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4/2013

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THE ISUD MEETING, ATHENS 2013

This part of the Dialogue and Universalism issue presents the lectures delivered during the ISUD Meeting at the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy. The ISUD participated actively in the Congress together with the mostly influential philosophical societies of the world. The ISUD presence at the Congress manifests the potency of the society and its continued commitment in dialogue transcending the borders of societies, groups of interests, nations, and cultures.

The lecturers, who are all the ISUD members, demonstrate—by investigating concrete problems—that all past and present human culture is a system of mutually interconnected elements, differing one from another in some respects and similar in others. The lectures show that cultural affinities, also of grounding type (these grounding affinities may be treated as universal roots of all cultures), are associated with cultural diversities in dynamic syntheses. Such dialectic nets of the diversities and similarities allows for inter-cultural communication, and for enriching each part of dialogues if the diversities are respected and preserved in modified forms. The lecturers investigate the following cases of interconnections between cultures: similarities between ancient Greek and old Indian philosophies (Hope Fitz), the ancient Greek roots of now eligible conceptions of men (Christopher Vasilopoulos), a clash of Plato's thought with modern poetry (Panos Eliopoulos). Lilian Karali presents the changes of the terms "culture" and "art" through history; the changes are relevant for the problem of intercultural dialogue. Those studies, together with Jean A. Campbell's considerations on global stewardship, accentuate once again the importance of the ISUD mission.

Małgorzata Czarnocka
Deputy Editor of Dialogue and Universalism

Hope Fitz

**A COMPARISON OF ANCIENT GREEK AND ANCIENT INDIAN
PHILOSOPHY BY COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHERS
IS NECESSARY FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROOTS
OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT**

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I give examples of the similarities in thought which I have found in the works of philosophers and thinkers of ancient Greece and ancient India. Being a comparative philosopher, I have worked with both traditions for many years. In fact, the more I do research in both traditions, the more similarities I have found in various views or perspectives, beliefs and values.

After briefly explaining some of the similarities, I argue that an ongoing exploration and comparison of these two great traditions can help humans to understand the origins of knowledge, especially philosophical knowledge, and that because the study involves both Western and non-Western traditions, it will require comparative philosophers to undertake the study. Furthermore, since the study will involve research concerning the two cultures, anthropologists, linguists, and some historians will also be needed in this undertaking.

Keywords: ancient Greece philosophy; ancient India philosophy; origins of knowledge; roots of philosophy; comparison of cultural traditions.

As a comparative philosopher, by training, teaching, research, publications and presentations,¹ I have long been interested in similar thought among some

¹ My Ph.D., from Claremont Graduate School, is in Asian and Comparative Philosophy. Also, I teach comparative philosophy and my most of my publications and presentations involve comparative philosophy.

of the philosophers and thinkers from ancient Greece and ancient India.² Let me briefly mention this thought, involving views or perspectives, beliefs and values, and then argue that it is comparative philosophers who will be needed for an ongoing exploration of the similarities and connections between these great ancient philosophical traditions. Also, in studying the philosophies, the two cultures will need to be compared and this will involve the research of anthropologists, linguists and historians as well as comparative philosophers.

Regarding the similar views held by the ancient Greek and ancient Indian philosophers and thinkers, let us first compare Plato's metaphysics with that of the predominant Hindu school of philosophy called *Advaita Vedanta*, whose roots are ancient³ Plato's philosophical system involves an ontology in which there is a realm of Becoming involving change and a realm of Being involving permanence. Also, there is a presupposition that that which is ultimately unchanging is more real. According to one interpretation of the Hindu school of philosophy being considered, there is a similar ontology according to which the same presupposition is held and there are the two levels of Being and Becoming.⁴ Hence, that which is unchanging, an impersonal absolute reality, is taken to be more real than the level of Becoming or change which is what one finds in the physical or material world.⁵ Thus, in both Plato's ontology and one interpretation of a Hindu school of philosophy, the world is not unreal, but it is less real than the realm of Being which is unchanging.

Still focusing on metaphysics, there is a shared cosmology between the ancient Greeks and the Hindus. The ancient Greeks, including Socrates and Plato, believed in rebirth. For the Hindus, rebirth was and is one of if not the most fundamental beliefs. As we shall see, for those ancient Greeks, whom we are

² A paper, "Plato and Gandhi: Justice and *Ahimsa*," which I presented last year at the 9th Congress of the International Society of Universal Dialogue, Olympia, Greece, June 22–27, 2012, won a monetary award as one of the two best papers delivered at the conference.

³ *Advaita* means non-dual; *Vedanta* refers to several metaphysical schools which hold that reality is unified. However, even though the roots of the *Advaita Vedanta* are ancient (Given a cyclical world view that did not pay much attention to dates, it is difficult to date much of the early Hindu material.), it was the famous *Advaitin* philosopher, *Sankara*, who lived about the 7th century A.D., who was able to take the ancient Vedic Literature, the *Advaita Vedanta Sutra* (the text with commentaries) and related works, to develop a clear, consistent, coherent and rigorous system of philosophy.

⁴ There are several passages in Sanskrit, written by Sankara, which can be interpreted in one of two ways. I remember that two of the Indian scholars assigned to teach a fellow student and me about Sankara, at Claremont Graduate University, had a friendly argument about which interpretation was correct. According to one interpretation, the presupposition of the ontology is that what is real is unchanging, so all else is ultimately known to be unreal. According to the other interpretation, which I now believe to be correct, the presupposition is that what is ultimately real is unchanging. According to this interpretation, the world is not unreal, but it is less real than that which is unchanging.

⁵ This belief turns on a presupposition described above according to which that which is ultimately real is unchanging. Again, the stricter presupposition is that which is real is unchanging.

considering, and for the Hindus, rebirth had to do with both ethics and spirituality.

Concerning ethics, both the ancient Greeks and Hindus subscribed to what we call “virtue theories”. Virtue theories are focused on character rather than rules or principles and, according to such theories, it is the teaching and development of virtues which form one’s character. However, unlike the predominately humanistic and naturalistic ancient Chinese philosophers, Greek philosophers, such as Socrates and Plato, as well as the Hindu philosophers, believed that one’s moral and spiritual development was ultimately determined by purification which is grounded in a belief in rebirth.⁶ For Hindus, this is still their most fundamental belief.⁷ To many westerners, who do not know Plato’s work, it is surprising to learn that both Socrates and Plato appealed to ancient Greek myths in rebirth.⁸ Furthermore, in the *Meno*, one reads that in the process of rebirth, one’s soul can be purified.⁹

Unlike his teacher Plato, Aristotle was focused on the physical world, and an explanation of both existence and function. However, although Aristotle did not subscribe to a belief in a realm of *Eidos* or Form apart from the material world or to the belief in rebirth, he did consider a realm of Being as an ultimate state of actualization which was a First Cause, Unmoved Mover and an Active Mind. Granted that the Active Mind did not interact with beings and things in the world, they were by degrees attracted to it.¹⁰ Interestingly, the Hindu philosophical school of *Samkhya*, which was written about the 7th Century B.C., and thus predates the work of Plato, involves an attraction between the physical

⁶ The *Dialogues* having to do with rebirth include the: *Republic*, *Meno*, *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus*. Also, whereas more recent critics of Plato tend to ignore or diminish the importance of rebirth, the earlier Plato scholars paid attention to its relevance in Plato’s philosophical system. These scholars included: Taylor, A.E.. 2012. *The Mind of Plato*. Whitefish, MT: Literary Licensing; Shorey, Paul. 1933. 1978 (new edition). *What Plato Said*. Chicago: Chicago University Press; Barker, Ernest. 1964. *Greek Political Theory: Plato and His Predecessors*. London: Methuen.

⁷ Hindus hold that the Karmic Law, i.e., a cosmic law, along with one’s *dharma*, i.e., sense of duty and righteousness, which is based on one’s class or caste, determines one’s destiny.

⁸ When one considers the many similarities between Plato’s philosophy and that of the Hindus, and, to some extent, the Jains, one would tend to classify him with these two South Asian traditions. According to one classification of religions/philosophies, these traditions are classified as acosmic, because the ultimate is taken to be transcendent. This is in contrast to the classification of East Asian, Homeric Greek and some other traditions as cosmic in that the ultimate is located within the world. A third classification involves those traditions which accept the view that an all powerful God is both transcendent and imminent, i.e., of the world. These traditions are classified as monotheistic or historical. According to these traditions, humans make a binding agreement with God to live out life according to his plan. In turn they are offered an opportunity to be saved from death.

⁹ The problem is which part or parts of the soul can be purified and hence saved? In the *Timeus*, only the reasoned part of the soul will be saved. I wrote about the problems with the tripartite soul in the paper, “Plato and Gandhi: Justice and Ahimsa.” See footnote 2.

¹⁰ Apparently this had to be the case in order for the Active Mind to be the First cause.

world (*Prakrti*) and the realms of pure consciousness (*Purusa*) which, in this system, are equally real. There is not a complete work on this earliest of philosophical systems, so it is difficult to understand the attraction as set forth in the texts, but then I find attraction unsatisfactory in Aristotle's writings.

I can understand Aristotle's claim that what he calls "human intellect" is different in kind from the material self or material beings, and that it speculates on that which is more actualized than itself. However, to say that it is attracted to that which is more actualized makes no sense to me. As to other levels of attraction from the plants to the animals and animals to humans, all I can think is that this is another cosmology having to do with levels of being in which there is a striving of the lower levels to achieve higher levels. Yet in Aristotle's system, this cosmology lacks an adequate explanation for the striving. If rebirth were influencing all levels of existence, as it is with the Hindus and the Jains, this belief would make more sense. Also, such a belief could be strengthened if there were a cosmic law, such as the "Law of Karma" which Hindus and Jains and Buddhists accept.

The members of Jainism, which I take to be an offshoot of Hinduism, are called *Jains* or *Jainas*. Their description of the goal of an individual spiritual journey is similar to Aristotle's description of ultimate reality. According to the Jains, each living being has a soul that evolves from the lowest level of life to the life of a human who is an ascetic. This evolution is in actuality a spiritual development based upon purification. An ascetic, at an advanced stage, wherein he or she¹¹ has been purified, can achieve omniscience and live eternally in a state very similar to that which Aristotle described. For the Jains, there is no creator or savior God, but humans who have lived according to the basic principles of their tradition¹² can, after many lifetimes, achieve an eternal state of omniscience in which they suffer no pain and can engage in contemplative thought apart from the world.¹³

Regarding similarities of a social/political nature, we have the real state in ancient India and the ideal state which Plato envisioned concerning a division of labor. In ancient India, there are the famous *varnas* or classes, which later became castes.¹⁴ These traditional *varnas* include Priests (Brahmans) at the highest

¹¹ Jaini, P.S. 1979. *The Jaina Path of Purification*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. In one of the Jain sects, the *Digambaras*, only a male ascetic can achieve omniscience. A woman would have to be born again as a man.

¹² The five basic principles which apply to lay people and ascetics, but are much more strictly observed by ascetics are: 1. *ahimsa*, i.e., non-harm to any living being by thought, word or deed; 2. *Satya*, i.e., truth; 3. non-stealing or taking what is not yours; 4. *aparigraha*, i.e., non-possession; and 5/ *brahmachariya*, i.e., celibacy for the ascetics and for the lay persons, limiting one's sexual activities to one's spouse.

¹³ These active minds are free from the bondage and suffering of worldly life.

¹⁴ See footnote 7. The caste system was based on the *varnas* or classes which first appear in "A Hymn to *Purusa* (a cosmic man)" found in the Rg (pronounced Rig) Veda which is often dated about 1500 BCE, but is dated 1900 BCE in my Sanskrit text.

level, then warriors (*ksatriyas*) at the next level, then merchants (Vaisyas),¹⁵ and then the servants (*Sudras*).¹⁶ In Plato's ideal city-state, he advocates a similar system. However, rather than the priests as the elite rulers, there are the guardian rulers, who Plato held could be counted on to be just.¹⁷ Next, there are the ruled. They are comprised of guardian soldiers, the merchants, and the skilled labor force.¹⁸ In addition to these classes, there are also servants that support the system as they do in India, plus slaves that have been captured in battle.

Finally, let us look at the various aspects of human character or personality held by Plato, on the one hand, and the Hindu schools of philosophy on the other. In the Republic, Plato describes three parts to the soul, namely, reason, appetite and the spirited part of a person. He argues that reason must be in charge of appetite or desire and that spirited part of us which, according to one Plato scholar, has to do with our more elevated emotions involving what is right and wrong, and our inclination to make judgments.¹⁹ In Hindu philosophy, the three *gunas*, i.e., *sattvas*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are the constituents of the universe (rudimentary elements) and the three basic characteristics of human personality. As constituents of the world, *rajas* is force, power or energy (*shakti*); *tamas* is heavy and dark and resists *rajas*. These two constituents are associated with material or physical things. *Sattvas* is interpreted as light, both in the sense of buoyant and in the sense of bringing clarity to an issue or situation. It is associated more with mind than matter. However, in Hindu philosophy, mind is part of the physical world, not apart from it as it was with Descartes.

When the three *gunas* are viewed as characteristics of character or personality, we see how that *guna* is expressed. Starting at the lowest level, a *tamasic* personality is one which Hindus call "slothful." In other words this person acts like a sloth in that he or she is slow to move or act. Furthermore, he or she is unmotivated and rarely accomplishes anything. We might say that the person is a "couch potato." The *rajasic* personality, by contrast is goal driven and at an advanced stage is likely to run rough shod over anyone to obtain his or her goals. One can easily identify this personality as the person is driven and turbulent inside. The *sattvic* personality is the highest level. Such a person is calm and serene. He or she is light or buoyant when dealing with others. Also, this person would bring light or clarity to any issue or situation.

¹⁵ Gandhi was a *vaisya*.

¹⁶ See footnotes 6 and 8.

¹⁷ As I have written in the paper, "Plato and Gandhi: Justice and *Ahimsa*", Plato could not adequately justify this belief unless he appealed to rebirth.

¹⁸ The thing about a closed social/political system is that one does have skilled laborers who have learned their respective skills from their forefathers. However, initiative is not rewarded, as they cannot aspire to a higher class or social status.

¹⁹ Taylor, A.E. 2012. *The Mind of Plato*, op. cit., 80. The spirited part of the soul is described as involving the higher and nobler emotions. Chief among these are the emotions of righteous indignation.

Although the character or personality differs in each of the traditions being considered, it is the case that both the rational aspect of Plato's division of character and that of the *sattvic* stage of development of character or personality are essentially mental involving reason. As to appetite or desire, as set forth by Plato, one could argue that desire drives ambition and hence, there is a close connection between the two categories. It is the lowest stage wherein there seems to be a marked difference between Plato's and the Hindu view of character. As I noted earlier, one of the early Platonic scholars described this aspect of the soul or character as having to do with making judgments.²⁰ I think that this aspect of character needs further research. However, on the face of it, making judgments or being judgmental is very different from lacking spirit.

The foregoing similarities and others in the philosophies of these great philosophical traditions need to be explored, so that we can learn more about the roots of human thought and especially the ability to think philosophically. Furthermore, since the study involves both western philosophy and non-western, specifically South Asian philosophy, those involved in this study need to be comparative philosophers who are versed in hermeneutics and especially the thought of Michele Foucault who held that before we apply any epistemological methods to the study of a people, we have to understand their *episteme* or body of knowledge. This body of knowledge includes everything that we can learn about a people in their lifetimes, including their beliefs and values, their myths, the conditions in which they lived including the climate and terrain. Of course, to gain this knowledge, the study must involve anthropologists, linguists and historians.

Based on what has been said, I maintain that not only would this comparative venture add to human understanding of the development of knowledge, but it would help us to understand the roots of philosophy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR — a professor of philosophy at Eastern Connecticut State University, the Director of the Peace and Human Rights Minor and the Advisor to the Peace and Human Rights Club at her university.

She is a comparative philosopher by education, teaching, research/publications, and her professional activities. Her Ph.D. is in Asian and Comparative Philosophy. However, her teaching, publications, and presentations are broader in that they involve Western and non-Western philosophy or as she would prefer to say, "the philosophical traditions of the North, East, South and West." Her book, *Intuition: Its Nature and Uses in Human Experience*, published in 2001, is in its second printing. She is presently writing *Ahimsa: a Way of Life; a Path to Peace*. (Basically, as Gandhi used the term, *ahimsa* means non-harm to and compassion for all living beings.) She also has numerous articles published in scholarly journals.

²⁰ Ibid.

Christopher Vasilopoulos

THE *ILIAD*. THE FIRST POLITICAL THEORY

ABSTRACT

Achilles' dissatisfaction with the heroic code, despite his preeminence, is Homer's platform on which he demonstrates that the code is an inadequate basis for the emerging polis. The political requires a new kind of man, one capable of love and friendship. For only this kind of man can be a proper citizen, a person capable of more than adherence to a heroic code.

Keywords: Achilles; hero; friendship; political; *Iliad*; polis.

The *Iliad* accepts the heroic ethic and yet inquires into its limitations and self-contradictions. Thus the *Iliad* is a ... profound work, for it leads us to a recognition of the internal limitations of one of man's most perfected ideas of his own possible virtues.

(Redfield. 1975, 85)

I. INTRODUCTION: THE LIMITS OF THE HEROIC CODE

Many scholars have noted that Homer questions the sufficiency of the Heroic Code in the *Iliad*. They have had two broad lines of argument, although scholars have not agreed about the relative value of the factors involved. The first concerns the many differences between the protagonists of the Trojan War: Achilles and Hector. Hector fights to defend his family, his property and his city, as well as, his heroic honor. Hector fights a war of necessity against the invading Greeks. Despite some wavering, Hector's character remains consistent throughout the poem, finally accepting his fate to die, his family to suffer and his city to perish. Achilles by contrast undergoes a major transformation as the poem unfolds. It is not an exaggeration to see the *Iliad* as the story of his journey to a new self-conception. The "best of the Achaians", while never question-

ing his heroic superiority, questions its worth. This paper describes his complex development not simply to understand his character but to indicate that his transformation illustrates many of the values essential to the development of the polis. Achilles can thus be conceived as a metaphor for, if not the political, if not the polis, its preconditions. Achilles incarnates the development of an unsurpassed hero into a man, complexly self-conceived, who can deal decently with strangers, even when they have been enemies and can do so in the midst of war. This is a tortuous process, which includes Achilles' descent into a vicious, devouring bestiality. Before a hero can become a man suitable for polis-life, he must realize, both in the sense of recognition and actualization, the beast latent in his nature. Before my thesis that Achilles is the metaphor for the emergent polis can be warranted, it is necessary to describe what sort of hero he is.

“Personal integrity in Achilles achieves the form and authority of imminent divinity, with its inviolable, lonely singleness, half repellent because of its almost inhuman austerity, but irresistible in its passion and perfected selfhood. Yet the scale is not weighted in favor of this gleaming vision. Homer has allowed the human world of fullness of all its claims upon our sympathy, and at length even Achilles himself curses as do all the others, the rage would set him apart from his fellows.” (Whitman. 1967, 182)

II. THE WRATH OF ACHILLES

In the ninth year of the war, a conflict erupts between Achilles and Agamemnon over what might seem a trivial issue, a girl taken as war booty. Of course, according to the heroic code of honor, an inappropriate taking of *anything* constitutes an affront. Yet, in the first book of the *Iliad*, it is clear that more is at stake than the relations of a “king” and a touchy “subordinate”. The scare quotes indicate that “king” and “subordinate” must be understood in Greek terms of the heroic era, not in the sense of the modern state”, or even in any sense of “state” at all. The modern “state” is defined as the ultimate sovereign authority which entails a monopoly of legitimate coercive force. Agamemnon may aspire to this level of power, but it is clear he does not have it. He cannot compel Achilles to give up his war booty in the lovely figure of Briseis. Achilles is persuaded to comply with Agamemnon's request, rather than killing him, at the behest of Athena. It is important to realize that he has not been persuaded by Agamemnon or the other supporters of the concept of monarchy:

“Throughout the poem Nestor and Odysseus struggle to maintain Agamemnon's authority, not out of personal loyalty to him but because they see him as the channel through which policy can be made coherent and effective. The role of the king requires him to be both responsive and authoritative; he should hear good counsel and convert it into public policy ...” (Redfield. 1975, 93)

Achilles explicitly rejects their advice on the grounds that Agamemnon lacks precisely these qualities, compounding his other inadequacies.

His price is withdrawal from the war, which he knows will bring on the same sort of catastrophe that Agamemnon is trying to avoid when he gave up his war booty, Criseis, the daughter of a priest of Apollo. It is important to note that the Wrath of Achilles is not manifested by the slaughter of Agamemnon, a deed too easily accomplished to be worthy of Achilles. It is indicated by restraint: he withdraws from the battle. Can one imagine the hero of any other heroic epic withdrawing? If Agamemnon's kingship is qualified, so too is Achilles' subordination. All of these elements—the inability of either Agamemnon or Athena to compel his compliance, his willingness to comply, his reluctance to give Briseis up on first consideration (he loves her as a “wife”) to say nothing of his scathing attack on Agamemnon's fitness to rule—suggest at this early stage, Book One, that something is going on far beyond an *explication du texte* of the heroic code. Moreover, although perhaps not so manifest is that Agamemnon's ill-conceived order, not merely from the sense of injustice, but from its arbitrary (ill-advised) nature, suggests the limitation of monarchy, even in the attenuated form of the heroic age. Agamemnon's focus on his kingship *per se* does not suggest authority but denies it. Homer hereby indicates the importance of the political or at least the pre-political by the catastrophe attendant upon its absence.

Another point, politically significant, though seldom remarked, is that Achilles' withdrawal arouses no charge of a treasonous assault on the state or polis. The simple reason is that neither exists to a degree sufficient to condemn Achilles' actions. The “political” in the sense, as I will later elaborate, does not exist. At the same time, Achilles' choice, in its substance and in its possibility, suggests a major condition of political activity: that the locus of choice in political settings, for all its corporate elements, remains the individual. The concept of citizenship looms on the horizon.

Achilles represents the fulfillment of the Heroic Code and its way of life but also its limits, suggesting in the process the road to the polis and the Greek discovery of the political. How Homer establishes these points testifies to his genius and to his political or pre-political acumen. In lesser authors, Achilles would recognize the folly of his ways and become an obedient supporter of the Greeks in the war, as Nestor and others advise him to do. By so doing Achilles would be a good soldier and a good citizen, subordinating his vanity to the interests of the community. His heroic attributes would thus be properly at the disposal of the Greeks, regardless of his personal differences with Agamemnon. Of course, it is precisely this sort of accommodation that Homer recognizes is impossible, in the sense of narrative and cultural impossibility. Here Solomon is useful: “The necessity that is invoked by fate and fatalism is not scientific necessity but rather what we might call ‘narrative necessity’. The analog is the ‘logic’ of a

novel or movie plot.” (Solomon. 2003, 438). Put positively, Homer’s understanding of his culture as it unfolds in his poem implies a narrative necessity which precludes such an accommodation. I am not suggesting that “narrative necessity” is an adequate philosophical concept, but only that it helps us to understand the *Iliad* and Achilles’ character. This is no easy matter, for in Book I Achilles, by his refusal to accept Agamemnon’s authority, sets himself apart:

“This speech is so powerful, and so unexpected, that the poem clearly opens out at this point into some previously unexplored territory. Achilles, himself is the explorer, and he explores alone; from this point onward the other characters in the poem find him baffling and speak to him in protest and incomprehension.” (Redfield. 1975, 7)

It is necessary that Achilles realizes the limits of the Heroic Code for him. Fundamentally different from Ajax and Diomedes, who find the code isomorphic with their characters: “Diomedes and Ajax fulfill the ideal with that kind of saving simplicity which renders them children beside Achilles, but children of an admirable and fine grain.” (Whitman. 1967, 166)

Achilles, though surpassing them in heroic attributes, cannot find their sense of satisfaction. His self-fulfillment requires more than unrivalled heroic achievements. While he understands this in Book I, he does not come to an adequate self-conception until Book XXIV, when he reconciles with Priam. Scholars who find Achilles over-sensitive or intransigent often misconstrue his character, believing he is a simple hero (or should be), one who is his heroic attributes and nothing more. Many characters in the *Iliad* fall into the same misconception. Repeatedly, they try to have him respond to incentives ordinary heroes would find compelling. The most famous is the “Embassy”. On instructions from Agamemnon, who is eager to curtail the losses Achilles’ absence effects, a delegation offers Achilles many treasures if he will return to the war. Content with the status quo and fully aware of the subordination Agamemnon’s offer entails, Achilles flatly refuses. The absolute hero is defined by the code; this is why Ajax and Diomedes are so compelling and disturbing. Hector is not so defined; subject to the values of family and city, he is more human and tragic. His heroism is at the service of others, including with great poignancy, as an example for his doomed son. Achilles, aware that absolute entails simplicity and incompleteness, comes at the problem differently. Not wanting to serve others, Achilles wants to be himself. But he cannot do this without “others”, who are part of him, those he integrates into his selfhood. Nevertheless, this “selfish” perspective suggests for Homer a condition of the emerging polis. It cannot live in a state of perpetual war or heroic struggle. Ajax, Heracles, Sarpedon and Diomedes, for all their fine qualities are apolis. A sense of camaraderie or loyalty is too unstable to substitute for a political structure. What is needed is a more profound understanding of the self than the Heroic Code allows for. The

choices available under an absolute code are too confining for a complete man, as Achilles comes to conceive of himself. It takes all of Homer's genius and the rest of the *Iliad* to make Achilles' character comprehensible:

“But to build this theme into a study of heroic self-searching and the dark knight of the soul was creativity in the highest sense. The hero who retires out of wounded honor, though he may not achieve the stature of Achilles, must nevertheless be in some degree a man of complex sensibility.” (Whitman. 1967, 155)

Of course the Fall of Troy is fated and as is Achilles' return to the war, but how, if an appeal to the Heroic Code and its obligations fail to move him? The “How” recalls his love of Briseis and anticipates the death of Patroclus.

“The great warrior is *akoretos*, insatiable. He steps outside the rhythm of culture; his *menos* [hunger] never fails him, ... He is beyond the human scale—but at a certain cost.” (Redfield. 1975, 201)

III. LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP: THE DESCENT

The tenor of the preceding might suggest that Achilles' transformation from a man who is the sum of his heroic attributes and achievements to a man who is much more complex, a man capable of the deepest emotions: love and friendship. This sort of man would perhaps be capable of becoming a citizen, that is, one who could conceive of his interests, if not subordinate them, in terms his civic community. Homer presents us, however, with a much more troubling set of possibilities. The depth of Achilles' love for Patroclus is matched by his hate for those who would kill him. Achilles descends into “devouring bestiality”. This descent is foreshadowed when Patroclus tells Achilles that his adamantine unwillingness to help the Greeks is inhuman, suggesting that to be human one must be part of a civic or at least a martial community.

Achilles does not realize how important Patroclus is to him until Patroclus dies. I do not mean that Achilles does not realize how much he loves Patroclus and how much his friend loves him. Raised together, they are more than brothers. The gentle Patroclus and the fierce Achilles complement each other. What Achilles learns with his friend's death, a lesson compounded by the circumstances of Patroclus' death, is that he has lost a part of himself. He has lost more than ‘another self’ as an ancient Greek proverb has defined friendship. He has lost the ability to be his true self, his complete self, the Achilles self-conceived. If this idea seems too strong or exaggerated, consider the circumstances. Patroclus enters battle wearing Achilles' armor, knowing that the Trojans will believe at least for a time that the ‘best of the Achaians’ has returned and that they are doomed. He performs heroically; in the heat of the battle, however, he fails to

heed Achilles' warning not to advance on the citadel, in a sense, not to exceed his capabilities, not to be Achilles. Worse, he is killed by Hector, who wants to desecrate Patroclus' body by beheading it. The body is recovered. Achilles vows and executes a terrible revenge. Entering the battle, he slaughters scores of Trojans. At Patroclus' funeral, Achilles sacrifices twelve Trojan boys. Homer makes it clear that Achilles has ceased to be human, reaching the nadir of bestiality. He finds himself alone, more he finds himself unable to complete himself, unable to realize his self-conception. His despair is absolute. Curtain. Finis.

As a character study, Homer would have been justified ending his poem here. What could be more devastating, more telling, more tragic, than the fall from heroic zenith of this half god to bestial depth? Of course, Homer is not so simple. He redeems Achilles, or rather, allows narrative necessity redeem him. Not the narrative necessity of a great tragedy, but the narrative necessity of a poet with a political or pre-political agenda. Writing in the middle to the last quarter of the eight century, he is immersed in the emerging polis. He could not avoid witnessing its birth pains. Anticipating Socrates, as much as the tragedians, he adopts the roll of midwife. If the *Iliad* is to establish the values, if not the structures, of the new born polis, it cannot end with the despair of Achilles, despair so profound it makes his imminent death a blessing. Achilles must be allowed to fulfill his self-conception, for the new Achilles is a metaphor or a proto-metaphor for the new polis and the kind of men that comprise it.

Again, Homer foreshadows. To honor Patroclus, Achilles convenes elaborate funeral games, distributing gifts in the manner suggesting an embryonic Achilles, embryonic yet more than the fully developed hero. Distributing generous prizes to victors, he also rewards others to forestall disputes over who won or won fairly from becoming bloody battles.

“The ritual of the funeral games appear as a constructed polis in which we see the emergence of a new definition of excellence, one that is political, as Achilles demonstrates a flexibility and responsiveness to situations as distributor of the prizes.” (Hammer. 1977, 3–4)

All accept his prerogatives, even Agamemnon. The kind of reconciliation so long yearned for by the Greeks is now accomplished. Yet he still despairs, unable to sleep, eat, or make love. He continues to dishonor Hector, dragging his corpse around the walls, trying to disintegrate it, only to be thwarted by divine intervention. He remains unable, as his mother attests, to partake of human activities. Then Priam.

“To be human is to be a member of a species and to share with others a specific fate. That fate is to die; this Priam and Achilles recognize in their shared mourning. But the fate of the species is also to live, and this they recognize in their shared meal. The reconciliation takes place on the level of na-

ture, outside the human world; it is a ceremony founded on the universal concept of man qua man.” (Redfield. 1975, 219)

IV. ACHILLES AND PRIAM: THE ASCENT

If one reads the *Iliad* without an appreciation of how unusual Achilles is, his reconciliation with Priam would not only compromise narrative necessity, it would annihilate it. Let me use a biological metaphor, Achilles is a mutant regarding the Greek conception of the Heroic Code. He is a new kind of hero, fundamentally different from Ajax, Heracles, Sarpedon and countless others. His mutancy does not transform him in one step, however. It gives him the capacity to see the limits of the Heroic Code with respect to him. He does not criticize the heroes who are content to be isomorphic with it, who define themselves by how closely they approximate its ideals. It is not sufficient for him. His struggle is to learn what his self-conception is and how he can realize it. It takes Homer all twenty-four books of his poem to tell the story of Achilles. How difficult and tentative Achilles' struggle remains is illustrated by the fact that it requires Priam's initiative, taken at divine behest, for Achilles to come to self-fulfillment.

Hecuba, Priam's wife, with good reason believes that Priam is on a suicide mission, for the beast Achilles can have no mercy. Priam persists. His decision, if conceived as a desperate effort of an old and defeated man to retrieve his son for burial, requires no analysis. What more does he have to lose? A few days of borrowed time for himself and his city? Honoring Hector is worth more to him than that. Achilles' decision to receive him, however, requires explanation. What does he have to gain? Why should not he kill Priam, as he has mercilessly and coldly killed and sacrificed many others? Why should he surrender Hector's body, who in life killed and tried to mutilate Patroclus? Above all, how can Achilles, who has descended into bestiality and who has failed to retrieve himself with the funeral and funeral games of Patroclus, not merely regain heroic values but transcend them? Achilles realizes how much he is deviating from his image and from his role as conceived by others. He cautions Priam to hide himself lest someone see him and kill him. He is even concerned about his own lack of patience with the old man's supplications. One kind of answer has been that the gods mandated the return of Hector and that they disapproved of Achilles' bestiality. Good as far as it goes; this kind of response does not explain Achilles' solicitude for Priam and his tragedy. Nor does account for his care of Hector's body, so soon after his efforts to desecrate it. Breathes there a soul so dead as to be unmoved by Achilles' carefully dressing and carrying Hector's body to Priam's wagon.

My suggestion is that Priam's supplication and Achilles' response to it completed the self-transformation Achilles has sought throughout the poem. He has become a complete man, upon his understanding that he could not be Achilles

alone, no matter what zenith he reached as a hero. He needed Briseis; he needed Patroclus, not for the services and pleasures they could render, but for the completion of himself. They helped him reveal to himself his capacity for love and friendship without which he could not be Achilles. Achilles' response to Priam's visit reveals Achilles' transformed self as a man possessed of grace, generosity, tenderness and delicacy. That we believe in this transformation testifies to Homer's genius.

Yet there is more to Homer's genius than making the reconciliation of enemies possible due to a radical character transformation. This kind of human understanding, requiring both sympathy and empathy, suggests that there is a way stranger to treat each other decently, even if they lack the heroic self-awareness of Achilles. If this be true it suggests that the power of the community, even a proto-civic community, might be able to provide rule-bound structures which could temper the ambition of an Agamemnon, provide the prudence of Nestor, the restraint of Poulydamas, the family devotion of Hector, the stalwartness of Ajax, the pragmatism of Odysseus, and protect a community which encourages love and friendship.

"The Homeric polis is a geographical and a military expression; it is a fortified place. Its epithets are 'precipitous,' 'well-built', 'well-walled', 'with broad ways', 'with fair habitation', 'set about with towers'. ... Similarly its *politai* in Homer are the defenders of this fortress, neither more nor less." (Myres. 1927, 35–6)

V. FROM POLIS/CITADEL TO POLIS/CITIZENS

In this section I follow Meier's definition of the "political" to make plain that I am not arguing that Homer has understood the polis in this sense, which developed in the sixth and fifth centuries. My thesis is that Homer undermined or seriously qualified many of the values which would have made the movement from *polis as citadel* to *polis as its body of citizens* much more difficult, if not impossible.

"The political denotes a field of association and dissociation, namely the field or ambience in which people constitute orders within which they live together among themselves and set themselves apart from others. It is at the same time the field in which decisions are made about order and delimitation, as well as other questions of common interest, and in which there is a contention for positions from which these decisions can be influenced." (Meier. 1990, 4)

Meier adds:

"People began to understand the existing order, to reconstruct the norms on which it rested, and to envisage an ideal constitution that could serve as a crite-

tion for political judgments. The idea arose that the citizens were responsible for the destiny of their city, and this idea gradually gained currency.” (Meier. 1990, 66)

This strong conception of the political and its expression in the polis is made stronger:

“The citizen’s political affiliation (that is, his affiliation to the polis) became so central and, being general, so untrammelled by competition from other affiliations that it produced a political identity unique in world history, weighted toward the middle and lower ranks of society. ... This meant that the unity of the polis had to be grounded in the community as a whole—and not just in the abstract sense. It was the citizens who constituted the real nucleus of the city, the source of authority for the increasing control it exercised over the activities of its members, including the nobility. There was no way in which anything resembling a state could establish centralized power or state institutions that were divorced from society. This close identification of the polis with its citizens presupposed a high degree of solidarity, and this could take root only in a general civic interest that transcended all particularist interests. The general interest became so powerful that, on this new plane of citizenship, the citizens determined the conduct of politics just as much as politics determined the conduct of the citizens.” (Meier. 1990, 21)

Homer does not quite conceive of the polis in these terms. “The demos...consists [in mid-eight century] no longer of subjects, but not yet of citizens.” (Hammer. 1977, 15) Moreover, this conception of the polis never became general in Greece. Yet Homer paves the way toward its approximation by the values he approves of in the *Iliad*.

Let us begin with Achilles’ rejection and denunciation of Agamemnon in Book I. What could be more anti-political? Does not the king represent the community, as so many scholars have stated? The difficulty with this line of reasoning is that it assumes a close relationship between the Greek army, taken as a community, and the modern idea of a state, as the unit of ultimate coercive authority and force:

“But this kingship was always fragile, as loyalty was more concentrated in a narrow sphere of kin and followers than in the larger community, the values of the members of the community were more competitive than cooperative, justice was a purely private matter, political relations between the king and other chieftains were governed by informal custom and accepted practices, and political institutions, such as the assembly pointed less to the reasons than to the decision itself, and hence to the power of authority.” (Hammer. 1977, 2–3)

Achilles is simply not subject to “police power”, so he can refuse to obey or even kill Agamemnon without being accused of treason, whatever the consequences of his actions might provoke. And of course he withdraws from the war with impunity. But does this not reinforce the anti-political or non-political nature of Achilles’ acts? Not if his reasons are understood, reasons which suggest a proper relationship between “rulers” and “ruled”. “Authority” is not identical with “command.” It must be based on persuasion and an underlying sense of justice. And the locus of decision regarding compliance is in the hands of the individual, the “ruled,” “invited” to act in accordance with the “ruler”. Not only are these ideas “political”, they are political in a sophisticated way. They form some of the cardinal values that Meier’s conception of the “political” and the polis imply. Of course, Achilles is a king with his own army, so Meier’s requirement of the polis being at the disposal of all its citizens does not apply. Nor is it clear whether Achilles would have allowed this form of authority to prevail within the Myrmidons, although it seems likely that his soldiers had no doubt about Achilles’ claim to authority based on merit. This is a long way from equality, but it is equally a long way from arbitrary rule. Meier appreciates that “there was a growing consciousness of the abilities and the accomplishments of individuals.” (Meier. 1990, 23)

The importance of individual merit cannot be overemphasized. For it fundamentally undermines the foundations of traditional society: the privileges of birth and the family. Again the *Iliad* needs to be read with care, for there are countless references to birth and parentage, which clearly matter to all concerned. Yet there are few instances when a father commands directly or indirectly a son to do this or that. What almost always occurs is that the son uses his lineage as a way of establishing his right to make his own decision. Homer reinforces his diminution of blood determinism by depicting Zeus’ inability to save his son, Sarpedon, whose death Fate ordained. Again, this is a long way from equality, but equally it is a long way from paternalism. And finally, consider, the newly humanized Achilles at the Funeral Games. He repeatedly transcends the facts—who wins and who loses—and applies his own notion of proper outcomes, most often in the name of conflict avoidance or resolution. While his decisions are authoritarian, they are not arbitrary. Merit may be attenuated, but in the service of a greater good. This is not yet in the name of a *civic* community, much less Meier’s notion of the polis, but an important step has been taken in this direction.

The most significant qualification of traditional values is the transformation of Achilles. As I have discussed this in some detail, only some summarizing points need to be noted here. Achilles is the incarnation of the Heroic Code, and he therefore could be expected to be its most ardent supporter. Yet he calls its sufficiency into question. It suffices for Ajax and Diomedes, but not for him. For Achilles of the Heroic Code to become the Achilles-self-conceived, he has to appreciate his incompleteness. He must realize he needs Briseis and Patroclus

to fulfill himself. Then he could engage the larger community as a complete man, not merely as the sum of his heroic attributes. By transcending the traditional heroic model of himself, he opens the door to a proto-political self. The political question is who is more suited to the emerging polis? Homer's answer could not be clearer. The reconciliation scenes of the Funeral Games and Priam's retrieval of Hector's body point the way to the kind of reconciliation that is necessary for a polis made up of hoplite warriors, competitive merchants, poor farmers and rich, and ambitious politicians to operate without civil strife.

In these ways, Homer does not establish all the conditions of a fifth century polis. He does, however, remove many traditional impediments to its development. As I have argued throughout this essay, perhaps the most important excision from the heroic value set is its presumption of sufficiency. When Achilles realizes that the Heroic Code cannot define him, he posits the reality and the necessity for choice. Awareness of his incompleteness entails the incompleteness of his knowledge. Incomplete knowledge implies the reality of choice, for even in a fated universe, ignorance of all the causes allows each decision the moral scope of choice, however tight the causal chain is or however predetermined. The only remedy for incomplete knowledge is a complete choice-maker, but until men are complete this is no remedy at all. The second best remedy is the alter ego, the voice in the ear, an alternative set of attributes which prevent tangential course of action, the inevitable result of absolute values. The complexity of the polis can be the functional equivalent of the complex, complete man. Of course there is no guarantee that even wise choices will have the desired results. Wise choices, however, remain the obligation of responsible men. Death awaits all, but a responsible life, a life conscious of its existential dilemmas, is the reward of men, for it confers meaning unavailable to the gods. As Redfield holds: "The gods of the *Iliad* ... are generally frivolous, unsteady creatures, whose friendship or enmity has little to do with human justice. They do not appear in the narrative as guarantors of human norms or as the sources of natural process." (Redfield. 1975, 76) Therefore, human have to provide their own codes, their own anchors; they must be responsible for themselves. We are moral because we are mortal.

For these insights, among others, for his power to imprint them upon generations of Greeks and large portions of the rest of the world, Homer, as the discoverer of the proto-political, deserves the title: the first political theorist.

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Panos Eliopoulos

THE ANTI-PLATO OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

ABSTRACT

In Charles Baudelaire's poetry there is only one direct reference to Plato. The French poet juxtaposes the joy of the senses to the ascetic, as he perceives it, pursuit of the Platonic Good. This juxtaposition is taking place not only with the aid of ethical terms, but principally through their transformation into aesthetic ones. For Baudelaire, the absence of the metaphysical or symbolical light is tautological to beauty, but also a firm ground where the poet stands upon for his artistic creation. Human existence without light, although bordering to the cold safety of death, is also an affirmation of its emptiness when without pleasure and passion.

Keywords: aesthetic; light; beauty; darkness; evil; love; poetry; Baudelaire; Plato.

In the forbidden poem "Lesbos," first published on July 13, 1850, Charles Baudelaire writes the following verses, which contain his only direct reference to the Athenian philosopher Plato:

"Lesbos, land of hot and languorous nights,
That make the hollow-eyed girls, amorous
Of their own bodies, caress before their mirrors
The ripe fruits of their nubility, O sterile pleasure!
Lesbos, land of hot and languorous nights,

Let old Plato look on you with an austere eye;
You earn pardon by the excess of your kisses
And the inexhaustible refinements of your love,
Queen of the sweet empire, pleasant and noble land.
Let old Plato look on you with an austere eye.

You earn pardon by the eternal martyrdom
Inflicted ceaselessly upon aspiring hearts

Who are lured far from us by radiant smiles
 Vaguely glimpsed at the edge of other skies!
 You earn pardon by that eternal martyrdom!¹

In *Lesbos*, Plato is presented as an austere master who would frown upon the erotic actions of the amorous girls. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, this view is substantiated to a certain degree as the Athenian master suggests that lovers should restrain their lust and devote themselves to the common quest of the divine. In this paper I aim to argue on the following points that will establish an anti-Platonic viewpoint in the poetical work of Charles Baudelaire among other issues that will be briefly referred to:

- a) Sexual love as opposed to love for the Good.
- b) Eros as an ascent to the divine as opposed to Eros as Lethe.
- c) Light as a representation of the Good or as a deprivation of the darkness.
- d) The identity of the poet as opposed to the identity of the philosopher.

In his forbidden poem, Baudelaire understands love among girls in a manner that conflicts with Plato's understanding of love among men. To his mind, this ethereal play of women is a rigorous act of pleasure. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Eros among men has the qualitative characteristics that would suffice for man's ascent to the realm of the Idea and for his own individual perfection:

"If, on the other hand, the two lovers leave philosophy and lead the lower life of ambition, then probably, after wine or in some other careless hour, the two wanton animals take the two souls when off their guard and bring them together, and they accomplish that desire of their hearts which to the many is bliss; and this having once enjoyed they continue to enjoy, yet rarely because they have not the approval of the whole soul. They too are dear, but not so dear to one another as the others, either at the time of their love or afterwards. They consider that they have given and taken from each other the most sacred pledges, and they may not break them and fall into enmity. At last they pass out of the body, unwinged, but eager to soar, and thus obtain no mean reward of love and madness. For those who have once begun the heavenward pilgrimage may not go down again to darkness and the journey beneath the earth, but they live in light always; happy companions in their pilgrimage, and when the time comes at which they receive their wings they have the same plumage because of their love."²

¹ Baudelaire, Ch. 1954. *The Flowers of Evil*. Transl. Aggeler, W. Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild.

² Plato. 1969. "Phaedrus." In: *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. Transl. Shorey, P., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 256 b–e.

To define the relationship between the above poem and the excerpt from *Phaedrus*, we need to take into consideration an intermediate ideology of an aesthetic of light. Actually, we need to discern the negative or positive outlook that Plato and Baudelaire have on Eros, light, and morality. The French poet judged light in its symbolic, but also pragmatic importance. The good and the bad can be placed in a manner that is either compatible or incompatible to one another. When incompatible, they are inclined to moralize reality in a positive or negative way. When compatible, they are illustrated in the symbolic and intellectual realm as aesthetic nuances that emphasize symbolisms which are never actualized in the form of moral realities. Baudelaire himself vigorously seeks to clarify the importance of his own seeming and misunderstood Satanism. In the defense of his poetic work, in 1857, he differentiates between “positive and practical ethics to which all owe obedience” and “ethics of the Arts, which are something completely different.” Under this prism, he considers that the collection of his poems presents “a superior morality.”

The question really appears to be an inquiry about light and poetic existence. Dolf Oehler describes the writing of Baudelaire as a demand for another existence, an explosion inside darkness.³ From this perspective it must be noted that, in my view, the art of the poet is not photographic.⁴ It portrays, but does not need colors; it depicts, but does not know theatricality as a virtue. Poetry can be made with simple materials, even as an involuntary confession of truth. That is precisely why poetry should not be confused with truth, as such a confusion would be offensive to poetry and punishable.⁵ The poem does not need conditions in order to be created; it is its own outlandish universe, beginning from null conditions; it is produced because it should be produced. Hence, the poem does not belong to the teleology of its world and era; on the contrary, it belongs to the poet. Thus, in full diachronicity, the poem justifies its self-illuminated existence in time and in the hands of the reader.

The work of the poet is a reflection of his ideal self, the acknowledgement of his failure to construct his life according to the innate instinct of his perfection. Instead of an ideal life, he produces the text. The poet never ceases to wish that he could have been that ideal being. He remains enslaved in the pain of conditions, where conditions are supposed to be the chronicity and temporality belonging to him. The ideal exists in every form of poetry, even in its negative or pessimistic side. Thus, there is no poet who would not perpetually worship this potential excellence. The ideal becomes subjectified, personal, and recognizable only within the poet’s subjective indestructibility while Plato would accept only the reality of the Idea as the objective reality approached by Eros and Episteme.

³ Oehler, D. 2010. “The Explosion of Baudelaire.” *Odos Panos*, vol. 149, July–September, 47.

⁴ Yet photography itself functions through light.

⁵ Skouras, F. 2010. “About Heredity in Health Issues: Medical-Psychological Essay on Charles Baudelaire.” *Odos Panos*, vol. 149, July–September, 88: “Poetry has no other aim than itself ... Poetry does not see truth as an object, but only itself.”

In the poetic universe of Baudelaire, the devilishness of the poet is diagnosed as the audacious refusal to accept that: a) he is not a god; b) he is about to suffer; and c) he has to be subjugated. His Luciferic truth is that he is not made for pain, but only as an eternal model for pain. Because the poet expresses the pain even if he does not feel it: he is the being that was created despite his own will. His devilishness, however, vigorously anticipates the oncoming punishment. In the case of the French poet, evidence of punishment or self-punishment is traced in his relation with women. The lost paradise as prefigured in his demonic temperament results not from extreme sensuousness but from endless pain (*ô vierges, ô démons*). Even pain has traits of sensuousness, but they do not comprise evidence of pleasure. Women, opium, and wine constitute tools of enjoyment; woman, however, is the supreme tool of pleasure (*The Poison*) and sexuality is the best replacement of virtue or the best medicine for the ignominy of life. Love can be seen through the prism of hatred and the woman is then changed into the cold fact of life (*The Cat, Duellum*). Baudelaire mourns for the woman that was not given to him (*Benediction*). The fact of his own diversity consists in the natural acceptance of his punishment. At the same time, however, it is his passionate reaction to this. For while the poet, according to Baudelaire, ratifies singularity and emerges only through himself, the fear of loneliness is evident, and the love of the flesh more intense than that of the spirit—due to the fact that the flesh has surprisingly more characteristics of permanence (*The Vampire*). Under this syllogistic formula, the work of Baudelaire is the synopsis of a sedulous search for the woman, rather than for the exemplary form that is inalterably reflected on the surface of the soul of the man. If it does not enjoy the fulfillment inside the body or heart of a woman, the male substance becomes barren landscape, dead nature. Women who fail to accept this neither love truth nor men (*One Night*).

So, can the poet really be removed from light? No, unless he wishes to find the instruments of his art. Even when he is endeavoring in the dark he knows where to find light. Inside light lies its blood, as Nietzsche affirms in *Also sprach Zarathustra*: “Von allem Geschriebenen liebe ich nur das, was Einer mit seinem Blute schreibt”;⁶ there lies its deeper substance, the eternal dark space (*The Balcony, The Ghost*).

In the *Republic*, Plato narrates the parable of the cave, making a profound connection between slavery and the absence of light.⁷ The interpretation that is given in the allegory is the following: the cave is the perceptible world that we see with our vision, the glow of the fire is the sun; we are the prisoners, while the ascent and the view of the above world is the rise of the soul to where truth, the good, and the beautiful reside. The allegory of the cave constitutes the

⁶ Nietzsche, F. 2007. *Also sprach Zarathustra*. München: de Gruyter, Kapitel 18.

⁷ Plato. 1969. “The Republic.” In: *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. Transl. Shorey, P., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 516–517.

schematic confirmation of the necessity of such a rise. It attributes the ascent of the spirit to the quest for truth. The traumatic experience of incarceration in the perceptible world is healed via the return of the soul to the Divine. The exit from the cave recommends the “καταβατέον,” the obligation of the philosopher to assist his fellow humans towards the good end. That is the precise reason why Plato does not trust the poet: the philosopher, in the allegory of the cave, will return from that world, while the poet is equally able to make use of the dark. In the case of Baudelaire, the poet does not feel the obligation to teach or to release men from slavery, he only feels compelled to avoid boredom (*To the Reader, Elevation, The Possessed, The Voyage VIII*). The poet, under this circumstance, would utter, with no hesitation, the words of Hamlet: “O God! God! /How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,/ Seem to me all the uses of this world!”⁸

In *Phaedrus*, the Socratic lover aspires to teach, to be a pedagogue,⁹ since Logos and Eros go together. But “the style is character,” pronounces Baudelaire. His anti-Plato is the sophist, who would applaud almost any effort to distance himself from nature. Hence ethics, losing its density, becomes pure and demonic aesthetics. In one of his letters to his mother, Baudelaire observes:

“You know that I always considered that literature and the arts seek an aim which is independent from morality. The beauty of apprehension and style is enough for me. But this book of mine, the *Flowers of Evil*, is particularly eloquent; it is clothed with cold and sinful beauty. It was created with rage and patience ... This book vexes people.”

Plato, nevertheless, in some points, wrongs the Poet (*Laisse du vieux Platon se froncer l'oeil austère*), as Baudelaire sees it. Because he does not consider the fact that the Poet is the unique being that does not banish the light when it becomes drearier than the dark (*Spleen*); in fact, he is capable of rescuing also that meager light which is neither anticipated nor visible by anyone else (*Sorrows of the Moon*). In this manner the poet emerges, engaged in a laborious and secret reaction to every discontinuance of the light (*Past Life, The Death of Lovers, Song of Autumn*).

The vampiric and poisonous curse of the poet (*Et j'ai dit au poison perfide / De secourir ma lâcheté*) is to insightfully perceive the Whole (*The Abyss*) and, at the same time, to get accustomed to his partiality and non-connectivity with other people and the world. In any case, the poet, as a person, is unknown to his fellow men (*The little old ladies IV*). Thus, singularity occasionally can be an addition that is absent, instead of an abstraction.

⁸ Shakespeare, W. *Hamlet*. Ed. Spencer, T. J. B., with an introduction by Barton, A.. London: Penguin Books, 1st act.

⁹ Plato. 1969. “Phaedrus”, op. cit., 261–262.

The morbid images in Baudelaire's work are not useful except as a primary alphabet for a new language. The gravity that he attributes to aesthetics makes the ethics of art transcendental or rather clarifies the fact that art cannot have any moral quality, but only an aesthetic one. Baudelaire in *Les Fleurs du Mal* is attracted by the dead, even by death as a supreme impression, from an aesthetic point of view. In this manner he achieves that his work does not border with the platonic study of death, since Baudelaire does not consider death philosophically but succumbs to its enchantment like a disciple. In beauty, he perceives the end, disappearance, or darkness, a horrible and fearful aspect (*Posthumous Remorse*). Plato, in the *Republic*, disagrees vehemently. For him, the soul, as he brings it in a position of comparison with the eyes (that have vision through the aid of the sun), acts in this way:

“when it is firmly fixed on the domain where truth and reality shine, it apprehends and knows them and appears to possess reason; but when it inclines to that region which is mingled with darkness, the world of becoming and passing away, it opines only and its edge is blunted, and it shifts its opinions hither and thither, and again seems as if it lacked reason.”¹⁰

The light of existence and reality springs from the Good. This light reveals an inconceivable beauty, a beauty that surpasses even the beauty of knowledge and truth. On the contrary, for Baudelaire, death stands nearer and more familiarly to the human being, bordering almost with his spirit. In the case of the French poet, I have the conviction that his satanic outlook is an aesthetic, mainly, and a psychological issue, circumstantially; certainly not an ontological evocation. It is an aesthetic of death, instead of an aesthetic of evil. Nonetheless, he himself hurries to allege that, “Personally, I think that the unique and supreme delight lies in the certainty of doing “evil”—and men and women know from birth that all pleasure lies in evil.” That is why he never frankly mourns for lost innocence: he is far more occupied in the sensuousness of black and of passion, passion seen from the reverse, from its funereal side.

Therefore, in the mind of Baudelaire, what is confused is genuine evil and aesthetic evil; that is how his Satanism is never really evil, or at least it is rather “myopic,” it sees near but not in distance. Longing for the “*tigres adoré*” (oblivion), he fails in his demonism, and finally he does not “disturb” to any substantial degree, he does not renounce his ontological innocence (*The Grateful Dead, Lethe*), and he does not acquire the triumphant wisdom of chaos (*Punishment of Pride*). Consequently, Baudelaire is led to a deprivation of light but only inside his poetic soul, since this deprivation serves him as a magnificent idea, even if he ascribes to it a subjectivity as the opinion that is almost coloring and illustrative. Moreover, the hubris that he commits is limited: he is left to oppose the exis-

¹⁰ Plato. 1969. “The Republic,” op. cit., 508d.

tence of light as the one who is deprived of it, the one who comprehends its innate and steadfast contradiction. Because the light is always found encrypted in such a contradiction: how can it exist if the dark is also not real?

Baudelaire affirms the necessity of Hell, while being nostalgic for Heaven (*Moesta et Errabunda*). His personal inversion as a being, the inversion of the poetic terms that he uses, is the hell in which he survives. Black is the only color that remains (*Confession, A carcass*): Baudelaire knows the light but is deprived of it (*Inversion, Irreparable*). As he announces a demonic art (*Destruction*), he directs the senses so that man can endure life in its empirical emptiness; he directs himself and everyone to the inescapable greatness of pleasure, quite contrary to what Socrates upholds in *Philebus*,¹¹ where he establishes that pleasure is not the supreme good, or even a secondary good, but only fifth in the hierarchy. Hence, in Socrates' view, the mixed life, a life that combines thought and pleasure, would be the ultimate exemplar.¹²

The anti-Plato of Baudelaire remains to be mainly the Poet. Cleared from any guilt of science, he stays in the shade of his own ethereal existence. The philosopher is chained to truth; on the other hand, the poet is free inside Lethe. As Jean-Paul Sartre described Baudelaire: "He is free, it means he can find—neither inside of him nor outside of him—no shelter from his freedom."¹³ While the philosopher of Plato aims for the light of the Good and seeks to reconcile what is beautiful inside with what exists outside,¹⁴ the poet comes to occupy his time inside the realm of shade and darkness because the world does not deserve any other merit than the one that the poet shall concede. Thus, even freedom becomes a perpetual adventure, love is not necessarily divine but it becomes "πάλημος,"¹⁵ submitted to carnal pleasure, to the primary desires and quests. However, Baudelaire resembles Plato magnificently when he says to Madame Sabatier after he has sexually conquered her: "A few days ago you were a deity, which is so convenient, so fine, and so inviolable. Now you are a woman."¹⁶

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¹¹ Plato. 1969. "Philebus." In: *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. Transl. Shorey, P., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd. 1969, 66 a–d.

¹² *Ibid.*, 21 a–23 a.

¹³ Michalos, G. 2010. "Baudelaire through the Eyes of Sartre." *Odos Panos*, vol. 149, July–September, 100.

¹⁴ Plato 1969. "Phaedrus", *op. cit.*, 279 b–c.

¹⁵ Cf. Plato. 1969. "Symposium." In: *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, *op. cit.* 181 a and 183 d–e.

¹⁶ Skouras, F. 2010. "About Heredity in Health Issues: Medical-Psychological Essay on Charles Baudelaire." *Odos Panos*, vol. 149, July–September. 78.

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Lilian Karali

CULTURE AND UNIVERSAL DIALOGUE

ABSTRACT

The paper considers the importance of culture for achieving universal dialogue. It clarifies the meanings of the terms “culture” and “art”, focusing on their historical transformations, and on the historical development of the history of art and archaeology, two academic disciplines which investigate art and culture. The recognition of the meanings is treated here as a basic initiating and necessary step in investigating intercultural (universal) dialogue.

Keywords: culture; material culture; nonmaterial culture; art; fine arts.

INTRODUCTION

Dialogue is extremely important for bringing views and people together, overpassing hostility, bitterness, unhappiness, misunderstandings and crises. Thereafter dialogue should be a key for resolving the most of individual, public and international problems. From the very beginning of the humankind, co-existence problems emerged—already in the first human groups resulting in hostility, war, torture, killing and destruction. Numerous cases in human history, literature, art and science demonstrate the lack of communication and dialogue among people, societies and cultures. Unfortunately, still nowadays the word “dialogue” is in the majority of cases a technical term, a word deprived of its authentic meaning; dialogue in its fundamental sense is calm exchanging views and civilized argumentation, communicating, reasoning, as well as expressing feelings and emotions viewing reasonable solutions and conciliation.

This is why the International Society for Universal Dialogue (the ISUD) was established aiming at bringing together cultivated people, mainly philosophers but also researchers from various social groups, countries, cultures and academic fields in order to advance international dialogue and understand cultural differences. This enterprise remains the goal of the ISUD.

Difficulties in achieving dialogue among people from various parts of the world are conditioned by many factors, but basically by the different cultural backgrounds of communicating persons or groups. One should firstly define what exactly culture is, and how many different kinds or layers of culture should be distinguished. It is a basic step in examining intercultural dialogue. The academic researches specialized in examining the cultural identity of human societies divide culture in material and nonmaterial ones, art—in fine art and applied arts.

The following presentation is focused on the clarification of the terms “culture” and “art” and their two main subdivisions: material and non material culture, fine art and applied arts, also with emphasis on the historical development of two academic disciplines investigating culture and art, i.e., the history of art and archaeology.

CULTURE AND ART: TERMS AND MEANINGS

The notions of culture and art have been overlapping each other what sometimes leads to confusion. As is commonly known, culture is broader than art; the former includes the latter. Culture comprises socially acquired and symbolically transmitted behavioral patterns, including language, science, morals, religion and their material manifestations (Bednarik. 2008). The term “art” refers to both intellectual, spiritual, non-material concepts, as well as to material elements, compositions, constructions, objects, artifacts, art works.

The notions of art and culture appeared and changed during the history of civilizations. In Ancient Egypt there was no specific word for art or artist, but many different terms denoting the materials used for the manufacture of objects and constructions. Later on, in Ancient classical Greece the word *techne* (τέχνη) had mainly the meaning of artisanal work, the technique, the theoretical and practical knowledge of manufacturing or constructing. In the first philosophical essays and texts on culture, art is associated with this meaning. It is well known that artistic objects (belonging to both nonmaterial and material cultures) were considered as manifestations of nonmaterial culture, and were conceived as fixed thoughts and behaviors. Consequently, art was defined as imitation (mimesis) by the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. The mimetic approach is present in Plato’s theory of ideas. It is undeniable that material culture is tightly linked to ideational culture. This is proved among others by the fact of the use of some objects by apes and animals of other species in order to satisfy such needs as eating, hiding, sleeping etc. This theoretical approach was generally accepted in the Western civilization for many centuries. It revived during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The collection of ancient objects and the organization of “*cabinets de Curiosités*” constituted the beginning of art collections and museums. All types of objects were included, natural and manufactured, such as skeletons, bones and stones having to do with the disciplines

of history, geology, biology, together with utensils, tools, jewels and artifacts significant in ethnography, archaeology etc. However, the term “art” had still the prevailing meaning of technical knowledge, acquired skills and their applications, as, for example, the art of rhetoric, the art of constructing etc.

During the Enlightenment, i.e., in the 17th and 18th centuries, emphasis was given to reason and individualism, and much less to tradition. Old non-impressive objects and constructions, such as stone tools and prehistoric monuments along with impressive architectural remains and artistic objects began to attract research interest.

At the end of the 18th century, Romanticism gave emphasis to the individual, to inspiration and subjectivity. Then art history and archaeology appeared as academic disciplines tightly related to each other. Art, religion, sciences and the humanities were perceived as “special faculties of the human mind” resulting in various religious forms and concepts, in professionally elaborated academic thinking and artistic creation. An inspired researcher, Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), who is considered to be the father of archaeology and the history of art, conducted the first systematic archaeological excavations, giving to archaeology the background of a real academic discipline. He also applied, as the first researcher, categories of style on a systematic basis in order to understand and date past art, thus creating the new disciplines. So, the history of art and archaeology were been formed as academic disciplines during the course of the 18th century. Afterwards the term “art” acquired its modern specialized meaning as “fine arts,” including painting, sculpture, architecture, dance, music, gardening, enriched with newer inventions such as photography, film, printmaking, digital and conceptual creation—all characterized by technical skill, imagination, and aesthetic expression.

Art is diversified into fine art and applied arts. The first one concerns the study of art forms, with aesthetics, while applied arts concern the fulfillment of practical needs. However, fine art and frequently the term “fine arts” as well, are associated with visual art forms. Archaeology relies on the visual analyses of art creations of the past, and, furthermore, examines the material culture of the globe in the diachronic aspect.

The term “material culture” as used nowadays includes objects, substances, constructions etc. fashioned by man, manufactured from natural materials, such as, e.g. stones, minerals, bones, wood and any other types of pure or mixed materials.

Considering cross-culturally art forms and objects as visual communication one should not oversee such factors as independent creation, contact, intuition, imitation, variability of aesthetic criteria and symbolism. Actually, two main theoretical approaches prevail. The first is a rather conventionalist approach considering material culture as evolving, reshaping, and changing over time. The second, which is less conventionalist, analyses and examines the worldwide common (i.e. universal) artistic and historic characteristics.

During the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century a new turn has been occurred in the researches of the past. This turn consists in promoting interdisciplinary collaboration. Quite an important number of disciplines such as literature, history, philosophy, religion etc. are involved in the analysis of the material culture in order to provide a supplementary, new approach to art and culture of human groups or ethnicities. Archaeology influenced by the contemporary socio-philosophical trends developed new tools in its theory and method to extend the interpretation of the remains of the past material culture. Thus, researchers coming from a variety of academic fields, from outside anthropology have discovered new ways in analyzing objects and monuments, the natural non-anthropogenic ones and the anthropogenic environments of the past.

Many works of art coming from the very beginning of human history have been cherished and preserved from damage for various reasons. For a researcher each one creation, simpler or more composite, smaller or bigger, reflects quite explicitly most of the hidden and difficult to distinguish in another way needs and wishes of their manufacturers and users. After many centuries of meditation and research, nowadays objects and the other groups of associated material remains are not only considered as reflections of fixed ideas, but mostly as promoters of at one time productive, symbolic, practically and aesthetically acceptable means of making human life easier, safer, better. Furthermore, social relationships, religious beliefs and practices are some of the aspects of material and intellectual life of past societies to be revealed through material cultural remains.

It is obvious that interdisciplinary researches give a better chance for obtaining comprehensive insights into man, art and culture, life in the past and the present. Interactions between different cultural groups and cultures result in cultural changes, in a new cultural identity, thus creating history. Therefore the researches of material culture can be more properly defined as the search in time and space, from the dawn of the civilization to the modern times, in every inhabited part of the world, of the real use and meaning of things and their relation to the species *Homo sapiens*.

ADDENDUM

The theme of the 10th World Congress of ISUD *The Human Being as Species: Its Nature and Functions*¹ is tightly linked to men and culture. According to the text of the invitation composed by the actual ISUD President Professor Christopher Vassilopoulos:

“In the 21st Century, we need a global examination of the human being which is not one of privilege as it was in the past. Some relevant topics per-

¹ The Congress will be held at the University of Craiova, Romania, from 4–9 July, 2014.

taining to this theme are: the old nature versus nurture revisited; various world views which are based in myth and religion; the future of religion as an influence on human beliefs and values; the scientific explanation of reality; the problem with scientism; the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life; the continued exploitation of the Earth by human beings; the role of morality on human behaviour; virtue theory versus duty theory, i.e., theory based on principles or rules; animal instincts, such as the sex drive, which drives procreation; overpopulation; how to plan cities, towns and farm land for the future; the effect of the global economy on human life and values; and perhaps the most difficult issue of all, namely, human knowledge from a human perspective.”

Participants from various academic disciplines are expected to achieve a deeper understanding of the human beings in different cultures, and in this way to offer an advance in the most difficult effort in our era—universal dialogue.

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GLOBAL STEWARDSHIP—ISUD AS ANTIDOTE TO GLOBAL DESPAIR

ABSTRACT

Global stewardship explores the perspective of caring for the entire globe—all its peoples and life. The interconnectedness of the basic elementary systems—air and water, which are both necessary for terrestrial and aquatic life—is acknowledged. The concomitant threats of their toxification from immoderate employments of substances and techniques justify the need for global respect and cooperation as well as effective world economic systems as the means to sustain this life.

Keywords: global stewardship; sustainability; global interdependence; global cooperation; global economy.

To want to care for the Earth—its peoples, animals, natural beauty, plants—is a distinctly modern sensibility. Once the full extent of the planet had become known and human population became something to moderate rather than stimulate, the enlightened perspective acknowledges the need to conserve the living resources that make all this possible. As an international association, the International Society for Universal Dialogue is well-situated to foster and nurture an urgently needed awareness of what there is to conserve and how it might possibly be done.

WHAT CANNOT BE SEPARATED

The first question to address could be what is there to conserve/take care of? As self-conscious life, human beings are in the unique position to actually contemplate this. But a very brief survey could start with the two media without which almost all forms of life on the planet could not survive—the air with its composition of 78.09% nitrogen, 20.95% oxygen, 0.93% Argon and 0.038% carbon dioxide and water, which is interestingly composed of the union of 2

gases—2 hydrogen atoms with 1 oxygen forming the well-known compound of H₂O.

After the effects of magnetosphere, the air in the atmosphere is Earth's most proximate buffer against the hazards of the more remote space of the universe. It moderates the temperature, protects all life from damage due to ultraviolet radiation and other dangerous particles as well as makes the hydrological cycle possible by helping to collect the moisture that leaves the earth as it evaporates.

Water is not only an abundant compound on the Earth, covering about 70% of its surface, but it is also an essential component of living things, making up for example 90 to 94% of plants and 75 to 99.9% of animals. Without water and air sufficiently clean and pure to support this life generally, all these forms will dry up and perish. The profusely rich and verdant Earth would conceivably have a future more closely resembling that of Mars or Venus.

Given the prevalence of these 2 substances on the planet as well as their particular fluid and communicating nature, these make the task of their stewardship both primary and global. The major oceans—the Atlantic and Pacific—actually flow into each other as well as into all the other oceanic regions that cover Earth's surface as an integrated whole salt water system. More locally, the inland rivers, lakes and seas collect the water that falls from the upper atmosphere, irrigating all the land through which it passes and then eventually contributing to the major oceans. Distance and specific topographical features achieve some discreet regionalization in this process but great catastrophic events such as the eruptions of large volcanoes, earthquakes with their accompanying tsunamis and nuclear disasters have shown that the air and water currents about the Earth's surface can carry substances and fallout to distant continents. In recent decades the information collected by the NASA satellites orbiting the globe has shown that all these systems are one, integrated whole.

THREATS

We must ask—what puts these essential systems at risk? In the near term, it is the interaction of human life with this—its environment. Ignorance and mismanagement can be said to account for major environmental disasters such as the dust bowl in the United States during the 1930s and the toxification of the region around Chernobyl due to the failure of the nuclear power plant there. Technological activities of man have impacted the inclination of the Earth's axis due to the weight of water collected by dams and accelerated its warming throughout the last 150 or so years since the industrial revolution.

With great technological leverage, therefore, comes the corresponding responsibility. People everywhere need clean air and water to subsist. How can human action be made accountable? It always comes down to the pressure of aware citizens who care about their own lives as well as leaders who have the vision and power to stimulate these activities into a "virtuous cycle" that pro-

motes their own wellbeing as well as that of others, rather than the vicious, predatory cycles that have characterized colonialism and unrestrained capitalism. There are immediate threats in the form of intense water pollution from the widespread use of coal for energy and fracking to collect natural gas.

In May, 2013, carbon dioxide levels passed the historic benchmark of 400 ppm.¹ As reported in *The Guardian*, “the last time so much greenhouse gas was in the air was several million years ago, when the Arctic was ice-free, savannah spread across the Sahara desert and sea-level was up to 40 meters higher than today.” At this time, called the Pliocene period, global average temperatures were only 3 or 4 degrees centigrade higher than today’s. The sea levels at that time would submerge many of the world’s major cities. Lack of political will and “overproduction of fossil fuels, especially oil”² have generated and maintained increasingly higher levels of greenhouse/warming gas emissions.

GLOBAL COOPERATION

It is critically important for peoples to be able to communicate across borders and boundaries that artificially separate them and their mutual needs. As the peoples of the globe proliferate and develop, their activities become ever more entwined. Of the 27 principles articulated in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the product of a United Nations conference in 1992, 15 have a directly international impact. Even under the principle concerning state sovereignty, while nations have the right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and development policies, they also have the responsibility to do so in a manner that does not cause damage to the environment of other states or areas beyond the limits of their jurisdiction.

Regarding the general threat of higher global temperatures, the world’s governments have agreed to hold the rise to 2 degrees centigrade, “the level beyond which catastrophic warming is thought to become unstoppable.”³ The deadline for a binding international agreement to curb emissions is the United Nations Summit in Paris in 2015.

THE ECONOMIC EQUATION

Macro-economically, the world is divided into developed, emerging and undeveloped countries. In recent decades world-wide policy makers dominated by the developed economies and nations have been guided mainly by supply-side

¹ Carrington, D. 2013. “Global Carbon Dioxide in Atmosphere Passes Milestone Level.” *The Guardian*, 10 May.

² Geerts, B. and E. Linacre. *Changes in Concentration of Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide, Oother Greenhouse Gases and Aerosols*. www-das.uwyo.edu

³ Carrington, D. 2013. “Global Carbon Dioxide in Atmosphere Passes Milestone Level.” *The Guardian*, op. cit.

economic theories. These are generally politically on the right, devoted to “free” (in quotes) markets and policies that are stacked to enhance accumulation by the top 1% in wealth, claiming this wealth will be distributed through society via the trickle-down effect. Just as Aristotle perceived the greatest political stability to be based on a large middle stratum of society, the progressive economists Eric Lui and Nick Hanover have articulated middle out economics: “Prosperity does not trickle down from the top but flows in a virtuous cycle that starts with a thriving middle class.”⁴ These “progressives” have emphasized the need to question the veracity of the misplaced belief that enriching the wealthy and deregulating the economy will promote general prosperity. Fundamentally, this approach has instead resulted in high public deficits and the further concentration of wealth. It is not tax cuts for the rich that act as an incentive for them to create more jobs, but the demand created by the consumption of middle and lower income earners that provides the greatest stimulus to the economy.⁵ History has shown anything but a correlation between jobs, economic growth and tax cuts for the rich. The decade after the Bush tax cuts had the worst performance since the Great Depression. During the Eisenhower years in the 1950s with high tax rates, the annual growth rate was robust, averaging more than 4%. Averaging 3.9% over the seven years following the more recent tax increase on top earners implemented under President Clinton, job growth was stronger than in the 1980s.⁶

Even more serious than the factual error “supply-side” economics is based on is its dramatic erosion of long-term investment. The focus of corporate managers on shareholder-value has “created a short-term quarterly earnings culture, a bias toward sweating assets versus building them, a view that employees are a cost to be managed rather than human capital to be invested in and a love of debt”⁷ in search of leverage. The progressive reforms led by Teddy and later Franklin Roosevelt enabled the struggling masses to regain self-sufficiency and kept the middle classes from backsliding. Entrepreneurs such as Henry Ford, Steve Jobs and Sam Walton are examples of people, not wealthy to begin with, who started their very successful companies “not because of tax breaks but because there are consumers out there who want and can afford”⁸ what they would offer.

In recent decades the world has made significant progress towards the millennium development goal of the reduction of extreme poverty measured at subsistence on less than \$1.25 per day. “This is the average of the 15 poorest countries’ own poverty lines, measured in 2005 dollars and adjusted for differ-

⁴ Liu, E. and N. Hanauer. 2013. “The True Origins of Prosperity.” *Democracy*, no. 29, Summer, 10.

⁵ Tanden, N. 2013. “Burying Supply-Side Once and for All.” *Democracy*, op. cit., 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷ Beinhocker, E. 2013. “A Truer Form of Capitalism.” *Democracy*, op. cit., 26.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

ences in purchasing power.”⁹ Of the 7 billion people alive on the planet, 1.1 billion subsist below this level. This means they lack not only health care, education, proper clothing and shelter, but they do not have even enough food to support physical and mental health. By comparison, the US poverty line for a family of four is at \$63 a day. The initial millennium goals set in 2000 expire in 2015. Most of the recent achievement is due to growth in China where 680 million people were lifted from extreme poverty over the period from 1981–2010, reducing its extreme poverty from 84% in 1980 to 10% now. If developing countries continue their current rates of growth, poorest countries are not left behind by the faster growing middle incomes and if inequality does not widen so that the rich lap up all the cream of growth, then developed countries would cut their extreme poverty from 16% of the population now to 3% by 2030. If growth could be a bit faster still and income more equal, taking extreme poverty down to affecting as few as 1.5% of the world’s population could be contemplated as a feasible goal.

WHAT IS GLOBAL STEWARDSHIP?

This brief consideration lays out some of the problems of global stewardship in broad strokes. Looking more closely at conceptions, attitudes and political structures supporting property is necessary. These conceptions and cultural mores themselves play a powerful role in determining the potential for income and wealth distribution, not to mention the use of energy sources that would support sustainable life on the Earth. However, that is a topic requiring development on another occasion—quite possibly at the next ISUD Congress. In a most general manner, stewardship has been used “to refer to a responsibility to take care of something belonging to someone else.”¹⁰ In the global context, the “someone else” is our planetary co-habitants and our children to come. Thank you for considering this solemn and precious heritage.

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⁹ *The Economist*. 2013, June 1, 11.

¹⁰ Wikipedia.