



RETHINKING GREEK *PAIDEIA* AND ITS TRANSCENDENT AIM OF APPROPRIATING THE *KOSMIC* WHOLE IN VIEW OF *HOMO-ECONOMICUS*, AND THE ECONOMIC HOLE AT THE ROOT OF MODERN EDUCATION

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This paper points to pathways that pedagogy may follow today in order to bridge the gap between two seemingly incommensurable systems of teaching and learning, namely: classical Greek *paideia* and modern education. Firstly, the present exploration elucidates the historical and cultural force of classical Greek education and then establishes Jaeger's conception of the *paideia* of the Greeks as imperishable cultural literary and philosophical genius. In turn, the discussion moves to the ways *homo-economicus* dominates *homo-politicus* and *homo-educandus* in Plato's *Republic VIII*, exposing the ways Greek philosophical *paideia* since Socrates overcame the weaknesses and destructive influences of 'economic-man'. It is submitted here that Plato's *Republic VIII* implicitly establishes that the *paideia* of *homo-philosophicus* is the best, perhaps the only way to reconcile the tensions between *homo-economicus*, *homo-politicus* and *homo-educandus* in the *politeia*. Further, the paper ascertains that the unrestrained intentions and ministrations of 'economic-man'—his *panourgia*—are at the root of the global crisis in culture and education today, and shows how the modern university constitutes an arena of scientific inquiry at the beck and call of global economic forces. Mostly, the present exploration illumines the pillars of Greek philosophical *paideia* and exemplifies the differences and antithetical aims of modern education in order to firstly, clarify the lack of a transcendent aim in today's pedagogical systems, and secondly, to open the way for envisioning such an aim outside of economic criteria and dogmatic religious or prescriptive pedagogical positions. Since the Greeks of antiquity, the best way to begin rethinking an honorable spiritual aim that will revitalize and inspire pedagogical learning remains the sole prerogative of philosophical *paideia*. Indeed, for the Greeks *paideia* constitutes the opening philosophical movement of the ongoing search for the place of the human within the *kosmic* whole along the pathways of *alētheia logos* and *dialogos*, whilst the modernist project of education apparently bears no philosophical backbone save pragmatism that is indistinguishable from the utilitarian movement of feeding the needs and voracious demands of the industrial conglomerate: down the bottomless pit of the economic hole created by the global economic rises, crises and metastases. In conclusion, the present inquiry re-contextualizes the possible contribution of classical philosophical *paideia* in today's emerging global environment through an exploration of the Greek conceptions of *epoché* (epoch) and the *kairos*—the apt or ripe time.

Keywords: Greek *paideia*, Jaeger, Plato, Postman, Jaspers, Globalization, Modern education.

A person of childlike genius and inborn energy is still a Greek, and revives our love for the Muse of Hellas.

—Ralf Waldo Emerson, *Selected Essays*.¹

When a thought of Plato becomes a thought to me,—when a truth that fired the soul of Pindar fires mine, time is no more.

—Ralf Waldo Emerson, *Selected Essays*.²

I mean to suggest that without a transcendent and honorable purpose schooling must reach its finish [...].

—Neil Postman, *The End of Education*.³

[...] when the elaborate machinery of civilization opposes and represses man's heroic qualities, life stirs again beneath the hard crust [...] drives men [...] to live once more in that earlier age when the spirit of Greece [...] was still fervently alive.

—Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. 1.⁴

Introduction

In reassessing the trends and direction of today's global landscape, this paper seeks to rethink and reevaluate the aim of modern educational systems by contrasting their ideals to those of classical Greek *paideia*. Undoubtedly, today's geopolitical vicissitude at the service of global economic rises and concomitant metaptoses has dealt the final blow in commoditizing the educational system. In modernity, 'education' and 'culture' have indeed been delegated to economic categories. Pedagogy has become a secondary affair fashioned after what it endeavors to keep-up to: the massive leap of economic-technological developments and their expansionist global communication movements. For this reason, pedagogy principally forwards the acquisition of a surface and narrow knowledge economy of vocational import that aims at plausible outcomes, which allegedly assure entrance in the marketplace and guarantee the prospect of economic success. Pedagogical success is therefore no longer measured by the value of learning to be a wholesome human being.

In the final analysis, the subjection of educational capital to economic and technical capital—along with concomitant political effectuations—heightens the already detrimental shattering of family and cultural bonds, accentuates the collapse of ethical values, and above all, undermines and irreparably ruptures the possibility of any humanist learning of spiritual import.

It is ascertained here that thorough knowledge of the cultural and philosophical atmosphere in which classical Greek *paideia* flourished, augments and acutely interiorizes awareness of the incommensurable differences and antitheses in the aims and way of life evinced by education today. In this regard, the present inquiry opens pathways that pedagogy may survey in order to gradually bridge the gap between two seemingly incommensurable systems of teaching and learning, namely: classical Greek *paideia* and modern education. Raising consciousness concerning the variances in scope and way of life between these two respective systems, enhances the possibility that modern pedagogical practice will begin reevaluating its methods and aim, thus appropriate in today's volatile educational landscape the best practices each system provides for the taking.

The classical Greek educational culture of the *polis* of Athens emerged in constant dialogue with the philosophical tradition that originated with the Ionian philosophers in the sixth century and ended with Aristotle in the fourth century BCE. Unquestionably, the Greek philosophers drew a good amount of their insights in dialogue with the *paideia* of a nexus of archetypical figures that excelled in their respective

¹ Ibid., 164-165.

² Emerson, *Selected Essays*, 165.

³ Postman, *The End of Education*, x-xi.

⁴ Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. 1, xviii.

fields of learning;⁵ consequently, the cultural interdependence of all fields of knowledge was dialogically established and intertwined with philosophic insight and acumen. Put otherwise, the probing dynamics and mysterious admixture of the humanities and of philosophy with art politics and science, assisted in the founding of the powerful educational atmosphere of classical Athenian culture, bringing forth an exceptionally complete and wholesome program of study and interdependent learning. Most importantly, the last three great philosophers Socrates Plato and Aristotle refined and advanced *philosophia* remarkably, rendering it to prominence as the most precious dimension of classical Greek education. This development prompted philosophical *paideia* with its transcendent aim –evermore pointing to *kosmic* beingness and fulfillment–, to assume precedence as the paragon in matters of *mathesis* (learning), and to become the discipline that elucidates the method and scope of all *mathemata* (*epistēmē*; sciences).

Returning to modern education, most of us recognize that it is in dire need of reform. But for effective reform to take place radical transformation in the aim and scope of education is necessary. In effect, the whole present-day educational system must be seriously reevaluated transformed and redefined. This, because today's teaching and learning at all levels of schooling including university pedagogical methods exists in a depreciated state, it has really failed to inspire students with the transformative benefits genuine education may initiate and tangibly bring to bear. In other words, present-day pedagogy cannot really provide the youth with definitive insight concerning the grandeur of the educative process, is incapable of convincing students about the greater scope and potentiating power of learning. In effect, the perception that the deepening of knowledge may potentially guide both teachers and students to the realization of their freedom and the purposeful wholesomeness of life lies beyond the ken of modern pedagogical systems and practices. As Postman puts it, modern education lacks “a transcendent and honorable purpose” one that provides insight as to why the youth ought to continue educating themselves.⁶

This paper maintains that at the root of the modern pedagogical crisis lay extraneous forces to the educational process primarily instituted by the economically oriented interests of *homo-economicus*. It is argued here, that economic forces constantly impelling scientific-technological and concomitant socio-political interests steer pedagogical narratives in the direction of pursuing utilitarian outcomes and fixed-ends. For this reason, educational practices have increasingly marginalized the humanities and the study of philosophy; and this progression can be traced to the beginnings of the rise of science in the sixteenth century, however, it has worsened during the industrial revolution and has attained epic proportions in our

⁵ Some of the archetypal figures whose legacy profoundly impacted Athenian cultural affairs and the educational environment of classical times, were the legendary poets Homer and Hesiod, also credited with first instituting religious customs, (ancient traditions later superseded by the culture of the famous mystery schools of Orpheus, Dionysius, Apollo, and Demeter, among others); and standing-out among the great lyric poets were Sappho and Pindar; and ever-present was Solon who outshined in the art of lawmaking and statesmanship, also Cleisthenes the great politician and lawgiver, and Pericles the outstanding statesman orator and general that brought forth the Golden Age of Athens; and, of course, enriching the Athenian milieu were flourishing orators like Antiphon, Aeschines, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Cephalus, and Lysias, notable personages who actively embellished the political and intellectual life of the city; and sophists of the caliber of Protagoras; and there too, admirably stood the renowned Aristophanes, master dramatist of comedy and political satire; and the sagacious tragedians Aeschylus Euripides and Sophocles, whose admirable performances filled theatres influencing public opinion; and definitely one has to pay homage to the eminent historians Herodotus Thucydides and Xenophon; and Hippocrates, who excelled in medicine accentuating its spiritual dimensions; and certainly standing-out was Phidias, the monumental sculptor painter and architect whom history eternalized for his magnificent masterpieces; and again, were the renown mathematicians and astronomers for instance the Pythagorean Philolaus and his student Archytas; and standing-out among many eminent scientists were Leucippus and Democritus, founders of atomic theory; and it would be a great omission not to refer to the successful and educated politician-generals, who remarkably affected the Athenian state of affairs such as Miltiades, Themistocles, Nicias, Laches, Alcibiades, Thrasybulus, and of course among others the outstanding Theban Epaminondas-, the great strategist general and statesman who transformed the politics of Greek city-states; and let it be noted, this perhaps not so seemly list is certainly not exhaustive.

⁶ Postman, *The End of Education*, x-xi.

day and age: genuine philosophic and humanistic study has become as it were an endangered species, evermore-so a museum relic a historical artifact of glorious times now past and gone.

But be as it may, unpretentious humanistic and philosophic insight is diachronic and of paramount value to education and must be reinstituted and revitalized. In this regard, to succeed in the reestablishment of integrative and wholesome teaching and learning in modern education, it is of outmost importance to firstly trace the ontological and epistemological crisis of today's pedagogical system to the atrophy—or else the eclipse—of genuine humanistic and philosophical thinking. In turn, it is necessary to investigate the ways *philosophia* constitutes that discipline which bears the humanistic and cultural power to curtail and thwart the subversive economic forces at the root of the modern pedagogical system. Ever since Plato, it has been widely acknowledged that *homo-philosophicus* is the best, perhaps the only way to reconcile the tensions between *homo-economicus* *homo-politicus* and *homo-educandus* in the *politeia*.

Even in today's so-called global *cosmopolis* where so much has changed since ancient Greek times, the imperishable achievements and immense influence of classical philosophical *paideia* has much to offer in the exploration of effectively rethinking and redefining the value and scope of modern education. The paradigmatic formation of the Athenian culture of learning especially the curious sprouting of philosophical *paideia* is worth investigating not in order to emulate; but because of the extensive dialogue and interdependence it has *de facto* established between all fields of knowledge. But, above all, the inexhaustible depth exemplary insight and conspicuous grandeur of classical Greek philosophical *paideia* is of furthestmost importance as it consistently points to the requisite—and conceivably plausible—transformation of the aim of modern pedagogical practices.

Unquestionably, the transcendent aim and the spirit of classical Greek philosophy as imparted to the generations already permeates our institutions of learning constitutes their foundation. In this light, to remember and rethink the accomplishments of Greek philosophical *paideia* bears the power to reawaken the ancient spirit founding the generations. Ancient philosophy rekindles evermore the inner life-force-, unveils the cultural knowledge that illumines the educational process and reestablishes the spiritual might that brings transformation to both the educator and the *educandus*. As such, generations of western thinkers have fully acknowledged that early Greek philosophical activity directly participates in the realm of reality, hence; enables an ingenious way of life that opens the possibility for the advancement of an upright spiritual narrative in education. After all, the perennial aim of education is—or at least ought to be—the existential grounding of teaching and learning in the ontological sphere of the appropriation of truth *as* totality; and surely the Greek philosophers were adepts at this, granting the community of students and teachers pedagogical being and fulfillment.

The Historical and Cultural Force of Greek *paideia*

As already mentioned, the pre-eminently Greek term '*paideia*' constitutes an admixture of cultural force and philosophic way of life that blossomed in Athens, achieving its apex in the fifth and fourth century BCE. In contradistinction to the Spartan *agoge*⁷, Athenian *paideia* involved a liberal model of the state that highlighted the citizen as a free and responsible individual part of a living civic community. For this reason, in Athenian society the individual as free political entity was expected to excel in both the private and public domains in conformity to the cultural ideal of democratic laws and procedures. Hence, the education of the citizen aimed at understanding participating in and apprising matters of *bios politikos*, a *bios* that valorized the freedom of speech and expression to be tested in the *agora*, that generally

⁷ Spartan *agoge* primarily consisted of a rather forcible form of *gymnasia* imposed on youngsters by the state to inculcate virtue, primarily in the military sense of training (*askesis*). According to Deleuze, it entailed a form of learning that aimed to toughen-up physical constitution and temperament in an effort to curtail unruly pleasures and inclinations, known to naturally arise to the youthful countenance. Cf. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 108 ff. For an important study regarding Spartan *agoge*, see Kennell, *The Gymnasium of Virtue – Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta*. Another equally important scholarly work concerning Spartan *agoge* is Ducat's, *Spartan Education: Youth and Society in the Classical Period*.

encouraged dialogue concerning the common good of the *demos*, and also addressed critical concerns regarding self-knowledge moral religious and city-state issues.

Further, Athenian *paideia* encouraged involvement in festivals and the Olympic Games, mostly cherished noble antagonism in matters of the cultivation of the body (vis-à-vis *gymnasia* and wrestling), as well as literary competitions in rhapsody tragedy and comedy. But above all, it wholesomely nurtured the cultivation of virtue through a well-rounded education, entailing the learning of philosophy rhetoric and grammar, music poetry and art, mathematics and medicine, history geography and astronomy, the natural and physical sciences. The pedagogical system of the Greeks was therefore able to “produce”, as Tarnas puts it, “a well-rounded fully educated citizen”.⁸

It is generally acknowledged that the referent to the ‘*paideia* of the Greeks’ in the classical age informs the historical and cultural contextuality of *humanitas*: the living torch of the moral and intellectual insight prevailing in the creative economy of knowledge production in the *polis* of Athens-, “the Hellas of the Hellas” according to Euripides’ epitaph.⁹ The cumulative expression of Athenian *paideia* embraced an all-encompassing literary *corpus* which at every turn pointed toward the poetic and universal architecture of truth as a way of life. For this reason, Isocrates in his *Panegyricus* writes: “so far has our city distanced the rest of mankind in thought and in speech that her pupils have become the teachers of the rest of the world, and she has brought it about that the name ‘Hellenes’ suggests no longer a race but an intelligence”.¹⁰ According to Isocrates, rhetorical and political refinement elevated to philosophical excellence is what differentiates Athenian *paideia* as highpoint of brilliance cradle of culture (*paideusis*) among the Greek city-states.

Jaeger’s Greek *paideia* as Imperishable Cultural Literary and Philosophical Genius

It is important at the outset to state that in spite of Jaeger’s splendid career in both Germany and America (since 1936), his three volumes of *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* has been rigorously criticized by a number of scholars.¹¹ It is beyond the present scope to discuss these and other criticisms or to offer an apologetic for Jaeger. For our purposes, Jaeger’s narrative of the cultural and educational dynamics of classical Greek *paideia* is apt and insightful, most pertinent as yardstick for assessing and redefining the aim and direction of education today. As it stands his insight into the monumental beginnings and everlasting influence of classical Greek *paideia* constitutes an in-depth historical and cultural analysis that certainly cannot be dismissed, rather has to be consistently reckoned with and revisited in times when civilization becomes sterile, desolate and in crisis.

To this day, Jaeger remains an eminent and most respected figure in the history and philosophy of education, precisely because of his unique comprehension and ingenious celebration of the beneficence, wholesomeness and lofty value of classical Greek *paideia*. He recognizes its diachronic sway, the unique spiritual power it released unto the human collective, indeed, a compendium of originary insight spilling-over in a forward thrust that irreversibly transformed and keeps transforming the history of occidental philosophy, and which constantly holds inspiration for the comings and goings of human culture and civilization as a whole.

Foremost, Jaeger is held in high esteem for his singular recognition that the predominant literary and philosophic predilection of Greek *paideia*, its comprehensive magnitude and ever-present cultural depth is responsible for creating the ideal of culture in the first place. Moreover, he claims that through the incessant ‘search for the divine center’, Athenian *paideia* above all enabled and empowered the

⁸ Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 30.

⁹ For the original ancient Greek text and English translation of Euripides’ epitaph, see Hanink, “The Classical Tragedians, from Athenian Idols to Wandering Poets”, 54.

¹⁰ Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 50.

¹¹ Jaeger’s three volumes of *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* has been recently criticized either for being idealistic, romantic, anachronistic, elitist, historically imprecise, conceptually vague, culturally and ideologically bound. Cf. Calder M.W. III, (ed.), *Werner Jaeger Reconsidered*.

spiritualization of western culture as a whole. He points out that Athenian *paideia* played a dominant part in “the development and expansion of Greco-Roman civilization”;¹² it bridged “the gap between classical Greek civilization and the Christian culture of late antiquity”;¹³ and most importantly, he ascertains that “without Greek cultural ideals, Greek Roman civilization would not have been a historical unity, and the culture of the western world would never have existed”.¹⁴

Jaeger is worth quoting extensively:

Perhaps it is not great praise to say that the Greeks created the ideal of culture. [...] It seems in fact that the culture of the present cannot impart any value to the original Greek form of culture. But rather needs illumination and transformation by that ideal, in order to establish its true meaning and direction. [...] And this realization of and return to the archetype, implies a mental attitude closely akin to the Greek. [...] When thought and custom have petrified into rigidity, when the elaborate machinery of civilization opposes and represses man’s heroic qualities, life stirs again beneath the hard crust. At such times, a deep-seated historical instinct drives men not only to go back to the resources of their own national culture, but also to live once more in that earlier age when the spirit of Greece (with which they have so much in common) was still fervently alive, and from its ardent life was creating the forms which eternalized its ardor and its genius.¹⁵

Indeed, beneath the hard shell of modern discontent the spirit of Greece is still ‘fervently alive’. By encrypting in its literary activity and philosophic way of life the universal beginnings of questioning human education and freedom, the *paideia* of the Greeks unceasingly embraces within its sphere of influence the unremitted stimulus to cumulative transmit the highest spiritual values and ideals of civilization throughout time in ways, impossible to interpret or decipher, that unwaveringly percolate even through the most invariable strata of society history art science and culture.

Jaeger’s method of study seeks “to describe history in a way which explains the life of man through the creative literature which represents his ideals”; therefore, his meticulous focus on Greek literature becomes the “most direct approach to the spiritual life of the past”.¹⁶ He finds that the interaction of historical and cultural forces with the creative impulse of the Greek spirit shaped literature whose power vividly, eternally and univocally pronounces the noble aim of *paideia* to be the shaping of the ideal formation of character, personified through and directed toward the intellectual and moral self-actualization of “the higher type of human being”.¹⁷ For this reason, to apprehend the solution the Greeks brought to the “historical and intellectual problem” of humanism “would bring a deeper understanding of the unique education genius which is the secret of the undying influence of Greece on all subsequent ages”.¹⁸

Thenceforward, historical and cultural processes backed-by moral and intellectual resourcefulness drove classical Greek education in the direction of the noblest accomplishment of philosophical *paideia*: the brilliant sway of *arête*, knowledge yielding toward the transformative light of perfection, a constant striving towards *humanitas par excellence*. This way, the most extraordinary beginning and enlightening force that Greek humanist *paideia* discloses, manifests-itself-in the curious blossoming of the strange but most fruitful conception of *arête*, the genesis of the idea that the philosophical aim of education displays self-cultivation, hence unveils—in the conception of *Bildung* and *kultur*—the moral striving towards

¹² Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. 2, ix.

¹³ Ibid., xii. Cf. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*.

¹⁴ Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. 1, xvii.

¹⁵ Ibid., xviii.

¹⁶ Ibid., xi.

¹⁷ Ibid., xvii.

¹⁸ Ibid., ix.

actualizing the belief that every form can be perfected, and that the human being is potentially proficient capable and gifted to tend towards supreme excellence, the perfection of truth in the unity of all form.¹⁹

According to Jaeger, the most extraordinary accomplishment of classical *paideia* is not only that the Greeks conceived of the culture of *arête* but that they realized it in art and architecture, law and politics, literature and philosophy, medicine and the sciences. In this light, the wonderful and mysteriously unique greatness of Greek *paideia* is precisely the tireless and unceasing striving for excellence the self-actualization that not only aimed towards goodness, beauty truth and justice, but existentially achieved it in all spheres of life and culture. Over and above, Jaeger proclaims that the fruition of the literary and philosophical education that curiously triumphed in the Greek pedagogical system not only intended-in self-realizing the artistic and poetic, moral and universal-noetic or *kosmic* laws operative within the human spirit, but also aimed at imparting the spiritual splendor and magnificence of its cultural accomplishments to the rest of the world. Hence, the philosophical activity of Greek *paideia* bespeaks the narrative of spiritual bestowal of enlightenment unto humanity and benevolence unto the generations. As such, Jaeger with confidence declares that the *paideia* of the Greeks self-illuminates “the *paideia* of mankind”.²⁰

Evermore-so, he insists that it becomes imperative “to rediscover the approach” of classical Greek *paideia* “during our present struggles” in order “to maintain our [...] civilization”.²¹ Even in our day and age, he tells us “it is impossible to have any educational purpose or knowledge without a thorough and fundamental comprehension of Greek culture”.²²

Evidently, Jaeger’s insight is most pertinent in our times which bear witness to the pedagogic devaluation of the humanities in favor of global economics. This development signifies nothing less than the bankruptcy of the *ethos* of *homo humanus* forwards the tyrannous prevalence of *homo-economicus*, the kind of human whose self-centered interest constantly destabilizes the ecology of the earth and of civilization, subverting the economy of humanity of education and culture as a whole. In a later section, we will elucidate the destructive influences of ‘economic-man’ on today’s cultural and educational dynamics. Now, we turn to an exploration of the negative impact of ‘economic-man’ in Plato’s *Republic VIII*.

Homo-economicus dominates homo-politicus and homo-educandus in Plato’s Republic VIII

Homo-economicus or ‘economic-man’ is here defined as the consciousness that shapes and establishes the human as an economic actor making rational choices, but also a knifing agent capable of instituting plots, motivated solely by the individualistic self-interest of maximizing wealth, preferably without having to work much for it and usually at the expense of others. As such, *homo-economicus* is effectually motivated by the force of *panourgia* that runs counter to the primordial Greek conception of *dike* (justice), entirely invalidates Hesiod’s and later Solon’s idea of *eunomia* (just laws), and above all, annuls and abolishes the idea of *isonomia* (equality under the law) which prevailed in Athens since Cleisthenes the initiator of democratic rule.

As Cramer puts it, at least “ever since Plato” it seemed obvious “that injustice and gross inequality would produce conflict”,²³ and this because “*homo-economicus* goes to war”, his “methodological individualism” and quasi rational choices manifest-themselves in and as “the political economy of war”.²⁴

¹⁹ Jaeger’s general understanding of Greek *paideia* as *Bildung* follows the Platonic model of thinking. However, Kahn criticizes Jaeger’s portrayal of Plato for strikingly lacking reference to his political thinking; and further claims that whenever he considers Platonic ethical and political theory he conceives of it as culture. Cf. Kahn, “Werner Jaeger’s Portrayal of Plato”, 80-81.

²⁰ Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. 1, xi.

²¹ Ibid., xi. Also, see Elsner, “*Paideia*: Ancient Concept and Modern Reception”, 145-149.

²² Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. 1, x.

²³ Cramer, “*Homo Economicus Goes to War*”, 1848.

²⁴ Ibid., 1845.

Indeed, in *Republic VIII* Plato elucidates well how ‘economic-man’ is the worse type of human as he cares only for the amassing of riches. He neither cares for justice nor for the people or their education; and of course, the most corrupt form of government suits him best. His constant subversion of both people and state knows no limits he therefore, stands as the pre-eminent force behind warring factions, revolution or civil-war, or else becomes instrumental in war against the state instituted by external forces. At every turn, *homo-economicus* effectually undermines *homo-politicus* and *homo-educandus*.

In *Republic VIII*, Plato *qua* Socrates essentially discusses the four types of unjust city-states: timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny, that respectively correspond to four types of unjust men the rulers of these states (546d3 ff.). These four types of government represent the consecutive corrupt stages that a city will pass over time. The reason for the discussion in Book *VIII* is to determine why the just person is better and by far superior to the unjust man; and it becomes obvious as the discussion progresses, that *homo-economicus* is precisely personified as that type of unwarranted man whose concerns interests and aims completely disregard the question of justice and integrity; in effect, foremostly his orchestrations determine *à la carte* the consecutive transition from one defective and degenerate form of governance to another. Moreover, the transition from one form of unjust rulership to the next is always violent and bloody; for the machinations of ‘economic-man’ his inability to care for the welfare of others, are capable of bringing the whole city-state to its knees. Finally, Socrates determines that when *homo-economicus* eventually rises to the position of a tyrant he becomes the most wretched of men; thus, the state under his rulership is brought to the bottom of the pit for the worse ruin deterioration and decay prevails in the despotism of tyranny. But let us take things from the beginning.

Socrates firstly discusses timocracy which flourished in Crete and Sparta as being the closest to his vision of an Aristocratic ideal form of government where justice prevails. He begins by praising the Spartan *agoge* (544c) but is quick to point out that the Laconian form of governance (545c ff.), which values the principle of *timé* (honor) is eventually destined to deteriorate into an oligarchy. He finds that sooner or later the rising to power of a timocratic ruler with unlawful and dishonorable constitution, driven by his disruptive appetites is inevitable, and such type of a ruler in order to fulfill his unruly passions begins to lust for riches: thenceforward, timocracy depreciates into oligarchy or plutocracy (550c ff.).

Now, timocracy and plutocracy (oligarchy) respectively valorize the principles of honor (*timé*) and wealth (*plutos*). However, either *principio* effectually fails to provide any worthwhile education for both citizens and rulers. On one hand, in both the timocratic and oligarchic forms of governance the masses of poor (including beggars and outcasts), but also the evildoers (thieves criminals and vagabonds), mostly worrying about matters of survival are kept uneducated and-in-check singularly by fear and the force of law; whilst on the other hand, the education of the rulers is solely intend either on learning: (a) to love honor or victory that in time turns into vain ambition, or else (b) to love wealth. But no matter what, the love of either *desiradum* honor or riches constitutes the same faulty ideal and fixation the amassing of money,²⁵ which inevitably leads to corruption and dronish appetites (552e ff.); indeed, the hoarding of wealth mirrors an eclipse of humanity: “the presence of such people is the result of lack of education, bad rearing, and a bad constitutional arrangement” (552e4-5).

At any rate, honor and wealth are defective forms of love unresponsive to the care of the soul. Hence, the lovers of these restricted ideals are constantly endeavoring to keep track of their frail forms of love thereby keep forcing the “rational and spirited parts” of their humanity to “sit on the ground beneath appetite”, until eventually they are reduced “to slaves” of their loves (553c7-d1). The ill-suited temperament of such men does not allow them “to reason about or examine anything except how a little money can be made into great wealth”, and they “cannot admire anything but wealth and wealthy people or have any ambition other than the acquisition of wealth or whatever might contribute to getting it” (553d2-6).

²⁵ Socrates ascertains that the timocratic and oligarchic forms of governance are favored by men whose mal adapted constitutions turn the youth into “honor-lovers” and “money-lovers”, whilst swiftly and inevitably the lover of honor by necessity turns to a lover of wealth and riches (553d7-8).

Accordingly, in the timocratic and oligarchic *polis*-states “money is valued above everything” (554b2-3) by both the city and its rulers, sovereigns, who lack genuine education political and philosophical acumen; in effect, they pay “no attention to education” (554b4) nor to virtue save to a form of unqualified training that makes them blind for personal gain profit and honor. Hence, all genuine learning that elevates the soul such as literature poetry and music is outrightly undermined and overthrown. The rulers effectively mal treat their subjects primarily by keeping them in a state of poverty whilst they themselves, become ever richer and more honored for they own most of the property but also create and enforce the laws; by lending money with high interests, they secure acquire or liquidate the property of unable to pay citizens, and, in the final analysis, instigate new laws in their favor when unforeseeable problems arise (cf. 556a ff.). Moreover, the thriving wealthy rulers pretend not to notice the impoverished dissatisfied and unbearable living conditions of the poor masses that their insatiable avarice firstly put in place (555e3).

Thenceforward, motivated by long-born hate the disenfranchised poor conspire and plot against their wealthy and privileged suppressors (cf. 555d6-556c4). The decline of oligarchy into democracy happens when at an opportune moment the fretting agitated and flattened masses of poor rise in bloody revolution slaughtering many of the wealthy oligarchs and ousting out the others. In turn, they institute a new form of constitution in which the remaining citizens allegedly share equally in the governance of the city. However, positions of power are primarily dolled-out by lot, therefore persons are unjustly assigned to privileged positions for which they are not suitable. For this reason, democratic rule from its inception becomes an equality of un-equals (556c5-557a5).

Freedom becomes the guiding principle of democracy whilst individuality antagonism and variety in character traits are its consequential effect. There is freedom of speech and freedom to author life as one pleases and no necessary obligations to partake in government arise. Notwithstanding, freedom becomes the very *principio* responsible for the deterioration and downfall of democracy. This, because once the citizens savor freedom they become incapable of obeying orders and can no longer bear the slightest authority above them; eventually they end-up disrespecting all written and unwritten laws and their state of being depreciates into extravagance and license; the unreserved pursuance of their unchecked desires and appetites corrupts both their soul and mind (557b3 ff.).

Most importantly, in the democratic conception of freedom no distinction is made between the necessary pleasures that elevate the soul and the unnecessary that corrupt it. Since all pleasures are valued equally and can be pursued freely, there is no coherence of purpose and no aim in education; instead, myriads of conflicting desires prey upon the soul and scatter its power in every direction. It essentially behooves the majority of citizens in a democratic state that they have the freedom to pursue the virtuous life and the elevated *eudaimonic* path of a contemplative existence. By forfeiting reason and the moral way of life they bear little or no respect for education and are rendered incapable of questioning the premises of their unbridled desires; consequently, the freedom to pursue the coherent integrated higher *bios* bypasses them.

As such, Socrates maintains that the city in democracy is devoid of order and harmony. In addition, it is essentially the poor uneducated masses the underprivileged mob that rules and commands in a democratic constitution. For one thing, the appointed rulers the so-called democrats consistently focus on how to absorb and imbibe the riches of the wealthy, whom they consistently accuse in the assembly for being intransigent oligarchs. Hence, it is not long before the impoverished masses elect their most outspoken and fierce leader to execute a violent and bloody overthrow (565b9-c9). This way, from amidst the poor mob a tyrant is born and democracy morph into tyranny (565d1 ff.). When the tyrant rises to power he is gruesomely feared, however, he himself fears all the more for the prospect of revenge and death becomes omnipresent. For this reason, he encircles himself with vagrants and criminals and further seeks protection by raising an army. Concurrently, through plotting and intrigue he pillages for riches and gathers evermore wealth by demanding exorbitant taxes from the people. He therefore legitimizes unlawfulness and in addition institutes laws that solely favor his self-interests.

To sum up, the total concerns of *homo-economicus* in *Republic VIII*, his conduct motivations inclinations and intentions manifest-in-and-as the unquenchable desire to possess and amass riches at all

costs. In other words, ‘economic-man’ efficaciously utilizes his judgment calculating power and all means at his disposal whether legal or else deceptive corrupt or violent, solely to promote and fulfill his selfish interests. Since the primary aim of ‘economic-man’ revolves around the acquisition maximization and accumulation of wealth, it is only natural that he perpetually antagonizes and perhaps plots against all rivals.

Needless to say, *homo-economicus* has secondary interests such as ambition for rank and honor, aversion to labor and difficulty, the desire for leisure luxury and comfort; and these parallel to the pursuance of unbridled appetites and perhaps caprices of extravagant spending or other forms of excess. Nevertheless, these secondary interests never really interfere with or hinge upon his underlying motive for gathering wealth at all costs. Moreover, his economic interests almost always prevail over his already enfeebled moral sense. He therefore readily justifies any consequential moral reservations that may per chance arise due to his immoral actions.

Furthermore, in order to accumulate wealth *homo-economicus* capitalizes on the discrepancy between the rich and poor. He adeptly maneuvers and plots his way through the social class system of any governmental constitution whether timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, tyrannical, or any other. And most successfully, when circumstances ripen for conspiratorial benefits collusions machinations or intrigue, ‘economic-man’ effectually constitutes the predominant force responsible for the corruption decline downfall and eventual morphing of governmental systems into new orders of political economy. As such, *homo-economicus* constitutes the primary force responsible for the political economy of war. Now in times of peace, the nature of the relationship that holds between *homo-economicus* and *homo-politicus* determines the form of governance as well as the quality of the cultural and educational system. At any rate, in *Republic VIII* ‘economic-man’ straightforwardly influences the developmental acumen of both *homo-politicus* and *homo-educandus*, of society and civilization at large.

Despite Plato’s apt criticisms of the shortcomings of democratic rule, the elevated cultural dynamics of classical Greek *paideia* flourished and triumphed in the ancient *polis*-state of Athens; the city that first conceived and highlighted the archetypal ideals of *dike*, *eunomia*, *democratia*, and *isonomia*; indeed, transcendent ideas that ever since constitute the historical aim and apex of justice and the economy of philosophical and political *paideia*. Undoubtedly, the democratic state of Athens best synchronized freedom and order in the ancient world, appropriately harmonizing the economy of politics and education. But above all, democratically ruled Athens first authoritatively gave birth to *homo-philosophicus*, that universal order of *homo-humanus* whose transcendent pedagogical aim is dauntless virtue and extraordinary wisdom. Ever-since, *homo-philosophicus* bespeaks the most wholesome way to accomplish the self-harmonization between *homo-economicus*, *homo-politicus*, and *homo-educandus*, in both the private and public spheres.

Homo-philosophicus understood all too well that *homo-economicus* constitutes a predominantly negative archetypal force that can potentially become destructive. Thus, philosophical *paideia* in antiquity apprehended that ‘economic-man’ foremostly constitutes a universally dominant adversarial force of the collective human psyche, present in differing ways and varying degrees in all epochs, civilizations, and systems of governance. It was the aim of classical philosophical *paideia* to direct the individual in overcoming the prevalent weaknesses and destructive passions of *homo-economicus* in favor of the self-cultivation of virtue and transcendent wisdom. Hence, in Plato’s *Apology* Socrates—the father of *philosophia*—sojourning around the *agora* and the streets of Athens cajoled all to take care of the soul, precisely because “it is not from wealth that virtue comes, but from virtue excellence come wealth and all other good things for men, both in private and in public” (30b).

Generally speaking, from the whole of Plato’s *Republic* we may conclude that the highest form of governance is achieved through the harmonization of the aims of *homo-politicus* (‘justice and the good of the people’), and *homo-educandus* (‘wholesome education for all – in accordance to ‘intelligence and rank’). Henceforth, wherever ‘justice for the people’ and ‘wholesome education for all’ prevail and coincide, the selfish-interests of *homo-economicus* are overridden and curtailed through the enforcement of democratic and just laws. It is therefore quintessential that *homo-politicus* his educational refinement acumen and integrity foremostly exhibit care for the elevation of culture, manifest themselves in and as

the enhancement of the inner-*politeia*—the *kallipolis*—of *homo-educandus*. Notwithstanding, ‘political man’ however rich his talents may be stands incapable of accomplishing such a fit if his proficiency is not steeped-in philosophical *paideia*, enhanced evermore by its transcendent aim, which here translates to being the bearer of *kosmic* consciousness and identity.

In the aftermath of Socratic and Platonic philosophy, the transcendent aim of ancient Greek pedagogy accentuated the self-cultivation of *arête* as the paragon of cultural force, for it was well understood that virtue bears the steadfast power of refinement for both the individual and the *politeia*. Indisputably, the pedagogical aim of our most interesting epoch is not to return to Greek *paideia* however, it would be most enlightening to apprehend the narrative of its humanistic aim for realizing the complete, comprehensive and luminous education of the self-cultivated person. In a later section, titled “Greek philosophical *paideia*: the transcendent narrative and aim of the *kosmic* whole”, the radiant storyline of the illumined person of classical antiquity will be further elucidated. Straightaway we turn to an inquiry regarding the destructive influences of ‘economic-man’ on culture and education today.

***Homo-economicus* at the root of the global crisis in culture and education today**

In our times the subversive monetary interests of *homo-economicus* have attained unmatched global proportions infiltrating every domain of culture society and education. The notorious hallmark of the 21st century which is at hand and here to stay constitutes the unlimited flow of capital and goods across the globe in an interconnected web of financial institutions and world-markets, facilitated by the ever-continuing algorithmic leap in scientific and technological advancements in all fields of human life and inquiry. During every day and whilst we sleep at night the free market enables the movement of amounts of money in the trillions and in all currencies, across a globalized network of exchange that knows no national boundaries nor has any limits.

Most interestingly, aside from surpassing by far the monitoring of nation-states, the worldwide financial conglomerate comprises the emerging paradigm of a new globalized economic order at the beck and call of a few elite, whose vested interests agendas and geopolitical aims are devoid of moral value. Small minorities of privileged humans that amount to approximately 3% of planetary population have essentially overpowered global economy, accentuating the disintegration of natural ecology human culture and civilization. These few elite cares little about the intrinsic value of education and human freedom, however, care much about the maximization of profit *via* the commoditization of everything, including humans and their education: culture, history, *ethos*, *bios politikos*, science, art and creative acumen.²⁶

²⁶ Heidegger makes this point quite clearly. He claims that enframing (*Gestell*) in modernity stands for the technological mode of revealing which orders knowledge, information, things, thinking, friendship, nature, the sacred, and ultimately people themselves as available resources for the purposes of maximal profit, exploitation and other finite ends. Cf. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Thomson points out that for Heidegger “teaching” is equivocal to “educating-against-education” which constitutes a form of original pedagogy that entails the *praxis* of educating against normalizing pedagogy in the sense of an economically oriented and technologically constituted *Bildung*. Cf. Thomson, “Heidegger on Ontological Education, or How We Become What We Are”, 137. Further, Thomson contends that nowadays “if pressed students will ultimately ‘justify’ even their education itself as a means to making more money [...]” or “through some other equally empty optimization imperative” (ibid.). Continuing, he clarifies that it is precisely for this reason that Heidegger considers the modern university to be the cave of shadows in Plato’s allegory, thus conceives the vocation of the enlightened teacher as returning to the cave in order to educate-against-education. In this regard, Michaelides points out that Heidegger, who in his later lectures (cf. *What is Called Thinking?*) explicitly addresses the meaning of authentic teaching and learning, contends “that genuine learning happens only by uprooting and unlearning that which traditional teaching prescribes and dictates” (8). Cf. Michaelides, “Heidegger on Teaching and Learning in Modernity”, 153. Michaelides goes on to say that the rudiments of Heidegger’s ontology of education entail, “the deconstructive process of unlearning” as “the only possibility of true (*alēthēs*) learning”. Hence, at all turns

As such, the unprecedented crisis of culture and the concomitant perilous state of education in our post-millennial age has reached epic proportions. This, precisely because the unrestrained selfish interests of *homo-economicus* are on an outlandish, culturally unbound, totalitarian spree of self-aggrandizement that encumbers or else outrightly subverts all spiritually-enriching activity. A brief survey of the economic motivations underlying the techno-way-of-life incorporated in culture and education today as propagated by the global dynamics of corporate capital, is enough to demonstrate the depreciated state of present pedagogical systems of teaching and learning.²⁷ More than any other epoch in history, the vested interests of corporate capital foremostly determine educational policy-making, steering the scope methods and aim of pedagogical narratives down the road of financial profitability. To substantiate the ways ‘economics’ mostly determines the direction and scope of ‘education’, and how the last few decades the latter has primarily become a category of the former, one need not look farther than the 1996 *Directorates Generales* of the European Commission, titled *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society*, which straightforwardly asserts that we should no longer concern ourselves with commonsensical questions such as ‘the aims of pedagogy’, since the uncontended purpose and aim of education is to serve the economy.²⁸

Adding to this, stands O’Hear’s observation that even in the “most advanced liberal democracies of today, it is taken for granted that politicians will actually run the systems of education they see themselves as funding, and run them in a way that emphasizes their own projects of utilitarian outcomes and social engineering”.²⁹ Hence, in the service of headlong politics and economic progressivism with its communication technologies, today’s liberal education has mostly rendered pedagogy equivocal to overspecialized disciplinary training because it purports to guarantee social and financial success to the individual, as well as social cohesion and economic affluence to the state, but the most certain outcome is that it makes the global economic elite richer. Education today ultimately serves the global economy. By singularly devoting itself to the production and consumption of knowledge at the service of the politics of

Heidegger contests, combats and seeks to debunk the metaphysical mold of education which grounds the pedagogical practices of occidental education. He maintains that real and concrete teaching induces *aporetic* thinking through presence and direct encounter; however in modernity, the embedded-ness of pedagogy in technicality has disregarded the depth of genuine thought, it has altogether nullified the arising of *aporia* and of genuine pedagogical encounter (156).

²⁷ Evidently, the vested economic interests of corporate capital strongly influence and often steer the trajectory of both cultural and educational pathways of teaching and learning. For instance, Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Samsung, and Apple, are only but a few of the host of companies heavily invested in the cultural and educational techno-way-of-life. One need only point out that the youth are foremostly culturally informed and educated independently *qua* global networks, receiving much of their informal perhaps also formal schooling influence vis-à-vis mobile and internet information technologies. The article titled, “The Impact of Mobile Technology on our Children” of the University at Albany *News Center-The World Within Reach*, is illuminating: “Americans spend a startling amount of time on [...] smart phones and mobile devices. According to emarketer, U.S. adults will spend about more than four hours per day using apps or surfing the web from a mobile device in 2017”. But above all, “the number rises as the population segment gets younger: The 18-to-24 demographic spends significantly more time on their devices than older adults”. It is then by no surprise that recently a plethora of literature has appeared discussing ways to position educators to implement and employ mobilization as a means of enhancing student centered pedagogical practice. For instance, see: Mlotshwa, and Giannakopoulos, “The Impact of Mobile Technology in Education”; and Zane L. Berge, Lin Muilenburg, (eds.), *Handbook of Mobile Learning*.

²⁸ European Commission, *Directorates Generales* xxvii & v, *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society*. Cf. Standish, “The Nature and Purposes of Education”, 221. Of course, many paradoxes emerge with any statement such as: ‘the sole aim of education is to serve the economy’. For one thing it does not clarify: Which education? What kind of education? : Whose economy and education? At the end of the day, the structural undercurrents of pedagogical systems are increasingly demarcated and designed beyond national or European control by the monetary dynamics and subtleties of the globalized technological way of life, paradoxically however education today is destined by the global value of money to define the nation’s financial as well as cultural success.

²⁹ O’Hear, “Education and the Modern State”, 331.

utility, it has become technically rigorous primarily focused “on vocational preparation and the general needs of society and profession, conforming thus to the currents of market dynamics, culturally conditioned pedagogical trends, national and international economic needs or other extraneous forces to the educational process”.³⁰

In addition, education in modernity foremostly provides objectifiable disciplinary knowledge of measurable and tested results, which give rise to social and scientific laws and theories chiefly divorced from insight into the everyday experience. This very separation of knowledge from the human *bios* exceedingly keeps driving education down the road of the relentless craving of utility, compelling it to accept novelty innovation technology luxury image thrill and spectacle as pedagogical trophies. In this regard, despite the many benefits technology brings to the pedagogical process, the praxis of techno-based pedagogy inculcates in students from a young age the desire to acquire innovative and expensive technological trophies.³¹ Moreover, since education promises to guarantee a well-paying job it ends becoming the sure means enabling utilitarian acquisitions, hence; its scope is flattened, reduced to assuring economic success. In other words, the scope of education becomes materialist, utilitarian, fixed and finite. Coerced and driven by corporate capital, education has turned into the means that secures for the youth the acquisition of luxurious technologies that project a delusory image of power, which purports to assure personal gratification and social success. On this account, present pedagogical systems are entrenched in an opportunistic, entrepreneurial consumerist and industrialist mentality towards learning which, in the name of politics and the economy, enables an ontologically empty incoherent and shuttered, relentless estranged and divisive, fearing restless and despairing, conflicted antagonistic tyrannical and clinging state of mind, devoid of real knowledge and existential insight.³²

Present day universities exemplify well the unparalleled change in the aims of education witnessed in our era. They blindfoldedly follow the tracks of the modernist fragmentation of society and culture as instituted by present-day global economic needs, trends and demands, in accordance to the ebb and flow of economic crises and financial metastases. In effect, in order to survive the onslaught of the modernist global economic agenda, universities have adopted the inner workings of industrial corporate complexes consequently university education, has been irrevocably restructured to serve the systemic machinery of industry and commerce. Moreover, subjugated to the progressivism of science and technologies, universities have become entirely dependent-on external sources of funding therefore succeed only if in partnership with industry. Appended thus to the worlds of business entrepreneurship commerce and the different professions, it is no surprise they end up serving the economic demands of a consumerist society and the workforce; and accordingly have become increasingly administrative and bureaucratic.

Most importantly, since today’s computer-generated global society has established the university as center for the exponential growth of empirically provable certain and quantifiable scientific knowledge, it has pushed over the edge the already marginalized fields of education the humanities and social sciences, which in order to assure their survival emulate the positivistic method of the physical and natural sciences of certain results; for instance, follow fashionable assessment methods stemming from technical innovations such as calculative statistical analyses of factual and probable outcomes, that often slant theories to fit facts or vice versa; and again, for the sake of knowledge-production often pay undue

³⁰ Michaelides “Heidegger on Teaching and Learning in Modernity”, 157.

³¹ Postman (*The End of Education*) finds that schooling teaches youth the bastion of consumerism, that “goodness inheres in those who buy things; evil in those who do not [. . .] you are what you accumulate” (33); and concurrently, pedagogy inculcates the techno-virtual realities it nowadays venerates by enthusiastically advocating in “a cheery, gee-whiz tone” of illusoriness, “the prophecies” that technology provides the unlimited bastion of future-hope (39). But in reality, schooling bluntly pushes the students from an early age into technologically oriented narratives of virtual unreality.

³² According to Postman, “[...] public education does not serve a public. It creates a public” (17). And again: “To the young, schooling seems relentless, but we know it is not. What is relentless is our education, which, for good or ill, gives us no rest [...] it mostly teaches hopelessness. But not always. Politics is also a great educator. Mostly, it teaches, I am afraid, cynicism. But not always. Television is a great educator as well. Mostly it teaches consumerism. But not always” (ix).

emphasis on the pedagogical novelty of case-study scenarios, mostly overgeneralizing their results. In this sense, it has become fashionable for pedagogy as well as the social and humanistic sciences today, to be ardently devoted to the production of quantifiable theory which principally serves the areas of quasi scientific inquiry and the economy. Therefore, they have sacrificed on the altar of gaining more prestige and funding all sense of a unified historical and cultural past, or any continuity of disciplinary tradition. In other words, the history of the humanities and social sciences as well as the history of education have been abridged and superseded by the history of science. Hence, the humanities have become less human and the social sciences less social; as for university education it has become less coherent. Universities have foremostly become loci for the production of so-called positive scientific knowledge, but essentially constitute a nexus of sites driven and pushed by the machinery of political industrial and marketable mechanisms of social and economic engineering.

Thus, university professors and students are often stupendously forced to follow the agendas of institutional expansionism, that compels them into a distantiated mode of teaching and learning;³³ and, therefore, are increasingly reduced to disembodied specialized professionals, directed towards possessing citable research foremostly valued for its ability to draw-in funds as well as raise the ranking rates and commercial standing of the university. For this reason, emphasis on teaching in modernity is withering and the eclipse of real teachers, along with the deterioration of authentic teacher-student relationships is at hand.³⁴

Furthermore, since institutions of higher learning have increasingly conformed to the demands of mass education and the computer-generated culture many professors and students are incorporated; effectively manipulated by university demands into becoming partially dehumanized mechanisms of production, indeed consumers of plump cultural data that cipher and then synthesize decontextualized bits of salable scientific information. The university society of teaching and learning seems, therefore, to unreservedly employ or produce a growing number of specialized ‘automatons’ with little or no moral reservations; not far from androids as it were, hosts of marketable scientific learning ready to do the job, to disseminate lifeless and disorienting ahistorical narratives that feed the rapacious economic needs of the global landscape and the surface economy of technical knowledge.³⁵

³³ For instance, Blake *et al* observe (*Education in an Age of Nihilism*), that “the enterprise of lifelong learning”—but the same stands for ‘distance learning’ education—is on one hand, a form of pedagogy that evinces positive outcomes as it “urges us to take responsibility for our own development”. On the other hand however, both methods—lifelong and distance learning—are derivatives of ‘Education in the Age of Nihilism’ because in the society of learning they “have turned out to mean accreditation, the accumulation and validation of skills. [...] something we have rather than something we are” (66). Now, regarding ‘distance learning’ it is here to stay and surely in the future, will undergo many transformations in regard to the application of its scope and methodology. However, it is imperative in some way to bring the ‘distant teacher’ back into an embodied presence for as it stands, s/he has been turned into a virtual disembodied consciousness more-so one that bears the hunch of the ‘big brother syndrome’; therefore, s/he is destined to interface as an ‘absent-presence’ essentially an abstract authority, a curriculum architect that foremostly takes-on the overarching role of a bird’s-eye-view ‘observatory advisor’.

³⁴ For instance, Heidegger (in “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth”), points out that pedagogy today suffers from the eclipse of authentic teachers. He goes on to say that in Plato, authentic teacher-student relationships are established through pedagogical encounters over prolonged periods of time. This, because in Plato’s mind “real education” like genuine teachers, “lays hand on the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it” (167). Of course, this does not imply that we ought to return to Plato’s pedagogical methods, however, it is most fruitful to become exceedingly aware of the differences in the method scope and aim of teaching and learning in the classical philosophical tradition. Thereafter, our sense of responsibility and relation with our students will attain a new order of moral significance. One thing is for sure, the focus of modern pedagogical methods needs to shift from ‘something we have’, the accumulation and validation of specialized knowledge, to ‘something we are’; only thus, is the flourishing of knowledge and science enabled to emerge from and cohere with the sphere of *ethos qua* being as a whole.

³⁵ It is important to note that this rather harsh critique does not intend to belittle the great research produced in universities and in all fields of knowledge throughout the globe. It merely seeks to point-out some of the harsh consequences of university education having lost truck of its honorable aim and coherence of purpose as a result of

By necessity then, the success of the intertwined educational and industrial conglomerate is assured in a backward and forward movement via pluralizing streams of ahistorical mass culture, subdued to the caprices of the marketplace and the dominant materialistic science of the day. In this light, the network of tertiary institutions comprising the global educational-industrial conglomerate scurry along the headlong paths of pedagogical pragmatism, essentially adventure cyclically down the rabbit hole of virtual information realities and their financial predicates hence; readily, conveniently, keep justifying as well as shielding-themselves under the most tenuous and withering intellectual panoply of utilitarian idealism.

Universities no longer gather-up organize and disseminate a unified and coherent view of life through an extensive and relational understanding of the various fields of knowledge; they are mostly incapable of inspiring the student body and there is no greatness of aim, no comprehensive culture of learning in all its depth and complexity. Most importantly, knowledge equivocated with scientific certainty has been totally divorced from moral value³⁶ which is banefully relativized to an opinion, subjective view, preference, inclination or private emotive sensibility. The eclipse of moral knowledge obscures teaching and learning in our universities, highpoints the decline of genuine philosophical thinking.

To the detriment of university education itself, *philosophia* today is considered paradisiacal and marginalized almost to the point of extinction. Ever since Plato and past Kant's Copernican revolution, *philosophia* constituted as it were the central sun of the academy, the *axis mundi* of the university around which all other disciplines revolved. Philosophical activity foremostly established the ontological sphere of learning destined to examine the criteria of every field and domain of knowledge, and, above all, inaugurated the highest *ethos* as bedrock and overarching measure of every epistemological or metaphysical inquiry.

However, in our most ambivalent day and age, the appellation *philosophos* no longer carries with it the realization of dauntless virtue issuing forth from practical and contemplative wisdom. Rather paradoxically, *philosophos*, which also defines the academic study of philosophy, designates the person or discipline that produces sterile outdated theoretical and idealistic output devoid of practical value and substance. It is no surprise then, that in the volatile global environment of our times, we are witnessing the breakdown of noble ideas in education through confused and often antithetical propositions of the good life.

On the contrary, Greek *paideia* established the foundation for producing the highest ideals and values of European culture and civilization. To the Athenians of classical antiquity we owe philosophy, ethics, rhetoric, the sciences, aesthetics, poetry and tragedy, democracy, the Olympic idea, as well as the universal idea of the golden mean by which truth goodness justice and beauty are ascertained. Whilst for the Greeks *paideia* constitutes the opening philosophical movement of the ongoing search for the place of the human within the *kosmic* whole along the pathways of *alētheia logos* and *dialogos*, the modernist project of education seems to bear no philosophical backbone, save the utilitarian movement of feeding the needs and demands of the industrial conglomerate: down the bottomless pit of the economic hole, created by the global economic rises crises and metastases.

Postman and the Necessity for a Transcendent Aim in Modern Education

Postman finds that the young have lost interest in schooling which in modernity serves the limited values and restricted narratives of Economic Utility, Consumership, and Technology. In this sense, a limited narrative -the same can be said for a limited value or narrow ideal-, restricts the self in that it promises to deliver what it cannot. It is similar to a pseudo-ideal which does not bear the largesse of hope encouraging

adopting the global aims of corporate capital. Sadly enough, education today has been implicitly reduced to that variety of specialized knowledge acquisition that will sustain and forward global economic interests.

³⁶ Postman observes that education today cannot inspire for it lacks purposeful moral narratives; it therefore can no longer instill "certain near-universal themes and principles—for example, family honor, restraint, social responsibility, humility, and empathy for the outcast" (*The End of Education*, 15).

one to strive towards the really real; but instead, creates intractable abridgment by enlarging the discrepancy between the real and the unreal. For example, Postman points to the senseless narrative that pays homage to the “passionless [...], cold and severe” value of Economic Utility that parents and teachers often, pedantically utilize to declare: “If you will pay attention in school, and do your homework, and score well on tests, and behave yourself, you will be rewarded with a well-paying job when you are done”.³⁷ He also points to the meaningless narrative of Consumerism that so to speak, issues forth the ridiculous claim: “whoever finishes with the most toys wins”.³⁸ Accordingly, schooling is overrun by the stubborn insistence of constricted and banal narratives that point toward fixed-end plausibilities, obfuscating the great questions and metaphysical concerns life *in se* poses – questions and concerns that Postman feels all educators ought to be grappling with.

But be as it may, many intelligent students see through the delimited aims, the heartless purposeless futile and free-less ideals and way of life that the cloistered pedagogical structure, with its overarching societal systems of utility seeks to draw them-in and entrap them. In their eyes, pedagogy obstinately holds the potential of becoming dangerous; it could possibly drive them down the perilous and empty road of desperateness, arousing emotions of helplessness worthlessness and diminishment of self-, feelings of remorse they evidently recognize manifesting in peers. For this reason, Postman ascertains that the extant pedagogical structure distantiates many bright students, belittles their intelligence delineating them separatists.

Such deficiencies in pedagogical practice drive Postman to acknowledge with Havel whom he cites, that the educational system today faces “a crisis in narrative”; it is incapable of advancing “an elementary sense of justice, the ability to see things as others do a sense of transcendental responsibility, archetypal wisdom, good taste, courage, compassion, and faith”.³⁹ Most importantly, Postman contends that transcendent narratives infuse education with a purposeful aim. In this light, he claims that it is precisely the absence of a transcendent purpose that seems to steer students to disillusionment, alienation, estrangement, meaninglessness, and lack of faith, even worse to dropping-out or suicide. Moreover, it is the general lack of worthy and inspiring aims in education that emboldens the various social forms of nihilism such as “the rise in the West of skinheads”, who adopt Nazi symbols identifying with racist nationalist or ethnic programs of the extreme right; or bolsters the emerging fascist gurus in Russia who are popular in that they promise “the masses a future more fully articulated than a conversion to a market economy”.⁴⁰

In addition, Postman points out that the almost worldwide “return to ‘tribalism’, which signifies “a search to recover a source of transcendent identity and values”, often leads to separatism as well as nihilism.⁴¹ Its general appeal is that it summons the youth to alternative hopeful futures that will imbue their world with meaning; but in the process, steers the poignant quest for origins outside of pedagogical systems, and in so doing, discredits and rejects every possible virtue real education may indeed bestow. Hence, Postman maintains that the educational system must necessarily advance new and grand ideals, transcendent narratives that aim to help guide the young to recognize the purposefulness of learning. Worthy transcendent aims will certainly imbue pedagogy with hopeful renewed and inspiring significance, hence establish schooling as “the central institution through which the young may find reasons for continuing to educate themselves”.⁴² Postman contends that what is at stake here concerns the eclipse of genuine education as a whole. As such, schooling must urgently be infused with a transcendent purpose that will inspire students with reasons for persistent and continued learning. It is imperative to understand, he writes, that “without a transcendent and honorable purpose schooling must reach its finish”.⁴³ It has lost its original *raison d'être*.

³⁷ Postman, *The End of Education*, 27.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁹ Havel, V., *Prognosis* 16, no. 3, (August 6, 1993), 4; as cited in Postman, *The End of Education*, 23-24.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴² *Ibid.*, x-xi.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

In this sense, Postman highly affirms the “transcendent, spiritual idea which gives purpose and clarity to learning” often found at the core of some religious-oriented schools. For “even the skeptics and nonbelievers know why they are there, what they are supposed to be learning, and why they are resistant to it. Some also know why they should leave”.⁴⁴ On the other hand, however, he sidesteps the transcendent narratives established in “the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Koran, the Bhagavad Gita”, finding them restrictive to the diverse student populace and the general purpose of schooling.⁴⁵ But yet again, he contends that the prominent study of the variety of transcendent narratives in public schools is a good thing in that it advances cultural pluralism; not to be confused with multiculturalism, which essentially constitutes another form of separatism.⁴⁶

Mostly, Postman seeks to redefine the value of schooling by introducing a wonderful set of transcendent ideals that are neutral in that they aim toward the direction of overcoming self-centered individualism. For instance, he suggests that education must pursue knowledge which promotes ways: that make us globally conscious, caretakers of spaceship earth; that recognize we humans are flawed but correctable; that advance personal responsibility making us less dogmatic about absolute claims to knowledge; that enable us to approach questions regarding our place and direction with awe and wonderment; that allow us to pursue learning beyond specialized confinements; that embrace cultural diversity and the interdependence of perspectives; that forward moral knowledge and cooperation; that recognize how language impacts our thinking and creates reality.⁴⁷

Here, however, a critical perspective is unavoidable. Postman’s vision of transcendent ideals that aim to advance the value of schooling consists of a set of prescriptive directives, which purport to initiate reform and redefine a mal-constituted pedagogical structure. However, his proposed directives so to speak, seek to prescribe a remedy to heal the deep-seated lesions of an ill-disposed wounded and ailing educational system, without first attending to the wounds. Put otherwise, Postman institutes by fiat a transcendent narrative without first guiding the student toward personally experiencing the path of transcendence. In the final analysis, it is precisely a taste of transformation *qua* transcendence itself that will actually heal inspire guide and direct students toward purposeful learning and the revaluation of schooling.

Transcendent narratives values and ideals are the corollaries that ensue as the effectual truth of already having discovered the path of transcendence. It becks the point if one begins from the cultivation of values and ideas directed toward what might seem a metaphysical abstraction, or a transcendent aim which continually eludes the student, that endlessly remains an unreachable ideal in forever discrepancy with the real. Reversely, to guide students themselves to unveil wholeness *qua* wholeness as such is what initiates the questioning concerning the nature of the transcendent whole and our relation to it, and what inspires towards the purposeful revaluation and appropriation of the meaning of wholesome learning. Values and ideas in and of themselves cannot lead students to an understanding of transcendence or to a comprehension of the cultural diversity of transcendent perspectives; neither do they bear the requisite power to guide students to apprehend or, more-so, to create the culture of transcendence. Besides, both the mere cultivation of values and the striving to reach ideals, lack the indispensable power to overturn the prevailing economically oriented cultural force and shrewd politic of global dynamics.

Needless to say, there is a backward and forward dialogue between values issuing forth directly from the transcendent whole, and the recurrent cultivation of these values or ideals with an aim toward further establishing the transcendent within oneself. However, there is a catch: the transcendent as such has to first be ‘suffered’ and ‘savored’. Henceforth, it is the responsibility of the pedagogical system at all levels

⁴⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7 ff.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 50 ff. Postman contends that the narrative of cultural pluralism “celebrates the struggles and achievements of nonwhite people as part of the story of humankind” (53), whereas, ‘multiculturalism’ forwards the narrative that “goodness inheres in nonwhites, especially those who have been victims of ‘white hegemony’” (52). It is important to note that Postman has been severely criticized for insensitivity and one-sidedness in his perception of ‘multiculturalism’.

⁴⁷ Ibid., cf. 93-193.

of schooling to unceasingly prepare and guide students—especially from a young age—to an existential appropriation of the transcendent. This way, the narrative of transcendence will bear purposeful meaning and its aim will be honored and established not as value or ideal rather as cultural pedagogical force.⁴⁸

After all, it is the transcendent itself that firstly inspires, directs and steers toward genuine learning; it heals restores as well as issues forth being *in se*, and all transcendent narratives, aims ideas and values to be realized and cultivated by the individual human being. It is precisely the ontological turn that first initiates and defines the transcendent aim of education that Postman's philosophy of education lacks. Conversely, it is this very ontological opening of the *kosmic* whole its transcendent intelligence which the philosophical *paideia* of the Greeks of classical antiquity unveiled and fully articulated.

But be as it may, Postman is absolutely right about the necessity for a transcendent aim in modern education and identifies well the problem of modernity as a culture of 'having and not of being'. Moreover, the transcendent ideals he proposes are fruitful and should be given serious consideration. They are indeed insightful and beneficial in initiating reform to the extremely problematic incomplete and deficient pedagogical system of modernity. To recognize our flawed human nature and the flaws in our knowledge culture and education as well as the need to reform by making amends is already the beginning of *dialogos* (genuine dialogue) with the transcendent (being-itself, totality in and as *alētheia*).⁴⁹ Nevertheless, one ought to always bear in mind that as first step reform is good; in and of itself however, reform is partial never enough, neither adequate nor complete. That is, reform may begin redefining the educational system at best it initiates the process of completion; but, total and complete transformation is what totality *in se* demands from us *per se*.

Greek philosophical *paideia*: the transcendent narrative and aim of the *kosmic* whole

The pedagogical force and impetus of classical Greek culture giving way to philosophical *paideia*, envisioned a transcendent aim outside of economic criteria, dogmatic religious or prescriptive pedagogical directives and positions. The naturalist philosophers of Miletus (sixth century BCE) initiated the beginnings of the occidental philosophical tradition. The Ionian materialists as they were alternatively called first inquired into the originating nature of the all-unifying *kosmic* whole, positing a natural element as the governing principle of *kosmic* reality: Thales claimed it was water (*hydōr*), Anaximander the boundless infinite substance (*āpeiron*), and Anaximenes air (*aēr*).

The way nature *as* totality disclosed itself to the speculative thinking of these first philosophers was not yet distantiated from natural phenomena, consequently they ended postulating a natural element or substance to be the first principle of *kosmic* totality—even Anaximander's *āpeiron* was thought in material terms an elemental substance. Perhaps along these lay lines, highlighting the deep connectedness of the early philosophers to the phenomena of nature, Emerson the truly enlightened philhellene poet exclaims: "The Greek had, it seems, the same fellow beings as mine. The sun and moon, the water and fire, met his heart precisely as they met mine".⁵⁰

Regardless of having speculated material stuffs as the originating natural principle beyond the multiplicity of phenomena, the Ionian thinkers did indeed inquire into the most pertinent ontological and metaphysical question in the entire history of philosophical *paideia*: what is the whole *in se*? This, in and of itself evinces that they bore direct experience of the transcendent whole. To inquire concerning the nature of something already means to be under its originating sway and grasp. The first philosophers were under the grasp of nature as a whole which enabled them to inwardly question its standing origin and source.

⁴⁸ Perhaps what we need is to create the culture of transcendence and not to imbue education with transcendent narratives. Narratives seem to constitute the effectual truth of pre-existing cultural dynamics. In the case at hand, transcendent narratives will naturally ensue from the dynamics of the creation of a culture of transcendence.

⁴⁹ To labor the obvious: our flawed human nature will always remain flawed. That is, when we address and overcome flaws new ones arise from the depths of the unconscious.

⁵⁰ Emerson, *Selected Essays*, 164.

The Ionian thinkers were indeed the first to make the ontological turn-inward raising thought to hithermost point inquiring how it ultimately stands with totality, thence rightly earned the appellation of first philosopher-scientists – in the ancient meaning of the terms *philosophos-epistēmōn*. On the other side of the spectrum, however, stand the philosophers who apprehended in uttermost lucidity the ultimate principle of the *kosmic* whole in greater exalted measure not merely in naturalist material terms rather as *spiritual stuff*, or better, as unconditional amplitude, inner spiritual vastness of soul or self, fullness in expanse; all-pervading and unifying intelligence: thus Pythagoras, claimed totality manifested as number and harmony; Parmenides as being itself (*eōn*) and immutable well-rounded truth (*alētheia*); Heraclitus as *logos* and ever-changing spiritual fire (*pyr*); Empedocles as the primordial sphere (*Sphaĩros*) composed of two primal forces Love (*Philōtis*) and Strife (*Neikos*); Socrates as *daimōnion*, knowledgeable ignorance, virtue *ethos* and dialogue; Plato as unqualified *eros* for the heavenly ideas and dialectical ascend to the form of the Good (*to Kalón kai Agathón*); and Aristotle as science and ethics, practical and contemplative wisdom, as well as the Prime immovable mover: *prōton akínēton kinoún* of immortal *Nous* (Mind; *Intellectus*): *actus purus*, pure potentiality –*energeia*– thought-thinking-itself: Being *qua* Being.

The axiomatic positioning of the first philosophers at the turning point of culture, wherein the dawn of *logos* emerges out of *mythos* makes their insight all the more pertinent evinces the magnanimity of their autonomy as thinkers, the grandeur of their intellectual independence and freedom from preexisting cultural and religious structures of authority. Indeed, for the first time in the history of occidental thinking the consideration of one-unifying principle at the root of the multiple, throws the limits of the world its beings mythical imaginaries and all extant knowledge into question. At the interlining crossroads of culture where *mythos* and phenomena meet, the birth and triumph of *logos* supersede the mythical by rising to the one source of the all, being as such.

In accord with archaic thinking, the whole indeed discloses itself in every part and every part may perhaps unconceal the whole. But that any part or principle may actually constitute the ultimate nature of reality, the first principle (*prōte archē*) and origin of all phenomena, does not constitute novelty in thinking nor discovery but revolutionary transformation in perspective and way of life; the transcendence and transmutation of previous conditions customs culture and reality as a whole is at hand.

Karl Jaspers observes the import of these revolutionary times in the entire history of thinking:

What is new about this age [...] is that man becomes aware of Being as a whole, of himself and his limitations. He experiences the terror of the world and his own powerlessness. He asks radical questions. Face to face with the void he strives for liberation and redemption. By consciously recognizing his limits he sets himself the highest goals. He experiences absoluteness in the depth of his selfhood and in the lucidity of transcendence. [...] The Mythical Age, with its tranquility and self-evidence, was at the end [...]. For the first time philosophers appeared. Human beings dared rely on themselves as individuals. [...] Man proved capable of contrasting himself inwardly with the entire universe. He discovered within himself the origin from which to raise himself above his own self and the world. In speculative thought he lifts himself up toward Being itself [...], apprehended without duality in the disappearance of the subject and object.⁵¹

Most acutely, the tireless philosophers of old the ever youthful ancient spirits of *sophrosyne*–the *phronimoi*–unreservedly discovered and kept pointing to the ultimate aim be-ing *all in all*: the uncovering of extraordinary human accomplishment and ordinary fulfillment of *kosmic* identity for the benefit of others and the whole as such.

It lies beyond the present scope to elucidate the varying philosophical insights perspectives and dispositions of these first thinkers of classical antiquity. It suffices to say that their *paideia* unveiled a complete metaphysics of soul or selfhood exposing its weaknesses strengths and potentials, the passions it

⁵¹ Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, 3.

ought to overcome, the dangers and pitfalls it must avoid, the *kathartik* processes it need undergo to achieve the developmental stages along the way to spiritual development.⁵² Indeed, the first Greek philosophers were adepts at guiding the soul of their students as well as the soul of their culture, influencing greatly the life of *bios politikos*.

Now, regarding the transcendent aim of Greek antiquity, the cultural genius of classical philosophical education perennially deliberates the soul of the accomplished philosopher—his *paideia*—like the pure shining of the brightest star. His immortal spirit best abiding in excellence bespeaks of peerless measure and supreme harmony, exhibits evermore the highest purest moral caliber unveiling self-knowledge as precious *kosmic* gem. But the most extraordinary triumph of Greek *paideia* is the unrivaled ordinariness of the accomplished one—the *philosophos* never considers his self-wise for wisdom belongs to unfathomable totality.

Thus, Socrates first to unravel ‘knowledgeable ignorance’ into historical self-consciousness rightly earned the appellation father of philosophy. Though the oracle of the god considered him wise beyond measure, he himself considered “his wisdom worthless” (*Apology* 23b3): worth “little or nothing” (23b1). So he set upon his notorious self-interrogations of all sorts of people in order to determine as to whether the oracle at Delphi was right. Firstly, he began testing those thought to be wise. However, after having tested many so-called experts in wisdom such as sophists, politicians, poets, and so on, he finally decided that he is perhaps a little wiser than those who are considered wise because, indeed, he knows that he is not wise when in effect they think themselves wise (21d3-7). Moreover, the sage-philosopher of old effectively taught that expert knowledge has little or nothing to do with real wisdom. In addition, Socrates understood that the little wisdom he had perhaps earned could only be termed human wisdom. Accordingly, real wisdom belongs to the incomprehensible god.⁵³ Effectually, his total disavowal of being the bearer of divine understanding and wisdom teaches posterity everything about the nature of knowledge and virtue, eternally points to the transcendent aim of all teaching and learning: excellence consists in unceasingly perfecting knowledge—*paideia* and *politeia*: soul and *kosmos*.

If you make no claim to knowledge Socrates seems to say-, if paradoxically, ‘you know that you do not know’-, then you are always ready to learn; and though learning entails the process of unlearning, it concurrently initiates the processes of appropriating the most radical mystery of learning—how to ‘learn learning’: *dia bíou mathēsis* (lifelong-learning); that is one learns to constantly inquire: ‘how does it stand with learning as a whole?’ Emerson seems to be speaking of Socratic wisdom when he says: “[...] every action admits of being undone. Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning: that there is always another dawn risen on midnoon, and under every deep a lower deep opens”.⁵⁴

Emerson who admirably recognized the grandeur of Greek philosophical *paideia*, and was greatly schooled in Platonic and Neoplatonic teaching writes concerning the immensity of soul-expanse:

The soul gives itself alone, original and pure, to the Lonely, Original and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads and speaks through it. Then is it glad, young and nimble. It is not wise, but it sees through all things. It is not called religious, but it is innocent. It calls the light its own, and feels that the grass grows and the stone falls by a law inferior to, and dependent on, its nature. Behold, it saith, I am born into the great, the universal mind. [...] Thus reverting the soul, and learning, as the ancient said, ‘its beauty is immense’, and man will come to see that the world is the perennial miracle which the soul worketh, and be less astonished at particular wonders; he will

⁵² Modern education is precisely lacking in the articulation of a well-defined developmental typology of the self that brings to the light of day the self’s transcendent sojourn; clarifying thus the transformative questions to be asked, the stages of ascend to greater lucidity of being and *nous* (mind), and the transcendent aim of encountering totality as such.

⁵³ Cf. Michaelides, “Socratic ignorance and *aporia*: what the wisdom of the god might be”.

⁵⁴ Emerson, *Selected Essays*, 225.

learn that there is no profane history; that all history is sacred; that the universe is represented in an atom, in a moment of time [...] he will live with a divine unity.⁵⁵

In the final analysis, knowledge of soul and the perfection of the *politeia* is the transcendent narrative of classical philosophical *paideia*, tantamounts to self-knowledge *qua* wisdom, which, in effect, surpasses words and all intelligibility. According to Plato, it is the philosopher's responsibility to lead his willing student to a direct encounter with the vastness of the soul. Plato tells us that through long personal encounter born through vestiges of time, the *educator* patiently guides the *educandus* until he reaches the order of learning beyond the mind: that is the *epistème* (*scientia*; knowledge) of *philosophia*. Continuing, Plato maintains that he himself never composed or shall ever compose a work concerning the immensity of transcendent knowledge that *philosophia* potentiates conceals and harbors—

[...] for there is no way of putting this knowledge in words like other sciences (*mathemata*); but after long-continued intercourse [study] between teacher and student, in joint pursuit of the subject, suddenly, like light flashing forth when fire is kindled [like a blaze kindled by a leaping spark], it is generated in the soul and straightaway becomes self-sustaining [nourishes-itself].⁵⁶

Jaspers' Axial Age and the direction of Greek *paideia qua humanitas-artes-scientia et veritas*

Jaspers as quoted above speaks not only of the accomplishment of the Greek philosophers but of the Axial Age of civilization which initiated critical changes in the dynamics of global culture; its apex culminated around 500 BCE though the spiritual fermentation of the process began around 800, and ended approximately 200 BCE. Jaspers writes:

The most extraordinary events are concentrated in this period. Confucius and Lao-tse were living in China, all the schools of Chinese philosophy came into being [...]; India produced the Upanishads and Buddha, and, like China, run the gamut of philosophical possibilities [...]; in Iran Zarathustra taught; in Palestine the prophets made their appearance, from Elijah, by way of Isaiah and Jeremiah to Deutero-Isaiah [...]; Greece witnessed the appearance of Homer of the philosophers—Parmenides, Heraclitus and Plato—of the tragedians, of Thucydides, and of Archimides. Everything implied by these names developed these few centuries almost simultaneously in China, India, and the West, without any one of these regions knowing of the others. [...] In this age were born the fundamental categories within which we think today, and the beginnings of the world religions, by which human beings still live, were created. The step into universality was taken in every sense.⁵⁷

Jaspers' Axial Age bespeaks of the radical mystery of collective synchronicity through globally constituted space and time. Philosopher sages and religious figures from different sides of the globe and from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds spontaneously lift themselves to universal totality, issuing forth the foundational categories of our thought and the great traditions that for billions of fellow humans, still imbue their lives with the ultimate meaning of their transcendent 'narratives'. In this regard, Postman is right to observe that the meritorious study of the diversity of transcendent narratives in public schools is most fruitful and praiseworthy.

Nevertheless, there are some fundamental differences with the Greek philosophical tradition. Most curiously, it still remains the only tradition and discipline—*epistème* (*mathema*)—that never turned into a

⁵⁵ Ibid., 223-224.

⁵⁶ Plato, *Epistole Z* 341c5-d1, cf. 340-345, "Letters", Morrow G.R., (trans.), in *Plato, Complete Works*, 1634-1676; brackets indicate alternative translations.

⁵⁷ Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, 2.

religion.⁵⁸ Further, flourishing in the *polis* that first instituted democracy, classical *philosophia* ordained *dialogos* as way to fine-tune the harmonious workings of the city-state; therefore, outspread its active participation and leading influence in Athenian political life, exhibiting its critical dialectical impact in the refinement of laws and the inauguration of the culture of justice in the *politeia*. Moreover, beginning with the pre-Socratic thinkers, *philosophia* is the tradition responsible for generating the spirit of *epistème* (*scientia*); and later with Plato and more definitively with Aristotle it stands as the discipline that first established the foundational categories of science.

Undoubtedly, the establishment of the foundational categories of science and thought bears an inner ontico-metaphysical apprehension of the *prôte arché* of a particular *epistème* (science; discipline) in relation to the *kosmic* import of the totality of knowledge. Most importantly, the disclosure of first principles *qua* being *in se de facto* establishes the interdependent relationalities of all disciplines, fields and domains of knowledge, and at once bestows *ethos* and moral excellence as the *fundamentum inconcussum* (unshaken foundation) of the epistemological appropriation of *kosmic* totality.

In this light, the intertwining of knowledge and *ethos* with the flourishing of being itself, paradigmatically, archetypally, demonstrates the excellence of *humanitas qua* the *kosmic* whole. Put otherwise, displaying *ethos* not as custom (mores; *moralia*) or mimetic habit but as foundational category of knowledge and being, the time-honored *epistème* of Greek antiquity neither constitutes science as established in modernity, nor moves along the headlong pathways of scientism. It rather opens the way to comprehend the interconnectedness and dialectical interdependence of all scientific inquiry *qua ethos*, hence, points forward in the direction of apprehending and rethinking the cultural dynamics and philosophic way of life that steered classical *paideia* to cohere to the spirit of *humanitas qua artes, scientia et veritas*.

The torch of the humanities directing science toward the path of *veritas*, bears the cultural force to bestow to the society of learning and the culture at large *eudaimonic* being *ex sapientia libertas* (out of the way of the wisdom of liberty)—firstly, by opening the way to thwart subvert and overcome the economically oriented politic of *homo-economicus*; and secondly, by advancing the spirit of *sapientia cordis* (the wisdom of the heart) that by virtue of the light of *homo-philosophicus*, best reconciles in the *politeia* the extant tensions between *homo-economicus*, *homo-politicus*, and *homo-educandus*.

It is in the spirit of Greek philosophical *paideia* and the establishment of its culture of learning that present-day western educational systems (and not only), ought to rethink and reevaluate their pedagogical practices. Further, it is fruitful to bear in mind that classical philosophical *paideia* best established that the *prima facie* interconnection between *humanitas*, *artes*, *scientia et veritas*, issues forth in both teachers and students inspiration as way of life. And again, since the Greek philosophical tradition fulfilled its consummate aim to bring inspiring transformation to the pedagogical process and to pedagogy as a whole in antiquity, influencing thus positively the history of the west, the culture of learning that the classical philosophers initiated and actualized must be thoroughly re-examined and researched.

In place of conclusion: the *kairos* of the individual and the forever-youthful Greek genius

Our epochal transition is a strange one. The emerging global landscape has already transformed our lives immensely for good and for bad, however, the strange crossroads we are now traversing are to say the least challenging, indeed revolutionary because the survival of civilization is in the balance. The world is changing at a pace hard to keep-up with, hence; foreshadows a future difficult to predict and impossible to imagine that incontestably, *vis-à-vis* the possible futural developments of social and political structures, harbors radically different challenges with many looming dangers. But concurrently our time and age holds the potential for illumination, promises offshoots of spiritual maturity and the beacon of hope.

⁵⁸ Huston Smith's authoritative study determines seven traditions as composing the so-called great religious traditions of the world: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Cf. Smith, *The World's Religions*. Indeed, the classical Greek philosophical tradition drew insights from the religions of the ancient world however it is not a religion and could never be classified as being one.

Winter most appropriately writes:

We are in the midst of a paradigm shift that is reshaping us in every level as a new and far more integrated world, slowly, but ever so surely and more than a little chaotically, struggles to come to birth. At the same time terror, misrepresentation, and prejudicial misunderstanding have infiltrated society, causing friction and fragmentation to obstruct commonsense efforts toward harmony and peace.⁵⁹

It appears that a new vision of being with a renewed transcendent aim along with a new earth and renewed humanity are in the making; and precisely this is why terror chaos and fragmentation are occurring. Darkness always resists change; raises its ugly head of gloom and doom before any prospect of paradigm shift, manifests therefore its unconscious and chaotic existence in ways that demonstrate the stubborn insistence of holding unto restrictive, deceitful old ways. Therefore, in this epoch of transitioning we must urgently confront and face-off the chaos of darkness by making radical changes in our societal and political environments. Equivocally, the maturing of time (the *kairos*) reverberates with the critical need to transform our pedagogical landscapes which essentially reflect our limited or corrupt socio-political structures of being.

Above all, the spirit of our times (*epoché*) discloses that the education of citizens must be once again steeped in philosophical and humanistic study, schooled in the kind of pedagogy that highlights the paramount importance of genuine and active participation in society and politics. Now, seems to be the *kairos* (the appropriate time) for conscious individuals to take the lead and accept the responsibility, for which they were destined; that is to realize the wisdom of the ages and ascend to the epochal challenge of our most ambivalent times, which decrees to act for the beneficence of the society of learning as a whole. It is imperative therefore for more individuals to begin honoring the uprightness of the human spirit which translates to and coheres with transcendent veracity of beingness in education. Society definitely needs proficient and accomplished individuals dedicated to realizing the purity of truth and being, highly-minded personages capable of bringing spiritual illumination to the educational process. This way, the peoples of the earth will be inspired and motivated to demand integrity in education politics and the economy. It is possible for a relatively small number of wisdom-bearers—individuals bearing *kosmic* identity and consciousness—to achieve monumental transformation. Potentially, a few realized individuals (a quite small percentage of global population), are able to shift and turn-around present epochal dynamics, steering global culture and its undercurrents toward genuine education and all-inspiring humanist learning.

The Axial Age and especially the *paideia* of the Greeks have once and for all determined that when enough individuals lift themselves to being-itself, new pedagogical visions of the appropriation of humanity art knowledge and truth are self-realized. However, it of utmost importance to remember that those vigilant individuals who seem to expediently ascend to a new vision of being-itself, are they who safeguard and advance the integrity of the human spirit by unceasingly working for the systemic transformation of the educational landscape. Moreover, today the development and expansion of the internet and other media technologies can be creatively employed in order to shift-around the global society of learning toward the advancement of genuine knowledge, and, above all, the advancement of compassion for the economically disadvantaged, those fellow humans who most desperately need and deserve wholesome education.

Indeed, now seems to be the most appropriate time for individuals to develop and unravel in a forward thrust their heroic and compassionate qualities; especially the youth who are the hope of posterity-, the torch-bearers of the new vision of a peaceful planet: the courageous ones called to initiate a new earth by creatively accentuating the renewal and elevation of education and culture as a whole.

Most importantly, when endeavoring to initiate the transformation of cultural and pedagogical practices—the visionary—the creative educator the philosopher the artist and the poet, must always in

⁵⁹ Winter, “Doing Effective Dialogue and Loving It”, 26.

accord to the decrees of vocation take heed of Pindar's cajoling, to remain grounded to the magnetic pull of the earth:

"let him [the poet] know that in this sandal he has his foot".⁶⁰

This, because visionaries are exceedingly sensitive and prone to be easily discouraged. The creative-ones therefore must unceasingly remain grounded and exhibit great patience. Visionary insight of a new paradigm necessitates the passage of time to become manifest reality. More often than not, the renewal of many generations is necessary for the transformation of pre-existing educational and cultural dynamics. Hence, when epochal transitions evince great difficulty, perhaps when the global culture and the educational system seem to be at the brink of spiritual disaster, the visionary the educator philosopher and poet must neither shroud her-self in gloom nor get disheartened. Rather in the agonistic spirit of the ancients s/he must confront and traverse the yawning void between the transcendent vision and the existent structure, because only in persisting will s/he be inwardly enabled to best strive for unqualified freedom. Thus, the visionary must constantly self-transform and re-position from within the ground of being as such.

The creative-ones ought to progressively re-member that the *ergon* (work) of liberation first begins with the archetypal courage and power of devoted individuals who excel in their fields of inquiry. Mostly, they ought to bear in mind that only gradually does the wisdom of individuals gain wider acceptance. Only when the passage of time matures does it become the wholehearted force of culture. Still more time and much patience are needed for new visionary appropriations of *alētheia* to be recognized affirmed and actualized by the generations, and by the peoples of the earth as a whole.

As Jaspers aptly points out, the period termed historical transition from an old culture of knowledge and being to the dawn of a new epoch of apprehending being-itself, consists in the remolding of old myths into new ones of greater depth and magnitude; and after all the refashioning of myths sinks into obscurity by the insurgence of new *dynámeis* and *logoi*, the old mythical reality still holds its clutches "through the continued belief of the mass of the people"; only "subsequently" is the transformed *logos* "able to gain the upper hand over wide areas".⁶¹

In and as the fullness of time—the *kairos*—alarming revolutions in the paradigm of reality happen in *toto*-, and ever-so suddenly, the remolding of the new human evinces renewed relationalities with a more informed and greatly transformed world. When new paradigms begin evolving into being, the total transmutation of historical reality and the flourishing of humanity are unavoidable. The snow ball is rolling. Surely, it is a matter of time for paradigm-change to wholeheartedly attain unbeatable global proportions.

In the final analysis, it is in times of epochal transition when danger looms from afar, approaching from above and from below, and when spiritual desolation seems at hand, that the spiritualization of the human and of culture—being *plasmatic* and resilient—is effectuated in full force. Jaspers ardently elucidates that in times of historical transition:

The unquestioned grasp on life is loosened the calm of polarities becomes the disquiet of opposites and antinomies. Man is no longer enclosed within himself. He becomes uncertain of himself and thereby open to new and boundless possibilities. He can hear and understand what no one has hitherto asked or proclaimed. The unheard-of becomes manifest. Together with his own world and self, Being becomes sensible to man but not with finality: the question remains.⁶²

⁶⁰ Pindar O. ix 27, in Sandys, *The Odes of Pindar*, "Introduction", xix; brackets added.

⁶¹ Cf. Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, 3.

⁶² Ibid.

Let us once again hear and take to-heart Pindar's, non-dogmatic, unqualified, and incomprehensible deity of poetic hope:

God [Being as a whole] can cause unsullied light to spring out of black night.
He [It] can also shroud in a dark cloud of gloom the pure light of day.⁶³

Alas! It resides to the individual to recurrently choose and evermore decide to either rise along the way of 'unsullied light', or else be pulled down towards 'the dark cloud of gloom'. The individual that chooses the peerless path of 'unsullied light', Emerson seems to whisper from eternity, is surely "[...] a person of childlike genius and inborn energy, [...] still a Greek", who "revives our love for the Muse of Hellas".⁶⁴

The time is ripe and the pervasive fulfillment of the *kairos* ubiquitously awaits the forever-youthful spirits of 'the Muse of Hellas' destined to guide us transform and revision *humanitas qua artes, scientia et veritas*. Then, freedom and order, liberty and democracy, will authentically coalesce with the matchless, primordial Greek conceptions of *paideia* and *koinōnia*: the amalgamation of *kosmos* and *economia qua philia* and *harmonia, qua philia* and *sophrosyne, dike, eunomia, isonomia*.

To rethink the virtue of classical philosophical *paideia* promotes the reconsideration of the felicity of humankind against all pernicious adversarial forces; advances *arête* spreading the spirit of *humanitas* and the elixir of wisdom far and wide. Rethinking the classical Greek spirit of philosophical transcendence ever-more empowers the torch-bearers of the youthful genius founding the generations, to establish and impart the self-cultivation of excellence in all spheres of human life and learning. In the compound spirit of *philia* and *sophia*, the philosophical *paideia* of the Greeks especially highpoints the multifaceted bestowal of genuinely flourishing science in the convergence of *ethos* and *epistēmē*: the spherical regeneration of knowledge and *kosmos* resonating with being as a whole.

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⁶³ Pindar 142 (106) Cp., *Paeon*, ix, in Sandys, *The Odes of Pindar*, 576-577; brackets added.

⁶⁴ Emerson, *Selected Essays*, 164-165.

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