Being Participation: The Ontology of the Socratic Method

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ABSTRACT: The dialogue format in Plato's works is often described as a method conducive to eliciting interlocutors' inherent knowledge, or as a tool by which elenchus, valued for its own sake, can be achieved. But to understand Plato in either of these ways is to miss the significance of the dialogue format predominant in his corpus, as well as the metaphysical underpinnings of the dialectic relation. In this essay I interpret the limitations of knowledge in Plato's corpus as a correlate of one's claims to independent possession of knowledge. Explicitly, I argue for a Platonic analysis of the individual that bolsters the impetus to use dialogue, rather than instruction, as a primary tool for philosophical inquiry and for education in general. Plato's criterion for doing philosophy well involves not only a subjective willingness to question one's beliefs and to live by one's vision, but also an objective demand to coordinate one's beliefs with those of others –and ultimately– to acknowledge the interdependence of one's own reality with that of others.

Part 1 Introduction

When advocates of the Socratic Method (SM) argue that dialogue is an alternative to (or a supplement for) the 'instructional approach' to education, they seem to focus on the benefits that dialogue has for students and teachers.[1] These same advocates seem to conceive of Plato and the SM, understandably, as entailing a certain metaphysical position.[2] In particular, this position holds that one's knowledge is limited insofar as one is part of a changing, material world, and that one's knowledge is confirmed to the extent that one connects with the unchanging Forms inhering in the soul; we are limited to the status of *becoming*.[3] I agree that the SM is beneficial, and I agree that the metaphysics mentioned above are easily derivable from the Platonic corpus. However, I argue that it is just as plausible, and more powerful, to view Plato, and the method he portrays, as pointing to a fact of our *being*, rather than as a fact of our *becoming*.

To frame this essay, which interprets the SM in an educational context, I begin by offering a contrast between what I call the 'instructional approach' to education, which is common in our nation's educational institutions, and the SM, which we find in the Platonic corpus.[4] Next, I describe how some interpretations can be seen as faulty, because they view the SM merely as instrumentally valuable to our becoming something else. I will end with an explanation of my interpretation of the SM, which is based on an ontological reading of the SM itself as intrinsically valuable.[5] Let us begin with some context: the problematic, instructional approach to knowledge, or what Socrates referred to as sophistry.[6]

The Problematic Instructional Approach

It is typical in popular education approaches for students to be seen as passive recipients of knowledge, and for teachers to be seen as bearers of knowledge which they then impart to students.[7] There is a sharp distinction between teacher and student, and students are taught certain pre-determined curricula which essentially contains other people's beliefs. However, the students are not instructed on how to develop and evaluate their own beliefs.[8] Students memorize isolated and fragmented bits of information without ever learning the connections

between facts, and without being able to give an account of how things are related.[9]

"Teaching to the test," which is now widely admonished by educational reformers, is a symptom of this problem.[10] Our schools teach content that is required of them in order to get funding, rather than being concerned with the form which education takes, or with the overarching principles which guide our schools. Funding for secondary schools is largely contingent on test results and on end results in general. It may be results that we want from schools –certainly we want all students to graduate, for example– but this approach leaves no mechanism for checking whether or not our collective goals are *good* goals. When teaching to the test we are vulnerable to the possibility that the mob, as Socrates might say, is wrong.[11]

It is most likely because of these problems –of structuring schools around the demands of our funders, of being subject to assessments which discount qualities like integrity or morality in our students, and of being dependent on quantifiable results in general– that educational reformers today advocate for use of the SM.[12] In the next section I will explicate just how the SM in general serves as an alternative to the instructional approach, before delving into my interpretation of the ways in which the SM is viewed as instrumentally valuable by its proponents today.

The Socratic Method

The SM is generally viewed as an alternative to the instructional approach toward education because it prioritizes the investigation of the beliefs that students have, and their processing of those beliefs, rather than on beliefs or information which teachers have and give to students.[13] The qualities derivable from a survey of the myriad of examples of the SM in Plato's corpus have been nicely summarized by Angelo Corlett as consisting of epistemic humility, a collective pursuit of truth, curiosity, honesty, humor, and hope, among other things.[14] The SM has also been described by other philosophers as consisting of (at least) two key steps: the 'gadfly' step, wherein students are brought to doubt their claims to knowledge, and the 'midwifery' step, in which students are led to critically evaluate their beliefs and elicit 'improved' or 'correct' beliefs.[15]

Essentially, the instructional approach as described in the above section is concerned with 'the destination,' or particular conclusions and results of education, while the SM in general is concerned with 'the journey,' or the form which education takes. The instructional approach assumes that education itself is be of *instrumental* value, because the process of instilling information in a student is analogous to using information as a *tool* by which to 'do something to' a student. The end result, in this framework, is a knowledgeable student who has been 'filled.' In the following section I aver that despite its alleged dissimilarity with the instructional method, the SM has also been interpreted (and/or implemented) primarily as instrumentally valuable.

Part 2 Becoming: Instrumental Interpretations of the Socratic Method

Many of Plato's dialogues have been classified as either embodying a "radical openness," or as typifying the instructional or consensus-aimed methods of education.[16] Decker avers that because elenchtic dialogues can only refute invalid beliefs, and cannot themselves give birth to viable new philosophical theses, we ought to either abandon elenchtic dialogues all together, or decide that the dialogical format is itself the wisdom for which we should strive.[17] The SM must either be instrumentally valuable or intrinsically valuable. Let us examine two interpretive schemas which take the SM to be instrumentally valuable, before taking a closer look at a schema which is closer to viewing the SM as intrinsically valuable.

Regarding the relevance of the dialogue format within education studies, the emphasis seems to be either on the benefits of using the method due to the uncovering of knowledge otherwise buried within the student, or due to the possibilities which are made available when education is led by inquiry rather than predetermined curricula.[18] Within the former framework –which has been derived from various Platonic dialogues– it is assumed that students have knowledge within themselves and that the SM brings out and gives birth to this knowledge.[19] The object of value in this case is the knowledge that each student possesses. The latter view holds that the SM *creates* value by maintaining a kind of grounds for possibility. The object of value in this case is 'the possibility itself,'[20] or the properties which consequently emerge, such as the equality which obtains when neither teacher nor student is said to possess knowledge,[21] or the self-improvement which results from the student's process of disregarding false beliefs.[22] Critical theory of education, though its affinity with the SM may be limited to its questioning of beliefs, may also be seen to fit into this category, insofar as it utilizes analytical methods in order to reach certain valued ends in education.[23]

With respect to the view which holds that beneficial possibilities emerge from use of the SM, one problem is that if we have a fixed notion of potential in mind, we may actually thwart potential because of our own ignorance of capacities and possibilities.[24] Similarly, if we take this fixed notion of potential for our students –be it a quality conducive to egalitarianism, or a quality of achievement– to be our end, we may come to find that there are other ways of achieving this end without having the SM as a core element in our classrooms. The students may just go ahead and become their own midwives. And yet, this concern is precisely what is wrong with assuming a priori knowledge: it reduces knowledge to the status of an object which can be possessed. This objectified notion of knowledge takes wisdom as constitutive of the fragmented, isolated bits of information upon which the instructional method of education thrives. Furthermore, in each of the 'instrumental' and 'emergent' value approaches, the role of the interlocutor, and thus, the SM itself, can become problematic and even superfluous if a priori knowledge or emergent qualities can arise otherwise. In both interpretations, as explicable as they may be within the context of Plato's works, the operative notions of wisdom are problematically consequentialist. Let us move on now to a third interpretation of the SM.

Instrumental Aporia Approach

Having gone through the conceptions which take the SM as instrumentally valuable –because it elicits a priori knowledge or because it opens us up to some other extrinsically valuable quality such as possibility– we can now assess the accounts which take the aporia resulting from the SM as 'intrinsically valuable.'[25] My argument here is that this approach also interprets Plato incorrectly, attributing too much to the ideas expressed by Plato's interlocutors by concluding that our ontology entails a gap between our existence and Truth. The 'instrumental aporia approach,' I argue, takes the SM as a means to realizing our epistemic ineptitude and to realizing, essentially, the chasm between ourselves and certainty. This view thus remains an instrumental account of the value of the SM.

It may be the case that dialogue is doubly instrumentally valuable, insofar as it both brings forth a priori knowledge and opens us up to possibility. There is certainly evidence of this within the text. We also see, however, many occurrences in which something else is alleged to occur as a result of the SM. In *Sophist*:

> **Visitor**: And you'll assign this dialectical activity only to someone who has a pure and just love of wisdom.
>
> **Theaetetus**: You certainly wouldn't assign it to anyone else.
>
> **Visitor**: We'll find that the philosopher will always be in a location like this if we look for him.

He's hard to see clearly too, but not in the same way as the sophist.

Theaetetus: Why not?

Visitor: The sophist runs off into the darkness of that which is not, which he's had practice dealing with, and he's hard to see because the place is so dark. Isn't that right?

Theaetetus: It seems to be.

Visitor: But the philosopher always uses reasoning to stay near the form, being. He isn't at all easy to see because that area is so bright and the eyes of most people's souls can't bear to look at what's divine.[26]

Even the philosopher, who is engaging in the SM and is closest to truth, is only near it. The 'instrumental aporia approach' recognizes this element in Plato and deems it a valuable end.

Plato's corpus includes many passages which indicate that Socrates (or Plato) believed elenchus itself to be truth because our bodies act as a barrier to knowledge; we can only know our limitations.[27] And there is much scholarly discussion regarding the disparity of metaphysical 'beliefs' which obtain in the elenchtic dialogues and the more 'robust' and theoretical later dialogues.[28] Some interpreters hold that while the earlier dialogues are aporetic, the later ones, insofar as they articulate more elaborate metaphysical and civic accounts, such as those found in *Laws* or *Timaeus*, represent Plato's abandonment of the 'the value of aporia' in favor of certainty.[29] I believe that these concerns only arise when one seeks justification for use of the SM –and of philosophy itself– by appealing to its instrumental capacities, rather than on its intrinsic value.

It need not be a surprise that interpreters attempt to justify use of the SM in terms of the results it affords; we live in an age, as Padraig Hogan and Richard Smith write, in which "nothing seems to have value unless it has demonstrable, quantifiable outcomes." However, as they go on to say, "to the mentality that fetishizes the performance-indicator, the Socratic dialogue is likely to remain a lasting puzzle."[30] Whether you take Plato's older dialogues to be indicative of fixed metaphysical positions or not, what can be said is that the dialogue format obtains throughout the corpus. In my view, it is the dialogue form itself which we ought to view as the most conclusive metaphysical and normative assertion within the corpus: engaging as such is what it means to be. Plato's 'problem of participation,' it turns out, is his solution: we are participation.[31] Let us examine just how this plays out.

PART 3 Being: The Intrinsic Value Approach Based on Ontological Interpretation

It is certain that throughout the dialogues, Platonic characters point us towards philosophical inquiry as being valuable. It is also certain that philosophers themselves find philosophy to be valuable. But among philosophers who either advocate for use of the SM or who consider it useless (or at best, instrumentally valuable and thus disposable), there seems to be a disagreement about the role of the SM within philosophical inquiry. Assuming that philosophers either find philosophy valuable for themselves, for other philosophers, or for every human being, the divergence must lie within their beliefs both about the world and about philosophy.

What I argue in the remainder of this paper is that if we understand reality to be concordant with practical identity, or as comprised of natural laws which all living organisms must respond to (or are affected by), then philosophical inquiry – insofar as it is intended as a means of engaging with reality in an 'appropriate' way– ought to include some form of dialogue akin to the SM. I argue that it is the SM which takes into account the

unavoidable interconnectedness of *other people* in our quest for knowledge.[32] And while it is typically agreed that Plato's later dialogues contain a theory of literal *other-worldliness* regarding truth, my interpretation takes the SM throughout the entire corpus as representative of the nature of being: we do not exist in isolation. Whether we look at 'ourselves' as individual human beings or as the human race, we cannot rightly lay claim to certain knowledge, because we can only occupy our place in relation to *otherness*.[33] This universal necessity of relatedness, and the multitudinous, particular manifestations of beliefs, situations and embodiments which arise from this relatedness, is the universality to which philosophy draws our attention. With that, let us turn our attention to a key feature of the SM which gives force to my position.

The Role of the Interlocutor

The *Republic* and other works emphasis a distinction between wisdom of the self and the knowledge claims of sophists, the mob, and interlocutors –even when the interlocutor is Socrates himself. Socrates presents the ideal of knowledge as that which one uncovers within one's soul, regardless of the material world and other people, yet we are faced with the brute fact that it is dialogue, not diatribes, which are predominant in the corpus.

If the role of the interlocutor or teacher is nothing more than the "leading out" of a priori knowledge within the student, then the interlocutor may not be necessary if the student has some other way of accessing their knowledge. While many of Plato's passages indicate that it is up to the individual to order themselves properly, and to not succumb to group dynamics or pressure from majority rule, other dialogues clearly dismantle the kind of knowledge a Pythagorean might express, wherein "every man (is) self-sufficient in wisdom."[34] What exactly is Plato's stance on the role of other people as interlocutors, as teachers? I take this issue to be the prime reason to interpret the SM ontologically. Take Socrates' commitment to the ideal state of justice in *Republic*:

> But perhaps [...] there is a model of it in heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and to make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees. It makes no difference whether it is or ever will be somewhere...[35]

Being the idealist that I am, this statement stands out to me. I know what it is like to have ideas about living sustainably on the planet, or about dismantling gender roles, for example, and to have those ideas shunned by your society. A person with ideals like this can either bury their ideals and conform to society, or live by their ideals despite their peers' reactions.

As Socrates surmised in *Republic*, just because our ideal does not presently exist, does not mean that we should not act as though it does; our ideals ought to effect what we do.[36] But why does Plato bother having his characters bring this up throughout the corpus, if at the same time, his dialogues exemplify the value of bouncing your ideas off of others? Plato confirms time and again that reason can help us edit our ideals, but that ultimately, the ideals come from outside of ourselves.

The Role of the Self

Plato's dialogue format, wherein people can check their conceptions of the world with each other, and confirm their most reasonable mode of behavior, should be seen as an exemplification of practical identity.[37] As Christine M. Korsgaard writes, in the Kantian spirit, in order for us to be efficacious agents, we must act on beliefs, or reasons, which consistently cohere with our reality. In order to do this, she continues, we must presup-

pose the existence of other agents who share in the same reality and hence, the same *universal* reasons on which we act.[38] Thusly, one's practical identity –in my argument and in Korsgaard's– amounts to one's ability to act efficaciously, or carry out one's will, with integrity and full knowledge of cause and effect (in both a physical and a moral sense).[39] You cannot climb a tree without some knowledge about gravity and the use of your muscles; you cannot tell a lie without expecting to be lied to in the future. The reasons that we have for acting the way we do –if we are doing it properly– are universal reasons that we all share.[40] This is the mysterious harmony of life that Socrates tried so hard to reveal among his friends.

To the extent that we take the 'instructional approach' to education, we devalue the means by which students must come to check their own belief systems. But to the extent that we treat the SM as a means by which to solicit inherent knowledge, as does the 'instrumental recollection approach', or as a fertilizer for potential, like the 'instrumental emergence approach,' or as a grounds for humility as does the 'instrumental aporia approach,' we miss out on the true value of the SM. The method is valuable because it best facilitates the means by which each person develops their practical identity and *engages in being*. This is a metaphysical, ontological position. It is not a purely humanistic, constructivist, or anti-realist view in which our knowledge is determined by what we can all agree on. It is not a dualist view in which we have no access to objective truth despite its existence. It is a view which holds that in terms of educating ourselves and others, we ought to approach education in a way which is most conducive to our nature –not as humans but as *relational entities*.

The recollection, emergence, and aporetic approaches for interpreting the SM all rely on a reading of Plato which precludes certain knowledge and more importantly, which precludes a solid justification for use of the SM. The SM may well be a tool. However, I believe that if we interpret the SM as a metaphysical assertion about our interconnectedness –even if it was never an intention of Plato's to do this– this interpretation affords us not only a better understanding of ourselves, but a better justification for the role of the SM in education. If we place a stronger emphasis on a "Socratic Interpretation" of the Platonic corpus, wherein we assess the dialogue form itself as representing an ontological position, it becomes a method conducive to self knowledge and wisdom; we can't know anything –even ourselves– without recognizing our interdependent ontology.[41] As Kant puts it:

> Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another [...]
>
> For enlightenment of this kind, all that is needed is freedom. And the freedom in question is the most innocuous form of all –freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters.[42]

Kant praises the process of deriving knowledge not *from* other people, but through our *relations* with other people. He admonishes the instructional or banking approach to wisdom. We too should realize that 'thinking for ourselves' and behaving philosophically is a way of life which requires our inclusion of other people's experiences and wisdom into our framework of reason(s).[43]

Conclusion: Participation

Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself.[44] –Paulo Freire

I have proposed an interpretation of the SM in which the method is valuable as an end in itself because it is the source of all value; it is *us*. This interpretation of the SM dissects the dynamic of inquirer and interlocutor as suggestive not of a protocol or embodied ideal which we ought to pursue, but as a metaphysical truth; we are intimately connected –one's wisdom cannot emerge without a profound humility, respect for one's interdependence, and a desire to be. It has been said that "Socratic pedagogy is erotic because it produces itself through a relation."[45] It seems to me, however, that eroticism –and even, Platonic love– could not exist without the relation that is Socratic pedagogy. The SM is a profound characteristic of *being itself* from whence everything, including love, comes.

Is this a fairly obvious and simple assertion –that we are connected, that we are social animals, and that no person lives alone? It appears that within Plato studies in education, interpreters have been locked within the Mouthpiece Interpretation, wherein they are forced into siding with one of the conclusions presented by interlocutors in the dialogues: either the dialectic process is good because it uncovers our ignorance, or it is good because it points us to truth.[46] My claim is that if we want to elicit in our students the kind of wisdom loved by the philosopher, we must focus our education not so much on the outcome of what our students are *becoming*, but rather, on what it means simply to *be*.

If understood in this way, I believe that the justification for the use of the SM in our schools today can be founded on the intrinsic value of a philosophical way of life, rather than on philosophy as a specialization or as a means to some other end.[47] As such, with an interpretation of the SM as an educational approach which models itself off of what it means to be, we avoid the pitfalls of taking the SM as a tool to becoming something else. We can view limitations in our knowledge as determined not by a metaphysical gap between the 'world of becoming' and 'the world of forms,' but rather, as determined by any instances in which we believe ourselves to be privy to epistemic –or metaphysical – isolation or superiority. Indeed, Plato's character Eros, who is intended to embody the favorable characteristic of *love itself*, is endowed with a genetic make-up which keeps her ever 'in limbo':

> And his nature is neither immortal nor mortal; but sometimes on the same day he flourishes and lives, whenever he has resources; and sometimes he dies, but gets to live again through the nature of his father. And as that which is supplied to him is always gradually flowing out, Eros is never either without resources nor wealthy, but is in between wisdom and lack of understanding.[48]

Perhaps, participating in this kind of limbo is not so bad. Socratic humility, in my view, is based not on our separation from the Form of the Good, but on our ontological status of *participating*. By interpreting SM as an educational approach modeled on what it means *to be*, as the relational beings that we are, we avoid the pitfalls of taking the SM as a tool to *becoming* something else, and we ground the value of SM as a method irreplaceable in any school that takes flourishing for all students to be the goal.

Endnotes

1. Pablo Cevallos Estarellas, "Teaching Philosophy vs Teaching to Philosophise," *Philosophy Now* 63 (2007):12-15., Mehul Shah, "The Socratic Teaching Method: A Therapeutic Approach to Learning," *Teaching Philosophy* 31, no. 3 (2008): 268.
2. There are even advocates of the Socratic Method's potential to "turn the soul" of students, who attribute this metaphysical framework to Plato but decide to simply circumvent his metaphysics altogether while still using the SM. See Sophie Haroutunian-Gordon, *Turning the Soul: Teaching Through Conversation in High School* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) 5-6.
3. Plato, *Phaedo*, 66c-d, *Parmenides*, 133b, and *Timaeus* 50d-e.in, *The Complete Works of Plato*.
4. Valerie O. Pang, *Multicultural Education: A Caring-Centered, Reflective Approach* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005) 28-31. Zeus Leonardo, "Critical Social Theory and Transformative Knowledge: The Functions of Criticism in Quality Education." *Educational Researcher*, 33, no. 6 (2004): 12-15.
5. Interestingly, Paul Woodruff argues that in the early Platonic dialogues, in which there is some scholarly agreement that the historical Socrates is more accurately portrayed that in later dialogues, Socrates himself is not committed to an ontological framework. Specifically, because "early dialogue Socrates" does not adhere to the Platonic Forms, Woodruff claims that Socrates was ontologically neutral. This view gives credence to the aspect of my argument which holds that the Socratic Method does not limit us to a dualism. However, because Woodruff bases his conclusion on the content of the Platonic corpus, rather than on the SM itself, Woodruff remains in the ontologically-neutral position regarding Socrates. See "Socrates and Ontology: The Evidence of the "Hippias Major," *Phronesis* 23, no. 2 (1978): 113-114.
6. See Plato's *Republic* Book 6, 493a-d, and *Republic* Book 9, 576b-c, in *The Complete Works of Plato* for some discussion of this sophistry.
7. Plato, *Republic* Book 7, 518b-c., and Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 72.
8. Pang, *Multicultural Education*, 14.
9. Ibid., 21 and 29.
10. Ibid, 422-423.
11. See *Republic* Book 6, 493a-d and Book 9, 576b-c.
12. It should also be noted that in this framework students are assumed to be individuals who, although needing to be "filled with knowledge," are culpably if unsuccessful. This blame is based on the assumption that students ought to meet universal standards. And to the extent that teachers are then to blame in terms of these high-stake tests, it is still based on the assumption that teachers ought to be able to mold students into these universal standards.
13. Henry G. Wolz, *Plato and Heidegger: In Search of Selfhood* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1981) 14-15, and John P. Portelli, "The Philosopher as Teacher: The Socratic Method and Philosophy for Children." *Metaphilosophy* 21, no. 1 and 2 (1990) 143-144.
14. Angelo J. Corlett, *Interpreting Plato's Dialogues* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2005) 48-49.
15. Gareth Matthews, "Whatever Became of the Socratic Elenchus? Philosophical Analysis in Plato" *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 3 (2009): 441, and Wolz, Plato and Heidegger, 14-15.
16. Kevin Decker, "The Limits of Radical Openness: Gadamer on Socratic Dialectic and Plato's Idea of the Good" *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (2000): 6 and 22, and Matthews, "Whatever Became of the Socratic Elenchus?" 441.
17. See Decker, "The Limits of Radical Openness," 22, and Matthews, "Whatever Became of the Socratic Elenchus?" 2.
18. Frank Margonis, "In Pursuit of Respectful Teaching and Intellectually-Dynamic Social Fields," *Studies in Philosophy & Education*, 30 no. 5 (2011): 433-439.
19. See Meno for discussion of recollection. In *Euthydemus* 719c-d, and 303b -306a, Socrates agrees that wisdom can be taught, but that this type of wisdom is likely sophistic.
20. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and Matthew Lipman, Frederick S. Oscanyan, and Ann Margaret Sharp, *Philosophy in the Classroom*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980) 157 and 207.
21. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 89, and Lipman, Oscanyan and Sharp, xv.
22. See James C. Overholser, "Collaborative Empiricism, Guided Discovery, and the Socratic Method: Core

Processes for Effective Cognitive Therapy," *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 18 (2011): 5, and Nancy Vansieleghem and David Kennedy, "What is Philosohy for Children, What is Philosophy with Children – After Matthew Lipman?" *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 45, no. 2 (2011): 173.

23. Zeus Leonardo, "Critical Social Theory and Transformative Knowledge: The Function of Criticism in Quality Education," *Educational Researcher*, 33 no. 6 (2004): 12-15.
24. See Margonis, "In Pursuit of Respectful Teaching and Intellectually-Dynamic Social Fields," 436, and Claire Colebrook, "Leading Out, Leading On: The Soul of Education," in *Nomadic Education: Variations on a Theme by Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. by Inna Semetsky (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2008), 40.
25. See Matthews, "Whatever Became of the Socratic Elenchus?" 441. An intermediary view is expressed in passing in Lipman, Oscanyan and Sharp, 207.
26. Bold emphasis by author, Plato, *Sophist* 253e-254b.
27. Catherine C. McCall, "Three Methods of Philosophical Dialogue: differences and similarities between Nelson's Socratic Method , Lipman's P4C Method, McCall's CoPI Method," The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, accessed October 17, 2011, http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/elearning/abstracts.html.
28. Hugh H. Benson, "The Dissolution of the Problem of the Elenchos," in *Socratic Wisdom: the Model of Knowledge in Plato's Early Dialogues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 57-95.
29. Padraig Hogan and Richard Smith, "The Activity of Philosophy and the Practice of Education," in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Education*, eds. Nigel Blake, Paul Smeyers, Richard Smith, and Paul Standish (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 167-168.
30. Ibid., 175.
31. For one of many discussions of "the problem of participation" see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1045b20, in Vol. II of *Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathon Barnes, trans. W.D. Ross (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
32. This might be favorably seen as reinforcing Megan Laverty's statement regarding the grounds for knowledge, wherein she writes about "the inescapable grounds of knowledge in our relationality, sociability and corporeality," in "Philosophy for Children and/as Philosophical Practice," *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 18, no. 2 (2004): 141-151.
33. A further, very interesting claim is that Socrates took the elenchus as tool by which incongruity could be identified not with respect merely to varying beliefs that a person has, but with respect to their beliefs and the way they live their lives. This too, is an interpretation of the Socratic Method which views its value in terms of its good-making consequences. See Charles H. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form* (New York: Cambridge University Press Syndicate, 1996) 302.
34. Plato, *Thaetetus* 169d.
35. Plato, *Republic* Book 9, 592b.
36. William James echoes this when he asserts that: "It is quite obvious that something more than the mere possession of ideals is required to make a life significant in any sense that claims the spectators admiration. Inner joy, to be sure, it may have, with its ideals: but that is its own private sentimental manner. To extort from us, outsiders that we are, with our own ideals to look after, the tribute of our grudging recognition, it must back its ideal with what the laborers have, the sterner stuff of manly virtue: it must multiply their sentimental surface by the dimension of the active will, if we are to have depth, if we are to have anything cubical and solid in the way of character. William James, "What Makes a life Meaningful," in *Talk to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals* (Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 161.
37. I am making use of Christine M. Korsgaard's notion of practical identity, which she attributes to Kant. Interestingly, Korsgaard uses Plato's idea of the just soul as an explanation of how we must properly order ourselves in order to have a function, practical identity. See *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 134-137.
38. Ibid., 205-206.
39. Ibid, 12-14, 37-44.
40. Ibid, 206.
41. For an explanation of the Socratic Interpretation, see Corlett, 39-66. On the topic of self-knowledge my view can be seen as akin to Dunson's in that it takes the aporia resulting from the Socratic Method as a means

toward self-knowledge, yet Dunson does not take self-knowledge to entail others. James A. Dunson III, "Hegel's Revival of Socratic Ignorance," *Idealistic Studies* 40, no. 3 (2010): 205.

42. Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Lara Devis (Peterborough, ONT: Broadview Press, 2005): 119.
43. Or in the words of Socrates, "Only the temperate man will know himself and will be able to examine what he knows and does not know, and in the same way will be able to inspect other people to see when a man does in fact know what he thinks he knows." *Charmides*, 167a.
44. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 89.
45. Colebrook, "Leading Out, Leading On: The Soul of Education,"40.
46. For a description of the 'Mouthpiece Interpretation' see Corlett, *Interpreting Plato's Dialogues*, 19-38.
47. Hogan and Smith, "Philosophy and the Practice of Education," 170-172.
48. Plato, *Symposium*, in the *Dialogues of Plato*, trans. Seth Benardete, (New York: Bantam Books, 1986), 265-266.

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