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EVANGELOS MOUTSOPOULOS
(1930-2021)

by Prof. Georgia Apostolopoulou



*Academician Evangelos Moutsopoulos
while receiving the title of Honorary Professor by the University of Peloponnese*

On 7th June 2021, the prominent philosopher Evangelos Moutsopoulos died in Athens. He was a Full Member of the Academy of Athens, Honorary Rector and Professor Emeritus of the University of Athens, Honorary President of the Greek Philosophical Society, Founder and President of the Greek Society for Philosophical Research as well as Founder and Editor of its review, *Diotima*, Co-President of the International Academy for Philosophy, Honorary President of the Association 'The Friends of the Library of Alexandria', Honorary Professor of the University of Peloponnese, President of the Ligue Franco-Hellénique, Honorary Member of the Hellenic Society for Aesthetics.

Evangelos Moutsopoulos was born on 25th January 1930 in Athens. He studied classical phi-

lology and philosophy at the University of Athens, and he went on to study philosophy and attend lectures in music and musicology in Paris. Short after his *Doctorat d'État* in Paris (1958), he was elected Professor of Philosophy at the University of Aix-en-Provence (1958). He returned to Greece and was elected Full Professor of Philosophy at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (1965), and then at the University of Athens (1969), where he taught until his retirement (1997). He was elected Rector (1976) and later Professor Emeritus (1997) of the University of Athens. Further, he was a Full Member of the Academy of Athens (since 1984), he served as Supervisor of the Research Center of Greek Philosophy of the Academy of Athens and as Editor of its periodical, *Philosophia* (since

1984). Further, he was a member of numerous academic institutes, academies, and philosophical societies, such as the Institut de France and the Institut International de Philosophie (Paris), as well doctor *honoris causa* of several Greek and foreign universities. Moutsopoulos taught philosophy at several European and American universities, among others at Toulouse, Paris, Washington, Düsseldorf, and Bologna. He was ‘Commandeur de la Légion de l’Honneur’ (France) as well as of the ‘Order of the Phoenix’ (Greece). He was awarded many distinctions, among others the European Herder Prize, the Great Medal ‘David the Invincible’ of the Armenian Philosophical Academy, the ‘Prix de l’ Association des Études Grecques’, the Golden Medal of the City of Athens.

Evangelos Moutsopoulos was a good friend of the leading Armenian philosopher Georg Bruntian (†2015). As co-residents of the International Academy for Philosophy, both philosophers organized congresses in Yerevan and Athens, promoting philosophical collaboration and edited the Proceedings. Moutsopoulos was also a Member of the Advisory Board of the Periodical *Wisdom*.

Moutsopoulos is the author of more than 80 books and more than 400 articles and conference papers published mainly in French and Greek and also in English, while some of his principal works have been translated into other languages. His first major publications indicate the broad horizon of his philosophical theorising: His work entitled *La musique dans l’œuvre de Platon* (1959) points to his interest in the systematic potential of Platonism exposed in his books on Plato, Plotinus and Proclus as well as in numerous articles on significant issues of this living tradition up to our days. His work entitled *Le problème du beau chez Petros Vrailas-Armenis* (1964) introduces his initiatives concerning Neo-Hellenic Philosophy, such as the critical editions of texts as well as the explanation of important problems of Neo-Hellenic philosophy from a systematic perspective. His monograph entitled

Forme et subjectivité dans l’esthétique kantienne (1964) indirectly points to his distance from Hegel’s all-embracing theory in terms of the Absolute.

These works manifest Moutsopoulos’ emphasis on aesthetics as well as on philosophy of art, especially of music, as constitutive parts of his philosophy, which will be renewed and restructured, as it is evident in several of his books and articles. Among them are his books *The Aesthetic Categories: Introduction to an Axiology of the Aesthetic Object* (1970, in Greek), *Poïesis et technè: Idées pour une philosophie de l’art* (3 vols, 1994), *The Aesthetics of Ethics* (2009, in Greek). However, it is worth mentioning that Moutsopoulos enlarges his version of the philosophy of spirit, and, at the same time, he focuses on the problem of the activity of consciousness. Thus, the initial exposition of the course of the spirit through beings, ideas and values, presented in Moutsopoulos’ three-volume work entitled *The Course of Spirit: Beings, Ideas, Values* (1974–1977, in Greek), is continued through other discursive means as a broader philosophical theory that could be considered as dynamic phenomenological structuralism.

Moutsopoulos is known as the philosopher of ‘kairos’. He connects it with the self-affirmation of consciousness as consciousness and the activity of consciousness. While kairos usually means the minimum of time, Moutsopoulos considers it the ‘optimum of intensity’, located between ‘not yet’ and ‘no more’ and indicating the activity of consciousness regarding the flux between becoming and being. While consciousness organizes the flux into structures according to its phenomenological intention, it realizes it as the “kairification” of temporality and spatiality. Nonetheless, consciousness faces, on the one hand, the kairification of the future and, on the other hand, the non-fulfilling past, and it develops the dynamics of restructuring the ambiguous and contradictory flux towards more being, i.e. towards the rewarding fulfilment of existence. Moutsopoulos considers intentionality and kair-

icity as constitutive elements of rationality in the broader sense and focuses on the capacity of the ‘imaginaire’ that produces images in which the kairic activity of consciousness presents the world. In this regard, the image indicates the transition from the irrational towards the rational, from becoming to being and, at the same time, it achieves only quasi-being status. However, this quality corresponds to the intrinsic dialectics promoting the creativity of consciousness in terms of intentionality. While Moutsopoulos focuses on the ‘imaginaire’, he introduces significant revisions in the aesthetics and philosophy of art. Thus, the work of art corresponds to the kairic activity of consciousness and points to an eminent point of creation and fruition, creation and contemplation. These issues are exposed in Moutsopoulos’ major works such as *Philosophy of Kairicity* (1984, in Greek), *Kairos: La mise et l’enjeu* (1991), *La conscience de l’espace* (1997), *Variations sur le thème du kairos: De Socrate à Denys* (2002), *Kairicité et liberté* (2007), *Reflets et résonances du kairos* (2010), *L’univers des valeurs, univers de l’homme: Recherches axiologiques* (2005).

Moutsopoulos’ innovative contribution to the research of Greek philosophy from antiquity up to the present time includes publications and initiatives supporting this research. His publications are guided by a systematic interest. Some of them can be selected and added to those mentioned previously: *Pre-Socratic Thought: From Mythos to Logos* (1978, in Greek), *Le problème de l’imaginaire chez Plotin* (1980, 2000), *La structure de l’imaginaire dans la philosophie de Proclus* (1985, 2006), *Structure, présence et fonction du kairos chez Proclus* (2003), *Le problème du beau chez Petros Vrailas-Armenis* (1964), *Petros Brailas-Armenis* (1974), *Bergson’s Critique of Plato’s Philosophy* (1962, in Greek). As the editor, he organized a group of researchers promoting the work for the *Proclus Lexicon*. His book *Philosophie de la culture grecque* (1998) introduces a significant issue in the theory of values since it deals with the locali-

ty and universality of cultural values. Moutsopoulos founded and directed the Center of Neo-Hellenic Research and Editions. Further, he created and directed the series *Corpus Philosophorum Graecorum Recentiorum* (CPGR) that includes the works of Neo-Hellenic philosophers in a critical edition. It should be mentioned that Moutsopoulos defines the beginning of Neo-Hellenic philosophy in the 14th century when the Greek philosophy of Byzantium acquires a European character through the translation of Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa theologiae* into Greek by Demetrios Kydones. Therefore, CPGR begins with the critical edition of Demetrios Kydones’ translations. Numerous articles and conference papers by Moutsopoulos explain significant themes of philosophy in its different epochs.

Moutsopoulos is a prominent philosopher as well as an appreciated composer and musicologist. Some of his piano works (*Works I-II*) were conducted by the pianist Chara Tompra (†2020) and are available on two CDs. Besides, some of his ‘Lieder’ were performed by the Choir Arioso, under C. Vassilicou’s direction, with the soprano Martha Arapi and the pianist Calliope Germanou, and are available in one CD. All these were sponsored by ‘Lilly, pharmeserve’. As a musicologist, he set out his research in music and the philosophy of music. In fact, he follows Socrates and considers music as the paradigm of philosophy also in terms of his philosophy of kairicity. Among his works on the philosophy of music are: *The Aesthetics of Johannes Brahms: An Introduction to the Phenomenological Philosophy of Music* (in Greek, 1986), *La philosophie de la musique dans la dramaturgie antique: Formation et structure* (1975), *La musique dans l’œuvre de Platon* (1959, 1989, 2000, in Greek 2010), *La philosophie de la musique dans le système de Proclus* (2003).

Moutsopoulos, as a university teacher, educated generations of students in philosophy and contributed to the broader presence of philosophy in academia and society. He was very active also as Emeritus. He promoted the co-operation

of researchers through organizing projects, meetings and public seminars; he participated in and supported conferences in Greece and abroad. His

students and colleagues dedicated special volumes to honour his outstanding contribution to philosophy, *paideia*, and culture.