II. Recognition of Plato as a problem. Plato assessment and interpretations

2.1 Plato as material to be improved according to P. Semenenko

Polish Christian thought in the mid-19th century did not have a single image of Plato, and therefore it could not make a clear, unequivocal assessment of his philosophy from the Christian point of view. Two short exemplary texts testify to this ambivalence in assessing Plato. The first of them appeared on the pages of the *Pielgrzym* (*Pilgrim*), a journal addressed to Catholic intellectuals, where some excerpts from the works of Antoine-Eugene Genoud were published in 1844. Genoud was a French clergyman who explicitly criticised the view on the affinity between Christian thought and Plato and on the possible influence of Platonism on Christianity. The purpose of his text was clearly polemical, and among his arguments the following appeared: if Platonism had been a predecessor of Christianity, then Christian dogmas would easily have spread throughout the world, but this in fact did not happen; the pagans found Christian doctrine bizarre. Had it been more in line with Platonism, there would have been little difficulty in its being widely accepted. Evidence of the differences between the two doctrines could also be seen in their divergent ethical systems. The notion of Platonism itself was also criticised. It was pointed out that Platonism in the Academy differed from the neo-Platonism that arose in the Christian era. Admittedly there may have been some common points between Christianity and neo-Platonism, but this was only because neo-Platonists, starting with Plotinus, copied the ideas of Christian teachings. As for Platonism itself, among the Church Fathers it was only Justin and Augustine who could be considered to have known it, so bearing these arguments in mind, Genoud concluded that "it is […] strange and even ridiculous to think that the Christians learned their own faith from idolaters."[1]

1 "Czy Chrystyanizm…", 1844: 14. Almost half of all the philosophical texts published in the *Pilgrim* were translations from French. Jan Bogdan, the translator, was a preacher and teacher, who published sermons and prayer-books (Błachnio, 1997: 48, 71).

This short text is characteristic of the type of texts that appeared on the pages of the "Pielgrzym", which catered for the expectations of intellectuals with an unambiguously Catholic worldview. For the editors, showing the separateness of Christian philosophy and rational philosophy seems to have been their most important goal.[2] Since Plato could clearly be classified as a rational philosopher, he was considered to be a secondary figure. The excerpts from Genoud were therefore published not so much to disseminate a particular image of Plato but only to show the originality of Christian thought which, unlike all other human philosophy, including Platonism, had its starting point in divine revelation.

A decade later, an article which went to the other extreme appeared in another Catholic journal, *Pamiętnik Religijno-Moralny* (*Journal of Religion and Morality*). Again, it was not an article about Plato himself, but his authority was used to strengthen Christian thought against contemporary philosophy, to improve the quality of Christian teaching and to deepen its philosophical foundations. Since Plato articulated so many thoughts that were essentially Christian, "the more embarrassing should it be for the church pulpit, which touches the most important truths of religion only superficially, or completely passes them over in silence just because they require deeper understanding and argument."[3] The paper begins by confirming that the Church Fathers were acquainted with Plato, that they referred to him, and that convergences between his philosophy and their teachings occurred. But the Church Fathers were not alone in their affinity with Plato, for "even Saint John the Evangelist meets this pious sage [=Plato] on his own ground, and his teaching about *Logos* is actually related to the notion of *Logos* in Plato, in the same way as the perfect image painted by a first-class artist relates to the image painted by a novice, or less skilled painter, who catches only the general outline of the subject."[4] In very broad terms, then, it can be said that Plato anticipated the Gospel and Christianity, and he solved many specific philosophical problems in the Christian spirit.

One of the problems that is highlighted in this article is Socrates' praise of the good, beautiful and just life in the *Crito* (47d-48b), for in such a life

2 Błachnio, 1997: 43–51.

3 "Myśli chrześciańskie w pismach Platona", 1854: 279. Let us add, as a side note, that this paper was published with quite a large number of misprints, which are particularly glaring when it comes to the titles of Plato's dialogues: *Entyphron* (268), *Memnon* (269), *Pheaitos* (274), and Greek words: "metampsycosis" (277) or „Stades" (278) – instead of "Hades".

4 "Myśli chrześciańskie w pismach Platona", 1854: 266.

there is no fear of physical death, as this should not be at the forefront of human concern. Socrates' submission to God in the *Crito* (54d–e) or in the *Apology*, where his way of life is justified by the Delphic Oracle, was explicitly regarded as an anticipation of Christian teachings. The *Euthyphro*, in turn, was read as an encouragement to religious practices. Not everywhere, however, was Plato close to Christianity. He did not recognise, for example, that human nature was tainted by original sin. This resulted from Plato's ethical intellectualism, according to which moral deficiencies did not stem from the fall of the first parents, but essentially resulted from the shortcomings of human cognitive powers.

In the *Gorgias*, on the other hand, Socrates seemed almost to be a supporter of Christian revivalism in his distinction between good and pleasure, in his praise of the well-ordered, reasonable, decent and pious life (*e.g.* 504a–e), and especially in his criticism of Callicles. Socrates' final speech concerning the judgment of the dead (522d–527e) was recognised as the most important fragment in the *Gorgias*, providing evidence of similarities between Platonism and Christianity. In the *Theaetetus* (*e.g.* 161c–162a), Socrates' criticism of Protagorean cognitive relativism based on sensualism was interpreted on Christian grounds as a need to recognise *auctoritas* (176a–c). Similarly, his reflection on the fact that death is not evil was also considered to be a Christian sentiment, so Socrates, if he could have been a Christian, would probably have used the words of the apostle Paul: *mihi mori lucrum est*. It was, however, with regret that the author noted that Plato accepted metempsychosis, and therefore his arguments in favour of the immortality of the soul were those based on the simplicity and homogeneity of the soul, or those presenting the soul's role in directing and animating the body, as a result of which it could not be defeated by death. Pagan philosophers, then, centered their disputes around truths which were essentially Christian and even led their lives according to these truths. "The connection between Christian revelation and Plato's philosophy comes to light in the very words of this philosopher and reverberates to such an extent that it is sufficient to merely quote his main thoughts to consider him a pagan prophet of our religion".[5]

As the above texts have shown, attitudes to Plato in the inter-uprising period (1831–1863) were not in harmony, and often completely polarised opinions about him were expressed. A slightly more moderate position was taken by Feliks Kozłowski (1803–1872), an uncompromising critic of Bronisław Trentowski's thought. Indeed his book, *The Origins of Christian*

5 "Myśli chrześciańskie w pismach Platona", 1854: 277.

Philosophy, was in fact a polemic against Trentowski's philosophy, showing that it was remote from Christian, or scholastic, philosophy, which, according to Kozłowski, was exactly what Poles needed.

Kozłowski was no doubt referring to Plato, among other philosophers, when he stated that "albeit not everything was true on the bosom of philosophy or cognition, everything was useful for philosophy"[6]. According to Kozłowski, among the benefits Plato brought to philosophy was his initiation of the speculative trend in philosophy. He was also the first to undertake metaphilosophical issues. For Kozłowski, the whole of Plato's philosophy should be judged on the basis of its moral purpose, for it is a response to the ethical questions asked by Socrates, and above all, to questions about the good, the law and the nature of morality. Plato did not fail to investigate the nature of all things, and the starting point for his philosophy was in the realm of the spirit, from which his interests in philosophy and mathematics originated.

Kozłowski claimed that, from the Christian point of view, one of the most valuable merits of Plato's philosophy was to be found in the conception of innate ideas. Equally valuable was the fact that Plato saw the purpose of philosophy within the sphere of ethics, its aim being to prevent the moral decline of his time. Philosophy as a means of improving the state of morality was one of the priorities of Polish critics of Hegelianism and German philosophy. In this regard, therefore, they could regard Plato as their ally. Kozłowski's assessment of Plato tended to avoid the superficial extremes noted in the previous articles, but he did not succeed in providing a comprehensive interpretation of Platonism.

During this period, then, the possibility of reconciling Plato with Christianity was still an open question in Polish philosophical circles. It was not until studies by Piotr Semenenko (1814–1886) appeared in print that a compromise solution was provided which was to be accepted by later writers. In the years 1859–1861 a series of Semenenko's papers was published in *Przegląd Poznański* (*Poznań Review*) under the collective title of "Philosophical Symposia" ("Biesiady filozoficzne"). At that time, Semenenko's period of youthful quests was behind him, and he had succeeded in developing a coherent philosophical worldview, or even a system of philosophy.[7] His "Philosophical Symposia" were essentially devoted to Greek philosophy, largely to Plato, and they were also Platonic in form, for they were dialogues. The "Symposia" were unique in Semenko's legacy, both in

6 Kozłowski, F., 1845: 146.
7 Smolikowski, 1921: 3.

terms of form and subject, so it is unfortunate that historians of philosophy have devoted so little attention to them, preferring instead to present Semenenko's philosophical views on the basis of his systematic treatises in Latin.[8]

According to Semenenko, the Polish word 'biesiada' (*symposium*) had become impoverished and limited in meaning to 'feast'. Referring to Linde's dictionary of the Polish language, he found that 'biesiada' denotes a meeting where 'both parties sit down' or 'banquet'.[9] Following Plato, though as yet not directly mentioned, Semenenko emphasised how useful this form of writing was: "We would like to see philosophy full of life, so we have chosen a form for it which shows life at its fullest. We would like to make philosophy accessible, and it seems to us that it will be most accessible in this form. Ultimately, we would like to make it clear, obvious and convincing."[10] The dialogical form can even be said to be an expression of a characteristic feature of Semenenko's train of thought, the purpose of which was to show the path that the author had travelled in order to allow the reader to experience the same.[11] The dialogues, as Semenenko imagined, were set in a 'Modern Babel' after the November Uprising, namely in

8 Gabryl took the "Symposia" as the basis for the reconstruction of Semenenko's philosophical views (Gabryl, 1914: 209–221), but did not devote any attention to Plato or ancient philosophy. He also briefly summarised Semenenko's philosophical views on the basis of "Symposia" in another text (Gabryl, 1913). Prior to this, Smolikowski (Smolikowski, 1904, 1904a, 1921) had drawn attention to Semenenko, whose philosophy he compared to scholastic philosophy and to Thomism. While Smolikowski limited himself to comparisons, Gabryl attempted to analyse the value of Semenenko's modifications of Scholasticism, concluding that not all of them were improvements (Gabryl, 1914: 223). "Symposia" can also be considered as the most representative of Semenenko's production as a thinker, but doing philosophy was at most a complement to his extensive activities in numerous areas (Jabłońska-Deptuła, 1966: 705). A detailed study of "Symposia" can be found in Mróz, 2009–2010.

9 Semenenko, 1859: 117. It should be added that Linde gives more examples of the use of this word, which would not have been to Semenenko's liking, namely relating 'symposium' (biesiada) to a place where 'the devil sits' ('bies siada'; Linde, 1807: 107). Undoubtedly, however, Semenenko would have been ready to accept that the devil was involved in creating *Biesiada* by Andrzej Towiański (1799–1878), a mystic and religious reformer who influenced a significant number of Polish emigrants in France, including Mickiewicz.

10 Semenenko, 1859: 117. Gabryl supposes that the dialogical form was chosen by Semenenko for the sake of its ceremonious character (Gabryl, 1914: 210), while regarding the style of the "Symposia" as beautiful in comparison to Semenenko's other works (Gabryl, 1914: 234).

11 Kaszuba, 1985: 35.

Paris during the period of the Great Emigration. It is not insignificant to note that Semenenko's "Symposia" can, at least to some extent, be read against the background of the Resurrectionists' dispute with the author of another *Symposium*, namely with Andrzej Towiański, the 'sower of tares', as he is described in the Resurrectionists' historiography.[12]

Among the characters of the dialogue there is one who occupied a special position, depicting someone who played an extremely important role in Semenenko's biography, namely Bogdan Jański (1807–1840). On account of his virtues, Semenenko wrote: "We will therefore introduce this name into our symposia, as a central character, and take him as our guide. He will be our Socrates."[13] In designating Jański as the Socrates of Polish emigration, Semenenko achieved another goal, which was to commemorate his teacher. At the same time, this placed him in the role of Plato. Jański himself, experiencing moments of doubts in religion and in the significance of moral action, made a note that Plato's philosophy 'uplifted him to some extent',[14] which most likely meant that Platonism prepared him for higher aims. Taking on the role of Plato's Socrates, Bogdan leads the interlocutors to the proper starting point of the discussion, that is, to the definition of the concepts used. Moreover, Bogdan formulated a method of studying the history of philosophy that involved searching for the first substantial thought of each philosopher: "We will go through all the more significant philosophical systems, the older, the newer, and the latest […]. This will be an interesting analysis, an instructive perspective. Each of these systems will be required to tell us what it set down as the first thought, as the first idea, as the beginning from which it started, and we will see clearly that this beginning was the cause of all the errors, whether inaccuracies, perversions or complete falsehoods, that every subsequent system committed."[15]

In the third "Symposium", Ewaryst, an expert in ancient philosophy, appears. He is introduced as follows: "He is truly a man of the old school: for him, only revered antiquity has the wisdom to judge what is healthy and the mouth to speak in comely fashion."[16] Ewaryst is not uncritically attached to antiquity, which will be of importance as the dispute proceeds.

12 *Cf*.: Kosiński, W., 1966: 21–57, 67–84.
13 Semenenko, 1859: 118; *cf*.: Błachnio, 2001: 136–137.
14 Smolikowski, 1892: 6.
15 Smolikowski, 1859a: 140.
16 Semenenko, 1859b: 257.

Bogdan welcomes the new interlocutor with joy, having heard him declare: "*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*."[17]

Before the proper subject of the "Symposium" is taken up, Bogdan provides his interlocutors with a unique guide to ancient philosophy in a nutshell, which will give them an insight into the history of this philosophy and its 'geography': "I will give you a key to this philosophy, I will give you a map with which you will see not only the history of this philosophy, but you will recognise and see in advance the history of any other philosophy."[18] The usefulness of this tool seems all the greater since the history of philosophy appears to the interlocutors simply as the history of human erring. Bogdan then draws attention to a diagram that has been printed on the page preceding the text of "Symposium" as a kind of a genealogical tree of Greek philosophers. Let us present from this diagram the part that directly concerns Plato: after Socrates, five philosophical schools were placed between the *sceptici idei* and the sceptics of matter. From the left the schools are as follows: the Megarian, the Academy, the Lycaeum, the Cynics, the Cyrenaics. The philosophical position of the Academy is described as idealistic dualism, and that of the Lycaeum – as materialistic dualism. The sceptics of ideas, Arcesilaus and Carneades, and the eclectics (Cicero) were descended from Plato's successors. Further to the left, the line of development of Platonism leads through Philo of Alexandria to the school of Plotinus, which is labelled as 'non-intellect' (*bezrozum*). Porphyry, Jamblichus and Proclus are mentioned after Plotinus.[19] The failure of Plato's successors, especially of Plotinus, 'the mystic of ideas', was twofold. Not only did he lead Platonism astray, but he neither understood, nor even noticed, the key historical moment in which he lived, when Christianity was becoming more influential. As a result of this oversight, his philosophy was doomed to failure.

Idealistic dualism is the rejection of the unity of form and being (*jestestwo*), when "we begin with form and go to being, maintaining that form is not identical with being, in other words, that being is what really is, and form is that which is the opposite of being; being as an idea turns out to be that which always exists and is immutable, beautiful and good, while form as matter is that which passes away, shapeless by its nature, dark and

17 Semenenko, 1859b: 258.
18 Semenenko, 1859b: 260.
19 Semenenko, 1859b: 256.

evil."[20] Idealistic dualism, Platonism, was therefore a negation of the real existence of the world.

Christianity had every right to use the philosophical legacy of antiquity because "all good inventions, bright ideas, sacred truths are inherently God's property, and those to whom God gave the entire store of His truth to guard have the full right to them; I am speaking to us, to Christians, who are the owners and guardians of the divine revealed truth."[21] Thus Christian thought, by possessing the ultimate truth, could incorporate ancient philosophy, especially that which was consistent with revelation, and thereby was true.

Bogdan asks Ewaryst to present Platonism. The edition of the dialogues by Immanuel Bekker served as the basis for their discussion.[22] Bogdan, somewhat curbing Ewaryst's oratorical virtuosity, directs the conversation towards epistemological issues, and asks about the foundation of Plato's thoughts. Ewaryst briefly summarises Plato's dualism in the sphere of metaphysics and the dualistic theory of cognition as its consequence. He thought it appropriate to quote several passages from the dialogues. He selected book VII of the *Republic* and the well-known depiction of the prisoners in the cave, the most important fragment of which is the following: "*there at the end of the intellectual realm* (is) *the Idea of the Good, and it is barely to be seen*, but when it is, it must be considered veritably for all as *the cause of everything that is right and beautiful*, it has created the light and its ruler (sun) in the visible (world), *and in the intellectual world it is the only master, the creator of truth and reason*, and it should be known to everyone who wants to act reasonably, whether in private or public."[23]

Ewaryst answered Bogdan's request and summarised the fragments that had just been read. He emphasised the duality mentioned at the beginning, developing the separation of opinion from knowledge, and pointing

20 Semenenko, 1859b: 263.

21 Semenenko, 1859b: 268.

22 Semenenko, 1859b: 273–274. *Platonis Dialogi graece et latine*, ex recensione Immanuelis Bekkeri, t. 1–8, Berolini 1816–1818. However, when quoting fragments of the dialogues in subsequent parts of the "Symposium", Semenenko refers to Didot's edition (*Platonis opera*, t. 1–3, Parisiis 1846–1873; Semenenko, 1859b: 278, footnote), and at the same time provides the Stephani pagination. It should be noted, however, that Didot's edition was produced in the period between Semenenko's stay in Paris and the time of writing the "Symposia". Possibly, then, the interlocutors' mention of the Bekker edition, was intended by Semenenko to add authenticity to the "Symposia", for they referred only to the work that was at that time available.

23 Semenenko, 1859b: 277.

out Plato's terminological inconsistency and indecisiveness in this regard (γνῶσις or νόησις), which he put down to Plato's difficulty in selecting words rather than to any lack of understanding of the nature of things. In the above-mentioned translations Semenenko rendered εἶδος as "form", and translated τὸ ὄν as the participle "being" (*będące*), while the title of Plato's work, apart from its traditional rendering, "Rzeczpospolita" ("Republic"), could still be found in the version: "Miastorządztwo" ("City-government").

In the most important of Ewaryst's comments there is an organised summary of the epistemological material gathered directly from the dialogues, which, for the audience's convenience, was schematically presented as follows:

"*Essence* (οὐσία)	= *becoming* (γένεσις)
comprehension (νόεσις):	= opinion (δόξα):
1. knowledge (ἐπιστήμη)	=1. belief (πίστις)
2. thinking (διάνοια)	=2. imagining (εἰκασία)."[24]

After this summary of Plato's position, Bogdan, following the example of Plato's Socrates, asks Ewaryst questions. The conversation starts with the lowest level of cognition. It is established that Plato did not attach much importance to this, and introduced it, perhaps, only for the sake of symmetry. The next section raises doubts about the terminology, because belief, or faith, in the modern sense was simply revelation of the truth. Finally, the interlocutors conclude that the division made by Plato in the sphere of opinion is of no great significance in his philosophy, and that opinion in general is "*seeing and knowing visible things by human beings, but never having certainty in themselves.*"[25] Bogdan, however, in true Socratic style, opposes this, and in a series of short questions he leads Ewaryst to the necessity of admitting that consciousness of his own body and of its conditions is bound up with certainty, which simultaneously relates to the visible sphere, and thus contradicts the above definition of opinion. The enthusiast for antiquity, however, defends Plato, accusing the interlocutor of the desire to discuss philosophical issues using common sense (literally: peasant's reasoning). He argues that in Platonism certainty must be associated with immutability, which does not apply to any statements concerning the

24 Semenenko, 1859b: 282.
25 Semenenko, 1859b: 284.

body. To confirm this he recalls further fragments of the *Republic*, this time book V (476e–477b, 478a–e, 479c–480a), in which Plato separated opinion from knowledge (capability) and presents it as something intermediate between knowledge and ignorance, for it concerns that which is "*being together with non-being*, which lies midway between pure being and absolute non-being."[26] In the final parts of the translations the word φιλόσοφος was rendered as "wisdom-lover" (philosopher), while φιλόδοξος as "illusion-lover", and then as "dream-spectator".

Semenenko, as Bogdan, then goes on to radicalise Socrates' considerations in the *Phaedo* (65a–b). In saying that the senses do not really provide immutable, certain knowledge, Socrates did not completely deny their cognitive power. Yet in Bogdan's interpretation the conclusion is: "sensory vision is completely deceptive, […] seeing and hearing are unreliable and uncertain senses, which do not report to us *anything reliable*, or *true*, and through them we cannot reach *any truth*."[27] Ewaryst realised that Bogdan had gone further than Plato's Socrates, and articulated certain doubts. These were dispelled by Bogdan, who excused himself with the need for haste, as he wanted to get acquainted with the whole of Plato's philosophy.

Bogdan stated that the aesthetic aspect of Plato's work, and also some of his deep ethical thoughts, had blinded the Christian reader to a number of his errors. Let us quote here a longer graphic fragment which reflects the doubts and evaluations peculiar to Christian thinkers who have succumbed to the charm of Plato: "In Plato there is so much that seems honourable in his thinking, so much certainty in his moral part and overall there is so much sense that it is difficult to consent to any final conclusion following from his teaching that deviates from the truth. Reading his works with affection only, but without skilful analysis and judgment, we always seem to be following a pleasant path leading to a respectable inn; and because we have our eyes closed during this journey, we do not notice the many bends and bridges, or the props and cantilevers that are all the while repairing the unsafe foundations of the road to prevent us from falling into a precipice every third or tenth step. But all such aids on the philosophical road have been borrowed from elsewhere, and are called inconsistencies; if the road were left alone in its original state we would go straight into a burrow."[28]

26 Semenenko, 1859b: 287.
27 Semenenko, 1859b: 290.
28 Semenenko, 1859b: 291.

One of Bogdan's important critical arguments against Platonism is that since Plato included the material world within the cognitive sphere of opinion, then as a consequence, he excluded it from the sphere of philosophy, and thus deprived philosophy of at least half of its problems. Bogdan went on to demonstrate the contradiction in Plato's reasoning. Since it was stated that the subject of opinion was that which simultaneously is and is not, or – as Semenenko wrote – "that which is both being and non-being,"[29] then, by learning this, man gains knowledge of that which is, and that which is not in particular things, so both can be differentiated. If man had not been able to make such a distinction, then, as a consequence, as Bogdan argues, he would not have known that the object of knowledge is a combination of being and non-being, yet he knows this. Thus, knowledge about material objects exists, for it turns out that opinion, as understanding of being and non-being, is the knowledge of being which allows it to be distinguished from non-being. Ultimately, then, belief is knowledge, but Plato directly denies this. Plato's error, according to Bogdan, consisted in the fact that the possibility of combining being with non-being in the sphere of metaphysics was by analogy transferred to the theory of cognition, in which Plato recognised the possibility of merging, or mixing knowledge and ignorance in opinion. It was also pointed out, as another of Plato's errors, that he failed to consider the necessity that being can become the subject of knowledge "*as long as it reveals itself, and we grasp it* […]. Can being, even the utmost being, be the subject of any new knowledge if it does not reveal itself to us, and if we do not grasp it?"[30] It is necessary, then, to include the moment of revelation in philosophy, and Plato did not do this.

The highest level of knowledge is knowing "exactly and accurately."[31] Between this and ignorance there are other levels of cognition of varied brightness. Bogdan used Plato's terminology for them, but he gave them different meanings, making some corrections to Plato's text. Let us quote a longer passage: "*Doubt* can be defined as the degree of knowledge in which something is not known with certainty, that is, an insufficient number of signs from the object revealing itself have been grasped to know whether it is this or that, so it is actually a kind of ignorance; *opinion*, in turn is the level at which enough features have been grasped to assume that it is this object, although still not without some concern that it might be the oppo-

29 Semenenko, 1859b: 293.
30 Semenenko, 1859b: 294.
31 Semenenko, 1859b: 295.

site; *conviction* is when sufficient features seem to have been grasped for certain, but in reality it may still prove to be different; only *certainty*, and then *perfect knowledge*, when not just in words, but in reality enough signs or even all the signs with which the object reveals itself have been surely grasped. […] All this by no means depends on a mixture of being and non-being in the object of knowledge, but on the mixture of its revelation and our perception of it, and the various degrees arising from this in the knowledge itself."[32]

Hitherto criticism of Plato had been to a large extent immanent criticism, by showing the contradictions in Plato's philosophy. Subsequent criticism was to be conducted from Semenenko's philosophical position. Returning to the previously outlined image of the cave, the interlocutors compare their own comprehension of the idea, as a form in the intellect, with that in Plato's philosophy, which is a notion in the cognising subject. They conclude that in Platonism this notion is a mere shadow of the idea, while for them this form in the intellect is the thing itself. Plato, then, 'broke' the principle given previously by Bogdan, according to which reality is the unity of form and its being. Plato denied the world of being. The whole world, then, turns out to be a shadow, to which, due to the impossibility of recognising it as the object of knowledge, Plato attributes only opinion, as a separate power. Semenenko stressed the fundamentality of the world as the subject of philosophy, but in his view, the bond connecting the world with ideas had been broken in Platonism.

At the end of this conversation, however, Ewaryst raised doubts about the possibility of Plato making such a large number of errors of such profundity. This forced Bogdan to provide a kind of defence of Plato. In view of the number of charges against him, let us quote a longer passage, in which the role of historical limitations was emphasised as the source of Plato's errors: "Plato's eternal merit will be his lofty sense of morality and his profound feeling for the harmony of souls, which forced him, as if by some conjecture of a higher nature, to strike a happy medium in all his scientific and moral theories and to reach out for a certain appropriate measure; a medium and a measure that, I say, came as close as possible to the truth that cannot be discovered by intellect deprived of divine enlightenment. Ah! how heartily sorry I am that this remarkable man and his master Socrates, who by their teaching seemed to reach beauty and purity in their own conduct, fell into those sad and pitiful depravities, known only in

32 Semenenko, 1859b: 296; similarly in the summary of the discussion: Semenenko, 1859b: 305–306.

Greece, without even suspecting their sickening unseemliness, so that the latter in his speeches, and the former in his writings, mention them, and even discuss the opportunities that they seized as if these matters were common and innocent things. Good Heavens! What a sad and instructive view of what man is, even when he receives the most beautiful, the most reasonable and the noblest soul, even when he is Plato or Socrates, […] without the help of the Saviour, and without the grace of the sanctifying God! But let us turn our eyes away from this human misery, which is even gloomier when it sits on the bright forehead of a genius […]. So it is in the case of Plato […], in whom I prefer to see what is beautiful, bright, healthy, great."[33] This apology generally completes the third "Symposium". Plato's cosmology, theology and anthropology are postponed by the interlocutors to the next meeting, and Ewaryst promises to make an attempt to 'rescue' the Athenian philosopher.

The subsequent "Symposium" begins with greetings between Bogdan and Ewaryst, who had indeed come prepared with a bundle of notes and extracts from the dialogues in order to defend Plato better. The audience had not been idle either, for they had reached the conclusion that Bogdan's criticism was possible due to Ewaryst's agreement to recognise Plato as a dualist, and this broke the connection between knowledge and opinion, the continuity between the levels of knowledge and the connection between ideas and the world.

In order to defend Plato, Ewaryst recommended reading original philosophical texts, and not studies or interpretations. He criticised second-hand learning of philosophical systems which did not come from direct sources: "This is your principle and your practice, my self-taught pseudo-philosophers! In your opinion, it is not Plato who knows what Plato said, but the one who knows better is a Friedrich or a Wilhelm, or whatever such a know-all is called."[34] Hegel's authority as an expert on Plato was therefore absolutely rejected; he was even turned into an object of mockery after Ewaryst quoted the well-known sentence: "weiß man aber, was das Philosophische ist, so kümmert man sich um solche Ausdrücke nicht und weiß, was Platon wollte."[35] Ewaryst could not refrain from ridicule: "Don't you think it's great? How melodiously these final words hum in my ears: *when you know what philosophy is* (it goes without saying, it is my philosophy, Hegelian: for is there any other?); when you know this, *you do not*

33 Semenenko, 1859b: 307–308.
34 Semenenko, 1860: 140.
35 Semenenko, 1860: 140–141; *cf*.: Hegel, 1982: 21–22.

bother about such expressions, about the most evident, the clearest expressions that were said in Plato's own most obvious words, most emphatically; then you do not have to bother about them (what a masterful expression: not to bother!); and why don't you have to bother about them? *because you know what Plato wanted*; you know on behalf of Plato himself and against Plato himself, what Plato did not know and what Plato knew differently and what he said differently. Yes, yes, you do not care, and you know! Don't you think it's just great?"[36] As a consequence of rejecting other philosophers' interpretations, the interlocutors also abandoned studies in the history of philosophy. They attempted to reach the philosophy of Plato that was unadulterated by interpretations.

To judge the truth of a theory of cognition two conditions were set: providing a certain object and offering a credible way of knowing it. Starting from the first issue, the objective existence of idea was confirmed: "the idea in Plato is that which is the most pre-existent; it has existence and its existence is its own; not only in the intellect, but in itself; it has the most essential reality."[37] To support this, a fragment of the *Timaeus* (51b–c) was quoted, in which the subject is the existence of things αὐτὰ καθ' αὑτά, by themselves, and in themselves. It was thus demonstrated that Plato's theory of cognition meets the first condition: it provides an object, and this is: "a form […] invisible (to the eyes) and not subject to the other senses, it is that which is exhibited to be seen (or to be viewed) by reasoning (or by the intellect)."[38] On the basis of further passages from the *Timaeus* the interlocutors draw the conclusion that the being of the ideas cannot be opposed to non-being, but to the world. And that which is intermediate between them, which is the subject of the cognitive level described as διάνοια, is the third kind: χώρα. This kind is linked by Ewaryst to geometry, and this justified translating it as space.

Ewaryst focused on showing the autonomy of ideas from the world, introducing the fourth element into his reconstruction of Platonism, namely matter. Χώρα was interpreted in two ways, on the one hand as the ideal space, being the subject of geometry, on the other, as material, as the Aristotelian ὕλη πρώτη. This second meaning was supported by quotes from

36 Semenenko, 1860: 141; let us add that this passage containing Hegel's great certainty about the correctness of his own opinion still arouses the astonishment of historians (*cf.*: Tigerstedt, 1974: 69); *cf.*: "one who knows what Philosophy is, cares little for such expressions, and recognises what was Plato's true meaning" (Hegel, 1894: 21).

37 Semenenko, 1860: 149.

38 Semenenko, 1860: 149; *Timaeus* 52a.

the *Timaeus* (52d–53a, and also 51a). Quite rightly, Ewaryst expressed doubts about his distinction between these two meanings of *chora*, the semantic difference being translated by him into an ontological distinction. He concluded, however, by accepting the existence of matter, which is: "something indescribable, invisible, shapeless, inaccessible to thought and completely unresearchable by means of the intellect."[39] Thus, according to his interlocutors, Plato had not been defended against the charge of dualism.

Regarding the issue of the relation between ideas and God, Ewaryst quoted a passage from the *Philebus* (30c–d), from which it results that wisdom and intellect are located in the royal soul of Zeus. Ideas, being wisdom and reason, are located in this royal and divine soul. This argument was, however, rejected, as the interlocutors came to the conclusion that the idea was independent of the intellect: "Ideas dwell beyond the human intellect, and even beyond that of Jove. They are alone in themselves, essences mixed with nothing; and the intellect, whether human or Jove's, must look at these essences to comprehend anything and to understand anything about itself and other things."[40]

Ewaryst's attempt to defend Plato in this regard had failed. It seems, however, that he was aware of the weakness of his argumentation because he was well acquainted with the subsequent passages from the *Timaeus*, "a kind of *Book of Genesis* in Plato's teaching,"[41] which Bogdan had recalled, and which confirmed the independent character of the idea. His interlocutors concluded that Plato had undertaken an extremely difficult task and, unfortunately, his mistake had been his failure to find the true solution to the problem of the relation between ideas and God, which, of course should be as follows: "True philosophy […] would say that these eternal, immutable ideas belong to the very essence of God, they constitute the content of his knowledge and they are as little created by God as his own essence is created by him. You can see, then, Plato's error in both of the following cases. When he places ideas outside God, he deprives God of the ideas, and he does not reach his aim; and again, when he claims that God creates the ideas, then he overshoots his aim, because then ideas cease to be ideas, not being eternal, and God ceases to be God, because before creating the idea he must have been without the idea. And it would be interesting to know according to what other ideas he created ideas, being previously

39 Semenenko, 1860: 160.
40 Semenenko, 1860: 166; *cf*.: Smolikowski, 1904a: 352.
41 Semenenko, 1860: 166.

without ideas?"[42] Bogdan, however, tries to defend Plato by blaming all the contradictions and mistakes that had been pointed out on imperfections in terminology. Ideas, according to Plato, do not belong to the essence of God, but they are present in God's mind and Bogdan accepted this as a valid solution to this problem. Even this departure from the truth was eventually regarded by the interlocutors as 'lofty, noble and true', especially considering the fact that Plato's philosophy pre-dated the Christian era.

The existence of the object of intellectual cognition was, then, confirmed, but the question of its being cognitively accessible to human beings still remained to be discussed. In view of the fact that the ideas are not directly accessible, some means of their cognition must be indicated. Ewaryst therefore approached the topic of Plato's dialectics, or 'the art of discourse'. He claimed that the idea is available to be known by every human being, but this capability lies dormant, and in order to be awakened "some friend of the gods, a divine man, in other words a philosopher, or a wisdom-lover in our language,"[43] is required. Dialectics proved to be the ability to make use of material from all the other sciences so that a level of abstraction could be reached that is unavailable to each of the sciences individually. To define dialectics more precisely, Ewaryst described it as follows: "it is called in Greek ἐπακτικὸς λόγος, in Latin *inductio*, and in Polish it could be called *derivation* [*wyprowadzenie*]".[44] Dialectics thus boiled down to inductive reasoning, which was invented, according to Aristotle's testimony, by Socrates, and developed and refined by Plato. The debaters were not satisfied with this answer because it remained unclear how, on the basis of the material of the sensory world, the conclusions concerning that which is ideal could be formulated; after all, it had already been demonstrated that there was no connection between the sensory and mental worlds.[45] It could be assumed, therefore, that there was no correspondence between the world of things and ideas, and the recognised abstrac-

42 Semenenko, 1860: 169. Notwithstanding the ambiguity of the term 'idea' in Semenenko's philosophical system, idea is, above all, the "the form of things in the intellect" (Kaszuba, 1969: 68). Criticism of Plato regarding the relation between God and ideas is also mentioned in: Piątkowski, 2004: 289.

43 Semenenko, 1860: 174.

44 Semenenko, 1860: 180.

45 Kaszuba, describing Semenenko's understanding of induction, stated that Aristotle's *epagoge* is "a transphaenomenal heuristic induction which is not reasoning at all, but a non-discursive transition from a set of particulars to general content" (Kaszuba, 1969: 90). In the "Symposia", by contrast, Semenenko emphasised,

tions were only the products of the intellect, and not pre-models of things. In order to defend the possibility of knowing ideas, Ewaryst introduced vision in the place of reasoning. At this point Bogdan intervened, deciding to clarify matters. He referred to the vision which Ewaryst had spoken of as intuition and considered 'gazing' (wpatrywanie) to be the best equivalent in Polish.

To explain Plato's theory of intuition, Ewaryst referred to *anamnesis*. Before it could be presented, however, some remarks about the substantial role of myth in Plato proved to be necessary since myth in Plato's work complements his philosophical considerations, and as such, has philosophical significance and meaning. The theory of pre-existence was assessed by the interlocutors as heretical and 'utter fatuousness', and became the reason for a digression critically directed against Towiański, whose idea of metempsychosis was considered by Bogdan to have come down to him from Plato, and he later added that it was: "an echo of the first tempter's voice, which penetrated through to all the first philosophers, it is to be found in the Magi's teachings, it was picked up by Plato […]; and from Plato it was finally taken over by the Alexandrians, where the Jews encountered it and, despite their knowledge of Moses, they surreptitiously transferred it to their cabbala; and then, through various channels, it flowed through the middle ages, and today, it gushes out in various places, from under the earth, and its sources are often unknown. And now that devil has come to us."[46] While Towiański's compliance with Plato covered only the most important principles, as far as neo-Platonism was concerned, as Bogdan states, the unanimity also touches the details. Towiański, then, repeated old errors in a new guise.

Having criticised Towiański's *Symposium*, Bogdan of Semenenko's *Symposium*, returned to the topic of metempsychosis. He considered this theory to be evidence of Plato's wholly dualistic system. He confirmed its ab-

---

above all, that in Platonism it was impossible to cross the boundary between particulars and the idea in an inductive way, thus he denied the possibility of discursive cognition of the idea.

46 Semenenko, 1860: 192. The history of the dispute between the Resurrectionists on the one side and Towiański and Mickiewicz on the other is outlined in: Rutkowski, 1994, who shows the complicated path from the initial friendship between them to the final rupture and the latters' condemnation. Semenenko's polemic against Towiański was even acknowledged by Pope Pius IX (Gabryl, 1914: 207–208). For Semenenko, Towiański's *Symposium* was quite simply heretical writing (Semenenko, 2001: 99). Gabryl credited Semenenko with being' Towiański's vanquisher' (Gabryl, 1913: 35).

surdity by providing examples from modern philosophical ideas that were compliant with Plato's ideas, such as nativism or intuitionism, but which had not been associated with metempsychosis by subsequent philosophers. Plato's theory of knowledge was, then, doomed to failure: "the real object of true knowledge are the ideas existing in themselves. They cannot be directly seen by anyone in this world, yet they cannot be known in any other way than by being seen. Plato, however, assumes that human beings were once able to see them and are therefore now able to recall them today. But this conjecture is not only unskilful but also false because in Plato's philosophy human thought does not have at its disposal any real means enabling ideas to be seen."[47] The very philosophy turned out to be inherently contradictory, for Plato indicated the ideal subject of cognition, but his theory lacked a method that would lead to it. Platonism proved to be even worse when confronted with the only true philosophical formula. Plato did not attribute real existence (jestestwo) to ideas because he did not attach them sufficiently to the only real existence, that is to God. Ideas themselves do not possess their own existence, because in that case each of them would exist and act by itself. The consequences of such a state of affairs, naturally, in accordance with the definition of true existence, as assumed by Bogdan, would be all too absurd. Bogdan regarded ideas as beings without form because in no way are they given to man; being considered as eternal, immutable and absolute, they have no form by which a human being could know them. Without granting them any form, Plato could not provide any means of knowing them.

The *Symposium* concluded with a philosophical boat as a metaphor for Plato's philosophy. The boat not only failed to bypass Scylla or Charybdis but also crashed into not just one of them, but both. For on the one hand, Plato acknowledged that the world could not be the object of knowledge, and on the other – what he indicated as the object of knowledge was something that did not exist. In this way he smashed his boat and drowned as a philosopher. Let us quote the final exchange of opinions between Ewaryst and Bogdan: "*Ew*. It is, however, strange: for so many centuries people have been sitting over this place where he disappeared from sight and assiduously fishing for the remains that are washed ashore after him, and they have been living on these remains for so long! The boat must have been richly loaded! / *Bog*. And why, Ewaryst, do you forget to add that the only thing that floated to the surface and the only thing that was turned to

47 Semenenko, 1860: 197.

human good was that which came from a truth older than Plato, from God Himself?"[48]

The next "Symposium" relates in the title itself to the problems raised in Plato's *Sophist*. Its theme was to be notions of nothingness and negation: "What is negation and what does it negate? Or to put it more simply and clearly: What is No, and what is Nothing?"[49] Further threads in the discussion point to an additional meaning of the title, for in the previous "Symposia" Hegel was considered to be a sophist, and his concept of negation was another subject for analysis.

In this "Symposium" Bogdan intended to finally crush Plato, but criticism of Plato went hand in hand with criticism of Hegel. Bogdan provides a graphic comparison of the systems of both philosophers: "I would like to compare Platonic philosophy to a beautiful, tall tree, though now cut down and devoid of roots, devoid of life; whereas Hegel's system can be directly compared to a pile of wood cuttings. […] Plato shows innate talent, Hegel – only art. In the former, we see a work of nature with all its irregularities, growths, hollows, decays and even rottenness, which continues to testify to its former existence, full of life circulating all through its body whereas in the latter, there are only dry cuttings, woodchips devoid of life, though admittedly they are trimmed, planed down, carved into squares and triangles, and arranged in a bizarre, but allegedly well-formed, mosaic. Plato's philosophy is, after all, an organism, while Hegel's is pure mechanism; in the former I admire the birth of nature, in the latter I see only the trickster's hand."[50] According to Bogdan, the trickster's method was fundamentally flawed because he comprehended negation and the notion of nothingness incorrectly. Plato erred in this regard as well, but his claims were far less contradictory to reason than Hegel's.

To prove this statement, Bogdan first had to discuss his own notion of negation and nothingness. To this end, he referred to the philosophical formula of the unity of form and existence (*ens et forma sunt unum*). Negation is their mental disconnection. Plato's error consisted in denying form. The reason for this error was his false theory of knowledge, in which, as had already been demonstrated by the interlocutors, the world is not the

48 Semenenko, 1860: 205.

49 Semenenko, 1861: 131.

50 Semenenko, 1861: 132–133; *cf*.: "In structure and method Semenenko's philosophy is similar to Hegelianism. Perhaps, however, Semenenko appreciated Hegel's »triality« most of all" (Kaszuba, 2004: 28); this was also noted earlier by Gabryl (1913: 43); similarly, Semenenko's concept of the 'absolute' originates from the philosophy of German idealism (Kaszuba, 2004: 29–30).

subject of cognition. Bogdan's view is the following: "The object of knowledge, and all knowledge, is the form of things, but this form belongs to the particular being [jestestwo] that is encompassed by its form; the act of knowledge is the same form of things in the intellect."[51] This moderately realistic view of Aristotelian-Thomistic provenance was contrasted with the idealism and dualism of Plato, who separated forms, as defined above, from the world.

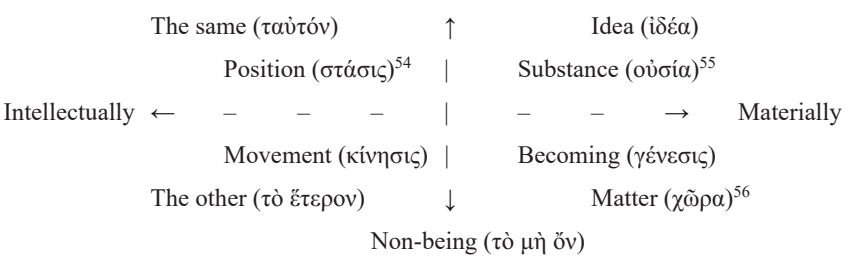
Bogdan surprised his interlocutors by saying that Plato did not quite avoid sophistry, but by ascribing to Plato an affinity with the Sophists, he did not consider this to be an allegation against the Athenian. He was after all "the best intellect and the most hostile to all that is sophistic,"[52] but even he was 'tainted' with ignorance of the real philosophical formula. Thus, if ignorance of the proper notions of nothingness and negation is regarded as the essence of sophistry, then Plato must be classified into this intellectual current, as Bogdan defined it. However, it would certainly be wrong to put Plato on a par with Hegel in this respect. Once again, to justify his criticism of Plato, Bogdan delivered a paean in his honor: "[Plato] will always be an exceptional mind even in his perversions, […] a noble mind whose search for truth is not just a game, but for whom the truth is always truly sacrosanct, and for whom the greatest desire is to watch its dignified nature even from afar, even from the sidelines. If he himself feels that he has not reached the truth, he would rather admit this openly, calling on others, if there are any, to teach him better, rather than proclaim himself to be infallible, as our know-alls do, who would rather marry non-intellect than learn reason and truth from those who were entrusted to guard these sanctities by God the Supreme."[53]

Plato's fundamental 'sin', which allows him to be classified as a sophist, was his acknowledgment of non-being as being. Plato's error resulted from the fact that he used one term in a variety of meanings, confusing one with another and not distinguishing between them properly. The examples of contradictions in Plato led Semenenko to recognise Plato's art of sophistry, but not to blame him for applying sophistry *mala fide* to sow intellectual confusion.

Plato's philosophical solutions were determined to a certain extent by the harmony of his system. Below a long discussion on Plato between Bogdan and Ewaryst is presented in schematic form:

---

51 Semenenko, 1861: 138; *cf*.: Kaszuba, 2004: 23.
52 Semenenko, 1861: 150.
53 Semenenko, 1861: 152.



This presentation of the relations between concepts and their arrangement in a transparent system, "accurately prepared, logical and absolute"[57] was considered by Bogdan to be a success. But how far does this system comply with Plato's intentions? Bogdan replies: "my above presentation of the Platonic system is not in fact his system; but it could have been if Plato had remained consistent to his adopted principles, if he had derived the consequences from them with logical strictness, and if, in short, he had not fallen victim to fortunate inconsistencies that sometimes rescue the truth."[58] Plato's thought, however, is not as terminologically strict as Bogdan would have wished. For Plato, truth comes before the clarity of the prospective system. If Plato had known the language of philosophy, he would have avoided all his errors because he would have been able to bring his thought to terminological clarity, and this would have allowed him to see its consequences. The above scheme shows a corrected and improved version of Plato by Semenenko, who introduced order and consistency into his system, although it must be said that it was often those very inconsistencies of Plato that proved to be of value because thanks to them, he was able to articulate a number of his most perceptive thoughts.

Although the title of the next "Symposium" did not seem to announce a Platonic theme, in fact Plato plays a huge part in it. Ewaryst, at Bogdan's request, was to prepare a presentation of the Megarian school. The enthusi-

54 In a state of rest.
55 'Istnia' also as existence.
56 Without its spatial, geometric meaning.
57 Semenenko, 1861: 177. Semenenko, perhaps, owed his desire to grasp philosophical issues in a systematic way to the influence of idealistic German philosophy, and thus to Hegel, whom he criticised (Wojcieszek, 2002: 66).
58 Semenenko, 1861: 177–178.

ast of antiquity was to show Platonism as the starting point for pantheism. Inspired by the previous "Symposia" and by Plato's dialogues, Ewaryst produced his own dialogue entitled *The Megarian School*, which he read aloud to the audience. It was, then, a dialogue within a dialogue, a meeting and conversation of Socrates' disciples in ancient Megara, related by a figure who had been created in the "Symposia" by a 19th century Polish philosopher.

In Ewaryst's dialogue, one of the characters was 'a genius of philosophy' who carried true philosophy into the remote epoch of antiquity, where he spoke to Plato and Euclid. Out of the entire speech of the genius, all that Plato remembered was firstly that only after God descended to Earth would the truth be given to the people, and secondly that he should listen carefully to Euclid's criticism. The latter, however, openly criticised dialectics as a useless tool: "To know about a particular thing, one must see it. This becomes clear in the cognates we use: *to see* and *to know*, or rather their identity (εἴδω, from which: ἰδεῖν to see, εἰδέναι to know). For what image can I have about a thing that I do not see? […] Viewing the thing itself, or intuition, is the only way to knowledge."[59] Since the only way to know the truth is through seeing, then the dialectician must be mistaken.

The second way of justifying the futility of dialectics stems from understanding it as the 'art of syllogism', and this, in turn, was reduced to comparing terms and deciding about their identity, which was shown by Euclid on the example of the *Barbara* type syllogism. Since each element in the syllogism contains two terms that are compared, it is necessary to know them in order to compare them. And to know them, intuition has to be applied. Equating dialectics with syllogism allowed it to be further reduced to intuition.

When dialectics had been defeated, the genius of philosophy joined the conversation, revealing himself to Euclid and criticising his ignorance of syllogism. He set forth the foundations of this theory according to Aristotle and also criticised the intuitive method because it mistakenly recognises form as independent being. Notions and forms exist in the intellect, the genius reasoned, and evidence for this can be seen in every meaningful sentence expressed about the world. Euclid, who was delighted with the philosophy revealed to him by the genius, addressed him as the "holy spirit."[60] Together with Plato, they were impressed by this philosophical revelation. Euclid would have liked to know and remember all of it, but the

59 Semenenko, 1862: 15.
60 Semenenko, 1862: 20.

genius declined his request answering in a way that portrays Semenenko's attitude to pre-Christian philosophy: "This curtain which I am now dropping before you, for many long centuries will remain down for all worshipers of philosophy who pass by its temple; and though great and vital, the truth concealed behind this curtain is so simple, so clear, so accessible that it seems that anyone could guess it; yet philosophers will not discover it for many years to come. […] they will not be able to work out what it is, they will not look upon its bright countenance, and they will not recognise that it is the only law, both of all thinking and of our entire existence. And how could they recognise it when they tend not to really look ahead, but only into themselves, into their own futile intellects? But even those who do really look will not be able to transcend their times until the time has come to see the truth in all its aspects. And yet, though they will not see the whole truth, they will have an immeasurable advantage over the others, because they will catch a glimpse of the truth and there will be no falsity in what they see. All this will happen to humiliate human reason, and especially to shame those philosophers who are arrogantly convinced that they are intellectually better than others, for it is precisely because they think they are better than others that they will prove to be inferior to others; and all the rationality they have is, in fact, bound up with what they have in common with other people. But eventually the moment will come when I will be allowed to raise this curtain, and then everything will be elucidated."[61] Plato and Euclid were disappointed that they had gained so little from the revelations of the genius of philosophy. Therefore they ended their dispute, realising that neither of them had learned the truth, so they remained entrenched in their own positions. Euclid suggested that Plato should introduce Eubulides into the conversation, while he, himself, decided to withdraw. Plato responded with a similar proposal and gave the floor to Phaedo. The conversation of Eubulides and Phaedo consisted of a repetition of the arguments from the discussion of their masters, and from previous "Symposia". This device was probably intended by Semenenko to let the reader understand that the succession of ancient philosophical schools and the reproduction of their concepts would have continued if it had not been for the Revelation. The successors of the masters continued to develop the same positions, deluding their audience with false appearances of the truth.

The conversation of the young adepts of philosophy was terminated by the genius of philosophy, who ultimately revealed himself to everyone,

61 Semenenko, 1862: 21.

claiming that further discussion was futile and vain since neither of the present philosophers had been able to convince his opponent of his own arguments. Euclid desired, however, to draw the conversation to an end with some conclusion worthy of the entire discussion, involving the deity, a conclusion that could be agreed upon by all: "But there is one truth that is obvious to everyone, and the path to it is accessible to all. That truth is that the Supreme Being is the *Good*, and the path to it is *Virtue*. Friends! This is the one certainty! So here is the conclusion: let us dedicate our minds, as far as possible, to looking upon the Good itself; but above all, let us devote our lives to attaining virtue, which is the most reliable thing we have here in this world!"[62] A valid and important conclusion results from this. Doing philosophy in good faith, not in the manner of the Sophists, still results in moral values even if the truth is unattainable under certain circumstances. And pre-Christian philosophy served to make the ancients more spiritually refined. This is how the dialogue within a dialogue, a product of Ewaryst's fantasy, himself the creation of Semenenko, comes to an end. All the participants of the "Symposium" praised Ewaryst, a former enthusiast of Plato and antiquity who, as a result of his participation in the series of "Symposia", turned into a supporter of Bogdan's philosophy.

Just as Plato placed Socrates in his dialogues, so Semenenko put Bogdan in his "Symposia". A similar role is played by the genius of philosophy in Ewaryst's dialogue. As far their roles in the dialogue are concerned, there is a fundamental difference between Bogdan, or Semenenko's Socrates, and Plato's Socrates. The latter led the interlocutors in a particular direction, whereas Bogdan mostly set forth his reasoning, though he was quite willing to be diverted by the comments of his interlocutors, who sometimes even interrupted him. Hence there is some lack of order in the "Symposia", of which the author himself was aware, saying through Bogdan that "in a conversation not everything can be arranged systematically."[63] As for the philosophical differences, these were evidently even more profound.

In the "Symposia" several charges are made against Plato. Even the words of approval concerning the aesthetic aspects and philosophical skill of Plato's work can, paradoxically, be regarded as an indirect charge against him because they provide a smoke screen to cover up a series of errors which thus become more difficult to discover. Other errors that were openly indicated include the contradictions in which, according to Seme-

62 Semenenko, 1862: 30–31.
63 Semenenko, 1861: 141.

nenko, Plato's philosophy became entangled by his acknowledgement that the world could not be the subject of knowledge, thus removing an important subject of philosophical reflection from the realm of philosophy. Plato's philosophy was also methodologically flawed because neither dialectics nor intuition allowed for real cognition of one of the most important subjects of knowledge.

The image of Plato presented in the "Symposia" clearly served as a platform for contemporary polemic against German philosophy. Semenenko, however, tried to present Platonism as it could be at its best. 'Best', in this case, means from the perspective of Christian thought, as can be seen, for example, in the attempt to organise the most important terms of Platonism and the relations between them within a scheme. This had the effect of destroying the lively nature of Plato's thought, but it had the advantage of bringing Platonism within a system.

Bogdan is Semenko's *alter ego* at the time of writing the "Symposia", Ewaryst is an enthusiast of antiquity, who is nevertheless not deaf to Bogdan's arguments. In all probability Ewaryst was Semenenko at the time when he met Jański. Although he was acquainted with German philosophy, he did not let it seduce him, for it was ancient philosophy which held the greatest attraction for him.

In contrast to the *Conversations of Plato with his Disciples* by Franciszek Karpiński (1741–1825),[64] which had appeared in print half a century earlier, in Semenenko's "Symposia" the interlocutors have their own individual characters, though the reader may not be able to identify them clearly on the basis of their first names, with the exception, of course, of Bogdan (*i.e.* Jański). The dialogues in the "Symposia" are also much more dynamic and Semenenko clearly had knowledge of Plato's philosophy resulting from his reading of the dialogues, which cannot be said about Karpiński. Semenenko used the popular edition by Didot, giving its page numbers, but also adding the Stephanus pagination, though he seems to have been unaware of its origin because he merely provided the additional page numbers with the note "differently."[65] In comparison to Karpiński's late Enlightenment poetic production, the "Symposia" constitute a new quality in Polish philosophy and in Platonic literature. It is a pity therefore, that this

64 Karpiński, 1806a.

65 Sememenko, 1859b: 278, footnote, *passim*. Semenenko experienced difficulties in assembling the editions of all the dialogues. In 1859 he repeatedly asked friends in Paris to buy them and send them to him (Semenenko, 2003: 72, 85).

work met a similar fate to that of Karpiński's *Conversations*, neither of them attracting much interest from historians.

Although Semenenko himself used the dialogical form in his work, he was critical of the lack of continuity in Plato's dialogues. Subsequent dialogues did not follow on as continuations of those that came before, and he accepted different points of view, his opinions being uttered by a variety of characters who did not maintain terminological consistency. In contrast to Plato's dialogues, the "Symposia", according to their author, represented a unified whole and were to be read in the order presented. Semenenko therefore believed that he had perfected the Platonic form. It was Plato, however, who had facilitated him in pursuing his philosophical arguments, for the presentation of his own philosophical views was based on Plato's dialogues, which formed a literary and philosophical starting point for his work.

The evaluations that Semenenko put into Bogdan's mouth are almost too obvious. "Semenenko was not only a philosopher but also a theologian. Although he distinguished between both disciplines, his philosophical and theological visions complemented and conditioned each other. The keystone of both visions is the Christian God. […] Semenenko, both in words and deeds, wants to be a Christian philosopher. Although he does not apply reasoning drawn from the Revelation to his philosophy, his work is based on this, takes it into account and draws inspiration from it."[66] When he praises Plato, pointing out that that he achieved the highest point in philosophy, he always qualifies this remark with the addition of 'as a non-Christian philosopher'. As for the question of Plato's possible influence on Christian philosophy, Semenenko's answer is essentially negative. "He regarded Scholasticism as the only true philosophy",[67] and the reason for this was that he saw it as the only true explanation of knowledge.[68] Plato's theory of knowledge, according to Semenenko, did not sufficiently explain the nature of knowledge, and even made such an explanation impossible.

In the "Symposia" Semenenko sought to achieve several goals. He wanted to settle accounts with German philosophy, especially with Hegelianism, and also with Towiański's Messianism. He therefore voiced the opinion that non-Christian philosophy was only of value in the pre-Christian period as an expression of natural human reason, being a gift from God.

66 Kaszuba, 2005: 248.
67 Smolikowski, 1904: 108.
68 Kaszuba, 2004: 22.

After Christ, Christian thinkers became the depositaries of the truth. This in no way negated ancient pagan philosophy, which was then seen as a preparation for Christian philosophy. And it is only from this perspective that ancient thought can be assessed as an important achievement in the world's intellectual history. In comparison to other modern unorthodox philosophical currents, Greek philosophy was innovative and authentic, it revealed new ideas. Everything in Greek philosophy that proved to be valuable and true, that is, consistent with Christian thought, was to be found within Christian thought in a much more perfect form. Everything that Christian thought could not accept and incorporate into its system found its place in contemporary trends like Hegelianism and Towianism, which were critically assessed by Semenenko. These currents were false, "and all falsifications result from arguing against the truth, against the exclusive truth that is called Catholic."[69] For philosophy is a sphere of knowledge which clearly shows progress in its revelation of the truth. Modern philosophies, deriving from ancient ones, do not deny the significance of that which came before. This line of development, however, must necessarily include Catholic truth and scholastic philosophy. When philosophers do not take into account past human thought, they vitiate themselves,[70] and this is what Hegel and others did. For Semenenko, pre-Christian philosophy was an intellectual game revolving around the truth, but not capable of attaining it.

It seems, then, that Semenenko marked out the way for the philosophical reception of Plato by subsequent Catholic thinkers in Poland. It is this model which was, to a large extent, to be followed in the works by Pawlicki, in the part of his study in the history of philosophy devoted to Plato. For Christian thinkers, understandably, ancient thought was not of great value. Nevertheless, they remembered Plato's affinity with some Christian ideas, which made him unique against the background of his time. Pawlicki met Semenenko for the first time in 1868. At that time he had been a lecturer in Greek philosophy at the Main School of Warsaw (Szkoła Główna Warszawska) for several years. As he recalled years later, they discussed Plato, among many other philosophical issues and at that time, they both came to agree that studying Plato and Aristotle had always brought great benefit to humanity and would continue to do so.[71] Pawlicki and Semenenko had similar motives for taking up the subject of ancient

69 Semenenko, 1861: 147.
70 *Cf.*: Smolikowski, 1904: 109–110.
71 Pawlicki, 1913.

thought – their interest in Greek philosophy and the defence of the excellence of Christian thought. For Pawlicki, this motive was strengthened by Pope Leo XIII's encyclical.

Polish Christian thought in the inter-uprising era did not initially succeed in elaborating a single image of Plato nor even a method of approaching and assessing his works. Semenenko combined paeans in honor of Plato with explicit philosophical criticism. He was aware, however, that Greek philosophy, and especially Plato's philosophy, had reached the highest degree of excellence that was possible in the pre-Christian era and that the practical and moral conclusions resulting from Greek philosophy should continue to be positively assessed. As an autonomous subject, Plato seems to have been of little interest to the philosophers of the time. He tended to be used as a polemical instrument, only referred to in relation to contemporary times, critically or approvingly, and modern problems were the measure of his value.

The interpretations of Plato in the inter-uprising period can be regarded as another field of dispute between two rival groups, the supporters of Hegel's philosophy and its opponents who criticised Hegelianism and Hegelians from the Catholic position. F. A. Kozłowski, the pioneer in translating the dialogues into Polish, is counted among the former, although perhaps he did not fully realise the significance of this dispute and took advantage of Hegel's views without any bias of outlook, treating him simply as a historian of philosophy. The latter group included the *Pielgrzym* (*Pilgrim*) of E. Ziemięcka, F. Kozłowski and Semenenko. In fact it can even be stated that Polish discussion on the value of Plato's philosophy in the inter-uprising period was determined by the dispute over Hegel. Discussions about German philosophy thus had the side-effect of reviving interest in ancient philosophy, in Plato, and in philosophy in general.

2.2 *Plato as an opponent of democracy and a precursor of socialism from the perspective of B. Limanowski*

In 1869 a paper about utopias appeared in the *Weekly Review* (*Przegląd Tygodniowy*). Its author, a lawyer, Gustaw Roszkowski (1847–1915), named Plato as the precursor of utopian thought. He was critical of Plato's work: "Plato's ideas were to remain forever in the world of daydreaming as a testament to the fact that the most powerful genius can become deranged by a system if, while reflecting on the most important issues of human life, instead of taking into account the existing conditions, he accepts only his

own ideas as a starting point, regardless of their practical feasibility and utility."[72] At that time Roszkowski was preparing a doctoral thesis on the nature of property,[73] and he regarded the common ownership of goods as one of the cardinal sins of all utopians. The purely utopian character of Plato's project was also emphasised by the Cicero translator, Henryk Sadowski (1847–1908). In his view, Plato had not succeeded in solving any social or political problems by means of his philosophy: "Plato's republic is the purest utopia, never and nowhere to be applied, let alone realised, for its institutions, laws and ideas of social government are contrary to human nature, and as such they can never be implemented if human beings are to meet all that Nature has destined them for."[74] Plato's philosophy thus failed to achieve its intention. It was not the philosophical aspect of Plato's social philosophy that seemed false to Sadowski but the plan for its implementation. Plato's communism was the result of his ignorance of human nature, for he turned human beings into zombie-like creatures, depriving them of family bonds. "A person in Plato's state merely exists; he is born, he does not need to worry about shelter or food, or even about his wife, because all this is taken care of by the state, which, in return for these amenities, turns him into some kind of bipedal animal, stripped of his reason, his will and those fine attributes with which the spirit of Plato's philosophy breathes."[75] Such extreme and superficial opinions were not, however, the only assessments of Plato's social philosophy in the years to come. The *Republic* proved to be inspiring, and in the second half of the 19th century enjoyed great popularity among authors who read it from various perspectives.

Bolesław Limanowski (1835–1935) took a deeper interest in Plato's political thought. He had been inspired in this respect by the lectures of professor Ludwik von Strümpell (1812–1899), which he attended as a student at the University of Dorpat in 1859, and as he himself admitted, he attended them regularly because of their many positive qualities.[76] Strümpell lectured on the subject *Die ethischen Grundlagen der politischen Oekonomie*, which included a general outline of social phaenomena, and under his in-

72 Roszkowski, 1869: 226.
73 Kadler, 1971: 325.
74 Sadowski, 1873: II.
75 Sadowski, 1873: VI.
76 Limanowski, 1957: 206–207; *cf.*: Żechowski, 1964: 33–34. While his studies in Dorpat introduced Limanowski to the field of social reflection, which was to have a lasting effect on him, at that time he was certainly not yet a socialist (Żechowski, 1964: 21–22).

fluence young Limanowski considered taking up the social sciences. He decided to acquaint himself with the most important works dealing with this subject and his first choice fell on Plato.[77] Being intrigued by the issue of the impact that 'socialist and communist ideas' had exerted on the historical development of societies, Limanowski planned to present these ideas in a series of articles devoted to past political projects under the significant title of *The Dreamers*. At the same time, his main interest was still Plato, who thus became a starting-point for further extensive studies on the precursors of socialist thought, constituting at the same time the beginning of Polish research into the history of utopias.[78]

In *The Dreamers* Limanowski expressed his faith in the positive role individuals play in historical progress, especially those individuals whose reflection transcends the present and goes beyond the sphere of immediate pleasures and profits. "In these sad times, there are people who cannot and do not want to come to terms with the existing state of affairs, for whom the truth has an irresistible charm, and in whose hearts love for humanity burns fiercely, – these people usually lose touch with reality and begin to dream. In contrast to the existing confusion, their imagination conjures up a blissful order that could exist in reality if people united their efforts to achieve it. This radiant ideal captures their entire being; their mind strains towards it, their heart vibrates to it with youthful enthusiasm."[79] Plato could certainly be ranked among those thinkers who formulated such 'driving ideas' for historical development, thus contributing to the progress of humanity: "towering over all social dreamers stands the colossal and beautiful figure of the divine Plato. The echo of his daydreaming can be heard right down the ages up to recent times."[80]

As Limanowski emphasised, Plato had a great passion for politics, but he had an aversion to its existing forms. That was why he undertook his Sicilian journeys and political experiments. His most important field of

77 Limanowski, 1957: 206–207; in the subsequent semester, with similar diligence, Limanowski attended Strümpell's lectures on the history of philosophy (Limanowski, 1957: 208); *cf*.: Kozłowski, W. M., 1902: 20–21.

78 Limanowski's works on T. More and T. Campanella, which were published subsequently elsewhere, were intended to be a continuation of *The Dreamers* (*cf*.: Kadler, 1971: 199). *Cf*.: Limanowski, 1958: 37; Kozłowski, W. M., 1902: 49; Śliwa, 1994: 45, 50–51.

79 Limanowski, 1871: 8; *cf*.: Żychowski, 1971: 69–70; Handelsman, 1937: 34. On the role of ideological factors in the history of humanity according to Limanowski *cf*.: Żechowski, 1987: 41–42.

80 Limanowski, 1871: 9.

interest, however, was philosophy, and it was only in relation to this that he addressed political issues.[81] As for the negative opinions expressed about Plato, they were briefly dismissed by Limanowski as follows: "the defects of great men fade away completely before their merits."[82] Plato's merit lay in his involvement in political issues, though not actively and not as a rhetorician.

Limanowski rediscovered three main claims in Plato's philosophy. Admittedly, it was only in later schools of philosophy that they were articulated clearly and explicitly, but in Plato they could be found at least as a 'premonition'. These were the belief in the immutability of the laws governing the world, in the hierarchy of the world, and in the mutability of phaenomena as a mere change of state, and not a change in their nature or substance. To support the latter claim Limanowski provided an example from the natural sciences, where matter, when it takes on different shapes and forms, does not perish. In addition to this, for Limanowski, the idea of inheritance, not only physical and material but also spiritual, confirmed Plato's theory of inborn concepts.

The relation between Plato and Christianity throughout the course of history was described by Limanowski as follows: "Platonism, on account of the ideal course it set and because of its mysticism, which was reinforced by subsequent believers, prepared the ground for the acceptance of Christian teaching. It could even be said that it paved the way for the adoption of the great Christian truths, for among philosophers, Platonists were the most numerous of those who were well disposed towards the teaching of Christ."[83] Plato's influence did not end there, however, it doubled in strength during the Renaissance, and others who fell under its spell included, according to Limanowski, Leibniz, Schelling, and even Comte.

The last of a number of papers published by Limanowski in *Gazeta Literacka* (*Literary Gazette*) concludes with a mere fragment of a summary of the beginning of Book I of the *Republic*. This study was eventually finalised elsewhere, but even this unfinished summary in *Gazeta Literacka* seems to have whetted the appetite of its readers, for Limanowski mentions the attention it aroused, particularly among young people.[84] It was perhaps this expression of interest that prompted him to further elaborate on Plato's political project.

81 Limanowski, 1871a: 9–10.
82 Limanowski, 1871b: 11.
83 Limanowski, 1871c: 9.
84 Limanowski, 1958: 37; Żychowski, 1971: 70.

Limanowski's subsequent articles on Plato were published in edited volumes. The first of these articles consisted mostly of material which had already been presented in *Gazeta Literacka* and included some criticisms of Plato's work. Socrates' claims that justice is virtue and wisdom while injustice is ineffective were considered by Limanowski to be unsatisfactory and insufficiently substantiated. Limanowski, however, did not support this assessment with detailed references to the relevant sections in the *Republic*. Socrates' 'dialectical subtleties', in turn, seemed to Limanowski to be contrary to common sense. Limanowski continued by arguing that Plato had failed to observe that a political system should stem from citizens' beliefs and that only a change in citizens' minds could bring about a political shift. Nor did Plato's view on the innate inequality between individuals gain Limanowski's support and was described by Limanowski as 'aristocratic mysticism' arising from the fact that Plato was in awe of the Spartan state and its strength, and disappointed with Athenian democracy, which had degenerated into anarchy. Limanowski devoted some passages to Book VIII, and considered the vivid outlines of the degeneration of political systems as excellently portrayed. But he was surprised by Plato's contempt for physical labor and his lack of respect for hard work and frugality, qualities which the Polish thinker considered to be important cultural virtues. He believed that Plato's attitudes must have arisen from his origins and upbringing. In general, Plato was unable to perceive the advantages of democracy, especially in its Athenian version. Limanowski summed up Plato's views on democracy as follows: "Plato, ill-disposed to democracy, did not discern any of its good points and distorted what he saw […]. As a doctrinaire, he looked at contemporary reality through the lenses of his own system. But in fact, […] the then democracy could not only be considered in terms of its shortcomings, for any comparison with other forms of political system reveals the superiority of democracy. Athenian democracy had distinguished itself with the greatest heroism while fighting off the Persian invaders; it had also enriched the treasury of knowledge with the most exquisite fruits of the intellect."[85] Let us add that Plato's works can undoubtedly be counted among them. He thus criticised the system to which he ultimately owed a great deal.

85 Limanowski, 1872: 116–117. Let us add that Chałasiński associates the beginning of Polish sociology with the date of publication of this paper by Limanowski (Chałasiński, 1972: 35). Although Chałasiński had noted the previous series of articles by Limanowski, *The Dreamers*, he failed to notice that this article (Limanowski, 1872) was basically a repetition of the ideas in these articles.

In another paper, which was published in the same year, Limanowski presented his final assessment of Plato's views, focusing on the sociological and educational aspects of his work. He provided a fairly credible summary of the content of the *Republic*, though he disregarded the metaphysical issues. For the most part, he assessed the Platonic project critically since it lacked precision, and its premises were chosen arbitrarily (*e.g.* the necessity for correspondence between the tripartition of the soul and of the state). The political system proposed by Plato is distinctively aristocratic, yet it was not a hereditary aristocracy, for entry into this aristocracy required perfection of the body and spirit. Limanowski commented: "If such rigour had been applied strictly to our present aristocracy, it is probable, I think, that we would be completely without an aristocracy."[86] Nor would there have been many eager candidates for an aristocracy which involved the surrender of all private property. Limanowski saw the advantage of democracy in that it did not separate the intelligentsia from the rest of society. He advocated public education, recognising that all citizens are conscious and capable of reasoning. Democracy, continued Limanowski, guaranteed the unity and freedom of citizens whereas the source of unity in Plato's political thought consisted in the supervision of the lower class by the upper, whose representatives had to be deprived of liberty.

Limanowski appreciated Plato's pioneering concepts with regard to the empowerment of women as gender difference should not constitute social difference: "In this respect Plato expresses his opinion even more openly and boldly than do the advocates of equal rights for women today."[87] Plato's eugenic guidelines from Book V were interpreted by Limanowski as the formulation of a notion of progress "in order to give rise to even better generations from the good ones,"[88] but he considered the communal life and upbringing of the guardians as unrealistic demands: "this would completely constrain personal human freedom, imposing supervision and care on nearly all of one's deeds and providing strict control of private life."[89]

Limanowski also rated Plato's views on education very highly. This was partly because, in this respect, Plato's ideas had not departed from the established Greek practice of generations. As for the details, Limanowski claimed that Plato was ahead of his time, and his pedagogical ideas were only rediscovered in the 19th century since earlier centuries had lost sight

86 Limanowski, 1872a: 213.
87 Limanowski, 1872a: 215.
88 Limanowski, 1872a: 217.
89 Limanowski, 1872a: 218.

of the principle: *mens sana in corpore sano*, by which Plato meant theoretical, intellectual and practical teaching, including gymnastics, teaching through play, and coeducation. Despite Limanowski's appreciation of these innovative and pioneering ideas, the general assessment of Plato's political project was not favourable: "It does not attract us. It lacks two vital elements: freedom and love, a natural and constant source of which is the family."[90] The great merit of Plato, however, was that his project was bold. True, the effects of this boldness were not always worthy of attention, but they encouraged subsequent thinkers to make attempts at reforming society and outlining utopian projects. Plato's project was unachievable, but it does not follow from this that it was without value because in the ongoing progress of mankind "many things that were considered impossible proved to be beneficial and possible when certain conditions changed."[91]

The next article on Plato by Limanowski included praise for him as a thinker who had laid the foundations for a new field of studies: "Plato is for sociology what Pythagoras is for mathematics. He studied the phaenomena of social life in static terms and was the first to start to study them in dynamic terms."[92] The third book of the *Laws*, in which the origins of the development of societies and states are considered, was regarded by Limanowski as the first attempt at historiosophy.

In comparison to the *Laws*, the shortcomings of the *Republic* could be seen even more clearly by Limanowski as "the first attempt to combine efforts of imagination and intellect to shape social and political ideas. This is the first political romance."[93] Among the disadvantages of the system presented in the *Republic* Limanowski mentioned: the division of society into two parts: the privileged class and the more numerous subordinate remainder; destruction of the family, surveillance of almost all aspects of human life and deprivation of freedom. True, the last of these defects affected only the privileged class, but this class constituted the essence of political life in the state. All these imperfections were removed from the *Laws*, where Plato himself spoke as the Athenian. He had given up his utopian social dreams and merely desired to improve the existing Athenian system.

Despite the many changes that occurred in Plato's mind during the last years of his life, he remained a supporter of aristocracy, which he under-

90 Limanowski, 1872a: 226.
91 Limanowski, 1872a: 227.
92 Limanowski, 1875: 491. It should be noted that 'sociology' was understood by Limanowski as social philosophy (Żechowski, 1964: 166).
93 Limanowski, 1875: 491.

stood as the rule of "better men, who combined virtue and wisdom."[94] Although Plato made some concessions, this division into better and worse classes was not removed from his social philosophy. Plato's aristocratic views provided an opportunity for Limanowski to say a few words about the superiority of democracy over other forms of government, for he considered the abolition of social divisions and the pursuit of widespread education to be the goals of democracy. Fortunately, Plato's attitude towards the issue of gender equality had not changed either. Among the positive changes that occurred in Plato's philosophy, comparing the *Laws* to the *Republic*, was an appreciation of the family, although its main role was reduced to providing new citizens, and not meeting the needs of the individual. The entire state outlined in the *Laws* was compared by Limanowski to a school whose mission was to educate future citizens in morality by means of laws which encouraged moderation: "The aim of human life is not fun, nor war, but a hardworking, beautiful and virtuous life, from which flows peace and happiness. This is the opinion of the great master of antiquity."[95]

Limanowski evaluated Plato's work in the context of his own belief in the progress of humankind, the importance of democratic values and the need to cater for all kinds of human needs, including emotional needs. This meant that his assessment of Plato, a representative of aristocratic views who did not see anything wrong in depriving people of family support, could not be entirely positive. Nevertheless, Limanowski, who observed progress not only in the history of mankind, but also in the history of utopian social ideas, yielded the palm to Plato as the creator of utopian literature and the precursor, however distant, of socialist ideas.

In assessing Limanowski's knowledge of Plato, it is important to note that he referred to the Polish translations of the dialogues by A. Bronikowski[96] and those rendered earlier by F. A. Kozłowski. Polish translations, however, were not the only source of his knowledge of the dialogues. Although Limanowski, as he himself admitted, did not know Greek well enough to read in the original, he made use of Schleiermacher's translations, which were recommended by his German teachers dur-

94 Limanowski, 1875: 494.
95 Limanowski, 1875: 500.
96 When quoting the *Republic*, Limanowski did not, of course, refer to the edition of the whole dialogue (Plato, 1884), which only appeared in print after Bronikowski's death, but only to the first three books published in the gymnasium's reports (Plato, 1862, 1864, 1866). From the fourth book onwards Limanowski used German translations.

ing his studies at Dorpat.[97] He also consulted translations by Carl Prantl. Some of Limanowski's views on Plato were drawn from Kozłowski's introduction to the dialogues, and Kozłowski was also the source of his knowledge about Hegel's interpretation of Platonism.

As already mentioned, Limanowski's first articles concerning Plato, which were published in *Gazeta Literacka*, provoked a positive response from younger readers. The subsequent paper (1872), which was mostly reconstructive in character, was also well received, but its continuation (1872a) was regarded by the public as scandalous. This was probably due to the general aversion to socialism itself at that time. The author himself, however, considered it his most important article, because it contained the greatest amount of his own critical assessment of Plato.[98]

Limanowski was personally affected by his encounter with Plato, who was one of the thinkers that had brought him closer to socialist ideas as a result of his study of the history of various currents in utopian socialism.[99] The specificity of Limanowski's historical interests was described as follows: "the history of social movements […] seemed to represent for him a search in history for his own justification for the agenda for today and tomorrow."[100] For Limanowski, the history of social thought was a rich source of ideas, not all of which had lost their value. It was therefore necessary to get to know them and to select those that could be applied in new conditions. Limanowski selected the ideas that interested him most from a fairly wide range of works, from Bacon, Herder, Schelling, to Śniadecki and Słowacki; there was also a place for Plato in this eclectic blend, which has even been assessed as syncretic.[101]

The motives for Limanowski's interest in the history of social and political ideas, especially in utopian socialism, can be discerned on the basis of his works on Plato, which had a "distinct philosophical and social colour,"[102] and which are, unfortunately, rarely cited. Limanowski approaches Plato as a positivist, and acknowledges the progress of mankind, the ultimate aim of which is to achieve a certain socialist ideal, comprehended by Limanowski as the triumph of rationalism.[103] His work on the

97 Limanowski, 1957: 207.
98 Limanowski, 1958: 56, 90.
99 Żychowski, 1971: 16, 58; Targalski, 1972: 155; a short presentation of the personality and works of Limanowski as a socialist thinker: Romaniuk, 2009.
100 Handelsman, 1937: 32.
101 Żechowski, 1964: 101–102, 105.
102 Żechowski, 1964: 41. Contrary to Limanowski's later works in sociology.
103 Handelsman, 1937: 34–35.

history of social ideas has generally been evaluated on the basis of his studies on the works of More and Campanella, as was done by *e.g.* Handelsman, who was quoted above. Limanowski's earlier and scattered articles on Plato undoubtedly confirm these conclusions.

For Limanowski, Plato was an important link in the development of the idea of socialism, and one of its greatest theoreticians. He noticed the connection between justice and socialism, but did not succeed in consistently implementing this idea of justice because of the lack of equality in his project. It was only in the works of later centuries that the link between equality and justice was established.[104] Although Limanowski's approach to Plato, whom he considered to be an early theoretician of socialism, may be regarded as positivist, he nevertheless comprehended progress teleologically as the inevitable human drive towards the fulfillment of the socialist idea that has been passed down over the centuries.[105] This idea also provides the driving force for progress, especially the idea of a better tomorrow,[106] which, perhaps contrary to his intentions, had already been discovered by Plato. Limanowski's historical studies not only confirmed that socialism did not disrupt the continuity of historical development but that "the idea of socialism has been an essential component of human culture since antiquity."[107] In this context, Plato's philosophy and subsequent Renaissance thought became instruments for rejecting charges made by its opponents about the revolutionary nature and the newness of socialism and of its aspirations to break with the past. It is worth noting here, however, that if Plato's project were to be implemented, it would have to start with eliminating the existing system.

2.3 *Plato as a revolutionary from the perspective of a conservative thinker, W. Dzieduszycki*

Philosophy, especially ancient philosophy, was Wojciech Dzieduszycki's (1848–1910) everyday pabulum according to T. Sinko,[108] and what started as an interest in Plato and ancient thought eventually evolved into something of a 'cult of classicism', one sign of which was that Dzieduszycki be-

104 Limanowski, 1989: 473–474.
105 Cottam, 1978: 60; *cf.*: Żechowski, 1987: 23–24.
106 Urbankowski, 1983: 129.
107 Śliwa, 2004: 6–7.
108 Sinko, 1914.

gan to speak Greek or Latin at social meetings.[109] It was only after the Count-philosopher's death that his most important and most interesting work on Plato was published, but earlier, he had touched upon the subject of Plato's philosophy in lectures he delivered in Warsaw in 1880 and 1881, which were extensively covered in the press, one report noting that they were the first open public lectures on the history of philosophy in Warsaw.[110]

Dzieduszycki's popular lectures provided an outline of the history of the first philosophy, the 'science of sciences,' with the aim of presenting the development of philosophy and the stability of its outcomes throughout the course of history. Dzieduszycki took for granted that philosophy was a European invention, arguing that the peoples of the East, despite having religion and wisdom, did not produce philosophy.

In the course of the development of philosophy the Sophists appeared, "and philosophy would have prematurely run to waste in subtle arguments about the wind, if its second founder, Socrates, had not rescued it from becoming worthless."[111] Dzieduszycki described Socrates simply as a conservative, verging on the reactionary, who hated all novelties and defended old customs. It was Socrates' kind of conservatism that suited Dzieduszycki, and he referred to it with obvious liking. It is worth mentioning in passing, that he emphasised Socrates' abnegation, which revealed itself in his lack of attention to appearance, something he was not ashamed of.[112]

To illustrate how Dzieduszycki expounded Platonism to his non-professional audiences, let us quote a longer passage: "My forester's dog is an individual entity, and what I know about it cannot be applied to anything else without fear of error, for I am using a common, non-scientific concept of it. But when I add, that it is a hound dog, I am already gaining a general notion of it, which is approaching a more scientific concept, and if it is sufficiently accurate, then the characteristics of this notion will un-

109 Piskor, 1959: 282, 296–297.
110 "Kartka z dziejów filozofii", 1880: 185.
111 Dzieduszycki, 1880: 16.
112 Dzieduszycki was remembered by his contemporaries as a man who did not pay excessive attention to appearances. His university seminars were sometimes conducted in cafes, or in a hotel outside the walls of the Lvov university (Jakubec, 2009: 21–23). His contemporaries emphasised the 'extravagance of his dress'. (Rosco–Bogdanowicz, 1959: 23). Perhaps the most scathing comments on Dzieduszycki's personality, with emphasis on his behaviour and his negligence with regard to his clothes, can be found in the memoirs of K. Chłędowski (1951: 153–155; 1951a: 278–279).

failingly become for me the common characteristics of all hounds. Above the notion of a hound dog I will find the notion of dog in general, still above, increasingly more general and higher concepts which are increasingly less sensory: predator, mammal, vertebrate, animal in general, organic being, body, being subjected to the senses, and finally, at the very top, I will reach the most general notion of Being, the solitary concept, completely abstracted and supreme, and what I can say correctly about Being will be true about everything, an absolute truth and, as Plato believed, a divine supreme truth, truth in its perfection."[113] Dzieduszycki explained that the development of the sciences was founded on Plato's discovery of notions, but, unfortunately, he got so carried away with the correctness of his method that he steered considerations too rashly towards pure abstractions, "on the top he saw the abstracted Being and right away he wanted to comprehend this Being and, through it, the all-truth. So he spread his wings and, as he flapped them, he thought he was flying upwards, oblivious to the fact that there was insufficient air under the wings."[114]

Dzieduszycki was critical of Plato's philosophy, considering it to be too abstract. He believed that human beings are incapable of knowing higher notions, and that Plato had deprived the material world of beauty and truth. Plato's philosophy, the first philosophy, was ultimately assessed by Dzieduszycki as daydreaming, from which Plato derived his "mystical physics and aesthetic theology."[115] Unlike Plato, Aristotle was a more 'sober' philosopher, who brought philosophy back to Earth, and in this respect deserved to be praised.

Less than a year later Dzieduszycki delivered another series of popular lectures in the same hall. No doubt in response to the reactions of the audience, he addressed the problems differently this time, his erudition allowing him to adapt to the expectations of the participants. He sketched in the wider social background, pointing to close links between philosophy, culture and civilisation, and highlighting the philosophers' personal entanglements. This must have helped to win over his non-professional audience and interest them in ancient philosophy.

Dzieduszycki presented Socrates as one of the Sophists, but one who portrayed these teachers of wisdom in a very different light, namely as those who proclaimed blatant contradictions. Dzieduszycki must have tak-

113 Dzieduszycki, 1880: 16. Thanks to such examples, Dzieduszycki was able to appeal to audiences with no previous philosophical background.
114 Dzieduszycki, 1880: 20.
115 Dzieduszycki, 1880: 22.

en his examples of Socrates' criticisms of the Sophists from Plato's dialogues, especially the *Euthydemus* and *Protagoras*, for Socrates himself did not write anything, nor did he teach or claim anything. In this connection, Dzieduszycki mentioned the difficulties that are encountered by researchers of Socrates, including difficulties in distinguishing between what is Socratic and what is Platonic in the dialogues; in other words, he reported on the problems of the so-called Platonic question. Dzieduszycki expressed his admiration for Plato's works in order to encourage the audience to read the dialogues: "real masterpieces of wit, the most perfect prose models of all times, pieces that can mostly be read quite easily and with a smile on the face, but which are almost always very profound."[116] Dzieduszycki, then, regarded the dialogues as literary fiction, but this fiction was presented with extraordinary verisimilitude; Socrates was idealised, and although he avoided articulating claims, his method of questioning required much previous intellectual effort.

Dzieduszycki did not resolve the question of whether Diotima's speech in the *Symposium* presented the ideas of Socrates or those of Plato. What was more important was its crowning beauty "not carnal beauty, but a higher spiritual beauty, beauty that is the truth, beauty that is the good, the holiest essence of beauty."[117] This was his introduction to the theory of ideas, which constituted the key to understanding and explaining the world: "So general notions are the beauty we seek, and therefore knowing them is good, and action based on such knowledge is virtue."[118] These ideas existed in the intellect of the universe, and Dzieduszycki emphasised their important epistemological role, for concepts modelled on the ideas were to serve as instruments for the cognition of reality. The role of teaching was to facilitate the discovery of the ideas and in this process love did not play an insignificant role; it should tame the chariot, as the human soul was depicted in the *Phaedrus*, helping it to climb out of the cave, and this in turn was to lead to his presentation of the fate of the soul, as outlined on the basis of the *Phaedo*. Continuing his eschatological considerations, based mostly on the *Phaedo*, Dzieduszycki emphasised the conservatism of Plato's teacher.

---

116 Dzieduszycki, 1881: 347.

117 Dzieduszycki, 1881a: 406. Dzieduszycki also referred to Plato in the context of aesthetics when articulating his thoughts about the ideal nature of beauty and sensory beauty, the latter being a mere reflection of the first, which could only approximate the ideal (Jakubec, 2009: 52).

118 Dzieduszycki, 1881a: 407.

The third talk concluded with the tragic death of Socrates, while the fourth and last talk began by showing the significance of Socrates' death in Plato's life: "he could not take pity on Socrates: he could regret having lost a beloved friend and his best teacher, but he had to believe that Socrates was better in death than in life, and he had to keep on believing that there, in eternity, the master could clearly see the truth that was hidden from the mortal eye."[119]

Dzieduszycki may have been taking into account the non-philosophical nature of his audience, when he interpreted the *Timaeus* in the Christian spirit. Let us quote a few passages: "So, in the beginning there was only God, indivisible, eternal, immutable, perfect and happy; there was no time or space – and with God was only the Word which was God. […] In the Word there was everything that is and that could be, and the whole course of infinite times; all this was contained in the Word, and to God it was like an open book that God's eye could encompass all at once […]. So God decided that he would create the world by means of the Word and in the image of the Word […]. […] therefore God the Father and the Word gave birth in eternity to the Holy Spirit, who is perfect and who embraces everything and beyond whom there is nothing; and since beyond the perfect Spirit nothing can exist, then this Holy Spirit is the only God along with the Father and the Son."[120] Dzieduszycki's text can be read almost as if it was written by one of the Church Fathers, at a time when the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* had not yet been finally established. The Demiurge and logos appear, though rather in the context of the *Gospel* of John. The concepts from the *Timaeus* are translated into the language of theology, and interpreted as the Trinity.[121] Let us add that criticism of such interpretations had already appeared in Polish literature more than half a century earlier. Dzieduszycki, however, confirmed Plato's monotheism, and any possible polytheism in Plato's work was the faith in the multitude of spirits and angels, but not in divine beings in the strict sense.

It was to Plato's political philosophy that Dzieduszycki then turned his attention. In order to present it in the right light, he summarised for the audience the gradual collapse of all systems and laws at the time when the

119 Dzieduszycki, 1881b: 477.

120 Dzieduszycki, 1881b: 479.

121 *Cf*.: Zieliński, 2000: *passim*. Another opinion, admittedly regarding the entire philosophy of Dzieduszycki, also refers to his interpretation of Platonism: "Dzieduszycki's philosophical concepts are rooted in Aristotle's views, but they breathe the air of platonising Augustinism" (Zawojska, 2009: 40).

whole of Greece 'revelled in democracy', the 'many-headed' system. Having presented the most important details of the political system of the *Republic* and mentioned the failure of the political experiment in Syracuse, Dzieduszycki expressed his negative opinion of all this, for "political life was not the place for Plato, the poet and thinker."[122] Unlike his teacher, he turned out to be a political daydreamer. His true place was as a teacher in the Academy, where he had earned the respect of those of subsequent centuries, including the speaker himself.

Dzieduszycki's criticism of Plato's state can be read as a condemnation of "all tendencies directed towards totalitarianisation of the state."[123] It seems more likely, however, that Dzieduszycki's criticism resulted from the fact that Plato's project was contrary to nature (lack of family), that it was ahistorical and that it lacked feasibility, as had been shown by his Sicilian journeys. The actual details deriving from Plato's radicalism were of little importance to Dzieduszycki, as can be seen from his failure to accuse Plato of socialism, though this charge was quite common in the literature of that time. Dzieduszycki did not take up this issue. He did not judge Plato's political views on the basis of their totalitarianism or socialism, but on account of their incompatibility with his conservative model, according to which all radical political means had to be rejected. What was characteristic of Dzieduszycki's lectures for his non-professional audience was his emphasis on the convergence of Plato's cosmology with the Christian worldview and Christian theology. At the same time, he unambiguously condemned Plato's political project.

Dzieduszycki's most important study of ancient philosophy, including Plato, was produced when he was working as a docent (associate professor) at Lvov University from 1893 to 1895. This ambitious work was based on a series of lectures, but this time they were not addressed to more general audiences but to university students from all faculties.[124] These lectures were very successful.[125] Published posthumously as *The History of Philosophy*, the work encompassed antiquity, including Plotinus, and was divided into thirty eight lectures, seven of which were devoted exclusively to Plato, and eight concerned Aristotle.

---

122 Dzieduszycki, 1881b: 488.
123 Daszyk, 1993: 53.
124 Sinko, 1914.
125 Piskor, 1959: 276. On Dzieduszycki's popularity and on his relations with students and university authorities: Piskor, 1959: 291–292.

Dzieduszycki rejected the very possibility of presenting history as an impartial rendering of facts, arguing that "a historian who refrains from passing judgment is not fulfilling his duty and demonstrates either a strange indifference towards human problems or a strange lack of confidence in his own beliefs."[126] Such an impartial approach to history was particularly unacceptable when discussing philosophical issues because the absence of such evaluations would leave the readers without the support of the author's opinions concerning the legitimacy, validity and historical value of the views under discussion. Ancient philosophy was not just an interesting relic to be described but was still worth discussing, for the ancients had discovered many philosophical truths which were reiterated by subsequent epochs. Dzieduszycki therefore recommended that adepts of philosophy should start their studies of philosophy from its history so that they did not end up hailing as great discoveries things that had, in fact, been discovered long ago. He also believed that knowledge of the history of philosophy, especially ancient philosophy, helped to deepen understanding of other cultural phaenomena. Further, he called for greater emphasis on the genetic analysis of the history of philosophy, by which he meant a broad study related to cultural background, such as he himself had already begun in his series of lectures *Socrates and Plato*: "Even the most powerful and independent mind develops under the influence of its environment and anyone who wants to understand a philosopher has to learn the conditions in which that philosopher grew up."[127] Extensive references to Greek religion and material culture were thus justified, for without them it would be impossible to understand the ancient geniuses.

It was the politically minded atmosphere of the city that Dzieduszycki considered to be the most important factor in Plato's Athenian environment, but it was not high-class politics, but rather petty, crooked politicking. This discouraged Plato from engaging in politics and he decided to found the Academy in memory of Socrates. Nevertheless, the serious philosophical Platonic spirit gained the upper hand over the Socratic irony with its overcautious research and questioning. Ultimately, it was the strictly philosophical differences between the two that proved to be most significant, for Dzieduszycki, and although he observed the differences be-

126 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 5.

127 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 9. This aspect of Dzieduszycki's method of historiography of philosophy was described by T. Zawojska as an application of the explanatory method (2008: 323–324). In the title of the section in this paper it was, however, incorrectly referred to as the 'understanding' method (Zawojska, 2008: 321).

tween the two Greeks even with respect to their physical build, he stressed that it was the spiritual aspects that were more profound.

The difficulties Plato's philosophical system presented to analysts as a result of the specific nature of his artistic literary production were described by Dzieduszycki as follows: "Although all of Plato's works have come down to us, it is not easy to set forth his philosophy systematically; not because it does not constitute a finished and complete system, for a more consistent thinker would be hard to find, and Plato's philosophy in its entirety is evident to anyone who has read his dialogues carefully. However, in attempting to present this philosophy concisely to speak about any particular philosophical issue, it is necessary to re-arrange its different parts and draw on many dialogues at the same time."[128] Dzieduszycki was also aware of the problem of the chronology of the dialogues, but he considered this to be ultimately insoluble.

Dzieduszycki attributed the source of Plato's polemics against sensualism to his attachment to traditional religion, which had been questioned by some philosophers, especially by the Sophists, with their emphasis on the role of sensory cognition. Plato believed that sensory cognition could not provide a constant image of reality, because its subject was variable. In keeping with his introductory declaration that he would not avoid assessing past philosophical views, Dzieduszycki even took issue with Protagoras' sensualism, claiming that the statement that man is the measure of all things was erroneous. His fundamental objection was based on the reduction of the Protagorean principle to the Berkeleyan *esse=percipi*, and he regarded making the existence of reality dependent on the subject perceiving it as contrary to common sense.

Although Dzieduszycki presented the idea of being as the most important of Plato's ideas, he also distinguished the ideas of totality, identity, difference and multiplicity, while the idea of proportion, or relation, was considered particularly important as it covered all relations between things and ideas. Building knowledge was therefore seen as organising experiential material on the basis of ideas. Ideas could also to be ordered, according to Plato, on the basis of dichotomous division, but Dzieduszycki described this as "the most mistaken procedure, random, simply childish, and surprising in such an otherwise clever thinker."[129] Further on he continued his severe criticism of Plato, though he may not have been entirely right: "He may have made mistakes and succumbed to fantastic delusions, but he

128 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 139.
129 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 156.

bequeathed to future generations a magnificent philosophical edifice, and its foundations can never be shaken and it will remain for centuries to come as a monument to an extraordinary genius. Nevertheless, when he wanted to encompass his study within a strict method, he was unable to invent anything better than his arbitrary, artificial and awkward dichotomy, and completely forgot that the natural kinds, and it was to them alone that the eternal ideas corresponded, cannot be divided from each other by means of arbitrarily and randomly selected characteristics, for no-one would get far, by, for example, dividing animals into white and non-white, and as a result, counting a white horse within one large class with a swan, and a black horse in the same class as a raven."[130] Clearly, Dzieduszycki went too far in his criticism here because Plato, who indeed recommended dichotomous division, would never have agreed to such a grotesque application of it, for his advice, for example in the *Statesman* (262c–e), was to avoid going beyond natural kinds. In writing about the correspondence between ideas and kinds of things, Dzieduszycki seemed to be evaluating Plato in the light of Aristotelianism, especially when he drew attention to the inadequacy of ideas and natural kinds. Fortunately, these dichotomous divisions were only an 'episode' in Plato's methodology. To Plato's credit, he distinguished essential properties from accidental ones and recommended that generic classification should be conducted on the basis of the former.

Plato denied the generally accepted notion of beauty being identified with utility because, as Dzieduszycki added, a heap of manure, though useful, would not be considered beautiful. Beauty appears in objects produced by man when they correspond to their intended purpose; a man is beautiful when he has the talents and skills that meet some ideal, for example, those of an orator; whereas natural creatures are beautiful when they most perfectly fulfill the idea of their kind. Man, however, is essentially a supersensory being, which is why he marvels at a higher beauty, beauty in harmony and mathematical proportions or in the most general scientific truths, and the whole of the sensory world reveals to him the highest idea of being. In this way, as Dzieduszycki concluded, it is from sensory beauty that man begins to reach divine beauty.

Dzieduszycki comprehended Plato's perspective on psychology in a specific manner, reduced in essence to eudaimonology, the theory of happiness, and it is only against this background that the soul is considered. Human happiness, unlike that of animals, consists in possessing justice,

130 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 156.

δικαιοσύνη, the highest virtue, the knowledge of the perfect law. In his discussion on justice, Dzieduszycki characterised the ideal of the just man in the following words: "he should be unacknowledged, should be vilified, should be persecuted for his justice, slandered, whipped and finally delivered to a painful and shameful death."[131] It may have been Dzieduszycki's intention that both Socrates and Jesus could be inserted within the framework of this definition of a just man.

Plato's state is in some ways like a human being, but on a larger scale. There is also a division within it, resulting from the different functions of its individual parts. Dzieduszycki introduced his audience to the social nuances of the *Republic* step by step: "the guardians of the republic must have wives, but there is often a great danger in a wife who is unable to understand the more noble thoughts of her husband, for she may drag him down from heaven and turn him into a greedy, jealous, quarrelsome man. In order to avoid this danger, noble women should be brought up and employed as men are."[132] Women, after all, according to Plato, as Dzieduszycki argued, possessed the same gifts as men. If, however, the rulers had family bonds, they might become more attached to them than to the state. And this was the reason for the unusual and well-known institution in Plato's *Republic*, known as the 'common family.' "Plato was aware that this could never be realised, but he desired love for a common Homeland to bring all the citizens of the republic nearer to the ideal state."[133] The state as a whole was to be a reflection of justice, therefore the state could not do harm to anyone, but it was allowed to cause 'temporary acute pain', which was, of course, always in the interest of the common good. It would be difficult to find wise men who would be willing and able to govern in such a system. Dzieduszycki was pessimistic about such a possibility, perhaps on the basis of his own political experience: "it would perhaps be an over-bold dream to imagine that even one such sage could be found in the republic."[134]

---

131 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 169.

132 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 185; Dzieduszycki may have partly based his reflection on his own experience, because his marriage was described in a similar way: "Wojciech was a man of good faith, who was unable to get involved in intrigues, and if he had not had an ambitious wife, he would not have been very ambitious; but Seweryna wanted her husband to be at least a minister and she vexed him terribly that »everyone becomes something, and he is still only a deputy and a deputy«" (Chłędowski, 1951a: 278). It is worth comparing these remarks to the *Republic*, book VIII (549c-e).

133 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 185.

134 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 187.

It is worth mentioning here that Dzieduszycki was the author of a dystopian story, which was most probably written as a satire on Plato's *Republic*. In the story, the author gives an account of his train journey from Paris, where he was accompanied in the train compartment by a Dutch official, a socialist, and a female feminist. Taking this into account, it is likely that Dzieduszycki's criticism was primarily aimed at two concepts associated with Plato's *Republic*: feminism and socialism. The Dutch official, provoked by the discussion of the other passengers, began to tell a story about a new Dutch colony located in the fourth dimension of reality. Initially, his story aroused the enthusiasm of the socialist and the feminist, because, as a result of a convoluted series of incidents, the right of inheritance had been abolished in the colony, which then came to be governed by women. Many of the details of life in the colony bring to mind Plato's *Republic*, for example the common education of children, who were to become citizens of the new colony. These particular children, as it happens, had been found in the forest, in the 'pears on the willow trees' of the story's title (this idiomatic expression is best translated as *pie in the sky,* again reinforcing the satiric nature of the story). Dzieduszycki's narrative is focused on the transitional difficulties experienced by the new community and on the degeneration of the system. It was inevitable, according to Dzieduszycki, that socialism would lead to widespread neglect of public property, contempt for religion among the youngest and fittest, and together with feminism – to the abolition of the institution of the family, marriage and to general bestiality in human relations, and the loss of Christian virtues, such as compassion for the elderly. Much to the indignation of the interlocutors, and especially the feminist, it turned out in the end that common ownership led to the collapse of social institutions because of negligence and lack of long-term planning. Women's governance was reduced to the power of the young and beautiful over men. Only extreme ignorance of human nature could have led to such delusions. Yet all these effects could easily have been predicted, for "if the eternal essence of human nature is considered, then the best legislator will be the one who does not trust abstract theories, even those that seem most beautiful, and who carefully takes into account the weaknesses and passions which drive people, and which are the mainspring of human actions."[135] All this was certainly missing in Plato's *Republic*.

---

135 Dzieduszycki, 1908: 416. Regarding women's struggle for emancipation, Dzieduszycki recommended that girls be educated in schools run by nuns and prepared for their respective life roles as wives and mothers (*cf.*: Ciszewski, 1978:

Plato was a faithful believer in the Greek religion, but, according to Dzieduszycki, he combined it, on the one hand, with the philosophy of the Eleatics, and on the other – with the Pythagoreanism of Philolaos. In his university lectures, unlike his public talks, Dzieduszycki placed less emphasis on the similarities between the *Timaeus* and Christian theology, but he still claimed that "since God is pure perfection, then whatever he did, he did well; he married nothingness, made it fertile, and in it he begot the universe, being the image of God."[136] Otherwise, the Lvov professor was quite critical, for example, of Plato's inconsistency in his theory of the elements: "It is beautiful – poetic, but perhaps no one could deny that the poet here prevails over the philosopher, and that Plato was not true to himself, involuntarily returning to the cruder beliefs of previous philosophers."[137] Physics, however, was of little significance in the whole of Plato's views, the arguments for the immortality of the soul being of much more importance. Dzieduszycki's criticism of Plato appeared even before he managed to reach the last lecture (XVII) which was entitled *Criticism of Plato's Philosophy*. Referring to the arguments from the *Phaedo,* Dzieduszycki found them naive and almost sophistic. The theory of innate ideas was assessed as 'extremely weak' and yet it had endured in philosophy up to the times of Kant. It must be admitted that the Pole's polemic with Plato was not too sophisticated: "Generally the only truth is that the human mind has an innate ability to learn the truth, just as the body has, for example, the innate ability to produce hair and nails, which in no way proves that the body existed beforehand and then learned to produce hair and nails."[138]

In Dzieduszycki's view, Plato was incapable of distinguishing immortality from immutable eternity. The latter is accepted by Christianity, whereas Plato was only interested in the immortal changeability of the soul in the cycle of death and birth, in metempsychosis. More important, however, was the purpose for which Plato took up these considerations: "he felt, al-

---

197). Jakubec describes "Gruszki na wierzbie" ("Pears on the Willow Tree") as an "anti-utopian literary joke" (2009: 183–184). It is certainly a humorous text, but the problems raised in it are serious, especially in the Platonic context. The philosophical and social views in "Gruszki" were convergent with those of many authors of *Przegląd Powszechny* (*General Review*), for example, the question of the relation between natural and positive law (*cf*.: Krajski, 2003: 49–50; Dzieduszycki, however, was surprisingly not included in this work).

136 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 196.

137 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 198.

138 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 201.

most instinctively, that the propagation of personal immortality and the personal soul's posthumous responsibility is necessary if people are to believe that the way to essential happiness is to choose virtue at the cost of material human interests."[139] Plato was, then, searching for a moral sanction, but he could not find it in philosophy because the arguments for the immortality of the soul were too weak. Ignorant of the Revelation, he had to draw on Greek religion, and on the basis of its myths he composed a vision of the posthumous destiny of souls with varying degrees of perfection.[140]

Dzieduszycki concluded that Plato had 'debunked appearances' by demonstrating that knowledge could not be based on the disorganised material drawn from sensory cognition. Plato discovered a world beyond the physical world to which he attributed real existence, and it was the ideas that allowed knowledge about the world to be produced. Let us add here that the cognitive aspect of Plato's idea was consistently presented by Dzieduszycki as a tree of genera and species, which was very useful for embellishing his lectures with examples drawn from the natural world. In the moral sphere, the ideas were prototypes for each individual entity, determinants of perfection, goals to be pursued. Plato, then, demonstrated that human happiness transcends health or beauty and lies in the spiritual realm. All this brings Plato 'to the forefront of the heroes of thought,' and therefore any charges against him should be minimised, for they in no way diminish the values of the philosopher and his philosophy. Dzieduszycki, therefore, was aware that the critic should maintain a historical distance to the views under criticism.

---

139 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 202.

140 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 202–205. It is not true, then, that "Dzieduszycki looks for the key to understanding the whole of Plato's philosophy in the fact that Plato founded his philosophy on the religious tradition of the Hellenes, believing in the immortality of the soul, and that he was attempting to save this faith. At the root of Plato's teaching we can perceive a belief that human beings and the world cannot be understood without faith in a higher, divine world, and human beings can get to know this world only by means of revelation given directly by the gods" (Zawojska, 2008: 330–331). According to Dzieduszycki, Plato's philosophy allows the 'higher world' to be discovered without the need to refer to religion. Since Plato failed to prove the immortality of the soul on philosophical grounds, then the authority of religion turned out to be necessary. The main aim of arguing for the immortality of the soul was not to understand the world, but to implement the edifying tendencies that Plato had set for his philosophy, which, after all, resulted from the inspiration of Socrates.

Among the more minor charges that were levelled against Plato were those relating to the form of his philosophy. Dzieduszycki admitted that Plato frequently contradicted himself, but this stemmed from his way of articulating his thoughts. More serious contentions were expressed about the essence of Plato's philosophy, namely the theory of ideas, with Dzieduszycki claiming that in the spiritual realm Plato did not distinguish ideas from spirits and God and the soul remained abstractions, at one moment being comprehended as on a par with ideas as models, while the next moment, the ideas existed within them. In general, Plato's concept of God was unclear. Another contradictory area was that of the existence of matter. For Dzieduszycki it appeared that the idea of matter could not exist, but that matter itself existed. "Contrary to his own logical principles, Plato turns that which is not into some substance, without which he could not extricate himself from his system, and having established this matter devoid of being, beyond being, and having made it a being, he descended into incurable vagueness."[141]

All these flaws in Plato's philosophy were to weigh down like lead on the philosophies of subsequent Platonists. Nonetheless, Plato consistently transferred them to the sphere of practical philosophy. And what would the immortality of the soul be like as an idea? – asked Dzieduszycki. Moreover, experience, which was disdained by Plato, contradicted his conclusions on the leading role of reason, which, as the lecturer continued, was only an instrument engaged by the feelings to achieve their goals. "And what was much more absurd, Plato believed that some impractical sage, who was engaged in watching an intellect devoid of purpose and so abstract that it was almost devoid of substance, this sage with no knowledge either of the real world or of real feelings and human relations would be the best king, and that the nation subjected to the absolute rule of such a sage would be the happiest nation. It was this mistake that was to lead to the most dire historical accidents."[142] Plato could have been forgiven for his political illusions and for one attempt at putting them into practice because they clearly must have resulted from his desire to improve human relations. But the fact that, despite their failure, Plato had refused to lose faith in his political fantasy for such a long time, was difficult to justify. Only at the end of his life, when writing the *Laws*, did he realise that the nature of history was far from ideal, yet at the time of outlining his future political project, rather than taking history into account and reckoning

141 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 210.
142 Dzieduszycki, 1914: 212–213.

with tradition, he had planned to re-build a community starting from scratch, from its very foundations. For a conservative thinker, this was something impossible to consider even in theory, not to mention the possibility of actually trying to carry it out. It was unthinkable even for an exceptional conservative like Dzieduszycki, who did not shrink from drafting visions of the future.[143] Dzieduszycki maintained that history provided an explanation for social phaenomena and processes, to put it simply: *historia magistra vitae*, so it should also be used as a source for thinking about the future. This applied as much to the history of nations, indispensable for any politician, as it did to the history of philosophy, which, as Dzieduszycki had declared in his introductory lecture, was indispensable for any philosopher.[144]

In his political philosophy, not only had Plato failed to draw sufficiently on the lessons of history, but even worse, he had even tried to prevent its development. This was certainly impossible, for social and political relations inevitably undergo changes, though these should evolve in accordance with the natural order and the maintenance of universal values. Dzieduszycki evaluated Plato's views in the light of his conservatism, a conservatism that "allowed slow, gradual change, while maintaining historical continuity and respect for tradition."[145]

Just as Plato's political views matured over the years, so Dzieduszycki's attitude to Plato also underwent some discernible evolution. During the years that separate Dzieduszycki's public lectures from his university courses, a development can be observed in his historical and philosophical interests, and a deepening in his knowledge of Plato.[146] In his university lectures he succeeded, at least partially, in separating Plato from Socrates, though wherever Plato's thoughts were original and independent of Socrates, Dzieduszycki considered them to have been drawn from Pythagoreanism in the field of cosmology, while even the outline of the theory of ideas was seen to have been already present in Philolaos. Still, during his earlier open lectures he had not even attempted to separate Socrates from Plato, though he did mention the existence of a problem, but accepted that in most issues the two philosophers had to be discussed

143 *Cf*.: Jaskólski, 1991: 163–164.
144 *Cf*.: Daszyk,1993: 33, 66–67.
145 Daszyk, 1993: 62.
146 The popular lectures can be considered as belonging to Dzieduszycki's youthful period, while the *History of philosophy* was from his professorial and mature stage (Zawojska, 2009: 41–42).

together. In the case of Plato's original thoughts in the cosmology of the *Timaeus*, for example, Dzieduszycki still discerned Socrates' inspiration, if not in its substance, at least in the purpose it was to serve. It seems that, despite his high opinion of Plato, Dzieduszycki wanted to divest him of originality. It is worth adding here that many of the attributes of Socrates that were highlighted by Dzieduszycki were, in fact, reflections of himself, at least according to the image of Dzieduszycki that has come down to us from his contemporaries, the image of a man prone to irony, or even a prankster, critical of others and of himself.[147]

From Dzieduszycki's reconstruction of Plato's philosophy the reader is left with the image of Plato as a traditionalist thinker in his intentions, and a revolutionary in his deeds, and it is here that the most important difference lies in his assessment of Plato and Socrates with regard to ethical and political issues. Socrates acted properly, he sought to preserve the old moral forms, while Plato, out of the same motives, created political fantasies which were not only rejected by his contemporaries but were equally unacceptable to Dzieduszycki and his contemporaries. Yet Plato was also devoted to tradition, as can be seen from his use of myths when speculation failed. Dzieduszycki's assessment of Plato's *Republic* resulted directly from his conservative views, which were in opposition to violent revolutions, especially those which disregarded tradition. The very idea of revolution denied the concept of the influence of Providence on history, to which Dzieduszycki adhered.[148] He considered tradition to be "the best disincentive to rapid and untested socio-political changes (revolutions)."[149] Dzieduszycki's philosophical views, usually labelled as neo-Messianism, were not, as was Lutosławski's neo-Messianism, connected in any way with

147 "He represented a type of a Greek sage in the style of Socrates, who walked the streets of Athens, listened to others, refuted false opinions and preached his own. Our dear Wojciech tried to apply the methods of the Greek philosopher, obviously suitably modified to the 19th century. He came from the classical world – and became its last representative, the last Socrates in Polish culture" (Piskor, 1959: 316); cf.: Daszyk, 1993: 21. Perhaps, as Daszyk assumed, it was a deliberate attempt by Dzieduszycki's to imitate Socrates by means of "extreme elitism not based on birth or property requirements, but on civic virtue, knowledge and competence. Hence the Count's understandable reluctance towards radical democracy as the rule of the ignorant and incompetent crowd" (Daszyk, 1993: 131). He was also described as a scientist and a philosopher of the 'Hellenistic type' (Łoś, 1968: 142).

148 Jaskólski, 1991: 165–165; Daszyk, 1993: 30–32.

149 Daszyk, 1993: 13–14.

Plato. His ideal of a conservative was Socrates, partly combined with Plato and depicted by him in the Socratic dialogues.

Dzieduszycki was fond of giving examples in his lectures and he was a popular lecturer. Certainly, Stefan Pawlicki's lectures, which were delivered in Kraków at more or less the same time, were much better prepared, with a broader knowledge of the subject, its problems and literature, but Dzieduszycki also had his advocates. Admittedly he was reproached for hastiness, sometimes even for dilettantism, but he was excused on account of his wide range of interests, his versatility and his many activities.[150]

One who could not be counted among the greatest admirers of Dzieduszycki was Tadeusz Sinko (1877–1966). Having acquainted himself with Dzieduszycki's *History of Philosophy*, he voiced his disappointment at the lack of footnotes, citations and bibliographic references, but Dzieduszycki, as Sinko himself noted, preferred to commune directly with the works of the ancients rather than read commentaries. The title of the book was, then, misleading, but this was not the fault of the author. The book, in Sinko's opinion, was outdated even at the time of its publication, especially the first lectures. Regarding the chapters on Socrates and Plato, Sinko wrote: "Dzieduszycki's lectures read with great benefit. […] they are presented vividly and originally."[151] He claimed, however, that chapters like *Criticism of Plato's Philosophy* 'read oddly,' adding that no one could remain indifferent to them, given the fact that it was an individuality of Dzieduszycki's calibre who authored this criticism and all the opinions expressed there. They should at least arouse the interest of the historian. Let us add that Sinko most likely meant the historian of Polish, rather than of Greek thought. The interest of the historian of Greek philosophy would no doubt be aroused by Pawlicki's work, still unfinished in 1914, which Sinko described succinctly as 'philological.' Nevertheless, he thought it was worth looking into Dzieduszycki's lectures for benefit and pleasure.[152] We might add that this was rather on account of the author's personality than because of the substantial value of the book. Likewise, in the review penned by Adam Zieleńczyk, it was emphasised that the book read with interest and even with benefit, though the latter was only possible in the

150 Daszyk, 1993: 13–14.

151 Sinko, 1914: 5.

152 Sinko, 1914: 5; a few years later, when Sinko edited the posthumous part of vol. 2 of Pawlicki's book, its unfinished part on Plato, he recommended two chapters from Dzieduszycki's work as supplementary reading: *Plato's Ethics and Politics* and *Plato's Religion* (Sinko, 1917, IV).

case of prepared readers,[153] those, presumably, who possessed some knowledge of the history of philosophy, which could then be supplemented with Dzieduszycki's interpretations and provide a means of assessing them properly.

In view of Sinko's criticism, the *History of Philosophy* by Dzieduszycki cannot be recognised as valuable or of great merit with regard to its content, although, the contrary position is sometimes substantiated: "thanks to its rendering of interesting information, which is absent in other works. It is also an interesting handbook on the history of philosophy from the didactic point of view, and, despite the progress in our knowledge of the history of philosophy, it is abundant in moral educational values. This is mostly due to the emphasis on the values relating to the question of wisdom."[154] It should be remembered, however, that this book is in fact not a handbook, for it consists of lectures delivered by Dzieduszycki two decades before it was published. At the time of its publication, it was already assessed by a competent reviewer as not meeting the requirements of the times, having no academic apparatus, and, in brief, was not very reliable. Perhaps Sinko would have rated this work much more critically, had it not been for his memory of the deceased author.

The aspect of moral education, mentioned by Zawojska, cannot, however, be seen as an indicator of the value of a book on the history of philosophy and cannot be its goal. In this respect only the conscientiousness with which the author treats the subject can be of instructive academic value. Dzieduszycki himself attributed to the teaching of philosophy a propaedeutic function, which he saw as preparing students to understand scientific findings[155] and not as a contribution to their moral development. When assessing Dzieduszycki's lectures today, it must, unfortunately, be concluded that their present value is almost only historical, as a testimony to the lecturing of this uncommon docent, and his now distant influence on the history of Polish philosophy. Stanisław Łoś, in his memoirs of Dzieduszycki, articulated a justified opinion on the current relevance of his studies: "Dzieduszycki's academic works have become lost in the past, for writings which originated two generations ago can only serve today as a step on the stairway leading to the summit."[156]

153 Zieleńczyk, 1914: 79.
154 Zawojska, 2008: 320; likewise Zawojska, 2009: 45–46.
155 Ciszewski, 1978: 203.
156 Łoś, 1968: 128.

It is worth adding a remark about Kazimierz Twardowski, who stayed at the Dzieduszycki estate as a private teacher to the Count's children during the years 1885–1887. This stay, his conversations with Dzieduszycki, their reading together (including the Greek authors), and their discussions were of such significance that they influenced Twardowski in his choice of study – he enrolled for philosophy.[157] The influence, however, was not unidirectional, because thanks to Twardowski, Dzieduszycki became interested in spiritism, both in theory and practice. Let us add that during their seances, among the visitant personalities to appear were Socrates, Plato and even Aristotle.[158]

It should be admitted, following Michał Jaskólski, that Dzieduszycki, though often regarded as Socrates, "did not have and does not have his Plato."[159] Young Twardowski did not become such a 'Plato'. Although it was thanks to Dzieduszycki that he became interested in philosophy, it is there that the philosophical influence ended. After his university studies, Twardowski had a very different concept of philosophy. He was a professor of philosophy rather than a Greek-style philosopher; he did not inherit Dzieduszycki's passion for studying the history of philosophy, which he did not even recognise as a branch of philosophy, but as a branch of history. Until his late years, however, he retained a grateful memory of his Socrates of Jezupol. Some years after Dzieduszycki's death, Twardowski recalled that he had been a real eccentric. "Everyday contact with this man turned for me into a source of abundant learning and stimulus, and no less contributed to strengthening and deepening my attitude towards philosophy."[160] Ironically, Twardowski and his students can be partly held responsible for the fact that Dzieduszycki's way of doing philosophy, his passion for the history of philosophy, and his originality, demonstrated, among other things, in his way of combining philosophy with ideology, have all faded into the past, and other trends have come to dominate in Polish philosophy.

157 Brożek, 2010: 81–87.
158 Piskor, 1959: 301–304; Łoś, 1968: 142.
159 Jaskólski, 1991: 168.
160 Twardowski, 1992: 22; it was in Jezupol, therefore in cooperation with Dzieduszycki, that Twardowski wrote his doctoral dissertation (Jadczak, 1991: 22).

2.4 Plato as a precursor of modern democracy as viewed by E. Jarra, a philosopher of law

Unlike Dzieduszycki and others, researchers of the younger generation saw advantages in Plato's political project. Among them was T. Sinko, who, while a student at the Jagiellonian University, had taken up the study of Plato's texts on the advice of S. Pawlicki. The result of Sinko's research on Plato's political conception took the form of a Latin essay on the philosopher kings and on the reception of this idea. It was a panegyric in honor of Plato, whose concept of the philosopher kings was regarded by Sinko as a star that would shine for all nations for centuries to come. "Even if the practice and experience of real life were to discredit these ideas, or at least show that their deployment provided no benefit in private or public life, still, in the future a new people will appear, who will become convinced that these *sententiae* are not at all false, and they will spare no effort in the attempt to put these ideas into practice."[161] For Sinko, then, the impact on future generations of thinkers and, above all, on politicians was to be the criterion for judging Plato's political concept.

Plato's golden thought was incorporated into the claim, variously articulated, that states would never be happy unless philosophers ruled them. The philosopher, however, as Sinko explained, was not a theoretician devoted to contemplation, nor a literary researcher who had lost contact with the practices of everyday life. The ideal philosopher, in its Platonic sense, was outlined by Plato in the *Republic* as an exceptionally gifted man, of dependable character, well-educated, knowing the idea of the good and ultimately capable of passing on his best qualities to his successors. "Taking all this into account, we should recognise that the dictum on the rule of philosophers was not ridiculous, though it certainly deviated from the ideals of Athenian democracy. By suggesting that dreamers and ignorants be

161 Sinko, 1904: 3. On Sinko's study, *cf*.: Mróz, 2011: 189–190; 2012: 124–125. The study by Sinko, who appears to have inherited Pawlicki's passions for philology and antiquity, was briefly praised by Pawlicki himself in his unfinished synthesis of the history of philosophy: "a very sophisticated study written in exquisite Latin" (Pawlicki, BJ 1: 124). Sinko, the editor of the work of the deceased author, probably out of modesty, kept this flattering opinion of the great Plato expert in the manuscript, and did not include it in Pawlicki's published work. Another flattering opinion by another great philologist, S. Lisiecki, who described Sinko's study as "a historical treatise, written in Ciceronian style" (Lisiecki, APAN 1: 19) also remained in the manuscript.

removed from public office […], Socrates provoked outrage among the people."[162]

Sinko came to the conclusion that the thought articulated by Plato had, in fact, often been implemented in the course of history when, for example, wise men, *aoidoi*, and later palace philosophers accompanied their rulers to assist them in the art of good governance. Having traced the history of Plato's idea from the Academics to Nietzsche, Sinko optimistically concluded: "Plato's golden dream has never been totally fulfilled; it has often been distorted or shown to be ridiculous, and sometimes attacked. Nevertheless, it has never ceased to appear in human minds as an image of better times because the whole purpose of the idea is that although it is not observable to the senses, it nevertheless occupies the mind, providing a model for shaping human affairs. And even though human clay is too crude to reflect the divine form in full, some of its features nevertheless remain firmly embedded and can be recognised. Is it not the case that today high offices are reserved for those who can demonstrate through examination qualifications that they possess the knowledge and skills to serve? It was no more than this that Socrates, the first author of this divine thought, desired. And when kings and leaders of our times appoint those with outstanding education and merits as their palace advisers, is it not true that they fulfil Plato's desire that the government should always have wisdom as its companion and adviser."[163] In its entirety, then, Plato's project seemed to Sinko unfulfillable because of the crudity of the clay from which humans were formed, but even its partial fulfilment, which had already taken place, was to the credit of both humankind and Plato's idea, the strength of which could be measured, according to Sinko, not so much by its implementation, but by the stimulus it provided for humanity to strive for at least partial realisation, and thus, for the improvement of humanity itself.

Like Sinko, Eugeniusz Jarra (1881–1973) saw Plato as a political thinker. It was on the basis of his dissertation on Plato that Jarra had received his Ph.D. in Lvov, but later, at Warsaw University, he had mainly devoted himself to research on the history of philosophy of law in Poland.[164] Jarra's book, *Plato's Idea of the State*, was to have been the first part of a great work on Plato's influence on the development of political thought. If it had been completed, it would have been an undertaking on a much grander

162 Sinko, 1904: 7–8.
163 Sinko, 1904: 55–56.
164 Kunderewicz, 1976.

scale than that fulfilled by Sinko in his *Sententiae Platonicae*. Jarra, however, did not take advantage of Sinko's work, nor did he return to his work on Plato.

Even the preface of his book left no doubt about Jarra's recognition of Plato as a universal and still relevant thinker, whose work Europe should continue to draw on: "Twenty three centuries ago, the Athenian sage, observing the sad perspective of the approaching ruin of Greece, dreamed up, from the depths of his ingenious spirit, a model by the means of which his country could be rescued. Since then, this model has continued to shine through theory and practice, and when the olive branch of peace finally flourishes over the world, when the nations return to normal life, the road that will lead to their proper development will confirm, once again, the everlasting power of Plato's Ideal."[165] It was Plato's critical diagnosis regarding the future of Athens, according to Jarra, that had induced him to create his impressive philosophical project. By analogy, World War I had aroused anxiety over the future shape of Europe, and Jarra drew the attention of his students and readers to Plato's work as the best possible way forward.

Plato's project in the *Republic* and *Laws* was based on three principles, each in harmony with the other: "1) the state is an educational institution, it is the citizen's nursery; 2) the state bases its education on the natural predispositions, on the inborn, so to speak, predestination of the individual; 3) general happiness will be assured if citizens are guided by nature along the road that is most appropriate for each of them."[166] All these principles were components of the Greek way of thinking during the period of Enlightenment in the 5th century.

Jarra drew attention to the dispute over the oversimplified, negative image of the Sophists. The dispute on how to assess the Sophists was also reflected in Polish literature, often echoing Western views. Jarra therefore compared the opposing views of S. Pawlicki and W. Lutosławski, the former holding an extremely negative opinion about the Sophists on account of their financial dealings and their moral unscrupulousness, whereas the latter emphasised the liberation of humans from the necessity of physical labour and the Sophists' contribution to the development of science and intellectual ferment. Regardless of the assessments of the Sophists' achievements by each of the Polish historians of philosophy, they both fell into

165 Jarra, 1918: preface. On the background of Jarra's work, *cf.*: Mróz, 2011: 190–192; 2012: 125–127.

166 Jarra, 1918: 6.

the trap of treating the Sophists as a uniform entity, rather than noticing the great differences among them.

According to Jarra, the Sophists in Plato's dialogues could be seen as a reflection of the social changes taking place in Greece, which had given rise to a search for new answers to old questions, a search for new truths, though with varying degrees of success, sometimes perhaps verging on dilettantism. In this light, Jarra felt it necessary to analyse more closely the Sophists' ideas as a possible source of Plato's political thought, an analysis based only to some extent on Plato's dialogues. Plato appeared to have, for example, certain features in common with Protagoras, who had assigned the most important role in the state to knowledge, and in turn, the state was responsible for education. The differences were, however, more numerous and they included: epistemological relativism and its consequences, individualism, usefulness as one of the value criteria of social institutions. Plato had little in common with other Sophists, and the differences were even more numerous, for example, the attitude to dilettantism and pretentious nonsense, and the acceptance of only earthly happiness and laws. In order to make these ideas repulsive to his contemporaries, for didactic purposes, Plato presented them in the dialogues in caricature fashion.

Regarding the credibility of Xenophon's image of Socrates, Jarra adopted a compromise position. Xenophon was, after all, not only a politician but also a commander, so he understood political matters from his own experience and in this respect he should be trusted. Xenophon thus became a benchmark for Plato's credibility, and only the content in Plato that was consistent with Xenophon could be regarded as a valid source of knowledge about Socrates' political thought. According to Jarra, such content could only be found in the *Apology* and the *Crito*. Socrates' contribution to Plato's political thought was the idea of basing ethics on intellectual foundations. The idea of state-run education may also, to some extent, have come from Socrates. Undoubtedly, Socrates was also the inspiration for the rational sanctioning of the law, with justice as its ultimate criterion. Above all, what distinguished Socrates from his contemporaries and at the same time linked him with Plato was the concept of the primacy of the general good, which resulted in the need to overcome egoism, and the insistence on citizens' obedience to the laws, for breaking the laws by the individual had morally negative implications for the whole community. By his strong adherence to the demand for obedience and fidelity to the law, Socrates was also pointing to those principles and criteria which were not met by Athenian democracy, for example, knowledge and, resulting from this, jus-

tice. By openly speaking against *demos*, Socrates in his teaching was anti-democratic and reformatory.

In his dissertation Jarra applied the genetic method, counting three factors among the sources of Plato's thought. The first, extensively discussed by Jarra, was the history of pre-Platonic Greek philosophy, the second, the contemporary historical background, and finally the third – Plato's individual personal characteristics. The outline of the historical context included the collapse of Athens, the degeneration of democracy and the widespread effects of self-interest. The degeneration of the system was on such a large scale that the only possible salvation was its complete transformation and reconstruction from the very foundations. Although Plato arrived at his concept by means of speculation, he selectively drew on the system he knew, and his project "bears the most remarkable features of Hellenic culture, […] Plato was its most perfect incarnation and expressed this even in his most original productions."[167] It was thanks to his originality that Plato was able to leave his mark on the well-known motifs of Greek culture, transforming them into a unified metaphysical, psychological and ethical system.

It is often alleged that one of the personal factors shaping Plato's project may have been his aristocratic origins, which could have contributed to his idea of bringing the best individuals to the fore in the state. Jarra argued, however, that it was not possible to attribute traditional aristocratic beliefs to Plato, because "the foundation [of Plato's aristocracy] is not the parentage of its members, but only their capabilities and personal merits; it was possible for the individual's virtue and intellectual endowment to cross over class boundaries. The aristocratism of Plato's state is not ancestral but spiritual – a principle which Socrates had already expressed with regard to the organisation of public affairs."[168] If any personal factors could be taken into account as contributing to the genesis of Plato's project, then those could only include his personal powers, a combination of the skills of a sage and a poet who had come under the influence of Socrates

Whether the main subject of the *Republic* was its political system or the idea of justice was a dispute considered by Jarra to be pointless because it was not possible to present the one without the other. What was of primary importance was the goal of Plato's *Republic*: "the image of such a reform of the relation between the state and society that it would become a com-

167 Jarra, 1918: 107.
168 Jarra, 1918: 108.

plete expression of justice, the most perfect among the virtues."[169] Jarra went on to discuss the most important issues of the dialogue. He believed that Plato made a distinction between society and the state, the latter being an ideal structure, with the lives of the ruling guardians entirely focused on the public component, whereas those who were governed remained free to develop their social interests. The ideal of the state as a whole consisted in a harmonious combination of both parts, which had never been achieved by past regimes.

With respect to the chronology of the dialogues, Jarra considered that the *Republic* belonged to the period of the theory of ideas because the knowledge that distinguished the guardians from those that they ruled concerned the ideas. Jarra drew attention to the fact that the common ownership of property among the guardians, an idea he found topical as a means of preventing greed in government circles, had Pythagorean roots. One of the frequently neglected issues in the discussions on the *Republic*, but one that was crucial to Jarra's interpretation, concerned the regulations of the lowest class in Plato's state. "Public affairs are not intended for the third class; they thus retain individual property and family. Its members, as common people, are distinguished by their appetites; since, as in the human soul, the lower part must be subordinate to the higher, then, they must also submit to the rule of the selected ones, who have noble feelings and intellect."[170] This class, then, was not, for example, deprived of property, since Plato "advises the guardians to ensure that neither excessive wealth nor poverty become rooted in the state."[171] Plato, then, having left the specific precepts concerning the lowest class to the rulers, did not need to deal with them anymore. In his political construction, they were only the substance of the state, neither forming nor co-creating the state apparatus; Plato, however, could not neglect them, nor did he treat them with aristocratic contempt. If he had done so, he would have broken the most important and fundamental principle of the perfect state: τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν, to do one's business, that which is one's duty, because there is nothing to despise in the perfect state. While no detailed regulations were provided for the third class, and Plato left their establishment to the rulers, nevertheless, to outline their framework and to ensure the continued impact of his own concepts, he handed down an educational system that was

169 Jarra, 1918: 111.
170 Jarra, 1918: 124–125.
171 Jarra, 1918: 125.

to guarantee that "the reformer's idea is not distorted, nor goes astray."[172] Jarra devoted a significant amount of space to the lowest class. "[Plato] could not despise their work in compliance with the τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν principle, the principle that each class should perform their functions as perfectly as possible, which was the foundation of the fourth and most important virtue of the soul and the state, justice."[173]

Doing one's duties was a key-principle in Jarra's interpretation of the *Republic*. The possibility for individuals to change their class was emphasised, and this allowed him to extract from Plato a message that was still relevant to modern times. Let us quote a longer passage: "Plato introduces a principle of great significance, the principle of individualisation: when people, as relatives and children of one land, come into the world, they are very similar to each other, but an imperfect nature can be born from the perfect, and vice versa; therefore, when such a case occurs, and there is a bad apple in the upper class, or an individual displaying features that raise it above its inheritance in the lower class, then in the first case, without any special favours, declassment should take place, while in the latter – social promotion should be enacted with full honours. Here, as follows from the text, Plato means that such transfers were to be carried out among young people or even children; but it was also envisioned that they could occur at a more mature age […]. This profound reform, which placed Plato many centuries ahead of the historical development of humanity, could indeed provide his state with harmony, for it eliminated the cardinal sin of the class system, on the one hand, by preventing the waste of first-class talents, whether military, administrative or scientific, that could blossom within an industrial working class environment, and on the other, by stopping advancement based on the privilege of birth for people without personal qualifications for state-run positions. This was equivalent to the principle τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν, its logical complement, and together they provided conditions for justice to materialise within the state. Thus, Plato's state loses its aristocratic character in the common sense of the word, and could be referred to as a 'sophocracy'."[174]

---

172 Jarra, 1918: 131. In the light of the above, W. Kornatowski's opinion that, according to Jarra, Plato dealt with 'the third estate' (Kornatowski, 1950: 288), requires correction. For according to Jarra, Plato did not disdain this class, but he did not have to deal with regulations for it, having left this duty to the ruling philosophers.

173 Jarra, 1918: 126.

174 Jarra, 1918: 129; *cf*.: Wróblewski, 1972: 105–106; Wróblewski argues that *sophocracy* and *elite*, with some reservations and the need for further specification, are

The most important component of Plato's reform, according to Jarra, was not the elimination of property or the family, which were minor considerations, but the educational program mentioned above, which also served as a means of testing the qualifications of individuals. State-run education was intended to raise the moral standards of institutions and social life. And since education was a touchstone of the individual's value, and since the most valuable citizens could be born among the lowest class, then, as Jarra emphatically claimed, the educational system had to encompass everyone.

Jarra had much that was good to say about Plato regarding the specialised roles of citizens and its compliance with nature, and the possibility of social promotion for every individual: "More than twenty centuries ahead of the development of democracy, Plato demands that, regardless of origin or class, the individual's position in the social organism should be determined on the basis of personal skills, while all those who do not display the advantages of their class should be forcibly degraded. The aristocrat-philosopher thus solemnly declares to pay appropriate tribute to nature in this way"[175]. Hence democracy, as the absolute equality of all the citizens without regard to their capabilities, showed itself to be contrary to the natural order, in which the skills of individuals are varied. In the light of this argumentation, gender equality was compatible with nature. Jarra emphasised that Plato's criticism of democracy did not stem from aristocratic premises, but from the incompatibility of democracy with human nature. Plato's concept of nature was rationalistic, so an empirical concept of nature could not meet the requirements of this philosopher. In this regard, according to Jarra, Plato was ahead of his epoch, and paradoxically, he even seemed to be a modern democrat, if democracy is defined as freedom of social promotion for everyone on the basis of their skills.

The whole state was to be an embodiment of the good, which was comprehended as the common good, and this was only possible through the harmony and solidarity of all individuals. This state cohesion was to be achieved through education, the purpose of which, according to Plato, was to provide an antidote to unbridled individualism, which leads to the disintegration of society. This might, quite reasonably, raise a question: Does Plato not go too far in his concern for the entire state? Could he not, in this way, annihilate the individual? Jarra had a clear answer to this: "this

---

the best terms to describe Plato's rule of philosophers (Wróblewski, 1972: 107). *Cf*.: "the rule of learnedness – sophocracy" (Popper, 1945: 127).

175 Jarra, 1918: 137.

accusation, though frequently raised, does not seem to be in accordance with Plato's intention nor with the spirit of the »Republic's« institutions. […] it is sufficient to recall the crux of this doctrine, τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν, which means – to carry out the duties appropriate for a given individual, and – related to this – redeployment within the social hierarchy on the basis of personal merits. These were the decrees giving the individual the unconditional opportunity to excel and gain personal rank."[176] Since Plato was primarily concerned with the entire organism, did he care about individual happiness? Jarra's answer is positive: "in the perfect state the happiness of the individual will be measured individually, but not according to arbitrariness, fantasy or the personal delusion of the individual, not according to a subjective, individual measure; but in accordance with an objective criterion for the given individual or position. Everyone is to be given what befits them, what is for them most appropriate and through which the whole will become beautiful."[177] Individual happiness is always in accordance with natural predispositions and with the general purpose of the state. "So a human individual is not »sacrificed without mercy« by the Platonic state; being placed in a position in accordance with its nature, the individual is equipped with the right view of the world and can feel totally satisfied with its fate, building, at the same time, the foundations for general harmony."[178]

Later generations called Plato's project a utopia, an illusory fantasy. They were wrong, said Jarra, to apply the intellectual, social and cultural measures of their generation to judge an ancient social project. Plato was convinced that it was possible for his project to be implemented, and this was substantiated by his voyages to Syracuse, but as Jarra added, "the feasibility of the plan is not the only touchstone of its absolute value, and actions, being less perfect, are never able to realise the word, which is by its nature a much more perfect instrument for grasping the truth. The possibility of merely getting closer to that which, after reflection, is considered best provides sufficient testimony to its value."[179]

The second dialogue in Plato's political triptych was the *Statesman*. Considering that the fundamental unity of Plato's political thought took on various forms of expression, a short digression on chronology proved to be necessary. Jarra remarked that researchers on language statistics had not

176 Jarra, 1918: 144.
177 Jarra, 1918: 144–145.
178 Jarra, 1918: 145.
179 Jarra, 1918: 147.

been the first to suggest that the *Statesman* followed the *Republic*, but "those who do not only know how to suggest a particular order but also how to prove it by means of their extensive philosophical and philological studies, full of monumental scientific significance, were rightly considered the founders of the new theory. Campbell and Lutosławski stand in the first place; their decisive works have found conscientious followers in Germany, who continue to substantiate the time of creation of the »Statesman« set by the two scholars."[180] While making a gesture of respect toward his compatriot, Jarra added that the philosophical content of both dialogues unambiguously testified to the sequence of the *Statesman* following the *Republic*.

The *Statesman* must have been written after Plato's Sicilian disappointments, which, although they did not induce him to depart from his ideal political system, at least convinced him to adapt it to the requirements of reality. In contrast to the rule of sophocracy in the *Republic*, what came to the fore in the *Statesman* were its laws, resulting from the experience of the community and the knowledge of the advisers. The *Laws* were the expression of Plato's disappointment and the powerlessness of his mature age. His lack of trust in humanity has become evident as has his belief in the supremacy of evil in the world, evil which stems from ignorance, but also from weakness of will.

While outlining his imperfect system in the *Laws*, Plato changed his attitude to private property and the family and admitted them as a necessary evil. He did not, however, abandon the principle τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν or gender equality. The rulers' knowledge of ideas was replaced by the knowledge of practical issues. It is, however, Plato's approach to creating the new system in the *Laws* and the method of its creation that were fundamentally different from the *Republic*: "In the ideal state, in the kingdom of wisdom, Plato indicated only the essential laws and entrusted their amplification to those into whose hands he was to place the government, namely the class of philosophers; in the less perfect state, on the other hand, he wants to ensure the durability of the foundations by means of legislation. Mistrust of human nature leads to a detailed rulebook for living, which often verges on pettiness. Νόμος is to become the ground beam and guarantee for the state; it is to regulate the citizens' actions and thoughts and ensure by all possible means that the whole social union, without exception, adheres to the principles prescribed for it."[181] It becomes clear that Plato believed

180 Jarra, 1918: 150.
181 Jarra, 1918: 166.

that, thanks to adequate laws, it was possible to establish the ultimate system, permanent, immutable, and able to withstand innovation. All this was to guarantee 'glaring normalism', as Jarra called it, meaning the dominance of legal norms over customs. The laws voiced the demands of reason, the necessity of their observance was to prove to be stronger than the motives of weak people, who could not be attracted by metaphysical considerations, which are, in fact, absent from the *Laws*. Yet concealed behind the laws, the same idea lives on.

The immutable fundamental principles of Plato's political thought are still discernible in the *Laws* in the form of the ethical purpose of the state and its educational function. "In the less perfect state, having replaced the class of philosophers with a trained magistracy and ultimate knowledge with practical reason, Plato considers the rule of the latter as compatible with nature in these conditions."[182] The anti-individualistic attitude of the *Republic* was also retained in the *Laws*, with its emphasis on unity and the common good, on which the good and happiness of individuals was dependent. "If it is taken into account that the state, by educating its citizens, instils in them ethical principles set by the state itself, then it must be admitted that the state will also inculcate desires corresponding to the common interest so that the citizens' notion of their well-being will harmonise with the state criteria in this regard, and therefore the whole of Plato's social and state system and the aspirations of well-educated individuals will not contradict each other."[183] By denying the relationship between happiness and the individual and his subjective aspirations, Plato merely shows that he did not base happiness on erroneous and fleeting foundations.

In the conclusions of his work Jarra quoted one sentence from the *Republic*, book VII, which was placed as a motto in Greek at the very beginning of his book: "with reference to a state and form of government, we have not altogether stated mere wishes, but such things as though difficult are yet in a certain respect possible" (540d, transl. H. Davis)[184]. He assessed the whole of Plato's political views as a lasting acquisition for subsequent generations. Apart from one final paragraph, Jarra's work is basically devoid of a distinct conclusion, or collected results. What the author intended was rather to articulate his own positive attitude to Plato's reformatory aspirations, which he regarded as innovative, up-to-date and modern, though sometimes misunderstood.

182 Jarra, 1918: 177.
183 Jarra, 1918: 179.
184 Jarra, 1918: 180.

Jarra asserted that contemporary society was hierarchically organised and class-ridden, showing the remnants of feudalism, so for him Plato was a true democrat. He therefore interpreted Plato's project as a perfect state, not impossible in the future, governed by educated people – the best possible ideal for a future Polish democracy. The project presented in the *Republic* seemed to be a perfect goal, one that was not easy to reach, but possible. Since the *Republic* was interpreted as Plato's reaction to the political crisis in Athens, it may therefore also have been read by Jarra as a remedy for the political frictions which were eventually to lead to World War I, and, subsequently, to Poland regaining its independence. While searching for a model for the political system in his homeland, the philosopher believed that it would not be absurd to turn to some of Plato's ideas, for they matched the aspirations of a modern society, and, what is no less important, they were achievable. In view of the above, the claim that Jarra, "while presenting the development of the Plato's idea of polis, characterised it as a speculative issue, not as a real demand of a political nature"[185] seems unjustified.

When taking issue with totalitarian interpretations of Plato, W. Wróblewski aptly counted Jarra among the opponents of the caste interpretation of the *Republic*'s political system.[186] Apart from this reference, it seems that Jarra's work has been underestimated, all the more so because his assessment of Plato's political project was unconditionally positive and it was also the first attempt at such an overall assessment in Polish literature. In fact, for a long time, this work was the only Polish book dealing with this subject, yet despite this, it certainly did not get the recognition it deserved, especially considering the number of studies continuing Popper's negative reading of Plato.[187] Let us add that among Jarra's citations were frequent references to the works of two Poles, namely to Lutosławski, including his early German study, and to Pawlicki. This provides evidence that a tradition of research on Plato was beginning to take root in the Polish millieu.

---

185 Trojanowski, 2006: 211, footnote 16.

186 Wróblewski, 1970: 206; remarking on the modest amount of Polish literature devoted to Plato, Wróblewski, who opposed anti-democratic and aristocratic, totalitarian and caste interpretations of Plato, had an excellent predecessor in the work of Jarra; *cf.*: Wróblewski, 1972: 6–7, 93. He criticised the views of Czarnecki, who in his reading of Plato did not consider Jarra's book at all (Czarnecki, 1968).

187 Wróblewski, 1970: 214.

The only vestige of reaction to Jarra's work among Plato researchers of the time is a review by Witwicki. He emphasised the predominantly reconstructive character of the book, and the large number of quotes and references to the subject literature, which sometimes, in the opinion of the reviewer, made it impossible to distinguish the author's thoughts from those of the writers to whom he referred. Witwicki, a psychologist, felt that there was insufficient psychological analysis of the various images of Socrates in the dialogues. He described the entire book as follows: "Generally speaking, the author of the book reveals great erudition and this predominates over all the other merits. At any rate, the accuracy and clarity of the analysis does not seem to me to be the greatest advantage of the book."[188] One advantage was, according to Witwicki, the informative value of the work, resulting from its reconstructive character.

This early study on Plato by Jarra was unique in his entire output, the subsequent period of his work consisting mainly of works in the field of history and philosophy of law, many of which, after World War II, were written in exile in England. Like Limanowski, the initial interest of a young researcher on Plato's utopian project changed in later years into scientific work in another field. In the case of Limanowski, it was social philosophy, or sociology, in Jarra's case – philosophy of law.

Sinko and Jarra present very optimistic interpretations of Plato's political ideas, which assumed the possibility of their future implementation. They regarded Plato as a political thinker ahead of his time, some of whose ideas had already been fulfilled, which was to the credit both of Plato and of more contemporary times.

Despite the author's declaration that *Plato's Idea of the State* was to be only the first part of his planned work,[189] Jarra discontinued his research on Plato because of a shift in his research interests. Jarra's unfinished work is considered to have been continued in a paper by Kazimierz Kosiński (1886–1970), who assessed Plato's project differently from his predecessors.[190] According to Kosiński, Plato simplified the vision of man, reduc-

188 Witwicki, 1920: 126.

189 Jarra, 1918: 180; the following description of the book's content cannot, then, be accepted: "He argued that the history of Plato's idea of the state is, above all, the history of the influence of Plato's thoughts on subsequent centuries" (Kuźmicz, 2008: 81), this is exactly what Jarra did not manage to prove, though at that time, he was still planning to pursue research into reception studies.

190 Witkowski, 1938: 21. It can be added that Witkowski passed his doctoral exam in philosophy with S. Pawlicki with flying colours, therefore he must have had a good knowledge of Plato (Starnawski, 2010: 127).

ing it to the sphere of politics, "Plato's state absorbs the individual without reservations, guaranteeing them political morality, but, in exchange, depriving them of personal happiness. The individual, then, is completely identified with the state."[191]

Sinko and Jarra constitute a certain turning point in the interests in Plato's practical philosophy. For them, Plato is no longer primarily a moral philosopher and only as a consequence of this a political thinker, as he was for Pawlicki or later for W. Potempa. Instead, he is from the start and by choice – a politician. Moreover, it was the unclear political situation of the times and the recognition of a turning point in European history that was the reason for Jarra's interest in Plato's political philosophy. Sinko, on the other hand, saw the positive side of the development of modern bureaucratised European countries, which, from the Platonic perspective, seemed to satisfy Plato's demand for government by professionals.

191 Kosiński, K., 1932: 14; *cf*.: Kornatowski, 1950: 291–292.