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Plutocracy, Platonism and Education in Brazil: Some Reflections on the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. *The Lancet* stated in its editorial on the 9th of May 2020 that the situation in Brazil was very problematic insofar as the COVID-19 pandemic was concerned. More than a year later, Brazil already registered more than half a million deaths from complications of COVID-19, which places it in second place in the world ranking of deaths despite having the seventh-largest population in the world. Despite this utterly tragic situation, in July 2021, almost 40% of the Brazilian population approved of the federal government's role in confronting the pandemic, and the Brazilian elites have defended openly the view that the economy was more important than individuals' lives. Given this context, in this article, we reflect on the issue of plutocracy, demonstrating its platonic authoritarian foundations, in order to understand the Brazilian elites' attitude toward the pandemic, which had no proper regard or care for the most vulnerable in society. Through this philosophical inquiry we indicate the importance of education, particularly of philosophy of education, in encouraging educationists and educational systems to reflect on problematic issues and self-reflect so as to identify possible educational deficiencies and shortcomings that created the conditions for individuals' attitudes of indifference to the victims of the pandemic and the vulnerable in society.

Keywords: plutocracy, kakistocracy, meritocracy, education, pandemic

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Introduction

The Lancet, a leading medical science publication, published an editorial on the 9th of May 2020, warning about the situation in Brazil. It said:

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"The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic reached Latin America later than other continents. The first case recorded in Brazil was on Feb 25, 2020. But now, Brazil has the most cases and deaths in Latin America (105 222 cases and 7288 deaths as of May 4), and these are probably substantial underestimates. Even more worryingly, the doubling of the rate of deaths is estimated at only 5 days and a recent study by Imperial College (London, UK), which analysed the active transmission rate of COVID-19 in 48 countries, showed that Brazil is the country with the highest rate of transmission (R_0 of 2.81). Large cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are the main hotspots now but there are concerns and early signs that infections are moving inland into smaller cities with inadequate provisions of intensive care beds and ventilators" [1].

This editorial was somehow prophetic, and Brazil already registers more than half a million deaths from complications of COVID-19, which places it in second place in the world ranking of deaths despite having the seventh-largest population in the world. The Dantesque scenes in some parts of the country, particularly in the city of Manaus in the north of the country, where the first and second waves claimed many lives, collapsing the public health system to the point that individuals died without the most basic — oxygen — were nothing short of tragic. Yet, the Brazilian elites campaigned very strongly against lockdowns and the closing of shops, services and industry, and so forth, advocating instead that the economy was a priority and that we could not stop the country due to a 'simple flu'. Given this context, in this article we reflect on the issue of plutocracy in contemporary Brazil, demonstrating its platonic authoritarian foundations; as a direct consequence of this, we advocating that philosophers of education (as well as academics from other fields) should redirect their criticisms from the issue of meritocracy and towards the problem of plutocracy in society. Also, through this philosophical inquiry we indicate the importance of education, particularly of philosophy of education, in encouraging educationists and educational systems to reflect on problematic issues and self-reflect so as to identify possible educational deficiencies and shortcomings that created the conditions for individuals' attitudes of indifference to the victims of the pandemic and the vulnerable in society.

Plutocracy and Pandemic

Plutocracy is neither a very common term nor is it much used within the Brazilian context. Plutocracy is the rule of the wealthy elite — the Greek words being *πλοῦτο*, (*pluto*), 'wealth' + *κράτος*, (*kratos*), 'power'. To avoid misunderstandings, we emphasize that the 'pluto' of Plutocracy is directly associated with 'plutos' or 'wealth', and 'Ploutos', 'god of wealth', and not 'Pluto' or 'Plouton', 'god of the underworld — who is a brother of Zeus, god of the heavens, and Poseidon, god of the seas. Given the similarity between Ploutos and Plouton, there may have been some historical misunderstandings, joining Ploutos and Plouton as the same god, mainly because wealth, in ancient times, always came

from the depths of the earth — gold, silver, and precious stones. Furthermore, it needs to be pointed out that Plutocracy contrasts with Democracy, the government of the people — being the combination of the Greek words δῆμος, demos, 'people' + κράτος, kratos, 'power'. The issue here is whether we, in Brazil, live in a Democracy or, rather, in a Plutocracy.

Reflections on the Plutocracy problem are not new and have affected many modern societies, which on several occasions have asked themselves about the position of their elites towards the rest of society, as well as about their lobbying and trying to influence State affairs through the use of its economic power — yet the literature on the issue of plutocracy is somehow sparse if compared to that of democracy for instance. However, it is worth noting a very interesting article entitled "Are We a Plutocracy?" (1894) published by W.D. Howells, a famous American realist writer, in *The North American Review*, the oldest literary periodical in the United States [2]. In this article, Howells questions the political situation in the United States in the late nineteenth century and comments:

"The god from whom the supremacy of the moneyed class has its modern name was said by the Greeks, who invented him, to be "blind and lame, injudicious, and mighty timorous. He is lame because large estates come slowly," they said. " He is fearful and timorous because rich men watch their estates with a great deal of fear and care." He is in lineage only a half-god or a three-quarters god at most, and some think him little better than an allegory. There are others who hold that this Plutus is the same as Pluto, who rules in Hades; but this is probably an error of those who do not understand the real nature of capital. It is no doubt through some such error that his name has hitherto been used to stigmatize, but it is not too late to ask that it should be used to characterize. At any rate, it seems to me that one may inquire without offence whether the term plutocrat will justly characterize not only all the rich people but the infinitely greater number of the poor people in this republic" [2. P. 185].

Howells continues with his argument, still comparing the situation in the United States and England, claiming that the British built affordable rented housing and that miners receive minimum wages even as commodity prices fell — in contrast to this, it was the plight of the homeless and unemployed in the United States, helpless and forgotten by the State, and by its rich elites. He further claimed that these developments in England were the effect of a sense of humanity that was not yet active in the United States and that thus the human ideal, not the economic one, is paramount in that country, England. Howells continued with an incisive question: is the economic ideal, making money, the supreme ideal in the United States? [2. P.196]. To conclude his text, Howells questions provocatively about the power of the Plutocrats, of the economic elites. He writes: "If we have a Plutocracy, it may be partly because the rich want it, but it is also infinitely more because the poor choose or allow it" [2. P.196]. Howells' questioning took place in the United States in the late nineteenth century; however, as we shall argue below, we believe that these questions still ring true in 21st century Brazil. Yet, as already mentioned,

the issue of plutocracy is not widely discussed in the literature, which tends to favour reflections on democracy.

More recently, Littler [3. P. 53] discussed the link between meritocracy, the focus of much criticism in our current times, and plutocracy. He says: "I argue that we should pay close attention to meritocracy because it has become a key ideological means by which plutocracy — or government by a wealthy elite — perpetuates itself through neoliberal culture...Meritocratic discourse...is currently being actively mobilised by members of a plutocracy to extend their own interests and power". Meritocracy has been the target of much criticism for decades by academics working in various fields and the most varied contexts (cf. [4—9]). In addition to this, it is important to note that there is a robust body of work on the issue of meritocracy and education. Michael Young's *The Rise of Meritocracy*, a dystopia published in 1958, is seminal, and coined the pejorative and demeaning term: 'meritocracy' [4]. On commenting on Michael Young's seminal work, *The Rise of Meritocracy*, Allen stated that "In *The Rise of the Meritocracy* Young argued that meritocracy would only perpetuate inequalities, and to some extent his predictions were correct" [10. P. 367]. Allen's statement was based on the fact that the inequalities in earnings are very pronounced in Britain, and this is both in comparison to its similar counterparts in Europe and to the situation thirty years before in the country. Allen continued and noted that "Young also predicted a gradual coalescence of classes along the lines of intelligence, and yet, by 2010 there remained 'deep-seated and systematic differences in economic outcomes' along lines of gender, ethnicity, social class and geographic location (National Equality Panel [NEP], 2010, p. 1)" [10. P. 367]. A recent report titled *Unequal Britain — Attitudes to Inequality after COVID-19*, by the Policy Institute, King's College London [11] confirms that inequalities continue to be a major issue in contemporary Britain (cf. [12]); the report states that "The crisis and its aftermath also give fresh impetus to the government's "levelling up" agenda and its broader "fight for fairness"...The pandemic has led to calls for the government to go further, to embrace a "Beveridge moment"...Greater action on inequality will certainly be seen by some as a logical progression from the unprecedented state intervention that's been required to weather the COVID-19 crisis" [11. P.5].

For Young, 'meritocracy' is a concept largely based on 'equality of opportunity', something that was largely embraced by Tony Blair and the British Labour Party in the 90s. However, Meredith comments that "it was more likely that the new tendency to equality of opportunity would 'end up creating a heartless meritocracy without a trace of noblesse oblige and dismissive of the needs and claims of those who failed to make the grade'. Without a fraternal critique of meritocracy, postwar society would succeed only in substituting elites" [13. P. 382]. This last point regarding the connection between 'elites' and 'meritocracy' concurs with Howells' and Littler's arguments, and in this respect, we would argue that to criticise 'meritocracy' is to miss the real target., which is plutocracy. As Littler points out, the issue of meritocracy is directly related to plutocracy, being a mere instrument

of the latter to maintain its privileges while creating the illusion of a possible situation of equity and equality [3]. That is, and we emphasise, the target of our discussions should be plutocracy and not its current instrument of action, meritocracy. Thus, there is an urgent need to direct robust academic discussions and educational action towards the implications of plutocracy in education, and society. And we would argue that this is a crucial point not only for Brazilian democracy, which currently faces major threats (e.g., tentative attacks against democratic institutions, such as the High Court and National Congress, by various factions present in society) but also for other old and modern democracies.

In connection with the above, Ribeiro commented on the problem of meritocracy in education and society [9], by referring to the work of Dubet [14]. The argument is, in short, that meritocracy would only work properly in a society in which positions are not fixed or transmitted by birth and/or social circumstances; and since this is practically impossible to happen because social and educational inequalities are inherent to society, any talk about meritocracy works as a smokescreen for the continuation of the elite's power, encouraging the lower classes to believe that they are competing in a fair social and economic game. Ribeiro writes that "Dubet (2009) exemplifies this contradiction: in these societies, access to the rare advantageous positions does not depend on transmission by inheritance or by factors related to fixed circumstances (e.g., belonging or not to a noble family)" [9. P. 1100]; that is, when socio-economic positions are not fixed at birth, then individuals must engage their own personal abilities, competing, to succeed. This means that in this sort of scenario merit will play an important role between the equality of individuals and their hierarchic position in society.

Dubet's argument is based on Rawls [15], and his argument stating the importance of the principle of equal opportunity (something that was also argued by Young [4]). Wenar comments on this principle: "fair equality of opportunity, requires that citizens with the same talents and willingness to use them have the same educational and economic opportunities regardless of whether they were born rich or poor. "In all parts of society there are to be roughly the same prospects of culture and achievement for those similarly motivated and endowed (*JF*, p. 44)" [16; 17]. And he continues:

"So, for example, if we assume that natural endowments and the willingness to use them are evenly distributed across children born into different social classes, then within any type of occupation (generally specified) we should find that roughly one quarter of people in that occupation were born into the top 25% of the income distribution, one quarter were born into the second-highest 25% of the income distribution, one quarter were born into the second-lowest 25%, and one-quarter were born into the lowest 25%. Since class of origin is a morally arbitrary fact about citizens, justice does not allow class of origin to turn into unequal opportunities for education or meaningful work" [16].

Once again, if we focus on Dubet's argument, the direct relation between meritocracy and plutocracy seems to be established, where the former is a device used by the latter (i.e. the elite) to maintain its privileges while creating the illusion of equity and equality amongst the wider population (cf. [14]). This is an extremely clever, and perhaps Machiavellian set up. Hence and once again, we emphasise that the target of our criticisms should be plutocracy and not its current instrument of action, meritocracy. Thus, there is an urgent need that philosophers of education, and academic's working in correlated areas, redirect their efforts to the issue of plutocracy in their respective societies — to continue to target the problem of meritocracy in education is to focus and attack a straw man.

Let us return to the issue of the pandemic in the Brazilian context. The concern with the economy displayed by the Brazilian elites during the pandemic seems to be related to its social, economic and political position, with "making money". This elite preached in favour of the reopening of the economy, the return of workers to factories and commerce. However, these same elites have access to a differentiated private health system, do not live-in precarious situations, and do not need to worry about providing the most basics of life, like food, for their families. In contrast to this is the working-class individual who moves and will move the economy, living in a situation of vulnerability, being exposed to the COVID-19 virus, and depending on a public health system operating at the limit of its capacity. What we see here is an elite that cares only about itself, indifferent to the rest of the population and its sufferings, incapable of putting itself into the Other's place — and as such, it can be argued that these elites display some sort of psychopathology.

The term 'psychopath' is derived from forensic psychology, and it is distinct from the classification displayed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), which is used by psychiatrists to diagnose personality disorders (cf. [18. P.217]). According to the Hare Psychopathy Checklist (i.e. PCL; cf. [19]), and more specifically to the Hare Psychopathy Checklist — Screening Version (i.e. PCL: SV [20]), an instrument in an interview format developed to assess psychopathology, 12 items should be considered: 1. Superficial; 2. Grandiose; 3. Deceitful; 4. Lacks remorse; 5. Lacks empathy; 6. Doesn't accept responsibility; 7. Impulsive; 8. Poor behavioural controls; 9. Lacks goals; 10. Irresponsible; 11. Adolescent antisocial behaviour; 12. Adult antisocial behaviour (cf. [18. P.218]). Considering the behaviour and attitudes displayed by the Brazilian elites during the pandemic, it is possible to indicate that, if these elites were an individual, she would score highly on at least these 1. Superficial; 4. Lacks remorse; 5. Lacks empathy; 6. Doesn't accept responsibility; 7. Impulsive; 8. Poor behavioural controls; 10. Irresponsible; 11. Adolescent antisocial behaviour 12. Adult antisocial behaviour. For these elites, the sick and dead are mere numbers, they are inevitable (or necessary) casualties for the well-being of the economy, and consequently, to the prosperity of the country, and consequently to their wealth, They were anti-lockdown and anti-masks, displaying superficial and impulsive behaviour and demonstrations, some mocked

the dead displaying a complete lack of sympathy and respect for the dead and their families. The repeated defence that most people who contract COVID-19 will not suffer anything much more serious than a "little flu," with an emphasis on the diminutive, implies that those who die are not strong enough to withstand the effects of the disease. This defence is perverse because it implies contempt for the weakest and most vulnerable, as if their death were justified, acceptable, regardless of the contingent: they are just a pound of meat. Besides, in contemporary Brazil, the pandemic added forces to endemic violence, poverty, hunger and neglect. As Howells stated in the previously mentioned essay "Are We a Plutocracy?", just as the American plutocratic elite lacked human values in the late 19th century, the Brazilian economic elite lacks human values, lacks humanity, in the 21st century [2]. Corroborating this is Darcy Ribeiro, the important Brazilian anthropologist, who said in a famous interview on June 20, 1988, that Brazil has "a bad, surly, sour, mediocre, greedy ruling class that does not let the country evolve" [21].

Further, through an analysis of this situation, we can argue that there is an objectification of the Other in Brazilian society. Death, the devastation of slums, the decimation of indigenous populations, the suffering of the most vulnerable in our society is acceptable as long as the economy is saved, and the wealth of the elites is safeguarded. The Brazilian plutocratic elite does not consider the Other as an equal, as a person, a human being; but as 'someone' (or would it be a 'nobody?') who needs to keep the economy alive. Aldous Huxley's famous novel *Brave New World*, first published in 1932 in Britain, provides us with a powerful analogy of Brazilian (and other similar) societies — a small elite, the alphas, control and dominate over the other classes, with the epsilons at the bottom moving the economy and the wheels of society [22].

Platonism and Education

Hare states that "Plato can claim a preeminent place in the philosophy of education, for two reasons at least. The first is that he started the subject; the second is that he expressed with a force which has not since been surpassed a particular, seemingly authoritarian, view about it" [23. P.568] — and the name for this is Platonism. In connection with this, we note that the previous discussion on plutocracy and meritocracy may reminds us of the Platonic view of society proposed in *The Republic* [24], which divides matters of citizenship, and society, between the *aristoi* and the *pseudo-aristoi*; that is, the educated classes, the philosophers, and the pseudo-educated classes, the non-philosophers.

This contrasts with the more democratic and egalitarian Aristotelian view, fundamentally centred on the polis [25]. Ignatieff comments on these understandings that "the one defends a political, the other an economic definition of man, the one an active — participatory — conception of freedom [traditional republican and the *homos politicus*], the other a passive — acquisitive — definition of freedom [modern liberal and the *homos consumus*]; the one speaks of society as a *polis*; the other of society as a market-based association of competitive

individuals" [26. P. 54]. And White says "The Aristotelian idea of citizenship, which combines, at once, ruling and being ruled [forming a *polis*], is not, however, the only model on offer. The Platonic version of citizenship, for instance, draws a sharp distinction between rulers and ruled, or the *aristoi* and the *pseudo-aristo*" [27. P. 115].

Prima facie, plutocracy takes its lessons from the pages of Plato's *Republic*; the elites believe that they are the new *aristoi*, and that the rest of the population are the *pseudo-aristoi*. However, when originally proposed by Plato the elites were formed by philosophers, enlightened individuals who can attain knowledge of the Good, to distinguish between good and bad individuals, who can provide a righteous moral guidance to the rest of society [24]. And as Hare notes this view of the world has educational and political implications; that is, "if it is only this limited class of people that can ever attain knowledge of the Good, and if, therefore, they alone know how to tell good men from bad men (or for that matter good from bad specimens of any other class of things), the only thing we can possibly do, if we are to bring up our children to be good men, is to put the men of this gifted class (the only people who know what goodness is) in charge of the educational process; and if by 'in charge' we really mean what we say, this involves (as Plato saw) putting them in charge of the whole power structure of the state" [23. P.570]. Popper is even more critical of Plato than Hare; he states that "the Platonic 'Socrates' of the Republic' is the embodiment of an unmitigated authoritarianism...His educational aim is not the awakening of self-criticism and of critical thought in general. It is, rather, indoctrination—the moulding of minds and of souls which...are 'to become, by long habit, utterly incapable of doing anything at all independently'. And Socrates' great equalitarian and liberating idea...is replaced by a demand for an educational nopoly of the ruling class, coupled with the strictest censorship, even of oral debates" [28. P.137]. The consequences of Platonism for educational systems are substantial because as Peters notes:

"Platonism in educational philosophy stands for the elevation and privileging of the mind or intellect over the body: it stands for a host of optional metaphors that serve to dualise or bifurcate reason and emotion. Metaphors, in their application and formalisation, have become the substance of educational practice. Perhaps, the most culturally deeply embedded dualism with which educational theory and practice must come to terms is the mind/body separation. This dualism historically has developed as an instrument of 'othering': of separating boys from girls, reason from emotion..." [29. P. 404].

Thus, and since education systems are reflections of their respective societies, it is not surprising to find that the dichotomies displayed by these systems are also inherently present in society. Discrepancies concerning access to an education of quality and to higher education generating issues such as lack of insertion in the labour market as well as difficulties in identifying opportunities that could lead to social mobility. It is interesting to note here Morgan and Guilherme [30] who, commenting on Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

(1904), stated that "[w]ithin this context work is not merely an economic activity, but also a spiritual duty (cf. [31. P. 2—3; 32. P. 110—111]), and this leads the successful bourgeoisie to view the unsuccessful working-class not just as economically inept (perhaps even lazy) but also as spiritually deficient" [30. P.980]. Thus, it is easy to see the dichotomies present in society, arguably a direct influence of Platonism, which in this case found its way into society through Christianity, and this is the very reason plutocratic elites would hold a contemptuous and dismissive attitude towards the masses, and the most vulnerable in their communities — the elite's answer would be simply that they are entitled to it; that is, they are entitled to hold such attitudes.

Let us return to the issue of the Brazilian plutocratic elites. The attitude of indifference displayed by the Brazilian elites seems to contrast utterly with what we have seen in other countries, as well as to Plato's philosopher elites — whether in Hare's or in Popper's account. The rhetoric in almost all nations has been to save lives, to put all the necessary resources to save the population. Many leaders described a situation of war against the virus, everything and everyone against the pandemic — for example, Emmanuel Macron in his speech of 16 March 2020 has repeatedly stated: "Nous sommes en guerre" [33]. In fact, only a handful of countries in the world questioned the current situation, and Brazil, due to its continental dimensions, becomes a unique example of inhumanity in the world, and ironically, 'the epitome of smallness'. In addition to this, given that the dead do not work and do not consume, it is illogical, irrational and uneconomical to place economic immediate issues as being more important than lives. This lack of enlightenment makes us question whether the current plutocracy in Brazil would not be mutating, just as the coronavirus mutated, and rather becoming a kakistocracy — from the Greek, *kakistos*, 'κάκιστος' (worst) + *kratos*, 'κράτος' (power) — or better said, in a government of the incapable or the ill-qualified — or perhaps, it was never enlightened and has always ill-qualified. The words of Paul Gosnold's in *A Sermon Preached at the Publique Fast the ninth day of Aug. 1644 at St. Maries*, display the earliest known use of the word Kakistocracy in the English language, and are very appropriate here. He says:

"Therefore we need not make any scruple of praying against such: against those Sanctimonious Incendiaries, who have fetched fire from heaven to set their Country in combustion, have pretended Religion to raise and maintaine a most wicked rebellion: against those Nero's, who have ripped up the wombe of the mother that bare them, and wounded the breasts that gave them sucke: against those Cannibal's who feed upon the flesh and are drunke with the bloud of their own brethren: against those Catiline's who seeke their private ends in the publicke disturbance, and have set the Kingdome on fire to rost their owne egges: against those tempests of the State, those restlesse spirits who can no longer live, then be stickling and meddling; who are stung with a perpetuall itch of changing and innovating, transforming our old Hierarchy into a new Presbytery, and this againe into a newer Independency; and our well-temperd Monarchy into a mad kinde of Kakistocracy. Good Lord!" [34].

Conclusion

It is important to make it clear that it was not the COVID-19 Pandemic that created this scenario of contempt for life and suffering. We live, unnoticed, with daily violations of the most basic human rights: to food, housing, health, education, life. Every day people die queuing up for help at the emergency room lacking equipment, every day people die in the slums at the hands of the state, its militias, state police. For 500 years, indigenous populations in Brazil have faced the threat of genocide — they still endure, but one wonders for how long. The pandemic context, on the other hand, opened up to the world the Brazilian situation. We no longer have the right to happily get on with our lives and manifest the perverse indifference to the thousands abandoned on the sidewalks. Democracy in Brazil needs to be seen as an educational problem. This means an educational system that, despite continuing teaching content, does not abdicate its task of educating, of provoking real democratic advances in society. For this we need to embrace a democratic education project, one which does not have democracy as its mere content, which reinforces its character as a myth; for this we need a democratic education project that does not engage in some sort of education for democracy, as something external to it, and which will be achieved in the end. Rather, we need an education that faces the ethical issues of democratic life directly: the dangers, for everyone, of the reduction of public spaces, of adhesion to collectives, of the denial of science, of contempt for life and indifference to the Other. Above all, we must engage in a discussion about the plutocracy that has been established in the country and face it head-on. Against all this, we only have education — philosophy of education.

Philosophy of education can be a great ally and instrument into this reflexive and self-reflexive process; Lowe has noted with regards to the field of philosophy that:

"[O]ne of the roles of metaphysics, as an intellectual discipline, is to provide a forum in which boundary disputes between other disciplines can be conducted — for instance, the dispute as to whether the subject matter of a special science, such as biology..., can properly be said to be subsumed under that of another, allegedly more 'fundamental' science, such as physics...metaphysics can occupy the interdisciplinary role just described because its central concern is with the fundamental structure of reality as whole. No special science...can have that concern, because the subject matter of every special science is identified more narrowly than this: for instance, biology is the science of living things..." [35. P.3].

Lowe is making a point about metaphysics, and about a particular field in philosophy acting as a forum for all disciplines. However, this could be expanded to encompass all philosophical fields. Philosophy of education is not just a tool to identify, develop, and explore particular issues in education; rather, it can be understood as an interdisciplinary and unbiased forum where all those concerned

with education, historians of education, psychologists of education, sociologists of education and so forth, can scrutinise issues. Thus, philosophy of education must engage with pressing issues, such as plutocracy in society and education, leading discussions and inviting other fields of human knowledge to join a properly critical and unbiased forum about this decisive societal problem (cf. [36]).

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Плутократия, платонизм и образование в Бразилии: размышления о пандемии COVID-19

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Аннотация. В редакционной статье журнала *The Lancet* («Ланцет») от 9 мая 2020 г. говорится, что ситуация с пандемией COVID-19 в Бразилии крайне сложна. Спустя год, в Бразилии было зарегистрировано более 500 тысяч смертей от пост-ковидных осложнений. Трагическая статистика ставит страну на второе место в глобальном рейтинге смертности, при этом по численности населения Бразилия — седьмая в мире. Несмотря на ужасающую ситуацию, в июле 2021 г. почти 40% населения Бразилии одобрили роль федерального правительства в противостоянии пандемии, а бразильская элита открыто отстаивала мнение, что экономика важнее жизни людей. Учитывая этот контекст, в представленной статье мы размышляем над проблемой плутократии, демонстрируя ее платонические авторитарные основы, чтобы понять отношение к пандемии бразильской элиты, не уделявшей должного внимания или заботы о наиболее уязвимых членах общества. Посредством данного философского труда мы подчеркиваем важность образования, в частности философии образования, в поощрении педагогов и образовательных систем к размышлению над проблемными вопросами и самоанализу, чтобы выявить возможные недостатки и упущения в образовании, создавшие условия для безразличного отношения людей к жертвам пандемии и уязвимым слоям общества.

Ключевые слова: плутократия, какистократия, меритократия, образование, пандемия

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