

Education for and beyond the Knowledge Society: A Critical Analysis of the European Discourse on Education*

Andreas M. Kazamias – Yiannis Roussakis 

ABSTRACT

In the first part of this paper we shall examine the European Union discourse on education by focusing on significant texts e.g. the *White Paper on Education and Training* (1995), the *Green Paper on Entrepreneurship in Europe* (2003), *The Future Objectives of European Education Systems* (2001) and *Education & Training 2010* (2002).

In the second and main part of the paper we shall argue: (a) that the European discourse on education (policy talk and policy action) constructs a concept of “knowledge society” that privileges instrumental rationality, techno-scientific knowledge, and what Manuel Castells has called an “Information-Technology Epistemological Paradigm”; (b) that such “knowledge society” and the kindred “knowledge economy” make certain demands on schools and universities to provide education and training, to produce knowledge, and to form skills / competences that are believed to be instrumentally useful for employability and “sustainable economic development”; (c) that in responding to such demands, schools and universities run the risk of underemphasizing one of their main educational functions, namely the cultivation of “minds and souls,” the quintessential

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elements of being “human”; and (d) that the type of education demanded by the “knowledge society” diminishes the capacity for individual autonomy and social and cultural inclusion which are fundamental aspects of a democratic, multicultural and equitable society.

In the third and final part, we shall briefly argue for the necessary re-invention of a “liberal humanistic education” that aims at the construction of reflective democratic citizens / persons.

Introduction

“Knowledge Society” (KS), often associated with a global “knowledge economy,” (see for example OECD, 1996) and such coextensive concepts as “Information Society” and “Learning Society” have recently become dominant discourses –academic and otherwise– with respect to the political and economic robustness, viability and development of the European Union (EU) and its member states. As in 1998, the then French Minister of Education is said to have declared: “The Europe we are building is not only the Europe of the Euro, the Europe of Banks and the Economy; it must also be the Europe of Knowledge.” The need for the creation of a competitive economy based on “knowledge” is underscored in several European Union official documents (White and Green Papers, Resolutions, Directives, Action Programs, etc.). For example, in the first and defining text, the White Paper titled *Growth, Competitiveness and Employment*, published in 1993, it is stated that, in view of such changes in the world as globalization, the coming of the Information Society and the rapid development of techno-science, it is imperative that the European Union be transformed into “Knowledge-based” and “Information” Societies (Commission of the European Communities, 1993). And in the much publicized and influential White Paper *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society*, issued by the European Commission (EC) in 1995, we read: “Be that as it may, the countries of Europe today have no other option. If they are to hold their own and continue to be a reference point in the world, they have to build on the progress brought about through closer economic ties by more substantial investment in knowledge and skills.” (European Commission, 1995: 1). Other relevant texts include: *Towards a Europe of Knowledge* (EC, 1997), *The Future Objectives of European Education Systems* (EC, 2001),

Education and Training 2010 (EC, 2002), and *Entrepreneurship in Europe* (EC, 2003b).

Discourses about “knowledge” –what it is, what its forms are, and how it is acquired– invariably have included references to education and training, and to the sites that have traditionally been responsible for the production, reproduction and dissemination of “knowledge,” namely, schools and universities. In a “Communication from the Commission”, entitled “The role of the Universities in the Europe of knowledge” we read: “The knowledge society depends for its growth on the production of new knowledge, its transmission through education and training, its dissemination through information and communication technologies, and on its use through new industrial processes or services. Universities play a key role in all these three fields of research and exploitation of its results.” (EC, 2003: 1). But, the Communication continues, “If they are to play their full role in the creation of a Europe of knowledge, European universities must, with the help of the Member States and in a European context, rise to a number of challenges. They can only release their potential by undergoing the radical changes needed to make the European system a genuine world reference.” (op.cit.: 11)

What is a Knowledge Society?

Knowledge Society has been conceptualized in various and different ways. For example, in his *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in an Age of Uncertainty* (2003), Andy Hargreaves conceptualizes KS in terms of three dimensions:

“First, it [KS] comprises an expanded scientific, technical and educational sphere... Second, it involves complex ways of processing and circulating knowledge and information in a service-based economy. Third, it entails basic changes in how corporate organizations function so that they enhance continuous innovation in products and services, by creating systems, teams and cultures that maximize the opportunities for mutual spontaneous learning.” (A. Hargreaves, 2003, p. 9).

From a Marxist critical perspective, C. Stamatīs, a Greek scholar, has conceptualized KS as follows:

“The conceptual nucleus of ‘knowledge society’ echoes, in substance, an actual capitalist trend, which it also ratified ideologically. It signifies the use of knowledge as a productive force in the labor process under the conditions of late capitalism. The type of education that is cultivated in educational institutions is accordingly called upon to be adapted to such knowledge use.” (Stamatidis, 2005, p.115. Translated from the Greek text).

Variations in the conceptualization of KS notwithstanding, in the prevalent discourse on the subject the following *epistemic* elements/characteristics appear to be salient and given greater emphasis:

- ▲ Enormous development of ICTs and sophisticated learning technologies; the rise of what Manuel Castells has called the “Network Society” and the Information/Technology Epistemological Paradigm. (Castells, 1996, 2000).
- ▲ Knowledge as a factor of production: Increasing importance of information technologies and what D. Guile has called “codified knowledge” (D. Guile, 2002) for the accumulation of capital and for sustainable development in a competitive global economy.
- ▲ New synergies of technological and human capital.
- ▲ Techno-scientific instrumental rationality.
- ▲ Knowledge as a trading commercialized commodity.
- ▲ Changing forms of organization of living and work [a “learning organization” (Senge, 1990), a “flexible workforce”, a “knowledge worker” (Drucker, 1994), the “shamrock organization” (Handy, 1989)].
- ▲ The emergence of new patterns of exclusion/inclusion (e.g. “digital divide”, see <http://www.digitaldivide.org>).
- ▲ A re-negotiation of power among established power formations (e.g. states, markets, civil societies, international organizations).

The European Education Space – “Constructing the European Knowledge Society/Technopoly” (See N. Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technopoly*, 1992)

In the aforementioned European Union texts, a European educational discourse (policy talk and policy practice) is propounded that emphasizes the development of “skills” and “competencies” to meet the needs of the Single European Market, an integrated European KS and a Euro-

pean “knowledge-based competitive economy.” Although in some of the texts reference is made to “solid broad-based education” and to a “broad knowledge base,” what is salient in the European Union educational discourse is the privileging of certain kinds of knowledge, skills and competencies (e.g., education in ICTs, techno-scientific instrumental rationality, and vocational skills) for “competitive advantage,” so that, as the Lisbon Council put it in 2000, the EU by 2010 will become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth accompanied by quantitative and qualitative improvement of employment and of greater social cohesion”. (*Conclusions of the Lisbon Council*, 2000). The instrumentalist knowledge bias in the EU’s educational discourse is patently clear in the “Communication from the Commission” entitled *Towards a Europe of Knowledge* that was issued in 1997 (EC, 1997). In this text, one reads:

“Noting that we are entering the ‘knowledge society’, the Commission in its *Agenda 2000* proposes making the *policies which drive that society (innovation, research, education and training)* one of the four fundamental pillars of the Union’s internal policies... Economic competitiveness, employment and the personal fulfillment of the citizens of Europe is no longer mainly based on the production of physical goods, nor will it be in the future. Real wealth creation will henceforth be linked to the production and dissemination of knowledge and will depend first and foremost on our efforts in the field of research, education and training and on our capacity to promote innovation. *This is why we must fashion a veritable Europe of Knowledge.*”

And further:

“In its conclusions, the Amsterdam European Council stressed that priority should be given to the development of vocational and social skills to facilitate workers’ adaptation to labor-market developments. The emphasis should be on a solid broad-based education and on a set of skills (technological, social and organizational) which are conducive to innovation” (EC, 1997).

In the widely quoted *Teaching and Learning—Towards the Learning Society* (1995), one gets a more comprehensive picture of the EU’s educational discourse in relation to the European KS. This important text pays homage to globalization, viz., the “internationalization of trade, the global

context of technology and, above all, the arrival of the [global] information society.” In the global “learning society” of the future, according to it, knowledge and cognitive skills will be of pivotal importance, especially knowledge and skills in techno-science and mathematics, particularly for purposes of economic growth and prosperity. At the same time, however, the White Paper urged that education and training in the “learning society” (also read “knowledge society”) should not be narrowly instrumental, but multi-purpose. It should (a) focus on “a broad knowledge base” and emphasize breadth and flexibility rather than narrowness, (b) build bridges between schools and the “business sector,” (c) combat “social exclusion,” (d) develop proficiency in “at least two foreign languages,” i.e., in “three Community languages,” and (e) “treat capital investment and investment in training on an equal basis.” The White Paper, further, talked about the importance of “personal development,” the “passing of cultural heritage,” and “the teaching of self-reliance.” Finally, it referred to the development of “human values” and “citizenship” which, according to it, “is essential if European society is to be open, multicultural and democratic” (EC, 1995).

Yet, from a careful reading of this text, it is clear that in the envisaged “learning society” greater emphasis and space were given to the acquisition of certain kinds of knowledge and the development of cognitive and vocational skills that would be instrumental for the productive employability of the worker, for economic growth and the accumulation of wealth, and for national and global prosperity. In this connection, John Field’s critical observations of the White Paper’s reformist orientation are well taken. “Although the White Paper,” Field has noted, “paid lip-service to the need for personal development and social learning, and even active citizenship, as well as training, there was no sign that the Commission had any concrete proposals in these areas.” In fact, Field has added, “the White Paper simply replicated the established boundary between vocational training and general education” (Field, 1998, p.75). And, according to Spring, even subjects such as literature and philosophy, not to mention science and mathematics, are viewed not for “their intrinsic beauty or personal satisfaction,” but “for their instrumental value in improving Europe’s position in the global economy” (Spring, 1998, p. 105. Also see Grollios, 1999, pp. 43-51).

The focus on “instrumentalism” and the “technological option” in the EU discourse on education and training, while at the same time emphasizing “through symbolism” attachment to the European humanistic

cultural and epistemological tradition, is evident in the various EU Action Programs, viz., SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI, ERASMUS, ARION and COMENIUS. These initiatives, which covered virtually every aspect of the education and training systems, induced students, educators, education officials and policy makers in the member states into the logic of seeking European funds to fulfill their educational expectations, in order to comply to the instrumental rationality of the EU guidelines. For the countries of the European South, the dependence on EU subsidies was enhanced even further by the funding channeled to national education systems from the European Cohesion Funds (the European Social Fund and the European Fund for Regional Development) on the basis of state-proposed “Community Support Frameworks”. These mechanisms subsidize national education policies which fall directly within the logic of the previously mentioned White Papers, promoting certain types of economic and social development and leading toward the envisaged/imagined “Knowledge Society” and “Knowledge-Based Economy”.

The economicist- instrumentalist logic that pervades the EU educational discourse is further evident in the EC’s recent Green Paper on *Entrepreneurship in Europe* (2003). The Paper defines entrepreneurship as “a mindset and as a way of creating and developing economic activity by combining risk taking, creativity and/or innovation with wise management, in the context of a new or an existing organization.” Entrepreneurship, the Paper notes, contributes to the creation of jobs, to greater productivity and to economic development, and to social cohesion in the “periphery;” it “unleashes the individual’s potentialities;” and it is a “basic factor in competitiveness.” In the European Union, according to this text, there is “less entrepreneurial dynamism” compared to the situation in the United States, and this puts Europe at a disadvantage in the global economic competition. The challenge for the EU, therefore, is to identify the basic factors that “contribute to the creation of a climate conducive to the fostering of entrepreneurial initiative and entrepreneurial activities,” and the adoption of “a strategy for the charting of macroeconomic policies that will be oriented towards development and stability.” And, significantly for our purposes here, the Commission urged that schools and universities should seek to develop entrepreneurial skills and competencies. In the words of the Green Paper: “Education and training should foster entrepreneurship, through the development of the suitable mindset and consciousness about the occupational opportuni-

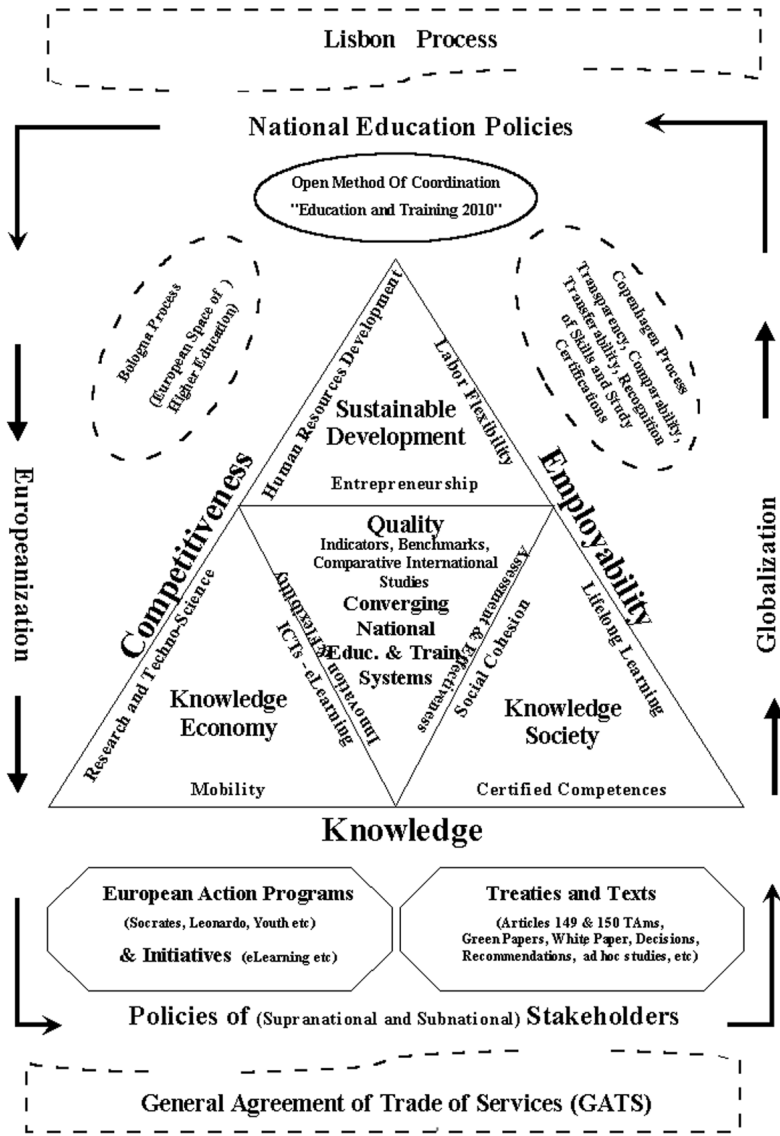
ties that are offered by the entrepreneur's identity and skills." It is further noted that entrepreneurship should be included as a subject in the school curriculum (EC, 2003).

The same economic and instrumentalist logic in the EU educational discourse also pervades the thinking of the already referred to Lisbon Council in its influential *Conclusions of the Lisbon Council*. The Lisbon Council, as noted above, expressed the wish that by 2010 the EU will become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth accompanied by quantitative and qualitative improvement of employment and of greater social cohesion (European Presidency, 2000). While it is obvious that there were many different policy areas involved in such an objective to be accomplished, the *Conclusions* assigned to education and training the leading role.

The Lisbon strategy and the initiatives it has inspired, call on the member states to "re-evaluate" their education systems, and to "adjust" them to the demands of the Knowledge Economy and the Knowledge Society. The national systems of education are now faced with the dual task of combating social exclusion, unemployment and inequality on the one hand, and acquiring high performance scores in the comparative evaluation of educational outcomes and school performance surveys coordinated by the European Commission, on the other. As Berggreen – Merkel (1999) notes, under the circumstances, "the question will arise whether the Member States will be able to carry on developing their proper educational systems regardless of the reforms and structures within the other Member States or whether they will have to face some sort of growing closer together even in matters where national traditions and national identity are at stake" (Berggreen – Merkel, 1999. p. 1.).

The initiatives of the European Commission are not the sole discourses (policy talk and policy action) affecting the terms of convergence of the national systems of education, or the re-contextualization of educational discourses beyond the national systems of education, or again the processes of Europeanization/De-nationalization/Globalization. Other European initiatives, notably the so-called Bologna Process, the process of constructing a "European Higher Education Space", sponsored by France, Germany, England and Italy in 1998, "voluntarily" binds the policies of higher education of 42 countries "from Galway to Vladivostok". Higher education policies are also affected by the General Agreement for the Trade of Services (GATS), which in 1994 was signed by 44

countries in the framework/context of the World Trade Organization. GATS provides for the “gradual liberalization of educational services”, mainly in higher and adult education, thus creating an environment of “educational globalization” (Larsen et al, 2002: 8).



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The emerging “European Education Space”, that is diagrammatically presented in Figure 1 on the next page, appears to be more than a space of educational cooperation of the European countries. It is a power/knowledge discourse which unquestionably formulates the educational agenda. As shown above, this discourse is heavily colonized by the demands of economic policies seeking to enhance the competitiveness of European economies and the employability of Europeans. What this space is obviously lacking is a comparable reference to the European culture, which was the spearhead of educational cooperation in the 1970s and the 1980s, and has been totally substituted by instrumental knowledge.

The Imagined Europe of Knowledge/European Knowledge Society and Education: A Dehumanized European Technopoly? A Virtual Dystopia?

The education discourse (policy talk and policy action) described above, that is promoted by the central organs of the European Union, leads to certain conclusions about the envisaged Europe of Knowledge or European Knowledge Society. To wit:

- ▲ **Education and training are conceived as levers/fulcrums for the “comparative advantage” of Europe over its major international competitors, e.g., the U.S.A, Japan and China.** To quote once more from the *Conclusions of the Lisbon Council* (EC, 2000), education and training would help to make the EU “become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth accompanied by quantitative and qualitative improvement of employment and of greater social cohesion”.
- ▲ **Education is conceived as an individual not a social responsibility, in contrast to the European welfare state tradition.** According to the White Paper *Teaching and Learning Towards the Learning society* (1995), “the move to the learning society must be centred on the individual” (p.21). And further: “The employability of a person and their capacity to adapt are linked to the way they are able to **combine** these different types of knowledge and build on them. In this context, individuals become the principal constructors of their own abilities and can combine the skills acquired through the traditional institutional routes, **with those acquired through their occupational experience and**

those acquired by virtue of their personal training effort (p.14, emphasis in the text). The new form of “social contract” reflected in such views implies that all members of the European societies who fail to improve their individual qualifications and skills through life-long learning can be “disqualified” from social welfare, and they are the only ones to be blamed for that, contrary to the established practices of the European social model.

- ▲ **ICTs or the “Information/Technology Epistemological Paradigm” is projected as an epistemic/knowledge priority for the imagined Europe of Knowledge.** As stated in the “Learning Project” proposal (EC, 2002b) “social cohesion and the competitiveness of Europe depend more and more on our ability to exploit the potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) for learning. The main benefits of ICT when applied to learning include facility of access, flexibility, learner orientation and better opportunities for collaboration.”
- ▲ **There is a shift in emphasis from Education to Lifelong Learning, but not a shift in the aforementioned paradigmatic epistemic/knowledge type of learning.** According to the European Commission’s official Lifelong Learning website (EC, 2007): “Acquiring and updating all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications from the pre-school years to post-retirement. It promotes the development of knowledge and competences that will enable each citizen to adapt to the knowledge-based society and actively participate in all spheres of social and economic life, taking more control of his or her future. Valuing all forms of learning, including: formal learning, such as a degree course followed at university; non-formal learning, such as vocational skills acquired at the workplace; and informal learning, such as inter-generational learning, for example where parents learn to use ICT through their children, or learning how to play an instrument together with friends”.
- ▲ **Emphasis is placed on “quality”, interpreted mainly as “output / performance quality”, and assessed/gauged in terms of achievement, effectiveness, and accountability to an unspecified “clientele”.** As A. Hinkel, a high-ranking Commission official writes (Hingel, 2001): “The quality of education and training is considered in all Member States to be a concern of the highest political priority. High levels of knowledge, competencies and skills are considered to be the very basic conditions for active citizenship, employment and social cohesion”.
- ▲ **Privileging certain forms of knowledge over others, despite the fact**

that in certain texts lip service is being paid to “contrasting rhetoric.” For example, according to the *European Report on the Quality of School Education* (EC, 2001) “Reading, mathematics and science claim their place as indicators because they provide essential knowledge tools and provide the foundations for lifelong learning skills. Less easily measurable competencies in civics, foreign languages and ICT will be no less significant in the future. Least developed of all in terms of the indicator areas presented in this report are learning to learn skills but, arguably, they may be the most critical and enduring of competencies in the society of the third millennium.” This, despite the fact that in certain texts, e. g., in the already referred to White Paper on *Teaching and Learning –Towards the Learning Society* (1995) and in several official documents which followed its publication, lip service is being paid to “contrasting rhetoric” such as (a) “education and training will have an increasingly central role to play in every aspect of personal development, in social integration and in the awareness of shared values, in handing on the cultural heritage and in developing individual self-reliance, ” (European Council, 1996) and (b) “The Committee also believes... that a sixth objective must be added to the five set by the White Paper, namely the humanist dimension of the learning society... education programmes must be established to cultivate democratic and social awareness among schoolchildren, inculcating them with the values of tolerance and solidarity with their fellow-beings and acceptance of the diversity of humankind in terms of age, colour, race, sex, religion or ideology” (ESC, 1996). In this connection, John Field’s generalization is well-taken. Relating the EU’s instrumentalist educational policy discourse to the European “global context,” Field has observed: “Generally... globalization has acted to reinforce the EU’s tendency to focus on the potential economic contribution of its policies for education and training, and to regard other aspects as secondary” (Field, 1998, p.3).

Lastly, it would be pertinent here to refer to Andy Hargreaves’ insightful observations about the contemporary reform discourses on teaching (and education) in the “Knowledge Society” and the related “Knowledge-based Economy.” In the previously mentioned *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity* (2003), Hargreaves comments on the reform discourses and strategies in North America and the United Kingdom, but his critical thoughts on the subject could easily apply to aforementioned educational reform discourses in the EU. Har-

greaves argues that contemporary capitalist societies that are also knowledge-based economies serve primarily the private good, and their schools are geared to develop primarily cognitive learning, instrumental skills and competencies for a knowledge society and a knowledge economy. But a knowledge-based economy, according to him, is a “force of creative destruction.” On the one hand, “it stimulates growth and prosperity,” but on the other, “its relentless pursuit of profit and self-interest also strains and fragments the social order.” In the knowledge-based economy, school systems “have become obsessed with imposing and micromanaging curriculum uniformity,” instead of “fostering creativity and ingenuity.” Hargreaves adds: “In place of ambitious missions of compassion and community, schools and teachers have been squeezed into the tunnel vision of test scores, achievement targets and league tables of accountability. And rather than cultivating cosmopolitan identity and the basic emotion of sympathy, which Adam Smith called the emotional foundation of democracy, too many educational systems promote exaggerated and self-absorbed senses of national identity” (Hargreaves, 2003, pp. xvi-xvii and p. 9).

Summing up our previous remarks, we argue that the educational discourse that is being promulgated by the European Union for the imagined Europe of Knowledge, may be epitomized in terms of the following key concepts:

- ▲ Education and training, instrumental rationality, not *Paideia*.
- ▲ Techno-scientific knowledge/information base, not general/liberal education and humanistic culture (*Algemeine Bildung, Culture Generale*).
- ▲ Cognitive, vocational, flexible and social skills that are readily assessed and constantly renewable. Competitiveness, entrepreneurship, employability, innovation, creativity, productivity, accreditation.
- ▲ Possessive individualism with tangential concomitants, e.g., “critical thinking”, “problem solving”, “cohesion”, etc.
- ▲ Emphasis on Competences (theoretical, practical, cognitive), mostly instrumental. Underemphasis of *aesthetic and ethical dispositions and civic virtues*— the *Paideia of the Soul*.

The Europe of Knowledge: A Dehumanized European Technopoly?

From the above it can be argued that the imagined Europe of Knowledge and the concomitant educational cultures that it entails is a “de-

humanized technopoly”, a non-human Dystopia? To use as a metaphor Plato’s famous allegory of the cave, it constructs a cave of “non-*paideia*”, of non-cultivation of minds and souls, and paradoxically of “non-true-knowledge” Criticizing the European Union policies from a similar viewpoint, Moulaert and Gonzalez (2003), argue that the European Union discourse “depicts a *society* that is in fact an *economy* solely based on rational behaviour with positivist scientific underpinnings.” It does not depict a culturally diverse, and we might add, a human social Europe.

In responding to the challenges of the envisaged European Knowledge Society, schools and universities risk underemphasizing one of their main educational functions, which has been the provision of *paideia* for the cultivation of “minds and souls,” the quintessential elements of being “human” and of what the ancient Greeks meant by “the good life” (*euzein*). Most of the discourse on the KS appears unscrupulously unilateral, favoring the “hard data” of performance indicators supporting its managerial/instrumental logic. Furthermore, the type of education demanded by such a Knowledge Society diminishes the individual capacity for even the putative claim of economic inclusion, let alone the capacity for individual autonomy and social and cultural inclusion, which are fundamental objectives in a democratic, multicultural and equitable society.

Quo Vadis? What is to be Done?

We argue that a necessary precondition to humanize the unfolding European Knowledge Society and education would be the re-conceptualization and re-invention of Humanistic *Paideia* (HP). By arguing for the re-invention/re-conceptualization of HP, we do not mean mean reviving the narrow concept of Classical Humanistic Education that centered in the classical literary and philological disciplines (See Jaeger, 1939; Papatathanasopoulou, 1987). Nor do we mean exclusively the Trivium–Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic–plus Music, of the Septem Artes Liberales (The Seven Liberal Arts) of the Medieval University (Kimball, 1995). We argue, instead, for the re-invention of a *Paideia* that questions the hegemony of the Information/Technological Epistemological Paradigm (Castells, 1998/2000) and rejects all constraints on the humanness, the democratic ethos, the free spirit and the imagination of man, a *Paideia* that cultivates “all the human arts”, especially the broad epistemic space of the Arts and

the Humanities, one that includes Language, Literature, Poetry, Drama, Philosophy, History, Music and the Arts. (See Procter, 1988/1998). Contrary to possible criticisms that such an education would be conservative and not devoid of Eurocentric elitist, sexist, racist, and “classist” elements, our re-conceptualized *Paideia* and Pedagogy could indeed be “empowering,” “liberatory,” “transformative” and, above all, humanizing to all, including the poor, the oppressed and the underprivileged (For a course called the Clemente Course in the Humanities, in support of this claim, see Shorris, 2000).

We also seek to construct a counter-hegemonic discourse, a paradigm shift that privileges a reinvented concept of humanistic *Paideia*. Epistemic areas such as the arts and the humanities represent different forms of knowledge and experience from techno-scientific studies and empirical social science, which, more than ever, are needed in the dehumanizing Information/Technological Knowledge/Learning Society (ITKLS). In an enlightening essay on “Aesthetic Modes of Knowing”, Elliot Eisner has argued that areas such as literature, music and art represent “aesthetic forms of knowledge,” that is different from the most widely accepted “scientific knowledge.” Viewed this way, “both artist and scientist create forms through which the world is viewed... both make qualitative judgments about the fit, the coherence, the economy, ‘the rightness’ of the forms they create” (Eisner, 1985, 26-30).

The epistemological, ethical, aesthetic and a fortiori humanizing potential for the study and teaching of Literature –poetry, drama, novel, biography, essay– in a democratic society, especially in the contemporary turbulent, uncertain, insecure and problematic world, has been presented eloquently by Louise Rosenblatt in her classic and influential *Literature as Exploration* (1938/1965/1968/1976/1995). Echoing Henry James, the province of Literature, according to Rosenblatt, is the human experience, “everything that human beings have thought or felt or created.” She explains: “The lyric poet utters all that the human heart can feel...The novelist displays the intricate web of human relationships with their hidden patterns of motive and emotion...The dramatist builds a dynamic structure out of the tensions and conflicts of intermingled human lives” (Rosenblatt, 1995, 5-6).

Humanistic *Paideia* through the Arts and the Humanities has the potential not only of developing cognitive skills and “forming minds”, which are necessary qualities of being human. As conceptualized here, perhaps more than the “social sciences,” it also has the potential of

cultivating the “human soul”—the social, ethical, emotional and aesthetic attributes, the skills, dispositions and virtues, and the character traits that are quintessentially human (Also see: Cohen, 2006; O’ Sullivan, 2001; Papacostas, 2001).

Epilogue: Tending to the “Mind” and the “Soul”: A *Paideia* For and Beyond the Knowledge Society

It is clear by now that we argue for a different kind of education for the Knowledge Society than the one promulgated in the EU documents, one that is not restricted to training and instrumental rationality, one that is broader in meaning, that cultivates the mind and the soul and aims at the wholesome development of the individual, what we have referred to as a re-invented concept of *Paideia*.

In his defence/apology at the trial at which he was indicted and condemned to drink the hemlock for his alleged “impiety”, specifically for preaching “new demons/ideas”, different from those of the State, and for “corrupting the youth”, Socrates, the “critical humanist philosopher-citizen” of democratic Athens, like the mythical humanist Prometheus, refused to obey the dictates of those in power and give up philosophy, which he considered to be a *sine qua non* for the cultivation of the “mind” and “soul” of the democratic *anthropos-politis* (citizen-person). In his defiance at the trial, he reiterated that he would prefer to die rather than cease to say to whomever he met: “How can you, my friend, an Athenian citizen of the greatest, wisest, most glorious and most powerful city, not be ashamed for caring more about how you acquire honor, glory and riches, and not be interested in your intellectual development, in truth and in tending to your soul?” (Plato, *Apology*).

Our reconceptualized humanistic *Paideia* for the creation of democratic “human citizens” with “minds and souls” in the European Knowledge Society of the 21st Century may be epitomized in terms of the cultivation of the following human values: “Character, Inclusiveness, Integrity, Cosmopolitan Identity, Sympathy and Democracy” (Hargreaves, 2003; Nussbaum, 1997), but also Justice, Wisdom, Responsibility, Friendship and Critical Thinking.

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Εκπαίδευση προς και πέραν της Κοινωνίας της Γνώσης: Μια κριτική ανάλυση του ευρωπαϊκού λόγου για την εκπαίδευση

Στο πρώτο μέρος αυτής της εργασίας οι συγγραφείς παραθέτουν μια συνοπτική εννοιολόγηση της Κοινωνίας της Γνώσης και στη συνέχεια εξετάζουν το σχετικό με την Κοινωνία της Γνώσης ρηματικό λόγο της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, όπως αυτός παρουσιάζεται σε σημαντικά κείμενα των θεσμικών οργάνων της Ένωσης.

Με βάση τη διεθνή βιβλιογραφία οι συγγραφείς διακρίνουν ως καταστατικά στοιχεία της Κοινωνίας της Γνώσης:

- ▲ Την επανάσταση των Τεχνολογιών Πληροφόρησης και Επικοινωνίας, και το Επιστημολογικό παράδειγμα της Πληροφορίας/Επιστημών (Manuel Castells)
- ▲ Την Οικονομική Παγκοσμιοποίηση – η σπουδαιότητα της Γνώσης (κυρίως της «κωδικοποιημένης γνώσης» - D. Guile) για τη συσσώρευση του κεφαλαίου και τη βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη
- ▲ Την τεχνοεπιστημονική εργαλειακή ορθολογικότητα
- ▲ Την αντίληψη της Γνώσης ως εμπορεύσιμου αγαθού
- ▲ Την αλλαγή στις μορφές οργάνωσης της καθημερινής ζωής και της εργασίας («οργανισμός μάθησης», «ευέλικτο εργατικό δυναμικό», «εργάτης της γνώσης»)
- ▲ Τις νέες μορφές αποκλεισμού/εγκλεισμού (π.χ. το «ψηφιακό χάσμα»)

Από την ανάλυση επιλεγμένων κειμένων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. (π.χ. του «Λευκού

Βιβλίου για την Εκπαίδευση και την Κατάρτιση – Διδασκαλία και Μάθηση προς την κοινωνία της Γνώσης» (1995), «Προς μια Ευρώπη της Γνώσης» (1998), «eLearning: Να σκεφτούμε τα σχολεία του αύριο» (1999), «Εκπαίδευση – Κατάρτιση 2010», (2002), κλπ.) οι συγγραφείς συμπεραίνουν ότι ο λόγος που διατυπώνεται για την εκπαίδευση για την Κοινωνία της Γνώσης από τα ευρωπαϊκά θεσμικά όργανα, βασίζεται σε μια σειρά από έννοιες-κλειδιά, όπως:

- ▲ Πρωταρχικά Εκπαίδευση και Κατάρτιση κι όχι Παιδεία
- ▲ Ευρεία Γνωστική Βάση κι όχι γενική παιδεία (*general education, Allgemeine Bildung, Culture Generale*) αλλά μάλλον πληροφορίες
- ▲ Μικρής διάρκειας γνωστικές, επαγγελματικές και κοινωνικές Δεξιότητες, που αξιολογούνται εύκολα και άμεσα και ανανεώνονται συνεχώς
- ▲ Ικανότητες (θεωρητικές, πρακτικές, γνωστικές) περισσότερο εργαλειακές, όχι αισθητικές και ηθικές προδιαθέσεις/κλίσεις και κοινωνικές αρετές, δηλαδή Παιδεία της Ψυχής
- ▲ Ανταγωνιστικότητα, απασχολησιμότητα, καινοτομία, δημιουργικότητα, παραγωγικότητα, πιστοποίηση, ατομική ευθύνη

Σ' αυτό το πλαίσιο η Εκπαίδευση και Κατάρτιση είναι μέσα για την απόκτηση «συγκριτικού πλεονεκτήματος», ώστε η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση «να γίνει η πιο ανταγωνιστική και δυναμική οικονομία της γνώσης στον κόσμο, ικανή για βιώσιμη οικονομική ανάπτυξη, συνοδευόμενη από ποσοτική και ποιοτική βελτίωση της απασχόλησης και μεγαλύτερη κοινωνική συνοχή». Έχει ως πρώτη προτεραιότητα την ενίσχυση της διά βίου μάθησης, την εκπαίδευση στις ΤΠΕ, και δίνει έμφαση στην «ποιότητα», την «αποτελεσματικότητα» και τη «λογοδοσία» προς την «πελατεία», ευνοώντας με τον τρόπο αυτό συγκεκριμένες μορφές γνώσης απέναντι σε άλλες.

Οι συγγραφείς υποστηρίζουν ότι αυτού του είδους η Κοινωνία της Γνώσης και η συναφής Οικονομία της Γνώσης, απαιτούν από τα σχολεία και τα πανεπιστήμια να παρέχουν εκπαίδευση και κατάρτιση, να παράγουν γνώση και να αναπτύξουν δεξιότητες που πιστεύεται ότι θα είναι εργαλειακά χρήσιμες για την απασχολησιμότητα και τις «ανάγκες της ζωής» (του ζειν). Αναποκρινόμενα στις απαιτήσεις αυτές, τα σχολεία και τα πανεπιστήμια διατρέχουν τον κίνδυνο να δώσουν μικρότερη έμφαση σε μια από τις κύριες εκπαιδευτικές λειτουργίες τους, που είναι η παροχή παιδείας για την καλλιέργεια του «μυαλού και της ψυχής», της πεμπουσίας της ανθρώπινης ύπαρξης και της «καλής ζωής» (του ευ ζειν). Κατ' αυτό τον τρόπο, το είδος της εκπαίδευσης που απαιτείται από αυτή την Ευρωπαϊκή Κοινωνία της Γνώσης ελαχιστοποιεί την ατομική δυνατότητα για έστω και την υποθετική απαίτηση οικονομικής συμμετοχής, ούτε καν ατομικής αυτονομίας και κοινωνικής

και πολιτισμικής συμμετοχής που είναι θεμελιώσεις στόχοι σε μια δημοκρατική, πολυπολιτισμική και ισότιμη κοινωνία.

Αυτή η εικόνα της κοινωνίας και η αντίστοιχη εκπαιδευτική κουλτούρα, θεωρούν οι συγγραφείς, δημιουργεί μια «εικονική» κοινωνία και μια απ-άνθρωπη δυστοπία. Χρησιμοποιώντας ως μεταφορά την περίφημη αλληγορία του Σπηλαίου του Πλάτωνα, παραλληλίζουν την κατάσταση αυτή με την πλατωνική κατάσταση της «μη – παιδείας» (όπου παιδεία εννοείται η καλλιέργεια του μυαλού και της ψυχής) και παράδοξα της «μη αληθινής γνώσης», όπου μια τέτοια Κοινωνία της Γνώσης στην ουσία τοποθετεί το άτομο σε ένα εικονικό «σπήλαιο», ελαχιστοποιώντας τις αισθητικές δεξιότητες που πιθανόν θα αναπτύσσονταν διαμέσου της ανθρωπιστικής γνώσης.

Με βάση τα παραπάνω, οι συγγραφείς υποστηρίζουν την ανάγκη εξανθρωπισμού της Ευρωπαϊκής Κοινωνίας της Γνώσης, με την επαν-ανακάλυψη της Παιδείας, δηλαδή της καλλιέργειας του ανθρώπινου μυαλού και της ψυχής. Υποστηρίζουν δηλαδή την ανάγκη να διαμορφωθεί ένας αντι-ηγεμονικός λόγος, ένα νέο παράδειγμα που να ευνοεί μια επανεφευρεθείσα έννοια της ανθρωπιστικής παιδείας, να αναζωογονεί τον «Προμηθεϊκό ουμανισμό» καλλιεργώντας «όλες τις ανθρώπινες τέχνες»: τις ανθρωπιστικές σπουδές, την επιστήμη και την τεχνολογία και να αποσκοπεί στην ανάπτυξη στοχαστικών, δημοκρατικών πολιτών.