

Fateful transformation: The World as “*Kosmos*” and the World as “*Universum*”

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Abstract

Fateful transformation: The World as “KOSMOS” and the World as “Universum”. – This text deals with the paradoxical situation that can be described as a loss of the world by its conquest. The intention is to provide a reader with a deeper understanding of our current predicament using and developing some of Edmund Husserl’s ideas.

Keywords: phenomenology, World, university, science**Klíčová slova:** fenomenologie, svět, univerzita, věda

You can recognize the most important, essential things by the fact that they cannot be if you interpret them as means for something else. What is the most important has an intrinsic structure that it is good for itself and not for something else. For instance, it would be absurd in friendship, to ask a friend, “for what is our friendship useful to me”. The same holds for the love or for the knowledge or for the education. To conceive these things as means for something else means to destroy them. And yet one meets the question “for what is the education useful?” again and again even from the people who are responsible for the education.

It is a tragedy that the transformation of education over the past 200 years has led to forgetting the original discovery of humanity as a possibility to be educated. Among other things, it is indicated by the fact that most official documents regarding organization of education define educational goals in terms and within the horizon of efficiency. But the Latin “*effectus*” means the effect as a result of some *causa*, cause. The relation between cause and effect constitutes the form of what we call “reality”, so the “reality” of real. But the issue of education as well as ethics cannot be questioned and answered meaningfully from this level of the real.

To be clear, I am not talking here about a system of ideas regarding education, about what modern man thinks about himself, but about the way how modern man *is*. That means: as a representing-thinking ego-subject. My agenda here is the ontological one. Modern man is built into systems produced by scientific idealization. And insofar as education is conceived as a subsystem within the system of modern technological society, insofar as education is thought about within the horizon of functioning of this system, education is deprived of its own essence and meaning. It is reduced to a mere system of production of “living tools”,¹ to put it with Aristotle. But education cannot be “caused” or “effected”. To conceive it in such terms is as absurd as to want produce more “triangled triangle”.

¹ See ARISTOTLE. *Politics*, 1253b.

It is worth mentioning that present subjection of education to the requirement of efficiency is in the long run understandable only from the transformation of philosophy into metaphysics. From the transformation which involves a paradox, namely, that thinking itself, philosophy became a tradition. And what I want to try here is to say something about this key transformation. I am using mainly Edmund Husserl's phenomenological life-world analyses.²

The radically new task to understand, to gain the insight (Einsicht, Einblick – THEÓREIN) is being born under the title “education” (PAIDEIA).³ This insight is not a mere knowledge, the “always-already-knowing-without-knowing-from-where-I-know” (DOXA), but finding the criterion for distinguishing the true and the false. The criterion of knowledge as knowledge, that means the necessity why a given knowledge holds true.

The criterion for humanity of human being is the desire for what the knowledge is of (for the sake of brevity only the key titles: ERÓS, TÚ EIDÉNAI OREXIS, ZÉTÉSIS, *studio*). This desire for knowledge is not a mere psychological, cognitive activity among others, as one could tend to interpret it within the modern metaphysics of consciousness.⁴ The desire for knowledge is the ontological character, the way how human being *is* human. The humanity of human as an issue is dis-covered by Plato in the form of possibility which, within our tradition, we call “education” (*paideia*). To put it differently, the education is discovered by Plato as an answer to the problem: wherein lies the humanity of human.

The education consists in the movement, within which one is by his own accomplishment, by his own insight led from the appearances to the idea, essence. It belongs to the essence of the educated one that he is able to distinguish between what is important and unimportant, essential and inessential. From this distinction and as this distinction the human possibility is discovered, which the possibility we call “education”. It is not a possibility among others, but *the* possibility to *be* human.

We know from Plato and Augustine that teacher cannot be conceived as a cause of learning. Teacher is not the one who teaches. His task is elsewhere, not in transmission or transfer of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The good teacher is not the one who is efficient in this transfer, but the one who in the living situation of education is able to see the essence of education and thus is able to lead his students to their own insight into an eidetic necessity. That also means the one who is able to show to his students that the respective knowledge is affecting, concerns, touches their own life in its inner core, not only in a way that this knowledge is useful only for a test success.

² The issue of education with regard to everyday life as an intertwining of KOSMOS and LOGOS see WIESENGANGER, Marek. Hľadanie “loga” a “dráma” mravnej výchovy v národnom školstve 1. Československej republiky. In PELCOVÁ, Naděžda, HOGENOVÁ, Anna (eds.). *Logos ve výchově, umění a sportu*. Prague: Charles University, 2018, pp. 325–326.

³ For the discussion of education with regard to philosophy see RAJSKÝ, Andrej. Uncomfortable Philosophy. Protection of Pädagogik from Itself? In KUDLÁČOVÁ, Blanka, RAJSKÝ, Andrej. *Education and “Pädagogik” – Philosophical and Historical Reflections* (Central, Southern and South-Eastern Europe). Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2018, SPECTRUM SLOVAKIA Series, 19, pp. 84–103.

⁴ For the modern interpretation of Plato see STĘPKOWSKI, Dariusz. Relationship between Bildung and Seeing. In PELCOVÁ, Naděžda, HOGENOVÁ, Anna (eds.). *Logos ve výchově, umění a sportu*. Prague: Charles University, 2018, pp. 93–94.

The movement of education cannot be conceived as a relation of cause and effect. Everyone must accomplish learning (MANTHANEIN) by himself, it cannot be caused by any external cause (for instance the teacher). The insight and the eidetic necessity cannot be transferred. This necessity is not a being; it is only given in one's own insight. That does not mean that it is subjective – for instance, only I myself must see (*Anschauung*) why the Pythagorean Theorem holds true. But that does not mean that such knowledge is subjective.

Also, the insight cannot be deduced from some effects. “To lead to the idea” cannot mean any form of transfer of positive knowledge. It is the other way round: “to lead to the insight” means to make visible, sensible the privation of knowledge, leading to the desire for knowledge, leading to a specific relation to myself through the experience of privation. To the knowledge: “I know that I know nothing.” But this “nothing” does not mean an absence of some information or any positive knowledge. It has a “positive” sense. It means that I actualize my own humanity in my own asking, in the tension, in the “between” appearance and idea, DOXA and EPISTÉMÉ.

Teaching means to lead human being to this horrible experience that I know that I know nothing within the whole of the world and my own life and yet I must orientate myself without knowledge, without understanding this whole and its unity (university: *ad unum vertere!*). Today, we are, to put it with Nietzsche in the state of “affluence and without hunger” when it comes to knowledge. Such “redundant” knowledge cannot be essential, because it does not affect, does not touch and does not transform the inner core of the humanity of human. That means it does not educate one in the insight into the eidetic necessity.

Plato's EIDOS, “insight”, in which the eidetic necessity is visible, is nothing real. In this sense, the educated one is able to hear and understand the necessity that is “more necessary” than any reality. And that holds true also for ethics. The Good is not a being; it is thanks to what we can encounter something as good or bad. It belongs to the mode of being that is encountered in the *nothing* in Socratic “I know that I know *nothing*”. Aristotle writes that the non-educated is the one who acts rightly only for fear of punishment. *A contrario*: the educated one is able to understand and act according to the eidetic necessity, for the good itself, not because of this fear of punishment.

It is the necessity in phenomena thanks to what something appears *as something*. Even what is bad appears thanks to this necessity. You have to have a measure to be able to perceive something as good or bad, important or unimportant etc. But in our technological age the worst is not what appears as bad. It is the situation, where every issue (education involved) is solved within the technological infrastructure, as a technological issue. In such a situation the phenomenon of *banality of evil*, discovered by Hannah Arendt, is the most dangerous. Where all issues are solved only within the technological horizon, the evil does not appear at all, everything is a question of technological means (“technological rationality” no matter whether it deals with the organization of concentration camps, production of atomic bomb, or of hamburgers).

Here I only would like to point out the issue of transformation of the traditional context in which the results of the philosophical questioning, the thinking itself become a starting point for thinking, thus constituting new prejudices of a higher-order from which the

world in its sense is explained. The ontological structure of the tension and desire for knowledge, as we can find it in Plato and Aristotle, becomes an explanatory scheme for the metaphysical understanding of the being of the world. The thinking and being are not situated in horizon of ERÓS and IDEIN, but in terms of creation and causation.

The questioning, the metaphysics as a searched for science is inverted into answering, let us say, into theology, where the being of beings is interpreted as the cause of beings. Logical forms are used for explanation of the world as such. That means the results of idealization in philosophical questioning and thinking are used for explanation of the being of the world. Husserl speaks about logicizing (*Logifizierung*) of the world and god. This change also affects the issue of ethics. The good is not a real cause, it is beyond being (EPEKEINA TÉS ÚSIAS) and it has fatal consequences when it is interpreted in the horizon of causation.

Together with the discovery of erotic structure of humanity, that means the difference between a mere meaning and knowing in the strong sense (DOXA and EPISTÉMÉ), the understanding of the world is transformed. The being and the good are for human only in its negativity, only in my own asking.

But in generations after Plato and Aristotle substantial change occurs. This change consists in fact that the results and the horizon of asking, the “between” a mere meaning (DOXA) and knowing (EPISTÉMÉ) and their ontological correlates create the non-questioned, non-problematic starting point for thinking. These results of philosophical asking are interpreted as an answer, as the reality of this world, an identity, from which any multitude is derived. As soon as philosophy becomes a tradition, a doctrine (MATHÉISIS, *doctrina*), it also transforms its inner meaning. It ceases to be a “searched science” (EPIZÉTÚMENÉ EPISTÉMÉ), as it is still in Aristotle – that means the knowledge which we gain only through our own searching, asking. The problem fields become fixed, non-problematic starting points, where we are always already situated; they become the form of disciplines (*disciplina*), as in Stoic philosophy: ethics, logic and physics. Here, the education within European tradition has become a specific pre-judice (*Vor-urteil*), the prejudice of higher order.

Within the tradition, this change is invisible; it occurs so to say behind the back of those who live within it. For the tradition and the traditional context in its sense-giving is not our activity, it has its own longitudinal or horizontal intentionality. For instance the Neoplatonic philosophers interpreted Plato without seeing the change, the transformation of the meaning of Plato’s dialogues. What does this change show? It shows the transformation of the “world”-horizon within this tradition.

The new humanity is being born in this paradoxical situation, where science and knowledge become a tradition. To this humanity belongs the horizon of endless progressing in uncovering the truth. To this humanity also belongs new possibility to forget, to cover up this progress and the shift in the meaning of both the science and the knowledge. But this tradition also carries the possibility of re-activation of its own results. That means to re-activate the original questions and original problem-space, from which these results in form of “de-activated” knowledge, detached from the original questions, are coming.

The essence, the eidetic necessity constitutive for the consciousness of something as something is not a matter of memory. It belongs to the essence of knowledge that it is possible as such only in the time-mode of presentification (*Gegenwärtigung*), in encountering of what

is self-present, the thing itself. And such encountering has a structure of fulfillment of the signitive intention by fulfilling intuition. Husserl calls the attention to a fundamental distinction in our knowledge between a mere empty meaning (like when I read Sherlock Holmes without the intuitive fulfilling of the words) and a full intuition, where I have the knowledge together with the criterion of this knowledge.

When philosophy becomes a matter of tradition, this structure of presentification is lost: “The originally intuitive life which creates its originally self-evident structures through activities on the basis of sense-experience very quickly and in increasing measure falls victim to the *seduction of language*. Greater and greater segments of this life lapse into a kind of talking and reading that is dominated purely by association; and often enough, in respect to the validities arrived at in this way, it is disappointed by subsequent experience.”⁵

As a consequence, the traditionalization of philosophy means also a substantial change in our European apperception of the world:

“It was only in its first and unforgettable inception, in the Platonic dialectic, that logic, as formal theory of science, had the fundamental theme: the possibility of a science as such and an existent as such. For *that* logic, there was as yet no actual science and no actual world as already accepted beforehand. Under the altered conditions of later times, the situation was reversed. Logic assumed the guise of a formal apophantic criticism of already-given science, already-given truth and theory; correlatively, the guise of a formal ontology for which, so far as their most general natures were concerned, existing objects and an existing world were fixed unshakeably beforehand.”⁶

Philosophy asks about how the world “is”. That means how the unity of anything whatsoever we can encounter, is possible. We always already encounter things in the world but what we do not encounter is this encountering itself. But this way how we encounter (NOÉISIS), pre-describes, pre-decide what we will meet in the world. To be able to encounter this “how” of my experience means to understand the essential necessity ruling in this own experience. While what I encounter in the world is always contingent, this correlation between how I encounter and what I encounter is ruled by necessity.

The transformation of knowledge, of the insight into the mere results of the insight has also an enormous impact on the transformation of what we call education. The education in the original Platonic sense is making one able to see, to understand the essential necessity, to be able to see the ideas. The insight (NOEIN) is self-giveness of the thing. When I understand something, I see why it is necessary, I have a consciousness: “it cannot be otherwise”, I see why it must be the way it is. But I can also only speak about this knowledge without having this living evidence.

As Husserl says, there is not fulfilled the condition for the living continuity of the insight and its results in the tradition:

“A continuity from one person to another, from one time to another, must have been capable of being carried out. It is clear that the method of producing original idealities out of what is pre-scientifically given in the cultural world must have been written down and fixed in

⁵ HUSSERL, Edmund. *Crisis of European Sciences*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 362.

⁶ HUSSERL, Edmund. *Formal and transcendental logic*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, §92.

firm sentences prior to the existence of geometry; furthermore, the capacity for translating these sentences from vague linguistic understanding into the clarity of the reactivation of their self-evident meaning must have been, in its own way, handed down and ever capable of being handed down.”⁷

The discontinuity, the break has as its consequence that the de-activated result (sediment, *Niederschlag*) of the past insight becomes a starting point of thinking without the consciousness of necessity to re-gain the original insight. In the form of written text this insight is only an empty possibility. The one who does not know anything about this lack of the insight, the necessity to fulfill the empty signs and words with the insight, cannot be called educated.

The living asking and thinking (NOEIN) is transformed into a mere “logical dealing”: “Out of sentences with sedimented signification, logical ‘dealing’ can produce only other.”⁸

And also the experience of the world is transformed in tradition. The “world” is always already thought in logic as something given beforehand, not as a problem, “is a logic – a formal apophantics and a formal ontology – for a real world, thought of as given beforehand”.⁹ Metaphysics and logic are not able to ask about the truth, the relation between the world and the soul, between the appearances and ideas, but only about the formal, logical non-contradiction of a being: “Im wesentlichen war diese und war die ganze Logik der Tradition nicht eine eigentliche Logik der Wahrheit, sondern eine bloße Logik der Widerspruchlosigkeit, der Einstimmigkeit, der Konsequenz.”¹⁰

Thinking is situated within the “universe”. That means within the world understood from the horizon of reality (“*causa-effectus*”). Only within this horizon the problem of the Good becomes a matter of causation. The God is conceived as a creator, as a cause of everything in the world including the world itself.

Within the tradition it is not the insight but mathematical results of the insights. But these results contain in their all-time validity (*Allzeitlichkeit*) the sense “always again constitutes the same evidence”.

The opposition between the essence and the fact ceases to be living asking in the sense of NOEIN and it becomes to be a logical structure by which the world and everything in the world in its being is explained. That seems to be a subtle difference. But it means that the logical figures and the insight is not something you have to accomplish always again. Logical figures and all the system of the doctrine works as a machine one only needs to deal with, to operate. We do not inquire the source of the logical truths, in thinking; we are always already situated within the horizon of the logical. Also the philosophy ceases to be the name for searching the truth in the structure of ERÓS or ZÉTÉSIS, in the living tension between the appearance and idea, but in the form of metaphysics it transforms into the system of propositions. The question of philosophy turns into the big Answer, logico-metaphysical

⁷ HUSSERL, Edmund. *Crisis of European Sciences*, p. 366.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

⁹ HUSSERL, Edmund. *Formal and transcendental logic*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, p. 224.

¹⁰ HUSSERL, Edmund, BOEHM, Rudolf. *Erste Philosophie (1923/24)*. Zweiter Teil, Theorie der phänomenologischen Reduktion. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1996, p. 19.

identity from which everything is derived, created. What is then inherited in our tradition, are the answers and names of the problems but not these problems themselves, from which the correlative answering originates.

To understand the transformation of the “world”, *KOSMOS* into *universum*, I need to say a few words about Husserl’s analyses of pre-scientific life-worlds. Husserl calls the structure of pre-scientific “worlds” subjectively-relative. That means that the center of their “world” was their own home, their living-space, their “Ours”. And this “ours” was surrounded by “theirs”.

But in the transformation of the sense of knowledge also the humanity of human is transformed. Political, power pretension to dominate the world as a whole, universally, to create the universal space, controlled by power, could come into being only where the world is understood as a universal space where every rational being must accept the same “rational” order. Because to the sense of the knowledge belongs that every being – at least every rational being – must accept what is true. In this rational being the new concept of humanity as something that is not based in subjective-relative “ours”, but in the trans- or supranational concept of humanity is being born (Husserl speaks about “Romanisierung”). The political concept of the universal power and correlatively the world as *universum* is intrinsically connected with the transformation of the idea of philosophical asking and striving for the knowledge into the pre-judice (*Vor-urteil*) of higher order or to put it otherwise, where the results of philosophical asking are in the form of metaphysics conceived as the truth about the reality of our world.

Imperium Romanum is the power giant which tends to the power domination and maintaining the world. In a way, within this horizon of the world as universe, humans are not able to do politics otherwise than in the intention to make real this concept of the world. That means politics of *divide et impera* in which the space is totally dominated. Wars of the 20th century as the wars of the world, as the universal space controlled and dominated by power, where every piece of the Earth is accessible in an instant, is the realization of the concept of the world as universe. The transformation of world into a planet is only a consequence of this movement.

Where the philosophy is conceived as metaphysics (theology), as a true and absolute knowledge about the reality of this world, the center of man is not a *LOGOS* but a will. Within the imperial world, the will represents the instance which realizes the humanity of man. Human being does no longer understand himself in his “who *am* I” from the tension between appearance and idea, but from the task to make real, to create the world as universe, that means as *universum*, as a universal power. To put it other way round, the correlate of how I relate to what there is insofar as it is, is, the will. *Voluntas* is the way how human being understands himself within the European tradition.

The example could provide the analysis of the basic structures of Christian metaphysics. What is the center of human within the Christian-Roman horizon? It is the relation to the God-Creator (to be means to be created, *creatum*). What is the nature of this relationship? The core of the Christian is love. Love specifically directs me to God. That is, in love the right direction to God is realized. From the state of sin in which we strive instead of being-God for things that are worse, inferior than we ourselves into the state of grace and

relation to God. What represents the core which directs me to God, which directs me in the right direction? The knowledge is not enough here (dialogue *Protagoras*), the sinner knows that he is acting wrong and he is able to act wrong for the wrongness itself (Augustine contrary to *Nicomachean Ethics*: “Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim.”¹¹).

A fortiori: the sinner acts wrongly because he is led by the love to evil: he wants evil. The core of human being which directs myself to the good or bad, to being or to nothingness, is the will. In this sense, love is the rightly directed will. How rightly? Rightly oriented to Being, i.e., God. But that means that we always already know, what is good and bad, that we always already know, how it is with the reality of the world.

¹¹ ARISTOTLE. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a.

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