

PROSPECT AND EPILOGUE

Some people say that at crises what is needed is not thought but action and that education is needless or even harmful because it hinders action. Some people say that without thought, action ranges between blunder and catastrophe and that without education only very rarely can one think. Some people, more reasonably, remember at such dilemmas the old saying “education is what remains when one forgets all that one has learned” and, in more detail, they also spell out another famous insight saying that education, at least before entrance to university, means getting for a while, mentally, into the shoes of soldiers and of generals before battle even if protected in a classroom’s walls, getting into an inventor’s shoes without spending sleepless months in a lab but only hours terminated by a bell ringing for a break, getting into the shoes of ascetic constitutions without leaving the company of classmates of the opposite sex except in fantasy, etc etc... And some people remind that at crises what is needed is not such rediscoveries of the wheel but solutions to be reached through research habits acquired in the university, or rather at graduate school; they also remind us that things that are still alive and possible to work out are not described in textbooks, or possibly not even in papers already published, but only in preprints.

The present author, who clearly is an educator, does believe in the view of his patron saint Lewis Mumford that humanity right now finds itself in a race course between education for all and destruction for all, but does not happen to believe that education as we usually mean it, whether or not Mumford meant it thus, is also sufficient and not just necessary; he also believes that the crisis is greatly based on the education of people trained in lifeless issues (e.g. money-market-eering) that ignore or bypass, or even dismiss, life’s deepest qualities wherever they don’t refer to some truly human needs of their own very close human circle, or even when it doesn’t suit some trivially and pettily self-centered goals and definitions related to their upbringing or training or society of their time and place; therefore he believes that education can have an effect only if educating the famous and unprivileged so-called “masses” is combined with the best of the healthy and life-valuing tendencies of self-destruction that sometimes may develop in some effective and charismatic persons, privileged either by nature or by opportunities or by both (like e.g. some very charismatic intellectuals, artists and self made tycoons) and which, if developed, may make them want to use their talents and gifts or acquired resources, and to use their extreme abilities for excellence and for survival under extreme Darwinian competition, in the service of Life Major itself rather than in the service of goals like those of their not equally talented, or even petty, rivals.

As such an extreme example (ranging from rare to unique, at least in that part of history which is both recent and western) we mention Mikis Theodorakis of the previous chapter.

Of course people like him, when they live to old age, especially in times that, collectively, decline in spirit faster than they, individually, decline in bodily powers, also live the oxymoron of being seen, for their proposals and interventions as both younger/livelier AND “more immature” than the youth of the new era they overlap with; and both as “more passé” AND weak (in body or spirit) than the mature of the new era they overlap with. In the academic jargon above, they face a question sounding like “People like you can help only if entering textbooks. Why do you still live when you can’t be a preprint and neither can we, yet or ever?” My personal answer is that this is a fault not of what one now calls a preprint, since, still, a coherent&sufficiently-encompassing proposal has not been made. For a time, hopefully not long, the top preprint quality of today should first, or parallelly, concern the development of people as self-destructive as Ansage*, i.e. it should concern the actions of *such* self-destruction of *such* gifted people in their heydays (*in the sense we have seen just above*); this explains why the title of the present book is “The teaching of humanities after the 1999 – 2011 events” : Most of what this book is about is not what one should dizzy the mind with of youths having no free time (unemployment is not exactly leisure!) and no chance for education by the state (or by

*PS: and of as wide abilities as Steve Jobs.

the private sector!) but what one should give as food for thought and for feeling and for communicativeness to youths going to university so as to sensitize them and to cultivate in them dexterities either additional, or orthogonal, or both, to the usual dexterities for making money and prestige, that now frequently, if provided at all, do not have as an aim to offer what one needs today to be a real citizen. So it would be interesting to see the outcomes (in politics, stockmarket etc) if the new random cards in the game-theory-like Darwinian competitions in the sufficiently near future, included models like Theodorakis in the humanities received as education by the new forthcoming Ansanges (PS: and Steve Jobses) and other exceptional geniuses, what additional ideas they would come up with if they did feel aroused in them the expectation, or even certainty, that it is immensely interesting to see what could be created if they destroyed themselves in ways analogous to the ones this book means; and that it is immense fun to live such an adventure rather than the ones that are both petty and expired clichés unworthy of truly creative persons. Concerning the role of more common mortals in applications of such humanity courses, one role can well be finding ways to transmit the inspired vibes, of both fun and tragedy of divine fools and players, and to transmit the condensed wisdom and serenity of such sages like the ones we've seen presented in this book, by the present common mortal. Transmit them, in their favorite or in their own subjective interpretation of them, to their favorite audience whether it is family, friends, neighborhoods, classes, or wider. We of course wish we could talk directly to more people than take humanities in some college but (probably) the present book will first be heard of in some lecture hall and only later, through also some hearers there, will be heard of as something posted on a free-of-charge-downloading site we keep (the one mentioned in the index at the beginning of this book). For some notes on this fact see Chapter 3's appendix) Before parting, and due to my personal background limitations (through both reluctance and financial innumeracy) to fill what is conspicuously missing here (i.e. the economics background to see where we are), we ask our friend N. Biniaris, whom we saw already in the 1st page of this book, to write in some idiom what could fill that and either give it to our context to include or tell us where to find it, e.g. do it in the idiom of "Platonic dialog on economics", the only dialog that as he says was not written by Plato ("because it was not needed since nobody who was seriously esteemed considered profit as worth being seen as a goal"); I mean do it like this if he feels up to it, and if he feels the time's clarity is already sufficient for such writing, and if he, conversely too, feels this book is up to including it...etc etc. (PS: In chpt 3's appendix we'll see another context of ours for both Platonic dialogs and monologs, titled "Long monologs in short dialog", maybe sufficing) After finishing the present effort I can myself join more freely and fully the efforts that concern my country's problems which Nick has joined most fully already since long, like so many people from other countries have also done regarding such efforts for their own countries; and both along these efforts and apart from them, both of us can more freely wonder like, of course, everybody else here is doing, too, about what we can do about the here-and-now problems of our families...

John Alevizos, Athens, August 2011