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## **THE HUMANITIES IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD**

*Keynote lecture*

**First International Conference on Humanities**

**I.C.H.**

**“The Spiritual Quest in Humanities”**

Beder University

Tirana, Albania, 11 May 2012

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V3/09-V-2012

## (I) *Universitas litterarum*: origin and alienation

Under the conditions of modern industrial society, which is driven by the success of technology and the specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge, we have become oblivious of the meaning and idea of “university” as it was set out more than two centuries ago in the concept of *universitas litterarum*. This term signified the totality (or universality) of science, which was meant to be practiced and taught in the institutions that, since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, were referred to as places of *studium generale*.<sup>1</sup> The term “universitas litterarum” invoked – as goal for the *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* (the community of teachers and students) – the unity of knowledge which, in turn, is rooted in the search for truth in a comprehensive philosophical sense. The love of wisdom (φιλοσοφία) this idea refers to goes *beyond* the realm of positive science and locates every scholarly (scientific) effort as part of the search for the origin of being, the totality of the world (κόσμος), and the absolute. Contemporary uses of the word “university” such as “Technical University,” “Economical University,” or “Pedagogical University” are, thus, semantically incorrect, and are evidence of a *pars pro toto* approach that is typical of the modern utilitarian (or pragmatic) understanding of knowledge. The wider public, and in particular those in charge of education politics, nonetheless like to make use of a lofty term the real meaning of which modern society seems to be largely ignorant about.

If we want to understand the scope and nature of the humanities under the conditions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must look back at the history of knowledge. In this process, we will become aware of the universal orientation of scientific endeavours that, since classical antiquity, informed man’s quest for truth. Every scientific undertaking, in whichever area of specialization, was perceived as part of an effort at understanding our position in the world in the context of *absolute* reality. In this sense, the *metaphysical* dimension – as an aspect of scholarly research that *transcends* the confines of the phenomenal (or empirical) realm – was always present in the history of man’s scientific undertakings.

The unity of the worldview (*Weltanschauung*), rooted in philosophy, was traditionally expressed in the classical curriculum (that can be traced back to ancient Greece) of the seven “liberal arts,” namely the *trivium* of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, and

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<sup>1</sup> For details see Aldo Geuna, *European Universities: An Interpretive History*. Research Memoranda 008. Maastricht : MERIT, Maastricht Economic Research Institute on Innovation and Technology, 1996.

the *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. In the system of the medieval universities, these were followed by the advanced studies of theology, law, and medicine, all under the roof of one institution that, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward, was referred to as “*universitas litterarum*.” This *comprehensive* approach included the organizational unity of what are nowadays called the “natural sciences” and the “human sciences.” This *universitas*, and unity of purpose, was gradually lost, however, with the advent of modernity and the pressures of specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge that accompanied it, with each of the now separate areas undergoing further diversification and organizational separation.

The legacy of the classical approach, also referred to as the “humanistic” heritage, was still visible, until recently, in the structure and organizational setup of universities that upheld the universal approach, at least in name, in the form of a “*Faculty of Philosophy*” – a scheme which, for instance, existed in Austria until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Under this title, the disciplines that nowadays make up the faculties of humanities and of natural sciences were assembled in a unified organizational framework, with philosophy as the basic discipline, which every graduate had to study in addition to his specialization, whether this was mathematics, physics, languages, or any other subject in the vast array of areas of research that were covered by the respective faculty. All graduates, including those of natural science, obtained the degree “doctor of philosophy.” This ensured that specialized empirical research also paid attention to basic methodological questions and to the philosophy of science. In general, it favoured, and institutionally highlighted, the *importance of self-reflection* in every scientific undertaking, whether oriented toward practical application or not.

This universal approach, which had long been practiced under the classical idea of “humanist education,” has almost everywhere been abandoned under the pressures of expediency and economic efficiency. The search for truth – and the metaphysical quest that it entails – obviously had to be subordinated to (or abandoned for?) more practical and utilitarian considerations. The acquisition of “skills” was given priority over the love of wisdom. In Europe, and in the industrialized world in general, liberal arts education has been marginalized as a result of this trend towards the instrumentalization of knowledge. Today’s globalized environment, which, to a considerable extent, is shaped by economic interests, has further increased the pressures on the humanities, something that has become only too obvious in the current educational doctrine of the OECD (Organization for

Economic Co-operation and Development) with its almost exclusive emphasis on “skills” for the sake of competitiveness.<sup>2</sup> According to remarks by OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría, “governments need to become more effective in matching students’ and workers’ skills to the new needs of markets and having effective teachers that can do the job. (...) we need to prepare learners with ‘skills for a rapidly changing reality’.”<sup>3</sup> This is a perfectly understandable concern for an organization that aspires to be the vanguard of globalization. The problem is, however, that those skills are being predominantly interpreted not in a humanistic but in a narrow economic sense, or with priorities set by the economy.

Especially since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the humanities have been on the retreat everywhere in the industrialized world. In terms of methodology and scientific standards, and because of their practical value, the natural sciences, described as exact (empirical) disciplines, seem to have established their position as standard-bearers. The humanities in turn have begun to imitate natural sciences in regard to methodology and precision, but they are about to lose their grounding in the *conditio humana* (with its metaphysical dimension) and, to a considerable extent, also their relevance for the very subjects that are the object of their research. One might even diagnose a kind of “inferiority complex” on the part of the humanities vis-à-vis the better financed – and often more highly regarded – exact sciences. This development has also become apparent in a change in terminology in the English language where the term “science” (without an adjective) has become the description of natural science alone – as if other disciplines that use different methodologies (such as interpretation) and obtain data differently from external perception were not part of the scientific endeavour. This “exclusivist” position was vehemently defended by the exponents of the Vienna School of logical positivism who, by the second half of the last century, appeared to have largely prevailed over the phenomenological or hermeneutical approach, and who claimed for themselves a privilege for the definition of the criteria of scientific research.

The vacuum left by the objectivist approach that denies the scientific status of human sciences unless they confine themselves to external observation (i.e. the observation of external objects), and the deficiency of the corresponding instrumental understanding of

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<sup>2</sup> See the documents and reports published by the organization under the title “OECD Education Policy Forum – Investing in Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” OECD Education Ministerial Meeting, Paris, 4-5 November 2010, published at [www.oecd.org/education/ministerial/forum](http://www.oecd.org/education/ministerial/forum), visited on 5 April 2012.

<sup>3</sup> “Education Policy Committee at Ministerial Level: Remarks by OECD Secretary-General,” 4 November 2010, published at [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org).

(academic) education that is predominantly oriented towards skills and the practical use of knowledge (instead of wisdom) cannot be compensated on the basis of the empiricist paradigm. The methodological problems abound if humanities are treated as if they were natural sciences dealing only with *external* perception and reducing the mind to the status of a quantifiable, object-like matter. This is indeed the legacy of 19<sup>th</sup> century positivism, in particular of Auguste Comte's dogmatic approach, which emphatically excluded any religious and metaphysical dimension from scientific reasoning, and ultimately aimed to found "sociology" in the physical sciences. It is rather ironic that Comte tried to build a kind of "secular religion" (*Religion de l'Humanité*)<sup>4</sup> on these premises.

Along those empiricist lines, 20<sup>th</sup> century positivism has tried to exclude the mind even from the sphere of psychology for which consciousness was supposed to be a "black box," and which, as a scientific discipline, was only allowed to use information obtained from the observation of behavior in the sense of the movements and characteristics of human beings as mere physical objects in space and time. *Behaviorism*'s artificial reduction of scientific research to external perception, excluding introspection, has meant that psychology and the other human sciences based on it are totally deprived of the possibility to interpret human behavior in a meaningful, systematic manner. The advocates of this method should have paid attention to Edmund Husserl's profound phenomenological analysis (1936) of the "crisis of European sciences," which he diagnosed in their exclusion of the inner experience of the "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*).<sup>5</sup> Due to the absolute "denial of hermeneutics" according to the behaviorist maxim, human sciences are indeed, in more than one way, "lost in data" they cannot understand, a predicament that weighs all the more heavily under the ever more complex conditions of today's "information society." The subordination of the humanities to the needs of the economy, indeed their instrumentalization for goals set by powerful external actors, has been another consequence of the positivist approach.

The humanities, with their emphasis on inner experience ("introspection") – highlighting the importance of the phenomenological versus the objectivistic (or naturalistic) method – find themselves in a *defensive* position, a predicament that, in the

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<sup>4</sup> See his *Catéchisme positiviste, ou: Sommaire exposition de la religion universelle, en treize entretiens systématiques entre une Femme et un Prêtre de l'Humanité* (1852).

<sup>5</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. Translated, with an introduction, by David Carr. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970.

industrial societies of the West, has also been felt in the general downgrading of humanistic education at the level prior to academic studies, and especially in the abolishing of the teaching of the classical languages in secondary schools – with the result that people less and less understand the logical structure and semantic roots of most contemporary Western languages, including English, and, thus, become less skilled in the use of their mother tongue.

## **(II) Humanities as hermeneutics of life: the spiritual dimension**

An alternative to the reductionist approach of behaviorism that aims to derive the criteria for research in the humanities from the methods and requirements of the natural sciences is badly needed under the conditions of our globalized world with the *simultaneity*, felt more than ever before, of different cultures and civilizations. Nonetheless, the economic reality of globalization at the same time means a powerful tendency towards standardization and the uniformity of lifestyles. As the Director-General of UNESCO said, “It would be a mistake to think that uniformity makes understanding easier: it simply masks differences.”<sup>6</sup> Under the conditions of our “global village,” peace cannot be achieved without mutual appreciation of the “life-worlds” in which humanity has expressed itself through the history of civilization. The “amputated view of human nature,” typical of a reductionist approach, which David Brooks of the New York Times decried in a recent commentary on the need for a new humanism,<sup>7</sup> can become a dangerous obstacle to this effort. We thus have to overcome the “objectivistic prejudice” that has led to the disintegration of the *universitas litterarum*, and to rediscover the *hermeneutical* dimension of the humanities, which through the centuries has enabled the human being to position himself against the *universal* horizon of civilization and, thus, to better comprehend the respective epoch’s unique life-world, and realize his individual and collective identity.

A deeper understanding of man and his world – what Heidegger called *In-der-Welt-Sein* (“being-in-the-world”) in a comprehensive and interdependent sense – is indeed one of the basic goals of human sciences. It goes well beyond the values of mere erudition or social skills, which the pragmatic (or utilitarian) approach of those who give priority to the

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<sup>6</sup> Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, *A New Humanism for the 21st Century*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> “The New Humanism.” *The New York Times*, March 8, 2011, p. A27.

economy emphasizes. The humanities open up different horizons of world experience in distinct historical and social constellations, and enable each civilization to build on those experiences in man's quest for the universal ontological horizon ("Being as such") within which he can properly define, and understand, the *conditio humana*. This is, in fact, the lasting contribution of the humanities to the spiritual development of mankind. They are more than just an ephemeral form of collective self-reflection.

Through the wealth of knowledge accorded by the human sciences in terms of man's interpretation of the world, a civilization, a people, a nation is able to reach a deeper awareness of itself in terms of (a) learning about the origins and sources of its temporal identity (historical dimension); (b) its relation to other contemporary cultures and civilizations (dialogical dimension); and (c) its being able to transcend the "awareness of the moment," i.e. the actual perception of reality in a given "life-world" (*Lebenswelt* in the phenomenological sense), through the encounter with distinct perceptions of reality and the search for, or awareness of, the absolute in other contexts or epochs (metaphysical dimension). These characteristics make up the essence of *philosophical hermeneutics* – as the universal quest for understanding the relation (or inner link) between man and world, and they can provide a lasting foundation for a genuine *dialogue among civilizations* for which mankind's perpetual search of truth – through the knowledge of as wide a spectrum of cultural expressions as possible – is the common denominator. This is the idea of *philosophia perennis*, which cannot be separated from the "civilizational legacy" of the humanities, and one may rightly say that "a community of all humanity is necessary for a life fulfilled."<sup>8</sup>

In this sense of a comprehensive analysis of the *Lebenswelt* ("life-world") and the different perspectives and perceptions of reality, the humanities widen our intellectual horizon, allowing us to go beyond the realm of the material objects and putting us in touch with the spirituality experienced in other contexts and by previous generations, first and foremost in each civilization's "classical" period, and with the quest for eternal truth that is peculiar to them. The historical aspect is of particular importance as regards the shaping of a mature national identity insofar, in the words of African scholar E. A. Ayandele, the cultural heritage of a nation is "the mainspring of its spirituality."<sup>9</sup> Through the encounter

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<sup>8</sup> Irina Bokova, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> E. A. Ayandele, *African Renaissance: The Cultural Dimension* (1998), quoted according to Michael O. Maduagwu, "Globalization and its Challenges to National Cultures and Values," in: Hans Köchler (ed.),

with the wealth of human experience – the “cultural heritage of mankind” (understood not in a legalistic, but a deeper philosophical sense), the humanities open up a universal ontological horizon of understanding (*Seinshorizont*) that complements the approach of the natural sciences and assists each generation anew on the path to understanding the transcendent dimension of life. The search for a reality beyond the visible, which is present in all phenomenal perception, has indeed been the driving force in diverse contexts of cultures and civilizations. It was a genius of natural science who has emphasized this spiritual nature of man’s intellectual endeavours in a most lucid manner: “The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science.”<sup>10</sup> (Albert Einstein)

The spiritual aspect of the humanities comes to fruition in the development of the *hermeneutical* method, and specifically in the pursuit of cultural hermeneutics, which brings each generation anew in touch with the different expressions of the *conditio humana*. The unique dimension of this undertaking is more adequately expressed in the German word for the humanities: *Geisteswissenschaften*, “spiritual sciences” (or “sciences of the spirit”). It is a term that emphasizes the importance of introspection (the observation of the inner world) as their central method, in distinction from the observation of external objects in the *Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences). In view of the ontological orientation of spirituality, which is directed at the universal horizon of being (*Seinshorizont*), emphasis of the spirituality in the humanities must in no way be confused with *anthropocentrism*. Accordingly, it should also be possible to overcome the antagonism between science and religion whose approaches are complementary, not contradictory. Spirituality allows us to experience harmony in relationship with the self, the others, the natural environment and the universe.<sup>11</sup>

If spirituality, as explained in a contemporary description, means (a) *authenticity* of existence, (b) the search for *meaning* of and in life, (c) awareness of *interconnectedness*

*Globality versus Democracy? The Changing Nature of International Relations in the Era of Globalization.* Vienna: International Progress Organization, 2000, p. 223.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Einstein, *The World as I See It*. San Diego, CA: The Book Tree, 2007 (originally published 1935), p. 5. – Text according to the original German version: “Das Schönste, was wir erleben können, ist das Geheimnisvolle. Es ist das Grundgefühl, das an der Wiege von wahrer Kunst und Wissenschaft steht.“ (*Mein Weltbild* [1934]. Ed. Carl Seelig. West-Berlin: Ullstein Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1956, p. 9.)

<sup>11</sup> M. A. Burkhardt, “Spirituality: An Analysis of the Concept,” in: *Holistic Nursing Practice*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1989), pp. 69-77. – See also D. N. Elkins, L. J. Hedstrom, L. I. Hughes, J. A. Leaf, and C. Saunders, “Toward a humanistic-phenomenological spirituality,” in: *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (1988), pp. 15-18.

not only in terms of social relations, but also in regard to the ontological level, and (d) awareness of *the transcendent*,<sup>12</sup> the humanities are indeed ideally suited to assist man – in this age of technology, or industrial civilization – in understanding himself. Of special importance for the definition and comprehensive understanding of the *conditio humana* is the fourth dimension of spirituality: awareness of the transcendent. As a reality that goes beyond phenomenal experience – what Kant has called the *Ding an sich* (“thing-in-itself”) or the “intelligible,” the transcendent at the same time shapes our concrete existence (*In-der-Welt-sein*/“being-in-the-world”). In this regard, the essence of humanity has not changed even under the conditions of a globalized economy with its drive towards cultural uniformity that results from competitive pressure and the imperatives of efficiency.

As succinctly put in an earlier report by the Rockefeller Commission on the Humanities, the human sciences “mirror our own image and our image of the world. Through the humanities we reflect on the fundamental question: what does it mean to be human? (...) They reveal how people have tried to make moral, spiritual, and intellectual sense of a world in which irrationality, despair, loneliness, and death are as conspicuous as birth, friendship, hope, and reason.”<sup>13</sup> The humanities are thus a paramount, and in educational terms indispensable, expression of the self-reflection of our species.

In conformity with their spiritual dimension, the basic orientation of *education* (which, except for the dogmatic behaviorist and empiricist, itself belongs to the domain of humanities) will have to be redefined. In addition to and above the acquisition of (mainly technical) “skills” and the ever more common emphasis on the instrumental aspect of “human capital,” the educational effort will have to focus on the development of deeper talents, namely on what might be called the “spiritual skills” of, among others, *attunement* (in the sense of a comprehensive understanding of, or empathy for, other life-worlds, cultures and civilizations) and *equipoise* (enabling the human being to reach equilibrium in the conduct of his life).<sup>14</sup>

Rediscovering the transcendent dimension of life, and reestablishing a link with the wisdom of other civilizations and epochs, which is the spiritual aspect *par excellence* of

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<sup>12</sup> The four aspects are mentioned in a definition suggested by Fahri Karakas, “A Holistic View of Spirituality and Values: The Case of Global Gülen Networks,” in: *Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2008), pp. 56-84.

<sup>13</sup> *The Humanities in American Life: Report of The Commission On the Humanities*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1980, Chapter I: “The Humanities in America,” p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> See the description of those talents by David Brooks, *op. cit.*

the humanities, also means to recover the unity of sciences (*universitas litterarum*) that was lost as a result of the diversification and specialization since the advent of positivism and dogmatic rationalism, a process that was further accelerated with 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialization and 20<sup>th</sup> century globalization. Under the dictate of the economy, virtually all scientific endeavours, including the human sciences, have come under intense and sustained scrutiny as to their instrumental value.

### **(III) Rehabilitation of the humanistic project in the era of globalization**

Reinstating the humanities in their rightful place – as core disciplines in mankind’s civilizational project, encompassing all epochs and expressions of the *conditio humana* – will be an important counterweight to the preponderance of a materialistic, objectivistic and utilitarian worldview that not only threatens cultural diversity but may endanger global peace and justice in the long term.

The voluntarism of our technological age has resulted in a state of inner emptiness, or spiritual vacuum, and has confronted the individual and society with *existential contradictions* that cannot be resolved even with the most advanced knowledge of nature and technological innovation. The absolutely posited will, individual as well as collective, is inevitably stopped by the physical limits, and finally negated by the reality of physical death. The ultimate vanity, indeed failure, of an approach that is exclusively oriented towards the self-realization of the subject in isolation from a deeper reality is obvious.

The humanities have proven to be an effective antidote to the “emptiness of positivism” that has become the trademark of modern consumer society, which, in its fixation on instant gratification, seems to exclude everything that goes beyond the phenomenal realm. In all epochs of recorded history since the classical era, humanities have helped man to reach a deeper level of self-awareness, enabling him to relate his interpretation of the world to those of other civilizations. According to the perennial ideal of γνῶθι σεαυτόν (“know thyself”), human sciences have substantially contributed to what may be called the “dialectics of cultural self-comprehension,”<sup>15</sup> enabling man to more fully

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<sup>15</sup> For details of this notion see the author’s lecture: *Cultural-philosophical Aspects of International Cooperation*. Studies in International Cultural Relations, II. Vienna: International Progress Organization, 1978, ch. IV, pp. 7ff.

understand himself in relation to the other. In this sense of mature self-reflection, they may also become an important element for a global dialogue among civilizations.<sup>16</sup>

What is needed, under the present circumstances, is not a kind of “humanistic nostalgia” or a sterile revival of old traditions and romantic historicism, but a rediscovery, in fact *reinvention*, of the *universalist* conception of academic studies according to the Humboldtian ideal, indeed a “new humanism” in the true sense. This would mean a *restitutio ad integrum* of man’s intellectual endeavour as such, and specifically a *studium generale* for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that rehabilitates the interdisciplinary approach. The integration of natural and human sciences, split into many isolated disciplines as a result of numerous efficiency-oriented “reforms” in the last decades, remains a major desideratum. Man must not be “lost in history,” but he must not be reduced to the state of an object of behaviorist observation either.

These considerations almost naturally lead to a *plaidoyer* for a *new self-assertion* of the humanities as disciplines that have been reformed and reinvigorated, and that have overcome their inferiority complex vis-à-vis the natural and applied sciences. The scholarly community should be aware that human sciences are more than mere supportive disciplines in terms of social techniques, and more than an expensive, but useless, ornament of an efficiency-oriented technical society. One should thus reconsider their almost total subordination to the needs of the economy, which seems to have become the trend of the times. What is required is not merely a reevaluation and rearrangement of priorities but a paradigm change as to what “knowledge” means in a knowledge-based society.

As regards the European cultural space, and in particular the cultural policies of the European Union, one should seriously rethink the narrow utilitarian approach of the so-called Bologna model of higher education that has led to a rather rigid compartmentalization of university curricula and has undermined the *interdisciplinary* approach, which has been so vital for the flourishing of the humanities, and in particular of philosophy. Equally, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development should reconsider its “education philosophy” with its almost exclusive emphasis on

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<sup>16</sup> Hans Köchler, *Philosophical Foundations of Civilizational Dialogue: The Hermeneutics of Cultural Self-comprehension versus the Paradigm of Civilizational Conflict*. International Seminar on Civilizational Dialogue (3rd: 15-17 September 1997: Kuala Lumpur), BP171.5 ISCD. Kertas kerja persidangan / conference papers. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Library, 1997.

(technical/practical) “skills” at the expense of a broader humanistic approach. This powerful organization of the industrialized world should not alone focus on questions of “skills demand and supply” and on how “to help close the loop between education, training, skills and employment,”<sup>17</sup> but should also acknowledge that the acquisition of wisdom is more than a mere “cost factor” that is external to the economy.

The humanities can, and must, play a central role in the refocusing towards a *holistic* – and ultimately spiritual – understanding of man’s quest for knowledge. Accordingly, a utilitarian, skills-oriented system of research and education will have to be transformed into a wisdom-oriented methodology that will not further alienate the human race, living under the conditions of the technical-industrial civilization, from the questions as to the origin and meaning of life, including the reflection on the norms that underlie the emergence and flourishing of that very civilization.

The new “humanistic” approach, in tandem with the rediscovered meaning of *studium generale*, will have important implications in terms of culture and social order in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

- (a) Due to the universalist nature of the humanities, this approach will help to challenge the primacy of the economic considerations and, at least indirectly, contribute to a more just and balanced social order, domestically as well as internationally.
- (b) On the basis of the spiritual dimension and potential of the humanities, it will promote and rehabilitate the idea of inter-disciplinary research, and help to overcome the (mostly artificial) separation of natural and human sciences into a myriad of disciplines.
- (c) If the humanities do not continue to remain in a state of positivistic isolation, and if their spiritual dimension is indeed rediscovered, this will also have a unifying and healing effect in terms of the antagonisms and contradictions of today’s “multicultural society” at the national, regional and global levels. While an exclusively *economic* globalization tends to expand its peculiar civilizational paradigm and value system

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<sup>17</sup> “Education Policy Committee at Ministerial Level: Remarks by OECD Secretary-General,” *loc. cit.*

over the rest of the world, risking a “clash of civilizations,”<sup>18</sup> the humanities, by virtue of their *transcultural* hermeneutical potential, will, without detriment to national identity, contribute to what Gadamer has characterized as “fusion of horizons” (*Horizontverschmelzung*), and gradually open up a “universal horizon of understanding”<sup>19</sup> that comprises the social as well as the ontological dimensions. This will also bring us closer to the universalist vision expressed by the Director-General of UNESCO which she expressed in the following words: “Together, cultures from across the world form a single human civilization.”<sup>20</sup>

- (d) Ultimately, the humanities, reinstated in their rightful place in the project of civilization, will help mankind to reach a higher state of *spiritual awareness*. Enabling man to relate to *other* perceptions of reality (“life-worlds”) in a comprehensive sense, they will deepen individual as well as collective self-reflection. In tandem with the natural sciences – that provide a sense of “cosmological depth” – the humanities will thus be able to provide a sense of metaphysical destiny, which seems to have been largely lost in modern technical civilization.

In general terms, the “rationale” (in the sense of the Latin *ratio* or Greek *λόγος*) of the humanities, as evidenced in these few examples, may help mankind – that seems caught in a web of self-objectivization and in a futile effort to control reality, or to become the master of the world – to *transcend* a narrow pragmatic worldview towards a comprehensive *hermeneutics of life*, and to get out of the impasse of extreme, and ultimately empty, voluntarism. A self-centered (and self-delusional) Nietzschean “will to power” (*Wille zur Macht*) – which seems to be typical of economic globalization – lacks direction, hinders self-reflection and is incapable to conceive of goals that lie beyond the finite realm.

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<sup>18</sup> Hans Köchler, *The Meaning and Challenges of Education in the 21st Century*. Lecture delivered at the 10<sup>th</sup> Commemorative International Forum of the Nomura Center for Lifelong Integrated Education. UNESCO, Paris, 9 November 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 1986. (English version: *Truth and Method*. Trans. by Garrett Barden and John Cumming. London: Sheed and Ward, 1975.)

<sup>20</sup> Irina Bokova, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

The “New Humanism” that the reintegration of human sciences into the canon of academic education will enable is rooted in their *spiritual potential*, which is to be rediscovered as the basic element of “deep science” (in the genuine philosophical meaning) – whether in the field of humanities proper or of natural science. The reconstitution of the unity of sciences, in the best sense of the humanistic tradition, that must accompany this process, will help us understand the *organic connection* between spirituality and rationality, with philosophy and religion in their proper place, as it was aptly described by Albert Einstein almost a century ago: “The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path to genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of life, and the fear of death, (...) but through striving after rational knowledge.<sup>21</sup> In the true sense of *scientia perennis*, the humanities are as well part of this rationality (or  $\lambda\delta\gamma\omega\varsigma$ ) as the natural sciences – a heritage that must not be abandoned under the pressures of the moment.

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<sup>21</sup> Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*. (Based on *Mein Weltbild*, edited by Carl Seelig, and other sources. New translations and revisions by Sonja Bargmann.) New York: Crown Publishers, 1954, p. 49. (Emphasis by the author.)