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# State Typohumanism and its role in the rise of *völkisch*-racism: *Paideía* and *humanitas* at issue in Jaeger's and Kriek's 'political Plato'

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to provide a philosophical conceptual framework to understand the theoretical roots and political implications of the interpretations of Plato's work in Jaeger's Third Humanism and Kriek's *völkisch*-racist pedagogy and anthropology. This article will seek to characterize, as figures of *localitas*, their conceptions of the individual, community, corporeality, identity, and the State that both authors developed departing from Platonic political philosophy. My main hypothesis is that Jaeger's and Kriek's interpretations of Platonic *paideía* shared several core-elements based on a modern conception of State sovereignty and human will, whose fundamental ground is the subjectivist-technical metaphysics. The "production" of a human type (spiritual and/or racial) and a unitary State political community appears in both authors mediated by a theory of political education, that I define as «State typohumanism», that sought its sustenance in Plato's political philosophy, mainly by means of a distorted understanding of the notions of *týpos* and *ēthos*, and that, I argue, played a key role in the intellectual legitimization of *völkisch*-racism. This would be broadly translated into a programmatic and literal understanding of the Platonic *Republic* which assumes that the inherent function of any State is to produce subjectivities based on national identities grounded on homogeneous characteristics. In these varied characterizations similar appropriations of *humanitas* have been expressed both in Jaeger and in Kriek.

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## 1. Introduction

Throughout the 20th century, German scholars emphatically readdressed Platonic philosophy, which represented an unprecedented fact in post-Renaissance modern history. After the First World War, different historiographic, philosophical, pedagogical, philological, and aesthetic schools, progressively identified Plato as a political thinker, an educator, and an artist (Pohle, 2017; Vegetti, 2009).

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The first characterizations of Plato as an artist and a poet can be traced in Friedrich Schleiermacher's famous general introduction to his translation of Plato's dialogues [1804] and in Georg Anton Friedrich Ast's *Platons Leben und Schriften. Ein Versuch, im Leben wie in den Schriften des Platon das Wahre und Aechte vom Erdichteten und Untergeschobenen zu scheiden, und die Zeitfolge ächten Gespräche zu bestimmen* [1816]. This trend will then be echoed by Friedrich Nietzsche in his *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* [§14; §190] and in its posthumous fragments (Nietzsche, KSA 6, 1999, §2, p. 155; Nietzsche, KSA 7, 1988, p. 110, 5 [78], 20–25).<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, paradoxically, the philologist Ulrich v. Wilamowitz —Nietzsche's most famous detractor— considered Platonic philosophy, in general, and the dialogue *Republic*, in particular, a form of poetry (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 1919, p. 5), even though he eventually understood the dialogical poetry as a failed episode of Plato's frustrated attempt of reforming the State, shifting the artistic dimension of philosophy to its political function.

During the 1920s and 1930s, almost no German studies of Plato considered him a mere philosopher. In fact, during the times of Emperor William II socialist and communist readings defied Plato's traditional interpretations from a Statist-political point of view such as the works of Robert von Pöhlman, *Geschichte des antiken Sozialismus und Kommunismus* [1893], and Georg Adler, *Geschichte Des Sozialismus und Kommunismus von Plato bis zur Gegenwart* [1899]. Even the Neo-Kantian philosophers of Marburg devoted themselves to think of Plato not only as a theoretician of knowledge, but also as a political thinker. This was the case of Paul Natorp's book *Platos Staat und die Idee der Sozialpädagogik* [1895], and of Hermann Cohen's conference *Das soziale Ideal bei Platon und den Propheten* [1916].

This liberal-social interpretation of Plato was harshly questioned in Berlin in the early 1920s, both by Werner Jaeger's *Dritte Humanismus* and Wilamowitz. Jaeger's famous mentor portrayed the Athenian philosopher with intense corporatist and militarist features. Since the beginning of the century, Wilamowitz had reintroduced a 'political' Plato into the philosophical debate after the recognition of the validity of the *Seventh Letter* in his own seminal work on the Athenian (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 1920), however, such a reinterpretation was deeply rooted in Prussian nationalism and authoritarianism. After the German defeat in World War I, Wilamowitz had intensified the interpretation of Plato as a State reformer in an internal context of political crisis and rising individualism especially in his lecture *Der griechische und der platonische Staatsgedanke* (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 1919).

In 1910 the article of the Stefan George's poet follower Kurt von Hildebrandt "*Hellas und Wilamowitz: zum Ethos der Tragödie*" was published. Although the Plato of Wilamowitz, as Arnaldo Momigliano noted, "anticipates that of the followers of Stefan George [...] in the fact of being a *Führer*", the *Georgekreis* members found it "too bourgeois" (Momigliano, 1973, p. 116). Hildebrandt's publication was a real milestone, highlighting the rupture, mediated by the influence of Nietzsche, between the new generation of philologists around George (some of them Wilamowitz's early pupils) and the school of Wilamowitz. Therefore, a new movement of philologists was born, represented by Karl Reinhardt, Wolfgang Schadewaldt, Hermann Friedemann, and Paul Friedländer. Furthermore, from 1927 on, Jaeger, Julius Stenzel, and other followers of the Third Humanism (George & Wolters, 1998, pp. 233–235; Maiatsky, 2011, pp. 112–113), were seduced by a similar plastic, creative, artistic, and political-pedagogical vision of Plato. Something similar happened to future Nazi philosophers, like Alfred Bäumler and Ernst Kriek.

According to Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, this relationship between Germany and ancient Greece represented the catastrophic symptom of an intellectual need of the Germans to reach an identity, fundamentally appealing to art as a mimetic instrument of identification *par excellence* for a nation. In particular, the German milieu felt that it was deprived of the right of being the subject of its own destiny. According to both authors, the particularity of this identification between Germany and «Greece» should be sought in the logic of *the double bind* that would have guided it from its foundations: "the appropriation of the means of

identification must both take place, and not take place, through the imitation of the ancients, essentially the Greeks” (Lacoue-Labarthe et al., 1990, p. 300).

In opposition to the literature published between 1895 and 1916, post-war studies on Plato’s political thinking reflected a widespread mistrust of the potential capacities of Weimar Republic and of political liberalism to carry out a national re-foundation. Accordingly, ancient Greece represented an alternative to the common apathy of both the divisive and mercantilist individualism, as well as of the anonymous modern gregarious masses. Along these lines, the parallel between the critical situation of the Weimar Republic and the Athenian crisis following the collapse of the Delos League represented a powerful myth of the German *intelligentsia*. In particular, the Great War was compared on several occasions by renowned Plato’s interpreters of the time with the Peloponnesian War (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 1920; Jaeger, 1933, p. 46; von Hildebrandt, 1933, p. xi). Indeed, this crisis, often characterized as “cultural” or “spiritual”, became an eminently socio-political breaking point rooted in the historical gap between the construction of a national culture and the fragmentary formation of the modern State (Plessner, 1924, 1935) which was, of course, amplified by the hyperinflationary famine of 1921–1923 and the rise of violence and political extremism.

Accordingly, I will show how Plato’s Jaegerian reading theoretically collapses under the sign of, what I call, the “topo-typographical *pathos*”, i.e. an inseparable theoretical-political affinity between *týpos* and *topos*. In addition, I will also highlight that such a reading is essentially a model of education based on the breeding of a national human type, mediated by a distorted appropriation of Nietzsche, which uses Plato to legitimize itself, in line with the «political Plato» claimed by the official doctrine of National Socialism —particularly the work of Ernst Kriek.

In this article, I aim to study how the revival of Plato’s political thought set the stage for the collapse of the Third Humanism, which degenerated into, what I define as a «State typhumanism»: a theory of political education aimed to develop a higher human type by a unitary State-based national community. By means of this category, I intend to encompass both the works of Werner Jaeger and the «archihumanist *völkisch*-racism» of Ernst Kriek<sup>2</sup>. I argue that «State typhumanism» played a key role in the intellectual legitimization of *völkisch*-racism.

This article is rooted on the perspective presented by Lacoue-Labarthe et al. (1990). According to this perspective, the National Socialist philosophy did not manage, to their regret, to distinguish itself from nodal metaphysical elements of humanism (besides its propagandistic and rhetorical devices). From my point of view, this is also testified by the philosophical production on Plato during Nazism. Thus, I consider that both the Jaegerian Third Humanism and the philosophy and pedagogy of Kriek shared a “determination of *humanitas* which is, in its view, more powerful than any other” for which “the subject of absolute self-creation” is instituted as the subject as such, inscribed inside the logic “of the realization and the becoming concrete of «abstractions»” (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990, pp. 95–96).

Furthermore, Jaeger’s and Kriek’s political philosophies of education remain within what Jacques Derrida called “topolitics” (Derrida, 2009, pp. 53–54) or “*ontology*” of the “*primitive conceptual phantasm* of community, the Nation-State, sovereignty, borders, native soil and blood”, [...] “an axiomatics linking indissociably the ontological value of present being [on] to its *situation*, to the stable and presentable determination of locality, the *topos* of territory, native soil, city, body in general” (Derrida, 1994, p. 82).

Jaeger’s and Kriek’s use of the notion of *Züchtung* (breeding) seems to have its roots in Nietzsche (i.e. *Der Antichrist*, *Götzen-Dämmerung*, and the posthumous fragments). Although it is possible to find also in Nietzsche a view in which the quest for a lofty human type was the unfinished task of the Greeks (Nietzsche, KSA 8, 1988, p. 105, 6 [18], 13–20), however, the Nietzschean breeding of a superior “human type” (Nietzsche, KSA 6, 1999, §3, p. 170; Nietzsche, KSA 12, 1999, p. 63, 1 [239], 17–25), a type of an experimental and plural nature, it is in opposition to the kind of education that will vindicate the «State typhumanism». The conscious «auto-poiesis» would not admit the fixation of an archetype through the imposition of (eugenic) criteria defined by the State and its legislation (which in Nietzscheans terms would be defined as

*Zähmung*, “dressage”); and even less the substantialization of nationality (Nietzsche, KSA 7, 1988, p. 646, 29 [48]).<sup>3</sup>

I believe that there are important theoretical starting points for deepening Lacoue-Labarthe’s, Nancy’s, and Derrida’s perspectives. My main hypothesis is that Jaeger’s and Kriek’s interpretations of Platonic *paideía* as *Bildung* (and *humanitas*) shared nodal theoretical-political elements based on a modern conception of State sovereignty and human will, whose fundamental ground is the subjectivist-technical metaphysics. The «production» of a higher human type (spiritual and/or racial) and a unitary State political community is what defines, what I call, «State typhumanism». Such production appears in Jaeger and Kriek work mediated by a theory of political education that sought its sustenance in Plato’s political philosophy (mainly by a distorted understanding of the notion of *týpos* and an implicit assimilation of *ēthos* to *kharaktēr*). This eventually led to a programmatic framework and «literal» understanding of Plato’s *Republic*.

## 2. Jaeger: *paideía*, *humanitas*, *Bildung*

On the first page of his classic book *Paideia*, written in 1933 and published one year later, Jaeger summed up the general tone of his reflection. Referring himself to the communitarian essence of education, he stated that “the character of the community is imprinted [*prägt*] on its individual members; in the human being, in ζῴον πολιτικόν, which is the source of all action and behaviour, to an extent not found in animals” (Jaeger, 1973, p. 2). For Jaeger, “the formation of a superior man” (5) was, at the same time, the ultimate goal and essential medium of Greek education, which regarded the human being as “the highest work of art” (p. 12). The uniqueness of Hellenism then became its ability to put knowledge, understood as formative forces [*gestaltende Kräfte*], at the service of education, and to mould, through the latter, the form of men as “the potter shapes his clay and the sculptor carves his stones” (p. 12). In the introduction to *Paideia*’s first volume of the English version [1939], he would even say that the Greeks “were the first to recognize that education means deliberately moulding human character in accordance with an ideal” (Jaeger, 1946, p. xxii), deepening the idea developed in 1934 that education must have been for the Greeks “a process of conscious construction” (Jaeger, 1973, p. 12).

Of course, from Jaeger’s point of view Plato inescapably became both the unfold of Greek educational culture and the source of modern German spiritual superiority. For Jaeger, one can properly talk about education or *Erziehung* when education is meant as the offspring of the Platonic *paideía*, that is, paradoxically, the German *Bildung*. Such *Bildung*, full of Hellenism, would appear in Plato as a “figurative expression of educational activity” (Jaeger, 1973, p. 12), as a “physical metaphor of *moulding* character” (Jaeger, 1946, pp. xxii-xxiii; original emphasis).<sup>4</sup>

Our German word *Bildung*<sup>5</sup> expressively designates the essence of education in the Greek, Platonic sense. It contains in itself the relation with the artistic and plastic conformation, as well as with the normative image, the “Idea” or “Typos”<sup>6</sup>, which is projected internally in the creator artist [*Bildner*] in a preeminent way (Jaeger, 1973, pp. 12–13).

It was especially on his foundational manifesto of Third Humanism, *Die griechische Staatsethik im Zeitalter des Platon* dated 1924, that the star disciple of Wilamowitz would definitively depart from what he considered the aesthetic and apolitical reception of Plato by German humanism.<sup>7</sup> His polemical targets were *Goethezeit* enlightenment humanism and classicism, Humboldt’s «Second Humanism» —his liberalism and philosophical individualism, as well as his subjectivist definition of *Bildung* (Jaeger, 1960, p. 197; Jaeger 1933, p. 34)—, and the general apoliticism of the Weimar culture. Such heritage determined the prevalence of a passionate classicist historicism in the departments of philosophy and philology. In Jaeger’s eyes, Wilamowitz belonged to a similar milieu (Jaeger 1933, p. 48), thus being unable to understand the importance and real possibility of a direct influence of Antiquity on the present (Jaeger, 1973, pp. 19–20).

There was no explicit support, at first sight, for racism and biologicism, which were determining components of the National Socialist ideology. However, the naivety with which Jaeger attempted to approach<sup>8</sup> Ernst Krieck's *völkisch*-racism is astonishing, particularly because of the way he tried to gain Krieck as an ally in the humanist task of spiritual renewal of the nation. In his essay *Die Erziehung des politischen Menschen und die Antike* (a text published in the journal *Volk im Werden*, directed by the aforementioned National Socialist pedagogue, in an issue of the fateful year 1933), Jaeger compared, as von Hildebrandt did the same year, the Peloponnesian War to the First World War, identifying the Athens in which Plato would take his first steps with Weimar's Germany. According to the philologist, it was in that critical period after 1918 that:

[...] then rose again upon us the understanding of Plato who, in the post-war period and after the collapse of not only the political power of the Attic empire, but of the whole human and divine order of life, set in motion the reconstruction and interior renewal (Jaeger, 1933, p. 46).

But Jaeger would not be content to give a mere diagnosis of what he considered the limitations of German culture in order to give birth to a new political and anthropological model. In the same text, a defence and vindication of his humanism and, at the same time, a broad concession to the National Socialist reading of the ancients in general and of Plato in particular, he added that:

[...] the criticism which humanism finds precisely from the point of view of the world view of National Socialism does not start from the broad meaning of the word here mentioned, and nothing is further from it than to deny the present the ability and the need to learn from the most powerful and most creative of all historical worlds, bringing us closer to them. It would be superfluous to quote literally in favour of the foregoing all the clear statements of the *Führer* which demonstrate this forcefully. The humanism against which the attacks are directed and which proves incompatible with the historical-spiritual presuppositions of National Socialism is a very determined ideology, although perhaps not capable of being uniquely defined, whose roots lie in the rationalist cultural system of the Western European Enlightenment of the 18th century. [...] His closest goal [that of the Weimarian apolitical reception of "the great representatives of the German classical culture of the Goethe era"] was the aesthetic and formal self-formation of the individual. Its connection with community life was non-existent (Jaeger, 1933, pp. 43–44).

Jaeger seemed to believe that he was able to merge the spiritual racism of his Third Humanism (a racism that explained the political success of Hitlerism as a movement of distant inherited forces) with the exclusive biological determination of the Nazi discourse, by taking some weak «theoretical» distances:

Thanks to the chain of history, which cannot be annulled, Antiquity has always had a fixed place in the construction of our culture. Just as the fundamental characteristics of a race and a people are not substantially modified over the centuries, so are the historical elements of their spiritual construction [...] (Jaeger, 1933, p. 43).

Jaeger's perspective, illegitimately labelled as individualistic, did not find any contradiction between the creation of the individual by the Greek spiritual world and the becoming of man through the State and the recognition of its laws (Jaeger, 1960, 89; 108), inevitably colliding with the National Socialist perspective, for which the notion of the individual had no place at all.

The Third Humanism, with its intransigent appeal to acknowledge and achieve the Antiquity's spiritual legacy penetration in German current culture (Jaeger, 1960, p. 107), its recognition of the binding and educational power of the modern Nation-State as the only historical sovereign unit able to hear "the call of the ancient State thinkers" (Jaeger, 1960, p. 210), i.e. "to bring State power and State ethos into true harmony" (Jaeger, 1960, p. 102), and its characterization of Plato as founder, educator, and legislator, thus, succumbed to the official humanism of the Third Reich, collapsing into the metaphysics of the regime and revealing a common background:

[...] ancient man is the political man in all the decisive phases of his historical life. On his community-State character is based his "*humanitas*", because the State still embraces the common circle of life and spirit. [...] He [Plato] taught for all time to conceive the State as the educational construction of the life of the

whole from the ideal forces of the nation, and to let the spirit and the will grow from a deep stratum of the human essence, where they become the supreme shaping forces [*Formkräften*] of the State's formative will [*staatsbildenden Willens*]. [...] The specific task which history sets for the German people today is the formation of political men. [...] As soon as a new political human type [*Menschentypus*] is formed, Antiquity as a forming force will become necessary for us (Jaeger, 1933, pp. 45–47).

*Humanitas* meant for Jaeger, as he stated in the first volume of his *Paideia*: “the education of man in his true form, his human being in his own sense” (Jaeger, 1973, pp. 14), “real and genuine human nature” (Jaeger, 1946, p. xxiii). In short, *humanitas* was for Jaeger a synonymous for *paideía*, and the latter for *Bildung*, as well as an antonymous of erudition [*Gelehrsamkeit*] (Jaeger, 1960, p. 107).

The last (problematic and very significant) reference is provided in a subtle way, in a footnote which refers the reader to the *Attic Nights* of Aulo Gellio. This passage referred by Jaeger, entitled “«*Humanitatem*» non significare id, quod vulgus putat, sed eo vocabulo, qui sinceriter locuti sunt, magis proprie esse usos [*Humanitas* does not mean what people think, but those who used language with purity used this term more properly] states as follows:

Those who coined Latin terms and used them correctly did not intend to give *humanitas* the meaning that people think -what the Greeks call φιλνθρωπία, which means a certain cordiality (*dexterites*) and benevolence (*benivolentia*) towards all men without distinction-, but they called *humanitas* more or less what the Greeks call παιδεία and we education and instruction in the fine arts [*eruditionem institutionemque in bonas arts*]. Those who really crave them and seek them, those are the most human. And it is that, of all living beings, only man [*homo*] has been granted the interest and cultivation of such arts, reason why the term *humanitas* was forged (*Noct. Att.*, XIII, 17, 1; our translation).

Thus, Jaeger decided to ignore what follows in Aulo Gellio's text: that *humanitas* for authors like Varro or Cicero meant, ultimately, erudition (*Noct. Att.*, XIII, 17, 2–4), and that the difference in rank decisive for this tradition was between the cultivated and the uncultivated. This qualification would have converted his interpretation into intellectual aestheticism, which Jaeger deplored (and of which he would later be accused as well). However, it is not clear whether this is the only reason why the issue is omitted. Jaeger seems to be interested in another level of the argument. First, that *humanitas* cannot be universal, but rather it demarcates an identity and a distinction, i.e. it is circumscribed to a human group. Second, the distinction introduces a different ontological rank to those who would hold such *humanitas*: the most humane among humans. Racism, spiritual or not, remains always racism.

Anyway, Jaeger's ideas were quickly rejected by National Socialism because they were considered weak, intellectualists, elitists, in short: not *völkisch* enough.

### 3. Kriek: how to philosophize with an Aryan hammer

From the standpoint of pedagogy, Ernst Kriek emblematically resorted to the Platonic *paideía* and the notion of *týpos*. Even before Nazism, in his *Philosophie der Erziehung* (1922) and *Menschenformung* (1925), Kriek understood education as the joint realization of formation [*Bildung*] and breeding [*Zucht*] of the animal-members of a community. For the German pedagogue, the mission of the State was the production and direction of a homogeneous *typus* around a shared archetype [*Vorbild*] of an ethical-racial nature (Kriek, 1925, p. 5, p. 370). “The State —held Kriek some years later— [is] a master breeder [*Zuchtmeister*] and people organizer in its entirety” (1932, p. 22). Although he did not make an explicit reference, it is easy to discover that a decade after *Philosophie der Erziehung*, this author would make out of *Rep.* 424a-b an article for his partisan decalogue.

It could be said that the “topo-typographical *pathos*” transubstantiates *ēthos* in *kharaktēr*, namely, mark, trait, engraving; and *paideía* becomes the verb of the State-subject, that is, *kharássō*<sup>9</sup>, to make an incision, to inscribe, to stamp, to engrave, to mint, to mark. Hence, Platonic education in Kriek's political pedagogy becomes *Bildung* and the latter “breeding and racial hygiene” (Kriek, 1922, p. 119).

While it is true that racial *Bildung* should not be understood in early Kriek's works in a strictly territorialized sense or biological-genetic (either Mendelian or Darwinist) (Kriek, 1922, pp. 123–125)<sup>10</sup>, “«blood» is always” the spiritual and formative support “of a symbolic ideal” (Kriek, 1922, 123). Accordingly, as the outbreak of war approaches, this author will incorporate biological determination into his theories.

In 1932 Kriek joined the *NS-Lehrerbund* and the NSDAP and published the emblematic *Nationalpolitische Erziehung*, in which he argued for the need of a *völkisch* and Nordic seal of what we might call the oxymoron of an «identitary *ēthos*» of belonging. Rather than advocating the quest of an *ēthos*, Kriek, in fact, longed to find the *kharaktēr*; to crown the people-cattle locked up in the farmyard of the National Socialist educational project with an internal and external mark of «property» made out of burning iron, banishing in this way the universalist “delirium of humanity” (Kriek, 1932, p. 152).

In Kriek's appropriation of Platonic political philosophy, the generative force of the spirit unfolds over the soul, filling it with its essence and giving rise to an objective form in it: the character.

It is only through the mutual penetration of the soul with the spiritual that character is formed [...]. However, [the spirit] acquires in the soul a personal form [*Gestalt*] and transcribes its glyph and seal [*sein Zeichen und Siegel*] on to the body, which in turn serves as an intermediary to allow the natural forces to mobilize, to invigorate, and to encroach on the spiritual-objective world (Kriek, 1922, p. 117).

However, it was not only a question of demarcation of property, of raising palisades in defence of the German people. It was not even the consecration of a *stemma*<sup>11</sup>, that is, a complex of elements (both symbolic and biological) capable of depicting a public and private identity made out of a pure and common offspring in a defined territory, and, simultaneously, made out of from a language and thought breeders of men character. It was the creation of a *stigma*, an indelible *coronam spinarum*, a complementary *gráphō* of impropriety, as that the Athenian of Plato's *Laws* considered that would deserve to receive in his face and hands the slave or foreigner who stole a temple (*Leg.* 854d); or, quoting Herodotus, the infamous mark that an irritated Xerxes commissioned to executioners to make to none other than on the Hellespont (*stixontas tòn Hella sponton*) (*Hdt.* 7. 35).

The Platonic *týpos* in Kriek's reading claims a *tópos*, an *historical localitas*: that is the essence of political writing, the politics of literality. This locality is a common place, a unitary and equal stamp; we could say, with a little irony, a *cliché*: a prototype for printing, a triviality always repeated in the same terms. This locality is, in the first place, body, blood, and racial identity. Secondly, it is also psychological, animic, spiritual identity.

These two instances were indissociable for the topo-typographic *pathos* from the beginning. Kriek, already in his book of 1922, using the Platonic triad body-soul-spirit, referred to the spirit as a harmonizing force, of which would be its biological substrate “the noble blood, the inclusive concept [*Inbegriff*] of noble races and high humanity [*Menschentums*]” (Kriek, 1922, p. 123). In this scheme, the soul acquires a mediating role presenting itself as a terrain in which the receptive-feminine principle competes with the impulsive-masculine principle (Kriek, 1922, p. 117), a conception that does not seem very far from what Jaeger will claim as the Platonic source of humanism (Jaeger, 1928, pp. 173–174).

Third, the locality is popular, national, immanent.

Fourth, it is territorial, State-based.

Finally, it is «political», sovereign, incarnate, transcendent, legal. Perhaps this may be a modern appropriation of the pre-Platonic understanding of *nómos* (which was posed as Platonic, of course), namely, the meaning of *némein* not only as the action of legislating, but of distributing the territory, of demarcating it, as well as of herding, leading the beasts, and, by extension, leading a group (Pradeau, 2008, pp. 91–92). The selective literality of Kriek's statement and his capricious reading of Plato —who effectively put the law into close relationship not only with



obedience and the image of the singular soul and the whole community, but also, and above all, with the faculty of reasoning (*logismós*) (*Leg.* 644d1-3)— allowed the German pedagogue to transform this pre-platonic herding into (modern) territorial sovereignty and governmental decree, as a consequence of the soul-political direction of the citizens that, in his eyes, would have enabled the Athenian.

Once again Kriek would appeal to Plato to strengthen a possessive and patrimonialist conception of the State and the citizenship, whose ground lays of course in the historical, economic, and metaphysical foundations of the modern nation State, legitimizing, in that way, his own racism: “Platonic upbringing and the educational State from the German people will thus be established on the basis of an image of the racial-*völkisch* world and in the context of the emergence of a new historical image” (Kriek, 1932, vi). Such image, as he would say years later, from his “*völkisch*-anthropological” perspective, can be summed up as an absolutely radical novelty, a religiosity of blood that was no longer exhausted in its symbolic dimension. The “racial-*völkisch*-political image of man, the reality of communitarian life in the Third Reich, derived from a new fundamental religious decision” (Kriek, 1938, p. 69), which was not only above every previous creed (pagan, Jewish, or Christian) and scientific biology, but also above philosophy itself, directed to a new temporal future. From this “image of the biological-overall world” [*gesamtbio-logisches Weltbild*] (p. 5) all Kriek’s literal and instrumental readings of Plato came from.

In 1933 Kriek had published *Musische Erziehung*, a book in which he reinterpreted his own theories in a partisan key and pointed to Plato as a master of breeding. In the prologue to this text Kriek stated that:

[...] no one was as deeply versed in the power of music as Plato, who can once again become our teacher here. For education in associations, in political youth, in the Imperial Armed Forces, in the defence unions of the SA, the SS and the Steel Helmets [*Stahlhelm*], artistic [*musische*] education has become a necessity. The spirit of the soldier cannot grow from military practice alone: defensive action is perfected only in the animic level, attitude and *ethos*, honour, devotion and loyalty. This lead, however, along with physical exercise, to artistic education, through the formal power of the rhythmic arts (Kriek, 1933b, pp. i-ii).

Kriek, during that same year, launched a philosophy journal aligned to the NSDAP, *Volk im Werden*, unfortunately legitimized by the Third Humanism, thanks to the inclusion of the text already mentioned by Werner Jaeger.

## Conclusions

The subjectivist myth of every *paideía* that has its *arkhé* in the *týpos* cannot be other than the two-sided myth of, on the one hand, a man-child/literal-beast citizen and, on the other hand, of a productive *makròs ánthropos* State. The minority and bestiality of the individual are resolved in the community maturity, by means of the plastic and pedagogical capabilities of a State aimed to ‘create’ and breed human beings. In this sense, it could be said that Plato was a solemn and seductive puppet, who projected his pedagogical shadow on Weimar as a result of the light of a fire that was claimed to be nietzschean in the cave wall of the Third Humanism and national racist archihumanism aligned with the NSDAP.

In a very short time, the «typohumanist» *kháraxis* sank into the living flesh, as deep as the abyssal impurity it seeks to eliminate. Humanity, an alienated abstraction of the *bíos*, was industrially replaced by the Aryan type or by death. Alfred Rosenberg’s onto-bio-typology, the vindication of the identitary embodiment of the original dream-forming power in the watchful body, sealed his own bloodthirsty destiny: “Nazism is the Nazi myth, i.e. the Aryan type, as absolute subject, pure will (of the self) willing itself” (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990, p. 95). In the words of Kriek: “The fact of the existence of race is not doubtful, because man carries it in his heart, his spirit, his soul, or because man wants race to become a fact” (Kriek, 2004, p. 9).

Over the Aryan people looms, threatening, the *Gegentypus*, the antitype, curious motor of history, further gear of the imminent Manichean racial gladiatorial duel: “only the final victory of the superior race collaborates with the elimination of the opponent, [and] when it is not so the people must perish” (1922, 25). As Krieck will state in his 1938 lecture *Die Intellektuellen und das Dritte Reich*:

History is the arena for the struggle between the human type, noble, pure racial type and what E. Jaensch described as the “antitype” [*Gegentyp*]<sup>12</sup>, that is between good and bad, between Aryans and Jews [*Germanentum and Judentum*], between blood and metaphysics, between light and darkness, between primeval forces and the weak-mindedness of the rationalists (Krieck, 2004, p. 9).

The modern racism of pure blood and the theological-political State terrorism inaugurated by Pedro Sarmiento in Toledo in 1449 eventually got to an accomplishment.<sup>13</sup> The National Socialist sovereign State body, pedagogical subject, cultivator, surgeon, sculptor and engraver of the healthy body of the Nation, with its educational chisel and scalpel, sculpts, makes his incision and inscribes the *kharagma* or *stigmata*, exterminating every single life other than its own. Plato will not be able to escape the *Gleichschaltung* or

[...] the fully realized metaphysics of the Subject, that ideology finds its real guarantee: that is to say, in the thought of being (and/or of becoming, of history) defined as a subjectivity present to itself, as the support, the source, and the finality of representation, certitude, and will (Lacoue-Labarthe et al., 1990, p. 294).

To say it with Derrida, Jaeger and Krieck surrendered at their own love and “taste for power”, to their “Syracusean temptation” (Derrida, 2018, pp. 22–23). Their interpretation of Plato was founded upon the «basileic» reduction of philosophy to a privileged means to influence the tyrant, not very different from “the idea of an hegemony of the spiritual and the philosophical over political hegemony itself” that, according to Lacoue-Labarthe, characterized the first stages of Heidegger’s commitment with Nazism between 1933 and 1935 (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990, p. 13). Thus, the Platonic *kallipolis* of the «State typhumanism»<sup>14</sup> was placed at the service of history in three directions: it served to discredit the immediate (liberal) past, it glorified the ancient (Greek and Nordic) past, and it mobilized the new radical present towards its ultramodern, racial, corporal, State-grounded, national, and popular (catastrophic) fate.

## Notes

1. However, later, in his *Götzen-Dämmerung* [1889], Nietzsche will change his view with regard to Plato as an artist (Nietzsche, KSA 6, 1999, §2, p. 155).
2. This theoretical-political shift was early warned by the pioneering works of Helmut Kuhn (1934) and Bruno Snell (1935).
3. However, this self-production or self-breeding, *Selbstzucht*, —as he will say in *Ecce Homo* referring to the importance of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* for his life and work; KSA 6, p. 327, 5)—of “a stronger species”, which replaces with consciousness what took place until then thanks to necessity or chance (KSA 12, pp. 424–425, 9 [153], 24–29), remains within the horizon of what Peter Sloterdijk called lately “anthropotechnology” (although the Nietzschean breeding is, in the absence of a “conscious agent”, “a breeding without breeder, an agentless biocultural drift”) (Sloterdijk, 2009, p. 23).
4. Jaeger refers the reader in footnote to the notions of *pláttein* (and indirectly also of *týpos* in *Republic* 377b), as he had already done in 1928 (Jaeger, 1928, p. 173).
5. The Jaegerian notion of *Bildung* was strongly rooted in the interpretation of the “formation” proposed by Johann Gottfried Herder in his *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* [1793–1797], and by the pedagogical theory of his colleague Spranger (1922). See also Horn (2018).
6. According to Krell “The word *ho typos* probably derives from —and at all events is related to— the verb *typtō*, «to beat, strike, or smite», in the sense for example of striking a coin. (The Greek word for hammer is *hē typas*, *he hē typis*)” (Krell, 1990, p. 23). The term *typos* in Plato, as the author himself points out, appears as a metaphor in the Athenian’s treatment of memory in *Theaetetus* (Krell, 1990, pp. 25ff).
7. This view was previously stated in Jaeger’s *Humanismus und Jugendbildung* [1921] (Jaeger, 1960, p. 42, 67). Krieck rejected Humboldt’s second humanism and university model in similar terms (Krieck, 1933a).

8. *Paideía* is never defined in Jaeger's work. Only in the second volume of the 1943 (Jaeger, 1943, vi) English edition Jaeger makes a remark (this comment disappeared in the 1986 reprint and was neither printed in the German version of 1944) on the difficulty in defining *paideía* as civilization, culture, tradition, literature or education since all of them were terms equally insufficient, partial and reductive.
9. According to David F. Krell the verb *kharássô* "is perhaps a loan-word from the Hebrew *haras*", which means "to sharpen, notch, furrow, scratch, or stamp" (Krell, 1990, p. 24).
10. In Krieck's early work *Bildung* meant a shared normative order, a product of will oriented towards the ideal of community life, in which the breeding of individuals is "never the acquisition of «pure lines» in the biological sense; it is not a biologically determined process, but is ultimately always based on the establishment of spiritual goals, valuation and formation [...]" (Krieck, 1922, p. 123).
11. As Klein clarifies, the sense (not mentioned here) of the verb *kharássô* as sharpening "led to several other words (*kharax*, *kharaktes*) associated with stakes, fences, and palisades; it suggested the materials with which boundaries are established" (Klein, 1994, n. 2, p. 91).
12. See Jaensch (1938).
13. As Donatella Di Cesare states in her last book: "The first racist theory has a birth certificate: Toledo, June 5, 1449. It is the date of promulgation of the *Sentencia Estatuto*, the document on the purity of blood in which all the «racial laws» to come are contained. [...] In addition to the idea of a purity that is recognized in blood and lineage, it introduces the requirement to defend oneself against any possible contagion. *Schutz*, «protection», is the term repeated in the laws promulgated by the Third Reich in 1935. From Toledo to Nuremberg there is only one step" (Di Cesare, 2019, pp. 59–60).
14. The expression "State humanism" [*staatliche Humanismus*] belongs to Frommel (Helbing, Frommel 1935, p. 135). See also Heinrich Vorwahl's later notion of "political humanism" [*politischer Humanismus*] (Vorwahl, 1942).

## Disclosure Statement

I report no potential conflict of interest.

## Notes on contributor

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