



School Culture: Full Lesson Tour in Community, Virtue, & Education Dr. Matthew Post

Lesson 1: Plato and Classical Education - Continued

Outline:

Is there an art by which we can identify the different kinds of souls and figure out what kind of education we want to give to each?

- Just - give to each what is owed, “one man, one art”, egalitarian, for the bronze
- Beautiful – having someone at the top who orders things, less respect for privacy, hierarchical, a city for the silver
- We want the just and the beautiful to come together.
 - Socrates thinks this is dangerous. How are you going to assess whether to demand apology or seem like you are above it all?
 - The real temptation is to say, “How am I going to get what I want from this person?” That starts to instrumentalize the other person, which starts to become a question of how to dominate someone?

If virtue is an art, can it be taught?

- Socrates solution is to talk about education as a turning of the soul.
 - One turns the soul away from becoming to being.
 - The turning of the soul, which is education, is an art.
- You don’t actually form the soul, you reorient the soul so it is illuminated by the truth, which makes the soul.
 - This is the distinction between classical education and progressive education.

If there is an art of turning the soul, how does it actually work?

- First stage: being able to draw comparisons
- Next stage: trust means that there are real things that are the objects of which you are comparing (abstract)
- Summoning the intellect: calculation takes you from arithmetic to geometry, rising to the level of abstraction with roots in the visible
- We need to study harmony, which means any kind of ordering.
 - Music takes us away from the visible, and we start to understand what ordering really is.
 - Music is effective at soliciting the passions.



- There is a fundamental unity between mathematical harmonies of the Cosmos and our inner emotional states.

The just in terms of education

- Socrates says that if you use the rod to educate, you always have to use the rod.
- The better way is to inspire children to virtue.
- The way that you foster a certain kind of conduct has to do with the way that the conduct is maintained later in life.
- There is a danger of thinking of one perfect technique for the turning of the soul, when you try to force it on others you are going to violate the principles of the just.

Dialectic

- Dialectic means conversation. This is the cusp of the truth.
- Dialectic separates out the beings and grasps each being itself (the just, the beautiful, the good).
- As transcendentals start to converge, we see a problem.
 - What is the one thing that can be applied to every student?
 - The foundation of order and justice is compulsion.
 - You will start to fail to understand to surrender to the beautiful and appreciate the justice.
 - You might to start to think that you are the author of virtue.
- Everyone corrupts the youth by confusing the just with the beautiful and the good through compulsion.

What is the good?

- The good is our ability to communicate with each other and to know the just and the beautiful.
- To know what is just or beautiful is to be just or to be beautiful.
 - One knows the transcendental by participating in it, the dialect allows you to grasp and encounter it.
 - Being is something which has to do with intellect, you think about it when you relate the part within the whole as an activity.
 - The good makes this possible.

Timeaus

- There is a yearning to have just, beautiful and good come together.
- The account of Cosmos by Timeaus:
 - The Demiurge is good, a god who fashions the entire Cosmos. The Demiurge fashions the soul.
 - The Demiurge looks to logos and calculation to create an intermediary between a model and between the visible world.
 - Soul brings these things together.



- The demiurge makes it possible for disordered matter and motion to come into contact with the beautiful and the result of that is the soul.
- Socrates places whatever would be the coming together of these things beyond the human capacity to understand.

The cave is a likeness of education.

- When they understand the truth, they come back down and stand shoulder to shoulder with those in the cave.
- If you are going to educate, you need to meet people where they are.
- When we think about the turning of the soul, you need to reorient yourself toward the changeable and you turn your soul and the student's soul together.
- Education is fundamentally premised upon friendship.