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Defending Education and Scholarship in the Classical Greek Era: Pragmatist Motifs in the Works of Plato (c420-348BCE) and Isocrates (c436-338BCE)

Abstract

As a broader realm of human endeavor and communication, education seems as fundamental as human group life itself. However, liberal education and scholarly ventures are much more problematic and fragile features of community life. Still, a liberal education is not the same as scholarship and some important distinctions are made between these two realms of activity prior to considering the ways in which they are envisioned and defended by two classical Greek authors Plato and Isocrates.

Although both Plato (c420-348BCE) and Isocrates (c436-338BCE) were students of Socrates (c469-399BCE) and share an emphasis on the importance of knowing, their approaches to human knowing and acting are notably different.

Clearly, Plato's depictions of education and scholarship are considerably more extensive and are philosophically as well as theologically more engaging. Likewise, Plato has had vastly more impact on Western social thought than has Isocrates. Still, Isocrates addresses education and scholarship in distinctively more pluralist and humanly engaged terms.

Following an examination of Plato's analysis of education and his defense of scholarship as these are addressed in *Republic*, *Laws*, and *Charmides*, attention is given to Isocrates' defense of educational ventures. Notably, Isocrates defends education and scholarship from the positions that Plato and (his principal spokesperson) Socrates promote, as well as from the ignorance and disregard of the community at large.

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"We are like dwarfs," said Bernard of Chartres [circa 1100CE – RP], "seated on the shoulders of giants. We see more things than the ancients and things more distant, but it is due neither to the sharpness of our sight or the greatness of our stature, it is simply because they have lent to us their own." (Gilson 1950: 425-426).

Despite being of incomparable value for human relations and progress, liberal education and scholarship often are taken for granted where they are not seen as more onerous endeavors in contemporary Western society. Still, these academic ventures are fragile features of community life and require considerable enterprise to ensure their quality and continuity.

As a realm of human endeavor, education is as enduring as is human group life itself. However, liberal education and scholarship have much more problematic and precarious existences.[2]

Notably, thus, while people in all communities place considerable emphases on their members acquiring basic life-skills, developing task-related competencies, fitting in with the social order or conventions of the community, and appreciating entertainment, comparatively less consideration is apt to be given to the matter of insuring that community members acquire more generic (i.e., comprehensive, abstract vs. situated, vocational, or applied) packages of knowledge about the world or embark on the sorts of sustained examinations and analyses of specific kinds of things that one would associate with scholarship.

Relatedly, as well, even where heightened emphases is placed on citizens obtaining general or liberal educations, it should not be assumed that this naturally translates into parallel emphases on one or more realms of scholarship.

This is not to deny that scholarship may, and commonly does, emerge in settings in which there is a substantial, possibly heavy emphasis on teaching. Nor, is it supposed that people's involvements in liberal educations, as instructors or students, stand in opposition to their own scholarship or that the same people may not be involved in education and scholarship. However, the emphasis on teacher and student roles, even when more abstracted materials are featured (vs. the specifics of training programs) and more creative thought is involved, is generally of a different quality than the emphasis on pursuing scholarship of a more sustained sort.

Thus, although all instances of scholarship are embedded within the broader education process, some distinctions are to be made between liberal education programs and scholarship as realms of knowing. The differences reflect (relative) emphases of the following sort.

Those offering liberal education programs generally (a) try to provide information for others rather than questing for new knowledge; (b) accept prevailing notions of knowledge instead of more rigorously examining or scrutinizing these; (c) summarize and illustrate things as opposed to detailing instances and abstracting

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[2]Although people may have differing ideas of what a liberal education may include, Martianus [Felix] Capella, in *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury* (text circa 410-429; Stahl and Johnson trans. 1997), addresses Seven Liberal Arts that would become a mainstay of later Latin European education. These include *Grammar* (speech, letters, reading, writing, understanding, literature, literary criticism, style, poetics), *Dialectic* (or logic, encompassing definition, categorization, reasoning, comparative analysis), *Rhetoric* (persuasive endeavor in all settings, compelling arguments and counterarguments), *Geometry* (measurement, distances, and weights; geographical locations, features, and terrains,), *Arithmetic* (numbers, ratios, geometric proportions, multiplication), *Astronomy* (earthly zones, seasons, solar system, constellations), and *Harmony* (sound, tone, rhythm, musical theory).

more generic essences; (d) emphasize general understandings in place of sustained comparative analyses; and (e) signify or objectify practices and contents of instruction instead of delineating variants and analyzing the results of divisions and combinations of aspects of the subject matters at hand.

Still, some important similarities or more generic emphases exist between standardized liberal educations and scholarship. Thus, while liberal educations are intended to encourage a wider awareness and understandings of things than people might otherwise attain, both liberal educations and more focused instances of scholarship generally encourage learning through the development of (a) extended vocabularies of words (and concepts) and (b) enhanced memories (and deliberative recollection).

Likewise, those involved in liberal education as well as scholarship both (c) place some emphases on participants attending to instances, distinctions, comparisons, and generals, as well as matters of variations, association, causality, agency, and process; and (d) utilize an assortment of embedded technologies or packages of resources and practices such as illustrations, models, alphabets, numbers, and texts to enable learning by participants in the settings at hand.

However, whereas those teaching in liberal education programs are often content when students approximate standardized sets of curriculum materials, *those engaged in scholarship* may be seen to push learning (as in vocabularies, memories, analysis, and the development of technologies or enabling devices) beyond the presently known limits.

Further, in contrast to those primarily involved in offering instruction in liberal education contexts, *those engaged in scholarship also* assume the tasks of (a) maintaining contact with and learning from others who are embarked on similar realms of study, (b) developing more adequate techniques for studying their subject matter, (c) finding ways of recording, accumulating, comparing, and assessing the outcomes of their inquiries, (d) obtaining funding for studies that are generally thought to be of marginal interest to the community at large, and (e) sharing the results of their scholarship with others.

As well, although some instances of scholarship may be achieved by people working on a part-time basis, more substantial accomplishment appears contingent not only on (f) people centering their activities around particular fields of inquiry, but also (g) having access to a community of others who are engaged in similar, intensely-focused pursuits, amidst (h) visions of longer term involvements and opportunities to continue studies in those areas of inquiry.

While building on people's generalized capacities for, and intrigues with, curiosity, scholarship entails much more than the isolated efforts of individuals to examine some phenomenon. Indeed, if it is to achieve any viability in the community, scholarship has to take place in a group context and has to be pursued over a more extended time-frame. The realms of scholarship that people engage may be limited only by the boundaries of human consciousness, but *scholarship* revolves around shorter and longer-term instances of *collective enterprise*.

Notably, too, whereas the agenda for a liberal education is normally set at the outset and progress may be gauged by assessing student familiarity with a defined field of knowledge, scholarship is characterized by (i) more ambiguous ventures of exploration, inspection, and the analysis of things that are more or less continuously in the state of "becoming known."

Relatedly, whereas progress in formalized educational settings is apt to be gauged by means of standardized indicators such as the outcomes of tests taken within pre-established time-frames, progress in scholarly fields is often not realized

for extended time-periods and, even then, the results of scholarship often become blended into other features of community life (as in formal education, technology, and life-style changes). As well, because the products of scholarship often are readily absorbed into other community arenas, scholarship is destined to remain a more marginal status of affairs and to appear of uncertain value to those who insist on concrete applications and results.

Further, while virtually everyone who has experienced a liberal education of some sort may claim some familiarity with a much broader array of material, scholarship assumes a much more exclusive or esoteric quality with respect to members of the general community. Most citizens, thus, lack viable reference points from which to comprehend and assess progress in areas that are notably removed both from their (more limited) educational backgrounds and their current theaters of operation.

Examining, Not Defending Scholarship

Although highly attentive to the value of scholarship as a comparatively generic human pursuit, the present statement is not written to justify or defend scholarship in any direct sense. Instead, it is part of a larger project that *examines the ways* in which various realms of scholarship *have been sustained* amidst the great many obstacles that communities of scholars have experienced over the millennia.[3]

While focusing more specifically on pragmatist approaches to human knowing and acting, the study of the ways that people make sense of and act toward the world cannot be understood without considering the broader array of stances that people may take toward the world and, relatedly, the explanations that they develop to account for the things to which they attend.

Accordingly, the project at hand represents an instance of the *sociology of knowledge* in the most fundamental terms. It is a study of *human knowing and acting* that focuses on academics and others who *have been more directly involved in the study of human knowing and acting*. Given these emphases, the present project is notably reflexive or "mirror-like" in its essence.

At the same time, this statement has a more enabling quality. Thus, the inquiry into scholarship as a realm of human endeavor not only (a) sheds light on more focused arenas of abstract inquiry, but it also (b) provides a highly instructive avenue for understanding the broader educational process that stands at the foundations of contemporary human community life. Further, because this inquiry attends to

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[3]The Greek project, as I sometimes label it, refers to my attempts to trace the developmental flows of the study and analysis of human knowing and acting from the classical Greek era (circa 700-300BCE) to the present time. Although this project began somewhat inadvertently as I examined Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the process of pursuing library materials on "power as a socially accomplished process" (Prus 1999), I was struck by the affinities of Aristotle's texts with the American pragmatist tradition and, especially its sociological extension, symbolic interactionism. Building on pragmatist philosophy, the ethnographic research tradition, and the comparative analytic approach associated with Chicago-style symbolic interactionism, I became more involved in following the development of Western social thought over the millennia. This took me into several, interconnected areas of community life, including rhetoric, religion, education and scholarship, history, politics, philosophy, friendship and love, and poetics (entertainment). For an overview of the broader project I have been pursuing, see Prus (2004). Some related materials developed from this project that trace aspects of the study of human knowing and acting from the classical Greek era to the present time can be found in Prus (2003a, 2006, 2007a,b,d, 2008a,b,c, 2009a,b, 2010). Readers also may refer to Kleinknecht (2007) for an interim account of my experiences with the Greek project and my work more generally.

education and scholarship as realms of group life "in the making," it also (c) enables social scientists to consider, in parallel terms, the ways that other aspects of Western social thought (e.g., rhetoric, poetics, religious studies, political theory) have taken shape.

Since all human activity is contextually (and temporally) situated, instances of scholarship are inevitably located within particular cultural-historical eras. Likewise, people may take all manners of events, circumstances, and things into account in developing their activities. However, the human community does not consist of a mass of factors, forces, or variables that somehow combine to produce a certain human life world. Thus, rather than revert to the typically vague sets of social forces, factors, or historical epochs that are sometimes said to shape scholarship or other realms of human group life, this statement considers *the processes of human interchange* that characterize community life in the making.

Whereas people act within obdurate realities of various sorts (Blumer 1969; Prus and Dawson 1996) that limit and resist, as well as enable human knowing and acting,[4] *it is people*, rather than inanimate objects or analytic concepts, who *act* in meaningful terms.

Thus, rather than envision scholarship as the result of various social and psychological factors that are presumed to intersect at this and that time, this project examines human knowing and acting in more direct, *agency-based* terms.

Because scholarship is constituted or achieves its essence through emergent and adjustive sets of human *activities* (and interchanges), those involved in scholarship (like people involved in other realms of human culture), may be expected embody the *full range of human association*.

This would include, for instance, matters of cooperation, sharing, competition, conflict, compromise, coalitions, friendship, animosity, deception, deviance, and disregard. Scholarship, thus, is contingent on the broader human capacity for activity (that may be directed toward any objective that the people involved may envision as appropriate) and meaningful human interchange.

In sum, although scholarship often seems removed from the more common activities of the community and has been notably uneven in its development over recorded history, scholarship is best understood as somewhat focused but precarious instances of activities that are developed within, as components of, a broader *community process*.

As well, by studying education and scholarship as realms of collective endeavor that have taken a variety of shapes and durations over the millennia, analysts may be better able to appreciate the ways in which particular historical eras may be understood as vast complexes of humanly constituted events.[5]

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[4] While developed in more detail in Prus and Dawson (1996), the following extract from that statement provides an overview of the notion of obdurate reality as envisioned herein: *The obdurateness of reality exists in the irreducibility of intersubjectivity for the human condition. This is rooted in a pragmatic appreciation of: (1) the most basic resistances to human action experienced daily in the material and the social environments of the human struggle for existence, (2) the objectifying nature of being human, (3) the resultant phenomenon of "culturally motivated resistances" stemming from the ongoing and group nature of human life, and (4) the rudimentary and universal social processes undergirding the ongoing accomplishment of human group life. These four modes or realms of experienced intersubjectivity are interrelated, and each depends on the other for a fuller or more holistic appreciation of its significance* (Prus and Dawson 1996: 246)*.

[5] This approach to education and scholarship (i.e., as connoting socially constructed realms of activity) does not deny the importance of human involvements in political, military, marketplace, religious, or (even) entertainment arenas for the development of education and scholarship. However, it is essential to (a) recognize that each of these other aspects of community life also represent *socially*

As the subsequent consideration of classical Greek scholarship indicates, the separations of, and tensions between, standardized education and scholarship are *not* matters unique to contemporary society. Not only do divisions of these sorts have a much more enduring essence but they seem likely to continue through the ages.

Setting the Agenda

As an extension of pragmatist philosophy, the interactionist approach taken here considers the ways in which people make sense of and act toward the particular instances in which they encounter things.[6] While focusing more specifically on education and scholarship, the present analysis considers group life in process terms, as a phenomenon that is more or less continuously "in the making."

Approaching education in process terms, the emphasis is on the ways that various authors attend to liberal education and scholarship rather than attempting to define the directions that any instances of education or scholarship should assume. Thus, there is no attempt to judge the morality (as in praise or blame) of the positions that various authors develop, nor is there an attempt to prescribe or shape policy pertaining to these matters.

Instead, the emphasis is on examining the ways in which various Western scholars have addressed matters of (liberal) education and scholarship over the millennia. Because we cannot consider all of those who have addressed education and scholarship over the years, particular attention will be given to those who deal with one or both of these topics more explicitly in humanly engaged (vs. moralist or prescriptive) terms.

Although it should not be assumed that the texts and analyses developed by later scholars are more astute than those that precede them, the material presented here has been given a historical flow. This way, readers may more readily appreciate the development of Western social thought, not just with respect to "the defense of education and scholarship" more specifically but also with regard to the development of scholarship more generally. Indeed, most of the people referenced here have contributed to scholarship in terms that go well beyond our immediate emphasis.

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constituted realms of activity, and (b) consider the *interlinkages of the people* involved in these other arenas of human group life with those who are more directly involved in education and scholarship.

[6] This statement builds on the symbolic interactionist tradition developed by George Herbert Mead (1934), Herbert Blumer (1969), and others working in this sociological extension of pragmatist philosophy (for overviews of these materials, see Strauss 1993; Prus 1996, 1997, 1999 and Prus and Grills 2003). Briefly expressed, symbolic interactionist theory may be characterized by the following premises: Human group life is (1) *intersubjective* (is contingent on community-based, linguistic interchange); (2) *knowingly problematic* (with respect to "the known" and "the unknown"); (3) *object-oriented* (wherein things constitute the contextual and operational essence of the humanly known environment); (4) *multiperspectival* (as in viewpoints, conceptual frameworks, or notions of reality); (5) *reflective* (minded, purposive, deliberative); (6) *sensory / embodied and (knowingly) materialized* (acknowledging human capacities for stimulation, activity, and memory as well as practical [enacted, embodied] human limitations and fragilities); (7) *activity-based* (as implied in the formulative (engaging) process of people doing things with respect to objects); (8) negotiable (whereby people may anticipate, influence and resist others); (9) *relational* (denoting particular bonds or affiliations); and (10) *processual* (as in emergent, ongoing, or temporally developed).

Greek Roots

As Plato, Aristotle, and other scholars from the classical Greek (c700-300BCE) sometimes acknowledge in their texts, Greek scholarship did not develop as an entity unto itself but reflects a variety of contacts that the Greeks had with others in the Mediterranean arena (most notably, perhaps, the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, and the Sicilians).

Nevertheless, because the early Greeks (a) developed a sophisticated analytical language, (b) articulated a compact and highly enabling phonetic alphabet,[7] (c) engaged in extended realms of scholarly interchange, and (d) developed, preserved, and collected extended written texts, the early (classical) Greeks represent a viable starting point for the present analysis.

Traversing an extended set of life-world arenas, participants, viewpoints and activities, Greek scholarship is far from one thing. Relatedly, Greek scholarship may be traced back to the poets (Homer and Hesiod), the sophists and rhetoricians (Protagoras, Gorgias), the philosopher theologians (Pythagoras, Socrates), the philosopher scientists (Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Democritus), and the historians (Herodotus, Thucydides). Still, the present statement focuses more directly on the works of Plato (c420-348BCE) and Isocrates (c436-338BCE). While Aristotle's (c384-322BCE) works are central to the larger study of education and scholarship, they are so extensive that they require consideration on their own. Nevertheless, it might be observed that Isocrates' defense of scholarship in many ways resonates with Aristotle's emphasis on the importance of attending to the humanly known sensate world in pluralist, pragmatist terms.

Given the remarkable intellectual scope, depth, and detail that these scholars achieve in their texts, readers are cautioned that the present statement is notably limited with respect to the larger corpus of their works. However, in tracing the "defense of education and scholarship" over the millennia, Plato and Isocrates provide a particularly instructive starting point.

Plato's Defense of Scholarship

Plato often is envisioned as an idealist whose claims to pure knowledge or truth are to be verified only through access to a divine as opposed to a humanly known world. However, most of Plato's texts also may be seen as educational messages intended to enable knowing and acting in the humanly engaged world.

Thus, while certain of Plato's texts are clearly theological in emphases (e.g., *Phaedo*, *Timaeus*) and many have pronounced moral or virtuous messages (see *Socrates' Defense*, *Crito*, *Gorgias*, *Meno, Protagoras*), Plato offers much insight into education as a social process and into scholarship as denoting more specialized instances of knowing in many of his writings (especially *Republic*, *Laws*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Phaedrus*).

Somewhat ironically, too, while Plato's speakers often insist that the ultimate form of knowing is associated with divine knowledge, Plato also considers the *problematic*, *engaged*, and *relativist* nature of human knowing at some length. Still, Plato generally prioritizes Pythagorean (via Socrates) notions of divine reality,

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[7] The Greek alphabet, much like its (later) Latin relative, enables authors to communicate with others by representing the sounds associated with words. Thus, text based on a phonetic alphabet can be used to signify or represent speech (i.e., words) in much more direct, precise, and concise manners than pictographs, signs, and other expressive markings.

individual virtue, social order, and dialectic reasoning over knowledge of the sensate or humanly experienced world.[8] Notably, too, Plato exempts Pythagorean and Socratic theology from the same dialectic scrutiny or skepticist inquiry that he applies to other aspects of human knowing.

Whereas virtually all of Plato's texts appear to have been intended as instructional devices and represent an incredible set of scholarly ventures unto themselves, it may be helpful to delineate four major themes or emphases in Plato's texts. These revolve around the matters of: *pursuing theology*; *attending to virtue*; *preserving the state*; *and achieving scholarly*, *dialectically-enabled knowing.*

These themes overlap in various ways in Plato's writings (especially in *Republic* and *Laws*), but they connote consequential *intellectual tensions* in many of Plato's writings and complicate attempts to engage Plato's texts in more focused terms. Thus, whereas the present analysis deals most fundamentally with matters of liberal education and scholarship, some consideration of fundamental life-skills, theology, and virtue as well as matters of state is inevitable.

Readers familiar with the larger corpus of Plato's works also will recognize that it is not possible to give Plato's works on liberal education and scholarship the attention that they deserve within the confines of a statement such as this. More modestly, the objective is to acknowledge some of the major themes in Plato's writings that pertain to human knowing and acting so that readers more generally might better appreciate the enabling features of Plato's texts.

In what follows, I will be using *Republic* as the primary base for Plato's position on scholarship, supplementing this with material from *Laws* and *Charmides*. Several of Plato's other writings could have been included (e.g., *Cratylus*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Phaedrus*, *Parmenides*, and *Philebus*) but the texts considered here should provide a viable introduction to Plato's thought on matters of scholarship and education.

Plato's Republic[9]

Plato's *Republic* may be best known as a treatise in political science, but as a remarkably comprehensive statement on community life it is relevant to a great many disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

Thus, while seemingly embarking on his consideration of an ideal state as part of his quest to come to terms with the concept of *justice* within the human community, Plato's *Republic* also represents a highly instructive statement on education and scholarship.

Further, whereas Socrates (the preeminent speaker in *Republic*) directly acknowledges the idealist nature of the state he proposes (and stipulates various limitations thereof), the dialogue developed within *Republic* is pursued in comparative terms. Therefore, the speakers reference wide ranges of situations, matters,

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[8] Plato's (generally principal) spokesperson Socrates (see *Cratylus:* 386d-387a) is directly opposed to Protagoras' claim that "man is the measure" of all things known. Thus, in many of Plato's dialogues, Socrates insists on the overarching truth of the divine reality. However, while fostering a position of totalizing skepticism pertaining to the nature of human knowing, Socrates and other of Plato's speakers often adopt positions that acknowledge pragmatist relativism in human viewpoints and practices.
[9] I found Benjamin Jowett's (1937) translation of Plato's *Republic* particularly valuable in developing this statement, but also am grateful to Paul Shorey's (Hamilton and Cairns 1961) and G.M.A. Grube's (Cooper 1997) translations of *Republic*.

participants and practices that one might encounter within actual human communities. In this sense, *Republic* has a powerful authentic and generic or transsituational and transhistorical quality.

Republic focuses on the quest for and problematics of *social order* of the city-state. While attending to the *foundations of the state* (as in its initial assembly, and considerations of a division of labor, cooperation, trade, government, and foreign affairs), *Republic* also deals at some length with the *education* of the citizens. This takes the dialogue into the matters of politics, leadership (guardians), family life, religion, military ventures, occupational pursuits, virtue, and entertainment, as well as more specific notions of philosophy and dialectics. Plato develops another extended statement on the state entitled *Laws*, but (the earlier) *Republic* represents a very viable point of departure.

Although Plato acknowledges the importance of a general education for the citizens at large in *Republic*, he is particularly attentive to the education of those who would eventually assume roles as *guardians* or leaders of the city-states.

Plato is not entirely clear on how the chosen few (elite) would assume roles as guardians, but he places heavy emphasis on quality. He intends that these people be prepared for, and selected to assume, these roles in manners that would maximize their physical and mental potentialities.

Relatedly, he stresses the importance of *developing* guardians who are strong and courageous but with temperate dispositions. He also intends to *insure* that the guardians acquire extended levels of knowledge and wisdom, social competencies, notions of justice and virtue, and capacities for superior judgment in all matters.

Above all, however, the guardians are to be *devoted* to the service of the state in the most focused, balanced, and enduring of ways. The role of guardian is not envisioned as a partial role (other than for those who are rejected along the way), but constitutes a selective, *totalizing* life-world involvement.

It is in this context, as well, that Plato's notion of *the Philosopher-King* evolves (even though his analysis clearly indicates that multiple guardians, male and female, simultaneously may fill these elite roles in the ideal state).

While there are many things in *Republic* that pertain to people's education generally and to the education of the guardians more specifically, it is Plato's considerations of (a) philosophy and (b) dialectics that most pertain to a *defense of scholarship*. Still, as the text is developed, it is apparent that Plato's defense of scholarship also takes him into considerations of (c) poetics or fictionalized representations of things and (d) sophism and popular realms of education. Each of these will be dealt with, in turn, beginning with philosophy. While attending to the four preceding topics, I have maintained the overall flow of this section of Plato's *Republic*.

On Philosophy

With Socrates as the primary speaker, Plato addresses philosophy most directly in Book VI (484-500) of *Republic*. Denoting those who are embarked on an unending quest for the truth, Socrates characterizes *philosophers* (VI: 485-487) as people who not only have enduring and intense curiosities for knowledge, but who also possess temperate and studious dispositions, good memories, quick minds, and strong senses of justice.

Subsequently, in responding to another speaker (Adeimantis [*Republic*, VI: 487]) who not only criticizes Socrates' method of analyses, but also and yet more centrally describes the *public view of philosophers as rogues or useless members of*

the community, Socrates launches into what represents an early and highly instructive *defense of scholarship*.

Interestingly, Socrates begins by observing that public opinion on this matter is reasonably accurate. Still, Socrates (*Republic*, VI: 489) notes, the uselessness of philosophers reflects the *general reluctance* of people in the community to make use of philosophers; their hesitations to consult more extensively with philosophers on matters of knowing and acting.

Ironically, too, Socrates suggests the major source of public disaffection with philosophers may be attributable to the larger *corpus of philosophers* themselves, for failing to achieve and sustain philosophic ideals. Indeed, given the qualities that he had earlier assigned to philosophers (see *Republic*, VI: 485-487), Socrates states that it may be possible for only a few people to realize these states of relative perfection.

Socrates (*Republic*, VI: 491) subsequently proceeds to address some of the *practical*, *worldly limitations* associated with people's pursuits of a contemplative or philosophic life-style. First, he notes that some other qualities or abilities that people possess, while not undesirable in themselves, may take promising individuals away from philosophic endeavors. Some other viable candidates may be diverted from the study of philosophy by attending to matters of wealth, position, or obligations of state. As well, some scholars may experience disabling injuries or other physical limitations that preclude more intensive study.

Still, Socrates observes, philosophers also face *the resistance of public opinion*. This, he notes, may lead even the most dedicated scholars away from philosophy as an ongoing quest for the truth. On this note, Socrates (*Republic*, VI: 492) openly laments the effect of the easily distracted and less informed public on the philosophic tradition.

One result of this state of affairs, Socrates (*Republic*, VI: 493) continues, is reflected in the practices of the *sophists*. Contending that the sophists (people offering wisdom as educators for fees) teach nothing other than what is desired in the public market, Socrates envisions sophist wisdom as defined (and constrained) by uninformed commercial interests. In this way, philosophy proper becomes silenced and is replaced by less viable or lower quality educational matters that cater to popular demands or intrigues.

Another common element contributing to less adequate philosophers, Socrates (*Republic*, VI: 494) notes, is the tendency for educators to *flatter* or puff the self-images of those who seem especially gifted as youngsters. Insofar as they come to accept these endorsements as genuine, many of the more promising students *presumptuously believe* that they are ready to assume all manners of leadership roles and resent those who may attempt to tell them otherwise. Further, even if some of these people are receptive to careful, extended study, they are apt to encounter *resistance from friends* who desire their companionship in other ways.

Relatedly, Socrates observes, the same qualities that might enable someone to become a capable philosopher would serve the person in a wide variety of *other realms of endeavor* (good or evil). Shifting the focus a bit, Socrates (*Republic*, VI: 495-496) also notes that *not all of those drawn to philosophy* as a realm of inquiry are among the best suited to sustain or represent philosophy.

Perhaps more consequentially still, Socrates (*Republic*, VI: 496-497) explains, even the very best and most sincere of philosophers have to contend with the general public and their *disregard of, and resistance to*, scholarly matters. This is compounded by the more general *lack of state support* for dedicated scholarship.

Socrates (*Republic*, VI: 498) subsequently notes that students of philosophy are generally quite young and have not yet managed households or embarked on career occupations. Accordingly, they tend to pursue the study of philosophy in more *superficial* terms rather than with the sorts of highly intense and sustained involvements of seasoned scholars. As well, the exposure of these younger scholars to genuine philosophers, especially of a more virtuous sort (*Republic*, VI: 500) is apt to be very limited. Here, Socrates begins to argue for a more divinely inspired (theological) philosophy, but then returns to his earlier emphasis on developing guardians who are philosophers (VI: 503-504).

A little later, Socrates (VI: 513) distinguishes *four capacities of the soul* (i.e., *psyche* [Gk]; mind): reasoning, understanding, faith, and perception of sensation. He will use these as a base for embarking on a further consideration of scholarship.

Book VII of *Republic* begins with Socrates (514-19) relating what has become known as *the allegory of the cave*. Here, Socrates considers some notions of reality that may be developed by a confined group of cave dwellers. Occupying a restricted position, wherein they are exposed to shadows from a fire that they see on the walls of the cave, Socrates attends to the version of the world that these people might develop through their sensations with, and collective interpretations of, the shadows on the cave wall.

Supposing that some of these cave prisoners subsequently were to experience the outside light, Socrates asks if these individuals would not at first interpret the sensations of the outside light in terms of their earlier notions of [cave] reality. Observing that people define realities by virtue of the sensations they experience in conjunction with their associates, and yet also assess the adequacy of older viewpoints in terms of their encounters with new things, Socrates asks about the subsequent or ensuing viewpoints of the cave dwellers who venture into the light.

Socrates expects that they would develop different notions of reality as they consider their newer sets of sensations over time. If these people were to return to the other prisoners in the cave, Socrates also anticipates that those who had ventured into the outside light would encounter resistance and disaffection from their former companions (the cave dwellers) who, not being able to comprehend the sensations and images of the outside light, would continue to insist on the authenticity of the [cave] reality that they know.

Likening philosophers to those few cave dwellers who subsequently become exposed to the light, Socrates says that *it is not enough for philosophers* merely to be enlightened and leave their former life-worlds behind. Instead, Socrates insists that those who receive philosophic training should *re-engage humanly known and enacted* life-worlds if they are to be of service to their community.

Still, Socrates does not intend to impose freshly trained philosophers on the community. Thus, he contends that philosophers should be willing but *not eager* to assume leadership positions. Likewise, they should assist the state through senses of gratitude and devotion rather than for financial or other kinds of personal gain.

[Following a broader commentary on education, Socrates will return more directly to philosophic pursuits when he begins to address dialectic reasoning with respect to the education of the guardians. As also will become evident, anyone who is not a capable dialectician would not be considered a philosopher in Plato's terms.]

Attending to the excellence of mind associated with the education of the guardians, Socrates (*Republic*, VII: 521) steps back to consider the early education of the prospective guardians. Here, Socrates says that gymnastics and music (includes literature) should provide the basis of the primary education wherein

physical capacities and an appreciation of harmony (as in symmetry, balance, fairness) receive particular attention.

This is to be followed by the study of mathematics (as in arithmetic and geometry). Mathematics, Socrates (*Republic*, VII: 522-530) contends, aids in the systematic ordering of people's sensate experiences and the accomplishment of all manners of practical affairs. It also fosters the development of abstract thinking, quickness of the mind, scientific thinking and a greater appreciation of the truth.

On Dialectics

After stipulating that skilled mathematicians are not to be confused with dialecticians, Socrates (*Republic*, VII: 532-534) examines the *dialectic* in more direct philosophic terms.

Socrates begins by defining the dialectic as the discovery of the absolute on the basis of pure reasoning, without regard for the senses. Subsequently, however, *he readjusts this definition* to refer to people who attain carefully reasoned, abstract conceptions of the essences of things. Accordingly, Socrates argues, dialectic reasoning is *central* to the development of all the sciences.

Continuing in this vein, Socrates (*Republic*, VII: 535-536) considers the qualities of a good dialectician. In addition to courage, fairness, and an even disposition, Socrates stresses a capacity for understanding, dedication to study, a good memory, and an emphasis on (dispassionately) discerning the truth.

Socrates (*Republic*, VII: 536-537) also envisions the development of a dialectician to be a long-term process. After pursuing an education that results in people developing an extended familiarity with *the full range of the sciences* by about 30 years of age, the most capable of these scholars may then be selected for the study of dialectic reasoning.

Still, Socrates (*Republic*, VII: 537-540) cautions, the study of dialectic reasoning represents a source of considerable risk. Because of the *extreme relativism* that the dialectic fosters, people who are exposed to dialectic procedures often begin to question all matters of social (and moral) order. As a result, they may become so *intrigued by dialectic skepticism* that they begin to challenge, denigrate, and disregard all manners of thought, convention, religion, and law.

For this reason, Socrates insists (*Republic*, VII: 539-540) that *after* they have studied dialectics for five years (and are now about 35 years of age), students of philosophy (like the enlightened cave dwellers) are to be compelled to assume military or other offices. This is to be done so that they might obtain a fuller, more adequate *stock of experiences* with which to appreciate human affairs.

Only after holding office for fifteen years, Socrates says, would these people (now about 50 years of age) be qualified to *re-engage philosophy* in a more comprehensive, full-time sense (albeit possibly amidst holding other political offices; ideally, as a philosopher-guardian).

In addition to the materials that provide defenses of scholarship (as in qualities, tasks, limitations, obstacles) in *Republic*, Plato also introduces some materials that may be seen to represent *defenses of scholarship against pretentious representations*. Especially noteworthy in this regard are Plato's considerations of the activities of poets and sophists.

On Poetic Representation

Although Plato's criticisms of *poets* are not limited to *Republic* (also see *Ion*, *Laws*), Plato deems it necessary to defend education (and the state) from poets because of their irresponsible, distracting, and disruptive fictionalized representations of things. Thus, with Socrates as his principal speaker, Plato (*Republic*, III: 377-398; X: 595-608) addresses what he considers the dangers and follies of poetics at some length.

Focusing on poetic representations of the affairs of gods and people, Socrates (*Republic*, III: 377-394) observes that the poets foster all sorts of undesirable images of godly behaviors, intentions, and qualities. These fictions, he contends, not only falsely represent the true God, but in their depictions of mythical gods, the poets also are apt to have a particularly corruptive effect on young people who would have much more difficulty comprehending the fictional and irresponsible nature of poetic representations.

Likewise, Socrates is displeased with the poetic representation of human affairs. Not only are people shown to act in disreputable terms, but bad people and matters of greed, deception, and injustice often also are allowed to prevail over good people as well as virtue, truth, and justice. Such things, Socrates argues, represent a great disservice to all members and realms of community life.

In quite direct terms, Socrates (*Republic*, X: 595) later argues that poetic imitations ruin people's minds. Citing Homer as the great teacher of the art of poetics, Socrates emphasizes the shallow artificiality of poetic representations, the deceptive quality of these materials, and the tendencies of poets to encourage generalized buffoonery and irresponsibility on the part of the citizenry at large.

At the same time, Socrates (*Republic*, X: 607) acknowledges the charming or appealing features of poetic representation and says that he would welcome those poets who (consistently) would develop materials that serve the interests of the state

On the Sophists

While Socrates and Plato might be identified among the sophists (from *sophia* or wisdom) or educators of the classical era, Plato (with Socrates as his primary spokesperson) explicitly describes the *sophists* as amoral, intellectual charlatans. By contrast, Plato reserves the term "philosopher" for those who more virtuously and dialectically quest for truth (and, relatedly, morality and divinity).

Plato's critiques of the *sophists* are considerably less forceful and extensive in *Republic* (VI: 492-494) than in some of his other statements (see *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Protagoras*), but even in *Republic*, Socrates (as Plato's primary spokesperson; see *Republic*, VI: 493) describes these "educators" as paying more attention to the demands and intrigues of the consuming public than pursuing scholarship in more informed and sustained manners.

Relatedly, Socrates is critical of the generalized disregard of and resistance to scholarship that one encounters among the general public (*Republic*, VI: 489-492). In substantial part, Socrates attributes this to (a) to the distractions of those (poets) embarked in providing entertainment at the cost of sensibility and (b) the misguided practices of those who purport to educate but instead appeal to, and are guided by, popular sentiments. As Socrates makes the case, scholarship is to be defended from irresponsible representation by both poetic and sophist sources.

Plato's *Laws*[10]

Like his earlier text, *Republic*, Plato's *Laws* represents another attempt to establish a viable model of a community life in which justice is the central emphasis. Like its better-known predecessor as well, Plato's *Laws* is a highly articulated and remarkably instructive depiction of human group life. Still, some noteworthy differences exist between the two texts.

In contrast to *Republic*, wherein Plato's ideal state would be managed by philosopher-kings whose background training would prepare them to make decisions of a wise, just, effective, and (state) benevolent nature, *Laws* concentrates on the articulation of a management system that is guided by a centralized constitution and a highly developed legal code.

In this (second) ideal state, leaders are to act in wise, judicious, and effective ways, mindful of the interests of state and divine wisdom, but this second set of leaders also is to operate within more constricted realms of autonomy.

Plato's concerns with education and virtue also shift somewhat as well. While accepting or presuming much of the early material in *Republic*, the educational emphasis in *Laws* is on a program that more thoroughly prepares citizens and leaders for the formally regulated life-styles associated with an extended legal constitution.

Scholarship and personal virtue are still important, but assume somewhat more muted dimensions amidst the more fundamental quest for conformity, focused cooperation, and centralized devotion to the state.

It also should be observed that although this statement focuses most directly on things readily defined as "education," the entire volume of *Laws* may be seen as addressing matters of human knowing and acting in one or other ways. Thus, in addition to matters of formal education, the topics of government, deviance, religion, and poetics also receive considerable attention in *Laws*.

As well, it should be emphasized at the outset that education is *not* one thing for Plato in *Laws*. Education may denote a focal point of sorts, but variously it is: (1) an essential resource or instrument for individual development and the maintenance of the state; (2) a multiplistic activity or process; and (3) the object of moral direction, planning, legislation, and regulation. Relatedly, for Plato's speakers, (4) education cuts across virtually every sector of community life.

Accordingly, Plato attends to the most basic of human experiences on the part of children as well as the development of people's personal and task-related capacities. But he also is acutely concerned about maintaining the state, promoting civic virtue, and encouraging theological devotion. As well, Plato's speakers focus on the tasks of preventing, as well as regulating, trouble and monitoring those who are in charge of regulatory matters (i.e., regulating the regulators).

In addition to articulating legal codes, educational agendas, and other directions for citizens and others in the state, *Laws* also attempts to identify, neutralize, and eliminate distractions and corruptive elements within the community.

Unlike *Republic*, in which Socrates is identified as the principal speaker, *Laws* is developed around a dialogue involving three speakers from different parts of Greece (i.e., an Athenian Stranger, a Cretan named Cleinias, and a Lacedaemonian [Spartan] named Megillus). In the course of developing this text, these three

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[10] While centrally indebted to Benjamin Jowett's (1937) translation of *Laws*, I also found A.E. Taylor's (Hamilton and Cairns 1961) and Trevor J. Saunders' (Cooper 1997) translations very helpful.

speakers not only reference a wide range of matters in their own states, but also discuss practices in other Greek and nonGreek states.

Thus, while the dialogue develops the around the formation of an ideal or hypothetical state (*Magnesia*; as in magnet), a great deal of the material introduced in *Laws* not only has a remarkably authentic quality, but it also provides some highly instructive, comparative analysis pertaining to education and other affairs of state. Accordingly, as with *Republic*, *Laws* readily lends itself to a broad array of generic, transhistorical considerations of human activities.

In what follows, I have tried to maintain the sequential flow of materials developed in *Laws* as these pertain more directly to education. Given the conversational directions of the dialogue, readers may anticipate that the materials on education are as not tightly organized or systematically packaged as might seem ideal.

To highlight topics for readers, I have introduced some headings and italicized some terms of reference. Still, by maintaining the flow of *Laws*, readers may be better able to locate particular sections of the text for closer study and may better appreciate the way this text was crafted.

While summarizing this material for readers in some respects, this statement is intended to assist readers in contextualizing, locating, and using the materials embedded in *Laws* for subsequent comparative analysis.

Still, readers should be cautioned that Plato's consideration of education in *Laws* is notably different from that which he presents in *Republic*.

Thus, whereas Plato still stresses the importance of education in *Laws*, Plato's emphases on maintaining the state, the legal system, and the religious order clearly dominate any concerns with scholarship. Likewise, while *Republic* provides a more concerted defense of scholarship in the midst of developing and sustaining a political order, *Laws* represents a more comprehensive attempt to sustain the state while consolidating and improving the civil and religious orders of the state through a notably enhanced legal system.

On Education

One of Plato's first references to education in *Laws* is developed mindfully of people's behaviors while drinking. Although the consumption of alcohol may seem somewhat peripheral to education, Plato has a much broader sense of education. Envisioning drinking as but one context in which people learn about group life and learn to manage their activities and sensibilities, Plato goes on to discuss the importance of both self control and social regulation in community life (*Laws*, I: 641).

Then, commenting on the *centrality of effective management* for a wider range of matters pertaining to the state and the military, Plato says that *education* makes a man good and that good people are able to act nobly and, thus, achieve victory over their enemies. Still, this consideration of management and the preservation of state is but a small part of his fuller discussion of education.

The following extract centrally addresses the importance of *early preparation* for later life tasks:

> [Athenian:] According to my view, anyone who would be good at anything must practice that thing from his youth upwards, both in sport and earnest, in its several branches: for example, he who is to be a good builder, should play at building children's houses; He who is to be a good husbandman, at tilling the ground; and those who have the care of their education should provide them when young with mimic tools. They should learn beforehand the knowledge which they

will afterwards require for their art. For example, the future carpenter should learn to measure or apply the line in play; and the future warrior should learn riding, or some other exercise, for amusement, and the teacher should endeavor to direct the children's inclinations and pleasures, by the help of amusements, to their final aim in life. The most important part of education is right training in the nursery. The soul of the child in this play should be guided to the love of that sort of excellence in which when he grows up to manhood he will have perfected. (Plato, Laws, I: 643; Jowett trans.)[11]

While the Athenian (principal speaker throughout) (*Laws*, I: 643-644) says that he prefers to reserve the term education more specifically for matters of virtue, he soon relinquishes this position. Thus, he and the others examine education on a much broader plane as the text unfolds.

Attending to the matters of "correct training" (*Laws*, II: 653), the Athenian embarks on a more sustained consideration of the sorts of things that people should be taught. In the process, he wishes to distinguish between matters that are pleasurable and those that are appropriate. In particular, he is concerned that matters of virtue and vice be given careful and honorable attention in his ideal state.

In developing this position, the Athenian (*Laws*, II: 658) discusses the prospect of people judging the most viable instance of entertainment at a festival. After observing that different segments of the population (e.g., children, adolescents, adults, more educated persons) would likely have very different viewpoints on what the most viable form of entertainment might be, the Athenian and the others conclude that the matter of education is much too important to be left to people's notions of pleasure and personal preference. Matters of education, thus, should be under the responsibility and control of the older, wiser, and more virtuous members of the community.

After giving some thought to music and singing, the speakers focus more directly on *the quality of imitations* of things (*Laws*, II: 667-671). Here, they attend more specifically to assessments of the adequacy with which things are represented (as in art, poetry, science, and other communications).

Then, observing (a) that people who lack knowledge of the things being imitated are not in a position to judge the representation of those things, the Athenian says that things are to be judged for accuracy (as in proportions) of representation, and for the completeness or beauty of their imitation.

Relatedly, the Athenian (*Laws*, II: 669) notes that while music is a very popular mode of expression or representation, the meanings of music are obscure because of the absence of words (with which to establish effective communication). Likewise,

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[11] Although the following translation is highly consistent with that provided by Benjamin Jowett, I have included it to give readers an appreciation of the ways in which the same ideas might be expressed by two different translators (presumably also, in some cases, as they might were the same person speaking on two different occasions):

Athenian: I insist that a man who intends to be good at a particular occupation must practice it from childhood: both at work and at play he must be surrounded by the special 'tools of the trade'. For instance, the man who intends to be a good farmer must play at farming, and the man who is to be good builder must spend his playtime building toy houses; and in each case the teacher must provide miniature tools that copy the real thing. In particular, in this elementary state they must learn the essential elementary skills. For example, the carpenter must learn in his play how to handle a rule and plumb-line, and the soldier must learn to ride a horse (either by actually doing it, in play, or by some similar activity). We should try to use the activities in which they will have to engage when they are adult. To sum up, we say that the correct way to bring up and educate a child is to use his playtime to imbue his soul with the greatest possible liking for the occupation in which he will have to be absolutely perfect when he grows up. (Plato, *Laws*, I: 643b-643d; Saunders trans.)

he contends, considerable training and study is required to properly know about musical composition.

[Although these topics may seem diversionary, Plato's concerns with (a) the accuracy and adequacy of representation and (b) effective judgment as aspects of knowing are consequential both to his notions of education and his criticisms of those who disregard these matters (as poets, sophists, and rhetoricians).]

In the midst of a highly instructive discussion that focuses more centrally on the formation of states, government, customs, legislation, rulers, and office holders (*Laws*, III: 676-VI: 787), the speakers (VI: 765) make explicit reference to the *ministry of education*. Emphasizing the importance of education from early childhood onward, they describe the ministry of education as the single most consequential office of state.

However, it is not until book VII (*Laws*, VII: 788) that Plato embarks on a more sustained consideration of education.

Describing education as a *developmental process* (*Laws*, VII: 788-792), Plato's Athenian emphasizes the importance of improving people's minds and bodies. Going back as far as prenatal health care, the Athenian gives considerable attention to the importance of comfortable motion as well as an absence of anxiety on the part of mothers and their offspring.

Relatedly, fear is to be minimized while courage and physical activity are to be maximized from the earliest stages. By contrast, pleasure is to be encouraged only in moderate terms, and luxury is to be limited. Some pain and discomfort are seen as natural but fear is to be minimized, lest it become habitual. Selfishness (*Laws*, VII: 793) is to be discouraged when it occurs, as in three to six year olds.

While boys and girls would be raised together in nursery settings, the Athenian proposes that they be separated into two groups at the age of six.

The Athenian (*Laws*, VII: 795) then delineates *two branches of education:* gymnastics and music. Gymnastics, in the form of dancing and wrestling, is to be directed exclusively in preparation for war. Still, music (encompassing a more playful, general artistic and verbal exposure to culture) is to precede people's more rigorous participation in gymnastics as well as the more focused study of school subjects.

Viewing instruction in music as forms of play, learning, and character development, the dialogue (*Laws*, VII: 797-798) shifts to the desirability of maintaining *consistency of tradition* in children's games and manners. The concern is that children who do not sustain continuity with earlier generations will lose contact with the past and be more likely to disregard, disrespect, and challenge the practices and values of the community.

The Athenian (*Laws*, VII: 799) then refers to the practices of the Egyptians, who sanctify consistency and censure change in child-rearing arenas. This is seen as the model to be imitated in Plato's *Magnesia*.

From there (*Laws*, VII: 800), the Athenian launches on a discussion of the appropriate kinds of things to be taught to children in preparation for later life. In addition to prayers respecting the gods, this includes expressions and affirmations of justice, beauty, virtue, and the honoring of good and noble deeds and characters.

While stating that human matters are not especially important in the broader scheme of things (*Laws*, VII: 803), since people are only "the playthings of the gods," the Athenian nevertheless expresses concern that people do things in virtuous, honorable, and appropriately devout manners.

Subsequently, the topic turns to teachers (*Laws*, VII: 804). Teachers would be brought to the newly created state of Magnesia from other areas and are to be paid

to instruct children in the art of war as well as in music. Education is to be compulsory for both boys and girls.

The Athenian (*Laws*, VII: 807) also stresses that the citizens of Magnesia are to be industrious. Not only are the citizens to engage in productive work, but they also are to set good examples for their servants.

Parents are to ensure that young boys (aged ten to sixteen) are in school and are appropriately regulated (*Laws*, VII: 808-810) as they extend their educations into reading, arithmetic, and the development of musical talents and appreciation.

The dialogue (*Laws*, VII: 810-812) next centers on the issues pertaining to the development of memory and the reading and studying of various texts. Here, the speakers question the content of works produced by various authors (as in authenticity and morality) and conclude that all materials are to be screened for acceptability by highly responsible individuals (such as themselves and the minister of education).

The speakers return to the topic of gymnastics (*Laws*, VII: 813). Both boys and girls are to be instructed in gymnastics (especially wrestling and those dances that would prepare them for war). However, the Athenian also recognizes the value of dances of peace, in which matters of grace and pleasure are more pronounced.

Still, *amusements* (*Laws*, VII: 816-817) also are to be regulated and citizens are expected to learn the boundaries of serious and humorous things and to act mindfully of their positions in society.

Relatedly, the Athenian (*Laws*, VII: 817) provides a very clear statement on *poetic license* as a feature of education more specifically and with respect to concerns about the state more generally. Insisting that the entire state is to be an imitation of the best and most noble of things and that the state would be unwise to tolerate any deviations from that, Plato's Athenian then proclaims that no fictional (poetical) material is to be presented to the citizens except that which is first approved by the magistrates of the state. This would apply to all types of song, dance, and music, as well as theatrical, textual, and other representations of things.

Having determined that these matters would be proscribed by law, the Athenian (*Laws*, VII: 817-822) then stresses the importance of arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy as topics for study.

While observing that there is a particularly scholarly, scientific dimension to these subject matters, the Athenian insists that it is still important that people generally achieve some fluency with these subjects. Arithmetic, the Athenian (*Laws*, VII: 818) contends, is essential, not only for a fuller appreciation of divinity, but also for a fuller comprehension of all manners of knowing, acting, and study.

Then, after stipulating that knowledge without appropriate training in virtue can be harmful (*Laws*, VII: 819), the Athenian notes that the Egyptians wisely taught principles of arithmetic and geometry to children within the context of games.

Having acknowledged some practical and analytically-enabling features of arithmetic and geometry, attention is next directed to astronomy (*Laws*, VII: 821). Here, the speakers consider the relations of the supreme God to the cosmos. This discussion ends somewhat abruptly as the speakers turn to the topic of hunting (822-827).

After delineating a variety of realms of hunting (as in people seeking out humans for various purposes, fishing, pursuing animals) and how activities of the sorts may be envisioned and regulated, the Athenian (*Laws*, VII: 827) concludes book VII saying that their consideration of laws on pertaining to education is now complete.

Still, Plato's discussion of education is not finished, as indicated in his subsequent considerations of military preparations, political citizenship, religion, interstate relations, and governing practices. Thus, for instance, the Athenian (*Laws*, VIII: 829-830) stresses the importance of people *practicing for war* during times of peace and the related value of gymnastics as a long-term element in matters of homeland defense.

Likewise, in discussing the *purpose of legislation* (*Laws*, IX: 880), the Athenian says that part of the purpose of laws is to instruct people on how to live with, and act toward, others in their community.

Later, the Athenian also takes issue with the physical or material philosophers (*Laws*, X: 891-907) and others *who fail to acknowledge the gods* or do not adequately take the gods into account with regard to their own (human) activities. While contending that the physical philosophers do not understand the priority of the (divinely-enabled) soul in human consciousness, Plato (*Laws*, X: 892-896) develops a subthesis on motion prior to insisting that the soul is to be seen as the source of human motion.[12]

Still, the Athenian (*Laws*, X: 896-907) is especially concerned about the *corrupting effects* of those who variously: (a) do not believe that the gods exist, (b) believe that the gods exist but are unconcerned about people's activities and situations, and (c) believe that the gods can be easily appeased through prayer and other human offerings.

The dangers are twofold, reflecting the unholy things that these people do themselves and their corrupting influences (via teaching and example) on others in the community, especially the young.

[A few other items pertaining to education may be noted in Book XII as Plato concludes *Laws*.]

Concerned about the potentially negative consequence of importing other people's customs into one's own community, Plato's Athenian intends to sharply restrict the travel of the citizens of Magnesia to other states (*Laws*, XII: 950-952). Thus, he is especially wary of travelers under 40 years of age.

However, he plans to dispatch selected individuals to other states so that they might *learn about the practices of peoples* in other areas and report back to a senior assembly about things learned in these expeditions. Likewise, a particular receptivity would be extended to those who come to Magnesia as visiting scholars (*Laws*, XII: 953).

Compared to *Republic*, Plato only very briefly discusses the education of those who assume roles as *guardians* of the state in *Laws* (XII: 963-968). After noting that all responsible members of the state are to encourage the virtues of courage, temperance (self regulation), wisdom (prudence), and justice, the Athenian stresses the importance of guardians receiving special instruction in these areas.

As well, the Athenian proposes that younger guardians monitor events in the city and report these to the more senior guardians so that the more senior guardians may take appropriate action with respect to these and other matters under their jurisdiction.

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[12] The ten kinds of motion that Plato (*Laws*, X: 893-894; see Jowett's translation) delineates are: (1) circular or rotational motion; (2) locomotion (variable directional); (3) a combination of circular motion and locomotion; (4) the separation of things; (5) the constitution or coming together of things; (6) growth; (7) decay or gradual decomposition; (8) destruction; (9) the things that impact on (and generate motion in) other things; and (10) something that can change itself and other things. Of these, Plato sees the last form of motion (i.e., spontaneous or object-initiated motion) not only as the product of the divinely-enabled soul, but also the most consequential of all forms of motion.

As the text concludes (*Laws*, XII: 968-969), the Athenian emphasizes that in addition to the virtues they have identified, the guardians also are to receive training pertaining to military practices, law, government, and religion.

Still, primary hope for an overarching, sustained order in the community is left to what the Athenian references as a "council of elders." This group is envisioned as a constitutional counterbalance to the proclivities and judgments of those who serve as guardians, magistrates, and in other offices. In the end, it is to be the advisory council that offers essential guidance.

Even at this point, the speakers acknowledge the uncertainties associated with these developments as well as the necessity of the guardians collectively adjusting to the shifting situations in which the community finds itself.

Nevertheless, the hope is that with appropriate education and community devotion one might achieve a social order that, if handled conscientiously and judiciously, could be a model for other communities.

Plato's *Charmides*[13]

Although it may be best known as a discourse on temperance,[14] Plato's *Charmides* contains an instructive consideration of what presently may be termed *the philosophy or sociology of science*. Thus, while not disregarding character development as a consequential aspect of the educational process, it is particularly important to attend to Plato's more abstract consideration of a "science of science" as this theme also is developed in *Charmides*.

In the process of analyzing *temperance* as a concept, Socrates and his companions examine the appropriateness of notions of quietness (159-160), modesty (160-161), attending to one's own affairs (161-163), doing good (164), and self knowledge (164-167) as connoting aspects of temperance.

Socrates and his associates eventually conclude their discussion of temperance by acknowledging the limitations of each of the preceding notions of self regulation, thereby leaving the concept of temperance in a state of some uncertainty.

While still referencing the (Socratic) viewpoint that people cannot truly differentiate "what they know from what they do not know," the speakers subsequently embark on a more focused consideration of science and the possibility of a *science of science* (165-175).

Acknowledging that each of the sciences has its own subject matter, the "science of science" is presented as an overarching analytical standpoint. Thus, the science of science would *conceptually encompass* the practice and standpoints of the other sciences but *without engaging the specific subject matters* of any of the other sciences.

Thus, in attempting to ascertain the matter under consideration, Socrates asks his companion, Critias:

> Does not what you have been saying, if true, amount to this: that there must
> be a single science which is wholly a science of itself and of other sciences, and

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[13] I have built on Benjamin Jowett's (1937) translation of Plato's *Charmides or Temperance* in developing this statement.

[14] More generally, temperance may be envisioned as a prudent sense of self regulation. However, as used in theological and/or moralist settings, temperance often implies extensive control over one's physical or sensate desires and enjoyments and is used to refer to people adopting more virtuous standpoints on these matters.

that the same is also the science of the absence of science? (Plato, *Charmides*: 167).

Socrates and his companions go on to consider the limitations (as in questioning the viability and usefulness) of a highly abstracted approach to knowing vs. a regular (content oriented) science.

Then, after acknowledging that no science of the type discussed exists, Socrates then acknowledges an important *analytic advantage* of people developing a science of science:

> May we assume then, I said, that wisdom, viewed in this new light merely as a knowledge of knowledge and ignorance, has this advantage:--that he who possesses such knowledge will more easily learn anything which he learns; and that everything will be clearer to him, because, in addition to the knowledge of individuals, he sees the science, and this also will better enable him to test the knowledge which others have of what he knows himself; whereas the enquirer who is without this knowledge may be supposed to have a feebler and weaker insight? Are not these, my friend, the real advantages which are to be gained from wisdom? And are not we looking and seeking after something more than is to be found in her? (Plato, *Charmides*: 172; Jowett trans.).

Although Plato returns more directly to his consideration of self regulation as a problematic human essence, rather than more fully consider what a science of science might involve, we would be highly remiss were we not to acknowledge the importance of Plato's (very early) concept of a "science of knowing" for a more comprehensive analysis of scholarship.

Plato's Contributions

Despite the remarkable array of materials that Plato introduces in *Republic*, *Laws*, and *Charmides*, Plato's contributions to scholarship are yet more extensive and conceptually enabling. Thus, even if one excludes his texts that more directly deal with matters of theology (e.g., *Phaedo*, *Timaeus*) and virtue (e.g., *Gorgias*, *Socrates' Defense* or *Apology*, and *Protagoras*), Plato's contributions to human knowing are still astounding.

Thus, in addition to *Republic*, *Laws*, and *Charmides*, readers may refer to: *Cratylus* (on language; meaning; knowledge; on the soul), *Theaetetus* (on knowing), *Statesman* (considers knowing in politics, sophism, and philosophy), *Parmenides* (challenge of forms; on the one and the many), *Phaedrus* (on rhetoric; method of division; writing; love, friendship), *Sophist* (on the sophists; on multiple, real and unreal viewpoints), *Euthydemus* (on euristics vs. true knowing; problematics of clarity of expression), *Philebus* (wisdom and knowing vs. pleasure as good), *Laches* (on knowing courage), *Lysis* (on knowing friendship, love), *Symposium* (on knowing love), and *Ion* (on knowing and judging poetry).

Unfortunately, for scholarship more generally, most of Plato's texts on human knowing and acting would remain unknown to Western European scholars until the 16th century Renaissance. Thus, whereas Plato would be revered among western European philosophers and theologians in the intervening centuries, much of this esteem appears to have developed around Plato's religious statements (especially *Timaeus*) and depictions of Plato's philosophic works by various theologians including Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (20BCE-45CE), Clement of Alexandria (c150-215), and Augustine (c354-430).

Still, while acknowledging Plato's enduring relevance for scholarship, it also is essential to recognize the rather consequential *limitations that Plato placed on scholarship*.

Thus, whereas Plato is comparatively well known as (a) a censor of poetic endeavor, Plato *also is a particularly severe critic* of (b) those who adopt more skepticist positions on theology and morality, (c) those who prioritize human knowing over divine knowing, and (d) those involved in rhetorical ventures.

Even as a critic, Plato substantially adds to our stock of knowledge in these areas. However (as just noted), Plato's work has retained some highly restrictive emphases. Hence, over the centuries, Plato's religiously-oriented texts may be seen to have *discouraged others from embarking on more sustained examinations of the secular or humanly known and engaged world.*[15]

Since Plato's spokespeople often severely criticize the practices of those who stray from Socratic theological and moralist positions, it is Isocrates and (especially) Aristotle who most notably contravened the restrictions associated with Plato's scholarship, both in their own time and on a more enduring basis. Thus, whereas much of Plato's material is highly enabling in conceptual terms, Isocrates and Aristotle more explicitly focus on the humanly known and enacted world.

Because Aristotle's works on education and scholarship are so conceptually massive in themselves,[16] it is not feasible to consider his texts at this point. However, it is instructive to examine, if only briefly, the contributions that one of Plato's peers, Isocrates, makes to the broader educational venture.

Although Aristotle is a student of Plato's rather than Isocrates and Aristotle appears to have been critical of Isocrates for not more rigorously pursuing scholarship in a more concerted manner, Isocrates engages education and scholarship in ways that are more consistently secular and pluralist than does Plato. In that sense, Isocrates represents a bridge of sorts between the more worldly-oriented, secular PreSocratic philosophers and Aristotle's insistence on attending to the humanly known and engaged world. As well, in contrast to Plato, who at times questions the viability of education and scholarship, Isocrates more distinctively defends these ventures.

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[15] Because of the contemporary tendencies to (a) use the term rhetoric to refer to instances of "fluffy," "pretentious," or more "blatantly deceptive discourse" and (b) emphasize factors, variables, and structures to explain human behavior in the social sciences, few readers may directly appreciate the loss to the human sciences that resulted from the neglect of rhetoric as the study of all modes of persuasive endeavor (influence, cooperation, and resistance) or the corresponding neglect of communication processes, agency, and interaction as central features of human group life.

Although Plato provides a highly insightful analysis of rhetoric in *Phaedrus*, Plato's condemnations of rhetoricians (and sophists) serve to isolate philosophy from the study of human interchange. This was readily apparent to Cicero (c106-43 BCE; see *De Oratore* 1942 and *Brutus* 1962) who deems it preposterous that philosophers (following Socrates and Plato) would separate philosophy and rhetoric; to dissociate human thought from human speech.

Relatedly, most of those in the broader hermeneutic tradition have failed to adequately appreciate rhetoric (i.e., the influence or persuasion process) as a central social essence in the study of human knowing and acting.

[16] In addition to the more comprehensive collection of materials on Aristotle in the Bibliography, see Spangler (1998) and Prus (2007a, 2008a, 2009a).

Isocrates' Defense of Education

Like Plato, Isocrates (c436-338BCE) was a student of Socrates. However, Isocrates also had studied with Gorgias (a sophist and rhetorician).

Consequently, while Isocrates strives for more virtuous positions on education and rhetoric than those adopted by Gorgias, Isocrates' positions on education and rhetoric take him some distance from the viewpoints that Socrates and Plato adopt on these matters.

Thus, in contrast to the skepticism that Socrates and Plato often associate with human knowing, Isocrates concentrates on the *importance of human knowing* and the *role of formalized education* in this process. Likewise, whereas Socrates and Plato appear intent on eliminating *rhetoric* (wherein Gorgias emerges as an arch enemy), Isocrates argues for the *centrality of* rhetoric as a realm of study.

Given the extended popularity that Isocrates experienced as an instructor and the overall success of his school, Plato (who was attempting to establish his own Academy) may have harbored some competitive resentment toward Isocrates. Relatedly, and more centrally though, Isocrates appears to have been too inattentive to Socratic theology, virtue, and dialectically-achieved knowing to win favor with Plato.

Clearly, Isocrates does not share the negative, censorial views of rhetoric that Socrates assumes in Plato's *Gorgias*. Moreover, Isocrates also rejects Gorgias' opportunistic (self-serving) position on rhetoric as well as Gorgias' more capricious views of human knowing and acting. In these respects, Isocrates takes issue with both the prominent philosopher-idealist and the famous rhetorician-sophist.

Thus, Isocrates is openly critical of Gorgias and others who (a) claim to provide people with infallible or virtuous knowledge, (b) encourage the use of rhetoric for personal gain through defenses of ignoble causes and disreputable characters or condemnations of honorable targets in the courts and political arenas, and (c) generate deceptive sophism or verbal illusions as opposed to sincere, more informed communications.

At the same time, and in contrast to Socrates, Isocrates stresses (1) the value (and viability) of a secular education, (2) the importance of rhetoric as a communications device, and (3) the matter of scholars attending to the humanly known world.

Challenging Socrates' theory of human knowing, Isocrates' writings not only display much more affinity with those of Aristotle than Plato, but Isocrates also generates an early and important *defense of education*. Relatedly, Isocrates not only envisions *language* as the essential medium for educational achievement, but also as the central feature that enables human progress of any sort.

In both *Against the Sophists* (which Isocrates wrote as a young scholar) and *Antidosis* (written at the age of eighty-two), Isocrates *defends education* from Socratic philosophers and others who (a) claim that one cannot genuinely learn about the things of this world, (b) contend that learning about the sensate world is inconsequential, (c) are skeptical of the value of persuasive communication, and (d) think that educators should not be reimbursed for their craft.

Further, while (a) directly acknowledging variations in people's natural (learning and performance) abilities, Isocrates also is intent on establishing (b) reasonable expectations of what may be achieved in the educational process, (c) the necessity of students applying themselves to the learning process, and (d) the importance of young people pursuing educational roles in more sustained and focused manners (so

that they might engage their other activities more effectively and be of greater service to their communities).

In developing his position, Isocrates states that *some* sophists (and rhetoricians) have failed to serve the community well and he directly rebukes these practitioners for their pretensions and disregard of justice and community integrity. However, Isocrates clearly endorses educational programs on a broader basis. Relatedly, Isocrates acknowledges the value of dialectic reasoning and various cognitive exercises, but stresses the importance of wisdom that more directly can be used to *enable* various aspects of community life.

As he indicates in *To Nicocles* (38-54) and in his later volume, *Antidosis*, Isocrates places particular value on those who collect, sort through, evaluate, and synthesize the ideas of others in sincere, open and dedicated (vs. popularistic) fashions.

For Isocrates, *speech* is the most fundamentally and uniquely enabling feature of the human condition (see *Nicocles or the Cyprians* [5-9] or *Antidosis* [253-258]):

> We ought, therefore, to think of the art of discourse just as we think of the other arts, and not to form opposite judgements about similar things, nor show ourselves intolerant toward that power which, of all the faculties which belong to the nature of man, is the source of most of our blessings. For in the other powers which we possess, as I have already said on a former occasion, we are in no respect superior to other living creatures; nay, we are inferior to many in swiftness and in strength and in other resources; but, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish. For this it is which has laid down laws concerning things just and unjust, and things honourable and base; and if it were not for these ordinances we should not be able to live with one another. It is by this also that we confute the bad and extol the good. Through this we educate the ignorant and appraise the wise; for the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul. With this faculty we both contend against others on matters which are open to dispute and seek light for ourselves on things which are unknown; for the same arguments which we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts; and, while we call eloquent those who are able to speak before a crowd, we regard as sage those who most skillfully debate their problems in their own minds. And, if there is need to speak in brief summary of this power, we shall find that none of the things which are done with intelligence take place without the help of speech, but that in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide, and is most employed by those who have the most wisdom. (Isocrates, *Antidosis*, 253-257 [Norlin trans. 1928]).

In developing his defense of rhetoric, Isocrates lays out a program for the successful practice of rhetoric in *Antidosis* (276-285).[17] Here, Isocrates emphasizes the importance of practitioners (1) developing noble discourse, (2) focusing on the well-being of the community, and (3) generating their materials with wisdom and devotion. He also insists on the importance of (4) speakers remaining characters of good repute so that their auditors will hold their messages in higher esteem. By pursuing honorable objectives, Isocrates expects that rhetoricians would be better rewarded doubly; both by others in the community and by the gods.

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[17] Readers familiar with Cicero's (106-43BCE) and Quintilian's (35-95CE) discussions of ideal orators will recognize much that corresponds with Isocrates' (*Antidosis*) depiction of successful rhetoricians.

In addition to good intentions and noble character, however, Isocrates also argues for the contributory importance of (5) natural speaking abilities, (6) a strong general education, (7) focused training, (8) practice, and (9) sustained application, as well as (10) more situated senses of personal confidence.

Still, Isocrates recognizes that even these complements will not insure success. Something more is required for the viability of noble rhetoric. This revolves around (11) a fuller appreciation of thoughtful, informed statements on the part of the *citizens* at large. This *potential source of resistance* to honorable, well informed rhetoric greatly concerns Isocrates. Thus, he pleads (*Antidosis*, 293-310) with the citizens of Athens to recognize the greatness of Athens as *the* center of civilized speech and education.

Is it not ironic, Isocrates points out, that the same Athenians who recognize Persuasion (*Peitho*) as one of their gods and make annual sacrifices to her would condemn those who aspire to study her ways? Even more ironic, Isocrates observes, is that the Athenians who stress the greatness of the mind would honor athletic prowess over philosophy when it is primarily through speech and thought that Athens emerged as the greatest and most prosperous of the Hellenic states.

In addition to the material referenced here, Isocrates' scholarly involvements in rhetoric are still more extensive. Thus, in addition to promoting a wisdom-based rhetoric as a field of study, Isocrates also assumed the role of political advisor (see *To Demonicus*; *To Nicocles*; and *Nicocles or the Cyprians*) wherein he attempts to persuade princes and citizens of the importance of attending to their collective (and reciprocal) concerns.

Whereas Isocrates has been given much less attention than Plato in the present statement, it is important to acknowledge his defense of education and the more distinctively pluralist secular approach that Isocrates takes with respect to education and scholarship. Not only does Isocrates, in a concertedly pragmatist fashion, insist on the centrality of language for all manners of human knowing and acting but also stresses the importance of studying rhetoric (i.e., influence work) as an essential feature of community life.

In Perspective

Although those in the social sciences more generally and those involved in the study of education more specifically may make occasional reference to Plato or other classical Greek scholars, seldom do our contemporaries acknowledge the contributions of the classical Greek authors to education and scholarship in more explicit and sustained terms.

Instead, operating with the assumption that "surely, we must have progressed a great deal since then," many scholars over the centuries have tended to focus more exclusively on authors and texts close to their own times. With some exceptions, this also is notably evident amongst contemporary academics.

While not denying the remarkable progress that has been made in the natural sciences and material technologies more generally, it is not apparent that we have made progress of a comparable sort in the humanities and social sciences.

This is not to say that we have not made some important advances in the human sciences but a more careful examination of materials from the classical Greek era indicates that many claimed "advances" are not as new, creative, or substantial as is often supposed. As well, many earlier developments of more consequential intellectual sorts have been lost or disregarded over the millennia by people with other viewpoints, objectives, and dispositions.

Still, in developing this statement, the concern is not whether the "older is better" or "the newest is the best." The emphasis instead is on learning all that we can about "human knowing and acting" by attending to all of those authors who have dealt with this subject matter in more explicit and sustained terms – regardless of the particular places and times in which they wrote.

One might expect that those who have had access to the works of earlier minds would improve on these in more consequential terms, but scholarship has not developed in consistent or cumulative ways over the millennia. Still, it is instructive to attend to the developmental flows of people's viewpoints and practices in order to better comprehend one's present stocks of knowledge and any associated dilemmas, practices, and adjustments.

Likewise, insofar as viable material exists, it would be most instructive to develop more sustained (transhistorical) comparisons between the practices of our contemporaries and those of people who embarked on somewhat parallel ventures in other times (just as one might develop cross-cultural comparisons of parallel processes in anthropology).

In these and other respects, we are most fortunate to have access to the classical Greek literature. Much material from this era appears to have been lost, but the texts that remain are remarkably extensive, precise and thorough. Although we need to read these materials mindfully of the contexts in which they were written, certain of these texts also represent "ethnohistorical statements" of particular significance.

Not only do the classical Greek texts as a set far surpass anything that has been developed by contemporary anthropologists on any other community, but many of the surviving texts also were written specifically as instructional, analytic accounts. This is especially true of the texts developed by Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, and Thucydides.

In developing this paper, I pursued two major objectives. First, I considered the contributions that Plato and Isocrates made to education and scholarship as realms of humanly achieved enterprise. A second and interrelated objective was to consider the affinities of their texts with a more distinctive pragmatist approach to the study of human knowing and acting. This latter objective involved asking if, to what extent, and in what ways, Plato and Isocrates approached education and scholarship in ways that might more closely approximate the pragmatist sociological emphases that is associated with Chicago-style symbolic interaction (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969).

Although Plato approaches education and scholarship in notably diverse terms, amidst considerations of theology, morality, idealism, and dialectic skepticism, Plato's discussions of education and scholarship also have a substantial pragmatist quality.

Some of the pragmatist emphases that one finds in *Republic*, *Laws*, and *Charmides* have been highlighted in the present paper. However, those who examine these texts in more detail will encounter a yet more valuable and comprehensive appreciation of Plato's pragmatist attentiveness to the processes and problematics of human knowing and acting more generally and to education and scholarship more specifically.

Of the classical Greek scholars, it will be Plato's student Aristotle (see Spangler 1998; Prus 2003a, 2004, 2007a, 2008a, 2009a) who most effectively articulates and sustains a "pragmatist" approach to the study of all matters of human awareness. However, (the somewhat more senior) Isocrates was highly consequential in

defending secular education and scholarship from the theological, moralist, idealist, and totalizing skepticist stances that one finds in Plato's works.[18]

Thus, whereas both Plato and Isocrates were students of Socrates, it is Isocrates who maintains linkages with the more scholarly features of the sophistical and rhetorical traditions. Like Plato, Isocrates is critical of insincere and pretentious scholarship as well as those rhetoricians who care little for the authenticity of the positions they represent or the viability of the justice that ensues.

In contrast to Plato's more diverse emphases, Isocrates insists on the importance of developing education and scholarship more exclusively around the humanly known and engaged world. Isocrates may have been better known as an instructor of rhetoric rather than a philosopher, but Isocrates not only defends education and scholarship from the theological and idealist features of Socratic philosophy but also from the smugness and ignorance of the community at large.[19]

This is not to minimize the importance of Plato's (still considerable) pragmatism for the ensuing development of Western social thought but it does suggest that *scholars of all eras* be highly mindful of the theological emphases, moral stances, intellectual disjunctures, and general disregard of scholarship in the specific communities in which they find themselves.[20]

Clearly, the classical Greek scholars could not anticipate the subsequent developments or the considerable gaps, lapses, and intellectual losses in education and scholarship that would take place over the intervening centuries to the present time. Still, as much as anyone, it would be Plato and (his student) Aristotle who would emerge as the major intellectual giants in the development of Western social thought. Although the present statement addresses only some of the texts that Plato and Isocrates developed, we have much more to learn from these authors (as well as other scholars from the past) than is commonly assumed.

Bernard of Chartres (circa 1100CE; opening quotation) is quite right when he states that the sophistication of our present viewpoints is due to the accomplishments of our predecessors rather than our own "perceptual acuity."

Still, *it is not enough* to see things from our present vantage point. Indeed, if we are to develop more adequate and enabling views of "what is" and "what is not," *we also need to see things in more comprehensive, multiplistic, historical, and comparative terms – acknowledging the particular viewpoints and activities of all of those who are willing to share their experiences with us in more sincere, open, and direct ways.* It is in this respect that the works of Plato, Isocrates, and others who

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[18] The relationships between Plato (c420-348BCE), Isocrates (c436-338BCE), and Aristotle (384-322BCE) have been subject to considerable speculation, but it seems likely that both Plato and Isocrates helped foster an intellectual milieu that generally was more receptive to Aristotle's pragmatism than otherwise would have been the case.

[19] It may be recalled that Plato essentially concurs with Isocrates in these latter (pragmatist) respects. Thus, in developing his material on philosophy as a realm of scholarly activity (*Republic*), Plato explicitly acknowledges the general resistance on the part of members of the community to scholarly pursuits as well as an uneven emphasis on the part of philosophers in maintaining the quality of their own scholarship. Plato also alerts readers to some of the personal and community-based obstacles that even the best intentioned students and philosophers may encounter.
Relatedly, while envisioning dialectic reasoning as an essential mechanism for all scientific endeavor, Plato (*Republic*) explicitly cautions readers about the dangers of adopting positions of totalizing relativism. Thus, Plato insists that those who have learned things at a theoretical level are to experience other realms of community life for fifteen years (presumably as a "participant-observer" of sorts) before supposing themselves competent to teach others about philosophy.

[20] Tracing the developmental flows of education and scholarship from the classical Greek and Roman eras to his own time, Emile Durkheim's (1904-1905) *The Evolution of Educational Thought* is particularly instructive in this regard.

have engaged the study of human knowing and acting in more direct and sustained terms are so valuable to contemporary scholars.

As well, if we are to pursue these matters more effectively, it will be necessary to employ a theoretical and methodological approach that not only (a) lends itself to more sustained, participant-oriented examinations of the situations in which people engage education and scholarship within both contemporary and historical contexts, but also (b) explicitly encourages the development of a cumulative literature and (c) stresses the articulation of concepts (i.e., generic social processes) that reflect central features of human knowing and acting in more discerning transsituational and transhistorical terms.[21]

In addition to developing more explicit, comparative analyses of the ways that people engage human knowing and acting, we also need to examine in more sustained, conceptually informed ethnographic terms the ways that people engage education as administrators, instructors, students, and scholars on a contemporary plane.[22]

Before concluding this paper, it may be worthwhile to ask "if education and scholarship are in need of defense at the present time."

With the vast array of educational institutions and scholarly materials presently available in print and Internet sources, as well as the resources that many governments have assigned to education and research, it might seem that education and scholarship are in no need of defense.

As well, although built on the highly enabling developments of the past (Sarton 1952, 1959), a great many of the advances in technology and the physical sciences over the past 2000 years appear rather phenomenal, if not more entirely miraculous in relative comparison with many technologies of the Classical Greek era. Likewise, many libraries have become inundated with publications in the humanities and social sciences. Indeed, never before have such large numbers of people been involved in formal educational programs, in conducting research, and in developing "scholarly publications." As well, never before has so much literary material been available on an almost immediate, global basis.

Still, it is important, as the materials from Plato and Isocrates suggest, to attend to the problematic, precarious nature of education and scholarship.[23] Education and scholarship are not singular essences and both need to be understood mindfully of the views, activities, and interchanges of the people involved in these fields of endeavor – in both historical-developmental terms and in reference to the instances in which education and scholarship are actively engaged.

As Durkheim (1904-1905) indicates at some length in *The Evolution of Educational Thought*, the development of education and scholarship in Europe has

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[21] More extended statements on the theoretical and methodological positions of symbolic interactionism are available in Blumer (1969), Strauss (1993), Prus (1996, 1997, 1999) and Prus and Grills (2003).
For more comprehensive considerations of generic social processes (GSPs) and overviews of the interactionist literature pertinent to these social processes, as well as an array of conceptual and substantive points of departure for subsequent inquiry and analysis, see Prus (1996, 1997, 1999, 2003b) and Prus and Grills (2003).
[22] Some analytic materials that address education, scholarship, and technology as research agendas that may be pursued ethnographically can be found in Prus (1997) and Prus and Mitchell (2009).
[23] As suggested elsewhere (Prus 2006), in a consideration of one of Cicero's (106-43 BCE) texts, a defense of scholarship not only encompasses an openness to inquiry but also a receptivity to skepticism.

been far from even or continuous in emphases.[24] Thus, education and scholarship have been substantially interfused with, as well as disrupted by, matters pertaining to religion, politics, and entertainment.

Relatedly, as Durkheim observes, education and scholarship also reflect the more particular visions, agendas, dedication, and enterprise as well as the ignorance, incompetencies, jealousies, animosities, and censorship of the persons and groups who promoted, discouraged, and otherwise shaped aspects of teaching, learning, inquiry and analysis.

Thus, for instance, as Durkheim explains in some detail, the 16th century Renaissance scholars pointedly reengaged poetic (fictional), linguistic-expressive, artistic, and architectural aspects of classical Greek and Latin thought. However, they somewhat simultaneously ignored, dismissed, obscured, and denigrated a considerable amount of highly consequential classical Greek philosophy, rhetoric, science, and history. Likewise, these Renaissance scholars (as Durkheim emphasizes) also disregarded, if not more explicitly condemned, the more rigorous analytical practices of those religious academics of the Scholastic era (12th-15th centuries) that more immediately preceded the 16th century Renaissance.

In somewhat parallel terms, the rejection of Catholicism on the part of those promoting the Protestant Reformation (also largely a 16th century development) not only resulted in the subsequent neglect of the exceptional analytic scholarship of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) but also seems related to the relative disregard of Aristotle's texts (the materials on which Aquinas had built so extensively in developing his analysis of community life) on the part of a great many Western European academics. One could go on and on, through the pages of recorded history to the present time, referencing a great many instances of the neglect, rejection and condemnation of particular emphases and realms of education and scholarship.

While there are those who claim that we can dispense with history, it is important to recognize, as Durkheim also (1904-1905) teaches us, that it is only by attending to the broader sweep of history that people can better contextualize and comprehend the "whatness" of the present. Not only may the failings and follies of the past provide valuable lessons for a great many realms of analysis and decision-making in the present but by more broadly attending to the historical developments of human knowing and acting, people also may be better able to discern superficiality, pretension, and triviality from more fundamental, sincere, and enduring features of education and scholarship more specifically and aspects of community life more broadly.

Consequently, it behooves us, as analysts of the human condition, to employ history and comparative analysis to better distinguish religion and/or moral standpoints, idealizations, and emotional states and expressions from "what is" in more basic, pluralist-analytic terms.

In what follows, I briefly address two matters pertaining to education and scholarship. One revolves around the challenges of maintaining a genuinely humanist emphasis in studying community life. The other involves the problematics of

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[24] Readers not familiar with Emile Durkheim's later writings (1902-1903, 1904-1905, 1912, 1913-1914) may be surprised to see his later emphases on history and ethnology as well as his analytical attentiveness to activity, collective interchange, language, concept development, and the like (also see Prus 2007b, 2009b). Although he is still concerned about being "scientific" (open, conceptual, precise, rigorous) in his analysis, Durkheim's notions of "science as this pertains to the human condition" in these later texts are conceptually and methodologically at variance from the positivist / structuralist emphases associated with his best known work (1893, 1895, 1897).

maintaining and pursuing quality in education and scholarship. Given the overall parameters of this paper, my comments can be little more than suggestive.

First, although some may define humanist scholarship (as in "public sociology," for example) in more remedial, moralist terms – as something intended to solve problems and/or otherwise improve, change, or reform society, I define humanist scholarship in more distinctive nonpartisan, pluralist, generic terms.[25]

Thus, I refer to research and analysis that not only (a) attend to the human condition in encompassing conceptual terms but also focus on (b) the humanly experienced "whatness" or reality of human group life and (c) the ways that people, as agents, make sense of their situations and actively participate in the community of the other. As well, a more thoroughly humanist social science would (d) strive to be attentive to the perspectives, practices, and interchanges of all of the parties involved in particular arenas of community life – regardless of their viewpoints, interpretations, intentions, activities, and the like.

The purpose of humanist scholarship, thusly defined, is not to praise, condemn, or intervene but rather to (e) examine, comprehend, and conceptualize the ways that people engage community life in the most thorough, comparative analytic ways possible.

Accordingly, while attentive to the humanly engaged, humanly experienced nature of group life, the study and analysis of community life would be transpersonal (i.e., conceptually impersonal), transcontextual, and transhistorical.

Enabling researchers and analysts to access an exceptionally broad range of conceptually parallel materials (across substantive contexts) from the literature and ongoing inquiry, approaches of this sort can be exceptionally informative for comprehending the more basic or generic features of human group life as well as providing a much fuller range of the variants that one might encounter from one setting to the next.

Because of these transsituational emphases, generic approaches differ from topical focused orientations (wherein people organize their thoughts and inquiries around particular substantive topics – such as crime, health, religion, and entertainment) as well as time and place framed approaches (as in 17th century France or 21st century New York City).

As well, conceptually generic approaches to the study of the human condition stand in stark contrast to applied emphases and interventionist orientations wherein people typically want results of more immediate and visible sorts.[26]

Since more distinctively generic approaches focus on the ways that people do things and how they relate to others, irrespective of place, time, or context, those intrigued with particular substantive topics often disattend to transcontextual conceptual materials. Pluralist, generic approaches also are commonly by-passed by those with applied, remedial, and activist agendas because pluralist approaches focus on "what is," rather than "what should be" from some particular perspective

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[25] See the Nichols (2007) volume for a more extended range of articles addressing "public sociology." A more comprehensive statement on the pluralist version of public sociology referenced here can be found in Prus (2007c). Related materials are available in Prus (1996, 1997, 1999, 2003b) and Prus and Grills (2003).
[26] Moreover, insofar as people intend to change certain aspects of community life or feel pressured to show that they are doing something about the problems at hand, they often fail to view these matters in a comparative-analytic perspective. As a result, they become more vulnerable to moralists, religious leaders, and control agents as well as researchers and academics who claim to have "solutions" to the particular problems at hand (see Prus and Grills 2003; Grills and Prus 2008).

While not denying the importance of people engaging in "practical lines of activity" (from whatever vantage point these may be defined), I am simply pointing to the difference between task-related endeavors or "problem-solving activity" and a more pluralist conceptual emphasis on education and scholarship. Task-oriented activities and remedial / prescriptive orientations are meaningful aspects of community life, but these typically contribute little to the fuller study of "what is" or the ways that people may learn to approach situations in more general analytic terms.

Thus, for instance, although applied programs (e.g., criminology, legal studies, recreation studies) offered at colleges and universities may appeal to many students and administrators, these often have been introduced and popularized at the expense of the conceptual / analytic wisdom attained through more fundamental, more rigorous educations in philosophy, history, social theory and research, grammar, and the like. Similarly, research that deals with "the problematic and/or popular topics of the day" has often been funded much more extensively than research that addresses more basic, enduring features of community life.

Accordingly, while representing the most broadly relevant and enduring of all conceptual orientations in the human sciences, it is these more generic or pluralist (transpersonal, transcontextual, transhistorical) approaches that are apt to be in particular need of protection as both realms of scholarship and as central features of education (see Durkheim 1904-1905).

As researchers, we can ask when and how people might pursue and sustain a pluralist emphasis in their scholarly endeavors, when and how approaches of these sorts are dismissed as inconsequential or encounter other resistances, and how the people in the settings at hand might deal with these in any variety of contexts in scholarly and educational arenas. Matters of these sorts may be investigated through ethnographic inquiry, examinations of historical documents, and comparative analysis.

A second issue revolves around the processes and problematics of defining, maintaining, and pursuing "quality" in education and scholarship. Clearly, quality is not one thing and definitions of quality vary with specific audiences. Not only may people invoke notably diverse perspectives and reference points as they define the instances they consider but they also may apply their interpretations of "what is" to the situations at hand with significantly different purposes in mind.

At a broad level, it seems inappropriate to assume that education or scholarship has greater quality – as in producing more competent performers or developing more conceptually astute materials, for instance – because there are more institutions of higher learning, because more students receive academic awards or obtain doctorates, or because more literary materials are available than ever before.

Thus, whereas (a) students and their parents are often pleased with the quality of education when these students receive good grades, graduate from particular programs or are otherwise acknowledged as bright, capable, and the like, and (b) schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions typically claim quality for whatever students they graduate and especially those that they recognize with meritorious awards, those (c) who examine texts from the classical Greek era (e.g., Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, Thucydides) may be much less enchanted with most contemporary literary productions.

In a somewhat related vein, it might be asked whether much of the research conducted in the social sciences over the past century has the genuine scientific quality that is often claimed for quantitative analysis of the human condition in sociology and psychology – or whether this mode of research and analysis fails to attend to community life and the nature of human lived experience. Relatedly, one

may ask if attempts to reduce human knowing and acting to abstract sets of factors accurately reflect or more notably misrepresent the nature of community life (as in people's activities, relationships and interchanges; see Blumer 1969; Prus 1996, 1999; Prus and Grills 2003; Grills and Prus 2008).

As with considerations of humanist scholarship, researchers may use ethnographic inquiry, historical documents, and comparative analysis to more informatively examine people's concerns with quality. This could include questions of the following sort. How do people define the quality of education and/or scholarship? When are these judged as problematic? How might these concerns be expressed to others in the settings under consideration? How might these issues be pursued? What kinds of resistances might be encountered? What sorts of tactical interchanges might ensue, with what kinds of eventual outcomes, and so forth.

We may be situated some 2500 years from the era in which Plato and Isocrates wrote, but many of the issues they addressed in their analysis of education and scholarship remain with us. As well, there may have been an extended proliferation of educational institutions over the past thousand years (following the Western European dark ages) as well as an almost infinite array of literary materials available in print and Internet sources. Still, as the preceding discussions of pluralist scholarship and the quest for quality in education and scholarship suggest, education and scholarship will continue to exist in diverse, problematic, and precarious terms.

It is through more focused inquiry into contemporary practices of matters pertaining to education and scholarship, combined with examinations of historical documents, and more sustained comparative analysis that we may reach a better understanding of education and scholarship as fundamental features of community life.

Viewed thusly, we may use the materials bequeathed to us by Plato and Isocrates as suggestive points for future inquiry. We also may benefit in more enduring terms by employing their texts and those of other scholars (past and present) as reference points in developing more adequate conceptualizations of the processes by which education and scholarship are accomplished in practice.

Acknowledgements

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Citation