

THE IDEA OF EDUCATION IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE⁴

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Abstract: *This paper interrogates the relationship between philosophy and education through problem-historical discourse. Critical to understanding the idea of epistemological access to knowledge, science, education and other related groups in different eras of development of the spirit. Through a comparison of relevant philosophical and scientific content makes the distinction between Hellenic, medieval, modern and contemporary concepts education. Abstracting the fundamental cognitive and ethical values and critical philosophical heritage associated with the dominant features of the current spirit of time. Reflects on the question of the reaffirmation of traditional educational paradigms and their involvement in solving the current issues of education.*

Key words: *philosophy, education, mind, knowledge, values*

1. Introduction

The development of the idea of education can be traced from the Hellenic, over the modern, all the way to the contemporary concept. The beginning of European education was marked by Hellenic enlightenment which was created through the affirmation of the *logos* and the critique of the myth as “the original language of the world”. However, the original implementation of that process was not followed by such a radical discontinuation from the cultural history as was later understood by some historians of philosophy. The ideal of mental independence, which was viewed by the Hellenic enlightenment as the highest educational goal, was not clearly defined in advance as a complete contrast to the spiritual tradition, but it was gradually realized, searching for the rational explanation of the

⁴ This work is the result of research project: Educational pluralism as the basis of educational strategies, 179036, supported by the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of Republic of Serbia.

core of overall existence. What constituted a common characteristic of the religious-poetic experience and philosophical thought was the pursuit for the truth of that which exists, which was thought to lie in the common order of things and thought. Therefore, although the Greek opinion gradually freed itself from sensory receptivity it did not claim the right to have an advantage over that which exists. It was not until the Modern age that the self-reflection of the mind was established and introduced as a discovery made by self-awareness. It was precisely this kind of a conception of consciousness that allowed for the construction of a subject capable of producing an entire order of things from his own self, ruled entirely by him, which was completely foreign to Greek gnoseology. However, although the Greek educational demand for the autonomy of the mind had no pretensions towards an alienation from the world, the Greek thought has contributed to this through the “methodical disciplining of the mind”, i.e. clear insight into the necessity of presenting arguments for the assertions that are being made. The search for the truth supported by arguments can be recognized as early as in Parmenid’s request κριναί δε λόγοι (decide with your mind, think well), followed by Plato’s principle of λόγον δίδοναι (reasonable discourse), in order to find its cognitive source in Aristotle’s formal logic (Diels, H. 1983). However, it was not until the Enlightenment of the Modern age that the principle to “justify and explain” everything was promoted into a necessary and ultimate criterion of truth and the authority of the human mind was established as an inviolable authority.

2. The Hellenic philosophical thought on education

The Hellenic thought on education had the same source of origin as philosophy itself. It is the ontological need of man to think, to picture the riddle of the world by using his mind and to seek for it to be uncovered. The Hellenic concept of education (παιδεία) has placed human good as the highest object of theoretical reasoning, and reasoning itself as the finest form of good life (Platon, 2013). This gave an educational character to the philosophical spirit from the moment of its creation, due to the fact that it was marked by a powerful surge of aspiring to uncover the cosmic structure of the world and the meaning of human life. The basis of this aspiration consisted of an open relationship of man towards the world, his pure instinct to observe and examine. As the historical and individual beginning of philosophical thought did not start through mere adoption of knowledge, but through the efforts of the spirit which used thinking to establish itself, so too the beginning of education was marked by a process of entering a new, different world in the ontological and epistemological sense. The Hellenic philosophical concept of education marked a shift from the sensory into the spiritual world, from the state of passivity into activity, from the sphere of the

known and self-explanatory into an area of the unknown and questionable (Aristotel, 2014) This revealed the fundamental tendency of the spirit towards truth to be the source incentive for education. This process had its own path and on this path it went from ambiguity, concealment, anticipation towards the establishment of clear thought. Nothing on this path was presented as complete, pre-prepared somewhere, ready to be adopted. On the contrary, philosophy, as a vivacious spirit, has always necessitated intellectual effort, sought ways in which it will, guided by a strong “knowledgeable Eros”, be able to participate in education, i.e. in the formation of character of the person guided by the laws of the mind (Platon, 2013)

Nowhere has the need of the human spirit to liberate and at the same time formulate thought been placed so high, at the very top of the scale of values, as was the case in the Hellenic concept of education. This concept included the self-discipline of thought through *logos*, i.e. understanding the meaning of the action of thinking by using the discourse of the mind. A lot of courage and strength were needed to free the thought of its dependence on original images and symbols and to seek support in one’s own ontological foundation. *Logos* is the discovery of Greek philosophy that marked the overall European education and the birth of a new cultural identity (Djuric, M. 2003)

The breakthrough of the “will to knowledge” was not only influential in launching new energies of thought but it was also far-reaching, so much so that its effects are still present today. The concept of *logos* included two meanings: thinking as a thought process and thinking as that which is being thought. This meant that *logos* expressed a common ontological establishment of the structure of human thought and reality itself. In Hellenic speculative thought, *logos* expressed the unity of *physis* and *anthropos*. Thus, Heraclitus’ *logos* did not only mean the reality of the physical order, but also the order in which physical laws were identical with the ethical and aesthetical. In its extreme, *logos* represented the universal principle operational in all particular things, which keeps them connected and, on a general plan, makes possible the order and harmony between all opposites. It is the discourse that can be heard by wise people through the *logos* organization of their being, according to the principle “equality can be known by that which is equal”.

Logic was derived from the original meaning of the word *logos* as a form of the mind’s discourse on the being of that which exists, and in contemporary European education it was separated from the *ontos* and reduced to a means of practical use of reason. By breaking the link between thinking and being, i.e. by separating the *logos* from its ontological

foundation, the possibility of reducing the mind to reason was introduced. Instead of intellectual knowledge, used to speculatively recognize things and relationships and associate them with the whole, the use of reason as the “great Hellenistic discovery” announced the entry into a new process of discursive thought and therefore education. Thus *logos* had two directions and allowed two types of education. One, that bore the character of humanistic enlightenment embodied in philosophy, religion, literature and art and the other which, through the development of science and technology, marked the nature of the development of civilization.

A specific concept of knowledge which encompassed the unity of theoretical and practical content is characteristic for Hellenic education. Although practical philosophy was derived at a later stage of philosophical development in the systematization given by Aristotle by consistently disciplining scientific knowledge, it can still be claimed that the attitude towards practice represented an important determinant of philosophy itself, because philosophical education included, in addition to a certain manner of thinking, a certain manner of living as well⁵. In this regard Hellenic philosophy was not only a theoretical but also a practical undertaking, because a life dedicated to the pursuit of truth, was at the same time considered to be the finest manner of living (Zivkovic, D., Petrovic, R. 2008)

As the conceptual content of philosophy included the aspiration to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge, so the general concept of education included, in addition to the research process of gaining knowledge, self-change as the possibility of creating one’s own personality. This allowed for a philosophy with a unified sense for learning about the cosmos and striving for a life worthy of a man, to represent the proper basis for education. The Hellenic educational system has, in addition to the science of that which exists, the organization of the world and the events within it as that which is real and certain, also encompassed the science of human matters, as that which is possible, undefined and that can be different. Thus, philosophy confirmed its practical dimension in education through concern for the moral development of the individual, which it encouraged through the pursuit of the meaning of life and through enabling him to reasonably resolve the issues of life. The aim of practical knowledge was to bring order to life situations and contribute to man’s self-understanding.

Hellenic education distinguished between two functions of thought. The function of theoretical thinking as pure speculative power that realizes its goal in the knowledge of truth and the function of thinking based on a

⁵ This dimension was later given a character of “the art of living” (*Ars vitae*) or “the skill of living well” (*Ars bene vivendi*)

practical goal realized through the power of knowledge and the power of discernment. This dual function of reason is confirmed through intellect and will, i.e. thinking and wanting. What confirmation or denial (truth or lie) represent for the intellect, which is based on logical thinking, aspiration or avoidance (good or evil) represent to a will, which is based on proper assessment. So, that which is gained as the truth through pure thinking on a theoretical plan, in thinking which is based on a practical goal, coincides with a morally correct will which is the starting point for decision and action. However, in order for thinking to become a principle of action its focus on the object of knowledge is not sufficient and what is necessary is a certain reason which is set as a goal towards which the will is directed.

The possibility of knowing generically different matters, of which some are necessary and others are possible, is based on the adaptation of different properties of the intellect to the matters which are examined. This is also the origin of the character of knowledge. Among theoretical knowledge, the Greeks differentiated between strict knowledge which is created as a result of rational thinking, which can be logically proven, taught and the essence of which can be learnt and intellectual knowledge which contains the truth about the very principles as the most prominent objects of knowledge. People characterized by such knowledge were considered wise men and scholars. When it comes to practical knowledge, whose object is subject to change, some referred to the creation (*poesis*) and the other to action (*praxis*). The first included the sphere of production and artistic creation and, in addition to observation and proper reasoning it required skill (*techné*) (Aristotel, 1988)

Among these were poets, sculptors, homilists, craftsmen. The second type of this knowledge related to practical wisdom. Its holders were considered smart because, in addition to learned skills they also possessed useful life knowledge which required a good decision-making ability based on properly set goals and a selection of means for its realization. Given that it is oriented towards doing and action, practical wisdom required individual knowledge i.e. knowledge that was built on experience, in addition to general knowledge. An important feature of practical knowledge was the focus on the concern about one's own good which should not be allowed to transform into egoism, an activity that threatens the general interest. Hellenic education was very mindful about this, considering that the aspiration towards the common good of the family or the state is the highest form of practical wisdom, which implies the highest level of prudence.

In the context of understanding the Hellenic concept of wisdom, the distinction should be emphasized between wisdom as philosophy i.e. spiritual tendency directed towards the knowledge of truth and practical wisdom, as

cleverness, whose function is not exhausted merely in the knowledge of what is good but also in doing good. However, in order for someone to do good in a noble manner, “with sincere thinking in his heart”, a moral virtue which directs us to the right path and practical wisdom, which chooses adequate resources, are needed. This means that moral behaviour should be an expression of free will and not an act made out of ignorance, against one’s will or for similar reasons. Therefore the ability of natural agility, ingenuity and skill in achieving a certain goal, which adorns the actions of smart people, deserves praise because it originates in good character, while the same manifests as cunningness in morally corrupt people. As philosophy connected ontology and axiology, i.e. the direct organization of things and their given possibilities, giving priority to the axiological approach, so the educational task, in addition to examining the general structure of the world and its specific domains, included the development of a normative value system of knowledge. This unity shows that the educational aspiration, which undoubtedly found its source in the vast curiosity of the spirit, was focused not only on pure knowledge, the discernment of the truth from the lies, but also on acquiring life wisdom. This connected in a unique way, in the idea of education, the essential and existential urge of man to design the world and the pursuit of the roads of personal happiness.

3. The character of Christian education

Although Greek philosophy provided the fundamental determinants of European education it still failed to maintain its dominance in all eras. Such discontinuity in the development of educational paradigms was also marked by the emergence and spread of Christianity. The breakthrough of Christian ideas and the fight for their domination were, at the very beginning, followed by a harsh repression of philosophy. Instead of the former distinction between knowledge and illusion, the dispute over the supremacy of faith or the supremacy of knowledge comes into play, which will eventually be overcome by the instrumentalization of the philosophical and methodological heritage for the purpose of defending theological dogmas.

Christianity, as a religion that originated in the East and developed through the immediate impact of, but also through opposing Jewish eschatological heritage, was able to become the governing religion of the West due to its great power of adaptation and persistence. It has managed to achieve a huge expansion and powerful spiritual influence even in those cultural areas that built their identity on a broader philosophical education. The contact of Christianity with the European cultural heritage which was created on the foundations of Hellenic philosophy, Roman law and other

achievements of the European civilization, has contributed to their mutual openness towards new experiences. So the process of Christianisation of the European spiritual heritage was accompanied by the reverse process of the reception of philosophical and scientific knowledge in the era whose thousand year long duration proceeded under the auspices of Christianity. Throughout the long struggle of conflicting tendencies of faith and knowledge, demonstrated in their mutual confrontations but also in their mutual interweaving, reconciliation prevailed. It is precisely this juxtaposition of the philosophical and Christian standpoints that indicated a new event on the educational plan. Instead of Hellenic gnoseology, which was based on the view that the path of knowledge leads from “lower” to “upper” levels, i.e. from the power of the human mind to rise to the truth through the effort of its own concept, Christianity accepts the road of “revelations” which is based on accepting the truth that is communicated in the sacred writings (Majorov, 1979)

However, the authentic founders of this teaching knew all too well that its true understanding excludes all naïve and literal interpretation and therefore requires a high level of education of the spirit. The truth concealed in Scripture and communicated in a multi-faceted manner could not reveal itself to pseudo-knowledge and blind faith but to a “mind liberated from passion”. Therefore, only sincere devotees could experience this religion as a sacred truth handed over and recorded in symbols, with words that have secret meanings and messages with an essence that is hard to reach. Through such approach they developed a theological exegesis as a form of unique gnoseology. The exegete was limited by a selection of research subjects that usually came down to a text which was interpreted in accordance with the adopted church laws. The possibility of free theorizing could only come from the symbolism of the text which expressed itself at a higher level of exegesis, such as conceptual analysis. It was based on an interpretation according to the soul and not the literal text. Thus, through the reconstruction of the thoughts of the authorities, many comments were created, which contained a certain independence of opinion on individual metaphysical, ethical or aesthetical issues. The highest developed level of exegesis was the speculative-constructive level which only used the selected text as a pretext for developing its own ideas. While the early exegesis guided itself in accordance with the church laws and apologetically held on to the inviolability of authority, the latter found, in the normative text, a pretext for the development of a certain philosophical doctrine.

Originally, Christianity had a relationship of exclusivity towards philosophy, believing that the “wisdom of man is foolishness to God, and the wisdom of God is foolishness to man”, that the pursuit of truth based on the

human power of knowledge is limited at its core, and that the truth of revelation stems from true faith and that it therefore needs no rational argumentation. It was precisely this knowledge, that Christianity began its expansion with a merciless critique of philosophy and in strict disunity with it, which created the misconception about the real character of the medieval era. For a long time this was the basis for the unjustified marginalization of educational values on which, in its thousand-year duration, an entire civilization was founded. A part of this civilization was Byzantium with its vast spiritual wealth, partly inherited from the Hellenic culture and partly created on the foundations of Christian heritage. The closing of philosophy schools by the issuance of Emperor Justinian's Edict in 529 did not mark the discontinuation with Hellenic philosophy but a continuity of comprehensive education which, in universities in Alexandria, Constantinople, Cappadocia, developed through the study of philosophical disciplines, mathematics, physics, astronomy and other natural sciences⁶. It is believed that it is precisely this shift of Christianity, from excluding philosophy towards accepting it, which was the achievement of its most educated supporters who realized, through the power of their minds, that faith without thought is blind, which contributed to the strengthening and acceptance of Christianity as the official religion. Christian theologians, who had fundamental studies of

⁶ In Byzantium, uneducated people had no respect. It was openly written and talked about uneducated metropolitans, emperors, their families and their servants. For example, it is said that the Emperor Romanus I Laskaris (920-944) was a "simple and uneducated man, and therefore did not comply with the laws of science, nor the laws of the church." The most educated woman of Byzantium, Anna Komnene (1061-1118) emphasizes as a "necessary condition for emperors and generals, court and business managers, an understanding of different scientific fields ... because free sciences help the temperaments of people and those who have the power to seamlessly rule". Basil I (867-886) in his message to the successor to the throne, Leo said: "Education for life is necessary, especially for honourable persons and emperors, because those who are educated gain, through this, the food for the body and the soul." His grandson, Constantine VII Bagrianorodni (913-959), also advises his son, the future emperor Roman II (959-963) to accept knowledge as "the greatest treasure, the possession of which creates the best capability for governing a state" (G. Ostrogorsky, 1988: 325, 372, 391). The epithet of a good ruler could only be given to a man who was devoted to science, the patron of knowledge and a lover of books. His attitude towards education and science significantly affected the position of educated people in society and the fate of education in general. The ones that were able to carry the character of an enlightened monarch were very rare. An extremely large contribution to education was given by thinkers: John Grammaticus, Theodosius, Nikephoros, Photios, Theodore the Studite, Leo the Mathematician, Michael Psellos, John Mavropid, Anna Komnene and others.

philosophy to thank for their erudition, could not exclude the importance of logical thinking from educational requirements. Thus, while enriching the philosophical heritage, they slowly returned to philosophy its reputation, creating the conditions for its revival in the new, secular attire in contemporary philosophy.

4. The characteristics of contemporary European education

Building a foundation of contemporary European education was marked by a creative restoration of the values of Greek philosophy and Christian religion as the two pillars which dominated the structure of European education in its entirety until the 17th century. As it adopted the rich Greek thinking experience in a new and transformed form, so it was given a secular character by contemporary philosophy, through the influences which came from Christian heritage. Many concepts which related to the cognitive-anthropological field could be themed in a new way precisely because their ontological meaning was set in Greek philosophy and Christian theology. Without their intervention, contemporary philosophy could not have endured in an attempt to build a comprehensive system of absolutely based knowledge. However, despite this historical conditionality, the emergence of contemporary philosophy marked a breakthrough of a new spirit of education which announced deep changes in the theoretical and practical inclination of man towards nature.

The initial confidence of the founders of contemporary philosophical education went so far that it did not refer to, or look back on, any sources, and it celebrated its own emergence as fully authentic. The appreciation of the Greek educational experience came at a somewhat later time, during the stage of sobering up from the initial enthusiasm, when it was possible to view the wider spiritual and historical context of the earlier cultural events in a more sober way. The invitation for the renewal of philosophical knowledge was based on the recognition of the intellectual principle as a lever for motivating the creative spirit. Once again, the understanding of the metaphysical basis of that which exists was pursued, but now in such a way that provided a secure basis of methods. Philosophy established as a “universal science” was oriented towards that goal. The beginnings of its existence were marked by many scientific discoveries which were based on knowledge that still bore the philosophical character because they equally encompassed speculation, exactness and even mysticism. With Hume’s

scepticism and Kant's critique of the power of the human mind, the faith in the possibility of discovering the metaphysical basis of the world started to fade, and thus the process of positivization and de-philosophizing of science began. With the disappearance of the philosophical spirit from science its shift from the ontology of things towards the world of phenomenal matters began. This shift was accompanied by a disciplined and strict distancing from anything that bore an enigmatic character and that could not be subjected to the method of strict scientific examination. In accordance with this, every piece of knowledge that eluded scientific measurability could not prove its authenticity and accuracy. By declaring the research of everything that goes beyond what is empirically given to be unnecessary and meaningless, science has made the very search for meaning meaningless.

Compared to the "great Greek beginning", not only has contemporary philosophy failed to build autonomy, it altered the original pattern of philosophizing and distanced itself from it. This radical shift in relation to the Greek understanding of philosophy as an "exemplary school of humanity" was most prominent in the request of Bacon, Descartes and other harbingers of the "grand renovation" to transfer the focus from the unity of theoretical reasoning and practical (moral) acting, to a practical activity understood in the technical and pragmatic sense. This placed the acquisition of knowledge that is useful for life as the first educational priority. What was considered worthy of a free man, i.e. a commitment to the education of the intellect and character, was transformed into what befitted the spirit of the slaves – into a concern about and orientation towards ephemeral things. This resulted in knowledge oriented towards the study of the mathematical structure of nature prevailing over essential knowledge oriented towards the discovery of general truths and the meaning of life, with an aim to increase man's power over things through its technical application. While the pretension of Greek philosophy was to preserve the unity of knowledge, which enabled a direct connection of all sciences dominated by the philosophical spirit, the direction of contemporary education aimed at transforming philosophy into a science that will reach exact knowledge about the world by using the mathematical method. Suffering from a fundamental structural change, this orientation of contemporary philosophy which highly elevated the scientific and technical knowledge embodied in the will to power, has decisively influenced not only its further development, but also the direction of the development of future European education and the increasing withdrawal of philosophy from science (Petrovic, R. 2017).

In order to understand the process of the all-present positivistic scientification of culture and education it is necessary to bear in mind the development of the idea of science from its Greek beginnings to the present

day. In this sense, any standpoint which would view the nature of science in a general way, without taking into account its differentiation in different historical contexts would be limiting. In this sense it can be said that the provisions that apply to contemporary science are completely inadequate to the concept of science that was cultivated within Greek philosophy. Given the fact that the original scientific awareness began to diverge in the opposing direction than the myth, it could be said, while searching for the common feature of science in general, that it can be recognized in the freedom of the human spirit to rationally study reality. Such science, in its inseparability from philosophy and from and all individual pieces of scientific knowledge aspired to the wholesome truth. In contrast, modern science has established itself as the highest instance of thought, in opposition to everything that crossed the limit of a doubtless methodical base. Without a cognitive affection towards objectivity that does not belong to the phenomenal world, it based its starting point on empirical research, thus linking logical discourse with experiential content. Although many scientific discoveries occurred due to the speculative-theoretical observation of that which exists, the basic determination of contemporary science is still reflected in its technical and pragmatic dimension. It is highlighted through Descartes' request to transform the old, speculative, school philosophy into a science that would be useful for life, which would assist man to dominate over nature. Such a tendency has led to the affirmation of its extreme form which functions today through the cybernetics model. As a science of management relying on organization and communication, with developed control mechanisms of transferring information and management, cybernetics has taken upon itself the task of a "planned mastery of human labour" (Heidegger, M., 1969)

By viewing technical effectiveness as the criteria for scientific truth, it elevated the technical mind to a level of an indisputable measure. Without an interest in exploring any area of objective reality, cybernetics places itself out of the ontological domain and, as such, interferes only in a functional way, by placing specific scientific areas into specific organizational, information and management systems. By adopting cybernetic traits, science has provided the growth of its technical power indefinitely, but it also placed a question mark on its human role. Through the absolutization of technology, it sided with positivism and pragmatism, and thus the questions about the essence and the highest meaning of life were not only neglected, but declared unscientific. It is reasonable to wonder whether science can claim the dominant role in the cultural and educational process if it shows a value-neutral attitude towards the fundamental questions of life by saying that they remain on the side-lines of scientific interest because they go beyond the scope of things which are rationally known. It began to lose the trust that it was given the moment

when, by ripping the links it had to philosophy and thus depriving itself of a character of integrity, it increasingly fell under the law of the *techno-logos*.

By following the genesis of philosophy, from its Greek beginnings, over contemporary dissolution into specific sciences, to the modern self-abolition in the concept of cybernetics, we must ask ourselves whether this process was inevitable and whether Greek philosophy carried in itself a seed of these end results. What is the role of the *logos* in this and whether its metamorphosis from a universal ontological principle into a formal-mathematical one was inevitable? Bearing in mind the discontinuity that the Greek philosophy survived after a thousand year long duration, continuing to exist for a thousand more years in a completely altered medieval status, we may be able to better comprehend the changes that were brewed in this long period and that finally gave birth to something new and even foreign to the Greek understanding of the *logos* and *techne*. Nowhere in the original understanding of these concepts does *techne* act without the participation of man and a deep respect for that which exists, nor is *logos* active outside of the cosmic-anthropological unity. It is only in the new century that *techne* is put into the function of governing nature, and *logos* is reduced to a methodical and mathematical dimension.

5. The scientific and technological dimension of education

The complex of changes that accompanied the historical constitution of the basic forms of human spirit was also reflected in the field of education. The forms of consciousness which showed superiority and achieved dominance in a particular era marked that era through the system of education. During the past development of European education four basic spiritual forces marked its duration: mind, faith, inspiration and reason, embodied through philosophy, religion, art and science. Greek enlightenment united in itself the speculative, mystical, experiential and discursive power of the spirit, and thus enabled a form of education which enabled pure speculation, object creation and moral action. In its innermost being such education was oriented towards the ideals of truth and humanity. Their ascent was also continued later in the framework of the Modern age scientific discoveries, social utopias and theories of natural law. But, in time, the humanistic pathos increasingly lost its power and gave way to the ideal of an easy life which has, today, gained influence over human aspiration to the point that it became the basic pattern of life and at the same time the main driver of technological progress.

The rule of technology has enabled the creation of a uniform and informatically comprehensive world, which is announcing a new post-European era embodied in the phenomenon of globalization. While the

movements of Hellenization and modernization carried the idea of the revival of the highest educational European values, so far this last movement is completing the defacement of the human figure that testifies to the all-present deep feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and fear of the modern man. A man belonging to contemporary civilization in general, and thus to European civilization, absorbed in the influence of technological creations, has stepped out of the organic unity with the entirety of the world, reconciled with the lack of justice in the world, suffocated the protesting of human consciousness against evil, mocked the will for an eternal life. In the omnipresent subordination to earthly desires and plans the spirit of interest prevailed (Berdyayev, N. 2006).

The changes that have taken place on the cultural and spiritual level during the new era have caused numerous discussions of philosophers which referred to the “crisis of spiritual sciences”. With this topic, which was first started by Husserl in his cycle of lectures in Prague, starts the linking of the crisis of science with the “radical life crisis of man”. At first glance it seems contradictory that such a developed spiritual field could even find itself in a crisis given the many new results and successful research undertakings. In any case, the scientific value of exact natural sciences could not be questioned given their rich system of knowledge and developed methodology. The crisis was related to another large group of sciences that we usually classify as positive, and that were considered to be the main bearers of responsibility for the crisis of culture. It was precisely this that required the submission of spiritual sciences to “serious criticism”, which was radicalized through the issue of the meaning and importance of science for human existence. “The exclusivity, with which the modern man, in the second half of the 19th century, let his entire world view be determined by positive sciences and blinded by the “prosperity” which was achieved by them, meant an indifferent distraction from the issues which are crucial to humanity. Merely fact-minded sciences make merely fact-minded people” (Husserl, E. 1990)

This situation did not bring into doubt the methodological aspect of science, but the axiological one. Specifically, the issue that was raised was how can science, which was constituted as a strict rational objectivity and which abstracted from itself the wealth of the subjective world, be able to answer to the value requirements of the modern man, to enter deeper into the issue of his freedom and the meaning of his existence? How far does the truth that is subject to pure rational measurability reach? Strict objectivity that rules the positive sciences today was unimaginable in the classical era and at the beginning of the humanistic and renaissance movement, when an attempt was made to revitalize ancient values.

The idea of science in its authentic form, before the positivistic impoverishment, included the synthesis of all spheres of scientific knowledge in which the research of the world and the meaning of man's existence in it were equally represented. The scientific knowledge referred to the entirety of that which exists and therefore had a pluralistic meaning because it encompassed different insights unified in a system of Unique philosophy. Philosophy was entrusted with a project of designing and constituting a universal system that would include the matters of the mind and meaning. However, in time, a contrast started to appear between metaphysics and the theoretical and practical knowledge about matters that did not exceed the physical horizon. This increasingly led to doubting the methodological achievements of the new "comprehensive philosophy" and its dis-unification into separate scientific systems. This process was accompanied by an emergence of a polarization between scholars preoccupied with the philosophical spirit and metaphysical issues and those who were increasingly turning into experts (Gadamer, 2000)

With the fragmentation of a unique philosophy its spiritual core was lost and specific sciences were separated from the entirety of the system, and continued their existence as separate parts of that which exists, which ultimately led to the separation of the mind and reality. This simultaneously meant the beginning of the transformation of vivacious sciences into mere positive knowledge which, as such, began to enter the educational system. These processes did not leave philosophy itself indifferent, and as a self-reflecting awareness, during the beginning of the last century, it began to question the meaning of its own existence. Many philosophical discussions raised the question: Why philosophy? (Adorno, T. 1982). The impetus to this was provided by, on the one hand, doubts and disbelief in the ability of the human spirit to create a structure of speculative knowledge through an intuitively creative conception and a priori construction and, on the other, the conviction that the road that leads to the truth leads through observation and experience, as it does in studying nature. (Brentano, F. 1982)

These doubts ceased in the mid-20th century when the idea about the absolute position from which it is possible to encompass the truth in its entirety, which does not allow any uncertainty and which sharply underlines the boundary between knowledge and illusion, was relegated. This insight was contributed to by the nihilistic spirit which became the dominant expression of the consciousness of the contemporary era. With it, the doubt in inherited cultural and educational values moved in, the faith into the validity of the traditional philosophy was lost; the significance of truth was relativized. The distance from the philosophical tradition could not directly, in and of itself, also produce the answers to the newly created situations

which faced man. By rejecting God, not recognizing the transcendent source of everything that exists, a horizon of hitherto unimaginable freedom appeared in front of man. He sensed that he can use it to question everything, deny the importance of everything and raise himself on the highest pedestal. But, it was in these new conditions of immeasurable freedom, when the past measures of what is true and good were destroyed, that man has imperceptibly entered the waters of the profane and trivial world. His efforts today do not, even remotely, carry an indication of deliverance. Far more, the situation resembles his containment in a vicious circle from which he wishes to escape, but without the strength and will to withstand the internal effort of the spirit which is a prerequisite of all self-transformation.

Today, we view, with pathos, the values that were directly involved in the formation of character of each educated individual, the time when the spirit was praised, when good was honoured, when the soul was nurtured as a refuge of virtues and when truth bore a binding character. All these were not just mere values spawned by a philosophical mind which were effective in some abstract world of ideas. On the contrary, they produced those human goods that the entire Hellenic civilization was educated and created upon. Unfortunately, today we cannot ask for their renewal without reserve, not because they have lost in their importance and not because man found support in some other, higher ideals, but because it seems completely futile to expect their affirmation at a time which is completely governed by the technological and pragmatic spirit, in which man is intoxicated by acquiring money, material wealth, earthly fame, burdened by a pathological ambition for success, a career and all types of power. The comprehensive development of personality is no longer topical. It comes to the socialization of education, the goal not being the formation of a harmonious personality, a man who would live in a maximal harmony with the cosmos and his immediate environment; today, everyone is contended to educate (or adapt) man for a life in the new technological-cybernetic society which is primarily defined by material, pragmatic interests. (Uzelac, M. 2012). This situation has produced discontent, alienation, spiritual poverty and all types of insecurities which are manifested in all spheres of life of the modern man. However, man is a being of possibility, freedom and creation, and the current situation should not be considered as final and unchangeable (Droa, R. P. 2011). Changes on the educational and existential plan can be achieved by overcoming the crisis which is affecting science and philosophy. There is no doubt that science which was entrusted with education has lost its philosophical character in time, all the way to its own complete positivistic establishment. Today we have in place a science which replaced complex cognitive and ethical issues of thinking, judging, criticising, argumentation, designing and evaluating,

with a projection of socially acceptable goals for the realization of which it conjures up effective means. In this context it has become very important to show selectivity with respect to the content that is to be presented and adopted, with an emphasis on knowledge that carries a functional character i.e. that may serve the pragmatism of power (Liessmann, K. P. 2009)

Still, in addition to the undoubted instrumentalization of education that takes place under the auspices of positivist pedagogy, the requests of those educators who, owing to their own philosophical education, in their research endeavours, affirm the meta-dimension of education by making a shift from the pragmatic and technical issues towards the very ontology of education, can also be heard. But, is the presence of philosophical issues in pedagogy, reliance on philosophical contents, and reference to its heritage, enough for pedagogy to receive the character of true philosophy. Can pedagogy founded on the principles and criteria of positive science also function as philosophy? To be truly founded and to act as such it would have to give up the subject distinctness and methodological certainty provided by the system of scientific work, it would have to denounce the developmental success provided to it by scientific results which it places into the function of projected goals and societal interests, it would have to expand the field of its own research efforts in the field of the phenomenal and not envision its ultimate task in discovering the laws which govern things and their relationships, but in the final causality and meaning of their existence. But then science would have to come to terms with the crisis, which is the permanent residence of philosophy, and that is to be always at the beginning, to always have the same curiosity when approaching issues whose attraction is in their mystery, inscrutability, constant elusiveness of the final and definite solution. Because ultimately, disagreement in philosophy is an inevitable part of its nature and the most eloquent confirmation of the vivaciousness of its spirit. The crisis of philosophy does not stem from its openness and the position of permanent beginning, because ultimately, this is its nature. The crisis consists of its inability to implement this essence in the existing spiritual world, and thus in the system of education. Anyone who has experienced philosophical thinking knows that there is no “royal road” to the truth and that a great effort of the mind stands in front of everyone who dares to step on the road towards the truth, and perseverance on this road is the sincere commitment to the truth (Liessmann, K. P. 2008)

Lengthy, thorough and meticulous work, which was considered a necessary condition for the introduction into truthful thinking and essential knowledge, has lost ground today in favour of the requirement for promptness, which was, in the general race for time, declared as the basic measure of the efficiency and success of work. Studying in which the

teaching of specific scientific areas is reduced to one semester is increasingly turning into a compilation of short courses in which meticulous studying is replaced by vocational training. In the spirit of insisting on speed as the secret of success, different schools of skills are increasingly appearing – fast reading, memorizing, learning, and the paradox is made even greater by experts, concerned about the health of the contemporary man, increasingly warning about the dangers of living fast. The fetish of speed has replaced the thorough and lengthy approach to studying with a fragmentary one, i.e. the demanding thought process with easily accessible information. As a product of sensory reception we receive information in its finished and complete form and therefore it does not represent knowledge because it is not a product of understanding, sobriety and prudence of the person who possesses it. The phenomena of information was therefore not given a cognitive value worthy of attention by the Hellenic concept of knowledge, and it was therefore placed into the sphere of the seeming, vague, unreliable and uncertain support on which the truth cannot be placed.

6. Conclusion

The movement of philosophical thinking is in its essence divergent because it is open to various possibilities and therefore it respects even the dissenting opinions as long as they contain equally justified and credible solutions, but it is also synthetic because it allows for a possibility of overcoming the opposites at a higher level of synthesis. Therefore, its pluralistic stance and lack of consensus are not its flaws but a unique way of its existence, through which it confirms the different ways of accessing reality. Such a starting point is based on an attitude that knowledge that aspires to know the truth about reality which is complex, diffused and multi-layered, must itself be expressed through an equivocal discourse.

In the search for an educational support in philosophical resources we must be clear as to the state of the philosophical spirit of today. Its previous historical course during which it survived various metamorphoses, from the theologization, over the scientification and ideologization, to the technologization, should not be lost from sight. After a period in which philosophers accepted the role in which they were invited to transform social relationships and after the inglorious end of that role, a period of their withdrawal from social engagement into cabinet and academic work ensued, which, in time, gained a character of sterile theorizing. Today, when we have, at work, the rule of the world of technics, technology, informatics and cybernetics, which are to a great extent banishing that which is human from people; philosophers are obliged, more than ever, to give a special place

within the context of a unique “philosophy of meaning” to the meaning of education.

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