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**120 Day- Course Learning Journal**

1. **Introduction**—The expectation of the OGS graduate program is to help train

and deploy people, who are anchored in Christian virtues across America and around the globe, in how to utilize their special skills and professional backgrounds to become agents of positive social change. The course, “Ethics in a Global Society,” focuses primarily on the history and scholarship around the study of “ideas” and how many of those ideas have impacted human ethical, moral, and political behaviors in respect to the individual’s conscious reckoning with the self and the struggle of the self to find its niche in society through philosophy. The course, “Ethics in a Global Society,” is appropriately situated as a near exit-course, in Core 5, because of its accent on ethics and the fact that it requires an essay that takes a scholarly approach in anticipation of Core 7.

1. **Personal Growth**—As a retired New York City public high school teacher, I arrived in this course with what I believe was a more than average level of sensitivity to much of the psycho-social impediments that hamper children's multi-faceted learning and aspirations. In this course, I found that the big overarching goal of OGS as it relates to the relentless torrent of questions that come pouring down about morality, politics, and equality, throughout, engendered in me a burden to convert the sensitivity I bring from my frontline experience in pedagogy into an urgency to cultivate the feeling of practical obligation to help reduce those impediments as soon as I have the chance to do so. Initially, when I participated in the virtual residency sessions on Zoom, followed by the readings and research, I arrived with the usual impression, as do most students of classical ethics and philosophy, that the execution of Socrates was yet another example of the never-ending story about the unfortunate instances of injustice by the “Criminal Justice System” of governments throughout history. Upon completion of the course, I began to realize that the *Apology* of Socrates, as well as the evidence, indicated that Socrates was more likely than not to have been, at least, complicit in the two insurrections against the City of Athens during the time of war, and that the execution was quite probably his just desert.
2. **Reflective Entry**—During the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan had decided that there was no provision in the Constitution for education of the American child, and the federal government had, therefore, no obligation to contribute to public education. With this, President Reagan, concluded that the parents of children who bore precious little, or none of the tax burden at all, for whatever reason, were actually gaming the system. And, therefore, the children of low or non-paying-tax parents should reap no benefit from a free education funded by the real American taxpayers. To achieve this, the president appointed William Bennett to be Secretary of Education. What Reagan had in mind was for Bill Bennett to be the hatchet man, whose commission was to chop up and dismember the entire Department of Education (US DOE). By the time Bennett got mid-way into carrying out his assignment, however, the plan to demolish the Department was halted, for whatever reason. Still, I continued to have that lingering fear that the president could one day revisit the plan.

In 1988, many American educators who were aware that the Reagan-plan to

demolish public education had frazzled out, had begun to breathe a sigh of relief over the fact that President Reagan had finally completed his second term, but the US DOE still intact. That was a good thing. And the four years immediately following the end of the Reagan tenure turned out to have been a *Pax Romana*, of sorts, under the “kinder gentler” approach of his successor, George H. W. Bush. In the new administration, public education was no longer on the chopping block, and from what I could see, there appeared to have been no longer any real fear among educators (my colleagues) that America was still contemplating the Reagan-type national education policy, similar to that of the most backward countries where meager, or no government funding was an absolute guarantee that the best education to be had would rest on the principle of “everyone for himself”.

William Jefferson Clinton took over the helm from George H. W. Bush, in 1993. And, shortly thereafter, Clinton showed an instant recognition for the significance of the already decade-old report, *A Nation at Risk*, in its poignant criticism of the destructive path the country had taken in education. Clinton came in with what appeared to have been a full appreciation for the American *telos,* ideallycentered in a Hobbesian type “utilitarianist” political philosophy. From the beginning all the way to the end, the Clinton presidency went about administering novel decisions to utilize education for the “national good” by stitching together incremental patches of federal funding into school districts where education had become so badly neglected to the extent that funding was becoming shorn and threadbare. None of the Clinton plans took into consideration who was paying what in taxes, but more upon how much passion did American children and their families exert to do what was necessary to take advantage of what he was offering.

Right off the bat, Clinton introduced the “AmeriCorps” program which was, and remains, a federal funded arrangement for high school seniors who were willing to do community service. The date, time, and nature of the community service, when done, were entered on the student’s AmeriCorps card and certified by the person supervising the service. Later, the points accrued from the student’s service-record were redeemed, either for college tuition or for subject-class credit. This was part of the Clinton strategy to fund the first two years of college for everyone.

In addition, the Clinton Administration decided to look at Western European models that were being tested in the new rapidly advancing technological labor markets. The resulting American schematic laid out how technology could be ingrafting into traditional academic education so that school-leavers would be employment-ready for the rapidly shifting job markets toward technology. This plan, spoken of as the “School-to-work” initiative, including special training for educators to achieve this goal throughout the country, came under the aegis of the new American Education Act known as, “Goals-2000”. In the end, the goal was to call the attention of educators like myself to the new scientific and technological demands upon education, in the dawn of the twenty-first century, to the government’s willingness to join the in an education partnership by pouring funds through federal pipelines change the vector of American education. At the same time, it was cognizant of the need to allow us (the educators) “academic freedom” to do the planning and the execution as needed from school district to school district around the country. The government took a very hands-off “consequentialist” approach. The idea was, just get it done!

As part of the plan, the New York City Board of Education arranged schools into family-like clusters based on their specializations and format. My school, as one of the Bronx clusters of vocational high school, took an approach that organized it educators, from both the academic subject areas as well as the trades (nursing, business, tourism, and cosmetology), into non-competitive teams. The veteran teachers were paired with newer, less seasoned teachers; plus, one each from the small coterie of guidance counsellors in our school was assigned to each team. In addition, qualified academic subject teachers (myself included) were drafted as associate professors to work with a tenured professor of education at the task of developing a whole new set of interdisciplinary curricula in mathematics, science, global studies, and English. The object was to inlay into the hard core academics, a rich cross grain of the specific trades offered in the school-clusters through the use of terminologies, concepts, and problem solving situations from the trades without diminishing any of the basic objectives of the academic subjects.

Looking anecdotally at the outcome of the “school-to-work” program initiated in the 1990s, we can see the boost it gave to the nearly more ample supply of technologically trained American workers that have helped us keep pace with the demand of the job market, today, than otherwise would have been, had it not been for “Goals 2000”. For me, looking at it after having taken “PHI 801-52, Ethics in a Global Society”, I am able to see quite clearly, now, the power of the Clinton vision for American education in the context of the government’s effort to facilitate *eudaimonia* for all Americans.

Obviously, if the technological advancements in a society outpace the ability of the labor force to meet the demand for workers with technical skills, employers will become increasingly more likely to turn to Artificial Intelligence and other technological relief. The result of such a condition would be an ever-increasing rate of unemployment which has not been the case for the last several years in America.

Historically, there always seems to be a very strong correlation between the unemployment rate and the crime rate in any society. That being true, a society with a very low unemployment rate is likely to make for a society with a very low crime rate, and a much larger number of happy people. By all appearances, then, living through the period during which “Goals-2000” was initiated, was my being given a front row seat to watch the unfoldment of the Clinton vision as the dramatization of an American president’s application of “utilitarianism” in its purest form. But that was an experience I was not able to appreciate prior to my taking “PHI 801-52, Ethics in a Global Society”. Nor would I have imagined without it, the extent to which so seemingly romantic a political philosophy as “the greatest good for the largest number of its citizens” could be practical.

1. **Future Expectations**—To me, the promise of the OGS doctoral program is that the student will succeed if he completes all the requirements over time. For me there are drawbacks.  One needs good health and time. I have neither, but I am determined to succeed.

I can still recall the time in 2017 when I got sick in one of Dr. Ward's class and had to leave the room so as not to completely shut down the class. Today, I still battle a combination of multiple myeloma-related illnesses like SEA, chronic kidney disease, and immune deficiency that would, in the past, cause me to pass out from time to time. I have not passed out in the last five years, and so far, I am still in the hunt.

Right now, I am still healing from my recent prostate surgery. Yet, in spite of the fact that I feel quite good about my progress, I am still anxious about my first post operation consultation coming up next week, at which time, I will be able to find out what the prognosis on the prostate cancer is. In addition, I am also doing overtime, in terms of age. So, in that combination of illnesses and age, I often do not have the stamina I would like to have. I have tons of doctor appointments and I get Chemo once per month. But regardless, I believe that God wants me to complete this program and I will continue to put one foot in front of the other as long as He continues to pinch hit for me.

1. **Conclusion**—Obviously, PHI 801-52 does keep the student on track to fulfil OGS goal of allowing himself or herself to be shaped into a catalyst for social change. And, because of that particular placement of this course, in Core 5, the requirement that the essay paper be written in the form of a scholarly work makes “PHI 801-52” an ideal preparatory course for entry into Core 7. Educators commonly operate under the principle that “learning is change”. As such, this course has altered a long-standing belief of mine that Socrates was the victim of an unfair criminal justice system. That has changed. Finally, it was thanks mainly to the vantage point I got from PHI 801-52 that I was able to look back at my own experience with Bill Clinton’s “American Education Act of Goals 200” that I was able to recognize the practical application of the utilitarianist political philosophy.

Because of “PHI 801-52, Ethics in a Global Society”, I have come to realize the

importance of the role that is played by morality in reining in wild unharnessed political power that could run amuck and do harm rather than good to society. The course shows that when the *telos* of government achieves *eudaimonia* in a utilitarian context, it does so because justice and equality are important component of such government policies. As a result, whenever education is used as the basis of accomplishing the kind of *telos* as that in Goals 2000, the educational process in the classroom, should be carried out in connection with justice and equal protection under the law.

By this fact, the education of children within a diverse population (such as many classrooms in the United States of America) demands that close attention be paid to a wholistic type of education for all the children. What this means, then, is that the “performance objectives”, to be met by the end of each lesson, should accomplish positive changes in the cognitive (intellectual), social, emotional, physical, and psychical (spiritual) aspects of being in all the children. If, in the attempt to educate a diverse group of children, one group emerges feeling inferiority, while, another group emerges with a feeling of superiority, something is amiss in the delivery process of the education, or in the education package that is delivered.

The famous “Doll Tests” performed by Dr. Kenneth Clark in the 1940s are perfect examples of one side of the problem of negative “emotional” change wrought by what occurs in school or society, or both. Essentially, the Clark “Doll Tests” was probably the most important “witness” in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Since there can be no true democratic Republic without morality and justice, and hence, equality, there can be no active indulgence of Christianity where there are acts of injustice. And so, the prophet Micha tells us exactly what God wants from us:

He [God] has told you, O man, what is good; and

what does the Lord require of you but to do

justice, and to love kindness, and to walk

humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8; Proverbs 31: 9 KJV)