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Plato on "Sociability" and its Educational Transmission

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A democratic society largely depends on the educational system therein. In attempting to examine the educational prerequisites of a society in accordance to man's dignity, Plato embarks on a vast critique of social systems and educational programmes. In what follows I intend to examine (a) his concept of normativity in relation to conformism in the formation of a society which is closed in nature; (b) his views on the dynamism of knowledge, capable of enhancing human formation; and (c) his way of denouncing the myth of dogmatism while analyzing the nature of educational transmission.

Plato: a Practical Philosopher with an Ideal

The set of circumstances making up Plato's social surroundings were tremendously determined by the political and educational institutions; the former holding in check the economical and industrial arts, the latter, the cultural circles. In proposing his social critique, Plato could do no less than dedicate much time to them. His picture was considerably wide so as to provide a solid foundation to his reflections; and neither was he solely putting forward a political theory, unconnected to other branches of thought.[1] His socio-political interests were eventually the first in time,[2] but subsequently he was urged forward to ever broadening horizons.[3] It seems that his immediate interests were always practical and sociological. All his efforts were directed to the development, the nature and the laws of human society, education holding a prominent place. His dialectic method, developed over the years, and evidenced in his writings, may be considered witness to this.

Basic Notions

Before proceeding further it would be worthwhile to state a few preliminary and basic notions proper to Plato's philosophy. They are mainly three, namely, (i) that the *art of appearance* (as opposed to the *art of measurement*) is the heart of Plato's ethical, sociological, political, and pedagogic critique; (ii) that the most skilled in appearance have the most authority in the State, due to their power of conviction; and (iii) that the more of convenience in a citizen means the less of his conviction. These three observations may be considered fundamental to Plato's analysis of society, without which he would not have proceeded to propose a solution. In other words, they state the immediate premises of his Dialectic Method, a method which incorporates the whole of his thought in a nut-shell.

The *art of appearance* in Plato's thought is identified to *normativity* and *sociability*. The latter term indicates the formal element of his analysis, whereas the former, the material one. Society is characterized with a standard, regular, usual, typical behaviour which constitutes a "*norm*" of normativity. Assimilating such a norm is essentially learning the art of appearance.

Normativity

Normativity, than, in the first place, is a *tekni*[4] (an art; a technique). The word does not have the modern implications of mechanics in industry. It refers to an *ability* which one acquires over and above his natural capabilities as a rational being. It is the know-how of social on-goings; the assimilation of the rules of the game of living well,[5] which does not call for any particular erudition. On the contrary, Plato holds that the ones possessing this "ability", and moreover the ones who attempt teaching it to others, "not only are they themselves ignorant of what is good or bad (...), but the people who (want to learn it) are so too"[6]. They miss the meaning of life itself:

> *As to all the good things that people are supposed to get by application and practice and teaching, where these are lacking in anyone and only their opposite evils are found, here surely are the occasions for wrath and punishment and reproof* [7].

The art of living is not as simple as might seem. Living and living well are absolutely distinct. All live, but few live well. The path of life is very frequently lost. Many a man, opting for the wrong possibilities, walking from alley to alley, acquainting himself with the blind company, giving

heed to foolishness, fails to accomplish his prime vocation: *to live*. Plato would call him "a mere layman (*idioteuein*) in (...) virtue"[8]. The term *idioteia* (from which *idioteuein* is derived; the word may suggest the English "idiot" which is derived from this Greek term) suggests a defenceless, unpractised condition; someone in want of education. In other words, an unskilled and uninstructed person, who, according to Plato would have "the only one sort of ill fare - the deprivation of knowledge" (*epistimis sterithinai*, literally meaning "educationally sterile").[9] This would in fact constitute the "normal knowledge" of society at large.

The ability is particularly distinct from an art in the proper sense of the word. *Measurement* can be called an art for all rights and purposes. But in opposition Plato puts what he calls a *pheinomenou dunamis*, the *power* of appearance.[10] *Pheinomenou* (which is derived from *phaino*) recalls the English words "phenomenology", "phenomenal", "phenomenalism" and "phenomenon", which are all derived from this important Greek word pregnant as it is with meaning. Scanning over its semantic richness, we point out the following meanings: (somewhat actively) to bring to light, to cause to appear, reflect, shine forth; (in the more passive meaning) to come to light, to appear, to be reflected, to be shined forth. In the more technical (philosophical) sense, it would signify what appears to the senses, what is observed, what appears to sense experience, what merely shows. Thus the term in our sense, used in a more negative meaning, would point to what is immediately evident but not necessarily true or realistic; an outward seeming; an external likeness. The real rather than the realistic. *Dunamis*, on the other hand, refers to a might, a quality, a means.

Conformism

In Plato the whole expression *phenomenon dunamis*, then, would be equivalent to a power which is used spuriously, in a systematically illusive and evasive manner: "pseudo-wisdom", "pseudo-virtue", "pseudo-real", "pseudo-truth", "pseudo-science". In the *Euthyphro* it is spoken of as a kind of shallowness (believing what appears on the surface);[11] in the *Apology*, as "doing nothing more out of the way than the rest", and doing nothing "other than most people" do;[12] in the *Meno*, as a "drought of wisdom";[13] in the *Gorgias*, as something more than mere imitation (of the social conducts), but rather being "essentially alike" them, to become like them;[14] in the *Menexenus*, as yielding "to one another in no respect save in reputation for virtue and understanding";[15] and also as "knowledge (...) sundered from justice and the rest of virtue", which is actually "plain roguery (literally meaning to play the knave) rather than wisdom";[16] in the *Phaedo*, as part of the soul that "thought nothing was true except the corporeal, which one can touch and see and drink and eat and employ in the pleasure of love", and avoiding "that which is shadowy and invisible to the eyes but is intelligible and tangible to the love of wisdom (that is, philosophy)";[17] in the *Phaedrus*, as "approaching (...) images through the darkling organs of sense";[18] in the *Republic*, as "the restriction to necessary desires in (one's) education";[19] and also as a quality of persons who,

> *with eyes ever bent upon the earth and heads bowed down over their tables, they feast like cattle, grazing and copulating, ever greedy for more of these delights; and in their greed kicking and butting one another with horns and hooves of iron they stay one another in stateless avidity, because they are vainly striving to satisfy with things that are not real the unreal and incontinent part of their souls.*[20]

The Closed Society

What does it mean exactly to be educated in "normality"?[21] The "normative" society is the static, closed, conservative and conformist society. It is the social structure to which Plato is opposed.[22] The educational system corresponding to such a society would prepare people to be in harmony and become similar to that structure. The order of the day would be: Agree! Conform! Accept as absolute! Identify yourself to the current State! Peace at all costs![23] It is identical to the teaching of the art of appearance, that is, to the formation aiming at the conservation of current behaviour systems. Continuing Socrates' inquietude, Plato sets out to examine that state of affairs, exposing its incongruities and absurdities, and denouncing its inhumanity. He will eventually understand that such a pedagogy is a crime against humanity.

A word from Popper, in his characteristic polemical language, for an attempt at elucidation:

> *There can be little doubt that (Plato) visualized human history in a cosmic setting; that he believed his own age to be one of depravity (...) and the whole preceding historical period to be governed by an inherent tendency toward decay, a*

tendency shared by both the historical and the cosmic development.[24] *(...)*

Plato believed that the law of historical destiny, the law of decay, can be broken by the moral will of man, supported by the power of human reason.[25]

This is very true. Plato knew also, however, that the breaking off would be extremely difficult. And he never dreamt that this could ever be done by many people. He always limited himself to the few, even if the message is heard by all,[26] especially so as time went by. He persistently saw that the general tendency is to conform to the current code of values rather than breaking off from it. And this, Plato will observe, is quite understandable. In the Athenian youth (apart from the general public) it could be clearly seen that they were very much attracted to the rhetoricians in general.[27] They flowed, for instance, to Protagoras when he visited Athens,[28] for, "anxious to gain consideration in (the) city, (they) believed (they) can best gain it by consorting with (him)".[29] The case is the same with all rhetorical orators,[30] including the eristic speakers,[31] the panegyrists,[32] and the politicians:

> Socrates: *Then when the orator who does not know what good and evil are undertakes to persuade a State which is equally ignorant, not by praising the "shadow of an ass" under the name of a horse, but by praising evil under the name of good, and having studied the opinions of the multitude persuades them to do evil instead of good, what harvest do you suppose his oratory will reap thereafter from the seed he has sown?*
>
> Phaedrus: *No very good harvest.*[33]

Knowledge as Dynamic

Such complacent knowledge could be learnt not only by intercourse with the rhetoricians, for here we are dealing with a will to be educated in civics. One could simple make recourse to the public itself. This is an important point, mentioned by the politician Anytus:

> Socrates: *I did not mention to (Meno) the men whom I supposed to be teachers of these things; but I find, from what you say, that I am quite off the track, and I daresay you are on it. Now you take your turn, and tell him to whom of the Athenians he is to go. Give us a name - anyone you please.*
>
> Anytus: *Why mention a particular one? Any Athenian gentleman he comes across, without exception, will do him more good, if he will do as he is bid, than the sophists.*[34]

Anytus is indirectly suggesting the art of appearance. It is the technique of living in perfect concord in and with society (indicated by the comment *"if he will do as he is bid"*, hence obedience, well-discipline, submissiveness, docility), without bothering anyone and anything, and without anyone or anything bothering oneself, that is, to conform to the current convention, is inherent in the people who actually live in that way. It consequently can be learnt without going to any special school or to any special scholar. This will later be called *"learning environmentally"*, where one's surroundings are active educationally on the passive subject. But for the time being we need only establish as an existing phenomena the fact that "normality" is taught; and if taught, it is not necessary and absolute; and also that eventually it need not be the case with everyone to learn it.

The uncritical compliance to the general opinion[35] points to some other facts, namely, that individual persons have a tendency not to be contradicted and opposed.[36] Avoiding to counteract such a tendency only helps to check one's personal maturity, giving the comfortable illusion that one is growing up while in fact one is not:

> *For everybody is delighted with words that are designed for his special temper, but is annoyed by what is spoken to suit aliens.*[37]

Social Psychology

The very personal character of such an observation shows just how much Plato is far-reaching in his social critique. He actually bases his observations on social psychology which enables him to see the flaws in the social structure from the perspective of man's most intimate temperaments. Plato is conscious of the fact that when tendencies such as the one we have just mentioned are left unchecked, the individual soul is consequently led astray and diverted from his path of progress. It is not surprising that he will finally end up talking or thinking irrelevantly and incoherently, wandering "amid the multiplicities of multifarious things".[38] We have a marvellous example of such wretched people in the *Theaetetus*:[39]

As a result of all this the speakers become tense and shrewd; they know how to wheedle their master with words and gain his favour by acts; but in their souls they become small and warped. For they have been deprived of growth and straightforwardness and independence by the slavery they have endured from their youth up, for this forces them to do crooked acts by putting a great burden of fears and dangers upon their souls while these are still tender; and since they cannot bear this burden with uprightness and truth, they turn forthwith to deceit and to requiting wrong with wrong, so that they become greatly bent and stunted. Consequently they pass from youth to manhood with no soundness of mind (ekontes tis dianoias) in them, but they think they have become clever and wise.[40]

Well said and terribly true! Dianeo (from which *dianoias* is derived) indicates a mental disposition. In our text it is in the negative, showing that the subject is ill-disposed to a sound mental state. By associating with such people, or rather by not associating with the right type of people (namely, with the man of measure, the man of value), the individual is caught in the dangerous game of convention and convenience. Life for him becomes a enclosure with little hope of escape; a disease which corrupts his soul in a dramatic and permanent manner. Such a person, Plato would describe as "he who did not know at the start that he ought never to have accepted a lover (*eronti*) who was necessarily without reason, but rather a reasonable non-lover (*mi eronti*)".[41]

The *eronti* (derived from eros, which, apart from love, means desire),[42] here mentioned in the context of the teacher of the art of appearance, points to the fact that the adherents were somehow "desired". Plato is saying that when one is so (arduously) desired he should not give in so easily without suspecting some hidden strategy. The fact that this suspicion is neglected not only shows the lack of sensitivity such adherents had in this regard, but also the promptness with which such masters grasped and held on to their adherents. It is these that Plato calls somewhat facetiously "reasonable non-lovers"; but the gravity of the case is seen in his following words:

The affection of the non-lover, which is alloyed with mortal prudence and follows mortal and parsimonious rules of conduct, will beget in the beloved soul the narrowness which the common folk praise as virtue; it will cause the soul to be a wanderer upon the earth for nine thousand years and a fool below the earth at last."[43]

Human Formation

This state of affairs cannot but handicap society, depriving its subjects from a formation compatible with their human nature; a nature which is open to the future, to innovation, to betterment, to growth. Human nature deserves our highest respect and attention. We cannot run the risk of destroying what is life in us, the dynamism from which our civilization evolved and which brought us to our stage of progress. Humankind must retain its vitalism, sometimes at the cost of putting aside the instruments which are there to aid our fragile nature. We are the subjects of our life-span, and it is up to us to never slip into the objectiveness which bars us from ourselves. The ideal of our conscientious living is the most high we possess, and to which it is worthwhile and fruitful to dedicate ourselves. To give ourselves to the absurd and blind obedience of convention and convenience is to loose what is most precious to us, namely, ourselves. Again the word to Plato:

Not a single man of all who live beneath the heavens could ever become wise if these were his practices from his youth, since none will be found to possess a nature so admirably compounded; nor would he ever be likely to become temperate; and the same may truly be said of all other forms of virtue.[44]

The Myth of Dogmatism

One can imagine how sad it was for Plato (as it is for us today) to see such a situation perpetuated beyond hope. All the more so to see candidates enthusiastically dedicating themselves to a way of life which they think and believe will emancipate their being, whereas it only contributes to their own poverty, slavery and destruction. They actually waste their lives stubbornly yielding to the current of their environment, refracting from any correction or sound sense. Plato rightly points out that such an obstinate will to be educated in conventionality, simply learning by heart the rules of the convenient game of society, is in fact to be held as ignorance of the true wisdom.[45] It is the false recourse to absoluteness and dogmatism; the hiding place of our unsurmountable fears, demanding wants and senseless failure. It is true folly;[46] the deprivation of our moral will and the power of our reason.

We are here speaking of a deprivation which is identical to ignorance of the art of measurement. For Plato this is a grave bereavement.[47] J.G. Frazer sees this important concept in a wider picture which is valuable and worth noting:

> *The Ideal theory was started from an ontological, not from a logical, point of view, and that, accordingly, at first Plato did not, as he afterwards did, assume an Idea corresponding to every class-name.(...) The Fact that injustice, for example, produces forgetfulness of the Ideal world surely shows that there was no Idea of Injustice to be remembered. Again in Phaedr 248c, to be tainted with evil and to forget the Ideal world are represented as simultaneous.*[48]

This observation calls our attention to the fact that the loss of virtue, or rather of the life of measurement, means falling off from the human ideal. In other words, it cannot, strictly speaking, be considered as an acquisition of something. On the contrary, it is a deprivation, a loss.

The transmission of "sociability" (and "normativity") is Plato's major immediate preoccupation. Here he enters into the techniques of the continual diffusion of the art of appearance by way of all the means of education. He distinguishes a direct way of communication, and an indirect one. The former would correspond to the schooling of the rhetorician, and in particular, to that of the sophists. The latter would be "learning environmentally".

Educational Transmission

The Sophist, knowing that education was held highly amongst the Hellines,[49] relied on his notoriety for constantly having adherents to hear his lectures.[50] Teaching rhetoric (and thus "normality") meant that he taught nothing other than falsehood.[51] He possessed knowledge himself, and imparted knowledge to others, only as long as it was *safe*,[52] in the sense that it never opposed, criticized or rocked the established state of affairs of no-one and nothing. He eventually never taught any "dangerous"[53] matters, but always those "demanded". This means that the sophist's criterion of truth was the other. He always re-acted; his teaching material was never an action coming from himself, from the free exertion of the power of his intellect. His education, in all rights, can be called simply "convenient". The sophist *made* others "wise"[54] (as opposed to guiding and leading others on to knowledge and the discovery of scientific truth); he turned them out to be (without actually being in fact) "wise". This he did by "making" them "gentlemen",[55] exercised in "normativity" and "sociability", giving them the instruments to appear "wise". And that which he taught others, he himself learnt just in the same way.[56]

"*Learning environmentally*" is considered by Plato to be a more serious case than learning through direct transmission. For it imbued the whole of the wide spectrum of the systems of education. By "learning environmentally" we mean that teaching transmitted unofficially and unsystematically by one's very surroundings. It is learnt from one's surrounding situations and circumstances.

The *Protagoras*,[57] shows forcefully how subtle such an education is, and how difficult for the subject himself to protect himself from it. From his most tender years he becomes unconsciously trained into "normality" and "sociability". One can understand how difficult it will later be, what violence he will have to exert over himself, to liberate himself from it. It will eventually be already difficult to understand the falseness and wrong of such an education. In prison, before his execution, Socrates would bring forward a similar case, and suppose that his accusors (representing the "normative" society) would say to him that he is breaking his compacts and agreements with them, even if he "were not led into them by compulsion or fraud".[58] He had learnt these agreements and compacts from his social environment.

In the *Meno* we find an interesting brief allusion to this important matter. Socrates, holding[59] that virtue is the desire and ability for good, presses his case further saying that the desire "belongs to our common nature", whereas the ability is not. It has to be acquired. In other words, "good men cannot be good by nature."[60] Virtue, then, is strictly speaking, not the desire, but the ability. The environment must be instrumental to develop this ability and not destroy it.[61] The Dialectic Method would undoubtedly do the job:

> Socrates: *Now do you imagine he would have attempted to inquire or learn what he thought he knew, when he did not know it, until he had been reduced to the perplexity of realizing that he did not know, and had felt a craving to know?*
>
> Meno: *I think not, Socrates.*[62]

Dialectic would give the subject the consciousness of his poverty and ignorance, thus urging him forward to search. It is the subject himself, then, who would "teach himself" with his inquisitiveness and inquietude. It is for this reason that Plato held that there are no "teachers of virtue".[63]

In the *Republic* the matter is slightly shifted to emphasize an interesting point. Plato observes that when a specially talented student is submitted to such a treatment and education, the result can be more devastating than with other less intelligent candidates, "unless some god comes to the rescue".[64] The testimony of Plato himself would be:

> *We know it to be universally true of every seed and growth, whether vegetable or animal, that the more vigorous it is the more it falls short of its proper perfection when deprived of the food, the season, the place that suits it. For evil is more opposed to the good than to the not-good.*[65]

Notes

1. Plato's political views cannot be considered without the metaphysical and the religious dimensions of his philosophy. On this point see K. Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies*, 1 (London 1989), pp. 84 and 88. See also his *Conjectures and Refutations* (London 1989), p. 9. Plato's authoritative scholars emphasise this point constantly. See G. Reale, *Storia della Filosofia Antica*, 2 (Milano 1988), pp. 43 and 354; *Per una Rilettura di Platone* (Milano 1984), p.53; B. Jowett, *Select Passages from the Introductions to Plato* (London 1902), p. 48; J.C.B. Gosling, *Plato* (London 1983, p.1; J.G. Frazer, *The Growth of Plato's Ideal Theory* (London 1930), pp. 10-15; and H. Kramer, *Platone e i Fondamenti della Metafisica* (Milano 1982), p. 313.

2. For Plato's initial political and social interests, and also for his eventual break with politics, see (from his first two periods of thought) *Republic* (Rep) 496c-e, 517a, 557d; and *Epistles* (Ep) 324d. See also Reale, *Storia*, p. 285; and his *Rilettura*, p. 149 (the development after the break); A.D. Winspear, *The Genesis of Plato's Thought* (New York 1956), pp. 65, 75 note (on the Conservatives), 77 (in relation to justice), 80, 112 (on the Progressives), 1171, 211, 270; Popper, *Open Society*, 1, pp. 7, 19, 83, 91, 130, 155, 169, 196; and his *Open Society*, 2, pp. 50, 61 (in relation to racism) and 281.

3. From his ethical problematic, Plato proceeds to reflections on the world of *physis*; to superphysical being; to the "care of the *psyche*"; and finally to the meditations over *"Areti"*. See Reale, *Storia*, pp. 43-47, in the context of Plato's discovery of the super-sensible, and the serious problems related to the interpretations of Plato's works.

4. See *Laches* (Lach) 186c.

5. Plato uses the word *techni* here in an improper sense. He prefers to use the word in a positive meaning, which here would be out of place. The usage in this sense is somewhat ironical.

6. See *Protagoras* (*Prot*) 313d. The phrase is used for the sophists and their adherents.

7. *Prot* 323d, e.

8. See *Prot* 327a.

9. See *Prot* 345b.

10. See *Prot* 356d.

11. See 6b.

12. See 20c.

13. See 71a.

14. See 513b.

15. See 239a. The citation has a slight ironical ring to it.

16. See 247a.

17. See 81b.

18. See 250b.

19. See 561a.

20. 586a. A remarkable text; another masterpiece of world literature found in Plato's *Republic*.

21. It is particularly valuable to analyse Plato through the widening concentric circles of his thought, which can be described as the following:

(i) *The Man of Measurement - The Man of Appearance.* This level is the most basic, the heart of Plato's thought. Here we would have the reflection on the *Real* and the *Good.*

(ii) *The Humility of the man of virtue - The Pride of the man of imitation.* The behaviour of the man of measurement is always that of one who never presumes, as the man of appearance constantly does, that he has arrived at any scientific truth. His position is one of systematic hypothesis, whereas that of the man of appearance is one of systematic certitude and dogmatism.

(iii) *The Wisdom of the virtuous man - The Opinion of the man of convenience.* The Man of Measurement beholds knowledge which qualifies as wisdom, that is, a science of science, since it underlies all man's being and activity. The man of appearance has only opinion, which is as far from true as much as he is afar from the possibility of any scientific advancement.

(iv) The *Remembrance* of man's ideals - *The teaching of man's social behaviour.* The man of measurement leads individuals to a human, mature and responsible development, which is not content with superficialities, but with high, magnanimous ends. He guides the subject to a scientific preparation on his laborious way towards the truth. In other words he teaches him how to think critically. The man of appearance, on the other hand, is not interested in this. His main aim is personal acquisition and gain.

(v) *The scale of Values of the interior man - The scale of Values of the exterior man.* These differ considerably. Here, however, we have Plato's final stage: the establishment of an ethical code which enhances the development and progress of society. We have here proposed a particular way of living which is in concord with the true nature of man.

22. The diametrical opposite of such a social model would obviously be a society which is non-normative, dynamic, open, progressive and non-conformist. However it is equally obvious that in all of its absoluteness such a society is difficulty, at least if carried too far into the extreme. Plato himself will realise this, as the dialogues of his third period show, and hence will reduce his notion of such a society to the concept of the individual. This is another matter, and (maybe) more practical and realistic. A non-normative, dynamic, open, progressive and non-conformist (as opposed to the anarchist) person is quite impossible and important in the social structure. It is indubitable that such a man is incongruous with the notion of "structure", and may suffer considerably for this matter, this however would constitute his mission. In this regard, Plato's writings have got ample references.

23. For the idea that "normativity" is equal to a conventional manner of understanding "virtue" (and thus being a pseudo-virtue), see *Prot* 324a ("virtue" as compliance), 325a, 349e; *Gorgias* (Gorg) 481c, 505b, 512d; *Greater Hippias* (H.Mai) 288d; *Menexenus* (Mex) 238c; *Phaedo* (Phaed) 66c,

69a; ReOp 353e, 365c, 586a; *Phaedrus* (Phaedr) 240e, 241c, 244d and 246d (a negative sense to this).

24. At this point Popper tells us (by way of note; see *Open Society*, 1, p. 210) that "apart from these scanty allusions (it is difficult to know to which of the scanty allusions he is referring: the chapter up to this point has no allusions at all!), there is hardly anything to indicate that Plato took the upward or forward part of the cycle seriously. But there are many remarks, apart from the elaborate description in the *Republic* and that quoted in (the preceding note)(he is here referring to *Laws* 676b,c - 677b), which show that he believed very seriously in the downward movement, in the decay of history. We must consider, especially, the *Tinaeus, and the Laws.*" I need hardly say after this that it is eventually Popper's proofs of his accusation that are scanty. His arguments are thoroughly unconvincing.

25. *Open Society*, 1, p.20. The context is what Popper calls "the myth of origin and destiny" and Plato's theory of forms or ideas.

26. For Plato's idea that the possibility of such a thing is shared by all indiscriminately, see *Prot* 319c, 322d; *Gorg* 461e; *Rep* 518e and 551c. See also H. G. Gadamer, *Studi Platonici*, 1 (Rome 1983), p. 45; and Popper, *Open Society*, 1,p. 152.

27. For Plato's reflection that the youths impressed themselves easily, see *Prot* 315a; *Euthydmeus* (E. dem) 303b; *H. Mai* 282b, e; *Rep* 492c; *Theaet* 162d; *Phaedr* 260c; and *Ep* 328b.

28. See *Prot* 314c.

29. See *Prot* 316c.

30. For a comprehensive idea of Plato's concept of rhetorics, and the convincing by rhetoric (and oratory), see *Apology* (*Apol*) 1b; *Lysis* (*Lys*) 209e; *Gorg* 448e, 452e (on persuasion), 456c, 459a, 465c, 502a (as regards certain types of poetry), 508c; *H. Mai* 284c, 304a; Mex 235d; *Symposium* (*Sym*) 198d; *Rep* 492d, 603a (as a mimetic art); *Theaetetus* (*Theaet*) 164c; *Phaedr* 260a, c, 261c, 262c, 263b, 268a, 269d and 272e. See also Reale, *Storia*, 2, p. 214; Gadamer, *Studi*, 1, pp. 39-44 (somewhat general); Popper, *Open Society*, 1, p. 140; and *Conjectures and Refutations* (London 1989), pp. 399 and 401.

31. The eristic disputations were aimed at victory rather than truth. For Plato's view on the subject, see *Meno* (Men) 75c; E. dem 275e, 276e; Phaed 90c, 91a; Rep 454a, 603a (in relation to mimery); *Theaet* 164c; *Phaed* 262c and 272e.

32. For Plato's idea of the *egkomiazo* (panegyric) and the *egkomiastis* (panegyrist), see Sym 199a; Rep 603a (in relation to mimery); and *Phaedr* 262c.

33. *Phaedr* 260c.

34. *Men* 92e.

35. For Plato's ideas on this point, see *Prot* 313b; *Crit* 47c; *E. dem* 276b, d; *Gorg* 458a (negative sense to this), 473e, 481e, 510d; *Phaed* 83e, 84a; and *Rep* 492c.

36. The Dialectic Method of Plato will actually work as a mechanism against such a thing. It will develop in the subject a sense of "humility" due to a certain personal security. It is interesting to note that the Dialectic Method, if upheld and practised, is instrumental in helping the subject to a personal and emotional maturity and responsibility.In other words, it gives a human formation to the subject.

37. *Gorg* 513c.

38. See *Rep* 484b. The Greek original is not so musical. Shorey, *Republic*, 1 (Cambridge 1930), p. 89 (note h), informs us that "wandering" (*planodis*) is the mark of error. He refers us to *Lys* 213e; *Phaed* 79c; *Phaedr* 263b; *Parmerides* (*Pann*) 135e; and *Sophist* (*Soph*) 230b.

39. The immediate context of Socrates' words is the brilliant comparison of the rhetorician's situation with that of a court-room.

40. *Theaet* 172e.

41. See *Phaedr* 241b,c.

42. The Greek mentality connected (as we do today) love to desire. Plato frequently uses this significance, and other synonymous terms, such as *philos*, to his advantage to drive home certain concepts. In the Lysis, for example, he uses the term philos in the context of his theory of Ideas, to speak of our "attraction" to (our "desire" of) Ideas and Ideals.

43. *Phaedr* 256e. The reference to "nine thousand years" and to "below the earth" in this beautiful text is obviously simply a manner of speaking, having no literal import.

44. *Ep* 326c.

45. For the idea in Plato, see *Prot* 313d; *Crit* 47d; *Phaed* 66b; *Sym* 194b; *Rep* 382b, 409a and 504c.

46. See *Rep* 585b.

47. For ignorance of the art of measurement as the loss of something fundamental, see *Prot* 358c; *Apol* 21d, 29b; *E. cem* 281d, 286d; *Gorg* 507a; *H. Mai* 294d; *Rep* 365c and 382b.

48. *The Growth of Plato's Ideal Theory* (London 1930), p. 49. The context of this interesting extract is precisely the discussion that there are no Ideas in Plato's thought of evil things.

49. For this idea in Plato, see *Lach* 186b; *Prot* 313a; *Euthyphro* (*E. phro*) 3c; *E. dem* 275b; *Rep* 377b (a negative sense to this), 492e and 494e.

50. For the sophist's dwelling on notoriety (and hence on his self-pride), see *Prot* 314b, 315c, 317c, 318d, 337b; *Apol* 22a; *E.dem* 296c; *Rep* 493d and 494a. See also Gadamer, *Studi*, 1, p, 40. Plato understands that this constituted yet another asset in the ruin of education. It must be also said that the sophists "suspiciously guarded in all ways (their adherents against everybody" (*Phaedr* 240e).

Two basic matters determined such a ruin, namely, the following: (i) *The fees*. The sophist, as long as he received the money, did not bother whether he imparts any education or not. His mind was at rest that his pay is coming in, and thus did not worry whether he received his adherents' advancement. (ii) *His notoriety*. The only preoccupation he actually had was to keep students coming to him. He therefore had to develop certain techniques with which he kept his adherents fixed to his classes and never running the risk of losing his income.

This critique can be applied to our own type of teaching and lecturing today in our educational institutions. We immediately understand that the situation is worse than that which Plato considers as very serious. First of all, lecturers today need not preoccupy themselves with the (sophist's) problem of attracting their students to the classes (problem (ii) mentioned above). Further unlike in Plato's time, qualifications are today a necessity. Lack of qualifications today means that one will most probably remain unemployed. In Plato's time this was out of the question. Secondly, today's lecturers are everywhere paid a salary, whether one teaches or not. One's only obligation is to lecture.

Plato opts for pedagogy which is a vocation, a service. He envisaged from early on the dangers which will materialize if such a thing was abandoned. Today we unfortunately live in the shadow of Plato's fears.

51. For Plato's views on this point, see *Prot* 313d, 323c, 324b; *Gorg* 481b (directly connected with rhetoric), 511a, 513b; *Rep* 409a, 491e, 561a; and *Theaet* 194e.

52. For Plato's thought on this point, see Lach 188c; E. dem 278b, 289c,296b; Gorg 502e, 513b; Phaed 83e; Rep 492e, 494a; and Theaet 180c.

53. For Plato's idea on this point, see *Lach* 186c; *Prot* 313c, 328b; *H. Min* 376a; *Men* 80a (such teachers do not "benumb" anyone); 91e, 95c; *E. dem* 278b (the "sport of the sciences"), 288a, b: *Lys* 216c; *Gorg* 474b, 486c, 502c (including Greek tragedy), e, 503a, 504e; and *Rep* 494a.

54. For this interesting and subtle point of Plato, see Prot 312a; *Charmides* (*Char*) 163c; *Gorg* 455a, 485a, 519c; *H. Mai* 285b, 294d; *Rep* 518c, 592a; *Theaet* 201a; and *Phaedr* 240c.

55. See, for Plato's view of this, *Lach* 186c; *Prot* 319a; *Char* 160e; *Gorg* 484d; *Rep* 350d, 474e, 550b, 592a; *Phaedr* 239e and 252a (a negative sense to this).

56. See *Men* 93a.

57. 325c-326e. It is a remarkable text from Plato's hand. The same matter is expressed in the context of the theatre in *Prot* 327d. The theatre, today's cinema, is yet another aspect of the same pedagogical system. Plato signals the case when in one of his plays *Pherecrates* the poet brought on the scene a character who was supposed to represent a convict. Plato's point is that in this way the public is learning that such and such a character is equal to a criminal (even if maybe, according to some subjective judgement, he is in fact none other than another "Socrates", be what may).

58. See *Critas* (*Crit*) 52e.

59. See 78b.

60. See *Men* 89a.

61. For the idea that "normality" is passed on, see *Prot* 323c, 324b, *Men* 86c (the teaching of "non-normativity", or at least its possibility), 90b, 93b; and *E. dem* 282d. In Rep 550b the same point is stated: "He is not by nature of a bad disposition but has fallen into evil communications."

62. *Men* 84c.

63. See *Men* 89e. In *Men* 93b-e Plato brings the case of Themistocles and his son Cleophantus. The son was completely different from his good and able father. This only makes the same point that virtue is not taught or learnt. Again in *Men* 95d Theognis the poet is quoted (Bergk, 33-36, in *LCL* p.354) in order to stress the same point: "(...) for from the good wilt thou win thee lessons in the good.(...)". Note the insistence on "winning" the good, and not learning it.

64. See *Rep* 492a. This is only half-jokingly said.

65. *Rep* 491d.

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