

*Kyriakos Charalambides: "Elements of poetic DNA"*

My relation with poetry dates back to when I first claimed *consciousness* of myself (from the age of nine or ten) and it has always been a relation of worship. Gradually, instinctual impulse and intuitive abundance that mobilized my poetic universe, granted their place to a deeper understanding of the world and history. Therefore, I could handle with more restraint (if not modesty) the language and other means of expression proffered to me by the poetic process. After all, poetry itself would train me

to discover ways in which I could nurse and serve it. Sometimes I wonder – as I have pointed out repeatedly – if truth is a biological condition. In fact, I have the impression that truth follows the body's physical development, transmuted with it. In other words, our relation to things is differentiated little by little, in the form of an organic evolution that expands as the spirit and the gaze mature. In this sense, my first topics sought to trace the world and conceive life's senses through the grid of an earthquake-stricken sensibility. Later on, my poetry received the stigmata of the contemporary Cypriot tragedy (Turkish invasion and occupation of a large part of the island) and this fact that caused everything to tumble, drove me to redefine poetry as essence and life. This is how I was graced with the understanding that in the end it is a miracle and a blessing for a people to keep their memory and all their cohesive elements focused on the condensed space of poetry. Starting from these, they may rediscover themselves *de novo* and consolidate their own conduct with decisive conditions of progress and History's deeper meaning. Further, they may vibrate existentially and grasp messages in their ontological dimension. Walking over a precipice and allowing a gap are necessary for these messages to bounce back in fresh combinations (new ways of poetic phrasing, new charge of words, new aesthetics).

Living in Cyprus, it is only natural that we are shaken from the tragic events befalling the island. On the other hand, I do not think it is honorable to take advantage of a wound. In contrast, art is supposed to add spirituality and a deeper quality to the passions of the people. Without the inclusion of tragedy in an ecumenical dimension of history, without that deep and abysmal property of existence, art is reduced to a descriptive trade of consumerist nature. Yet, its essence lies in this: it can cover a wider field than its historic context.

I owe to admit that History in itself does not interest me; and by History I mean idolatrous adhesion to a specific historic event. For me, deep down, perception of History means perception of the myth. The secret lies in turning history into myth. In short, history is useful as a basis for transcending facts and expanding them meta-historically. My poetry does not deal with History; it deals with its very refutation. However, in order for something to be refuted, it needs to preexist and this attests to the essential meaning of History as a material which is available for reversals.

At present, my evolutionary path leads me one step ahead, to something related with the reversal of myth itself. I've always looked at things from an

oblique angle – I've even handled language heretically attempting to re-integrate the whole intellectual treasure bequeathed to us throughout the centuries, not forsaking that my dependence on the genetic elements of our civilization are at the same time a debt. A debt to grasp the substance through the miscellaneous layering of history and myth, a debt to exist not only as a Greek of Cyprus but also as a citizen of the world, of which your homeland's labyrinthine history makes part. It is precisely this apperception that allows me to release myself from my insular milieu and make way with my poetry toward redemptory escapes. It is my deepest conviction that poetry comprises a *science* and that each poem is an effort made by humans to raise their own truth as to the deeper mystery of art and life.