THE PRESENCE OF PLATO AND THE SPECTRUM OF SCHOPENHAUER IN NIETZSCHE'S LECTURES, *ON THE FUTURE OF OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS*[1]

La presencia de Platón y el espectro de Schopenhauer en las lecturas de Nietzsche, *Sobre el futuro de nuestros Centros Educativos*

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Abstract : We have set out here to highlight two references that underlie Nietzsche's argument in his lecture *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*. The philosopher shares with Plato and Schopenhauer a natural aristocracy of the mind, i.e. the idea that nature is stingy in its production of geniuses. In these conditions, it's understandable that he should feel «frightened» by the «democratization» of the university he is witnessing. We show, however, that he plays Plato off against Schopenhauer, but does not follow the Greek philosopher all the way. First, Nietzsche stresses that far from believing that the university and culture should be at the service of the State, it is the State that should be at the service of *Bildung*, and it is what would emerge from the Platonic model. We claim that there is a kind of hesitation on Nietzsche's part, who wonders whether the institution can still create *Bildung* or whether it is not outside that it should be sought and built, in which case we are closer to Schopenhauer.

Keywords: Educational Institutions – Bildung – Schopenhauer - culture

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Resumen: Nos hemos propuesto aquí resaltar dos referencias que subyacen al argumento de Nietzsche en su conferencia *Sobre el futuro de nuestras instituciones educativas*. El filósofo comparte con Platón y Schopenhauer una aristocracia natural del espíritu, es decir, la idea de que la naturaleza es tacaña en la producción de genios. En estas condiciones, es comprensible que se sienta «asustado» por la «democratización» de la universidad que está presenciando. Mostramos, sin embargo, que enfrenta a Platón con Schopenhauer, pero no sigue al filósofo griego hasta el final. En primer lugar, Nietzsche destaca que lejos de creer que la universidad y la cultura deben estar al servicio del Estado, es el Estado el que debe estar al servicio de la *Bildung,* y es lo que surgiría del modelo platónico. Sostenemos que hay una especie de vacilación por parte de Nietzsche, que se pregunta si la institución todavía puede crear *Bildung* o si no es fuera donde debería buscarse y construirse, en cuyo caso estamos más cerca de Schopenhauer.

Palabras clave: Centros de educación – Bildung – cultura - Schopenhauer

Introduction: An aristocratic point of view on education and the old philosopher

At a time when Nietzsche's first major work had just been published, and would prove to be a veritable thunderbolt,[2] the young professor of philology was preparing to deliver lectures dedicated to the future of educational institutions in German-speaking areas. These lectures were devoted to the meaning of what educational institutions should be, in contrast to what they were in Germany at the time Nietzsche delivered them. To appreciate the polemical nature of these remarks, it is worth remembering that the author had been appointed professor of philology in Basel for three years and that he was going to criticize the German educational institutions from which he came, or rather a tendency in German policy to 'democratize' them[3]. Nietzsche noted both the proliferation of these educational institutions and a decline in the culture they imparted, and hence in their excellence:

> It seems to me we need to distinguish between two dominant tendencies in our educational institutions, apparently opposed but equally ruinous in effect and eventually converging in their end results. The first is the drive for the greatest possible *expansion* and *dissemination* of education (Erweiterung *und* Verbreitung *der Bildung*); the other is the drive for the *narrowing* and *weakening* of

2 *The Birth of Tragedy* was published on 2 January 1872.

3 However, Nietzsche's comments on this point must be put into perspective, as Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon note: «By most standards, the German system was still exclusive, very much so. In Nietzsche's day, about 3 percent of German schoolchildren, most of them from families with means or with high social standing achieved through education (that is, the *Bildungsbürgertum*), went on to attend a gymnasium» (Friedrich, Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, Introduction, p. x-xi).

> education (Verringerung *und* Abschwächung *der Bildung selbst*). For various reasons, education is supposed to reach the widest possible circle – such is the demand of the first tendency. But then the second tendency expects education to give up its highest, noblest, loftiest claims and content itself with serving some other form of life, for instance, the state.[4]

The german word '*Verbreitung*' means both extension and dissemination or diffusion. This motif is not foreign to Plato's *Phaedrus*, the only work of philosophy quoted by Nietzsche in these lectures.[5] Thus, after pointing out that written speech resembles painting, so that they appear alive without necessarily being so, Plato specified:

> Once any account has been written down, you find it all over the place, hobnobbing with completely inappropriate people no less than with those who understand it, and completely failing to know who it should and shouldn't talk to[6].

We shall see that the reference to Plato plays a major role in these lectures. In this context, it is also a safe bet to assume that this is a conscious borrowing on Nietzsche's part. It is not a mere reminiscence produced by a similar context – that of the democratization of a knowledge that escapes precisely those who receive it – since the part of the course he was devoting to Plato on the *Phaedrus* at the time began as follows: «For dating purposes, the passage on 'writing' is extremely important».[7] Nietzsche had already referred to it earlier: «Plato says that writing only makes sense for those who know, as a means of remembering».[8] So it is highly likely that the philosopher had this in mind. But the important point, in our view, is that Plato can be a real ally for Nietzsche insofar as he himself was confronted with a similar problem.

The problem, in Nietzsche's terms, is that in the context of the democratization of the university, *Bildung* is aimed at people who do not have the means to receive it, which initially renders the attempt obsolete. But this

4 Friedrich, Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, I, p. 15.

5 Idem, p. 68.

6 Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275d-e, translated by Robin Waterfield (here and afterwards).

7 *Introduction à l'étude de Platon*, *in* Nietzsche, Écrits philologiques, Tome VIII : *Platon*, traductions, présentations et notes par Anne Merker, Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 2019, p. 145 (my translation above and in what follows). Nietzsche continues to discuss the same passage (p. 149). Anne Merker also notes that in Nietzsche's reinterpretation of Plato, which is both philological and psychological, «*the Phaedrus* plays a decisive role» (*Ibid.,* p. 47) and a little further on: «If Nietzsche pays such attention to the *Phaedrus* – as do many philologists – it is certainly because this dialogue presents Plato's reflections on writing.» (Idem, p. 49) We think that Nietzsche had a particular interest in this dialogue, as can still be seen from these lectures given in 1872. Anne Merker adds, «the *Phaedrus* has left its mark on the teacher, and therefore also on the philosopher and writer. It is one of the peculiarities of the Nietzschean writing that is the *Introduction to the Study of Plato* course that the *Phaedrus* is omnipresent, whereas it seems very discreet in the published works» (Idem, p. 66).

8 Friedrich, Nietzsche, *Introduction à l'étude de Platon*, p. 81.

obsolescence can also lead those responsible for disseminating it to replace its content with a pseudo-*Bildung* that is more likely to be heard by those for whom it is intended[9]. From then on, this first problem gives rise to a second (in such a way that we read a causal relationship between the two parts of the sentence): a tendency towards the «weakening (*Abschwächung*)» of education or culture (*Bildung*), since the same thing cannot be demanded of the masses as was initially demanded of an elite («education to give up its highest, noblest, loftiest claims»). We note here that the aristocratic spirit in which Nietzsche delivers these lectures is shared by the two references, partly implicit, that we wish to emphasize in this work, namely Plato and Schopenhauer.[10]

In these lectures, then, we read a clear interest in these offbeat references, more or less implicit depending on the passage (but obvious in our view), as a response to the problem of the crisis of contemporary culture.[11] In order to understand those, we should first of all remember that Plato's philosophy places the question of education at the heart of its project.[12] Equally, Schopenhauer, at least as Nietzsche portrays him, seems at first to be able to play the role of the educator Germany needed at that time.[13] That said, the character of the old philosopher who appears in these lectures seems to us to be highly problematic and symptomatic of Nietzsche's relationship with these two authors or figures. Overall, we are tempted to identify him with Schopenhauer, but Nietzsche's portrayal of him does not lead us to see him as a true role model, which may be true either for Schopenhauer and that old philosopher himself. And, behind him, there is perhaps a more positive guide in the figure of Plato, who above all allows Nietzsche to take a greater distance from the time and the milieu in which he is writing. We shall begin with the presence of Plato, before considering the spectrum of Schopenhauer.

The solar presence of Plato

We shall argue then that these conferences are inhabited by the solar presence of Plato and Nietzsche will appear, in our reading of this text,

9 We borrow this vocabulary from Fabien, Jégoudez, *Nietzsche et les savants. Essai sur la* Bildung *et la pseudo*-Bildung, Paris : Editions Connaissances et Savoirs, 2022.

10 We shall see how Nietzsche borrows Schopenhauer's aristocratic conception of nature, but this was already affirmed by Plato himself: «a natural like, possessing all the qualities we have just enumerated, which are necessary if one wants to become an accomplished philosopher, is a rare plant that rarely grows among human beings» (Plato, *The Republic*, 491a-b, we translate).

11 See our article, co-written with Quentin Landenne, «Critique et crise de la *Bildung*. La politique inactuelle de la culture chez le jeune Nietzsche», in Quentin, Landenne and Nicolas, Quérini (eds), *Bildung. L'actualité intempestive d'une idée moderne*, Presses universitaires de Saint Louis, to be published in 2024.

12 On this point, see Laetitia, Mouze, *Platon. Une philosophie de l'éducation*, Paris : Ellipses, 2016. Education is obviously the main subject of the philosopher's major works, *The Republic* and *The Laws*. Rousseau also described *The Republic* as the finest treatise on education ever written.

13 The third of *Untimely Meditations* was hence titled *Schopenhauer as Educator*.

closer to Plato than to Schopenhauer. Indeed, Plato is the very central figure in the dialogue reconstituted by Nietzsche between an old philosopher with two young students, and he is undoubtedly a better guide for them than Schopenhauer himself, as is clear from the statement with which Nietzsche's great lecture on Plato opens: «Plato has always been rightly regarded as the true philosophical guide for the youth.»[14]

Admittedly, Nietzsche mentions Plato 'only' six times, and only the dialogue of the *Phaedrus* is mentioned explicitly, but Nietzsche's Platonic influence is particularly striking here. We should begin by recalling that Nietzsche gave lectures on Plato during the entire period he stayed in Basel, both at the *Pedagogium* and at the university.[15]

As Quentin Landenne and I have claimed[16], the study of Platonic topoi in these lectures do merit real attention. Therefore, we would like to develop some of these topoi to support our statement that Nietzsche perspective on education borrows even more from Plato than of Schopenhauer. Let's begin with the narrative situation. The biographer C. P. Janz already noted that «The model of these lectures is indeed that of the Platonic dialogue: a preliminary and circumstantial setting, a spokesman in the person of an old philosopher, a Socrates in whose mouth the author places his own truths».[17] First and foremost, it is a situation that Nietzsche narrates,[18] adding a fictional element: «Another characteristic aspect is the free recourse to the biographical genre. The framework of the narrative thus seems to be borrowed from a real experience.»[19]

Quite simply, just as Plato could invent a meeting between two characters that had never taken place, or reconfigure a scene for philosophical or

14 Friedrich, Nietzsche, *Introduction à l'étude de Platon*, p. 77, we translate.

15 «Nietzsche gave four lectures on Plato, covering the whole of his work, from 1871-1872 until 1878-1879 (the last semester of his professorship). This lecture therefore spanned almost the whole of Nietzsche's professorial period» (Friedrich, Nietzsche, *Introduction à l'étude de Platon*, présentation par A. Merker, p. 22, we translate). Schopenhauer also believed that «Plato should be diligently read as early as the High School level, because he is the most effective stimulus for the philosophical mind» (Schopenhauer, *On Philosophy at the Universities*, p. 1).

16 *Op. cit*.

17 Curt Paul, Janz, *Nietzsche, Biographie tome I*, p. 406. It should be pointed out, however, that it is far from clear that Socrates is always a faithful spokesman for Plato's views. M. Dixsaut also notes that these lectures «teem with Platonic reminiscences», that «the Foreword puts the Lectures under the sign of Socrates : their author dared to speak only 'out of non-knowledge and knowledge of his non-knowledge'», that «a narrator who, like Phaedo, is also an interlocutor, relates to an audience a dialogue heard between a Philosopher and his disciple and, like Phaedo again, he interrupts his narrative on several occasions to express the feelings he has experienced in the face of the Philosopher's speeches» (Monique, Dixsaut, *Platon-Nietzsche. L'autre manière de philosopher*, p. 295, we translate).

18 As if by the grace of a happy coincidence, Nietzsche «overheard two remarkable men talking on just the topic» (Friedrich, Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, I, p. 3), namely on the worrying issue of current 'culture', which from the outset seems a little too good to be true.

19 Curt Paul, Janz, *Op. cit.*

literary purposes, we must insist that Nietzsche is merely borrowing from his own biography.[20] In this way, the philosopher magnifies his life and his experiences, turning them into objects of literature, and this is certainly not a faithful retranscription of a real past experience. At the beginning of his lectures, Nietzsche refers to a scene he is said to have experienced in the small literary society he had set up with his friends, Gustav Krug and Wilhelm Pinder («Germania»), but this is far from an accurate description of an event that actually took place.[21] Following Plato, Nietzsche constructs a situation that could have happened, imbued with reality, but idealized to give it a particular philosophical depth. He also undoubtedly dramatizes the events to give us a sense of the crisis that lies behind them.[22]

Most of all, it is through the setting framed by Nietzsche that the Platonic anchoring seems striking, and here again it is the *Phaedrus* towards which our attention is recalled.[23] The conversation that Nietzsche recounts is said to have taken place outside, in the open air, outside any place intended for culture. On the one hand, there is an appeal here to «nature», which will prove to be a salient feature of these lectures, inherited from the Humboldtian conception of *Bildung*, but on the other hand there is also a marked distance from civilization and in particular from the society of his days, from the places that receive and disseminate the pseudo-*Bildung* of the time when Nietzsche is writing. This chosen location, which will be the scene of a confrontation between two conceptions of *Bildung* – one, naive, from a young person who believes himself to be in possession of it; the other, much more harsh, coming from the mouth of an old philosopher – seems to us to symbolize perfectly the crisis of *Bildung* that Nietzsche wants to describe, as well as the need, in order to be able to really think about it and discuss it, to distance oneself from the place where pseudo-*Bildung* is rampant. We should also note that this scene is said to have taken place during a «trip to the Rhine in late summer»,[24] which

20 As he would continue to do thereafter. On this point, see Nicolas, Quérini, «La pratique nietzschéenne de l'autobiographie» (*Cahiers philosophiques de Strasbourg*, n°53, 2023/1).

21 Confirming the importance of Nietzsche's move, Janz points out that «this small society had been founded in Schönburg-on-the-Saale, near Naumburg, and not in Rolandseck, near Bonn, during a trip on the Rhine. Moreover, it had not been at the end but in the middle of summer, on 25 July 1860, and, finally, none of the other members – his friends Krug and Pinder – had been Nietzsche's fellow students in Bonn. Further, Nietzsche himself did not spend the end of the summer of 1865 in Bonn, having left on 9 August; moreover, his first trip to the Rhine was not during his grammar school years, but only when he started university in October 1864» (Curt Paul, Janz, *Op. cit.,* p. 407, we translate).

22 This is undoubtedly what emerges from the pistol shots and the question of the duel, but also from the anger and reprimands addressed by the philosopher to the young listeners.

23 Dixsaut had already noted the similarity of the setting: «The resemblance with the *Phaedrus* (the only Dialogue by Plato with a natural setting) marks the desired link between German and Greek culture» (Monique, Dixsaut, *Op. cit.*, p. 296).

24 Friedrich, Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, I, p. 4.

twice (spatially and temporally) marks a distance not only from the place of their studies, but also from the period when they were learning.

In its own way, this distancing repeats the gesture Plato makes in the *Phaedrus*, when he situates the dialogue (the only one alongside *The Laws*) that takes place outside the city. Socrates and Phaedrus have left the walls of Athens and set up camp under a tree by a river, a point that Nietzsche himself made in his lecture on Plato: «It is emphasized that Socrates, in total contradiction to his usual habits, is leaving the city here».[25] This literary fiction thus allows Plato to construct an opposition between the ἀστεῖος (what is urban, civilized and thus the city-dweller) and the εὐήθης (what is naive, in particular because we are closer to nature in this register). On this point, we follow Létitia Mouze's stimulating interpretation of this Platonic opposition and the geographical location of the *Phaedrus*, when she writes in particular about the latter that by inscribing «philosophy in myth, Socrates behaves like a 'naïve' man».[26] Now the ἀστεῖος is indeed the man of the Athenian democratic city, the man of rationality, since that is where his λόγος is exercised «par excellence», whereas the naive man (εὐήθης) of the countryside readily believes in the myths and traditions left by the ancients. We argue in this connection that this dramatic situation of the *Phaedrus* (outside the walls), that is almost exceptional, is an additional literary means for Plato to mark the *atopia* of the philosopher who must distance himself from this commonplace of discourse that is the city and thus with Lysias, this placeless «position» of the philosopher allows him to provide a critical outlook on it.[27] Nietzsche, for his part, is also seeking to distance himself from the current locus of *Bildung* in order to be able to speak critically about it.

The second Platonic-inspired point, which is more conceptual than the first, permeates the entire lectures: it is the importance Nietzsche gives to the affects of astonishment and fear. First of all, the German philosopher seems to substitute fear for astonishment, because the times in which he is writing call for a more radical and firmer distancing, and something so disturbing that we should be frightened:

> Just read around in today's pedagogical literature – anyone not utterly horrified to see it clumsily chase its own tail with an incalculable poverty of spirit is beyond help. Here, our philosophy must begin not with wonder but with fear (*Hier muß unsere Philosophie nicht mit dem Erstaunen, sondern mit dem Erschreck-*

25 Friedrich, Nietzsche, *Introduction à l'étude de Platon*, *Op. cit*., p. 146 ; we translate.

26 Platon, *Phèdre*, Introduction par L. Mouze, p. 172, Paris : Le livre de Poche, 2007. We translate.

27 See Nicolas, Quérini, *De la connaissance de soi au devenir soi. Platon, Pindare et Nietzsche*, p. 70.

> *en beginnen*), and no one incapable of such a feeling should touch pedagogical matters.[28]

At first, it might be tempting to say that, in the lectures, Schopenhauer was the one who instills fear and Plato instills enthusiasm. In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche thus write a few years later that it is nowadays necessary for us to really get angry (which also obviously ties in with the old philosopher's bitter side), to go through suffering so that everything is better. According to Nietzsche, Schopenhauer is a great resource on that topic:

> So, to put it bluntly: it is necessary for us to get really angry for everything to be better. And this is where the image of Schopenhauer's man should encourage us. Schopenhauer's man takes upon himself the voluntary suffering of truthfulness, and this suffering serves to kill his own will and prepare for the upheaval, the total conversion of his being, where the true purpose and meaning of life lie. This way of telling the truth seems to other men to be an outpouring of wickedness, for they consider the preservation of their mediocrities and their farcicalities to be a duty of humanity and they think that one must be wicked to break their toys in this way.[29]

But we shall see that, in the lectures Nietzsche gave in 1872, it is perhaps not so much a question of substituting astonishment for fear, as of using the former to make the latter possible. If we still retain the Platonic astonishment of the *Theætetus*,[30] so that we might think that Nietzsche is distancing himself from Plato here by preferring fear (or horror as initially translated, but we can also hear that affect in the English 'dread' or 'awe'), we should not forget that this last affect is also Platonic (even if Nietzsche's use of it will obviously not be quite the same)[31] and that it comes to us, once again directly from the *Phaedrus*. Plato wrote indeed that at the sight of beauty, the soul «shivers and is gripped by something like the fear he felt then (ἔφριξε καί τι τῶν τότε ὑπῆλθεν αὐτὸν δειμάτων)»[32]

28 Friedrich, Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, II, p. 21 (we modified the translation a bit). This is the first possible reason invoked by B. Stiegler to justify the substitution of fear for astonishment at the beginning of philosophy. But we agree with her that this 'psychological' explanation is unsatisfactory (Barbara, Stiegler, «Nietzsche et la critique de la *Bildung*», § 6).

29 Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, § 4, we translate.

30 Plato, *Theætetus*, 157d; a theme to which Nietzsche himself refers at the beginning of his lecture on Plato, since the image of the overflowing nature that is Plato is apt to inflame «the instinct for philosophy: it strongly excites the θαυμάζειν [astonishment], which is the philosophical πάθος [affect]» (Nietzsche, *Introduction à l'étude de Platon*, p. 77, we translate).

31 This is the term Δεῖμα, δεῖματος, which in Greek means fear or dread; the German term *Erschrecken* appears five times in the Conferences.

32 Platon, *Phaedrus*, 251a. See also *The Republic* 386a, *The Laws* 791c. The specificity of the Platonic use of the *Phaedrus* is that it is a metaphysical affect, which awakens the soul and sends it

And it is worth noticing that this sentence is in the immediate vicinity of the pages that Nietzsche is going to evoke in his Fourth Lecture.[33]

Furthermore, according to Nietzsche, this fear can eventually lead us to flee our position, our duties, which again obviously refers to a tension present in the author himself and to the crisis of vocation that we mentioned earlier. The philosopher evokes the possibility of a «flee[ing] into demoralized solitude».[34] The existential question posed by Nietzsche seems to be the following: does the state of our institutions encourage us to flee, or can we still save it? This flight is also an entirely Platonic theme associated with the question of enthusiasm, particularly in the *Theætetus*,[35] but it is also present in the *Phaedrus*, even if it is not named as such, since it is a question of looking from here to above, upwards like a bird,[36] so that it is also associated with the fear mentioned in the same passage. Nietzsche also links the two in the following manner:

> The reverse has been the rule up until now, of course. Those who were horrified (*erschraken*) (…) ran skittishly away.[37]

Of course, Plato refuses to accept this flight into solitude and contemplation. The philosophers of the *Republic* would have to be forced to govern.[38] Here too, Nietzsche's response from the philosopher is Platonic: «Remain at your post!».[39] So, for Nietzsche too, running away is not an option (at least not in

back to the vision of beauty of yesteryear (but, from this point of view, it is questionable whether there is a real distinction to be made with regard to astonishment, since the nuance seems to be tenuous). Nietzsche is referring here precisely to «the first budding of the wing Plato speaks of in the *Phaedrus* bears the soul aloft toward the realm of the immutable pure Forms of things at every contact with the beautiful» (Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, IV, p. 68).

33 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, p. 68-69. We find the vocabulary of fright on page 251a of the *Phaedru*s, and the image of the soul as a winged carriage, pulled by the hair on pages 246c-e and 248c, and then, precisely on the snarling, savage horse on page 253d-e. The vocabulary of fright is therefore to be found between these pages, which Nietzsche calls up here.

34 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, II, p. 22; and he uses the vocabulary of renunciation, or «giving up» in the same paragraph (*Ibid*.).

35 «We need to escape from here to there as quickly as possible (χρὴ ἐνθένδε ἐκεῖσε φεύγειν ὅτι τάχιστα). The escape (φυγὴ), is to assimilate ourselves to God as far as possible: and we assimilate ourselves by becoming just and pious with the help of thought.» (Plato, *Theætetus*, 176a-b, we translate). This is a theme that will be widely criticized by Nietzsche, since he invites us to recognize appearances as real and to flee the world only out of resentment (*The Dawn of Day*, I, § 43; *The Twilight of the Idols*, «What I Owe to the Ancients», § 2). So began the era of seriousness about life, which would later lead to contempt for it: «The flight of the best from the world was a great misfortune. From Socrates onwards: the individual suddenly took himself too seriously» (Nietzsche, *Posthumous Fragments*, *Untimely Meditations III et IV*, 6 [13], we translate).

36 Plato, *Phaedrus*, 249d.

37 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, II, p. 21.

38 Plato, *The Republic*, 347b-c.

39 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, IV, p. 53. It is worth noting that this Platonic gesture, which consists of forcing the philosophers to return to the

the public comments he made in Basel, the city that welcomed him and offered him a post). Even though Nietzsche would later praise solitude, following in Schopenhauer's footsteps, the answer he gives in the lectures to the current alternative – «flight» or «politics» – is clearly Platonic, much more so than Schopenhauerian.[40]

To return to the apparent substitution of astonishment for fear, we need to recognize that, however close they may be, these affects are not synonymous. In Nietzsche's case, the fear of inactuality enabled him to make the shift we mentioned, the distancing necessary for the critique of present-day *Bildung*, and it clearly refers to the crisis he was experiencing within himself. We should not lose sight of the fact that Nietzsche's next work, published in Basel, was precisely his *Untimely Meditations*, in which he sought to take a critical distance from the culture of nineteenth-century Germany, in order to be able to measure its value. For Nietzsche, inactuality was intended to enable him to see and think «beyond what is German»,[41] without stopping at any spatial or temporal boundaries, and thus to be able to measure the present as well as prepare for the future.[42]

But inactuality does not mean that we are outside all time; it simply means that we are moving into another time to criticize the present. On the contrary, Platonic *atopia* and astonishment lead us to be in no time at all. It is more a question of divine suspension, which allows us to gain height and a timeless gaze, in the direction of the timeless (in this case, the intelligible Forms and the divine model). Or, to be even more specific, while being in his place in the city, at least through his body, Socrate is in contact with this out-of-place of

cave to govern, will be repeated by Zarathustra himself in the Prologue when he returns to mankind. Nietzsche himself would agree in a letter to Overbeck dated 22 October 1883: «Dear old friend, as I read Teichmüller, I am more and more petrified with admiration, I realize how little I know Plato and how much I know of Zarathustra πλατονίζει» (we translate). It should also be noted that Nietzsche described Plato in his lecture as a «political agitator (*agitatorischer Politiker*)», that «Platonic idealism is not synonymous with a withdrawn life, a renunciation of the common world. From the outset, Plato's writing is seen as a means to an end» (Nietzsche, *Introduction à l'étude de Platon*, Présentation p. 34-35, we translate; refer to page 78 of the course for this last aspect).

40 As Miguel Abensour and Pierre-Jean Labarrière wrote about his text *On philosophy at the Universities*: «Without dwelling on Schopenhauer's aristocratic or elitist approach, which reserves philosophy for the happy few, let us remember this maxim: to philosophise well, let us philosophise hidden away, far from the world and its intentions, sheltered by the walls of a garden» (Schopenhauer, *Contre la philosophie universitaire*, p. 24, we translate).

41 Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, IV, § 10, we translate.

42 M. Dixsaut also links Plato and Nietzsche in this respect: «both assign philosophers a similar task: 'to be the bad conscience of their time', to subject 'the virtues of their time to vivisection' in order to discover 'a new greatness of man'. Each time, they revealed how much hypocrisy, how much lazy convenience, how much slackness and slouching, how many lies were concealed beneath the type that the morality of their time most revered»; Nietzsche concludes: «it was perhaps irony, that wicked Socratic assurance of an old doctor and an old plebeian, that was required for access to greatness of soul» (*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 212). «Here again, the phrase is directly from Plato's Socrates to Nietzsche, and Nietzsche recognizes it as such.» (Dixsaut, *Op. cit.*, p. 264-265, we translate).

ideas. His atopia stems from this in-between position. Nietzschean fear, on the other hand, refers to a step backwards; a step backwards that is accompanied by a form of disgust, an affect that enables us to take the necessary distance from modern man and his times. Astonishment and fear therefore share the same kind of distance function, a distance from the common reality, but they do not share the same modalities, nor the same orientation. This common functionality is therefore to be found in the distance that these affects make it possible to create in relation to common time. In the fifth lecture, which deals with the so-called 'autonomy' so vaunted by today's students, the philosopher says he is 'frightened (*erschreckt*)' by it.[43] Here, then, fear is also a means of freeing ourselves from the appearance of a thing (in this case, autonomy) in order to rediscover its truth.

As we said earlier, the point here is not so much to replace astonishment with fear as to use both, starting with the latter because it is undoubtedly necessary to awaken young people who naively believe in the autonomy that is offered to them.[44] Here too, we can argue that fear is a harder affect and is therefore more suited to a crisis situation, but also perhaps that the privilege given by Nietzsche to it over astonishment is yet another sign of the spiritual crisis that he himself is experiencing, more and more intensely. Fear is a colder-toned affect[45], and this one is more chilling, which certainly suits the old philosopher's bitterness (whereas astonishment is undoubtedly warmer and gentler), but Nietzsche's preference for the latter means first and foremost that there is some kind of sense of urgency to emerge from the torpor of modern times and violently extricate oneself from what seems to be taken for granted. In Plato, the philosopher's astonishment at the world led him to adopt a posture of *atopia*, which made him ridiculous in the eyes of those who did not understand the object of his contemplation. But if we find this theme of ridicule and laughter in Nietzsche, it's not so much laughter that we're going to provoke by the discourse we have to hold on true *Bildung*. There's no need to fear this, since it is likely that you are going to arouse other emotions in people (particularly fear), and get «enemies who sincerely hate us», as soon as you bring up «many frightening, embarrassing, unforgivable truths».[46] It is undoubtedly the «most outspoken hatred» that will be aroused.

43 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, V, p. 74, translation modified.

44 This is also clear from page 77 of the fifth Lecture.

45 Which can be also said about astonishment, to a lesser extent. This affect carries with it a dimension of wonder, but it also signifies a form of crisis in the face of reality and can even have paralyzing effects at first.

46 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, III, p. 39.

The popular response to astonishment was laughter; the popular response to fear is hatred[47].

To sum it, astonishment remains a solar philosophical affect, while fear has the tone of a dark and profound crisis, which can therefore testify, in a second stage, to a personal crisis such as that experienced by the young soul that fears losing itself and not being itself. This central theme of the third of the *Untimely Meditations* also emerges in the last occurrences of the term in the paragraphs at the end of the fifth of the lectures. Here it is a question of fear at the waste of a degenerate culture:

> It is a serious thing, a man of such degenerate culture, and it is frightening indeed to see that our whole educated reading public bears the mark of this degeneration. When our educated men ceaselessly read journalists, and even cooperate in their work of corrupting the people, we have no choice but to suppose that their erudition is functioning for them much as writing novels functions for others: as a flight from themselves, a desperate self-annihilation, an ascetic strangulation of their own drive for education and culture.[48]

The spectacle of degenerate culture and degenerate individuals will thus provoke disgust. In his second Lecture, Nietzsche already said:

> If you cannot feel a sacred duty here, then you have not even the seed of higher culture within you.[49]

What is at stake in these lectures, then, is above all the young man's confrontation with his vocation, which at the same time takes Nietzsche back to his own fear, which bears witness to an existential crisis in his vocation as a scholar[50]. The point here is not so much to talk about institutions as such, or programs, but to bear witness, first and foremost, to the existential crisis that the young man faced with the vital risk of renouncing his vocation. Hence the appeal to the youth to emerge from this torpor, in the manner of what he will propose again at the end of the second *Untimely Meditation*: an appeal to the youth who must resort to the Apollonian to organize the Dionysian chaos.[51] This appeal to the youth also reflects the fact that Nietzsche does not

47 Even if the Platonic philosopher is lined up after being ridiculed, he also arouses a form of hatred.

48 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, V, p. 81.

49 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, II, p. 23.

50 Again on that topic, see the article we co-wrote with Quentin Landenne (*Op. cit*.).

51 B. Stiegler interestingly notes that *The Birth of Tragedy* replaced Platonic experience with «of being and its unity, the experience of arch-unity, which has become the horrifying ordeal of a chaos of contradictions» (Stiegler, «Nietzsche et la critique de la *Bildung*», § 7, we translate). The author goes on to say: «If philosophy must henceforth start from the 'terrible' (*deinon*) and no longer from the 'marvelous' (*thauma*), it is because it now begins with the appalling experience of chaos,

fully identify with the character of the old philosopher, who appears relatively grotesque in his invective. The reader cannot fully identify with him, who is clearly embittered and overly pessimistic. He constantly gives the impression that he has lost his enthusiasm, and so cannot arouse such passion.

From this point of view, Nietzsche's insistence on the affect of fear can also seem like a form of renunciation of what should be the starting point of philosophy, if the period were not so dark. If Nietzsche recovers the Platonic affect of fear, it is clear that he does not give it the same function as that attributed to it by Plato (a metaphysical mean to seek beauty). Instead, he gives it a more Schopenhauerian tinge.[52] We might therefore be tempted to see in the alternation between enthusiasm and fear an alternation between the sunny Platonic aspect and the much darker figure represented by Schopenhauer, embittered by the times in which he lives. And the figure of the philosopher, as portrayed in these lectures, in fact combines this dual aspect Socratic (through his refutation) and Schopenhauerian (through his theses in particular and the violence of the terms he uses in relation to modernity).

The spectrum of Schopenhauer

So, apart from the reference to Plato, we need now to say more about the spectrum of Schopenhauer in these lectures. First, we would like to discuss further the claim that Nietzsche already saw himself as this old philosopher.[53] It is true that the young Nietzsche's theses are generally brought to bear by the

including in its most sinister and disturbing forms.» (*Idem*, § 8). However, we challenge this very 'metaphysical' reading of Nietzsche's use of fear, which in our view refers above all to a political and educational issue.

52 However, we do not agree with B. Stiegler's reading, which consists in making it a metaphysical affect, in the Nietzschean usage: «Placing himself on the very terrain of Plato's and Aristotle's metaphysics (that of the true being, the original One and the divine), Nietzsche formulates, in the wake of Schopenhauer, a 'metaphysical hypothesis' that substitutes fear for wonder» (Stiegler, *Op. cit*, § 7, we translate). This raises the question of whether Nietzsche's problematic of *Bildung* is rooted, as B. Stiegler argues, in the metaphysical hypothesis of *The Birth of Tragedy*. We are not satisfied with this point, at least not in its stated form, since we would not understand why this concept of *Bildung* remains a major one in the rest of Nietzsche's work. It is also omnipresent in the *Untimely Meditations*, which dispense with a metaphysical hypothesis as perceived by B. Stiegler in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Although they were written over the same period, *The Birth of Tragedy*, for the very specific reasons that led Nietzsche to write such a work, is not entirely at one with the *Untimely Meditations*. Nietzsche does use Schopenhauerian language, particularly in the third section, but there is a real shift from metaphysics to a political project of education. We agree with her conclusion that «this new beginning finally reveals the profoundly non-metaphysical meaning of the 'metaphysical hypothesis' of the first Nietzsche» (*Ibid*.).

53 Janz wrote the following about the philosopher who appears in the Conferences: «Nietzsche already saw himself as the 'old philosopher', and it was not long before, while still relatively young, he began to sign his letters, although this pseudonym was never applied to him. He never achieved the serenity of the old philosopher, but remained the fiery fighter who had turned his pen into a formidable weapon. In these lectures, he sets out his demands for a critique of culture, which is to say, to a large extent, a genuine critique of society.» (Janz, *Op. cit.*, p. 406, we translate).

philosopher, but at the same time there is a critical distance here. We therefore argue that, while it is mostly Schopenhauer who hides behind the traits of the embittered old philosopher, Nietzsche maintains a certain distance from him, even though he essentially defends the young Nietzsche's theses. But this is not a one-sided portrait, and the philosopher can be as much Socrates as Schopenhauer, even if the bitterness of the character makes us think more of the German philosopher than of him. Moreover, Nietzsche's character is himself present at the scene, and it is doubtful that the author, who is appealing to youth, would not put himself in the shoes of an old hand. There is more of an ambiguity here, a game of masks, rather similar to the way Plato plays with the figure of Socrates. In these lectures, then, there is both an enhancement of and a distancing from Plato and Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche is clearly somewhere between the two poles.

Thus, if we argue that the old philosopher represents Schopenhauer more than Nietzsche himself, as we have said, this does not mean that the old philosopher in the lectures fully identifies with Schopenhauer, since the problematic of flight that we mentioned earlier («Remain at your post!») is clearly Platonic[54]. In the same way that Nietzsche can take up Platonic elements while appropriating or diverting them, his use of Schopenhauer is never pure and simple recuperation. This can be seen, for example, in his distancing himself from Schopenhauer's metaphysics of genius, which bears witness to the fact that Nietzsche did not wait until the period of *Human, All too Human* to be critical of Schopenhauer and that he never believed in his metaphysics.[55]

But if Nietzsche seems first and foremost to imagine Schopenhauer in the guise of this philosopher, it is because Schopenhauer constantly speaks to us of this metaphysics of genius. Yet, at the same time, there is a form of Nietzschean retreat, which can be heard in the voice of the companion who follows the argument. Precisely, this character seems skeptical and at least puts this metaphysics of genius at a distance:

> 'Teacher', his companion said, 'you amaze me with this metaphysics of genius, and I have only a dim sense of the truth in these metaphors'.[56]

54 This is also the function Socrates gives himself in the *Apology*, entrusted to him by Apollo.

55 As P. D'Iorio reminds us: «Nietzsche never believed in Schopenhauer's metaphysical system [...]. Nietzsche never believed in the epistemological value of metaphysics, but always attributed to it an edifying function, as conceptual poetry. This theoretical framework would form the basis of the metaphysics of art in *The Birth of Tragedy*.» (*Dictionnaire Nietzsche,* D. Astor (dir.), Paris : Robert Laffont, 2017, p. 576-577, we translate).

56 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, III, p. 43. Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon also write that «The old philosopher strongly resembles Schopenhauer in both bearing and thought. But ideas very much in line with Nietzsche's are also expressed by the former disciple» (Idem, Introduction, p. xvii).

It is understandable, then, that this is not what really counts for Nietzsche, who never really believed in Schopenhauer's metaphysics, but at this point he shares his aristocratic attitude and his disillusioned view of an age in which genius is in peril. Like Schopenhauer's philosophy on this point, Platonic astonishment sent us directly back to a metaphysical dimension. And this is perhaps precisely one of the reasons for the overall substitution of fear for astonishment since the fear that Nietzsche wants to substitute does not have this metaphysical dimension (and therefore this use would be different from the Platonic fear characteristic of the *Phaedrus*). What matters to Nietzsche, then, is not the Schopenhauerian metaphor, but the discourse on education that emerges from it:

> But I understand perfectly what you said before, about the excessive number of gymnasiums and the resulting excess of teachers.[57]

Here we return to the theme we started from, namely that of the democratization of *Bildung*, which denies the natural aristocracy of the mind and the fact that few are cut out for true *Bildung*,[58] and even the fact that the *Zeitgeist* that defends emancipation through culture is in fact fighting against true culture, which is clearly a theme that Nietzsche imitates from Schopenhauer:

> These heralds proclaiming the needs of culture, seen from up close, appear suddenly transformed into eager, even fanatical enemies of true culture – one that holds firm to the aristocratic nature of the spirit. Their fundamental goal is the emancipation of the masses from the rule of the great individuals. What they are working toward is the overthrow of the most sacred order in the empire of the intellect: the servitude, submissive obedience, and instinctive loyalty of the masses to the scepter of genius.[59]

Schopenhauer wrote that «The public, however, could not be benefited by anything so much as by the recognition of this *intellectual aristocracy of nature*»; and that, to be a philosopher «is really only a question of *thinking before* others», a quality «bestowed only by nature and then extremely rarely»[60]. This idea is echoed in his work, *On philosophy at the Universities*:

57 *Ibid*.

58 «we must proclaim with one voice that people truly destined by nature for an educational path are infinitely few and far between, and that far fewer institutions of higher education that we have today would be enough to let these rare people develop successfully» (Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, III, p. 40).

59 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, III, p. 41.

60 Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, translated by E. F. J. Payne, Dover Publications, New York, 1958, vol. II, p. 147.

> But what the public never seems to recognize – because there are good reasons for not recognizing it – is *the aristocracy of nature* […] Once nature, in the best of spirits, allows to proceed from her hands the rarest of products, a spirit truly gifted beyond ordinary measure, when fate, in a benevolent mood, allows the spirit to develop, indeed, when his works have finally 'overcome the opposition of a dull world,' and are acknowledged and recommended as the standard, then it does not take the majority, the public, long to drag some political puppet out from under a rock in order to place him at the altar beside the gifted intellect, because they do not realize how *aristocratic nature is*: She is so much so that her factory may produce 300 million articles before one truly great spirit emerges.[61]

Schopenhauer saw genius as «the clear mirror of the inner nature of the world».[62] He is the person who has been able to set aside his individual interests in order to see the world objectively. But the question was more one of gnoseology and epistemology than politics. So, these themes of genius and aristocratic nature of the spirit, inherited from Schopenhauer, take on a particular acuity when they are related to the cultural and political problem that Nietzsche envisages in these lectures: how can educational institutions be conceived if so few men are destined for true culture? What sense can be made of such an educational enterprise, admittedly small in relation to what was being practiced at the time Nietzsche was writing, if only a select few are likely to attain an authentic identity through *Bildung*?

Genius is only the tip of the pyramid, and it is the true *telos* that everything else is aimed at, from the very broad base of the pyramid, as Schopenhauer was already saying at the very end of *On philosophy at the Universities*:

> The *aristocracy of nature* cannot sincerely be denied. Nature is more aristocratic than any feudal or caste system. Accordingly, her pyramid rises from a very broad to a very sharp summit.[63]

Nietzsche uses the term 'pyramid' again in the fourth Lecture:

> You have said so much about the genius and his solitary, difficult wandering through the word, as though nature were capable of producing only polar opposites: on the one hand, the stupid, sleeping masses who proliferate by instinct alone, and on the other, enormously distant from them, the great contemplative individuals who are capable of eternal creations. But you yourself call these individuals the top of the intellectual pyramid […]. Where does what you call culture begin – which block of stone marks the boundary between the lower sphere and

61 Schopenhauer, *On philosophy at the Universities*, p. 64.

62 Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, translated by E. F. J. Payne, Dover Publications, New York, 1958, vol. I, § 36, p. 186.

63 Schopenhauer, *On philosophy at the Universities*, p. 95.

> the higher? And if we can truly speak of 'culture' only with respect to these most distant beings, how could their incalculable nature be the basis of an institution – what would it even mean to imagine educational institutions that benefit solely these chosen few?[64]

In the philosopher's terms, the genius would be so exceptional that he would have absolutely nothing to do with the rest of mankind, so that in his case, nature would have made something of a leap. But, it seems quite obvious that, in Nietzsche's opinion, genuine culture must be the aim of the true university and of society itself. Under these conditions, the individual must not be at the service of society, but rather society must be capable of sacrificing most of itself for the benefit of true individuality, i.e. the chosen few.

Conclusion

Going against the trend towards the democratization of culture, but also against that of the emancipation of the people, Nietzsche's strategy is to keep this mass asleep, unaware of this mechanism. In a text contemporary with these lectures, *The Greek State*, Nietzsche refers to Plato's *Republic* as being misunderstood since it is taken lightly by contemporary scholars, even though it represents the acme of this ideal. Nietzsche's interest in Plato's *Republic* as a model – the quintessence of the Greek spirit, which pushed forward the Greek ideal of a positive communion between the State and the genius[65]. The State at the service of genius is thus manifest in a text that Nietzsche addressed to Cosima Wagner, written like four other prefaces to books that were never written during the Christmas holidays of 1872, that is at the end of the year in which these lectures were delivered. Far from believing that the university and culture should be at the service of the State, it is the State that should be at the service of *Bildung* according to Nietzsche, and it is what would emerge from the Platonic model.

But we must also realize that this model is not entirely Platonic since the city does not serve the geniuses, even if they are philosophers, in Plato's view. It is necessary to provide the best conditions for the appearance of the philosopher, but the philosopher is in turn responsible for the excellence and happiness of the city, so that the Platonic end is the whole, whereas the end that Nietzsche seems to be aiming for is the individual genius. In fact, although the starting point of the text is the future of institutions, we notice that there is little mention of this and that it is much more a question of thinking through what must be done to make true culture possible, as embodied in an individual. Does

64 Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, IV, p. 61-62.

65 See also the article we co-wrote with Quentin Landenne on this matter (*Op. cit*.).

Nietzsche not already renounce such a political model and such a vocation for the university, which would once again explain why its vocation is in crisis? Isn't he also giving up hope of a leader capable of restoring *Bildung*?[66] In this case, *Bildung* would become the privilege of exceptional individuals who fulfils themselves and should only be thought of in this sense. That is to say *Bildung* is individual and the realization of the politics of *Bildung* in the individual. In which case, Nietzsche starts from a Platonic device that he actually turns against the Platonic thesis. Plato speaks to the individual for the collective, Nietzsche to the very few for the individual.

In conclusion, we feel that there is a kind of hesitation on Nietzsche's part, who wonders whether the institution can still create *Bildung* or whether it is not outside that it should be sought and built, in which case we are closer to Schopenhauer. He would then be playing Plato against Schopenhauer, but also Schopenhauer against Plato. Nietzsche orchestrates a kind of joust between the two[67]. He uses Plato to overcome the pessimism of the old Schopenhauer (which does not seem to be the end of the story), but also Schopenhauer, among others, to arrive at an individualistic thesis that is no longer Plato's at all, foreshadowing Nietzsche's break with the university.

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66 As Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon state: «In 1872, young Nietzsche claimed, of course, to be confident that a redemptive intervention made possible by the 'purification of the German spirit' would improve German education. But in the end, his faith seems less than solid. The philosopher's important friend, who we are prompted to suspect might be the kind of leader Nietzsche was hoping for, never fully arrives» (Nietzsche, *Anti-education. On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, Introduction, p. xxv).

67 See Nicolas Quérini and Quentin Landenne, «Critique et crise de la *Bildung*. La politique inactuelle de la culture chez le jeune Nietzsche», *Op. cit.*

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