

**DRAFT TRANSLATION!!!**

Original pagination will be indicated in brackets, e.g. [p. 104].

**Title:** Bad education as the main cause of social disruption

**Abstract:**

This article aims to explore the question of education in Plato from the historical context, thinking the model of Athens, Lesbos and Sparta, and from the perspective where a bad *paideía*, the low quality in the formation of citizens, becomes the main cause generating social disruption. Then, a reflection was made on the educational possibilities that Athenians from different social classes would have and on the Platonic proposal based on the combination of gymnastics and music, so that a citizen profile with solid collective ideals would be developed to the point of avoiding *stásis*.

**Keywords:** Plato, Education, Dissension, *stásis*, *paideía*.

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[p. 102] I intend to present a reflection on Greek education and Plato's proposal from a contemporary perspective, interweaving political issues from there and here. In short, bad education is the one who does not cultivate the minimum characteristics to maintain a good social coexistence. Because it is flawed, it generates a citizen who no longer cares about others but himself and his personal success, who recognizes nothing but his own desires and opinions about his immediate reality. This kind of person, a true *apaídeutos*, perceives only the world as it shows itself and is completely uncommitted with other times. To know history and understand the constitution of one's own world doesn't matter to him, nor does he plan the consequences derived from an action, that is, understanding the link between Nazism and the extreme right, knowing that one shouldn't burn an entire forest, nor underestimate a worldwide pandemic, are not important things for the one who didn't have a good education. This exacerbated individualism is, therefore, the consequence of a bad education and it, in turn, allows [p. 103] constitutional breaks and even civil wars. Simply because the fruits of a *kakē paideía* are people capable of cast themselves into narcissistic adventures that can cause harm to everyone else in the same society, just like various individuals in our present society, but also in the classical era, such as Alcibiades and Critias.

The interpretation I will do here is anchored on Plato's shoulders<sup>1</sup>, but I don't see how to avoid the interrelation with current issues, since our time also reaps the consequences of a bad *paideía* and a *stásis*, topics much debated in Platonic writings. As, for example, in *Laws* 629d, where *stásis* is considered a more bitter war than that waged against foreign enemies, or in the definition made in *Republic* 470b, where *stásis* is characterized as a dissension between those who are familiar and of the same lineage, being distinct from the war with foreigners, *pólemos*. After all, there are many external factors that can affect a city, for example, when a foreign invasion whose sole purpose is to obtain spoils of war or colonize attacks the city, but nothing is worse than an internal division within the same political community, even when a small part of the citizens, an oligarchic elite, does not act alone and makes shady deals with foreign powers, handing over their population to chaos while saving themselves for money and honors. It is true that a political dissension can end with a *pólis*, but the one who is composed by a good society, made up of very well educated and united citizens, will

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<sup>1</sup> Diogenes Laertius, in 3.4, says that the philosopher would have the real name Aristokles, but was nicknamed Plato by his coach, since he had the physical constitution of broad shoulders, the adjective used is *platýtēs*, referring to *platýs* that means broad, with broad shoulders.

not break easily. Therefore, maintaining a political link between fellow citizens should be considered as one of the major objectives of a healthy state. Since a good ruler would never incite internal division among his commanders, anyone in such a position must behave up to the job and never rule only for his friends or his family.

To talk about the Greek interpretation of social rupture in the midst of a contemporary Brazil governed by a *familitia*<sup>2</sup> that constantly attacks education may seem, at first, an excess, but it is important to point out that the question of the family is completely related to the Greek interpretation of dissension. As LORAUX (1987) points out, *stásis* is reflected as a war in family, that breaks the fraternization and plays relative against relative<sup>3</sup>, making it possible to interpret this problem by the triad *stásis*, family and city<sup>4</sup>, because “sometimes it is the family that induces the [p. 104] *stásis* against the city, sometimes it is the *stásis* installed in the city that destroys the family, other times it is the city as family that repels the *stásis*”<sup>5</sup>. The first two cases are easy to understand, because a family may want to take control of the city for itself, in favor of its particular interest, as well as the political issues of the city as a whole may cause family breakups, but it is the third case that is more interesting to explore here, because a solution widespread in Greek thought, to the point of being considered a *tópos* of political rhetoric<sup>6</sup>, is to define, “against the civil war, the civic kinship”<sup>7</sup>, for then there would be only one solution: to constitute “a generalized kinship that would unite all citizens one another”<sup>8</sup>.

This perception is well highlighted in Plato, since this author also identifies the creation of symbolic kinship bonds as an alternative to keep the city cohesive, with the issue of the guardians’ community of goods and women in the *Republic* being the greatest example. Narrowing the bonds of fraternity among citizens is a way to try to prevent the appearance of *stásis*, since it was considered that fraternity would found civil peace<sup>9</sup>. The very resolution of the dissension, as exposed in *Republic* 471a-b, because it is a war between equals, among citizen-relatives, seen as a reconciliation<sup>10</sup>

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2 *Familícia* is a neologism used very often in Brazil to refer to Bolsonaro’s family, because this word is compounded by ‘family’ and ‘militia’, therefore *familitia* in English.

3 LORAUX, 1987, p. 5-6.

4 The triad appears at various times in LORAUX (1987), as on pages 18 and 34.

5 LORAUX, 1987, p. 18, my translation.

6 LORAUX, 1987, p. 26.

7 LORAUX, 1987, p. 24, my translation.

8 LORAUX, 1987, p. 28, my translation.

9 LORAUX, 1987, p. 8.

10 Reconciliation is seen by LORAUX (1994, p. 285) as an inherent linking characteristic of *stásis*, also highlighting that it brings the desire for order and justice (Id., 1995, p. 324).

among family members, with a natural tendency to face differences with benevolence and avoiding the massacre of equals. In fact, the plea for brotherhood among citizens to end a *stásis* can be proven with the Amnesty of 403, which proposed an end to the revenge of the democrats when they defeated the tyranny of the Thirty and returned to the power in Athens. Therefore, the collective ideal needed to be always praised for the good functioning of the city, that is why an education that values the social aspect inevitably needed to be defended.

Thus, the educational process as a whole, at any time, needs to avoid at all costs generating a population of true idiots, in Greek sense of the word *idiótēs*, that is, a person without education, an ignorant, a private simpleton, someone who only takes care of his own backyard. It is certain that the idiots are more easily manipulated, [p. 105] mainly in a democracy, where everyone can express themselves, but the cost of this in the long run is harmful not only to men, because nowadays we clearly see the irreversibility being caused to the ecosystem. And it did not even need television and WhatsApp's fake news to discover how dangerous a bad education can be. Plato, in *Republic* 564c, already described how in democracy some skillful voices are able to deceive the unwise with their siren songs. This class of illusionists corresponds to the worst kind among all men, and Plato makes a typology of political profiles and compares them to drones, for he finds himself outside of any community ideal, serving neither as a ruler nor as an auxiliary because of his inherent and excessive licentiousness, being only “a squanderer of the goods at his disposal”<sup>11</sup> (*Rep.* 564a), just like that bad soldier and ruler we know well, a true contemporary tyrant.

The solution to avoid these bad citizens is always to bet on education. It is necessary to tame bad human natures and at the same time make sure that the good ones can develop completely. To achieve this, we can now look back on Antiquity and instruct ourselves on the sagacity of a philosopher like Plato, who spent decades of his life immersed in an almost constant *stásis*<sup>12</sup>. This led him to devote much ink to the problem of education that was already being discussed by his master, Socrates, when he inquired whether or not virtue could be taught, and questioned those who seemed wise,

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11 For the *Republic* quotations, I follow the translation of Anna Prado in PLATO (2006).

12 LORAUX (1987, p. 11) questioned whether *stásis* was inherent in city life, ending up stating, more categorically, that it is an integral part of Greek political life (Id., 1994, p. 284) and that it is “for the city, an innate evil” (Ibid., (Ibid., p. 290, my translation); thus concluding that “*stásis* is an integral part of Greek politics, even if the Greeks themselves systematically tried to deny the political dimension by treating the civil war as a calamity, [...] strange to the normal functioning of the city which would, from this perspective, always be peaceful” (Id., 1995, p. 304, my translation).

such as the sophists or the poets, but who, in fact, were not. But no one can romanticize the past to the point of thinking that the solution just like as suggested there can be applied, for the Kallipolis of the *Republic* or even the Magnesia of the *Laws* are utopian spaces, they are not realizable cities in our world. However, there is nothing more foolish than to throw away all this millennial discussion based on the writings of this philosopher, after all, there is no greater proof of an immediate being, who knows nothing beyond his own experience, to despise Greek philosophy for pettiness. There are centuries condensing the thoughts of great men, who lived through times with more changes, conquests and defeats than ours, saw empires and city-states rise and fall. It is, therefore, a foolish thing to refuse this knowledge.

### [p. 106] Educational models of the Greek experience

Roughly speaking, our society seeks an education through a more inclusive school and academic system than those described here. We may even ironize by saying that Lesbos would be a kind of Escola da Ponte<sup>13</sup>, Sparta a military school and Athens a Catholic boarding school only for boys. But, actually, these ancient models do not pair with our world. Our word ‘school’ even comes from the Greek *skholé*, but that root meant only the spare time citizens could use to enjoy the acquisition of culture through study. However, this contemporary concept of school is not Greek. After all, there is no parallel in the Hellenic world with our model of mass education, serialized in school years, with a system of evaluation and reprobation developed by State sponsored institutions. The school project as we know is very recent, originating from the Industrial Revolution, but taking shape only near the 20th century.

That is why I will now turn to more historical aspects of the Greek *paideía*, because to better understand how Plato thinks about education it is necessary to have a notion of how the Hellenic world experienced the educational process. For this I will make a brief description of how education was carried out in three *pólis*: Lesbos, Sparta and Athens.

The citizens of Lesbos, at least the aristocracy and both men and women, were considered lovers of the Muses, that is, well educated people. The main reference as to education on this island is the *thíasos* of the poetess Sappho, considered the tenth Muse

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<sup>13</sup>Escola da Ponte is an experimental school from Portugal, acknowledged for being influenced by a pedagogy centered on the student and concepts such as freedom and autonomy.

by Plato<sup>14</sup>. This place would be a kind of female school, the best known, but not the only one, because it competed with other *thíasoi* like those of Gorgo and Andromeda. There is a problem with the historiography of this educational experience, because there are few sources that reached us due to the Christian curatorship that discarded, throughout the centuries, what did not serve it. Furthermore, it is no wonder that we have the word ‘lesbian’, because the feminine schools of Lesbos have an image related to the homoerotic experiences that were supposed to happen there. However, this is a source of controversy and revision among scholars since antiquity, and the two main ancient sources in this regard are the second or third century Oxyrhynchus papyri and the 10th century Suda (LEITE, 2012, p. 45), written many centuries after Sappho, who was a poetess of the VII/VI century BCE. [p. 107] Moreover, the bad reputation of the women from Lesbos was constituted by a caricature vision present in comedies (SHIELDS, 1917, p. xviii) and recorded in text by ancient and modern men.

In fact, it is even difficult to situate Sappho’s social role in Lesbos and even to attest whether she was in fact a teacher, because depending on the source, she is described as the leader of a *thíasos*, a *hetaireía* or even a house of the Muses (LEITE, 2012, p. 48). There are even scholars who doubt that Sappho was in fact a person, and there is a discussion, as in Homer, whether she was not just a poetic character (LEITE, 2012, p. 49). It is true that they were not women gathered for the sole purpose of exploring their bodies, because contrary to what the male commentators of the 19th century thought from the interpretation of the pronoun ‘I’ in Sappho’s poems, she was not a master who taught “sentimental education”<sup>15</sup> to girls before marriage, and she was definitely not a center of formation neither of *hetaírai* nor of *pórnai*.

What is known is that the students were girls from the aristocracy of the region and that they were dedicated to learning subjects such as music, singing and dance, that is, they were scholars of the art of the Muses, *mousiké*. We must remember that the Muses, and also Eros and Aphrodite who received dedication in the poems, were deities belonging to the Greek religion, so there is a context of religious devotion in the apprenticeship that should not be forgotten, so much so that Sappho called her school ‘home of the Muses’ and the participation in religious festivals was encouraged (SAPPHO, 1986, p. 12-13). But we should also not exclude the homoerotic component,

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14 That is the epigram 16 attributed to Plato and present in the *Palatine Anthology* (or *Greeks Anthology*).

15 According to LEITE, 2012, p. 48.

since it is present in Sappho's poems (e.g. frag. 94), exhibiting "a poetic and therefore social space, where this expression was quite permissible"<sup>16</sup>; even more so when we remember that that ancient world did not know Christian morality.

Similar to the cities that concentrate university students today, Lesbos was an important center of education until the time of the Roman Empire. Many philosophers, mathematicians and scientists passed through there, and the inhabitants of Lesbos were recognized for their musical talent (SHIELDS, 1917, p. xvi-xvii), remembering that *mousikḗ*, the art of the Muses is something much bigger than just music, in a way close to what we would call today liberal arts or humanities. In short, the [p. 108] competition with other schools and the presence of scholars there prove that the city of Lesbos valued education and was a place of great cultural wealth (at least for the rich and aristocrats).

The Hellenic *paideía* had peculiarities to each city, from a teaching focused on arts in Lesbos, we will now see something almost opposite to that. Sparta was a city of warriors who fought hand-to-hand, and the development of physical characteristics and courage was the main objective to create citizens. So, Lacedaemon relied on an education for warriors, viewed by various sources as an austere and harsh educational procedure, but focused on the community, where parents were not allowed to educate their children as they wished (RICHER, 2018, p. 525-526). In short, the Spartan *paideía* was aimed at guaranteeing the city combative, experienced and courageous warriors, nothing more than what a colonial power would demand of its members. Xenophon used the term *paideía* to describe the educational experience of Sparta, but many commentators today use the term *agōgḗ*<sup>17</sup>, i.e., that education is a guide to war, characterized by military training, that is, a creation of soldiers.

Spartan education did not neglect girls: Plato, in *Laws* 806a, states that Spartans learned both gymnastics and *mousikḗ*. According to Richer (2018, p. 537-538) it is obscure, however, how the education of Spartan women was actually carried out, but they are supposed to have had lessons in reading and writing and probably in arithmetic. In general, the question of body development is reflected in their education, as it was somewhat caricatured in comedies and represented in iconographic material. In addition, just like the women of Lesbos, the Spartans women were misspoken and tacky

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16 LEITE, 2012, p. 53, my translation.

17 RICHER, 2018, p. 526.

as libertines and lesbians. Here is an indication of the profile of the writings that reached us: male writers who felt threatened by women who were not very submissive, since they had at least a similar education to them and could challenge them at the same time.

There are modern commentators indicating that there would be a parallelism in education for men and women in Sparta (RICHER, 2018, p. 538), but in general this education, or at least the comments made about it, was focused on the adult men training. This educational model was divided by age group, starting at age seven and probably keeping the same class training together until the age of twenty, when they [p. 109] began to form the young adult body called *eírenes* or <sup>18</sup>*hēbōntes*. Therefore, similar to how we currently refer to concepts like ‘boomers’ or ‘millennials’ according to the date of birth, Spartans used to identify an individual by the generation with which he was educated. In classical times, the education of lacedaemonians was divided by three age groups: *país*, *paidískos* and *hēbōntes*, something equivalent to a separation between child, teenager and young.

Xenophon, in the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, describes that the Spartan militarized education encouraged competition among young people because they believed they would thus reach excellence (“*eis érin peri aretês*”) and develop *andragathía*, the masculine bravery (cf. Xen. *Cons. Lac.* 4.2). This is, therefore, a rigid and conventional education, capable of marking the character of a Spartan over generations. Plato, for example, notes in *Hippias Major*, 284b, that lacedaemonians do not usually change their laws, nor educate their children outside the customs. This conservative education has lasted for decades and “made it possible to inculcate a common culture and to impose discipline on minds as well as bodies”<sup>19</sup>. The result of this, as Xenophon says in *Cons. Lac.* 2.2, is that modesty and obedience have become the inseparable companions of Sparta. If today this sounds like a bad and authoritarian education, we must take into account the need for discipline in the midst of the military and war context of that time.

This educational system of Lacedaemonia was supposedly designed by Lycurgus, the Spartan legislator sanctioned by Apollo. Highlighting this is important to emphasize the religious character, since it was believed that the god of Delphi himself

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18 Young Spartans in their twenties and thirties were called *eírenes*, *hēbōntes* or even *tá déka áph'ēbēs* (LIPKA, 2002, p. 131).

19 RICHER, 2018, p. 527.

had sanctioned or even handed over the laws to Lycurgus. Plato, in *Protagoras* 342e-343c, comments on Spartan education and the relationship with Apollo, since many enthusiasts of this model of education, such as the Athenian Solon or Thales of Miletus, supposedly left concise maxims in the temple of Delphi that are known until today. The interesting thing is that Plato in *Protagoras* does not approach the Spartan education by the military bias, but by the wisdom obtained by the laconic concision<sup>20</sup>, because a Spartan, like an expert archer, [p. 110] was able to make phrases full of deep meanings, even with few words. That would be, for Plato, in *Prot.* 342e, an indication that:

lacedaemonian education has a broader basis in the love of wisdom [*philosopheîn*] than in physical exercise [*philogymnasteîn*], certain that the ability to enunciate sentences of this kind is characteristic of individuals with a thorough education<sup>21</sup>.

Thus it is clear that there was also the teaching of reading and writing besides gymnastics, indicating that this instruction was part of the training given by the *paidonómos*, the superintendent of education (RICHER, 2018, p. 532). Another point is that in the seventh century Terpander, a poet born in Lesbos, had a music school in Sparta and that at the same time that city produced poets recognized for their excellence, such as Alcman and Tyrtaeus.

Regarding the Athenian *paideía*, it must be emphasized that Classical Athens excluded women from education and learning for war, while boys were educated according to the financial possibilities of their social class. The young boys had a *paidagōgós*, usually a slave, who tutored them and led them to their teachers, the *didáskaloi*, and these taught them subjects such as fighting, music and rhetoric. However, in opposition to his time and city, Plato presented a revolutionary proposal, in a way influenced by the Spartan model, since all men and women would be taught by the State itself, in matters of both body and soul, thus taking away the family influence in education.

Since Athens had no public education or mass school, social classes were critical for what kind of instruction a person would receive. The poorest, the *thêtes*, could not

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20 It is a common place among commentators to see irony in the Plato's praise of Spartan knowledge in this passage, but I believe that this is actually only the consequence of a cultural history where Athenian works prevailed, but only a few fragments of Spartans. BARROW (2012, p. 27-28) not only recognizes that Plato would see the Spartans as morally well educated, but also infers that the influence of the Spartan educational model in the reform of education proposed in the *Republic* would be applied to the masses and not only to the select group of guardians.

21 I follow the translation of Carlos Nunes in PLATO (2002).

afford a teacher or a sophist, so if they were lucky they would know the basics of how to read or write. If they lived in rural Athens, besides being poor, probably not even this they would be able to afford. The urban part of the *pólis*, the *ásty*, would at least allow *thêtes* employees, at the mercy of temporary jobs, to get a better instruction because of the function they had to perform.

The information about the lower class of Athenian free men, concerning to education, is still incomplete, for there is a classist tenor both because ancient writing has always been a [p. 111] space dominated by elites, and because, until very recently, commentators on antiquity were not very interested in researching the subalterns in depth. That's because *thêtes* formed the lowest census class among Athenian citizens, by the constitution of Solon, but also because this word, since Homeric times, has symbolized all those who needed to sell their work<sup>22</sup> to receive a *misthós*, a payment. In classical times, they were employed in the countryside, in the city or as mercenaries (GUÍA, 2015, p. 184), thus forming a class of wage-earners (*misthōtoí*), because either they had no land or the private property they owned was not enough to support them. In this way they were forced to submit to an employer, thus maintaining a relationship much despised by Greek (and aristocratic) thought of freedom and a sense of self-sufficiency<sup>23</sup>, so much so that their work situation brought them closer to slaves<sup>24</sup>, being common to work side by side in the same function (GUÍA, 2015, p. 186-187).

There is, obviously, a distinction between the social status of the slave and the *thés* who needed to sell his work, because the former was obliged, by force, to that relationship for an indefinite period of time, while the latter would have some right to choose, because he could, supposedly, elect to whom he would be submitted. However, the working condition of a *thés* was as harmful as that of a slave, since his status as an employee was considered a service, being able to perform the same task as a *doûlos*, but with a contractual term and conditions defined at least orally. If, legally, one *thés* was still a free citizen, socially, his condition, in practice, was not so different from a slave<sup>25</sup>, because it was a fine line that separated them.

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22 According to GUÍA (2015, p. 185) and NDOYE (1993, p. 268-269).

23 For example, with the platonic critique of the *misthophoría* in *Gorgias* (515e), as well as Aristotle's parallel in *Politics*, 1277a-b, between the function of these wage-earners and the slaves; cf. GUÍA (2015, p. 187).

24 There is even evidence that it would be possible for a slave to hire a *thés* (NDOYE, 1993, p. 263) or even have his citizenship and status as a free man infringed to the point where he could be arrested and killed, without trial, by his boss, for having killed a slave, as appears in Plato's *Euthyphro*, 4c (GUÍA, 2015, p. 186).

25 In ancient Greece there was slavery for debts, where an economically bankrupt citizen became a slave, but with the reform of Solon this had been prohibited, but as GUÍA (2015, p. 190-191) points out, it is possible that in the fourth century the slavery for debts returned, but masked by a "voluntary contract" to be able to break the law.

Due to this social level approximation, it is not difficult to conclude that the education of a *thés* and a slave would, most of the time, be merely an instruction<sup>26</sup> [p. 112] oriented to the technical characteristics required by the function determined by their boss or master. One form of education that the *thêtes* could count on is that analogous to the guilds, the craft corporations of the Middle Ages, because this social class had the predominance of craftsmen, making possible a certain education, the technical teaching being passed on among relatives and even among unrelated people<sup>27</sup>. However, this service specialized in some art or craft, that is, as a *bánausos* at city workshops<sup>28</sup>, was still considered a typical slave<sup>29</sup> work and, therefore, seen as an inferior knowledge. The only real chance for a *thés* to get a better education would be through pederasty, if it aroused the interest of some aristocrat, or if it managed to raise money to pay sophists, which given the kind of work it took on, close to that of a slave, it would be unlikely to earn a salary high enough to be able to afford a lecture or course from some sophist<sup>30</sup>, because as Plato reports, these teachers charged very costly.

The upper class, on the other hand, could obtain a more advanced education through the payment of sophists, a kind of itinerant teachers or lecturers who would attract followers willing to give up a good amount of money to obtain their teachings. Plato is extremely critical of these professionals of education and in his work it is very common to see Socrates fighting with sophists like Hippias, Protagoras or Euthydemus, or even with their pupils. The big question is that, from the Platonic critical view, the sophists do not care about justice and would only hunt wealthy young people through their silver tongue and false wisdom. These wealthy young people were willing to pay something so costly for the reason that Athens had become a city where it was very common to sue or be sued by someone in a court of law. And, as traveling salesman taking goods out of their suitcases, the sophists made exhibitions to attract the interested ones, seeking to sell oratorical and rhetorical techniques to be successful in trials, regardless of whether that knowledge would be used for something good or not.

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26 Many *thêtes* of the 4th century were peasants who had gone bankrupt or lost land in the war (GUÍA, 2015, p. 187) and therefore had the specialized knowledge necessary to maintain agricultural production, in line with the peasant councils that appear in *Works and Days* of Hesiod.

27 An indication of this model of education is the case of Hippocratic medicine, which even though it is not a handicraft, was a technique taught between an experienced doctor and his apprentice, besides the fact that doctors, even without inbred ties, could consider themselves of the same family, nicknamed Asclepiades, in reference to Asclepius, a god of healing.

28 GUÍA (2015, p. 192).

29 GUÍA (2015, p. 193).

30 However, this possibility exists because Anytus' father, the accuser of Socrates, was a *thés* who obtained a fortune as a tanner, a poorly regarded profession that slaves also exercised.

Therefore, the private interest of the sophists, that is, the love of money and fame, was their main impulse. After all, they, as foreigners in Athens, [p. 113] wouldn't have to stay there if they caused damage to the city, that is, if their education created bad citizens, they would just shift locations and move on to another *pólis*.

As was the case throughout Hellas, Athenians could also educate themselves through male homoeroticism, constituting *paideía* relations. If this word means education in a broad sense, it also has a strict meaning which is the relationship between an older man, *erastés* (the lover), and a male adolescent, *erómenos* (the beloved). This relationship was not merely a sexual involvement, as it was accepted by the young man's parents and sanctioned by the city, forming a common mode of transmission of knowledge, especially among the aristocracy. But there was nothing to prohibit relationships between distinct social classes, and it is certain that a poor person, a *thés*, if he were handsome or socially well articulated, could take advantage of the Greek *paideía* to rise in the world, both through political contacts and learning. In general, the only thing that an *erómenos* would have to offer would be its own body and the memory of a jovial beauty, but in return it was expected from the *erastés* that he would help his beloved to socialize in political life or learn some technique, like riding a horse or playing the flute.

### **Plato's reformist proposal**

Plato has a more negative than positive view of this homoerotic procedure of *paideía*. In *Laws* (636c and 836e) he goes so far as to say that it would be a relationship against nature, however, it would be anachronistic to define this attitude of his merely as homophobia, after all, at that time this was not a problem nor did it cause stigma, but mainly because this question is related to the fact that the union between man and woman would, in *Laws*, be primarily within marriage and merely for the purpose of producing children, that is, new bodies for the city. Nevertheless, in *Philebus* 32d it appears that human life is a mixture of pleasure and suffering and that there is no pure life, beyond what in dialogues like *Symposium* or *Phaedrus* it was already possible to see an incipient criticism of the *paideía* (in the homoerotic sense), but still allowing positive readings of it when the experience of *érōs* between the lover and the beloved did not only aim at the pleasure of the body, but the cultivation of the soul.

However, the Plato from *Laws* really intends to end the relationship between *erastés* and *erómenos*, because he refuses body pleasure in favor of a rationalization of [p. 114] reproduction. For the old Plato, sex exists basically to reproduce <sup>31</sup>and this act serves to maintain an optimized number of people necessary for the good functioning of the city. In addition, the *Laws* project includes a revolution in education, for it has a certain embryonic mass teaching, since religious temples would house magistrates responsible, by the State, as to the education of everyone, at their basic level and continuing throughout life, with the excellence of all citizens being sought in rituals and competitions based on the knowledge of both government and religious legislation. The latter is linked to the temple of Delphi, as Plato will make a bridge with it through his priests *exēgētás*, who will deal with the laws of religious order. Soon, the Greek *paideía*, understood as the relationship between an adult man and a young man would lose its function, because the city of Magnesia would no longer have the pleasure of the body nor the need to seek another form of education other than that which the state would already provide.

Criticism of current education is always present throughout Plato's text, but we can detect at least three different perspectives. The first appears immersed in various dialogues, when Socrates debates with some sophist on the question of whether virtue can be taught or not, always ending in aporia. However, in the *Republic* we see something different which is a more systematic proposition for education, but still with an idealistic tenor which in the *Laws* the author tried to remove. In this last book we see Plato discussing legislation, but now in a more concrete way, making suggestions closer to the real and the human possibility. I do not consider these three points of view as an echo of the interpretation of the Platonic texts known as developmentalism, in the sense that gradually the author would be distancing himself from the Socratic influence, because I understand Plato as a very unsystematic thinker who uses these contradictions to stimulate dialectics, discussion and examination of proposals.

In summary, Plato prioritizes the education of the soul, but considers body education necessary, since the body serves the soul and it is from it that human excellence can fully develop<sup>32</sup>. That is why Plato's education, both of the *Republic* and of the *Laws*, combines the education of the body with that of the soul. Unlike Lesbos,

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31 In the *Republic* there is a control of sex among guardians, to avoid cross-breeding between siblings, but sexual activity was kept free if there was no risk of producing children (BARROW, 2012, p. 19).

32 See BARROW, 2012, p. 24.

which prioritized *mousikē*, and Sparta, which praised *gymnastikē*, the cities thought by Plato, the Kallipolis of the *Republic* and the Magnesia of the *Laws*, seek [p. 115] an integral education of their citizens, both by body development and mastery in military techniques as well as in the arts of the Muses, such as music, but also the greatest of all music: philosophy (*Phaedo* 60e-61b).

Training the body together, in close human relationships, and educating oneself from the intellectual point of view, besides to have what it takes to better understand the world in which one lives, creates bonds of cultural belonging. Many of these arts, like the choir, require both the body with dance and the soul with music, inculcating good measure, rhythm and harmony since childhood, assimilating moral ideals as if they were a game. Especially since, in the *Laws*, Plato follows in part the Spartan model and visualizes lunches together beyond religious parties with constant musical competitions as in Athens. All these civic activities require learning and through it the citizen is prepared and moves the life in the city, strengthening friendly relationships and favoring the assimilation of living in community, that is, creating *koinōnía* in a pleasant way and strengthening fraternal ties between fellow citizens.

The main issue with Plato's education is that it is the instrument that good politicians can use to persuade citizens, through legislation, from early childhood, to inculcate in them – and not just train, as some like to criticize – the need to prioritize the common good and justice of the city as a whole. There is a parallel between soul and city, in book IV of the *Republic*, that needs to be remembered, because a city formed by wise, courageous, temperate and prudent people, that is, virtuous and excellent, would reach the maximum perfection possible in the human world. On the other hand, the ones who, like the drones, are only thinking about private interests end up bringing injustice to the whole city as soon as they acquire magistracy and power. Simply because their attitudes in favor of their own personal power are, in fact, small fiefdoms of domination that in the long run are capable of generating internal dissension in the state, leading to the breaking of basic links of cooperation and life in common.

## **Conclusion**

Given that the cultural and temporal differences between the Greek examples and our current society, it is not up to us to just import the solution that was discussed for their world. Making a Brazilian learn to play the lira or to fight *pálē* will not make

us, logically, a better country. But we have the chance to mirror ourselves in Platonic thinking, as it [p. 116] emerged amidst the consequences of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta and of living in tyrannies like that of the Thirty or that of Dionysius in Syracuse. His reflection resisted not only because he was spared of the decomposition material damage of the papyri, but because he was able to identify that communities in ruin experience internal dissension, because they made mistakes in education and did not cultivate the virtues of their inhabitants. In other words, they did not create good citizens, only private beings, mere idiots with incomplete citizenship. They formed individuals who think that everything they could achieve in life, whether success or failure, was the fruit of their own efforts or bad luck and not that their achievements and defeats were influenced by public policies, that is, by political participation and the discussion regarding the ability to think of ways to exercise power with justice, where private interest becomes restricted by the well-being of the community itself.

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