When should it occur? In the evenings? What action should be performed alongside it? Additionally, this para-textuality plays with the mechanics of how the text itself is displayed to a reader (for example, the aforementioned breaking-up of the book-object into smaller objects and mailed, one Meditation at a time, to a reader). As these methods of using words gain a rule structure via iterability, a work comes into being, a work that is a game, which is a structured interplay between techniques, practices and ways of reading.

PLATO'S PHAEDRUS: A MEMORY PHARMACY

During the summer of 2015, in a residency programme at The School of Making Thinking, I enacted a para-textual extension upon Plato's critique of writing in *Phaedrus* that resulted in the creation of a game called *Plato's Phaedrus: A memory pharmacy*.² I had been fascinated by Plato's critique for quite some time because of a strange inconsistency within it. For Socrates, writing can never be serious, as it does not 'yield results that are clear or certain', and only the activity of dialectics has the power to plant wisdom in the soul (Plato 1995: 79–81). Yet, these very words are written and thus the seriousness of the entire *Phaedrus* is thrown into question. In considering this curious passage, Alexander Nehamas, in his preface to the *Phaedrus*, invites us to consider that 'the whole dialogue, like the speeches in it, is itself a "game"' (Nehamas in Plato 1995: xlvi). The

S01- Myth of Theuth (274c - 275b)
P01- Rebuke of Socrates as Storyteller (275b)
S02- Getting to the Point (275b-c)
P02- "Your rebuke is just, and I think the Theban is right in what he says about letters" replaced by directive *What do you think?* (275c)
S03- Reiteration (275c-d)
P03- "Very true" replaced by directive *What do you think?* (275d)
S04- Painting Metaphor (275d-e)
P04- "You are quite right about that, too" replaced by directive *What do you think?* (275e)
S05- Glorification of Dialectics (276e-277a)
P05- "Yes, that is far nobler" replaced by directive *What do you think?* (277a)

*S = Lines where Socrates is the speaker. P = Lines where Phaedrus is the speaker.

game is to consider the text as a playful launching point for a practice of dialectics that moves beyond the text. That summer, I attempted to do exactly that, namely to use the text of *Phaedrus* to engage in dialectics.

How exactly is dialectics para-textual? How does it necessitate this playful movement outside of the text? Hadot explains:

Dialectics was a debating technique subject to precise rules. A 'thesis' was proposed – an interrogative proposition such as: Can virtue be taught? One of the two interlocutors attacked the thesis; the other defended it. The former attacked by interrogating – that is, he asked the defender skillfully chosen questions with the aim of forcing him to admit the contradictory of the thesis he wanted to defend. (Hadot 2004: 62)

Dialectics was a structured method of dialoguing, a 'debating technique' initiated by two, live individuals, vocalizing their arguments back and forth. Plato's critique of writing in *Phaedrus*, and his explication of dialectics as a more serious procedure, is para-textual – it is a call for a reader to leave the book behind, find an interlocutor and practice dialectics.

I required a playful para-textual extension as this message of Plato's to leave the book behind is not typically read as such. Many of the artists I was working with were not familiar with this passage, with Platonism or with the practice of dialectics as one of dialogic exchange. The para-textuality of this passage needed to be extended. I initiated this via erasure. I printed out a brief one-page passage of Plato's critique and crossed out the lines of affirmation of Socrates' interlocutor, Phaedrus, and wrote in a prompt for dialogue, saying: 'What do you think?' (fig. 1). This break in the reading was meant to begin to activate a dialogue that would move towards the dialectical as a reader would speak out against the reasoned movements of the text itself and thereby be forced into the concrete situation of their living self, speaking their own opinions and views.

The explicit command of the erasure was still not enough as I realized the movement towards dialectics demanded a simultaneous material alteration of one's environment.

The erasure text I created, if read alone, would produce only a quiet moment of pause. In order for dialectics to occur, a staging was required, one that the text itself beckons towards – two performers (one Socrates, the other Phaedrus). These two readers had to be reading aloud, and in a certain proximity, such that the reading could transition fluidly into a verbalized argumentative dialectical activity. I played the part of Socrates. Phaedrus was played by a fellow resident. We met in a living room and sat close on two opposing couches that created a comfortable casual setting in an effort to ease the participant's potential discomfort produced from the quasi-agonistic attack–defence structure of dialectical dialogue.

The first iteration of this dialectical procedure began as we read through the text aloud together until arriving at P02 – the moment of erasure in the text. At this point a hesitation occurred in the reader as they looked up, bewildered. I re-stated the prompt using a rhetoric and tone that were more casual and welcoming: 'So, what do you think about the passage, do you think it has merit?' My interlocutor responded by saying: 'I have heard something like this idea many times before, that whenever we have a new technology we wonder if it is good or not and if it will hinder our memory, but yea, I just don't buy it.' Soon a conversation began to take shape as the interlocutor began to defend the written word and I attacked its validity. After about ten minutes I began to transition the conversation back to the text as I read the next passage (S03), broke again from the text at the following act of erasure (P03) and so forth.

This moment of rupture that transitions the textual utterance to a dialectical activity is highly necessary, as it is in this moment that interactability is radicalized and the para-textual extensions move towards a game. Dmitri Nikulin in *Dialogue and Dialectics* explains that 'only dialogical partners can themselves decide, judging from the appropriateness of the situation and context of what is being said, when is the right time for interaction and interruption' (Nikulin 2010: 99).

Dialectics, as a kind of structured dialogue, differs from its textual counterpart in that its content is co-generated in-the-moment by a multiplicity of content-generators (that is, people) who are constantly holding the potential for interruption. As we were reading *Phaedrus*, we were not implicated in the Socratic text because we did not constitute its situation. When the reading turned to dialogue, the situation of the text broke; the rhetoric, style and conversational topics espoused by Plato were partially discarded as a new situation opened up whereupon individual readers approached the textual arguments with their own immanent logos, rather than through the rationality of the text itself (see Hadot 2004: 63). Ancient metaphors were replaced by modern ones such as the valences of electron. Instead of the Platonic example of the gardens of Adonis, examples of technical writing, instruction manuals and Brahman prayers were discussed. The conversation integrated contemporary notions such as signifiers, emotional associations and the proliferations of meanings. Dialectics provided an opportunity to interrupt the play of the text and to initiate a kind of play that reached out to the specific needs and possibilities of a reader by creating a horizon between the text and our situation. This meeting was mediated by the para-textual extensions enacted upon the text, moving it into our concrete situation as we vocalized our ideas back and forth to one another, creating an environment that allowed the text to generate content beyond itself.

My next step was to further extend this practice by producing a repeatable procedure to generate additional textual content. This first required transcription. I took the audio recording of the dialectical exchange and transcribed its contents. This act of transcription involved a good deal of editing as I removed repeated words, exclamations, quips and pauses. I was attempting to combine the stylistic content contained within the Platonic Dialogues with the modern transcription such that the two texts, original and new, could be fluidly integrated. In place of each of

- (left) Figure 2. Transcription of the initial iteration folded into the original text.
- (right top) Figure 3. Example of Thought Pathways (from SP04 B).
- (right lower) Figure 4. Example of Thought Pathways (from SP04 B).
- (right below) Figure 5. Structure of *Twine* game *Plato's Phaedrus: A memory pharmacy*. Images Aaron Finbloom

S01- Myth of Theuth
 P01- Rebuke
 S02- Getting to the Point
 SP02- Transcription of P02
 S03- Reiteration
 SP03- Transcription of P03
 S04- Painting Metaphor
 SP04- Transcription of P04
 S05- Glorification of Dialectics
 SP05- Transcription of P05

Phaedrus' directives for answering I inserted the transcription of the dialogue that ensued (fig. 2). This created a new text, an amalgam of both the original *Phaedrus* passage and the dialogical transcription, the distinction between them indiscernible to those unfamiliar with Plato's *Phaedrus*.

In an effort to move the text towards a game, I made this procedure repeatable. I went back into my document containing the transcriptions, and at the end of each dialogical transcription I erased the closure that was enacted – I replaced whatever final words were uttered to close the dialogue, once again with the instructive to discuss: 'Discuss: keep discussing until you come to an agreement or you grow tired of discussing.' This final act allowed for me to repeat the above procedure: print out this new text, read it aloud to a new interlocutor, record the process, insert the transcription of this dialogue back into the text, replace the final lines of closure with the instructive command 'discuss' and repeat. The para-textual extension became a game.

This process described above kept repeating until soon it became difficult to maintain

Phaedrus: So you are imagining that all fathers of creative works should go out and defend their work?

Socrates: Yes! This is philosophy. Is this not the case? Is it not the case that a back and forth conversation ensures true knowledge and understanding of a subject, whereas reciting or reading a text does not ensure this. Likewise, a piece of paper lying dormant on a shelf in a library neither ensures true knowledge. Is this not the case?

Agree with Socrates
Phaedrus: "You are right Socrates. Please go on."

Disagree- Dialectics can obstruct knowledge absorption
Phaedrus: "Socrates, you favor dialectics too highly..."

Clarification- What exactly is dialectics?
Phaedrus: "Socrates, I don't fully understand this dialectics of which you speak."

Provocation- Why is dialectics so important anyway?
Phaedrus: "Why is dialectics so important anyway?"

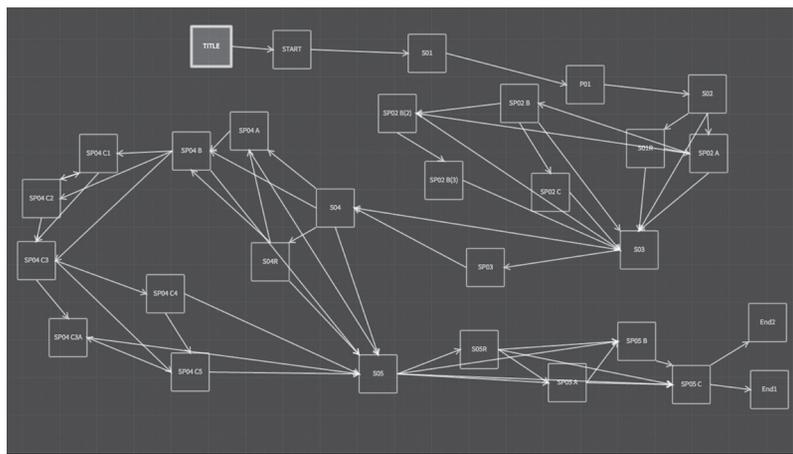
Socrates: But wouldn't that act of discrimination be exactly the kind of word/logos/dialectic we have been talking about?

Discuss- Other Modes of Discrimination
Phaedrus: "I don't know if it's a dialectic process. Perhaps that's part of it. But I also think that discrimination comes from experience which is beyond, before, after and during words."

Pause- ReThinking the Speech/Text Creator's Role
Phaedrus: "I want to consider something else, Socrates"

Pause- ReThinking the Multivocality of Text
Phaedrus: "I want to consider something else, Socrates."

linearity. After three iterations I was left with the following question: how was I to re-inscribe a text formed by three distinct conversations that each had their origin in a single line of originary text? In other words, how could I offer a reader the possibility of choosing multiple dialogical pathways that branch off of one singular originary *Phaedrus* passage? In order to answer this question I decided to change mediums. I moved to an electronic platform for interactive storytelling called *Twine*, which allows a user to create non-linear, expansive narratives – 'choose-your-own-adventure' style stories. This allowed me to offer multiple, rhizomatic openings instead of only one opening through one act of erasure. Each pathway of thought that myself and an interlocutor traversed in our conversation was now named. Some examples include, 'an attempt at clarification', 'an incisive disagreement' and 'repetition' (figs 3–4). Since each original textual passage kept unfolding into new texts and each new text would open into more texts, the meta-text would keep burrowing into itself as it was expanding. This meant that the first few original passages had the most options for users to choose from, and the options would then recede as the text continued (fig. 5).



I published the *Twine* story on a website and soon realized that it needed an introductory set of instructions. Since now one distanced from the living room at the artist residency could interact with the game, I had to take the performative enactments and transfer them into written instructions. These instructions explain how to move through the non-linear pathways of the game and lay out various requirements: two players, in a room together, one playing Socrates and another playing Phaedrus, both reading aloud, and so forth.

I then had to decide how to end this endless process of textual expansion. I decided to mimic Plato's own movements in his critique of writing by highlighting the peculiarity of the written form that underlies the discussion about it. I inserted four lines of dialogical exchange that help the interlocutors to notice themselves as they notice their medium (SP05C in fig. 5). The players are left with a final option as to how they would like to commemorate the game they have just played. They can write on the soul, which is Socrates' metaphor for continuing to engage in dialectics. Or they can write on the computer, which is a modern version of Plato's decision to write the dialogue of the *Phaedrus*. If they choose to write on the soul, they agree to continue the conversation outside of the graphic medium, to create new texts whose materiality is distanced from the original. If they choose to write on the computer, they write a response that is then fed back into the text, adding another layer of textuality onto the original. The final choice is merely a choice of medium and a choice of spacing. Will you type with your hands or speak with your mouth? Will you engage here or there? It almost doesn't matter. Neither medium offers the user a sense of lasting impact. Both options necessitate new layers of meaning, and then new layers of deferment.

The game is itself an infinite loop of deferment, a never-ending text – a text constantly moving either upwards towards circumstantial understanding, as new conversational pathways are opened and discussed, or downwards into the abyss, as a pathway is forgotten, erased or brushed over

in favour of another. But this verticality is almost irrelevant. The incisive movement is always at the point of transition – between the two gestures or techniques – between dialectics and writing. It is in this turning, this alteration, this unfolding, that meaning is found. Meaning, then, not as final significant, but as the playful altercation of forces that animate life.

In spite of the potential vitality this account offers, a critical question lingers: does this movement away from discursive philosophy and towards a game-like philosophical practice lessen philosophy's seriousness and semantic rigour? Rather than arguing for the importance of my practice's operation on the margins of contemporary academic philosophical practice, I want to make a more radical claim – namely, that the very centre, discursive philosophical practice itself, is laden with para-textuality. A similar point is made by Derrida in *Plato's Pharmacy* as he pushes up against philosophy's all-too-serious logocentrism by arguing that dialectics is 'welded irremediably to its "inferiors," the mimetic arts, play, grammar, writing, etc' (Derrida 1981: 167). While Derrida's para-textuality winds its way through writings that expose philosophy's 'rational' centre as mere myth and metaphor, his account still remains imprisoned by the written word – the very form it seeks to escape. My account of para-textuality differs significantly as it deals with performative and embodied extensions that push writing outside of the graphic and inscriptive. Philosophy can never be purely theoretical, because every encounter with theory is always mediated through a particular spatio-temporal context. Every philosopher must write and read in a particular time and place. Every text is read with varied durations and contemplated in a time frame that exists alongside the reception of a text's semantic meaning. Every talk given necessitates tones of voice that, via various affective networks, alter the reception of the words given. Every class led requires a structuring of lecture, writing, discussion and other activities that play a vital role in a student's understanding of a given idea.

These elements that exist alongside and within all discursive philosophical practice – place, time, duration, voice, style, repetition, and modes of generating response – are given by our general culture of reading and learning. This culture does not actively seek out unique combinations of these elements to fit particular texts or ideas. Rather, it assumes a uniformity or arbitrary determination of these elements across all philosophical texts and ideas. To operate para-textually is to move against this tradition by creating methods of reading that match particular philosophical texts. To extend this site of para-textuality and furthermore to create a game from this extension, is to create a suitable environment for the ideas of that text to be understood and is to establish unique connections between the thinking practices of an author and the interpretive practices of a reader. Playful extension does not lessen the rigour of a philosophical argument; rather, it allows the argument to germinate in the life of the reader, to extend to other life-moments of the reader or other styles of reading. This extension ensures that a textual passage will be more thoroughly understood by multiplying its variety of encounters and reading methodologies. The practice of making philosophy into a game is one method of more closely attending to the contextual demands of a particular text, and thereby creatively constructing a physical and/or textual site, structured and bound by unique rules, for philosophy to be practised, rigorously and playfully.

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