



SAPERE AUDE! – The testimony of Eironeia, School of Philosophy, after seven years of life in the age of the “Economy of Knowledge” [OCSE, UE] and “Education for All” [ONU/UNESCO]

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Abstract

(1) EIRONEIA'S MISSION: REPLACING THE “SCHOLĒ” AT THE CENTER OF THE EDUCATIONAL ACTION – At the heart of the “key competencies” promoted by OCSE [DeSeCo] and UE [Lisbone 2000] there are “the practice of reflection” and “the emotional intelligence” directed toward “mental techniques” used during the school learning process. This is the ultimate sense of our action: to reopen the student’s minds to the Socratic/Cartesian dimension of dialogue and meditation (school=skolé=idleness!), which have always been the only pedagogic-therapeutic sources of (1) the opening up of really new horizons of research, and (2) the deep and lasting release of learning energies in people who are stuck and in trouble.

(2) THE HISTORICAL SITUATION: THE FIERCE INTER-NATIONAL CONFLICT – “*The dissolution of the monasteries and the development of flight travels may be considered as examples of discontinuous changes with revolutionary implications. Today something similar may be happening in education*” [OCSE 2002]. Since long time the traditional systems of education, i.e. the schools created by the nations during the 19th century, are in a deep crisis, all over the planet. Thus the much more recent international realities are mapping out routes quite in contrast with what is practised in each member state [cf. OCSE: PISA, ONU-UNESCO: EFA...]. All this gives place to voids of deep and traumatic discontinuity in the present horizon; voids that the operators must seriously take in consideration at a political and strategic level. In fact, reforming the field of education can be evaluated both very positively (= revolutionary!) and very negatively (= revolutionary!) by the historical actors to whom the non-formal educator addresses. Our example: teaching to think about a mathematical operation means promoting the slowness in performing it... and this value is intensely opposed in all national schools of OCSE.

(3) THE ASSUMPTION OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY – «*In The Castle Franz Kafka, in describing the vain efforts of the protagonist to attain his goals, tells us all the hopelessness that a person can feel facing a deaf and blind bureaucratic machine [...]. Resistances to take into consideration the findings in the reflection on the educational policies and practices are very strong, and they can discourage the best wills . [...] And yet, such difficulties must not lead us to give up. As Lao-tse puts it: “the path is the goal”*» [OCSE 2007]. This situation of historical rift often reaches heights of paroxysm that show the intrinsic limits of a purely “strategic” mentality. The Kafkaesque climate that every day those who work in this field breathe must be tackled by an essentially political and ethical propulsion. Thus the future of Education depends on the willingness of the individual to fully incarnate its absolute and irremissible values. Eironeia has been recognized (and awarded) as “social enterprise” because it testifies this kind of commitment: the only one that can bring Lao Tse’s “path” back on the tangible routes of the present history, which finally are again those of Knowledge, but only for those who dare to cover them.