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ΆΚΡΙΒΕΙΑ AND ΠΑΙΔΕΊΑ: ON THE NECESSITY OF INVOLVING CLASSICAL NOTIONS IN CULTURE STUDIES AND CULTURE PRACTICES

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Annotations:

Цихонь Кшиштоф. Άκρίβεια і παιδεία: про необхідність залучення античних понять до досліджень культури й культурних практик

На основі розгорнутого філософського аналізу динаміки категорій «культура», «технологія», «майстерність», «меритократія» у сучасній культурі автор показує, що акцент на спеціалізації в європейській традиції призвів в останні десятиліття XX століття до майже повної відмови від поняття paideia та нехтування ідеєю освіченості на користь спеціалізації. З іншого боку, люди все більше дають собі звіт у тому, наскільки важлива для збереження демократичного ладу участь громадян та свідоме здійснення ними будь-якого вибору, що має вирішальне значення в різних аспектах громадського порядку. Будучи громадянином, потрібно проявляти певні здібності та навички, відмінні від освіти професіонала та близькі до paideii.

Цихонь Кшиштоф. Άκρίβεια и παιδεία: о необходимости привлечения античных понятий к исследованиям культуры и культурных практик

На основе развернутого философ ского анализа динамики категорий «культура», «технология», «мастерство», «меритократия» в современной культуре автор показывает, что упор на специализацию в европейской традиции привел в последние десятилетия XX века к почти полному отказу от понятия paideia и пренебрежению идеей образованности в пользу специализации. С другой стороны, люди все больше отдают себе отчет в том, как важно для сохранения демократического строя участие граждан и сознательное совершение ими любого выбора, имеющего решающее значение в разных аспектах общественного порядка. Будучи гражданином, нужно проявлять определенные способности и навыки, отличные от образования профессионала и близкие к *paideii*.

Cichon Krzysztof. Άκρίβεια and παιδεία: On the necessity of involving classical notions in culture studies and culture practices

On the basis of evolved philosophical analysis of the dynamics of such categories as “culture”, “technology”, “mastership” and “meritocracy” in modern culture the author demonstrates that the emphasis on specialization in European tradition in the last decades of 20th century has resulted in nearly absolute rejection of the notion “paideia” and neglecting the idea of education in favour of specialization. On the other hand, people are growing much better aware of the necessity for citizens to take part and make a conscious choice in order to preserve democracy and it is of crucial importance while dealing with various aspects of civil order. To be a citizen it is necessary to demonstrate certain skills and knowledge which differ from the education of a professional and are close to paideia.

Key words:

культура, технологія, метафора, правда, майстерність, меритократія, пайдейа.

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culture, technology, metaphor, truth, mastership, meritocracy, paideia.

The basic dichotomy of nature-culture is an invention of the modern era. Exactly the same as the Latin *natura* and its Greek prototype φύσις, derived from the Latin verb *coleo*, the word *cultura*, denoting care, occupation, and agriculture were formed in ancient culture. The role of language, or rather, a set of concepts through which we describe the environment and deal with it, is, of course, of basic character. A distinctive feature of modern culture (at least, since the spread of the category of progress, that is, from the second half of the XIX century) is “a short cultural memory”. More and more often new terms are invented or the old words acquire new meanings than their original meanings are used. From an environmental perspective, this practice reminds widespread tendency to use disposable bags. A significant part of the modern terminology is so narrowly defined that it is suitable only for “single-use”, it explains only one context. The result is an avalanche development of jargons and death of basic human skills of conversation or dialogue which is understandable to others.

The need to specialize in a particular area, as well as gain in-depth knowledge, seems to be the principle that controls the vast fields of education in developed societies. It also follows from the significant role which culture plays in modern technology and related branches of science (natural science). A particular value for all processes is repeatability. The technology which is not repeated ceases to be technology. Repeatability coincides with the concept of accuracy, unambiguity, measurability. The same principles are the foundation of knowledge in the natural sciences. Key issue in contemporary culture seems to be identification of repeatability with accuracy, which is understood as a synonym for a single action and in each case expresses a single value. Meanwhile, the repeatability is as much close to the concept of metaphor. The essence of repeatability is slightly different from the metaphor's “mechanism of functioning”, which repeats – moves to another place, another situation, the original meaning. No one would argue against the fact that science and technology must be accurate. But no sooner we start to emphasize that science and technology are based on the metaphor, it will turn out that this opinion (in modern culture) for great many seems at least incomprehensible, or even controversial. Because of some cultural reasons that are little known technology and metaphor seem to be the areas of human activity, which, according to popular opinion, should be clearly separated

from each other, or even kept apart to an extreme degree, which does not allow them to touch. It is possible that you ought to see the historical reasons in the reduction of mathematics to the calculation[1]. At least since the XIX century in teaching mathematics emphasis has been laid on the ability to solve arithmetic problems, on operations, based on the speed and certainty of operating numeric indicators. That part of mathematics, which is based on the transformation of characters, and not on the calculation of specific values, was the hallmark of the highest, elite mathematics. Mathematics as a universal knowledge of the character conversion is very close to the metaphor and far from this type of mentality, which, following Max Weber, can be defined as the universal and fundamental to Western culture – calculation, pragmatic rationalism[2].

This type of rationalism almost "instinctively" avoids any uncertainty, vagueness (English: *vagueness, vague*; French: *levague*, *vague*; German: *Vagheit; vage*), which are perceived as errors and negative traits. Ambiguity is considered the opposite of the truth. This is most clearly revealed in the famous maxim of Descartes, the meaning of which is to study and describe reality: "*clareetdistincte*", – and in a clear and distinct opposition of "the obscure judgment" ("*vagas*... & *mutabiles opinions*") to "reliable knowledge" ("*veram & certam scientiam*")[3].

This opposition gives rise to the modern tradition of scientific knowledge. Descartes' opinion is also particularly important because he translated the requirement of accuracy, certainty and measurability in Cartesian coordinates, which are the basis of most modern technology. Measurability of the image, including the image of reality – this is a broad question, largely beyond the scope of this article. Unmistakable defining of their place in space as well as objects around us is the main factor that affects our sense of security and control over the world around. In a culture that increasingly relies on the remote control properly and telepresence, clear system of Cartesian coordinates is irreplaceable. At the same time Descartes took this same requirement of clarity and precision to the concepts that are much more metaphorical nature and location of which in the space is very difficult to determine unambiguously. Such concept is "the truth". According to Descartes, that is "*illudomneesseverum, quodvaldeclareetdistinctepercipio*"[4].

The truth is a necessary concept for science, but at the same time, its multiple meanings in the human world is much broader. Attempts at the truth limiting, exaggerated refining, and defining mostly lead to conflicts limit such basic values, as freedom is. The truth as the value present in the culture, is inevitably has a lot of meanings. Except the truth of scientific language, all other aspects of it cannot be expressed directly, but only through metaphor, which prevents its precise definition. The truth seems to be a concept, the essence of which is outside the scope of the accuracy and measurability. In other words, the truth, regardless of what it is like is still at least partially outside *akribei*. Greek άκρίβεια is one of the oldest definitions that describe the human need for accuracy and measurability of cognitive activity[5], the basic need for civilization, which is based on the technology. Describing the historical progress, Immanuel Kant saw it in the "culture of mobility" ("KulturderGeschicklichkeit"), which is to develop the technical skills to conquer nature and can "be a means to achieve any goal"[6].

You can easily find the trace of "mental" approach, rooted in *akribeii*, in texts relating to contemporary culture. Richard Senet, one of the most cited authors, dealing with a vast area in which you can apply the techniques that are typical of sociology, has introduced several opposition concepts, "skill" and "meritocracy", into a discussion of the main features of our civilization. Undisputed descendant of *akribeii* is, of course, *kunszt*[7]. By Sennett's observations we know what distinguishes the present from at least culture of the XIX and early XX century is gradual replacement of mastery as a skill needed to achieve success in life by a new type of a skill, which he calls the "meritocracy"; <...> mastery hardly finds a place in the institutions of flexible capitalism; <...> the better you understand how you should do something correctly, to a greater

[1] The latter attempts to preserve the role of mathematics uniting all knowledge - mathesis uniwersalis - could be considered the work of Leibniz, Mathesis universalis sive Logistica et Logica Mathematicorum. Still later attempts to unite philosophic thinking and mathematics has been made by Christian Wolff, Philos. prima sive Ontol. (1730) § 755.

[2] On the theme of M. Weber's influence on formation of the idea of the West q.v.: *Th. H. von Laufe: The world revolution of westernization (New York 1997).*

[3] [R. DESCARTES: Medit. V, 14 (1641). Oeuvr., hg. CH. ADAM/P. TANNERY (Paris 1897–1913) 7, 69.].

[4] [Medit. de prima philos. 3 (1641). AT 7, 35; vgl. Medit. 4f., a.O. 58. 65. 69f.; Sec. resp., a.O. 144; Disc. de la méth. 2. 4 (1637). AT 6, 18. 33.].

[5] [PLATON: Polit. 294 a–b; Arystoteles pisze o dokładności zgodnej z zasadami: ARISTOTELES: Eth. Nic. I, 1, 1094 b 12–25].

[6] I. Kant, Kritik der Urteilskraft §83Akademie-Ausgabe, Bd. V, p. 432 ; Metaphysik der Sitten, Akademie-Ausgabe Bd. V, p. 444; q.v. Werner Euller, Der „Wille der Natur" als Friedensgarantie? Zum Problem der teleologischen Begründung in Kants Friedenstheorie, [in:] Recht und Frieden in der Philosophie Kants: Akten des X. Internationalen Kant – Kongressen,hg. V. Rohden, R.R. Terra, G. A. de Almeida, M. Ruffig, Berlin 2008, Bd. 1, p. 297–298.; Bettina Stangneth, Kultur der Aufrichtigkeit: zum systematischen Ort von Kants „Religioninerhalbder Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft", Würzburg 2000, p. 32–38.

[7] "Speaking of mastery, we mean usually craftsmen and the importance that they attach to the violins, pots or clocks they make. However, it is too narrow understanding. There is also intellectual mastery, such as the desire to write clearly. Social mastery may be based on maintaining good conjugal relationship. The definition of mastery, covering all these phenomena, would sound like this: doing one's work for its very good execution. <...> Each type of mastery is accompanied by self-discipline and self-criticism, an important role is played by standards.<...> Mastery emphasizes objectivation. When Nicola Amati worked on violins, he did not try to express himself through them. He just made them. We are not interested what condition, either ecstasy or depression, Amati was during the work process. What is important is the shape of the holes and the type of the varnish. This is what objectivation represents – a thing is done for itself. <...> One can observe the results of skills and it is measured by specific and impersonal way: what is clean remains clean". Op. cit. Richard Sennett, Kultura nowego kapitalizmu, transl. by G. Brzozowski, K. Oslowski, (Warsaw 2010, [The Culture of the New Capitalism, Yale 2006]).

degree you depend on this. Institutions that rely on short-term transactions and constantly changing challenges do not go into these areas; in fact, they fear what the authorities define as in-growth (*ingrown*). The man who tries to perform some action carefully in order to do it well, may seem to be "ingrown" to other people in the sense of concentration on one thing, and mania, in turn, is inseparably accompanies the master. He is quite the opposite of a consultant who comes and goes away, but never "makes a nest". Moreover, the improvement of skills in any field takes time. <...> Improvement of skills through practice is contrary to the objectives of the institutions that are expected to perform a variety of tasks within a short time[8].

If we compare the "short-term deal" and "a quest for a short time", according to Sennett, it appears that the category of "speed" plays an important role in describing the modern age. Paul Virilio sees the most important feature of modern culture in the "speed": "Being involved in almost half a century long arms race of the mutual intimidation era, which took place between East and West, science was subjected to the evolution <...> at the expense of the single and useful for mankind truth it used to look for. Becoming gradually TECHNO-SCIENCE in the inevitable and disastrous entanglement of operating elements with the research, the purpose of which is the knowledge, modern science abandoned its philosophical bases and went astray, that did not cause any disturbance, perhaps with the exception of a few individuals acting in the name of environmental protection as well as clerics. <...> Operational reality of technical tools and decisive truth of scientific thought – these are the two fundamental aspects of the original knowledge, which, however, have recently become the unity and that does not seem to worry anybody. Science is less tied to the "the truth'", as it used to be, it is increasingly focused on the direct and immediate "efficiency", it goes into a decline, tending to civil death ..."[9].

Virilio emphasizes and contrasts two concepts to each other: *operational efficiency and decision*. They appear to be synonymous. It's hard to imagine any operation or action without decisions. The problem highlighted by Virilio, follows from the asymmetry of relations. Decisions are needed for the operational reality of technical tools, but the technical aspect of reality cannot be perceived as something that can replace the "crucial truth of thought". The key here is the word "decision". Its equivalent is a Greek κρίνω – share, decide, and its derivative κρίσις (Lat. c*risis*). The present decision is always a moment of crisis, verification of earlier standards, beliefs, so it cannot be done in a technical manner of *akribeii*. Usually a time of crisis like a situation assessment, comparison of opposing values is referred to as the moment in which the forces are found, remaining beyond human capabilities. In the ancient art such a moment has been associated with the concept of *Psychostasis* – the judgment of the soul. Iconography of *Psychostasis* is remarkably unchanged. Egyptian scenes of the Court of Osiris over the soul of the deceased (picture 1) differ from the Christian Last Judgment with the face of the Archangel Michael on the pictures painted in the XXI century (picture 2). There always appears a purely technical element associated with the accuracy of measurement, often represented as a scene of weighing, weight comparison. This is the aspect of the court which requires *akribeii*. However, confidence is important in the active, creative role of forces personified in gods and angels. These are not scales, but the person using them who passes the sentence.

Virilio's fears associated with growing confidence in the "operational reality of technical tools" are the same as the fear before the "mechanical sentencing" or decrease in the role of the court to the mechanism of the scales. Even in cultures that are most conducive to technology and standards, it is still difficult to imagine identification of the law system and the court with the impersonal mechanism. For a fair sentence for this assessment of the situation, except *akribeii*, that part of human consciousness is necessary, which is formed by *paideia*. Παιδεία is even more multi-valued concept than akribiya. Perhaps, its main feature was width, expressed most often as *enkykliospaidea* (ἐνκύκλιοςπαιδεία – literally – round, full paydeya). Its Latin equivalent, except the literal "*orbisdoctrinae*"[10], "*circulusdisciplinarum*"[11] – a circle of knowledge, was also *septemartesliberales*, i.e. seven skills, learning of which created the educational system formed in the late antiquity and preserved until the XVIII century.

The opinion that paideia is rounded, i.e. covers everything, influenced the formation of the root of the word *encyklopedia* that was derived from it. The biggest contribution to the re-distribution of this concept belongs to Werner Jaeger, the author of the basic and at the same time monumental work, which first appeared in 1933. It was Jaeger who paid attention to the fundamental importance of the initial segment of Aristotle's "Anatomy of Animals"[12]: "to each of the branches of knowledge <...> two approaches are possible. One of them was awarded the name of scientific knowledge, the other, in turn, would be better to define as a form of education (paideia). The characteristic feature of an educated man is that he is able to judge fairly or presenting any business, says about it intelligently or stupidly <...>, referring to the person having a general

[8] R. Sennett, cited, p. 85.
[9] Op. cit.: Paul Virilio, La bombe informatique, translated by S. Krulac, Warsaw 2006 [La bombe informatique, Paris 1998], p. 7–8.
[10] Quintilianus, Institutio oratoria, [Institutio oratoria 1, 10, 1.].
[11] St. Augustinus, Contra Academicos 3,7.
[12] In Russian translation – "On the parts of animals", q.v.: Aristotle. On the parts of animals, transl. by V. P. Karpov, M, 1937. – *editor's note*.

education, we mean a person who, so to speak, combines ability to speak out on various issues" <...>[13]. Jaeger points out that "in Aristotle we often find an ethical principle, from which he drew far-reaching consequences in the branch of theory of culture, namely that much advanced specialization (*akribeia*) cannot be combined with the education of a free man and a real ethical perfection (*kalokagathia*). Specialization is the case of either craftsman or professional[14]. Jaeger encourages another basic concept *kalokagathia*, created from the combination of two words: καλόςκαίάγαθός – beautiful and nice. Initially, even in Homer (Iliad XXIV 52) they are not only of ethical but also of aesthetic value. Paideia can be trained, if it is based on these two principles. In search of a better educational model one should pay attention to the fact that in modern culture we can trace rapprochement of aesthetics and ethics. A distinctive feature of art derived from the avant-garde tradition, is the emphasis on the social and moral value, often by refusing to care about the form, explicit neglecting the technique of manufacture (understood as κακτέχνη that is synonymous to *akribei*). Important role in this process of acquiring skills to solve or overcome the cognitive crisis plays ambiguity, metaphors which play a fundamental role in the arts and humanities.

It seems that, at least in the second half of the XX century, the opposite trends in the *paideia* can be traced. On the one hand, the emphasis on specialization has led, especially in the last decade of XX century, to the almost complete abandonment of the term *paideia* and the neglect of the idea of general education in spite of specialization. On the other hand, at the same time, people were getting more aware of how important is the participation of citizens for preserving the democratic system and their conscious making any choice, which is of crucial importance in different aspects of public order. As a citizen, you need to demonstrate certain abilities and skills that are different from the professional's education and close to *paideii*. People were aware that even the best group of focused specialists who do not have any abilities that go beyond their narrow specialization, does not guarantee the preservation of democracy as we know it[15].

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[13] Jaeger, Paideia. Formation of a Greek man [Paideia. Die Formung des griechischen Menschen], transl. by M. Plezia, Kh. Bednarek, Warsaw 2001, p. 527.
[14] Ibidem, p. 529 (aryst. Pol VIII 2 1337 b15).
[15]For the same reasons, precise and highly specialized education is preferred in many undemocratic countries. Such deliberately formed ethos was part of socialist culture in the Eastern Block.