

ARISTOTLE'S IDEA OF CIVILIZED MAN AND PATHWAY TO CIVILIZATION

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ABSTRACT. *The 21st century, paradoxically, is wrestling again with the same old questions, “What is civilization?” “What is barbarism?”, “What does it mean to be civilized?” and how to resolve different views on culture, religion, civil society, and order and peace. No matter how strange it may seem, it is Aristotle, from the distant 4th century BC, who can provide numerous sensible answers and solutions rather than modern thinkers.*

Aristotle never asked the same questions overtly but a careful re-reading of his texts reveals a very responsible attitude and a serious constructive consideration of the same topic. Aristotle, who constructed methodology of thought, founded logic, designed ethics and laid the foundations of science, art, history and philosophy, actually outlined the pathway of civilization. He demonstrated how to become civilized without directly naming “civilization” or explaining the terms. He compared man and animals, different men and different modes of Being with the purpose of building a perfect society, above and away from barbarians and suitable for civilized man.

KEYWORDS: *civilized, barbaric, barbarism, civilization, ethical norms, values, morality, antiquity, modernity, moral compass, ascent of man*

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Introduction

Civilization, as we know, define and perceive it, is currently under threat. The resurgence of political and religious battles in the 21st century, particularly in the name of Islam, is undermining the very foundations of human *civilization*, placing the discourse on *barbarism* and *civilization* in the forefront of our present global concerns. In this respect, one turns, perhaps surprisingly, to the wisdom of the most prominent Greek sage, who can guide us in our post-modern trials and tribulations. Throughout his entire professional life and intellectual career, Aristotle was actually preoccupied with the making of *civilized man*, creating civilized habitat that would be in harmony with cosmos. Thus, the answers to the current plunge into barbarism could be found in Aristotle's works that reveal persistent search for the ultimate civility. It was precisely Aristotle who outlined human passage from the primitive to the civilized stage and what are the features of *civilized man*.

1. Animal versus Man

Aristotle started as a physician, not as a philosopher. More known as a developer of healthy Reason and teacher of wisdom, he actually started as a healer of the ailing physical body and observer of nature. Aristotle, the observer of nature, antedates and controls Aristotle, the grand thinker about life and Being in cosmos. From biology and medicine to logic, ethics, sociology, history, and philosophy – this is the apparent trajectory of Aristotle's studies and thinking about the world around man, and man himself. Nature versus Culture, animal versus man – this is his analytical point of departure.

Prior to pondering over the ways of making perfect or *civilized man* and how to reach the heights of human *civilization*, Aristotle turned to the comparative analysis of all species, including man. He aimed at the reconstruction of the actual *Ascent of man*, the process of transformation of a primitive living creature into the future *Homo sapiens*, the creator of art, knowledge and culture, and of all that differentiates man from animal. During his three-year exile at the Aeolic coast in Asia Minor, Aristotle conducted serious observations of the local flora and fauna which would inspire his later life-long comparison of man and animals, becoming a solid base for studying man and cosmos, revealed in such works as: *On Plants*, *Generation of Animals*, *Progression of Animals*, *Parts of Animals*, *History of Animals and Generation of Animals*. He would repeatedly draw comparisons between man and animals in favour of man, the most advanced member of the animal kingdom.

Even describing animals, Aristotle recurrently draws parallels between man and animals. He sees obvious biological existential similarities – all species require food and shelter, all procreate, move and respond to the natural environment. But marvelling at the overall variety of species and complexity of their anatomy, the gamut of reactions and responses to the environment, richness and beauty of the animal kingdom, uniformity of the general natural biological processes, Aristotle introduces the distinctions as far as the humans are concerned, pointing out to the greater sophistication of even the biological characteristics of man. Sexuality, for instance, being the main shared with animals feature, is programmed quite differently

in man, as Aristotle observed. He mentions in the *History of Animals*, that horses, for example, are ready for sexual activity at the age of two, and “dogs are sexually receptive when a year old while man begins to possess seminal fluid at the age of fourteen” (1984, vol. I, 860-861).

While all animals somehow signal and communicate with one another, “no animal other than man talks,” proudly states Aristotle in Book II of *Problems* (1984, vol. II: 1393). He suggests that only man possesses the anatomical prerequisites for the production of language. Somehow, nature that “makes nothing in vain” has endowed humans with the developed vocal cords, adaptable tongue and larynx, having equipped for the enunciation of the consonants, vowels and words. Describing animals who also elicit signals and non-verbal communication, Aristotle emphasizes that man, programmed for speech, stands higher on the evolution ladder even biologically. His interest in animals was just a prelude to the study of man, the producer of *civilization*. Describing dogs, horses, dolphins, birds, Aristotle never leaves man from his purview. He needed animals to come to the analysis of man, his body and mind.

2. Man – the Ultimate Species

Comparing animals and man, Aristotle became convinced that man was the most wondrous creation, not only as the producer of unique verbal communication, but also the carrier and owner of advanced memory, the prerequisite for the production of art and historical narrative. In his *History of Animals* he wrote: “Many animals have memory and are capable of instruction, but no other creature except man can recall the past at will” (1984, vol. I: 778). Animals do communicate non-verbally but this communication is purely pragmatic and functional – they signal immediate danger, presence of food or sexual desire. Their communication is biologically oriented and limited to biological functions alone. “Some animals are musical,” writes Aristotle, but most of their musical overtures “are chiefly in connection with the intercourse of the sexes,” implying that they, unlike humans, do not have music for aesthetic pleasure alone (*History of Animals*, 1984, vol. I: 777). Thus, even any approximation to art in animals is not a form of culture, but pure nature, never divorced from sexuality, he implies. Man alone is the cultural animal who can compartmentalize his activities, separating biological functions from the intellectual ones and, by doing so, removing Eros from a number of activities or putting it on hold. Although the post modern art and culture made a point of re-introducing Eros into all cultural manifestations, exploiting biology for political, economic and other goals, man has demonstrated historically his ability to live in the realm of high aesthetics, abstract thought and ennobled or delayed sexuality. While animals remain entangled in the Erotic, man is capable of taming desire or delaying gratification, distancing oneself from Eros and temporarily removing the chains of the strongest natural instinct. This obvious superiority of man as a biologically advanced species was clear to Aristotle. The sexual and moral *taboos* gradually invented by man were intended for further distancing man from animal, overcoming barbarism or creating *civilization*. Without language animals have no art, while man, a producer of speech, has verbal art, poetry,

drama, theatre and socializing for the sake of socializing, or aesthetics, i.e. the activities going beyond the mere biological functions and needs.

Possessing memory and ability “to recall at will,” humans apply it to poetic expression, the creation of music, history, and science, education of the young, transmission and preservation of knowledge and culture for future generations. Man is capable of keeping record of events, creating culture and cultural monuments. No animal can. Admitting the biological analogy between the species, Aristotle elevates man as the producer of Culture. The capacity to create language, talk and “to remember at will” has removed man, a long distance away, from the primitive biological survival, having formed the first principles of *civilization*. In Aristotle’s view, the ascent of man involved making oneself different from animals, distancing as much as possible from the primitive biological functioning in the animal kingdom and learning to live differently. Despite the similar biological beginning, common functioning of the body, certain common natural cycles, man has proven to be incapable of solely emulating animals and remaining on their primitive stage of Being. Nature has been keeping Man related to animals, and, yet, endowed with the capacity of leaving animals behind, and producing culture, man has made himself different. Culture, a creation of man, introduced the gulf between the beast and man. It elevated man and triggered the process of cultivating the barbarian. The dichotomy of *nature/culture* would pose problems for later thinkers who would even wish to dispense with *civilization*, to turn the clock of evolution back and retrieve the beast or the “noble savage.” Aristotle had no doubts regarding culture. He was happy to live in Hellenic antiquity, be civilized and wishing man to complete the cycle of civilizing oneself. A believer in Reason, he defended the purpose of *civilization* as an opportunity to leave barbarism and distance oneself from the animal kingdom.

3. Ennobling the Sexual Instinct

Centuries after Aristotle, some thinkers would justify return to nature, to the “primordial man,” essentially providing the ideology of reclaiming the human primitive past. The concept of the “noble savage” would resurface in Europe, in the middle of the Enlightenment, with the Rousseauvian man as a slave of one’s desire and instincts who would be worshiped even in the 20th century. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and Michel Foucault (1926–1984) would undermine the historic principles of *civilization* by advocating new revised sexual politics, proposing sexual pluralism and sexual liberation. Freud perceived Family, State and Society as the three sources of trauma and prescribed sex in indiscriminate doses to undo the alleged damage of *civilization*, or “cure humanity” with sex and uncover the happy “primordial man”(A. Makolkin, 2000).

Paradoxically, Aristotle, two millennia prior, clearly saw the retreat into biology not only as a regrettable regress in development, but actually as an impossible move. In his view, man has been already far culturally mature and advanced in evolution and one’s cultural activities to be satisfied with the total enslavement by Eros. Eros alone could no longer satisfy the “political animal” and producer of complex culture. The post-Sumerian, post-Egyptian, post-Phoenician, post-Babylonian man, the owner

of Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, Euripides, et als. could not be satisfied with the resurrected savage and his primitive dull life, Aristotle implies. Man ultimately came up with the idea of a monogamous family, after the millennia of trial and error, perceiving it as the most beneficial form of sexual policy, the best optimum outlet for the sexual instinct, the needs of the body and the needs of civilized society, i.e. the most rational treatment of sexuality with respect for both sexes. Such a sexual policy was the first major step on the road to being civilized.

Even describing animals, Aristotle does it from the ethical human perspective. For instance, he writes in the same *History of Animals*, “some are particularly salacious, as the partridge, and the cockerel; others are inclines to chastity, for the birds of this kind indulge but rarely in sexual intercourse” (1984, vol. I, B.1:777). Here Aristotle argues that the sexual instinct varies even among animals, nor is it always predominant, nor should it rule. If even birds are not uniformly obsessed with the sexual activity, the message is that it would be logical for man to be able to develop a sexual policy, suitable for civilized beings and “ennobling the sexual instinct.” This expression belongs to another physician and neo-Aristotelian thinker, Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) who shared the views of the ancient sage. He also believed in human capacity to control one’s body and beautify existence by Art and intellectual pursuits that may enrich the life of man and elevate one above the animals.

4. Status of Women- Sign of Civility

Centuries after Aristotle, Montesquieu (1689–1755) would proclaim that status of women was a good indicator of the level of *civilization* and that societies which treat women in despotic manner and humiliate them through polygamy cannot claim to be civilized (A.Makolkin, 2000: 70–71). In this regard, Aristotle wrote the following in his first Book of *Politics*:

But among barbarians no distinction is made between women and slaves because there is no natural ruler among them; they are a community of slaves, males and females (1984, vol. II: 1987).

The state may be considered as about equally divided into men and women, and, therefore, in those states in which the condition of the women is bad, half the city may be regarded as having no laws (1984, vol. II: 2015).

He implied that laws make a man, guiding his behavior, instilling values that, after a long practice, become a norm and a way of civilized life. In contrast, barbarians have no laws to control their behavior and lawless habitat, unleashes the most savage impulses in man, for “man perfected, is the best of animals, but when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all; full of lust and gluttony,” wrote Aristotle in Book One of *Politics* (1984, vol. II: 1988). Thus, those people who have laws, aiming at instilling justice, equality and dignity for both sexes, can be called

“civilized”. (If one recalls the number of countries who do not have such laws even in the 21st century, it is possible to conclude that very few countries are actually civilized even two millennia after Aristotle’s time). For this very reason, Aristotle criticized Plato’s and Socrates’ idea of shared common wives and children, regarding it a step back to the “sexual communism” of barbarians when neither justice, nor equality could be maintained. The articulation of this utopia in *Symposium* appeared to Aristotle as an objectionable ideology of regress towards barbarism that he could not endorse even on medical grounds. Plato’s utopian state would have undermined not only the millennia of painful ascent towards *civilization*, but also the pattern of healthy biological relationships and would have destroyed the monogamous family, the first fundamental feature of *civilization*. Aristotle subtly mocks his mentor for introducing confused notions of “mine” and “ours,” pointing out that, if realized, Plato’s mythical republic with liberalized sexuality would be the ground for undetermined paternity, since it would be impossible to say “this son is mine” and “love be diluted,” wrote Aristotle concerned about “consanguinity” or problematic inbreeding (*Politics*, 1984, vol. II: 2008) He sarcastically addresses the question, alluding to Lybia “where women are common” and, asking the readers to compare with the state of affairs in Athens, Aristotle rejects the ideas of Socrates and Plato on both medical and ethical grounds.

Eventually, Aristotle and Plato/Socrates would form two main ethical and ideological camps, two lines of thought that would continue to divide the best of humanity for millennia. The monogamous marriage appeared to Aristotle to be the main achievement of man and the first advanced step on the road to *civilization* which enabled man to move sexuality into the safe periphery of being and away from the centre, regulating and ennobling the sexual drive. The sexual reform, proposed by Freud and Foucault in the 20th century would be the re-incarnation of Plato’s mythical code and a very dangerous utopia of Socrates, the confused modernists of antiquity, the designers of the lawless mythological republic and ancient reformists. Relying on the experience of Sparta, Lacedomonia, Crete, Milesia, Sicily, Thessalia, Magnesia and ancient Hellenes, Aristotle, the physician, realized what was healthy for humans, and Aristotle, the promoter of ethics, knew what attitudes towards women make humans civilized. Woman, a target of sexual lust, the victim of barbarism, and laws are required to protect her. The unrestricted sexual freedom would harm both sexes, in his view. He does not specifically deal with homosexuality but he mentions that this alternative practice was known among the tribes at their barbaric stage and does not approve of it as a form of civilized behavior (*Politics*, B. II, 1984: 2015).

Unlike Plato and Socrates, Aristotle accorded equal intelligence to women, mentioning that they also could exercise power in state affairs, when and if given the opportunity, equally well or with the same liabilities. He acknowledges the natural disadvantages that women have to overcome, since they “live a laborious life gestation, facing challenges of nature.” Despite the occasional plunge into misogyny, overall, Aristotle defended women’s rights and dignity and regarded their status as the marker of *civilization*. This position would be recovered by the modern thinkers,

like Montesquieu, and regrettably discarded by Rousseau in the mid-18th century and his followers in the 20th century. The modern sexual reformers, advocates of the new morality, the ideologues of promiscuity, the neo-barbarians, like Freud and Foucault, totally parted with Aristotle, regarding sexuality and sexual policy, having revived the stand of Plato and Socrates in this matter. The current ethical and moral divide between East and West, Middle East and Europe, in this matter is the embodiment of the ancient ethical debate between the Platonists and the Aristotelians. Christian ethics embraced Aristotle's principles while the post-modern West is rather confused as to the sexual liberalism. Plato's idea of common wives, paradoxically, echoes the Islamic institution of polygamy. The same old debate is again facing humanity whose achievements and advancements on the road to *civilization* are in jeopardy again.

5. Aristotle's Conception of Civilized Man and Society

Unlike the 20th-century modernists, postmodern followers of the Rousseauvian "natural religion" or Freudian and Foucauldian "moral reform" and revision of *civilization*, Aristotle not only admired *civilization*, was proud of the achievements of human intellect and taught how to organize one's thought, but he had a very clear image of civilized man and what actually constitutes *civilization*. Essentially arguing with Plato and Socrates, Aristotle outlined human pathway in the direction of civilized existence, as far as possible away from animals and barbarians. If Freud, two millennia after, would insist on the recovery of the "primordial" or primitive man and dismantling *civilization*, the alleged source of trauma and neurosis, presumably, for the sake of human happiness, Aristotle, in contrast, embraced the process of acculturating and civilizing man. In his view, the transformation of man from a primitive creature, a slave of impulses, instincts, leading the life limited to physical survival, into a creative thinking creature, whose life is guided by the triumphant Reason, was the road to *civilization* and a source of true happiness.

Having constructed the pathway to *civilization* that begins with the civilized sexual policy and having successfully tamed Eros, man confined it to the institution of monogamous family, the very family that Freud, two millennia afterwards, would condemn, undermine and diagnose as the source of trauma., while it was, indeed, the first major step and the first basic achievement on the road to *civilization*. This was axiomatic to Aristotle, a member of Hellenic civilized society that had ascended from the times when wives were bought to the period of the triumph of monogamy. In his view, this was the most solid building block of civilized ethics. The ability to exercise control or "continence," as he termed it, was paramount to Aristotle who regarded it the primary quality or precondition for making man civilized. In his judgement, only such a man could keep one's negative emotions in check, control natural impulses and biological instincts, restrain anger, irascibility and stay away from violence. A man was not born with those characteristics, but could be taught, "something grows by habit," and it could be acquired with training, Aristotle wrote in his *Eudemian Ethics* (1984: vol. II: 1932).

In addition to "continence", the Aristotelian *civilized man* possesses "moral excellence" which is also acquired through training, upbringing and self-discipline.

This man persistently tries to improve oneself, acquire wisdom, immunity against evil, meanness, pettiness, cruelty and lack of feeling. He is not a slave to one's desires which Aristotle divides into the negative triad – “wish, anger and sensual appetite” (*Eudemian Ethics*, 1984, vol. II: 1937). Inability to control one's desires leads to what Aristotle regards as “incontinence” which is equal to “wickedness,” as Aristotle puts it. Millennia later, Schopenhauer, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, the Russian Rousseau, Freud, Foucault – all would celebrate the opposite, the return to nature, submission to Desire and its whims. But Aristotle would argue with them from the distance of the Hellenic antiquity, claiming that “anger and appetite belong also to brutes while choice does not” (*ibid.*, 1984, vol. II: 1941). Throughout the entire corpus of his texts, Aristotle consistently brings in the *brute/savage/civilized* paradigm to emphasize the difference between man and animal, between the barbarian and the *civilized man*. According to Aristotle, unlike brute, the *civilized man* is able to make choices towards civilized behaviour, i.e. to choose to control, submit one's desires to Reason and not to be aroused by passions or animalistic drives. His *civilized man* is able to choose to leave the world of the brute by knowing the difference between the moral excellence and lack of it. His category of “choice arises out of deliberate desire of something in one's power,” and his *civilized man* is empowered by the ethical experience of one's ancestors, the ethics or moral excellence of generations that had become one's second nature or habit of being human.

A *civilized man*, according to Aristotle, is not only moral in personal relationships, but towards others in society whom one should treat with respect, without envy, with fairness and good will. Aristotle developed a code of civilized conduct for man within his family, community and country. He prescribes civic courage, honesty and bravery to defend the values of the civilized state. His *civilized man* is brave not because he feels no fear, but because he trains himself to overcome it, and “the habit of the brave man is praised; his condition is analogous to that of the strong and healthy” (*Eudemian Ethics*, 1984, vol. II: 1946). The evolution of a brute and transformation into a *civilized man*, a painstaking and millennia-long process, involved a laborious simultaneous development of mind, body and perfection of the soul, which was not uniform and synchronic with other people. It required instruction, training or simply education over centuries which different nations acquired, lost and retrieved again at different times in their history.

In his comprehensive essay, *Problems*, Aristotle covers not only the physical problems of man, but also intellectual ones, and developmental differences among different people at various periods in history. He writes the following in this regard:

One race among the Thracians alone of all men counts in fours, because their memory, like that of children, cannot extend farther and they do not use a large number of anything (*Eudemian Ethics*, 1984: vol. II: 1416).

Aristotle implies that advanced societies with developed science and mathematics could be named “civilized.” Discussions, debates on all topics are a part

of such a society where people are trained to use reason on a regular basis. “Man who refuses to reason is no better than a plant,” he wrote in *Metaphysics* (1984, vol. II: 1588). The present developed countries who regard themselves as democratic have little debate, the representational democracy of modernity is nothing but a farce, and it would not get the approval of Aristotle, nor would he have regarded such countries as truly civilized.

Aristotle attributed great significance to education and acquisition of knowledge, which he regarded as the “measure of things” or the country with poorly organized education would not be regarded as civilized. “To be educated is to be able to form a fair judgement,” he wrote in *Parts of Animals*, 1984, vol. I: 994). With the current global decline of education, literacy and overall knowledge, despite the flood of information in the post-digital age, there is the decline in judgement, and, thus, in the degree of being civilized, using the Aristotelian yardstick who regarded the uneducated person to be a part of the natural kingdom, closer to plants, insects, and animals. Thus, only education could elevate man and turn him into a civilized being. However, formal knowledge alone would not be enough, stressed Aristotle, implying that we are made civilized by having knowledge and goodness, moral compass – it is necessary to have education be combined with the awareness of moral conduct that also comes with training – “we are made good by teaching,” he wrote in *Nicomachean Ethics* (1984, vol. II: 1864). Education, equal for both sexes, predetermined the level of *civilization* in Aristotle’s estimation and was indispensable for making man civilized. Moreover, any civilized society has to have the rights to equal education be enshrined into constitution, “Women and children must be trained by education with an eye to the constitution,” he stated (*Politics*, B .I, 1984, vol. II: 2000).

Despite the fact that he knew that “all men cling to justice,” Aristotle still gave room for some inequality. He believed in the extraordinary excellence of some individuals that surpasses that of the ordinary people, and only they are suitable to become rulers. It is fair because “the excellence of a ruler differs from that of a citizen,” he wrote in *Politics* (1984, vol II: 2026). He came up with this notion on the basis of the harm of radical democracy, creating barriers for the realization and expression of the extraordinary. In this respect, he mentioned ostracism, exercised in the extreme democracy “as a measure of disabling and banishing the most prominent citizens” and installing the rule of the average to the detriment of the civilized society and common good (*Politics*, (1984, vol. II: 2038). He arrived at this conclusion pointing out the harm of excess even in exercising democracy that can create its own terrorizing order. The competition in excellence is, in fact, not only healthy, but it is ingrained in human psyche and has parallels in nature. Education enables one to differentiate and cultivate excellence and reveal the most prominent ones who could become leaders of the civilized state. “Man begets man,” he wrote in *Metaphysics*, implying that the educated man begets educated masses, or is able to surpass one’s forefathers (1984, 1691). (One wonders what he would have said about the 20th-century leaders who returned humanity to barbarism.) He argued that knowledge, cultivation of excellence, both intellectual and moral, could be transmitted in a

civilized state that has proper protective laws, securing free education, free enjoyment of the arts (like in Crete) and adequate health care. Aristotle, a physician, insisted that “body must be trained first,” but as a philosopher, he maintained that human reason must be stimulated, developed and inspired since “ lower animals do not apprehend reason and obey their passions” (*Politics*, 1984, Vol. II: 1990). Thus, human reason is responsible for elevating man and maintaining the process of civilizing man.

Nonetheless, Aristotle, an advocate of justice and equality, did not believe that all men are born equally intelligent or interested in upgrading themselves. In fact, he wrote in this regard

The mass mankind are evidently quite slavish in their tastes, preferring a life suitable to beasts (Nicomachean Ethics, 1984, vol. II: 1731)

Nonetheless, masses have to be elevated via education, both moral and academic. Quoting Hesiod, Aristotle agreed that “he who neither knows, nor lays to heart another’s wisdom, is a useless weight” (ibid.). His idea of education, like many others, is of tripartite order as well:

- physical excellence;
- intellectual excellence;
- moral excellence.

The famous Roman *mens sana, in corpore sana* could be, obviously, traced back to the Aristotelian first principle of excellence – “body be trained before the mind,” articulated in Book VIII of *Politics* (1984, vol. II: 2123). What is implied in this cryptic statement? Aristotle, an advocate of the caring state, apparently implied that a civilized state begins with the universal health care for all citizens, young, old, women and children. Healthy citizens in his ideal civilized state are able to strive better for mental excellence or cultivation of the Mind through the acquisition of knowledge, also equally available to all, or universal public education. Next comes the idea of moral excellence, inculcated since childhood or moral code of conduct, the civilized behavior, rooted in “continence” or restraint, the ability to overcome passions, lust, gluttony and all desires, more suitable for a brute. It is axiomatic for Aristotle that *civilized man* is faithful in a monogamous marriage, and he, a man of pagan pre-Christian antiquity, is already quite critical of adultery:

As to adultery, let it be held disgraceful in general, for any man or woman to be found in any way unfaithful when they are married, and called husband and wife (Politics, B. VIII, 1984, vol .II: 2119)

Finding adultery objectionable overall in any civilized society, he condemns it particularly when children are involved. This is what Aristotle wrote on this matter:

If during the time of bearing children anything of the sort occurs, let the

guilty person be punished with a loss of privileges in proportion to the offence (*Politics*, *ibid.*)

One wonders what would be Aristotle's judgement of the postmodern sexual liberalism and immorality? He would not regard most of the Western 20th-century societies civilized. Paradoxically, a Hellene of the 4th century BC can pass a strong moral judgement on a 20th-century man and his moral principles that leave much to be desired. His concept of the civilized society is in many respects a prototype of the socialist state of modernity, minus gluttony, lust and immorality. Aristotle advocated a state with the "equalization of property" which he got from Phaleas, "who was first to affirm that the citizens ought to have equal possessions" and subsidized arts as in Crete, colonized by Phoenicians at some time (*Politics*, B. III, 1984, vol. II, 2009; 2017; 2022). Relying on Solon, Aristotle argued that "no bound to riches has been fixed for man", and regarded the art of wealth getting a sort of vice that has to be contained as much as many other activities, in order to exercise the nothing-in-excess principle and sustain reasonableness and civilized mode of being. Aristotle's social and moral prescriptions would have been quite unpalatable to many members of the modern affluent societies whose lifestyle the Hellenic sage would have found is rather uncivilized, if not even barbaric. The march to his perceived *civilization* required persistent process of overcoming greed, cruelty, inequality, emotional incontinence and animalistic characteristics. To squeeze a brute out of man was Aristotle's challenging prescription in order to attain moral excellence. Modern societies exploit daily the atavistic animalistic impulses, having, instead of "nothing in excess," created the culture of barbaric vulgar excess.

Conclusion

Despite the technological sophistication, the atmosphere of comfort, the flights of scientific and technological imagination, modernity is standing rather helpless and confused, the brute is on the surface of all human endeavors, and Aristotle's wisdom therapy is in urgent demand. Instead of the clash of civilizations, we witness the battle of the wills between the semi-civilized and utter barbarians. Consequently, our collective cultural human memory is being under the vicious attack, *civilization* may become totally extinct if we do not wilfully recall Aristotle's theory of *civilization*, implying a consistent and uninterrupted rise from the primitive animal-like stage to the rationally ordered condition. His *civilized man* is not asked to re-arrange cosmos at large, but to live in harmony with each other and with cosmos around. Aristotle can still be a mentor of the semi-educated 21st century brute.

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