or fall not on its corroboration by textual evidence, since everything in the text reflects only the limited if inventive outlook of Encolpius, but on the strength and fecundity of the conceptual scheme on which it is raised. That scheme is impressive. Conte’s book succeeds in highlighting more facets of the _Satyricon_ than all the rest of recent Petronian criticism put together.

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S.A. FRANGOULIDIS _Handlung und Nebenhandlung: Theater, Metatheater und Gattungsbewusstsein in der römischen Komödie_, Beiträge zum antiken Drama und seiner Rezeption, Beiheft 6 (Stuttgart, M & P Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1997); ISBN 3476 451844.

‘Metatheatre’ has become a key concept in scholarship on Plautus and New Comedy since it was popularised by Slater’s _Plautus in Performance_ in the mid 1980s. Frangoulidis, in his Introduction, attempts to situate his own work within this school of interpretation. He directs his attention to those characters, such as trickster slaves, who construct schemes or scams which develop into a kind of play within the play. He claims to depart from his predecessors in that they have typically seen an analogy between the dramatist and the clever stage characters who devise and direct these internal performances. He, however, depicts the relationship more as one of contrast and seeks to explore the interplay between the inset dramas and the wider dramatic frame, between the plot invented by the resourceful slave and the greater plot put into effect by Plautus or Terence (3-4). He even talks of a kind of rivalry between characters and author: ‘These
characters are often set against one another, or against the play’s poet himself in an attempt to impose their own version of the performance as the authoritative one’ (ix).

This organising theme propounded in both the Preface and the Introduction is not fully realised in the chapters that follow. The bulk of the book is made up of detailed critical commentaries on two plays, Plautus’ *Mostellaria* and Terence’s *Phormio*. In both cases the critical discussion is perceptive and comprehensive, but while the metatheatrical considerations of the Introduction remain prominent, these chapters read more like ‘stand alone’ studies rather than developments of the argument in which the book purports to originate. The sense of coherence is further damaged by the third chapter on ‘Dream and Theatre: Dionysiac vs. Apollonian Elements in Plautus’ *Mercator*’ which, being much shorter than the earlier chapters, and quite different in focus and character, has the appearance of a separate journal article thrust somewhat arbitrarily into the middle of a book about something else. Frangoulidis concludes with a detailed (and illuminating) discussion of the affinity of Apuleius’ *Cupid and Psyche* with the plots and motifs of New Comedy. This is far removed from the subject with which the Introduction opened. Although it is thirty four pages long (nearly thrice the size of Chapter Three) the *Cupid and Psyche* section is called an ‘Appendix’, as if to declare that the author is himself uncomfortably aware of its tangential relevance to the thesis from which he set out. The various parts of Frangoulidis’ work taken individually are mostly worth reading but they don’t hang together at all well as a book. There is (understandably) no Conclusion.

Important to Frangoulidis’ approach is his technical employment of the terms ‘fictive subplot’, ‘factual subplot’ and ‘countertheatricalisation’. A ‘subplot’, as he understands it, is not a secondary storyline within the play (as in normal critical parlance) but any plot or deception devised by a character (which may in fact be the key ingredient of the primary plot, according to standard terminology). Tranio’s hoax in Plautus’ *Mostellaria,*
that his master's house is haunted, is central to the play's action and humour, even giving it its title; yet it is, in Frangoulidis' eyes, a 'subplot' because it is concocted by one of the characters in the play. It is also a 'fictive subplot' because it is not true. Other 'subplots' are 'factual', where the scheme ends up mirroring rather than contradicting the play's 'real' facts; if, for instance, a slave-girl who has been misrepresented as being freeborn is proven to be freeborn after all. Though he does not go into the question in depth, Frangoulidis offers the observation that there is in Terence's preference for factual subplots and Plautus' preference for fictive ones an under-recognised difference between Rome's two great comic dramatists (18). The term 'countertheatricalisation', a neologism of which the author seems uncommonly proud, refers to the exposure of a subplot's illusoriness to the other characters in the play.

Good literary scholarship often involves not taking insightful ideas too far. The analogy between the playwright and the clever slave as devisers of plots can be a useful basis for exploring the implicit poetics of a dramatic text; yet it is, in the final analysis, a conceit, and a conceit easily pushed into absurdity. Frangoulidis does seem to me to pass this point when he speaks of Plautus and his character Tranio 'as independent and separate poets' (23), engaged in some sort of competition for control of the stage. To equate the guileful character and the dramatist himself is severely reductive of the dramatist's overarching creative act in bringing the guileful character and his plans to life in the first place. Also, the distinction between the plot (as unveiled by the author) and subplots (invented under pressure of circumstances by characters) is artificial, for the former is not separate from but comprehends the latter. Frangoulidis interprets the close of the Mostellaria as embodying a synthesis of Greek and Roman cultural ideologies, a superficially attractive solution but one that necessitates presupposing too neat and schematic an opposition between 'Greek values of feasting and lavish merry-making' and Roman values 'of frugality and propriety' (72). Despite the overall success of his case for the influence of Greek and Roman
comedy on *Cupid and Psyche*, it still seems to me inapposite to try and read the role of the goddess of Love in that story too closely in terms of the stock dramatic character of the stern father (167; 175; 177). Frangoulidis rides his good ideas a little too hard.

This book will be found useful by specialist scholars and postgraduate students concerned with the specific texts of Plautus, Terence and Apuleius with which it deals in detail. Its laboured prose, untranslated Latin and idiosyncratic format certify that it is unlikely to appeal to a wider readership.

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The twelve chapters of this volume derive from a conference held at the University of Pittsburgh in 1990, five developed from commentators' responses. While it is an important collection for scholars working on the physical theories of Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition, the exclusion of Plato, the originator of the concept of self-motion, is a major deficiency in its usefulness and balance. Without argument the editors unabashedly deny him any influence apart from Aristotle (xiii, n.b. also 6 n.5; but cf. 3 n.2, 137, 176 n.6), contrary to the explicit admission of some contributors (176, 291, 293, 303). Again, there are later figures of major importance for the topic who receive no direct attention, such as Augustine (see only 294-95), and Leibniz (see only 326). David Furley's often cited 1978 paper 'Self-Movers' is here reprinted as a second introduction. It argues that, notwithstanding