

# EDUCATIONAL IDEALS IN A CHRISTIAN HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE\*

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I would like to express my warm thanks to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lancaster, Mr. Philip Reynolds, as well as to the head and the members of the Department of Religious Studies and especially to Professor and Mrs. John Bowker for the kind invitation which they have extended to me and for the gracious hospitality that my wife and I have enjoyed in this beautiful town.

My presence here signifies the official beginning of a spiritual exchange between the University of Lancaster and the University of Athens. This comes to confirm the contacts that have already existed for some time with the education in Lancaster of Greek students and post-graduates, as for example, my assistant, Mr. Perselis. I hope that my lecture today will be the commencement of a fruitful cooperation that will be continued and systematized in the future.

The title of my lecture is: «Educational ideals in a Christian - Humanistic Perspective». The word «education» in my lecture is not so much related to the Greek word «ἐκπαίδευσις» or to the German word «Erziehung», as it is to the German word «Bildung» and the Greek word «μόρφωσις», which originates from the verb «μορφόω-ῶ» (= I form, I shape).

The expression «Christian-Humanistic Perspective» refers not to atheistic or anti-Christian anthropocentric systems, but especially to the humanistic ideal formed under the influence of the Greek Orthodox Christian Tradition.

It is a falsification of historical truth to allege that the flowering of humanistic classical studies during the renaissance was caused by man's emancipation from Christianity or the Church. On the contrary, this blossoming was the result, culmination and product of a

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very long cultivation of the classical studies which in the East and the West was realized under the blessings of the Church. Therefore the fact that the initial theocentric Humanism developed later into an anthropocentric atheistic or anti-Christian theory of life does not signify an advancement, but a regression. Indeed, the German Neo-Humanism of Humboldt, Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Shelling, Schiller and others, and the so-called «Third Humanism» of Jaeger were attempts to stem to some extent this degeneration.

In the last decades many systems with the label of humanism have appeared, but an unbiased consideration leads us to the conclusion that most humanistic systems substitute a part for the whole, thereby committing the logical error «Pars pro toto». Consequently the quintessence of the humanistic ideal must be sought only in the combination and the harmonization of the positive and selected elements of the several humanistic doctrines.

According to this criterion then, the culmination of the educational ideal from the formal viewpoint is tantamount to the ideal of humanization: man's striving to become human. This means that the worth of man lies not only in the ontological, but also in the deontological realm. Man has worth not only for what he is, but also for what he must or can become. Genuine humanism is thus the ideal of true educational cultivation and formation. The human being must obtain his appropriate form. Menander would say in regard to such a being: «How graceful is man, when he is human» («Ὡς χαρίεν ἔστ' ἄνθρωπος, ὅταν ἄνθρωπος ᾖ»). But this morphological claim can not become a reality, if it does not at the same time also become a demand from the essential or material standpoint. Man can not become truly man, if he does not develop human qualities in himself. What is it that can be described as truly human? What is that which constitutes the differentia of man, his ontological and qualitative superiority and which characterizes and distinguishes the human species from all other beings? It is the fact, that man, as created according to the image and likeness of God, is an axiological being and has a constant orientation to the realm of values.

It is not possible to define precisely a value. It can only be experienced and described. A value is something which is not only subjective or only objective. The ontological place of a value lies not only in the subject or the object, but rather in the relation and interaction between the two. A value is whatever evokes an appreciative response. It creates the interest and the personal impulse of the subject towards

an object because of the pleasure and satisfaction that this object provokes in us.

Value is thus a notion which expresses the emotional and volitional relationship between the subject (the soul) and the (material or spiritual) object. Pleasant feelings or some desire are born from this relation in us. When, for example, we see a beautiful painting we feel a spiritual delight and desire to possess it, if possible. In our contact with this object one or more values emerge. Hence a value is the expression of a recognition and satisfaction for everything material or spiritual that satisfies certain needs, predispositions, tendencies, inclinations and propensities.

When we value something, we like it; we prefer its presence to its absence. If we value it highly, then we prefer its presence to the presence of many alternative values, and if we value it supremely, we prefer to give up life itself rather than to live without life's supreme value. A valuation, then, is a liking or a preference. A value is the experienced fulfillment of our liking, the achieving of our desire.

Value thus is the cause that makes an object possess desirable qualities and be regarded as a Good. Goods (material or spiritual) are goods, because they contain for us a value. All men have the tendency to experience or realize in their lives a variety of values that correspond to their material or spiritual needs.

Values are not related to reason and intellect, but mainly to the emotions and to volition. Values are not conceived by the intellect but by the emotions. The order of values, as Pascal would say, is not an «*ordre de la raison*», but an «*ordre du coeur*». Logic is blind especially to the higher spiritual values in the same way that the ear is blind to light and the eye deaf to sound. Values become understandable when they are first kindled and radiate within us. We see them when they light up or catch fire in us. We perceive them when we are first carried away and fascinated by them.

Values are the foundation of human freedom. Thus, it becomes clear that true freedom is not only freedom from something concrete in a negative sense; it is not only the external freedom of our acts, carried out without external restraint, without dependence and oppression; true freedom is in a positive sense a freedom towards something; it is a spontaneous self-binding to the deontological demands of the various values; it is a choice between alternative courses of action. Positive personal freedom means the power to achieve chosen objectives. In this sense, freedom is a fusion of the power to choose and the power

to achieve, and of course the power to choose is undoubtedly the more fundamental of the two.

Of course the free action of man is trapped and caged within the whole of the psychosomatic and social processes which often influence and decisively determine his volition. Nevertheless we can consider only values and not these processes as motives of this free action. To use a pictorial example, when we speak of the causes and the motivations of undertaking a flight to the north pole, we do not take into consideration the condition of the airplane's motors, the velocity of the winds or meteorological conditions—which of course can influence and even frustrate the journey—but only those things that would make such a journey adventurous and worthwhile, e.g. the attraction and the fascination of the polar landscape, the desire for scientific research and discovery, the hunting of furs, etc. In the same way the principal motivations of free volitional action are not the psychosomatic and social factors which determine this action, but the values of the material and spiritual goods towards which the volition is directed. In order for us to direct our free action towards some object, this object must rightly or wrongly appear to us as bearing a value, i.e. to be a good whose existence is more desirable than its non-existence. Thus the essence of freedom is an axiological choice.

Values are the driving forces of man's civilizing activity. Civilization, which includes the material and technological achievements and the several sectors of the spiritual life, is nothing else than the experience and the realization of values in the life of society, aided by the innate predispositions, potentialities and abilities of the human being. Values are conceived, materialized, embodied and realized in the various goods of civilization and make them agreeable and desirable, and targets of man's interest and activity. It is in accordance with the type of values realized in the various goods that civilization is divided into different sectors. Each of these sectors signifies the realization of a certain value and consequently corresponds to a special innate axiological predisposition and tendency of our soul.

The principal sectors of civilization are: the correct behaviour towards the ecological environment; economic life and technology as the infra-structure of other sectors of civilization; the protection of health and the development of athletics; scientific knowledge and philosophy; the experience and the realization of the aesthetic values of beauty in the realm of the Arts; the realization of social values in social life; the moral life; the realization of political values in the

State; and Religion which concerns man's inclination to the value of the Holy and corresponds to the most profound of all human innate propensities.

Each of these sectors, which is, so to say, the outward projection of a part of our soul, has a special meaning and fulfills a special purpose; therefore it cannot be ejected from civilization, neither can it be replaced by another sector. Just as it is impossible within the human organism to substitute the liver for the heart or the heart for the stomach, since each of these organs has a special and unique function, in the same way within the whole of civilization, which embraces the totality of human reality, it is impossible to substitute science for religion or art for science etc., because each one of these sectors refers and corresponds to a special tendency and need of the human being.

Therefore in order to have a healthy development of civilization and to avoid the so-called «disease» or «crisis» of culture, it is necessary that its different sectors develop harmoniously together. One sector, e.g. technology, must not develop excessively like a malignant tumour strangling all other sectors.

From what we have said above, it becomes evident that the ideal of true education must first help the student to experience these values in their entirety and to become an integrated personality that will be incorporated in a critical and selective way into the traditional civilized reality which has been bequeathed to us by former generations.

Secondly, educational work must indicate how we can overcome the crisis of civilization and how its structures can become healthy.

Thirdly, education must create builders of civilization who will push on with the realization of values and the production of new civilizing goods.

An indispensable presupposition for health, equilibrium and renewal to exist in civilization as objective spirit, is that individuals must exist, who themselves have achieved health and inner equilibrium in their subjective spirit.

The existence of man is, so to say, a bundle of axiological predispositions and propensities, which correspond to the sectors of civilization and which weave together a single whole and compose his special psychological type. Thus, just as we can from a morphological viewpoint classify men into introverts and extroverts (according to the terminology of Jung) or into schizothymics and cyclothymics (according to the terminology of Kretschmer) or into choleric, melancholic, sanguine and phlegmatic (according to the terminology of Hippocrates and Ga-

len), so, too, from the material axiological viewpoint we can classify men according to psychological types using as criterion the predominant axiological propensity of their psychosomatic existence.

By making some additions to the typology and terminology of Edward Spranger we could speak about the economic, sensual, hedonist, technical, biological, athletic, social, theoretical or scientific or cognitive, aesthetic or artistic, moral, political and religious human types.

Each of these types has his own temperament and idiosyncrasy and consequently has different psychological reactions. If these types were to find themselves for instance in a large garden of roses, the religious man would exclaim together with the psalmist «Ὡς ἐμεγαλύνθη τὰ ἔργα Σου, Κύριε» («We magnify your works, o Lord»); the artistic or aesthetic man would write a poem or paint a picture. The theoretical or scientific type would probably think about the genus of the plants, to which the species *Rosa* belongs. The social man would think about the bouquets which he would like to offer. The political type would have a vision of the gardens which he would promise to his voters. The economic man would calculate the profit from the sale or the distillation of the roses, etc.

The truly educated and integrated man has arranged the development of his axiological predispositions and inclinations in such a way that one is not excessively cultivated at the expense of the others. All these inclinations are satisfied harmoniously together by the experience of goods and the realization of the corresponding values which together compose a system and an organic entirety. This totality is hierarchically organized and animated by one uniting vital principle and force. The artifact which we desire to become by self-education and to form in our students by our educational endeavors signifies unity and the dependence of all partial manifestations of the human activities upon a single regulating center. This center helps the human personality in each concrete case to subdue the «χείρον» (= the worse or the lower) to the «κρεῖττον» or the «βέλτιον» (= the better or the higher).

Very often each of the above-mentioned psychological types presents an one-sided and excessive development which leads to the oppression or to the strangulation of essential elements of the authentic human being. The man who considers for instance material goods as an end-in-itself: he who is absorbed in business and is ignorant of that spiritual delight which is to be obtained from reading a book or from

listening to a concert or from attending a theatrical play or from experiencing the liturgy—this man is the one-sided economic man.

The hedonist is enslaved to the pleasures of the body. The man who is attracted by vitalist naturalism and by Nietzsche's ideal of the superman who deifies the body or by athletic achievements: who forgets the spiritual delights or his moral obligation and duties, is the one-sided biological or athletic type of man.

The one-sided social man allows the derailed «emotion of honour, to neutralize his healthy «self-esteem». He loses his authentic existential Ego; he begins aping and jabbering like a parrot and is enslaved by the conformity of robots and the «mannequins» to the various ideologies or by a sexual collectivism. He does not have the power to oppose the destructive influence of the multitude as Socrates says in Plato's *Crito*: «Οὐ πᾶν ἡμῖν φροντιστέον τὸ ἐροῦσιν οἱ πολλοί, ἀλλ' ὅ,τι ὁ ἐπαῖτων, ὁ εἶς, ἡ ἀλήθεια» («We must not care too much for what the many say, but for what the expert says, he who knows good, the one, the truth»).

The social worker also falls into a one-sided behaviour when he is not inspired by the ideal which «the mother of prisoners», the great English-woman Elisabeth Fry has formulated with her famous words: «Charity to the soul is the soul of charity». Today also we all know too-well the one-sided theoretical or scientific type of man, who deifies the intellectual sphere, cutting it off from the other spiritual and ethical values. Today we understand how dangerous this type can be for humanity. Therefore self-regulation and self-control of the sciences is necessary in order to confront those dangers connected with advanced scientific and technological efforts and attainments. Biological or psychological mutations, caused by radioactivity (radiation) and the upsetting of the ecological equilibrium; the pollution of the biotope and the biosphere, which leads to the loss or the production of new chromosomes or new parts of them; the interventions in the development of the genotype, the phenotype and the gametes; biotechnology and the medical technology of behaviour; psychotechnics and the industry of psycho-medicaments; the invasion of psychiatry and neuro-chemistry into politics, as for instance in the political psychiatric clinics; the extreme suggestions for the genetic rebuilding of the human species by constructing men whose body will be connected to a computer; all these efforts or tendencies and many others, persuade us that the planned scientific and technological channeling of the biological and psychological functions must be self-regulated in order to promote psychosomatic health and inter-human relations in a way

that corresponds to man's dignity and freedom. The demand for this self-control has led to the creation of a social scientific field (technology assessment), whose purpose is to study the question whether or not it is right to permit the realization of planned new large technological initiatives and programmes. The evaluation of these programmes has as its criterion their probable consequences for man and his environment.

In a similar way we can speak about extreme experience or the realization of aesthetical values. When the artist is dominated by excessive aestheticism and loses the sense of moral obligation, he is the one-sided aesthetic or artistic type, who can also be dangerous for civilization. Arts and aesthetic education must have a consciousness of their responsibility and be self-controlled.

Just as we cannot, by invoking the dogma «Chemistry for Chemistry's sake», justify the chemical achievement of the Nazis, who turned human bodies into soap, in the same way we cannot, by invoking the dogma «L' art pour l' art» (=Art for Art's sake), justify an uncontrolled and harmful exemption from the moral rules of artistic production. Our demand must be «Art for man's sake» as well as «Science and chemistry for man's sake».

Those who combat the «laissez faire, laissez passer» (= allow them to do, allow them to pass) of economic - political liberalism and of moral libertinism often contradict themselves by demanding the exemption of artistic «laissez-faire-ism».

Our attitude towards the various sectors of civilization (e.g. the artistic or the economic) must be governed and influenced by consequence and by the same logical and moral standards. True art does not cut off the beautiful from the whole of the spiritual life. On the contrary genuine aesthetics—according to the Platonic and Christian traditions—always correlates the beautiful to its eternal source, to the absolute and perfect beauty of God.

Goethe in the first verse of a four-line stanza describes a girl who sees herself in a looking-glass and observes that she is beautiful. In the second verse a group of old men says: «Your beauty however is temporary and passing». Then in the third and fourth verse the girl, in order to preserve the value of beauty, answers the old men: «Beauty however is eternal in God. In seeing me you see God. I am nothing else than a momentary flash of the eternal beauty».

Aesthetic value, when emancipated from its divine source and



its connections with morality, is reduced to degeneration. Dostoyevsky spoke about this degeneration in his work «The Brothers Karamazov». He said: «Beauty is something terrible and horrible! All contradictions are met in it. A man who has a great heart and a deep intellect begins many times with the ideal of the Madonna but ends with the sodomite ideal. Believe me, for the majority of men beauty resides in Sodom. It is a horrible thing, that beauty is not only something terrible, but also something mysterious. The devil struggles against God by using beauty; the battlefield where this war is waged is the heart of man».

An one-sided attitude could exist also in the ethical life. When man is ignorant of the objective hierarchy of values or when he bases his moral action upon his own powers and disregards the divine source of dynamic moral action, he is the one-sided ethical type of man.

Similar is the one-sided action of political Machiavellianism, amorality and opportunism, which deny the relevance of morality in political affairs and hold that craftiness and deceit are justified in pursuing and maintaining political power.

Correct political education aims not so much at building the «Machtstaat» (State of power), or the «Rechtsstat» (State of law) or the Sozialstaat (social State), as to building the Kulturstaat (State of culture, of civilization), which increases the goods of civilization, secures «bonum commune» and contributes to the experience and realization of «Grundwerte» (=fundamental values). Also one-sided is the man who is dominated by a morbid religious mysticism, allured by dyadic and neo-Platonic metaphysics and theories of life, and who restricts his religious life to the vertical dimension disregarding the horizontal direction and the other humanistic and civilizing values.

Each form of experience or realization of a value must not conflict with the whole spiritual life, but must be harmoniously embodied in its totality and promote it. True and perfect education is to live and to realize values as a single whole. Partial activities and manifestations of the human being are spiritual, not when they are isolated in themselves but only when they constitute integral parts of a total life of value, promoting and generating other values.

Spiritual life is the task of creating personality by transforming its highest potentialities into actualities, its hopes into reality.

The tragedy of our time is that the educational work has often forgotten that only that psychosomatic formation which is symme-

trical with the fullness of values and to their objective hierarchy, creates discipline, order and unity in human behaviour. Information, knowledge, skills, habits, attitudes, appreciations, beliefs and ideals must be acquired in one and the same process.

This general and common education is, so to say, susceptible to spectroscopic analysis. Thus it appears multiform, with many colours, according to its relations with special professional instruction and its partial concrete connections with the social structure.

One who is a specialist and has devoted himself to a particular field of study or research, or professional occupation can very well be under general humanistic cultivation. In this case we can see all the excellent colours which are formed when rays of humanistic light are broken up as they pass through the prism of professional specialized training and occupation.

Water, as Saint Cyril of Jerusalem says, when it is absorbed in the various plants, becomes white in the lily, red in the rose, purple in the violet; in the palm it becomes different, so too in the vine and it penetrates everywhere in various ways and forms, without changing its essence; yet according to the construction of the plants which receive the water, it appears differently».

In a similar manner the «ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν» (living water) of general education can permeate everyone of the sectors of special educational work or profession.

Healthy axiological orientation is also the quintessence of correct education.

It is not easy, however, to experience and actually realize the fulness of values according to their hierarchical order. The human being considering the various values, does not resemble the clear mirror which hangs on a wall and shows everything exactly as it appears, but is similar to the reflecting surface of a lake or the sea. When it is clean, clear and calm, it reflects more or less faithfully and gives a true picture of the landscape or the coast. When the lake or sea is muddy and stormy, it elongates or shortens or distorts, or hides completely the objects on the coast.

Thus we can understand why in cases of spiritual shortsightedness or colour-blindness on the one side the higher values are hidden and out of sight or are distorted completely, appearing as repulsive, tyrannical and oppressive, while from the other side the lower values and goods come into view as attractive, alluring and lovely.

To avoid such diseases of axiological vision, it is necessary to have a spiritual center which will help us see correctly the fullness of the values and their correct position in their hierarchically organized realm.

This center is Religion, which is the mother, the womb of civilization and culture. Religion satisfies the deepest nostalgia of the human being. Just as the sunflower turns in the direction of the sun and the magnetic needle of a compass points to the north, so the human being, when he is not degenerated, repeats together with St. Augustine: «My Lord, you created us for yourself and our heart is unquiet until it finds rest in you».

Nietzsche, who declared that God is dead, prays to the unknown God:

«All streams of my tears  
flow to you!  
And the flame of my heart  
rises bright to you:  
Oh, come back to me,  
my unknown God,  
You, who are my pain  
and my highest happiness».

This nostalgia of St. Augustine and Nietzsche can be perfectly satisfied only in the atmosphere of the new life and reality in Christ. This reality means union in Christ with God in the Holy Spirit, knowledge of the truth, unity, love, grace, social justice, true peace, salvation. The Eucharist is the summit, the centre and the source of this life. «It is the actualization of the new aeon within the old, the manifestation of the Church as the new aeon; it is participation in the messianic Kingdom as the parousia, as the presence of the Resurrected and Resurrecting Lord» (Schmemmann, p. 57).

The combination of Soteriology and Christology of the Greek Fathers together with the paramount doctrine of «the restoration of the old Adam and his deification through the resurrection of Christ» demonstrate the objective and ideal of the Orthodox Church, so strikingly expressed by the words of St. Gregory the Theologian: «I must be buried together with Christ; I must be resurrected together with Christ; co-inherit with Christ; become God's son—God Himself». («Χριστῷ συνταφῆναί με δεῖ, Χριστῷ συναναστήναι, συγκληρονοῆσαι Χριστῷ, υἱὸν γενέσθαι Θεοῦ, Θεὸν αὐτὸν») (Migne P.G. 35, 785).

Greek Orthodox worship, as the famous German professor Friedrich Heiler used to confess, «encloses the same mystery which in the past was hidden in simpler forms. Just as the Christians of the fourth century and the Christians of the period of the martyrs and the Apostles, so also today the Greeks experience the fact that in the Liturgy the Crucified and Resurrected Christ is present and that with Him the glory and the blessedness of heaven descend upon earth».

In the Orthodox Church many polar and dialectical opposites are harmonized in wholeness and unity. Individualism and community life, intelligible and mysterious, temporal and eternal, natural and supernatural, past and future, grace and nature, spirit and flesh, heavenly hopes and earthly interests, attraction and repulsion, childish simplicity and philosophical depth, delight of the senses through the material symbols and spiritual contemplation, divine authority and human freedom, bodily abstinence and spiritual cheerfulness, symbol and reality, incarnation of God and deification of man—all these opposites or polar and dialectical antinomies are combined in a marvelous unity and harmony. The Orthodox Church is heaven on earth — the sanctified earth.

The perfect contact with the Holy leads to the experience that God is not only the absolute being, the highest ontological reality, the «ens a se» or «ens realissimum» or «ens perfectissimum», but also the «summum bonum», the greatest good, the supreme axiological reality, «valor valorum», the ultimate source of all values and goods. The origin of values is to be found not in the slowly evolving experience of the human race, as the instrumentalists and experimentalists say, but in the divine and eternal order. Values have permanent validity and durability and are ultimately sanctioned and consecrated by religion.

This explains why the mystical colour and eschatological idea of the Greek Church does not lead to an indifference for the things of the world and to an unhealthy religious mysticism which ignores cultural goods and values.

It is not true that Orthodoxy neglects real life. The Greek Church recognizes and sanctifies all the sectors of civilization and it embraces all partial cultural interests in one all-inclusive interest.

It is characteristic that the Prayer Book of Greek Church contains beautiful prayers related to so many expressions of material civilization and of worldly life (cf. the prayers «for the sick», «for the foundation of a home», «for fields, gardens, vineyards», «for the blessing of seed», «for the eating of (the first) grapes», «for the blessing of wine», «for the blessing of salt», «for the blessing of herds», «for the construction

of a ship», «for the blessing of fishing nets», «for the foundation of a school», «for the inauguration of irrigation works,» etc.

Then again the fact that the Orthodox Church concerns itself with nature and the ecological environment made the Protestant Professor Ernst Penz confess that in this Church «Christian cosmology and the Christian philosophy of nature have a great development».

Greek Orthodox tradition also praises the human body. This tradition appreciates the dynamic relation which exists between organic defects or bodily diseases and human personality.

Characteristic is that two of the seven sacraments of the Greek Church, i.e. the sacraments of Matrimony and of Holy Unction are immediately related to the biological and corporal sphere. To a much greater degree the higher spiritual values, such as the values of truth beauty, social love and justice etc., are sanctified in the new life in Christ. This life has not only a vertical dimension pointing to heavens, it is also horizontally directed towards social life and culture. Thus, the moral ideal is realized according to which lower values are realized in favour of higher values. Morally good is not the denial of lower values, but their subjection to the control of higher values. On the contrary, ethically bad is not the recognition of lower values, but their deification and exaltation over the higher values.

Eternal, productive and intrinsic values are to be sought in preference to those which are merely temporary, unproductive and extrinsic. An intrinsic value is one which has worth in its own right; it is an end-in-itself. An extrinsic value is one which is a means to some other value; it is of instrumental worth only.

The Christian theory of life guards against axiological shortsightedness and colour-blindness and contributes to unite the axiological motives of free and responsible decision and activity into an organic wholeness. This axiological wholeness, which acts with a great liberating power, mobilizes and educates the totality of the human being. Thus, personality consists of a hierarchy of wishes, drives, impulses and interests.

An objection could be made to what I have said. Christian humanistic education presupposes the imposition of the authority of a religious ideological system; but authority is today incompatible with democratic freedom.

This objection is unreasonable. Educational work without authority sanctioning some «Grund-werte» cannot exist. As it has been proved not only by the narrations concerning children who are brought up

by wolves, but also by the study of children who grew and developed isolatedly in a desert or forest, the intellectual and axiological development and progress of man is not realized automatically by the development of the organic and biological substratum and substructure of his being, but needs an impetus from the outside, from preexisting logical and axiological experience of persons who inspire trust and confidence. Even the supreme and most clever scientific authority depends upon other fields, which are not related to his specialisation, and upon the knowledge and experience of other authorities. In nearly all fields we accept the opinions of those men whom we regard as being wiser than us. So the authority of a good educator who is — so to say — the result of the healthy axiological orientation of the educational community, does not mean an abolition of the freedom of students, an ostentation of feudal power, or oppressive use of authority.

Educational authority presupposes dialogical relation of interchange and communication, free and willing dependence, readiness for voluntary appropriation of truths and axiological demands.

Obedience in the frame of educational function is not the obedience of a machine nor the lack of initiative or readiness for self-confidence, free and responsible decision, self-control, self-discipline, self-determination, self-realization and self-transformation.

Obedience implies typical and morphological autonomous consent to the heteronomous content of rules, models and personal examples which enlighten, attract, expel timidity and inspire trust, confidence, courage and certainty for the possibility of spiritual progress and victory.

It is self-evident that authority, discipline and obedience are not ends-in-themselves, but that they submit and surrender to the ruling claims of values.

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The modern declarations about the freedom of conscience and the pluralism of ideas can not justify the propaganda for the axiological neutrality of education and for the disappearance of its ideological colouring. This propaganda consciously or unconsciously always aims not at emancipation from every ideology, but at opening a road for the invasion of a new ideology, which will substitute the preceding ideological system. Some make the waters muddy and turbid in order to avert and prevent others from pursuing spiritual fishing, while they themselves feverishly and restlessly prepare nets and bait for fishes. Nihilism is always imaginary, not real. Even the denial of transcendence

and of Religion is a road which leads to creation of their illegitimate surrogates.

Certainly in a democratic society and in the educational institutions freedom of conscience, free movement of ideas and their critical valuation are necessary, so that students will be able to develop healthy critical and selective thought and self-determination. But education without struggle against nihilism, without leading axiological orientation, without a list of «Grund-werte», without guiding personalities trying to produce tones in the soul of youth by plucking, striking or bowing strings corresponding to strings which produce the same tones in their own soul—such an education cannot exist. Freedom and responsibility do not occur in vacuum; they are not manifested before Nihil, before Nothing, but have reference and intentionality to something and to some criteria. In an ill-omened and unlucky situation of a nation some sectors of culture and the whole legislated educational work could violently be driven and forced into a chromatic mutation, into a change of colour, but not to a decoloration, to a deprivation of a colour. Education may change its flag, but it can not exist without a flag. Therefore sincerity and honesty demand us to accept that during the discussion about the freedom of education and the education of freedom the myth and mask of ideological and axiological neutrality must be taken away. In this discussion what we ask and seek is not the decoloration or the nihilism of education. What we attempt to find is not only *how* but also *what* we must teach and be taught. Both, formal «how» and material «what» are essential to education. In any case authentical education needs a status quo, a standard, a criterion, a principle, an emblem on which the choice of its ideological identity, the choice between colour *a* or colour *b* can be based. This criterion ought not to be anything other than the ideal of true humanization and cultural progress which can bring into unity and consistency various elements involved in a comprehensive all-inclusive view of life,

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