PHILOSOPHY & EDUCATION

Enhancing Humanity

The Philosophical Foundations of Humanistic Education

Nimrod Aloni

Springer

ENHANCING HUMANITY

Philosophy and Education

VOLUME 9

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Enhancing Humanity

The Philosophical Foundations of Humanistic Education

by

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Springer

A C.I.P. Catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN-10 1-4020-6167-6 (PB)
ISBN-13 978-1-4020-6167-7 (PB)
ISBN-10 1-4020-0961-5 (HB)
ISBN-13 978-1-4020-0961-7 (HB)
ISBN-10 1-4020-6168-4 (ebook)
ISBN-13 978-14020-6168-4 (ebook)

Published by Springer,
P.O. Box 17, 3300 AA Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in the Netherlands.

For Sima

My wife and fellow musketeer

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PREFACE

In Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea*, Roquentin feels bound to listen to the sentimental ramblings about humanism and humanity by the Self-Taught Man. "Is it my fault," muses Roquentin, "in all he tells me, I recognize the lack of the genuine article? Is it my fault if, as he speaks, I see all the humanists I have known rise up? I have known so many of them!" And then he lists the radical humanist, the so-called "left" humanist, and Communist Humanist, the Catholic humanist, all claiming a passion for their fellow men. "But there are others, a swarm of others: the humanist philosopher who bends over his brothers like a wise older brother with a sense of his responsibility; the humanist who loves men as they are, the humanist who loves men as they ought to be, the one who wants to save them with their consent, and the one who will save them in spite of themselves...." Quite naturally, the skeptical Roquentin ends by saying how "they all hate each other: as individuals, not as men."

Fully aware of the misuse and false comfort in the use of the term, Professor Aloni proceeds to restore meaning to the word as well as appropriate its educational significance. There is a freshness in this book, a restoration of a lost clarity, a regaining of authentic commitment. No longer oriented to an "essence" of what it means to be human, "humanism" in the context of this book cannot be used to paper over what has become a kind of wasteland where values are concerned. Nor can it be used to suggest that contemporary education (public or private or religious) is governed by identifiable principle or communally defined and accepted ideal.

Perhaps most important in the pages that follow is the light cast on the problem of human existence in these days of blank indifference on the one hand, a search for sensation on the other. Professor Aloni is as interested in individual uniqueness as he is in community, and in what it means to become human in a postmodern moment of receding universals and an emptying out of meaningful purposes and goals. He knows as well as anyone the importance of empowering students to be not only wide-awake but also critical in their adoption of world-views.

Beginning as he does in classical times, concluding with open questions regarding education – and the prospects of humanism – in the face of postmodernism, Professor Aloni weaves the past of humanism into the present. For him, the past does not press down upon the present or determine what we think and dream and try to teach today; but the possibilities in a revised humanism remain – for the individual as well as for the community.

We can only hope that under the deceiving brightness of an oversimplified and conventional "humanism," there are fewer instances of professed love for "humanity" coupled with hatred of particular persons. Professor Aloni hopes to pull aside the screens of obfuscation that have allowed so much of a so-called humanist education hide an erosion of ethical concern as well as concern for the individual self. At once he hopes to point the way towards the thus far undiscovered: a new philosophical consciousness in education, a humanism that works to liberate and at once to bring together, to make visible and palpable heretofore undefined possibility.

Maxine Greene
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Teachers College, Columbia University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Kibbutzim College of Education and Beit Berl College of Education for providing me academic and material support without which this work would not have come to completion.

The Gilo Familiy Foundation has provided me with a generous grant that enabled me to concentrate on this work and bring it to successful completion. For this I am most thankful.

Two good philosophers-friends have made important contribution to the book: Maxine Greene, of Teachers College-Columbia University, who was my mentor during my doctoral studies, has inspired me since then with her sensibilities and sensitivities, and wrote the Preface to this book; and Zvi Tauber, of Tel Aviv University, with whom I have discussed many of the ideas presented in the book and who contributed insightful comments on early versions of the various chapters.

Finally, my mother, Shulamit, my wife Sima, and my sons Adam and Tal have always given me the emotional and intellectual backing that is so needed in the long and lonely odyssey of writing a book. I love them.

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Chapter I

BETWEEN THE CLASSICAL AND POST-MODERN: MILESTONES AND CENTRAL APPROACHES IN HUMANISTIC EDUCATION

To you is granted the power of degrading yourself into the lower forms of life, the beasts, and to you is granted the power, contained in your intellect and judgment to be reborn into the higher forms, the divine.

Pico Della Mirandola

Every individual man carries in disposition and determination a pure ideal man within himself, with whose unalterable unity it is the great task of his existence, throughout all his vicissitudes, to harmonize.

Schiller

In man creature and creator are united.

Nietzsche

1. THE INITIAL QUESTION: HOW TO BE A HUMAN BEING

Like a shark that is born a shark and a dolphin born a dolphin, human beings are born human beings. But unlike the shark whose life embodies its shark-like nature and the dolphin whose life manifests its dolphin-like nature (and it appears that this is true of all other animals), human beings live wondering about their nature, seeking in vain to characterize and define it, and do not know (in the words of Ecclesiastes) "what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their lives." In other words, from the time humans are capable of thinking, they are aware of their own reality and life in the world next to other creatures: but how to live their lives, what content and meaning to give it, and what character or ethos they will adopt in their relationships with their natural and human environment – these are no longer facts, but weighty and challenging questions that compel the individual, day in, day out, to choose and decide.

The attempt to follow the developmental process of human individuals reveals that they are also natural beings, whose development and formation

the biological level, for example, the genetic heredity with which a person is born (and as of now, also dies) plays a most significant role in defining the individual's character. To a great extent the genes in our body's cells determine our physical appearance, mental potential, temperament, life expectancy and talents for various human occupations. Moreover, numerous physical attributes have a far-reaching effect on the directions our lives take, our social status and self-image. Many opportunities for promotion and success are open to the "the bold and the beautiful" and remain inaccessible to the majority. This is also true of those who have outstanding talents for sports, music or scholastic studies. Another example is the implications that a person's skin color or gender has on his or her life. It is indubitable that until recently, the fact that people were born dark skinned doomed them, in many parts of the world, to a life of bondage to the white man; the very fact that a person was born female – a woman – made her part of her husband's – a man's – property, and deprived her of the right to fully develop and realize her human skills.

As to the rules governing the development and activity of the psyche, we can also deal on the psychological level with the causal relationships that act in forming human character and behavior. As early as the 4th century B.C.E., Aristotle maintained that the way in which we are formed in early childhood has a cardinal effect on our character as adults; Jean Jacques Rousseau redeveloped this understanding in the early days of the New Era. In the 20th century, this notion was substantiated and broadened in the theoretical frameworks of Freud (with a psycho-sexual emphasis), Erikson (with a psycho-social emphasis), Piaget (with a cognitive emphasis), and others. A great deal of evidence regarding this insight on causal relationships in the psychological sphere is demonstrated in ordinary life and does not necessarily require scientific formulation. As a rule, human beings' thinking, modes of expression, artistic sensitivity and characteristics stem to a great extent from the relations and interactions they have within the family and in the social surroundings; and in extreme cases, we know that events such as sexual abuse or exploitation, loss of a dear one, or traumatic encounters with animals have long-term implications on the individual's life and often leave a deep mark on his or her personality.

Man is also a social creature and reflects his environment. Like a sapling that grows and develops within the factuality of the surrounding earth and climate, so humans breathe and absorb the landscapes of their culture: their mother tongue, the religious beliefs prevalent in their culture, their ethnic and national singularity and perception of human purpose. When they are very young, human beings do not realize their individual freedom or make rational and critical decisions regarding cultural and social alternatives. During their socialization process, children internalize the culture's values

and customs and rapidly become an integral part of it – a product that represents a well-defined and differentiated social culture. Moreover, the social sciences put predictive (at a fairly high level of probability) tools at our disposal for ascertaining the worldview, occupation and social status of a specific person during his or her adult life. This is based on the cultural and socio-economic characteristics of the individual while he or she was young (for example, in the case of a group of infants from the communist and atheistic community of the Israeli kibbutzim in comparison with infants from community of the ultra-orthodox Jews of Jerusalem; or black children from New York's Harlem ghetto in comparison with their white counterparts who live ten blocks south on Fifth Avenue).

To these three perspectives – biological, psychological and sociological – we could add various conceptions claiming the existence of a set of rules that dominate human life and affect their content and direction: from divine plans and personal destiny, through materialistic, historical or socio-biological determinism. Yet there is nothing in any of them that can invalidate or desensitize our most basic human experience regarding freedom and responsibility for our character and our relationships with our environment. Whether we prefer the religious description, "everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given,"[1] Nietzsche's philosophical description that "in man *creature* and *creator* are united,"[2]or a biological description, which claims that man has a very flexible nature and "relatively very few innate or inborn patterns of behavior"[3] – we will arrive at the same conclusion that human beings are to a great extent free vis-à-vis the reality of their lives, and through their self-awareness are capable of perceiving themselves as their very own project. We care a great deal about how we and our actions appear; in many and varied moments in our lives we examine and evaluate our personal character or social order through intellectual mirrors (truth and falsehood, correct or erroneous), moral mirrors (good and evil, just or unjust) and esthetical mirrors (beautiful and ugly, refined or coarse) – and are often totally dissatisfied with what we see. At times (particularly during adolescence) we defy our parents and say that we are tired of being what they planned us to be, and from now on we are on our own and only we will decide on our way. At times, we point an accusing finger at society's wrongs and demand that they be rectified; at times, we change our religious belief, become pious or turn our backs on religion; and often, we modify our positions and pave new ways for ourselves.

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[1] *Ethics of the Fathers,* 3:19.
[2] *Beyond Good and Evil,* sec. 225.
[3] Neumann, *The preeminence of Man,* p. 46.

This possible basic experience of human beings in their relationship to themselves as free and sovereign subjects – as beings who mold their own character and establish their world while being aware of the reflective, autonomous, critical, moral and creative character of their consciousness – does not negate the fact of our existence in the world as natural, historical and social objects. It is rather this consciousness that enables and creates humanistic discourse, at the center of which lies our basic question: how to be a human being. If indeed, in contrast to the shark, dolphin or any other animal, *human beings are to a great extent the thinkers, scriptwriters, directors, actors and audience of the reality of their lives, then it follows that they shoulder a great responsibility for the quality of this drama which is their – and our – lives.* As human history has taught us, this drama can be the source of our dignity and hopes as well as the source of our disgrace and end. Man, whose essence is not constant and whose nature is open and incomplete, is capable of anything and everything: exemplary heights of wisdom, sensitivity, conscience, refinement and creativity, but who is also capable of descending into the heinous abysses of instinctual savagery, evil, ugliness, crudity and murderousness. In other words, *humanness is both the generator and product of the attempts of Man – as an autonomous, rational, worthy and creative being – to be a human being* (in the normative sense of the term).

In this chapter, which is an historical overview, we will examine four answers to questions which address the idea of "humanity at its best," "full humanity," or of "good and worthy human life," and the educational ways of realizing it. These four answers manifest the positions of four central approaches that developed in the heritage of humanistic education in Western culture: the classical-cultural, romantic-naturalistic, existentialist and radical-critical approaches. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the implications of the postmodern standpoint on the status of humanistic education: an examination of the feasibility and significance of humanistic education in an era that to a great extent renounces Man.

2. THE CULTURAL-CLASSICAL APPROACH AND THE LONGING FOR HUMAN PERFECTION

Conventional wisdom identifies the roots of Western culture's humanistic worldview in Judaism and Hellenism, the ethics of the Israelite prophets and the Athenian philosophers, scientists and artists. A central contribution to the humanistic perception of ethical values is accorded to Biblical Judaism, which places special emphasis on the sanctity of human life, equality of human value, social justice, charity, solidarity with the weak, and a striving

towards world peace. A notable expression of these ideas can be found in the story of the creation of Man in the image of God, which imparts a unique status to him, and imposes on each and every one a duty to act towards all humankind with the special respect that they deserve. We can find additional notable expressions of the Bible's humanistic spirit in the following elements: absolute superiority of "benevolence and justice" as the salient characteristics of "the Chosen People"; forbiddance of spilling human blood; special concern for the proselyte, the orphan, and the widow; negation of discrimination and strict adherence to equality before the law; and the love of one's fellow men and women.

Notwithstanding the ancient contribution of Judaism to the sphere of moral values, academic research on the heritage of humanistic education usually begins its historical survey with classical Athens and avoids dealing with Jewish heritage. The reason for this, with which I agree, are that despite the existence of significant humanistic values in Jewish cultural heritage, it mainly comprises a religious worldview that places God, not Man, at the center of being. Although human beings are afforded unique status in the universe, their dignity, the significance and purpose of their existence and their way of life and customs, all derive from a supreme and omnipotent holy being, which human beings are compelled to revere and follow through their entire life. We should not infer from this that Judaism, Christianity or Islam, as monotheistic religions, cannot dwell in harmony with a humanistic worldview, but they should not be regarded as humanistic in essence, since it is not humankind that is the source of authority, and it is God, not human beings, who are responsible for their fate. God is considered the king of the universe, and the believer must accept the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, fear God and fulfill His precepts.

We will turn first to the roots of humanistic education in the culture of classical Athens in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C.E. Unique to ancient Athenian culture was an anthropocentric and humanistic worldview that situated Man at the center. In the framework of this culture, Man's excellence and happiness were perceived as ultimate goals and every person who respected him- or herself strove to prove his or her skills in the most general and arduous task of all – the art of human life. A condition for this general excellence of Man *qua* man was a harmonious and proportional development of the assemblage of human skills – physical, mental, moral and artistic – while any deviation in the direction of excessive specialization or professionalism was perceived as marring Man's complete humanness. This humanistic and anthropocentric spirit also characterized the religious dimension of Greek life: the world of nature and the divine world were, for them, a single unity. They feared the gods but did not efface themselves before them and regarded their own lives on this earth – and not somewhere

in the next world – as the only arena for realizing their full humanness and demonstrating their excellence as human beings.

Humanistic education first appears as a central subject for public examination and discussion in the second half of the 5th century B.C.E., and its echoes can be heard in Plato's[4] early dialogues. Socrates and the Sophists systematically and critically examined the basic question regarding human virtues and the proper way of imparting them. The content and form of these dialogues exhibit what is known as "the humanistic turnabout in Western culture." In contrast with the earlier Greek philosophers – the pre-Socratics – Socrates and the Sophists do not focus solely on cosmological questions that deal with the basic elements and the laws of nature, but on the essence of human life and the proper way of life for Man *qua* Man. Regarding the character or form of study, the dogmatism and obsessiveness that characterized religious, political and cultural authority is now negated and replaced by Socrates and the Sophists with a discussion of rational and critical principles of thinking. It is based on open-mindedness and the expectation to ground ones positions with evidence and reasoning. That is to say, at the center stage of their discussion lies the question of how we are to conduct our lives as human beings in the best possible way, while we ourselves are required to provide the answers through study and discussion – relying on the best intellectual, moral, and creative abilities bestowed on man. With this humanistic watershed, Man turned to self-definition as a sovereign autonomous being.

These humanistic dialogues revolved around two central notions – *Arete* and *Paideia* – which became the cornerstones of classical-humanistic education. These concepts assume a perfectionistic quality par excellence. The first, *arete*, means skill, excellence or virtue, and is usually related to the activity or function in which you can be expected to demonstrate your essence or vocation. For example, speed and stamina are the principal merits of a horse, since they are what make it a good horse that can perform admirably; courage, physical strength and maneuvering are the virtues of a warrior; a beautiful, harmonious and moving performance constitutes the excellence of a musician; while honesty, justice, wisdom, generosity, courage and obeying the law were considered the virtues of Man *qua* Man and a citizen of society. The second notion, *paideia,* can be translated as education or culture. From the 5th century B.C.E. it held a more general meaning of the ideal assemblage of human virtues – of the body, spirit and character – which should be regarded as a model of excellence for a good and full human life (and from this stems the identification of classical-

[4] See in particular *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* and to some extent also the *Apologia*, *Meno* and *Crito*, in The Writings of Plato.

humanistic education with the model of excellence of a good and full human life).[5]

We can find a concise expression of this cultural educational ideal and the virtues it comprises in Pericles' "Funeral Oration" as it appears in Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War*. Athens' political regime, Pericles boasts, is an open democracy that strictly adheres to the individual's freedom, equality before the law, equality of opportunity based on individual ability and special protection of the poor and weak. In contrast with the citizens of Sparta, whose entire existence was focused on the military efficacy of their state, Athenians enjoy a humanistic education that engages in a multi-faceted and harmonious development of their character and their formation as autonomous and sovereign people. In Athens, Pericles adds, decisions and actions were taken only after open and well-informed public discussion took place, in which the various issues were examined from numerous and diverse directions.

In conclusion, Pericles outlines the way of life worthy of human beings, which is the source of their vitality, value and dignity. It is a life motivated by love and commitment to truth, justice and beauty as the objectives of human leisure, a guiding light in quotidian thinking and action. In this context the concept of *schole* is worthy of note: it indicates "school" in Greek – and its additional transformations in Latin and numerous other languages – derive from the notion of leisure time. The meaning of leisure time in Greek was not "free time" (as many people understand it today), but rather engagement in activities and subjects suitable for the individual as a free person who is not completely subjugated to earning a living and which advance him or her towards fuller humanity. School, therefore, is an assembly place for people who want to engage together in activities and concentrate on subjects that contribute to the sublime elements of their humanity.

In the beginning of the 5th century B.C.E. education in Athens was already public and institutionalized (although only for the sons of wealthy Athenian citizens), and was founded on two basic principles: the first was music, the purpose of which was to create a fine harmonious soul, and comprised of – in addition to practicing – language, literature, poetry, ethics, and some arithmetic. The second component was gymnastics, or physical education, which was designed to promote the student's health, strength and physical ability, as well as nurturing virtues of character such as courage, willpower and self-restraint. From the mid-5th century, studies and training

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[5] See Jaeger's formulation, in his *Paideia*, [vol. I, p. 286], as the "highest *arete* possible to man...the sum total of all ideal perfections of mind and body."

in geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, rhetoric and dialectics or philosophy were also added to higher education.

With regard to the aims of education, various trends in humanistic education are revealed in Plato's early dialogues. The two main debators, Protagoras and Socrates, seemingly do not disagree on the general purpose: finding that human quality, beyond all individual talents and skills that embodies human perfection; that human virtue "in which all must share and which must enter into every man's actions whatever other occupations he chooses to learn and practice."[6] The two disagree on the status of that human perfection. On the one hand, Protagoras, the most important Sophist philosopher, presents a relativistic approach that maintains that Man (both as an individual and as society) is the "measure of all things"[7]; an educational approach, the purpose of which is to bring about the success of students in their personal and public life, as these were defined by the society to which Man belongs. Socrates, on the other hand, disagrees with the Sophists and identifies human perfection with the nurturing of the soul in light of a universal and objective idea of wisdom and moral character.

Beyond the description of the confrontation between Socrates' educational conception and that of the Sophists, we can find in Plato's writings a systematic presentation of his educational concept, the principles of which have become the immutable assets of classical-humanistic education.[8] Plato subscribes to ten educational principles:

1. Nothing is more important to human beings than the concern for their human image and the nature of their character.
2. Life devoid of critical examination of the good, just, true and beautiful is pointless and worthless
3. Human virtue, superior to all others and all-embracing, is wisdom, and it is manifested first and foremost in knowing good and evil.
4. Human freedom, morality and happiness are a consequence of expanding knowledge and therefore intellectual education should be at the core of Man's education.
5. Good human life depends on the power of wisdom to dominate the elements which are considered more inferior (such as drive, emotion and imagination), and channeling them into the realization of aims that reason identifies as worthy.

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[6] *Protagoras, 325.*

[7] These words are attributed to Protagoras in Plato's *Theaetetus*

[8] The main thrust of Plato's educational conception presented here are taken from the following writings: *Protagoras, Gorgias, Apologia, Meno, Crito, Charmides, the Republic, and the Symposium.*

6. The beginning of all knowledge is human beings' self-awareness of the limits of their knowledge.
7. In morality, reasoning should be matter-of-fact, rational, consistent and impartial.
8. The good teacher does not put the right answers into the mind or mouth of his students, but leads them towards an inquisitive and focused dialogue, so that they will themselves discover the truths, whose vitality, once accepted, will be maintained in their memory for life.
9. From early childhood, one should nurture in children a liking for behaviors worthy of praise and an abhorrence of those deserving condemnation, so that when reaching maturity they will not experience contradictions between their natural propensities and intellectual ideals.
10. It is both worthy and worthwhile to conjoin with people who have good and fine souls, since the essence of such friendship is that it mutually develops, enriches and enhances the character of its partners.

These ten principles represent Plato's educational perception and should be viewed in the context of his rationalistic philosophy, which assumed the existence of essences and rules both in the natural world and that of human values. Against the background of Plato's belief in the ability of human wisdom to know these essences and rules, we can better understand the weight he attributed to knowledge in humanistic education, beyond any other component. This standpoint also explains the absolutist, paternalist and authoritative approach which characterizes Plato's philosophy of education, and which often runs counter to the principles of equality, freedom of thought and the pluralism of modern humanism.

In Plato's view, and that of contemporary conservative humanists, freedom of thinking and development of intellectual abilities have no value per se if they do not lead to a rational and moral life. As we know, Plato says in the famous "parable of the cave"[9] that there is a multitude of clever and ingenious people who make malicious and harmful use of their minds, and numerous free people who their entire lives follow their momentary appetites and the manipulative promises that shrewd conscienceless politicians heap upon them. For all these there is only one true, befitting remedy: the knowledge of truths, values and purposes that have passed the test of reason and time, and in which light the next generations should be educated. It is desirable to realize such an education by creating interest and inner motivation in the student; but even if this is successful, in light of the danger of other influences, the young should be molded by authority and coercion. It is better that students be limited in their personal freedom and

[9] *The Republic*, book VII.

behave properly than enjoy unlimited personal freedom and live a worthless life, or worse – a life of stupidity and injustice.[10]

The desirable measure of personal freedom, Plato thought – and following him, numerous other thinkers of the classical school – will always depend on the degree of the individual's intellectual and moral maturity. Bestowing freedom on the child (and frequently on the adult) when proper maturity is lacking is similar to abandoning our life and all that is dear to us to the arbitrariness of appetite and the randomness of foolishness. Plato's attitude towards aristocracy (as the preferable form of regime) also derives from this, since in it the intellectual elite of the "wise and the good," *i.e.*, the philosophers, serve as a political leadership that manages social issues according to the guidelines of wisdom and justice, for the benefit of all.

It would be unfair to Plato and his contribution to humanistic culture if we take leave of him here, with his exacting intellectual demands on the individual, and ignore his fine and important words on emotional and artistic education. In the most basic sense, Plato manifests the emphasis placed by contemporary Greek education on musical education, as an enrichment and refinement of the soul through learning to play a musical instrument, poetry and literature. As early as *Protagoras* we read about teachers who "teach them the works of good poets of another sort, namely the lyrical, which they accompany on the lyre, familiarizing the minds of the children with the rhythms and melodies...[making them] more civilized, more balanced and better adjusted in themselves...for rhythm and harmonious adjustment are essential to the whole of human life."[11] In a later dialogue, *The Republic,* Plato expands on the contribution of artistic education to the nurturing of differential and judiciary skills and the refinement of taste: "musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful."[12]

Plato made a singular and original contribution on these issues in *The Symposium* in which the discussion focuses on the question of the essence and contribution of *eros*: What is the essence and function of love; to whom and towards what is it worthwhile striving and yearning? These are seemingly irrelevant questions, since we love whom we love and are attracted to whom we are attracted, and it would seem odd to attempt to control and plan these emotional issues. In fact, as it is well-known, these are by no means absurd questions: all parents relate to the nature of their

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[10] See for example, *The Republic*, 488-489, 561-564, and 588-589.
[11] *Protagoras, 326-327.*
[12] *The Republic, 401-402.*

children's friends (some of whom have a positive influence, others, a negative one), as well as to the nature of the leisure time activity that attracts their children (what they read, watch on television, to what activity they volunteer, what attracts them in youth culture, and which personalities captivate them). Parents are similarly not indifferent to the dreams, visions, ideals and human attributes to which their children are attracted as a basis for their motivation which leads them to make themselves into human beings of one kind or another.

Plato's answers to these questions are relevant to everyone at any time, and particularly the portrait he painted of "Platonic love." He sets out with mythological explanations of the figure of Eros as an ancient and important god, whose contribution to the human race is embodied in the fertility of love as a driving force for great deeds. In other words, the lover who longs for mutual love from his beloved, motivated by the power of his love to do great and singular deeds that will impress his beloved and win her heart. In this context, one of the interlocutors says that we often seek to impress our beloved with extraordinary deeds, but often these acts are ostentatious and reckless and their results are totally negative. Therefore, says another interlocutor: "thus I say that even loving and Love are not wholly good, nor worthy of praise, but only that loving which urges us toward noble action."[13] There are people who by nature are crude and common and are attracted to and yearn for physical and sensual beauty only; they do not pay heed to others' wisdom and soul, their only interest being physical and sexual satisfaction. In contrast there are others whose soul is refined and sensitive, their eros is mainly spiritual and they crave for the good and beauty of the personality of the other no less than their physical beauty: "The man who is a lover in the common way is base – he loves the body rather than the soul.. Nor is he constant, since he loves things which lack constancy. Why, with the flower of the body fading, his favor, too, disappearing...but the person who loves the character of a good man endures throughout life, merging with what is lasting."[14]

Another enchanting mythological story appears in the *Symposium*, which tells about the god Zeus who was angry at human beings, at a time when there were still three types of mortals: those with four hands and four feet, two faces (one facing each direction) – some of which were male on both sides, others female on both sides, while others were androgynous, with one side male and the other female. As a result of his rage, Zeus severed all creatures into two, thus love was created as the yearning of each half for the part that was separated and removed. But the most important version, which

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[13] The *Symposium, 181.*
[14] Ibid, 183-184.

Socrates contributes to the discussion, is presented towards the end of the *Symposium*. With his fine-honed logic, Socrates claims that since *eros* means yearning, passion and longing – as both physical attraction and a yearning for truth, good and beauty – Eros is not a god (since gods are perfect and lack nothing), neither can he be crude and vulgar since "those who are ignorant don't desire wisdom" and do not yearn for beauty or the sublime. From this Socrates infers that he is a hybrid demon: the son of the god "Plenty" and the woman "Poverty." One day, the story goes, when the god Plenty (or Resource) "having gotten quite drunk" the woman "Poverty" lay down beside him, and in her cunning she became pregnant and bore Eros. This is the source of Eros' unique nature: a creature that combines the human and the divine, the worldly and the spiritual, the transient and the immortal, and he is all longing and yearning for the perfect, supreme, lofty and immortal – the essence he will never attain. These are Eros' activities in human beings: it motivates the attraction for and love of a person of the opposite sex, so that the subject will enjoy this beauty, and the two will copulate, "so that through the conception of children they achieve immortality, memory and joy."[15] But there are those "who are pregnant more in their souls than in their bodies, with things which are fitting for the soul to bear and bring to life";[16] intellectuals and creators, who are prolific in ideas and actions, who do not love or yearn only for the beauty of the body and soul of this person or another, but for pure beauty and the sublime and the exemplary. In their relations with and commitment to these spiritual ideals they produce masterpieces and exemplary deeds that confer on them eternal glory and memory in human consciousness – they are the founders and leaders of the supreme culture of the human race. And Plato concludes: "Here above all places...is the life that is worth living for a man, lived in the contemplation of the Beautiful itself."[17]

The philosophy of education of Aristotle, who was Plato's disciple, constitutes both a continuation and a shift in comparison with his teacher. The classical spirit of humanism is engraved in his contention that "clearly there is no more important lessens to be learned or habit to be formed than that of right judgement and of taking pleasure in good morals and noble actions."[18] Like Socrates and Plato, Aristotle too claimed that wisdom or knowledge is the supreme human virtue, but, in contrast to them, he believes that this virtue does not guarantee the development of a moral and happy human being. Aristotle's innovation lies in his assertion that there must be a

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[15] Ibid, 208-209.
[16] Ibid, ibid.
[17] Ibid, 211.
[18] Aristotle, *The Politics,* VIII, 5.

distinction between the virtues of intellect and virtues of character and that each kind of virtue has unique characteristics and ways to be nurtured.[19]

Human beings can acquire knowledge on the order of nature, historical events and human standpoints through systematic learning provided both by teachers and self-learning. Each person's degree of success in acquiring knowledge depends on their skills, the means at their disposal and their invested effort. In contrast, moral attributes – such as courage, generosity, honesty, decency, self-restraint and moderation – are not, as Plato claimed, the product of this kind of knowledge but are in fact the fruit of extensive training, practice and guidance, partly conscious and partly sub-conscious, for example, acquiring the required skills for horseback riding, playing a lyre, military command, or (in contemporary activities) driving a car, playing the piano or windsurfing. Clearly, some theoretical knowledge is required in order to achieve skill in these spheres, but the crux of the matter is that what characterizes a high level of morality, skiing, playing chess, driving a car, playing a musical instrument or military command is a human being's ability to recruit all his or her senses and skills at a certain moment in time, interpreting the situation correctly, identifying the rules that should guide him or her, controlling his or her emotions and desires, and orchestrating all these together, quickly and without conscious thought, so that his or her reaction or action will be the right and most efficient one in a given situation.

Keen perception, heightened senses, intuition, knowledge and reasoning, decision-making ability, coordination and finding the golden mean, the correct measure or the suitable proportion – all these are part of successful activity. On the one hand, almost everyone can attain a reasonable level of functionality in these spheres and skills; on the other, it is impossible to clearly and systematically define the required qualities, not to mention teaching them through ordinary didactic means. The combination of certain qualities and skills in a person's personality makes him or her an excellent dancer, driver, military commander, etc., according to the type of qualities and skills, while the combination of attributes and skills that are related to his or her quotidian behavior and attitude to the other create what we call a human being's moral character. In the case of moral excellence, Aristotle says that this is manifested in a constant tendency to do the right deed for the right person, at the right time and place, in the correct measure, and as a result of the right motive and full awareness of the rightness of the deed.[20]

In light of the singular character of the moral act and of the fact that numerous people who suitably distinguish between good and bad, choose the bad or yield to it, it is clear that education of a full and active human being

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[19] See particularly the *Ethics*, Book II.
[20] Ibid, ibid; see also Book VI, ch. 12.

cannot rely solely on knowledge, and we should not limit the meaning of education to its intellectual dimension. What is required of us, as parents and educators, is to mold the character of children from their earliest stages – their desires, behavior and conscience – by personal example, instruction and habituation so that they will develop for themselves a moral character as "second nature," which will spontaneously and regularly incline towards the good and move away from the bad, pursue justice and rebel against injustice.

Another significant contribution by Aristotle to the sphere of humanistic education is embodied in the naturalistic model of self-actualization or self-realization. According to this model, everything in nature, including human beings, strives to actualize its full potential which is embodied in it by its very essence: the oak tree's acorns strive to develop and become wide-branched, sturdy oaks with a plethora of acorns; the raising of a foal is directed towards becoming what an adult and successful horse can be; girls and boys, by their very nature, seek to actualize the assemblage of skills that are embodied in them and transform them from potentiality to actuality, to become human beings endowed with full and well-developed humanity. When we speak of the nature of a thing, says Aristotle, we should understand this as its singular existentiality, not in its initial stage, but as its final stage, when it has already actualized the *telos* (essential purpose and vocation) towards which it strived during its development.[21] It follows that the art of education, similar to the art of medicine, concentrates on providing assistance to a person so that he or she will be able to properly actualize the powers that nature bestowed on him or her and make the best of his or her life (without help and instruction, the purpose inherent in Man's nature will not be actualized because his tendencies are raw and general and mandate nurturing and educational formation in order to fulfill their aim).

Aristotle equipped us not only with a naturalistic model for full human development but also a clear-cut definition of that final purpose towards which we all, as human beings, should strive. Here too, in contrast with the idealistic Plato, Aristotle chose to seek the answer to the concrete and quotidian reality of man's existentiality. In Book I of the *Ethics*, Aristotle asks what is the thing that men desire above all else? What is that final purpose that people imagine that if they actualize it, they will need nothing else? The universal answer to this is happiness, the good and successful life. Or in Greek *eudaimonia*, which means the good human life on both the *objective* level of good quality in human functioning, and the *subjective* level of a relatively permanent feeling of enjoyment and contentment from life.

But this is a mixed blessing: it appears, Aristotle says, that different people identify different things as the way to happiness and a good and

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[21] See, for example, in the *Politics*, Book I, ch. 2.

successful human life. Some identify happiness with a life of pleasure and sensual gratification, others with a life of fame and public status, while still others, with a theoretical life of rational inquiry and contemplation. Aristotle comes down in favor of the third course, a spiritual life of study, based on the principle that a good and successful human life is attainable only by nurturing and improving the most excellent elements in our singular nature as human beings.[22] In this test, the course of "sensory pleasure" and the way of "public honor" fail on both counts: (1) happiness cannot be stable, because it is at the mercy of external factors (that pleasure the senses or those who bestow honor) and when these are absent the individual will be frustrated and wretched; and (2) happiness is not human par excellence because in these cases human beings do not actualize the excellent and singular element with which they were blessed – "for man, therefore, the life according to reason is best and most pleasant, since reason more than anything else is man."[23]

Aristotle therefore believes that the way of the eudemonic man – whose human life is full and worthy – is paved by "liberal" or humanistic education. The intention here is that in addition to forming a moral character (which we discussed earlier), education should focus on a general and manifold nurturing of man's rational and free spirit. It should refrain from overstressing its focus on professions and crafts, because specialization in them will cause harm to one's general education, nor should it overdevelop any specific skill of body or soul – the intensive development of which can leave voids in the soul or impair full humanity. This is education essential to mankind, "not because it is necessary, but because it is fine and worthy of free men."[24] In other words, the guiding ideal of this kind of liberal-humanistic education is that free human beings actualize and develop the best in themselves by leisure activities (contrary to activities that derive from the necessity of making a living). It refers to human beings who have freed themselves from subjugation to drives, ignorance and prejudice; those who possess general education and judgmental abilities enabling them to wisely contemplate theoretical and practical matters in various and diverse spheres – "the best men choosing the best and that which has the fairest source."[25]

Another element in Aristotle's philosophy that is worthy of note is the nature of the link or relationship between intellectual development, moral character and the educational process. As we have seen, Aristotle identifies the most distinctive human virtue with the ability to acquire knowledge on

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[22] See the *Ethics,* Book I, chs. 7-8; and Book X, chs. 7-9.
[23] The *Ethics*, Book X, ch. 7.
[24] The *Politics*, Book VIII, ch. 3.
[25] Ibid, ibid.

natural and human reality, combined with the ability to organize the social life, not merely according to drives and needs (similar to the animal world), but also according to laws that they determine for themselves as free, rational and political beings. We have also seen that success in human life (as it is worthy of being lived) is founded on the integration of virtues of intellect with virtues of character. Like his predecessor Plato, Aristotle warns us that under no circumstances should one identify the education of the mind with nurturing clever and quick intelligence, which has nothing whatsoever to do with knowledge and virtue. The reason for this is simple: when human beings are at their best, and knowledge and moral character serve one another, they reach the height of perfection, but when they reject law and justice, their reason can serve evil purposes, and then they deteriorate and become more savage and cruel than all animals.[26] (Human history has proved time and again – and with a heavy toll – how right Aristotle was in this observation).

Isocrates is the last of the Ancient Greek humanist educators whose philosophy we will review here. He was a contemporary of Plato and Aristotle (436-338). Like them, he founded and headed a school for higher education; unlike them his contribution to philosophy was relatively small – the main part of his activity focused on shaping the patterns of educational thought and endeavor. Isocrates presented his educational conception as an alternative both to the Sophistic and Platonic approaches. On the one hand, he negated the Sophists' relativistic and egocentric approach and regarded the cleavage from the traditional cultural heritage as the source of Athens' military weakness and cultural degeneration. On the other hand, he criticized Plato's philosophical-scientific approach as over-theoretical and alienated from the real challenges that faced the citizens of Athens.

The proper humanistic education of a complete man and good citizen, Isocrates claimed, cannot focus only on imparting scientific and philosophical thinking, but on learning and internalizing the best virtues of Greek cultural heritage.[27] In his opinion, the shaping of an excellent character depends on the encounter between those being educated and excellent individuals, great deeds, lofty values, refined emotions, noble virtues and wondrous styles of expression as these are manifested in literature, poetry and cultural traditions. In this spirit, Isocrates proposed the ideal of educated man. He is neither an economic and social "go-getter," as the Sophists proposed, nor is he necessarily one who possesses scientific and philosophical knowledge as Plato proposed, but a man whose quotidian life

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[26] The *Politics*, Book I, ch. 2.

[27] Isocrates' standpoint and words that appear here are taken from the chapter on Isocrates in Paul Nash's *Models of Man.*

embodies the best human and civil attributes. He is a man who successfully copes with the daily challenges of life and tasks. He is endowed with circumspection and composure; he is polite, shows respect and is civil toward his fellow men and women. He (today this should equally apply to "she") has a courageous spirit and his reason reigns over his instincts and emotions. He has a broad education and his brave spirit does not give way when faced with failure and does not yield to the temptations of conceit or aggressiveness, which are the bedfellows of success. In short, in all his deeds the educated man strictly adheres to his human image and moral character.

As we will see later, Isocrates' traditional and conservative worldview, which emphasized cultural heritage, bore a strong influence on the coalescence of the patterns of humanistic education of Rome, the Renaissance and the New Era. This trend in classical-humanistic education places heavy emphasis on language, literature, poetry, history and rhetoric, and its most prominent representative is the orator. This, as we have seen earlier, lies in contrast to the Platonic-Aristotelian trend whose main affiliation was to science and philosophy, and whose main representative was the philosopher. According to this approach the orator is a man of both words and deeds, and the perfect orator combines natural talent, rational and moral virtues, love of the homeland, a commitment to justice and general welfare, and of course, the skill of oratory and persuasion that can impel the public to chose the desirable way.

Isocrates' emphasis on linguistic skills was not arbitrary. It was grounded in the Greek worldview which held that language is what separates man from the beast and is the basis of his humanity. It should be noted that by language the Greeks did not mean only its communicative function – which also exists in the animal kingdom. They thought highly of language mainly as words that are logically arranged which, as an inner language, serves us for thinking, careful consideration and the formation of positions, and as a public language serves us in scientific-philosophical discourse, political-moral discussion and in creating artistic literature. Rational thinking and speech, i.e., *logos* in its Greek meaning, is the medium or the singular means for human beings to mediate between themselves and the world, enabling them to depart from the attributes of animals (whose entire existence is engaged in satisfying their natural needs), and create for themselves a spiritual and political culture.

Language enabled humankind to move away from the world of nature and establish a cultural world in which words replaced the club, logical argument replaced conquest and the social treaty replaced the law of the jungle by which might is right. Through language, Isocrates says, we distinguish between good and evil and justice and injustice; through it, we learn from one another and enrich our world with meaning, knowledge and

beauty. Through it, we become free beings who have the power to envisage alternatives for each given reality, to choose one of them and act towards it actualization. Therefore, according to Isocrates, since language is the greatest of all man's blessings, we are obliged to develop our linguistic skills as much as we can and make the most efficacious use of them for our own benefit and for that of all humankind.

In ancient Rome, whose culture was greatly influenced by Greek culture, as early as the 1st century B.C.E. we find the term *humanitas*, which in the fullness of time became the linguistic source of the term "humanism." By *humanitas*, which is a Latin translation of the Greek *paideia*, the Romans meant both the educational process and its product. First, it denotes the process of educating man into his "true form": actualizing the individual's humanness and shaping the individual towards his essential nature and designation as a human being. Second, as the product of education, *humanitas* symbolizes a quality that characterizes the most excellent in humankind: "the quality which distinguishes man, not only from animals, but also, and even more so, from him who belongs to the species *home* without deserving the name *homo humanus*; from the barbarian or vulgarian who lacks...respect for moral values and the gracious blend of learning and culture."[28] It was also the Romans who coined the terms *artes liberalis* and *studia humanitatis*, i.e., liberal education and humanistic studies, and institutionalized them as a formative educational system for Rome's free citizens. It is worthy of note that by the term "free citizens" the Romans meant the social elite that was free of the mastery of others and the need to work and acquire a profession in order to make a living. As they were free, they were able to devote their time to those activities of study and training which developed and actualized their humanity – of the body, spirit and character – and which made them a leading and serving elite in Roman society. In other words, humanistic, liberal and general education in Rome was perceived as proper for the free citizen and its objective was to broaden the individual's humanity and freedom so that he would be a man of excellence both in his private and public life.

After Greece and Rome, the Renaissance can be regarded as the third period in which classical humanism plays a prominent and formative role in the culture of Western Man. In the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries the heritage of humanist creativity and thinking reached a new level of self-awareness, the most prominent manifestation of which is the self-definition of its followers and innovators for the first time, as "humanists." An ideal expression of this new spirit and breakthrough in all matters pertaining to the perception of man's image and status can be found in Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on*

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[28] Panofsky, "History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," p.92.

the Dignity of Man. The author identified man's distinctive dignity with his having an undetermined or open essence and his ability of forming his image through his reason and creativity:

> God made man a creature of indeterminate and indifferent nature, and, placing him in the middle of the world, said to him "Adam, we give you no fixed place to live, no form that is peculiar to you, nor any function that is yours alone. According to your desires and judgment, you will have and possess whatever place to live, whatever form, and whatever functions you yourself choose. All other things have a limited and fixed nature prescribed and bounded by our laws. You, with no limit or no bound, may choose for yourself the limits and bounds of your nature. We have placed you at the world's center so that you may survey everything else in the world. We have made you neither of heavenly nor of earthly stuff, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with free choice and dignity, you may fashion yourself into whatever form you choose. To you is granted the power of degrading yourself into the lower forms of life, the beasts, and to you is granted the power, contained in your intellect and judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, the divine.[29]

From this it is clear that the Renaissance humanists did not seek to propose a secular alternative to the religious position, but were determined to free themselves of the ignorance, narrow-mindedness and depreciation of the value of man that characterized the Dark Ages. As a rebellion against these cultural characteristics and an alternative to the dwarfing of Man's humanity before divine grandeur, the humanists posited a striving towards freedom, knowledge, beauty and human dignity as objectives which can be realized through correct and consistent nurturing of human skills – as they believed this was achieved in Greek and Roman classical culture. In these cultures, the humanists believed, human beings were at their best, and their humanness was revealed in all its glory: in the free spirit and inquisitive reasoning, in scientific activity and artistic creativity, in the love of life and belief in humankind, in literary style and philosophical thinking, and in an adventurous spirit and restraint of instinct. The adherence of Renaissance humanism to the spirit of classical culture produced the second meaning of classical-humanistic education: an education which can exist in any historical period (and not only in the classical one), but its main affiliation is with the classical culture of Greece and Rome as an exemplary model and basis for the nurturing of mankind's humanity.

Against this background, Renaissance humanist teachers sought to arouse and nurture the kinds of human excellence and beauty in their students, as

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[29] Pico della Mirandola's, *Oration on the Dignity of Man.*

they are known in classical culture. The means for achieving this were the basic and systematic learning of the literary masterpieces that in their content and style represent the sublime in mankind and which have the power to broaden, enrich and refine the souls of the students towards actualizing the essence of humanity. Thus the Renaissance humanists laid the foundations for the educational approach known in the 20th century as the "Great Books" or "Masterpiece" approach. This is an approach which the conservative neo-humanists in the United States posited then and posit today as an alternative to the innovations of open, progressive and technical education. Its main thrust, as presented by Hutchins, its main spokesperson, is two-fold: (1) A person cannot be considered educated unless he or she is well versed in the masterpieces of human culture; (2) the best way of nurturing human virtues is through *systematic familiarization with the masterpieces and internalization of the qualities embodied in them in one's active personality.*[30]

However, it is worthy of note that there is often a vast gap between lofty talk about humanistic ideals and excellent attributes and the depressive and boring routine of educational endeavor – a fact that is manifested in historical studies and is well known to some of us through personal experience. The non-critical worship of the masterpieces and the ritual of imparting classical culture to the young produced in numerous instances authoritative and strict teaching patterns which required students to memorize literary content and exercise language skills which had no relevance whatsoever to their real-life experience and no connection whatsoever to future challenges with which they would cope in their quotidian life. Greatness of spirit, fertile imagination, moral sensitivity, wisdom and artistic sense – all these devoid of personal examples or inspiration – were experienced by numerous students as lofty but hollow words. While the ideals were worthy of recitation and the style worthy of use for ornamental purposes, they lacked in the original vitality that makes knowledge the source of wisdom, moral character and pleasure.

It was Montaigne, a late Renaissance French philosopher, who more than any other realized the harm in over-scholarship for the human spirit. In his critical essays, he indicated the true vital sources of classical culture – reason, the power of judgment, moral character and the sensitivity of taste. His clear-cut statement in his essay "On the Education of Children" deals with this subject:

> The usual way is to bawl into a Pupil's ears as if one were pouring water into a funnel, and the boy's business is simply to repeat what he is

[30] Hutchins, *Great Books: The Foundation of a Liberal Education*, pp. 3-7.

> told. I would have the tutor amend this state of things, and begin straight away to exercise the mind that he is training, according to its capacities. He should make his pupil taste things, select them, and distinguish them by his own perception.... A tutor must demand an account not just of the words of his lesson, but of their meaning and substance, and must judge of its benefit to his pupil by the evidence not of the lad's memory but of his life. He must make him consider what he has just learnt from a hundred points of view and apply it to as many different subjects, to see if he has yet understood it and really made it his own.
>
> Our minds never work except on trust; they are bound and controlled by their appetite for another man's ideas, enslaved and captivated by the authority of his teaching. We have been so subjected to our leading-string that we have lost all freedom of movement. Our vigor and independence are extinct.... The tutor should make his pupil sift everything and take nothing into his head on simple authority or trust.[31]

The Age of Enlightenment in 18th century Europe is the fourth stage of the development of classical-humanistic education: an era in which human beings' natural rights (life, freedom and possession) become a central element in the political worldview and in which scientific reason takes on a supreme status in intellectual discourse. The spirit of modernity also made its mark on educational thinking and endeavor, and side by side with the old education's conservative and elitist trends, a skeptical, critical and democratic spirit grew and developed. In the educational thinking of the enlightenment philosophers, *critical and autonomous* thinking takes on supreme importance. They regarded it as a barrier to blind acceptance of external authority and social conventions and as a critical screen which every human being should develop and improve so to be able to differentiate by him- or herself between what is important and what is not, between truth and lies, good and evil. The earlier Renaissance patterns of servile acceptance and non-critical memorization of the "exemplary truths" were replaced by a new trend that demanded of every position and custom to pass the test of critical and scientific rationality. "Dare to think for yourself" was the battle cry of Enlightenment education, the objective of which was to free the personality from naïve and blind obedience that characterizes small children and great fools. We must extricate consciousness from its heterogeneous existence, says Kant, from inertial servility to external authority and social conventions, and instead develop and establish autonomous and critical consciousness which it, and only it, is suitable for the adult personality.[32]

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[31] Montaigne, *Essays*, pp. 54-56.

[32] Kant, "What is Enlightenment." This message was also manifested in Kant's lectures in which he underscored for his students that the most important thing is not learning

Kant's words in his book *On Education* are a fine example of the systematic presentation of the principles of humanistic education and the intellectual and ethical tension that exists between classical heritage and the modern spirit.[33] Like his predecessors of classical heritage, Kant believed that we cannot rely on the natural and spontaneous development of man's personality; it should be formed in light of the objective ideal of human perfection. Only man, says Kant, is in need of an educational framework in order to actualize what his nature allows him to be. Animals become what they are by virtue of their innate instincts: fish become fish, a donkey foal becomes a donkey, a lion cub turns into a lion, and a female cub into a lioness without having to cope with questions of identity and self-definition during their lifetime. Man, on the other hand, is at birth an animal-biological being, but has the unique potential to exist as a cultured-human being.

In other words, man is endowed with reason, freedom of will and the ability to know the natural order and use it for his benefit, determine values and ways of life for himself, and create for himself beauty and meaning in his artistic and creative endeavor. In order to actualize this human potential, Kant adds, man is in need of the art of education that is based on five principles: (1) devoted care for the child's physical and spiritual needs; (2) a multi-faceted and harmonious nurturing of the skills embodied in him, including the refinement of thoughts, emotions and artistic taste; (3) reinforcement of willpower and the ability for self-control, which enable the individual to adhere to rational ways and stand firm in the face of obstacles and temptation; (4) inculcating knowledge and developing thinking skills and reasoning; (5) forming moral thinking and behavioral patterns, the most important of which is the "goodwill" or the willingness and commitment to always act in accordance with the moral imperative.

With regard to the character of the source of educational authority, Kant adopts Socrates' approach and rejects that of Protagoras. He states that educational endeavor should not be directed towards the success of the young in society as it is in reality, but towards the development of their character according to the model which is *worthy* of characterizing human beings in an ideal human society. Kant was aware of the fact that this educational undertaking might meet with the objections of various bodies in society. First, parents might object as a result of their tendency to drive their children to be successful in society at any price, even if society is corrupt and degenerate. Second, different rulers would object on egotistical grounds,

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thoughts but developing thinking; not the study of philosophical theories but the ability of human beings to think and philosophize on their own.

[33] Immanuel Kant, *Education.*

since they prefer gullible and servile citizens rather than inquisitive and critical ones.

In this description of the struggle between the good of man and society and the egotism of political, religious and economic power factors lies the seed of rebellion that later developed in open and radical education. We are witness here to the coalescence of modern humanism. In Kant's philosophy there is still a balance between the heritage of classical culture and the spirit of democracy, individualism and pluralism. Kant's humanism places the advancement of man's development and happiness as the ultimate goal of human beings, one that is beyond any other, be it religious, political or economic. In his humanistic vision, he saw the Family of Man as an assemblage of individuals who behave towards one another with equality, courtesy, respect and decency worthy of rational and free human beings. In this spirit, as we know, the American constitution and the human rights charter in France were written, as were the United Nations Charter of Human and Children's Rights in the 20th century.

At the beginning of the 19th century the central term of our discussion *humanism* was coined (the adjective, humanistic, as mentioned earlier, was in use as early as the Renaissance). It was the German educator Neithammer, who, in 1808, coined the concept of humanism as indicating "an educational system that considered the study of classical languages and culture to be the best education toward full humanity."[34] (From the mid-19th century a second meaning of "humanism" was added – as a worldview that places man at center stage of existence and humanity as the measure of all things). A second term that became central at that time in Germany was *bildung,* and like the concepts of the Greek *paideia* and the Roman *humanitas*, this cultural-educational ideal indicated the "highest and most harmonious development of [the distinctively human] powers to a complete and consistent whole."[35] We can learn more about this concept from von Humboldt, who viewed *bildung* as "the attitude of mind which, from the knowledge and the feeling of the total intellectual and moral endeavor, flows harmoniously into sensibility and character."[36]

Among the 19th and 20th century education philosophers who spoke in the name of classical-humanistic education, there were many whose orientation was Christian-Aristotelian, while the minority were secular humanists. The most notable among them in the 19th century were von Humboldt, Mathew Arnold and Cardinal Newman; in the 20th century – Irving Babbitt, Jacques

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[34] Van Praag, *Foundations of Humanism*, pp. 15-17.
[35] Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 186.
[36] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 11.

Maritain, T.S.Eliot, Richard Livingston, Robert Hutchins, Mortimer Adler, Russell Kirk and Allan Bloom.

In the writings of Arnold, who worked in the second half of the 19th century as an inspector in the school system, literary critic and poet in his own right – we can find a fluent, concise and modern articulation of the ideas of classical humanism. As the title of his important book *Culture and Anarchy* says, Arnold posited that human society is situated on an axis, on one side of which is spiritual anarchy, materialism and barbarism, and on the other "culture" as a unity of sublime values and the high standards of human excellence. The way to distance oneself from anarchy and barbarism and to promote the actualization of the cultural ideal is first of all, according to Arnold, through education that nurtures all that is excellent in man. In this context it should be noted that Arnold does not use the term *culture* in its sociological meaning, as a way of life unique to a specific group, distinguishing it from all others. Culture, as Arnold defines it, has an ethical and normative meaning. It is an assemblage of the virtues and achievements of the human race in a variety of spheres of life: in science's greatest studies and findings, in literary masterpieces, in art and philosophy, in the figures and deeds that serve as models of human greatness and moral character. In other words, education towards culture is *education towards love, study and internalization of all that is excellent in human thinking, speaking and endeavor.* This is education *towards constant enrichment of the human world with meaning, knowledge, moral sensitivity, justice and beauty.*

In this approach Arnold remains loyal to the principles of excellence, harmony and the art of life of the classical period. He also remains loyal to the trends of the Renaissance vis-à-vis the nurturing and refinement of man's humanity through studying literary masterpieces. Arnold also adds the principles of equality, democracy and society's commitment to provide excellent education for all. Contrary to Plato and Aristotle's conservative-aristocratic approach before him, to the radical-aristocratic approach of his contemporary Nietzsche, and to T.S.Eliot's and Erwin Babbitt's conservative-elitist approach after him, Arnold called for the inculcation of higher education and cultural heritage for all citizens. He regarded this as the only guarantee for the strength and thriving of democratic and enlightened human culture.

A contemporary expression of this approach can be found in the educational endeavor of Mortimer Adler and the Paideia group he heads. In 1982 Adler, who was the chief editor of Encyclopedia Britannica and one of the prominent representatives of the "great books" approach at the University of Chicago, presented the American public with a model for general humanistic education which combined a conservative-classical trend

with a democratic one that called for excellent humanistic education for all.[37] In this educational model there is a uniform curriculum for all, without optional subjects or academic compromises, the purpose of which is to equip all students with the same cultural resources, knowledge and skills required by human beings in order to live like human beings in the full sense of the term.

Adler speaks in great detail of the three ultimate goals of education. The first is to assist learners in actualizing the talents embodied in them and expand their awareness and spiritual resources. In this way learners will learn how to elicit the best from their lives and the treasures of knowledge and art that culture has put at their disposal. The second is that educators must nurture in learners the values, skills and attributes required for active and responsible participation as citizens in a democratic society. Adler, it should be noted, placed special emphasis on the nurturing of knowledge, critical thinking and civil responsibility without which democracy turns into mobocracy: from the rule of educated and caring citizens to the rule of the mob, which is guided by emotion and prejudice rather than reason. The third principle pertains to the development of abilities, knowledge, values and skills that constitute an appropriate foundation for all types of vocational training that will be available to young people when they conclude their general studies at school.

With regard to the content and methods of study, Adler presents a model that is divided into three dimensions, each of which has its own goals, study methods and unique spheres of knowledge. The first is directed towards systematic and basic inculcation of *corpuses of knowledge* in the main fields of knowledge: the exact sciences, the humanities and the social sciences. In order to inculcate these, Adler designates accepted teaching methods of lecture and discussion, while the textbook plays a central role in the teaching and learning process.

The second is directed towards developing *thinking and learning skills*, where the emphasis is placed on the "how," not the "what." These academic skills comprise the language and discourse skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening; the skills of observation, evaluation, calculation, measurement and problem solving; and the skills of critical and autonomous thinking. The teaching aspect of this educational dimension is different from the previous one. Here the goal is not the acquisition of corpuses of knowledge but improving and enhancing the students' execution abilities. Teachers must function as coaches and instructors, giving a personal example by exposing students to the best and exemplary in the different spheres, providing individual tutoring that assists learners in acquiring the

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[37] Adler, *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto.*

required skills and achieving the highest level their abilities allow them to attain.

The curriculum's third dimension comprises enrichment, extension and deepening students' awareness of human culture's intellectual and ethical spheres. This directs educational activity towards heightening sensitivity to beauty, developing a moral sense and enhancing openness to ideas and values embodied in literary works and life traditions. The study subjects suitable for these goals are: history, literature, philosophy and art, not as they are presented in textbooks but as they are embodied in the original works. The teaching method of this dimension are different from the two preceding ones. It focuses mainly on Socrates' "midwife approach" that brings the learner, through guided and fertile dialogues with intellectual and artistic works, to "give birth" to new and more profound insights.

Any digression from this model, Adler claims, constitutes a betrayal of the principles of humanism and democracy. The authority in such a school is undoubtedly external and at times even mandates coercion, but the alternative and its price are worse tenfold. Relying on children's desires and will and assuming that they know what is really good for them better than adults is an unfounded idealization of childhood. If we add the fact that today's youth are incessantly bombarded with commercial and political propaganda that shapes their desires and preferences, then relying on children's wishes is like abandoning them to the manipulations of factors in society whose interest in children is not their development but their use as consumers or political supporters. Adler, and others who support this standpoint believe that it follows that for the benefit of individual development, a prospering culture and a strong democracy, it is mandatory for parents and educators to wisely and strictly shape young people's personality. They should equip them with the best knowledge, attributes and tools, so that when they complete twelve years of compulsory education they will join the society of adults as civilized human beings and good citizens in the full sense of both terms.

The last two examples of classical-humanistic education in the 20th century, which I will present here, relate to modern nihilism. Nihilism is a concept that indicates nullification, negation or rejection of all meaning, reason, value, purpose and sanctity. Serious attention to the idea of nihilism mandates clarification and analysis of context: "who calls whom a nihilist and on what ground?" From the liberal-humanistic standpoint, "the death of God," "shattering idols," and collapse of the "great ideologies" are nihilistic events only if they are present only as negations: offering no alternative content that expands human freedom, raises dignity and enriches life with meaning, reason and value. When these positive elements are added to the rebellion against oppressive absolutism, we can speak about nihilism as an

emancipatory process that promotes humanism (like uprooting weeds in order to nurture fertile crops).

In the modern age, nihilism has been associated with the "death of God" and the brutal awakening from utopias and ideologies. It is also associated with the loss of faith in the spirit of man and human reason, a severing from all objective touchstones in morality and art, repudiation of authority and social responsibility, and the dismantling of important social frameworks such as community and family. The marks of nihilism can be seen everywhere: in the tens of millions who were killed and murdered in the wars and great revolutions, in the destruction of the world of nature, in the violence and cultural deprivation that dominates the big cities, in the corruption of language, in crude materialism that identifies the quality of human life only by the economic standard of living, and in the spiritual inertia of people who function in their work like robots and in their leisure time shrink into passive consumers of the mass media.[38]

The first example of the attempt of classical humanism to cope with nihilism is embodied in Richard Livingston's book, *Education for a World Adrift,* written at the end of World War II as an expression of the deep pain attending the physical and spiritual destruction associated with that war. The book does not deal with war and destruction but with the hollow and destructive image of modern man whose culture lost direction and purpose and lacks standards of good and worthy human life.[39] The solution Livingston offers is a return to the classical virtues of reason and character without which human beings become – as they have indeed become in the 20th century – the wildest and most brutal of all creatures on the face of this earth.

In his discussion of the importance of the nurturing of an intellectual approach to life, Livingston opposes restricting the intellect to problem-solving and underscores the centrality of "knowing good and evil" as the most important knowledge of all – the wisdom to differentiate between using and misusing all other kinds of knowledge and skills. In the spirit of Aristotle's approach, Livingston calls for a repositioning of the ideal of the good and moral character in education, the components of which are honesty, decency, trustworthiness, independence, self-dignity, courage, generosity and civic spirit. In the curriculum, he gives pride of place to teaching literature and poetry as the best way of having students encounter visions and models of human greatness and enriching their spirit with sensitivities and insights that expand their humanness and shape their moral

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[38] On different meanings of nihilism in Western culture see my book, *Beyond Nihilism,* chs. 4-8.

[39] Livingstone, *Education for a World Adrift*, ch. I.

image. In short, Livingston says that in our perception of education we should not be satisfied with less than assistance in learning the art of life.

Allan Bloom's book *The Closing of the American Mind*, published in 1987, will serve as a second example of the battle of conservative humanism against modern nihilism. Bloom's criticism includes Livingston's arguments and analyses and adds criticism that deals with post-modernist culture. In essence, Bloom claims, Western culture has lost its intellectual vitality and its spirit is left hollow and diminished. Not only did culture shed its traditional values (modernism) but it lost all interest even in the philosophical dialogue on truth, justice and beauty (post-modernism). Today's youth grows up with the prejudice that there is no knowledge whatsoever in the sphere of values. The majority tend to adopt the relativistic doctrine that all positions in the sphere of morals, politics and art are relative to the individual or to the society in which he or she lives; that there are no objective and universal criteria for favoring one position to another, and therefore no one has the right to judge the preferences or ways of life of others. Limitless equality, tolerance and pluralism devoid of any qualitative differentiation whatsoever have become the supreme imperatives of the period.

Bloom says that the young people who adhere to this position are seemingly endowed with a great deal of openness. In reality, since they waived a priori any attempt to find a worthy way of life, which is a badge of honor for man, their approach excels in indifference and disbelief towards any serious worldview, and in an amazing ignorance of the trends and phenomena of human culture. In such a world – in which everything is relative, "anything goes," everything is possible, and importance is no longer attributed to the aspiration to achieve human perfection – man's spirit is diminished and the only thing that remains is an efficient human being who functions like a machine, and a hedonist engaged in satisfying physical drives. The equilibrium between knowledge and reason and skepticism and relativity has been undermined to the extent that when Bloom asks his students about their attitude towards the Indian custom of burning the living widow with the body of her dead husband, they are angered by the very question and reply that they cannot and are not allowed to take a stand on this issue. The worst part of it, says Bloom, lies in the fact that education systems and higher education institutions accept these nihilistic trends. This acceptance borders on betrayal of the very essence of education, and if the institutions do not take immediate steps to rehabilitate the traditional ideals of research, philosophy, morality and art, we are doomed to spiritual degeneration and the annihilation of human culture.

We will now summarize the central characteristics of the classical-humanistic educational trend as we have reviewed it from the classical

Athenian period up to the present. The objective of education is defined in terms of achieving perfection or human excellence. Educational endeavor is perceived as the art of shifting man's awareness from the world of sensory experience to that of real experience with its rational order and eternal values. In contemporary terminology, the role of education is *to expand, deepen, refine and improve our human ways of experience through familiarization with the virtues and achievements of the human spirit as these are manifested in the best masterpieces, writings and deeds of human culture.*

Humanistic education, according to this tradition, deals with broadening human beings' humanity and freedom by inculcating knowledge, enriching imagination, nurturing love of and sensitivity to their fellow men and women and shaping interpersonal behavioral patterns that include courtesy, honesty, decency, generosity and social responsibility. As the contemporary conservative humanist Russell Kirk says, our objective as humanistic educators is to teach students the meaning of a full and moral human life, arouse in them a yearning and desire to fulfill this ideal in their real lives, and inculcate in them respect and moral commitment towards values and virtues which should guide us all as human beings.[40] It seems that the most pertinent definition of classical-humanistic education is provided by the educator, the Renaissance man, Pierre Paulo Vergerio. Humanistic education, he says, consists of "those studies by which we attain and practice virtue and wisdom; that education which calls forth, trains and develops those highest gifts of body and mind which ennoble man."[41]

3. THE NATURALISTIC-ROMANTIC APPROACH AND THE YEARNING FOR THE AUTHENTICITY OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION

The romantic approach in humanistic education (which in certain contexts is also known as naturalistic, permissive, individualistic and therapeutic) first appears in the 18th century in the writings of Rousseau. Rousseau presented his educational theory as an antithesis to traditional education: he argues against the identification of education with the consumerism of knowledge, culture and skills as a means for social success, and against the use of authoritative and artificial teaching patterns which hinder the individual's development and alienates human beings from their real needs. Rousseau believes that the social values and educational patterns

[40] Kirk, "The Ethical Purpose of Literary Studies," pp. 35-36.
[41] Quoted in Green (editor) *The Meaning of the Humanities*, p. 20.

of the bourgeois ethos of his time (and ours) are the reasons for the distorted and hollow image of modern human beings whose unbridled passion for social success corrupts and makes them miserable, rendering them egotistical and herd-like in their attitude towards others. Rousseau presented an alternative perception of the good life that attributed positive value to human beings' natural inclinations, to free and playful application of their natural abilities and self, and to authentic direction of their life. Nurturing human beings according to these principles, Rousseau claimed, will bring about the "growth" of good people and good citizens, whose full humanity will be tempered with sensitivity and wisdom, advancement of personal benefit and the good of all.

Rousseau's ideas brought about revolutionary changes in educational thinking and endeavor: emphasis on educational thinking was shifted from culture to nature and from philosophy to psychology; from reason to feeling and from society to the individual; from structured and uniform didactics to experiential discovery learning; and from duty grounded in social conventions to action deriving from and guided by the good nature of the individual. It should be noted here that in his revolutionary ideas Rousseau did not aim at negating or destroying the foundations of humanistic education. On the contrary, his objective was to bring people from the alien domains to which they exiled themselves – back to themselves. He aimed to guide education towards a healthier path where man's primal nature is not perceived as an obstacle to human perfection but as the only basis upon which one can rely, and if only we are attentive to it, man will develop and grow into his full glory. We can learn from the following that Rousseau's conception of education was humanistic in the fullest and most basic sense of the word:

> In the social order where all positions are determined, each man ought to be raised for his. If an individual formed for his position leaves it, he is no longer fit for anything.... In the natural order, since men are all equal, their common calling is man's estate and whoever is well raised for that calling cannot fail to fulfill those callings related to it.... Prior to the calling of his parents is nature's call to human life. Living is the job I want to teach him.... He will, in the first place, be a man. All that a man should be.[42]

In his pedagogical doctrine Rousseau says that "humanity has its place in the order of things; childhood has its in the order of human life. The man must be considered in the man, and the child in the child. To assign each his place and settle him in it, to order the human passions according to man's

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[42] *Emil*, pp.41-42.

constitution is all that we can do for his well-being."[43] Moreover, he demands that adults should first of all be humane towards children: "Be humane. This is your first duty. Be humane with every station, every age, everything which is not alien to man. What wisdom is there for you save humanity? Love childhood; promote its games, its pleasures, its amiable instinct.... Why do you want to deall with bitterness and pains these first years which go by so rapidly and can return no more?"[44]

Here we will summarize Rousseau's position: educational theory should be based on the nature of man; the educational endeavor should be tailored to fit the nature of the child and the level of his or her maturity; learning should be relevant and meaningful by basing it on the child's interests and intrinsic motivation as well as on direct and holistic experiences with natural and human phenomena.

In the 19th century, and particularly as a result of the educational work of Pestalozzi and Froebel, the components of love, trust, support and affective nurturing were afforded a central status in educational thinking: they were perceived as necessary conditions for the development of man's humanity and actualization of the powers inherent in him (according to the botanical metaphor of the child as a tender plant and the educator as gardener). At the beginning of the 20th century, the British educator A.S. Neill, in his book *Summerhill*, continued Rousseau's criticism of learned and oppressive education. Books, he states, are the least important component of the educational process: the remedy for our unhappy and violent civilization does not lie in the shaping of man but in setting individual happiness as the ultimate goal of education. Education that acts towards actualizing this objective will always side with the child – even when he or she is criticized – and will provide a just and humane social climate recognizable by mutual respect and trust, the freedom of thought and individual expression, supportive relationships and sexual permissiveness.

In early 20th century America, an additional branch of the romantic approach developed in the form of *progressive education*. It presented itself as an alternative to the old form of education: no longer authoritarian and strict, but democratic and permissive; no longer education for its own sake with a commitment to "the exemplary" of past culture, but knowledge and skills that equip the learner with tools for coping with present and future challenges; no longer education that "prepares for life" in alienating school frameworks, but education as an active experience of "real life," where the school organized as a miniature society that exhibits caring involvement in

[43] Ibid, p. 80.
[44] Ibid, p. 79.

the "big society."[45] To the optimism of progressive education – which placed personal growth, pluralistic democracy, and critical intelligence as the objective of education – was added the *humanistic psychology* stream, which advocated trust in the good and unique nature of every individual and a commitment to provide the young with the vital psychological conditions for actualizing this nature. From the cooperation between progressive educators and humanistic psychologists, the educational pattern called "child-centered education" was molded, the objective of which was to assist the student in authentic and autonomous actualization of his or her inner nature.

This is the place to expand somewhat on the humanistic psychology of Maslow and Rogers, which gained a great deal of popularity in the second half of the 20th century as a theoretical basis for humanistic education. Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" theory became a classic in his lifetime. At its base lies the perception of man as a natural being, with a well-defined nature that combines general humanistic elements with ones unique to each individual. Under suitable conditions, Maslow claims, the nature of man strives to reach full actualization of the potential embodied in him, according to set humanistic patterns, together with unique tendencies which derive from the singular characteristics of each individual's personality.

The developmental continuum and its direction are nourished and guided by the human "hierarchy of needs." At its base lie physiological needs that are concerned with the physical existence of the human organism (food, fluids, vitamins, air, climatic conditions, etc.). Above it lies the stage safety needs; for a sense of confidence that includes stability, freedom from fear and arbitrariness, and all other qualities that provide emotional stability. Above it is the need for belonging and love, which includes expressions of caring, sympathy, liking and solidarity on the part of the human environment relevant to the individual. Above it is the need for esteem and social prestige, which is related both to recognition on the part of others of the value, status and dignity of the individual and the feeling of self-worth and self-respect of the individual in perceiving him- or herself as they are reflected in the eyes of others. Still above, at the apex of the pyramid, is the stage of self-actualization or self-fulfillment, at which conditions for the full development of the essential and unique nature of the individual have matured.

Those who have reached this stage enjoy the best fruits of knowledge and art; they treat their fellow men with justice and humanity (in an overall humane moral perception) and experience mental health, harmony and peace in their relationships with themselves and their environment. In light of this perception, the role of humanistic education is self- evident: to create conditions for students that promote their self fulfillment, both in enriching

[45] In this matter see Cremin, *The transformation of the School.*

their life environment with factors that encourage development and prevent "noise," "weeds," and artificial desires that distance man from sensitive and wise attention to messages that his inner and original nature sends.

With regard to the conditions necessary for learning and personal growth, Carl Rogers plays a central role as the chief developer of ways of interpersonal communications that help the individual in making the best of him- or herself and his or her life. Educators, according to his conception, should regard themselves, not as shapers of souls or as life instructors, but as those who enable and facilitate in the natural growth of the child. In his book *Freedom to Learn*, Rogers characterizes those attitudes that appear effective in promoting learning: "First of all, is a transparent realness of the facilitator, a willingness to be a person, to be and live the feeling and thoughts of the moment. When this realness includes a prizing, a caring, a trust, and a respect of the learner, the climate for learning is enhanced. When it includes a sensitive and accurate empathic listening, then indeed a freeing climate, simulative of self-initiated learning and growth, exists. The student is trusted to develop."[46]

In his book *Climate for Growth*, Dov Darom discusses Maslow's and Rogers' theories and deals with their implications on humanistic education. Pertinent to us at this stage of our discussion are the practical educational qualities that characterize the naturalistic-romantic approach as they are derived from these psychological theories. Based on Darom's conclusions, this educational approach can be characterized by the following: it is holistic in character (in its relating both to knowledge and the learner's personality); stresses the importance of a social climate that is founded on mutual respect and trust; promotes relevant and experiential learning; all this with a special emphasis placed on autonomous and authentic growth, interpersonal closeness, pluralistic diversity and a democratic spirit.

A representative example of the combination of these components in the educational endeavor can be found in Paul Ritter's *Educreation and Feedback.* In the spirit of Maslow's and Rogers' psychological theories, Ritter presents an alternative model (naturalistic and therapeutic) for the prevailing conservative education. In this model, *self-direction* replaces *compulsion* and *external authority* as a basis for learning and social order; *cooperation* replaces *competition* as the guiding logic of learning and endeavor; a distinguishing and supportive *therapeutic attitude* replaces *the judgmental and achievement-oriented approach*; *procedural and continuous evaluation* replace the standard *test and grading approach; an appeal to life experiences* and social reality replace the narrow experience of *disciplinary learning; and an appeal to* teachers' and students' *full life* – their physical,

[46] *Freedom to Learn* (third edition), p. 167.

intellectual, emotional, moral, creative, cultural and singular elements – replaces the *functional approach* that sterilizes the human elements of both teachers and students.[47]

Let us now summarize the discussion of the naturalistic-romantic approach in humanistic education. It can be characterized through the basic assumption that there is a "fixed self," or an "inner nature" in each of us, which is essentially good and unique to the individual, and drives to actualize and fulfill itself – according to an inner code inherent in it – towards mental health and moral conduct. The naturalism of the romantic stream is broader or more extreme than that of Aristotle's, in that it assumes an inner pattern that comprises a natural tendency towards moral goodness, and relies on the individual's self-development and self-guidance. Romantic naturalism is also more individualistic, since it focuses more on the unique "inner self" of every individual, while Aristotelian naturalism focuses on the "general humanness" common to us all. Contrary to their classical counterparts, Romantic educators regard the way to human perfection in terms of guiding awareness, not towards the universal and objective, but towards the inner essence of individuals and their initial and singular "I." Hence real education deals with helping children – with extreme care and awe – actualize the skills embodied in them by virtue of their singular personality to become what their nature guides them to be.

4. THE EXISTENTIAL APPROACH AND THE YEARNING FOR THE AUTHENTICITY OF SELF-CREATION

Existentialist educators reject both the classical image of man as a "rational being" and the romantic basic assumption that in each of us there is a "fixed self" or "inner nature," the essence of which is good and unique to us. The alternative presented by the existentialists maintains that man is *freedom*, and not only in the general meaning of the ability to depart from inner and external *idées fixes*, but also the real experience of the individual who cannot avoid recognition of the fact that there is no inner pattern whatsoever, no fixed pattern or supreme authority from which the worthy life can be derived. It follows, therefore, that in the sphere of values, human beings have no external or supreme authority to which they can turn, neither in the universal world of the spirit nor in their "inner self". Therefore, people are destined to be those who choose, shape and create their identity and image – and the greater the freedom the greater the responsibility. On these

[47] Ritter, *Educreation and Feedback*, pp. 33-39.

characteristics of the existential approach – such as the individual's caring about his or her personal identity, together with his or her recognition of the scope of freedom and the weighty responsibility that are part and parcel of it, Sartre says the following in his essay "The Humanism of *Existentialism.*"

> Atheistic existentialism...states that if God does not exist, there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept, and that this being is man.... It means that, first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and only afterwards, defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after his thrust toward existence.
>
> Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself.... Thus existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him.... Indeed everything is permissible if God does not exist, and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to. He can't start making excuses form himself.[48]

From the historical point of view, it is accepted to regard the mid-19th century Danish philosopher Sören Kierkegaard as the first existentialist philosopher. In his writings he presents the argument that the most important and relevant truths in our lives are not objective but subjective – they deal with the way in which individuals perceive and regard themselves in the real world of their decisions and actions. According to Kierkegaard, this precedes every weighty and challenging process of choosing your image and shaping your personality as a subject and an "individual." It is a process in which individuals are required to cope not only with the abstract thoughts and general truths that alienate them from their real and unique existence, but also to cope with the spirit of the masses, whose herd-like tendency and demand for conformity threaten to erode any emotion or manifestation of individual independence and authenticity.

It was Nietzsche who, from a different perspective, declared that "God is dead" and that there are no absolute truths in the world but only perspectives; no objective facts but only interpretations; not one way of living worthy of man, but numerous, diverse and contradictory ways in

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[48] Sartre," The Humanism of Existentialism," pp. 35-41.

which man can be at his best.[49] Man's human dignity, Nietzsche added, is revealed in the authentic life of self-overcoming and self-creation, in a life that actualizes Man's singular existence as a being in which "*creature* and *creator* are united.[50] The "true life" does not exist by virtue of affiliation to a divine plan or an "inner and singular I" – two images or fictions that people have created for themselves – but by virtue of individuals' ability to shape themselves as sovereign and singular people who legislate for themselves their goals and values and actualize and implement them in their life.

On the basis of this perception, Nietzsche appeals to educators to first of all educate themselves and create themselves as exemplary images of full and authentic human life. Secondly, he calls upon them to demand of their students to break free from a certain stage of their education, the influence of their educators and themselves shape a singular, ethical and sovereign way of life. In his writings he repeats his call to students to follow themselves and create for themselves. In his early writings as well as in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche calls on young people seeking their freedom and personal identity, and instructs them not to be tempted to find the given and well-trodden path – neither in public life nor in their inner life. If they respect themselves, they must *create* for themselves their own unique path: "No one else can build a bridge on which you must cross the river of life, no one but you alone. It is true that there are numerous paths, bridges and demigods that wish to carry you across the river, but only at the cost of your self: you would pledge yourself and therefore lose yourself.... For your true being does not lie hidden deep inside you but immeasurably high above your, or at least above what you usually consider to be your ago."[51]

Nietzsche opens a later work, *The Gay Science*, with guidance for the enthusiastic reader: "Lured by my style and tendency, you follow and come after me, follow your own self faithfully – take time, and thus you follow me."[52] When Nietzsche speaks from the lips of Zarathustra, he reprimands his students who beseech him to show them the *way*: "This is *my way*; where is yours? For *the way* – that does not exist."[53] The values of life, he interprets, are not found in something given in the world but only as the fruit of human beings' evaluation and creation: "Verily, man gave themselves all their good and evil. Verily, they did not take it, they did not find it, not did it come to them as a voice from heaven. Only man placed values in things to

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[49] See for example *The Will for Power,* secs. 3,12, 481, 600, 604, 606; *The Gay Science*, secs. 108, 25, 143, 343, 374.
[50] See for example *Beyond Good and Evil*, secs. 61, 203, 225; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "On the Way of the Creator."
[51] *Schopenhauer as Educator*, ch. 1.
[52] *The Gay Science, p. 43.*
[53] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 307.*

preserve himself – he alone created a meaning for things, a human meaning."[54]

When his students decline and become disciples and foolish followers, Zarathustra is appalled to have to defend them from their self-disparagement, and directs the following demand to them:

> Now I go alone, my disciples. You too go now, alone. Thus I want it. Verily, I counsel you: go away from me and resist Zarathustra! And even better: be ashamed of him! Perhaps he deceived you....
>
> One repays a teacher badly if one always remains nothing but a pupil....
>
> You say you believe in Zarathustra? But what matters Zarathustra? Your are my believers – but what matter all believers? You had not yet sought yourselves: and you found me. Thus do all believers; therefore all faith amounts to so little.
>
> Now I bid you to loose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you...with a different love shall I then love you.[55]

An additional example of the character of existential education can be found in Martin Buber. In his article "The Education of Character," he opens with a presentation of an adamant position according to which no technical teaching or learning content can replace the present, spontaneous, full and concrete existence of the educator's personality: "Only in his whole being, in all his spontaneity can the educator truly affect the whole being of his pupil. For educating characters you do not need a moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to this fellow being. His aliveness streams out to them and affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them."[56]

He goes on to say of himself that the educational problem that troubles him is how to educate character – the personality's behavioral patterns that operate in the reality of its life – in a reality that has lost all agreement on a system of ideals and mandatory values. Buber's answer is not related to content but rather to form. What is productive from a pedagogical perspective is not the pedagogical tendency but the pedagogical encounter – a real human dialogue, the "I-thou" relationships that help individuals to experience an open, comprehensive and multi-lateral encounter with their humanity and that of their fellow humans, and the profundity of this encounter to make them into human beings:

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[54] Ibid, 171.
[55] Ibid, p. 190.
[56] Buber, "The Education of Character," p. 488.

> Today host upon host of men have everywhere sunk into the slavery of collectives, and each collective is the supreme authority for its own slaves.... This is true, not only for the totalitarian countries, but also for the parties and party-like groups in the so-called democracies. Men who have so lost themselves to the collective Moloch cannot be rescued from it by any reference, however eloquent, to the absolute whose kingdom the Moloch has usurped. One has to begin by pointing to that sphere where man himself, in the hours of utter solitude, occasionally becomes aware of the disease through sudden pain: by pointing the relations of the individual to his own self."[57]

We can therefore summarize the uniqueness of the existential approach towards humanistic education: it relies not on a god in heaven, nor on the regularity of the order of nature, nor on the "real self" latent in the individual's soul – which constitute ready-made answers and paths, and even if their basic intentions are good, they inhibit students' humanization processes. Being a human being, according to this perception, means the full and active acceptance of your freedom and the responsibility for what you are: to shape your image and that of your environment, to express your singularity and make your mark by imparting significance, value, meaning and purpose on the reality of your life. Existentialist educators seek more than to inculcate knowledge and virtue; they act to arouse, motivate and encourage their students towards caring, interpretive, evaluative and creative involvement in their own lives. They wish to empower students to become aware of the social forces acting to shape and determine their characters; to extend their personal freedom so that they will be able to see what is possible side by side with what exists, and will "choose themselves" differently than what is expected and accepted. Educational success, according to this existentialist approach, is demonstrated in a kind of self-affirmation in which individuals dare to express their being in a personal, direct and significant manner – defining themselves and creating beyond themselves without losing themselves.[58]

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[57] Ibid, p. 492.

[58] On such activities of self-affirmation see Paul Tilich's *The Courage to Be.*

5. THE CRITICAL-RADICAL APPROACH AND THE YEARNING FOR EMPOWERMENT AND EMANCIPATION

Radical education, by its very nature, strives towards the root of things (*radix* in Latin means "root") and is not satisfied with gradual reforms and other "cosmetic changes" to reality, since these tend to continue to cover up the wrongdoings and lies of society's high-ranking and powerful figures. In other words, radical educators direct their actions in such a way as to bring about fundamental – and therefore revolutionary – change in the existing order of things. The ideal guiding the struggle, however, can be different for different radical educators in accordance with their respective Weltanschauungs and the specific social conditions in which they operate.

In the context of our discussion, the term "radical education" will specify the educational theory and practice of the "New Left" as these were manifested in the "counter culture" of the 60s and the critical and Neo-Marxist approaches of recent years. In the opinion of these radical thinkers and educators, examining educational topics divorced from the broad social and economic context shows, in the best case, ignorance and naiveté, and in the worst – cynical and perhaps even criminal pleasure vis-à-vis the social forces that actually determine the character and level of the education our children receive. Poverty and illiteracy, crime and drugs, wars and social gaps, ecological crises, discrimination against women and minorities, technocratic thinking, interpersonal alienation and the destruction of the community and family unit – these grave problems are the facts of life for the majority of the world's children and directly or indirectly affect the development of children on the physical, emotional, mental, social and moral levels.

Moreover, radical educators do not perceive these problematic and oppressive elements of our lives as a product of some scientific weakness or technological difficulty, but as a practical expression of certain ideologies that serve the interests of powerful groups at the expense of weak or oppressed ones. Understanding this "picture" of social reality – perceived as such from a radical perspective that is committed to an egalitarian and enlightened democracy – also explains the militant criticality of the radicals that characterizes their approach to humanistic education. These thinkers and educators created a discourse of "critical pedagogy" controlled by images of power, struggle, opposition and possibility. Pedagogical nurturing and the rehabilitation of man's humanity are perceived as serving two purposes: (1) as education towards a emancipation from thinking patterns and patterns of life that endanger individuals, dwarf their full development, and reduce their

consciousness to the lowest common denominator; (2) as education towards empowering individuals, or reinforcing them, so that they will be able to critically and autonomously "read" reality, identify in it the forces and elements that shape the conditions of their lives, and develop for themselves directions and skills that will enable them to direct their lives for their own benefit and that of society.

As stated earlier, an idea was formulated at the end of the 60s (and also implemented to a certain extent) regarding radical education as one of the elements of the protest movement that acted toward humanizing life through the replacement of capitalistic and nationalistic values with those of peace, social justice and human solidarity. We will mention three of the educators who were predominant at that time: the Brazilian, Paulo Freire, and the Americans Neil Postman and Jonathan Kozol.

Paulo Freire, who began his educational work in Brazil, was forced to leave his country when it was taken over by the generals' junta. Finally, he returned as the minister of education of São Paulo state and posited an original conception which he called "the pedagogy of the oppressed." By this he means education directed towards the rehabilitation of the humanity of the poor and abused population of the Third World, where the perpetuation of the poverty and ignorance of the masses serves as a mechanism for preserving the superiority and regime of the elite social classes. At the basis of Freire's pedagogy lies the idea of a human dialogue of equals, directed towards rehabilitating the sense of self-worth and self-confidence, nurturing the basic literacy required for understanding the reality of life, and for developing attentive and critical political awareness – all this as a means for building the motivation and ability of the masses that will enable them to take their fate into their own hands and act towards changing and improving the reality of their lives.

In 1968, Neil Postman published (with Charles Weingartner) *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, the essence of which underscores the claim that education should mobilize itself to prevent humanity's self-destructive processes that take place in murderous wars and the arms race, destruction of the natural environment, crimes and violence, addiction to drugs and technology, cultural-deprivation in the weaker strata, and the false and stupefying manipulation of mass media.[59] At center stage of educational endeavor, he claims, one should place the development of critical awareness and moral sensitivity among students, that will inform them of the main problems of modern civilization, equip them with a "crap detector kit," and train them to rationally, morally and responsibly cope with the main challenges facing humanity in the last third of the 20th century.

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[59] Postman & Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity.*

Jonathan Kozol presented a more radical view, according to which the United States' political system intentionally acted to culturally deprive the black minority, viewing them as an inferior and oppressed class, and to shape the better-established strata as servile and efficient cogs in the capitalistic and military machine of American society (in the United States of the mid-90s one percent of the public hold forty percent of the material assets, some fifty percent of the black population and some twenty percent of the population of children live below the poverty line, over thirty percent lack basic literacy for understanding the social and cultural reality, approximately one million citizens are behind bars – relatively ten times more than similar data reported in developed European countries). We can find the essence of Kozol's criticism against the American education system in Adir Cohen's article "Education for Youth According to Your Way or Lessons in Castration":

> One can hardly find schools that cultivate skepticism regarding the validity of social conventions or endorse critical examination of social issues, government policies, and educational curricula. For twelve years they are habituated to think only "positively," to accept reality as a given fact, and to smoothly function in it. Consciously or unconsciously, this is how the castration of the future citizens begin...
>
> The graduates of such schools come out of them informed about reality, but not engaged with life, aware of social processes but alienated from them. There are plenty of words in their vocabulary, but these are empty words, lacking any personal meaning, social position, and practical implications. They eventually become nothing more than religious believers, obedient soldiers, automatic consumers, and robot-like job holders."[60]

In the same spirit of social criticism and moral rage the American philosopher Maxine Greene writes on schools that are totally sterile of any social engagement and moral consideration:

> Little, if anything, is done to render problematic a reality that includes homelessness, hunger, pollution, crime, censorship, arms build-ups, and threats of war, even as it includes the amassing of fortunes, consumer goods of unprecedented appeal, a world travel opportunities, and the flickering faces of the "rich and famous" on all sides. Little is done to counter media manipulation of the young into credulous and ardent consumers – of sensation, violence, criminality, things. They are instructed daily, and with few exceptions, that human worth depends on

[60] Cohen, "Education for Youth According to Your Way or Lessons in Castration," p. 14.

> the possession of commodities, community status, a flippant way of talking, good looks. What they are made to believe to be the "news" is half entertainment, half pretenses at being "windows to the world".... In the midst of the marketing and the sounds of sitcom shotguns, there are opportunities to become voyeurs of starvation, massacres, torture, and the beat of MTV goes on and on.[61]

We will turn now to Michael Apple and Henry Giroux, among the most prominent of the radical education thinkers, who are co-partners to the idea that "pedagogy should become more political and the political more pedagogical."[62] Applying this principle to the curriculum, as Michael Apple says, will lead us to the awareness that the central question regarding "*What* knowledge is of most worth" is deceptive and misleading.[63] This pedagogical question is always related to the social and political reality: to struggles and the balance of power between the races, classes, religions and ethnic groups and, of course, between men and women. The alternative to this misleading perception of the curriculum is a new articulation of the question and awareness of society's political power struggles; in other words "*Whose knowledge is of most worth*" – a phrasing that focuses our awareness on the fact that knowledge, values and cultural hierarchies are always related to the desires and interests of people and social groups. It therefore follows, Apple adds, that the creation of a true democratic culture – egalitarian, open and pluralistic – mandates the abandonment of the image of the "melting pot" and the conservative-classical ideal of a uniform "cultural literacy" for all (Adler and Bloom's version), and adopting in its place the commitment to "maintain conditions that enable all members of the community to actively and continuously participate in the creation of meaning, knowledge and values."[64]

Therefore, Giroux says, we should regard critical pedagogy as "a cultural praxis that empowers teachers and fellow citizens to conceive education as a social, political, and cultural endeavor. It is a pedagogy of struggle, hence being a critical praxis that looks into modes of oppression, discrimination and dehumanization – aiming to make the teachers agents of social transformation and political democratization."[65] We should also know that modification of education involves first and foremost a change in the self-image of teachers. Those who engage in education should, according to the

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[61] Greene, *The Dialectic of Freedom,* pp. 12-13.
[62] Aronowitz and Giroux, *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debate Over Schooling,* "Dedication."
[63] Apple, *Ideology and curriculum,* "Preface."
[64] Ibid.
[65] Giroux, "Education of Border and the Politics of Modernism-Postmodernism," p. 51.

critical-radical approach, stop regarding themselves as agents of the socialization process and as responsible for maintaining existing order. They must regard themselves as agents of change whose goal and endeavor lies in transforming schools into institutions that provide young people with a genuine experiencing of freedom, equality, independence, and strength for the sake of influencing and improving their own lives and that of the community. In such a school, "we will have to struggle collectively as transformative intellectuals...to make public schools democratic public spheres where all children regardless of race, class, gender, and age, can learn what it means to be able to participate fully in the ongoing struggle to make democracy the medium through which they extend the potential and possibilities of what it means to be human and to live in a just society."[66]

In summary, the critical-radical approach focuses on revealing those elements in education that serve social and political trends of oppression, dispossession and the cultural deprivation of man. These trends have an extensive history. In ancient times, sons and daughters were sacrificed to the gods on the altar and in modern times they are brainwashed with national ideologies so that they will hasten to shed their own blood of their own volition. Throughout history, the main religions crushed all human vitality related to independent thinking and emotional spontaneity, and in modern times capitalism reduces the spirit of man to a common denominator of "entertainment for the masses" and causes people to define their humanity in terms of manufacturer-consumer. Women and blacks were stripped of their humanity, groups and nations were stripped of their culture, broad strata of society were made culturally deprived, reaching a level of degeneration, and children were required to sacrifice their childhood. To all the above phenomena of human exploitation radical education requires us to look sensitively as well as critically. It expects us to undertake responsibility for reality and act towards its transformation.

As educators, their claim is that we should first and foremost nurture and empower our students with critical awareness, moral sensitivity and political activism. This, they believe, will protect them from the trends of oppression, dispossession and cultural deprivation as well as make them alert and skilled in timely identification of the threatening writing on the wall before they become a reality and tattoo the image of mankind.

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[66] Giroux, "Educational Reform and Teacher Empowerment," p. 186.

6. HUMANISTIC EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF THE REPUDIATION OF MAN: THE POST-MODERN CHALLENGE

As we have seen earlier, the different humanistic versions share a general commitment to promoting the development, dignity and welfare of human beings. In the 20th century this agreement expanded into a perception whose content can be presented in two categories: first of all, as a worldview obligated to nurture the personal freedom and growth of individuals towards self-actualization and broadening of their human abilities, and to the moral code that places man's dignity and welfare as the supreme purpose of human thinking and endeavor – beyond the imperatives of any religious, ideological, national or economic theory. Secondly, there is agreement on the political translation of this worldview in the image of a democratic, enlightened and humane society, based on the equality of the value and dignity of man, moral sensitivity and social solidarity, respect for man's rights and placing the required resources for normal development and dignified human existence at the disposal of all. However, these approaches disagree on all matters concerning the perception of the nature of man, the meaning of the "good and full human life," and the educational and political ways leading to the actualization of the humanistic vision.

On the question of this development in humanistic education, different positions were formed in our century, two of which, the modern and the post-modern, are of interest to us in this context. The thinkers and educators who identify with the basic beliefs and ideals of modernity are characterized by a belief in the powers of rationality, sensitive morality and creative imagination to advance humanity towards an enlightened, just and thriving existence – in other words, an optimistic approach towards the possibility of progress. From this point of departure, modern thinkers continued the same line of thought in their attempt to establish a preferred model of humanistic education, which was in most cases integrative in character. This humanistic education fed on the different elements of humanistic education's heritage and on an evaluation of the situation in relation to unique problems and challenges facing us.

We can find examples in the words of numerous humanistic thinkers. Russell's philosophy of education comprises classical, romantic and radical positions. Whitehead's approach to education combines classical and progressive perceptions. Yanosh Korczak actualized in his life a model of humanistic social education that combines placing the child at center stage (without the romantic idealization relating to the nature of the child) with radical involvement in rectifying society. John Dewey was careful to

maintain a balance between "making the child a partner-inheritor of humanity's intellectual and moral assets" and actualizing the child's singular nature, needs and inclinations. Martin Buber's existentialist thinking maintains an affiliation to classic and transcendental experience. Paulo Freire's emancipatory and empowering pedagogy combines existentialism, radicalism and neo-Marxism. Neil Postman's educational perception attempted to simultaneously hold both ends of the "pedagogical rope" and combine classical visions with pragmatic philosophy and radical critique of technocratic society. And the last example we may find in the theory of Mortimer Adler, who carries the banner of conservative neo-humanism, the elitistic-classical approach mellows towards a democratic and egalitarian approach committed to "excellent education for all."

A different kind of modern discourse on the desirable image of humanistic education can be found in the books confronting the various approaches, such as *Education and the American Dream,* edited by Holtz, which presents and challenges the contemporary visions and methods of the neo-classical, the liberal, and the radical approaches. The fruits of this discourse – as I see it – is the awareness of the great value of insights and sensitivities in each of the approaches, as well as an understanding that the real decision we have to make is not between different approaches, but rather a balanced and wise choice of different elements taken from each of them. In other words, we should not choose between "cultural literacy" and "critical literacy," between morality and good citizenship and autonomy and authenticity, between human excellence and self-actualization, but combine in correct measure, and according to the population and unique conditions available to us, those elements of humanistic education which will best promote man's development and welfare. Although "wisdom" has become more modest in the 20th century, it has still maintained a supreme status in the theories of modernistic thinkers as the best skill and human faculty at human beings' disposal in their attempt to actualize their humanity and better their lives.

On the other hand, the post-modernist approach rejects a pretension of objectivity and universality of "reason." It regards the universalistic approach as fiction or myth that developed in a specific historical and cultural context, serving the interests of the social group that adopted it. Therefore, the post-modernists claim, "reason" cannot provide what it had promised: advancement towards a truer understanding of reality, the creation of a just and enlightened human world, and the nurturing of a more superior or educated people. The deconstruction of the positive standpoints of modernism by the post-modernists seeks to: (1) expose the elements of personality and the cultural, historical and class contexts that lie at the basis of intellectual and ethical standpoints; (2) situate the various positions in the

historical-cultural space of aggressive, albeit latent, struggles for cultural dominancy; (3) deny the pretense of all the worldviews, ideologies, ethical theories, and life styles of possessing a preferred status – scientific, philosophical or ethical.

Post-modern society, as Ronnie Aviram points out, no longer believes in the possibility of human truths and values having an objective and universal status, and therefore, it turns to "a kind of multi-culturalism and moral relativism that is uncritical and tolerant towards almost any ideological outlook and social practice."[67] On the basis of this point of view, post-modernist educators would be expected to discuss with their students the character of both democratic and tyrannical regimes, but should avoid any democracy-oriented education. They would expose their students to human and universal ethical perceptions as well as to racism and nationalism, but avoid any objective determination that indicates a preferred position. They would arouse their students to examine the issues of juxtaposing "high culture" and "mass culture," but mainly in order to "inform" them of the refutability and arbitrariness of this distinction.

The goal of such an educator is not shaping or nurturing the student towards any cultural ideal whatsoever, such as *humanitas*, *bildung*, *paideia*, culture, "autonomous personality," or "individual growth," since these reflect a biased attempt on the part of a specific group to gain social power and cultural hegemony while relegating weaker groups whose culture is perceived as worthless and illegitimate to the periphery. This will also be their standpoint in regard to the modern humanist's argument that a democratic society in which women and minorities will enjoy equal opportunities and rights will be *objectively* more developed, enlightened and just than a social organization of monolithic, tyrannical and patriarchal character. From the standpoint of the post-modern, as stated earlier, this perception of enlightenment and justice, that is also seemingly universal and impartial, expresses aggressive interests and is not preferable from the philosophical point of view.

A manifestation of this post-modern spirit (even when it is not conscious of itself) can be heard in almost all the philosophy of education lessons I teach in the various frameworks of teacher training. The very attempt to focus discussion on the "qualities that add dignity and value to a person's personality" is often received in such classes with great reservation by the students. They claim that there is no point in discussing ethical issues since they are culture-dependent and subjective. Moreover, the attempt to posit characteristics of the figure of a more developed, fuller, refined or educated (without quotation marks) person usually enrages students since "everyone

[67] Aviram, "Adopting a Comprehensive Look at Education."

has his or her own good, justice and beauty." The very attempt to conduct a reflective and normative discussion on this subject is perceived as irrelevant and meaningless, and recently even as patronizing and oppressive.

It is well known that there is nothing new in this relativistic standpoint; it has deep roots in classical skepticism and modern positivism that identifies knowledge only with the tangible and measurable knowledge of the exact sciences. The innovation lies in the fact that next to the old skepticism, postmodernist thinkers argue that "the assets of humanity's knowledge and morality" constitute no more and no less than focal points of power and means of dominance camouflaged as cultural achievement and refinement. They serve, as mentioned earlier, the social elites in their attempt to establish a cultural hegemony in their own image.

Adherence to this standpoint presents humanist educators with a tremendous difficulty: they are aware of the justness of some of the post-modern arguments, but at the same time are unwilling to relinquish the universal ideals of reason, equality, freedom and solidarity. They are not only challenged by the modern positivistic and emotivistic view, according to which moral positions are merely subjective and lack any cognitive validity (as in the case of liking Coca-Cola more than Pepsi-Cola, or chicken breast more than the drumstick), but also with a post-modernistic claim that holds the "inalienable assets of culture" as possessing no intrinsic value but being only conventions of interest.

According to this logic, there is no objective criterion for deciding between "the Nazis' justice" and the "Jews' justice"; there is no possibility of speaking about the extraordinary and immanent greatness of the works of intellectuals like Shakespeare, Mozart, Dostoyevsky, Virginia Woolf, Garcia Marques or Picasso; there is no essential advantage in the wisdom of philosophers like the prophet Isaiah, Buddha, Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza or Nietzsche vs. the man in the street. The only thing we need to understand, according to the post-modern "truth," is that these are traditionally perceived as great and exemplary in their sphere. They were simply moved from the periphery to the cultural center as a result of aggressive battles for cultural hegemony.

One way of coping with the challenge and burden that the post-modern approach confronts us with is to turn to Nietzsche's philosophy, which is considered one of the primary and central sources of inspiration for post-modern thinking. Indeed, in his writings we find numerous insights and analyses that have become the foundations of post-modernism: "God is dead" and "the other-worldly reality" is a plain myth; there is no objective and impersonal outlook but only personal perspectives; there are no facts in the world, but only interpretations. In reality itself, Nietzsche argued, we can find only those values and meanings that humans have molded into it; the

striving towards "truth" rises out of a "will to power"; and the "I" and "free will" are not independent entities, as it is customary to think, but only linguistic images and conceptual constructions.

Post-modern thinking adopted these insights and analyses of Nietzsche and used them in the critical analysis of reality, thus giving an important and welcome contribution to society in general and humanistic education in particular. As Asher Idan states in his article "From Integration to Pluralism," post-modern thinking brought about "disclosure of hidden mechanisms of discrimination and oppression in the processes of modernization and social integration."[68] The intention is mainly directed at forcing the interpretation of the world of the "white European male" on all other societies, while relegating their cultures to the periphery. Thus post-modern thinking advanced the transition from a monolithic patronizing cultural approach to one which was more democratic, pluralistic and just. Or as Yossi Yonah presented it, post-modernism substantiated the normative meaning of cultural pluralism and contributed to education "the obligation of relating openly, with dignity and tolerance to the existence of diversity in the ethical-cultural sphere."[69] It is, however, worthy of note that both in these critical insights and in the commitment to communal and pluralistic democracy, there is nothing essentially different from modern humanism's perception of enlightenment or from the basic commitment to "equality, freedom and solidarity." In this limited meaning of post-modern criticism it is no more than an additional stage in the "enlightenment project" of the modern age.

On the other hand, the consistent post-modern standpoint (if it indeed can be thus called), which comes to a halt at the negatory stage and does not go beyond criticism of cultural heritages and powers, is totally nihilistic. As an anti-rational approach it returns to the Sophists the senior status that was taken away from them by critical reason. It replaces relying on the foundations of reason and ethics, as a basis for shaping social patterns, with the power of power (since it believes that everything begins and ends with a struggle for power) and leaves demagogy as the legitimate and dominant means of attaining it.

The stylistic ornamentation of post-modern philosophizing in linguistic sophistication, heavy academic jargon and elusive dialogues between various "discourse spaces" holds perhaps esthetic value and theoretical volume, but it eliminates any possibility of carrying on a serious, sound and responsible discussion of basic humanist questions – moral, political and cultural. The

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[68] Idan, "From Integration to Pluralism," p. 48.

[69] Yonah, "Cultural Pluralism Versus Cultural Integration and Their implications in the Practice of Education," p. 123.

struggle against "logos" and rational talk that seeks to loyally describe reality results in the loss of orientation and ideological and practical anarchy: it creates a post-cultural jungle in which symbols do not symbolize anything, signs have no instructions or meaning, and similar to Orwellian language all distinctions between justice and injustice, executioner and victim, war and peace, truth and fraud – a colorful festivity perhaps, but nonetheless dangerous for humankind – dissolve and disappear. It leads, as Moshe Zuckerman says, to "moral and political indifference" and undermines the basis of every humanistic endeavor. "Postmodernism" he writes, "is an impotent kind of philosophy, a kind of stylistic and colorful intellectual game, manifesting helplessness and despair – giving up the quest for progress in the intellectual and social spheres of life. Their complete cognitive and moral relativism strip people from any ability to make meaningful and valid judgment regarding their lived reality, hence being unable to change reality for the better. All in all, postmodernists are actually joining conservative and oppressive groups in maintaining the social and political order unchanged."[70]

In this context it is important to return to Nietzsche who warned that stopping at this negatory and critical stage is a dangerous cultural pathology.[71] Particularly in light of the "death of God" and "moral and authoritative crisis," Nietzsche stated that we must support life, be loyal to humanity, see before us the human ideal of "übermensch" and establish a superior and noble culture motivated and nourished by a perfectionist demand of continuous self-perfection and self-overcoming. There is nothing more destructive and decadent for man, Nietzsche said, than "to sacrifice God for the nothing."[72] He therefore calls for the establishment of a new nobility of "philosopher-artists" who have overcome both dogmatic absolutism and dogmatic relativism, and in their creative endeavor – which is both qualitative and unique – they give human life meaning, value, direction and purpose.[73] Against this background we can understand his clear-cut word on the education of man in post-modern existence: "Never were moral educators more needed, and never was there less chance of finding them."[74] "Educators are needed who have themselves been educated, superior, noble spirits, proved at every moment, proved by words and silence, representing culture which has grown ripe and sweet – not the

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[70] Zuckerman, "On Postmodernism and Education," p. 99-101.
[71] *The Will for Power,* secs. 7, 13, 55.
[72] *Beyond Good and Evil*, sec. 55
[73] *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Part II, sec. 24; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "on the Gift-Giving Virtue" and "On the Thousand and One Goals."
[74] *Schopenhauer as Educator*, p. 12.

learned louts whom secondary schools and universities today offer our youth as 'higher wet nurses."[75]

Indeed in the 20th century, a philosophical approach developed side by side with relativist post-modernism that accepted on the one hand the idea of the "great narratives" as supra-logics that developed in the framework of cultural heritages and regarded "conversation of mankind" as the sole context for understanding phenomena. On the other hand, this position was adamant that the existence of common human needs and desires as well as the participation of people and societies in the cultural heritages, practices, and professional occupations – which had inner criteria of excellence and worthlessness, success and failure – enables the possibility for common and objective yardsticks for what is good, just and beautiful in the human world. We find examples of this approach in the thinking of Arendt, Habermas, Gadamer, Oakeshott, MacIntyre, Taylor, Nussbaum and Bernstein who presented, each in his or her own way, the possibility of moderate rationalism and moderate objectivism that preserve commitment to the true, just and sublime in human existence. They have all advanced their ideas without rejecting the basic tenets of the humanistic outlook, on the one hand, and without the pretense of pure, absolute, impartial and a-historic reason, on the other.[76]

Unlike traditional philosophy, according to this approach, identification of the sublime elements of man does not mandate pure philosophical observation of the "world of ideas," but rather combined, critical, interpretive and creative involvement in the cultural heritages, spheres of knowledge, shared practices – and all their goals, basic principles, prominent achievements and conditions of excellence and success. The world of human culture is indeed perceived here as the fruit of human creation and the expression of Man's unique "tools," but there is nothing in it, according to these thinkers that negate the possibility of the existence of "practical reason." In other words, our ability and duty to evaluate at every moment and in every situation – with varying degrees of differentiation, preciseness and objectivity – the relative level of functionality in the sphere, of some aspect or preoccupation that belongs to our common public world. This principle applies to football and skiing in the same way it applies to physics, dance, theatre, literature, ethics, education or politics. In this matter, the words of Spinoza in the fourth part of the *Ethics* are particularly relevant: "Perfection and imperfection, then, are in reality merely modes of thinking,

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[75] *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 510.

[76] This approach is extensively and clearly presented in Richard Bernstein's books *The New Constellation*, and *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism.*

or notions which we form from a comparison among one another of individuals of the same species."[77]

Against the background of this alternative – which offers humanist education a theoretical foundation in the image of a rational, historical, normative, hermeneutic and pluralistic discourse – the total post-modern approach seems a sure way of reaching the annihilation of humanistic education. It turns its back on the intellectual and moral idea of enlightenment and relinquishes the very attempt to *educate* the generation of young people in the light of common humanistic ideals. Thus post-modernism joins hands with positivistic functionalism and both abandon the rational, moral and pedagogical discussion of the image of man and society as they can and deserve to be. This relinquishment is conducted for the benefit of the description, albeit in-depth and sophisticated, of the real man as the market forces have shaped him.

In conclusion of this review of the milestones and central approaches to education, humanistic education always strives towards a fuller and more sublime human existence through nurturing qualities unique to human beings and making their lives better, more meaningful, moral and happy. In other words, it is an education that helps people – of both genders and all groups and communities – to actualize their humanity and reach their best, as individuals who actualize their potential, as involved and critical citizens in society and as human beings who develop and expand their humanity through an educational encounter with the best achievements of human culture. However, in the post-modern world – where "anything goes" and everything has equal value, in which justice is relative and beauty is no more than a personal issue – yearning and striving towards more sublime human life loses its meaning and humanistic education is perceived as totally irrelevant.

As we have seen here, humanistic education was born and raised in classical Athens as a result of a rational, moral and esthetic caring about our human image. It changed and developed different heritages as a unique discourse in the broad cultural discourse setup. Now, in the beginning of the 21st century, there is a danger that it will decline and degenerate as a result of the post-modern estrangement from that same rational caring, moral passion and erotic yearning for human beings as they can be, in their full dignity and glory, if only they actualized and properly developed the superior elements embodied in them.

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[77] Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part IV, "preface."

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Chapter II

AN INTEGRATIVE AND NORMATIVE MODEL FOR HUMANISTIC EDUCATION AT THE ADVENT OF THE 21ST CENTURY

The classical is meaningful and relevant anywhere and anytime.
Roth

Living is the job I want to teach him.
Rousseau

Lured by my style and tendency, you follow and come after me, follow your own self faithfully – take time, and thus you follow me.
Nietzsche

If we educators are to prevent democracy from collapsing into a new form of barbarism...we will have to struggle collectively as trasformative intellectuals...making democracy the medium through which they extend the potential and possibilities of what it means to be human and to live in a just society.
Giroux

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I wish to present an integrative and normative concept of humanistic education that draws on the four approaches presented in Chapter One. This concept seeks to view these approaches not as disqualifying or exclusive of the others, but rather as complementary approaches that can be integrated into a model that will successfully address the tribulations and challenges of the period. The basis of this integrative approach is the perception that "educational truth and justice" are to be found not only in one of these approaches, but that each of them encapsulates values, sensitivities, insights and skills of great and prolific potential for a contemporary theory of humanistic education. Moreover, I feel that we have learned from the historical review in the previous chapter that what is

common to the four approaches is greater than the variances between them. Beyond the intellectual and pedagogical contention, they have two basic components in common that classify them as members of the humanistic education family. First, they are committed to the "humanization" of humankind (fulfilling and broadening its humanity) by means of employing educational experiences that will enable all human beings to develop the human resources inherent in them, and live a full and dignified human life. Second, they are committed to an educational endeavor that strives to free humankind from the shackles of ignorance and prejudice, from the arbitrariness and capriciousness of the human experience, from the conformist herd instinct and individual alienation, from parochial narrow-mindedness and the false consciousness shaped by political propaganda and commercial advertising.

My presentation of the proposed model will be in a number of stages. In the *first stage* I shall present an updated, detailed and normative definition of Humanism, both as a worldview and an ethical code that places human well-being, freedom, development and dignity as the ultimate human end, beyond all political, religious, ideological and economic ideals and interests. It is my hope that this definition will be sufficiently clear and incisive in order to distinguish between humanists and pseudo-humanists, while at the same time sufficiently broad and open in order to enable a pluralistic humanism, with a multiplicity of interpretations and approaches that is neither monolithic nor dogmatic.

In the *second stage* I will present a detailed normative definition of humanistic education which will seek to do justice both to the classical components of humanistic education and to its developments in the Modern Era. The *third stage* constitutes a kind of continuation and detailing of the second stage. There, I will present three ultimate goals of the proposed model: (1) education towards cultural quality that maintains a special affinity towards classical heritage (West and East); (2) education towards autonomous and critical thinking that feeds particularly on the classical heritage of Socratic Dialectics and the radical and critical approach of modernity; and (3) education towards an authentic personality that draws its content and modes both from romantic-naturalistic and existential pedagogy.

The chapter will conclude with the *fourth stage*, in which I will present both theoretical and practical guidelines for pedagogy: I will relate to the infrastructure and physical appearance of the educational institution, the social climate and nature of interpersonal relations, relevant and meaningful teaching that strives to render the "tree of knowledge" into the "tree of life" for students as well as for the entire society.

1. HUMANISM AS A WORLDVIEW AND MORAL STANCE: A NORMATIVE DEFINITION

The proposal of the normative definition of humanism presented here relates to humanism as a worldview and moral stance that should direct both the theory and the practice of humanistic education. I hope that this definition is broad enough to encompass diverse trends and styles, but is also clear, obligating, and is not a toothless tiger, in the sense that it holds specific criteria for differentiating between humanistic stances and actions and those running counter to them. As a normative worldview, humanism means *regarding human beings as sovereign individuals who are responsible for their destiny, attributing to all people an unconditional self-value equal to that of their fellow men and women, and striving to establish a just, democratic, and humane social order, which is committed to the sanctity of human life and the furthering of human equality, freedom, solidarity, growth and happiness.* The meanings of this definition will be detailed and explained on four levels of reference.[1]

First, on the *philosophical level,* humanism posits Man (*homo* in Latin) at center stage of existence and considers *the enhancement of human development, freedom, well-being and dignity as the ultimate goal, above and beyond all others – be they religious, national, ideological or economic.* At the root of this view, as H.Y. Roth says, lies the commitment to cultivate "the humanity within all humans"[2]; in other words, to have special concern and responsibility for the dignity of human beings by virtue of their being endowed with free will, reason, moral sensitivity, esthetical sense, and the powers of imagination and creativity. Humanism identifies these unique attributes of humankind as the source of human dignity and the ability of human beings to shape an enlightened and flourishing culture for themselves.

Despite the attempt on the part of numerous establishments, both political and educational, throughout the world, to adorn themselves in a humanistic worldview, their version should never be taken as self-evident, and in most cases the truth is quite the opposite. Let us take, for example, religious

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[1] The four levels or aspects of Humanism that I present in the following discussion include the Philosophical, Socio-Political, Intellectual, and Educational-Cultural. Among the many ways of categorizing and presenting the elements of Humanism, I find most valuable the one of Paul Kurtz, in his *Living without religion,* where he speaks about four main characteristics: (1) Rational and Critical Method of Inquiry, which he often calls Critical Intelligence, (2) Naturalistic Worldview, (3) Ethics of Rational and Universal Humanism, (4) Democratic Political Order that is liberal, pluralistic, just, tolerant and humane.

[2] Roth, *Education and Human Values,* pp. 9-10.

messages. Throughout history, and to a great extent in the New Era as well, we are witnesses to the fact that people's attempts to place human intelligence (inquiry and contemplation) rather than divine imperatives at the core of existence have brought in their wake grueling sanctions that include excommunication and ostracism (at best) or a death sentence by stoning, torture, burning at the stake, or other creative methods (at worst). The basic assumption of orthodox religious perceptions, not to mention fundamentalist ones, is that divine truth which originates in revelations and the holy writ is absolute and eternal and obliges human beings to live according to it, whether it is compatible with their worldview or not. Should they not obey, God and his authorized earthly representatives will settle accounts with them.

Furthermore, religions also have a clan-like or sectarian nature that differentiates between "us" and "them," according to which followers of the "true religion" enjoy a privileged status, and the others, the "heretics" or those who have "erred," are relegated to an inferior status. In this context we should not forget religion's decisive contribution to the determination of the inferior and deprived status of women; not only are they not sovereigns over their life (which is also true of men) but in most cases their status and place in the world is dictated by religious laws which deny them the freedom and right to actualize and develop their human skills according to their best judgment and cognition.

We can find further examples of anti-humanist forces in both left- and right-wing political ideologies. The extreme right, in its nationalist version (in moderate cases) and its Nazi and Fascist versions (in extreme cases), posits an ideology and practice that upholds the oppression of individual freedom, denial of human rights, ethnic discrimination, and in extreme cases even racism and genocide; all this in the name of a supreme ethical commitment to "the greatness of the homeland and the glory of the nation" – as ultimate values in relation to which the self-value of human beings is negligible. This is also true of the status of the individual in totalitarian left-wing regimes, who in the name of the "great truths" of communism (which are humanistic in origin) trampled basic human rights underfoot, condemned its critics as deviates or traitors, and sent them to "re-education" camps (in moderate cases) or executed them (in the worst cases). It is well known that the anti-humanist results of these ideologies are documented by the millions of victims of murder and oppression in the 20th century, and by the hundreds of millions whose human image was trampled in the past and is being trampled at present by virtue of the power of tyrannical right- and left-wing regimes.

Together with fundamentalist religious approaches and totalitarian ideological stances, we must also mention in this context the anti-humanistic

character of capitalistic ideology in its extreme form. According to this perception, life is an egotistical and aggressive competition for fortune and assets – I am my fortune – and similar to the Darwinist nature – the fittest survive and the weakest diminish and disappear. In a social Darwinism of this kind, as is well-known to anyone who has walked the streets of the big cities in the United States, people who have lost their fortune are promptly expelled from the circle of distinguished citizens, losing their human image – as homeless, drug-abusing people or violent criminals. Particularly pertinent in this context is the statement of Olaf Palme, the former Swedish prime minister, who said that like the United States, in his country, too, the economic market is free and competitive, but unlike the United States, human dignity is posited as an ultimate value, regardless of a person's economic status; i.e., as a welfare state it is mandatory that society places at the disposal of human beings the opportunities and conditions necessary for maintaining a dignified human existence even if they have lost their property and livelihood.

The last anti-humanistic element in this context – which relates directly to the capitalistic element – is technocratic functionalism. By this term I mean the concept of the efficacy of performance as a supreme value, the logic of which should be revered by all, regardless of purpose and cost. With regard to the deprecation of purpose, it was pointed out by Jacques Ellul, in The *Technological Society*, that nowadays more and more people, with more and more efficacy, produce more and more products that are directed to the fulfillment of goals in which less and less has been invested in their usefulness and value to humanity. Regarding the harm to human beings' humanity – Charlie Chaplin as a cog in the production line in *Modern Times*, clerks who are required to replace their human sensibility with bureaucratic logic, abrogating spontaneous emotions and independent thoughts for the sake of automatic and robot-like functionality, nullifying moral sensitivity for maximal exploitation of natural resources and human strength – all these and the like are quotidian scenes that strip people of their humanity and impose on their multi-faceted and multi-paced personality the mechanical and purpose-oriented logic of the production apparatus. A human being as a function, Man as a cog in a machine, an automaton, a robot, a "player of roles" and a "hanger for all clothes" – very little humanity is left in Man in the wake of this kind of functionalistic dehumanization.

The second level is socio-political. The humanistic worldview does not negate organizations in religious, national, ethnic or other communities, but as a common foundation for human pluralism, as well as a condition for its existence, it posits the "family of man" as a normative and binding frame of reference. In other words, on the basis of humanity common to all people – with no difference of gender, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin,

economic status or political stance – the humanistic worldview posits the principles of equality and dignity as a basis for the overall solidarity of humankind, global (universal) ethics, international law, and the preservation of our planet's ecology (our common, and as of now, our only home).

With regard to the political community, *democracy is the politics of humanism.* Democracy should not be regarded as a technical mechanism designed for organizing power and arranging counter interests in society: in the spirit of Pericles in democratic Athens in the second half of the 5th century B.C.E., but devoid of the class distinctions that characterized his times, humanistic democracy is not only liberal and pluralistic but also takes care to be just and humane. At its core it ensures the freedom, development, wellbeing and dignity of all its citizens, and is mandated to serve all. It is not only committed to the formal principles of the protection of individual freedom and the equality of civil rights, but is also obligated to the cultivation of well-educated, caring and critical citizens, to advancing qualitative and diverse culture, to fair trial and fair treatment of its citizens. In the spirit of the welfare state, it is also committed to putting the necessary resources for dignified human existence – decent housing, health services, education, the ability to make a decent living, and aging in dignity – at the disposal of all.

Regarding the nature of interpersonal relations, in the spirit of Rousseau, albeit contrary to his behavior, what matters is to "be humane. This is your first duty. Be humane with every station, every age, everything which is not alien to man."[3] In this matter we are again faced with the Roman *humanitas*: one of its meanings, as we have seen in the previous chapter, was a striving towards cultural and educational excellence, but it also meant human emotions and a human attitude towards all human beings *qua* human beings. Whether we define this kind of human relationship as humane or philanthropic, its meaning is the love of humankind and concern for its welfare, in the vein of "love thy neighbor as thyself" and "happy is the man made in God's image." It stresses the importance of interpersonal relationships that are characterized by good will that seeks the good of others, openness and sensitivity for others and consideration of their needs and desires, sensitive and empathic caring for the condition of others, a tolerant and non-condescending attitude, mutual respect and trust, courtesy and generosity, and regarding all people as ends in themselves and not only as a useful function that serves the system.

The third level is intellectual. In its framework the humanist is committed to open-mindedness, broad education, and critical and rational spirit as the most worthy basis for understanding reality, resolving conflicts, organizing

[3] Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 79.

social order – for the benefit of both the individual and society. As we have seen in Chapter One, in the early days of humanistic culture, in classical Athens, the imperative "know thyself" was accepted as a life-guiding principle, followed by Socrates' no less well-known principle that human dignity lies in rational and critical examination of individual personality and social reality. Along these lines, Aristotle argued that Man's most appropriate and worthy occupation is rational inquiry, Renaissance humanism posited the ideal as the polymath, and the 18th century contributed the ideal of enlightenment: consciousness that frees itself from the shackles of ignorance, prejudice, superstition, and the heteronomy of blind obedience to external authority and social conventions, and establishes itself as free, educated, autonomous and critical consciousness.

However, one should take care to avoid identifying enlightenment with a narrow positive scientific approach or an instrumental and goal-oriented rationality. In the spirit of Aristotle, who said that an educated person is defined by his ability to demand in all spheres the degree of precision that the nature of that sphere enables,[4] the intellectual humanistic approach does not relinquish truths and criteria in the moral, legal, political and artistic spheres, nor does it ignore the truths of the exact sciences. In all cases this intellectual approach negates the pretension of individuals and groups to hold a monopoly over what is true, good, just or sublime. It seeks to cultivate a skeptical, inquisitive, critical, pluralistic and tolerant stance on the one hand, and on the other, as we have seen earlier, it advocates that we conduct our lives according to the best knowledge and tools that have been accumulated in common human experience.

The fourth level is educational-cultural. Here, to my regret, the modern era displays a regression in comparison with the classical age. Contrary to Greek *paideia* and Roman *humanitas*, which express a commitment to the cultivation of the spirit of Man towards a full and good human life, in the modern era there is a tendency to emphasize the liberal principles of individual freedom and pluralistic democracy, while commitment to edification or educational and cultural nurturing of the individual is less emphasized. "Universal suffrage and universal schooling," as Mortimer Adler argues, "are inextricably bound together. The one without the other is a perilous delusion – suffrage without schooling produces mobocracy, not democracy."[5] Moreover, it divides students into those who will enjoy their full humanity and culture, while others are doomed to serve as hewers of wood and drawers of water. A good educational system, Adler contends, is one that provides equal educational opportunity:

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[4] Aristotle, *Ethics,* Book I, 3.
[5] Adler, *The Paideia Proposal,* p. 3

> Not only the same number of years in school, but also making sure to give to all of them, all with no exception, the same quality of education.... [it should enable all] to earn a living in an intelligent and responsible fashion, to function as intelligent and responsible citizens, and make both of these things serve the purpose of...enjoying as fully as possible all the goods that make a human life as good as it can be.[6]

In other words, the issue here is the humanist's commitment to assist all individuals in maximally developing the human and individual potential embodied in them, which stems from an interest both in their development and happiness, and acknowledgment of their possible contribution to the establishment of a better society. The French philosopher and humanist Jacques Maritain summarizes this idea:

> Humanism...essentially tends to render man more truly human and to make his original greatness manifest by causing him to participate in all that can enrich him in nature and in history.... It at once demands that man make use of all the potentialities he holds within him, his creative powers and the life of reason, and labor to make the powers of the physical world the instruments of his freedom.[7]

This four-level division (philosophical, social, intellectual and educational) holds conceptual and analytical value, but it cannot clarify the contemporary humanistic spirit. To complete the picture we will now add two additional aspects: the first deals with a review of humanistic charters and conventions in three periods of the New Age – the end of the 18th century, the mid-20th century, and the last decade of the 20th century; the second focuses on the humanistic theories of three prominent New Era philosophers – Baruch Spinoza, John Stuart Mill and Sidney Hook.

The United States Declaration of Independence of the 4th of July 1776 is the first landmark: "We hold these truths to be self evident" so it declares, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it."

During the same period, in 1789, approximately one month after seizing the Bastille, the French National Assembly passed the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen," which is similar in spirit to the American Declaration of Independence, and states that:

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[6] Ibid, p. 18.
[7] Maritain, *True Humanism,* p. xii.

> Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.... The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression....
>
> The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation....
>
> Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else hence the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of the society the enjoyment of the same rights....
>
> Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its foundation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities, and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents.

If the American and French declarations focus almost entirely on the equality of the value of man, natural rights and the democratic nature of the regime, the UN's "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" 1948, contains all four levels (philosophical, social, intellectual and educational) presented at the beginning of this chapter. Following are several paragraphs from the Declaration, which are innovative in comparison with previous ones:

> Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world...and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people....
>
> It is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations... [and] reaffirm the faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women...[and] promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom....
>
> The General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedom...
>
> All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one

> another in a spirit of brotherhood.... Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person...[and] everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion....

This declaration goes beyond reaffirmation of the central values of human equality, dignity, freedom, and solidarity, and beyond the inclusion of women as equal human beings, to the sphere of social rights to health, education, work, and housing:

> Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment ...has the right to equal pay for equal work...has the right to rest and leisure...has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care...has the right to education...[that] shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups.
>
> Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children... [and] everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

Despite the fact that it often seems that science alone is innovative, we see here that the meaning of "advancing Man" in the framework of a humanistic worldview has developed and has become broader since the days of the American *Declaration of Independence* through *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in the mid-20th century (the concept of the "family of man" has changed, as blacks and women were not included in the category of human beings in the full sense of the term). But since the UN *Declaration of Human Rights* the humanistic world-view has not rested on its laurels. In UNESCO's 1996 "Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development" we find direct reference to new issues pertaining to post-modernistic multi-culturalism. This report of UNESCO, titled *Our Creative Diversity,* opens with a reference to the concept of human development in terms of the fulfillment and extension of the skills embodied in each individual, and the necessary political, social, economic, health, educational, cultural and ecological conditions for enabling all people to conduct free, meaningful and dignified lives. Regarding the concept of culture, the report's contributors did well when they did not relinquish any of the two meanings: culture in the sociological and anthropological sense, which relates to the assemblage of values, beliefs, modes of thinking, ways

of life and expression that characterize de facto a specific human group; and culture in the humanistic normative sense as human prosperity and prolificacy through *successful and worthy* fulfillment of the spirit of humankind in the realms of thinking, creativity and morality.

The use of these two meanings of culture in the contemporary context of a multi-cultural society constitutes a challenge for the report's authors, and in my humble opinion, offers a worthy and honest humanistic solution: on the one hand they sound a call to negate the traditional tendencies of cultural hierarchies that allowed subjugation, colonization, and the derision of one culture by another, but on the other, they seek to reject the relativistic positions that renounce objective and universal criteria for protecting the equality, dignity and welfare of Man. In other words, in the spirit of the times, the committee recommends renouncing the old vision (which until recently was considered new and enlightened) of the "education and acculturation" of all human beings according to the model of "the progressive and enlightened melting pot." This homogeneous vision was repudiated as serving the colonialism and hegemony of the "white European male" and as the one responsible for undermining the image and cultural identity of numerous communities and cultures. It should vacate its place for the vision of open, productive and harmonious coexistence of a plethora of diverse cultural identities – communal cultures that preserve their unique heritage and maintain mutual relationships of recognition, respect and creativity.

On the other hand, not all cultures are worthy of respect and tolerance: there are basic global or overall human standards of humanistic ethics that everyone is obliged to respect. The rules of global ethics, states the report, are limited only to the core of basic principles related to the protection of the dignity and welfare of Man *qua* Man, but they should be attributed *a mandatory objective and a universal validity*. This ethical code comprises: the sanctity of human life, the equality of the value of human beings in general and gender equality in particular, respect for the freedoms and natural rights of human beings, and the protection of civil, social and cultural rights, within the framework of a pluralistic, just and humane democracy. The message is loud and clear: pluralism and multi-culturalism – yes; but not moral relativism according to which "anything goes," and everything is equally just. The relinquishment of obligatory global humanistic ethics also means exhibiting tolerance towards national and cultural communities whose words and deeds are directed towards the liquidation, oppression, exploitation, subjugation or degradation of people who belong to other human communities – and the cost in human lives, suffering and misery of this type of experience in the 20th century is well known.

We will now move on to the philosophical aspect as it is reflected in the theories of Spinoza, Mill and Hook. Similar to Montaigne in the late Renaissance of the 16th century, who was outstanding in his free spirit and criticism of the pedantic scholarliness of conservative humanism, Spinoza was equally prominent in the 17th century, "the century of the rationalists," as a pioneer of atheistic, enlightened and democratic humanism. Similar to other humanist pioneers – Socrates before him and Rousseau after him – he too was forced to pay a personal price for his positions: the Jewish community excommunicated him (forbidding members of the community to meet with him and read his works), and after his death the Dutch government banned all his works and presented them as a symbol of all the evil embodied in heresy. On the distress and deliberations from which his philosophy developed, Yirmiyahu Yovel writes in his book *Spinoza and other Heretics*:

> He is extremely familiar with the Bible, finds in it many contradictions, and the whole notion of divine revelations and miracles seems to him irrational and inconsistent with the laws of nature. The Biblical law seems to him historical and arbitrary, unlike the laws of nature which are universal, eternal and constant.... In the face of the death that awaits us all, the foolish notion of "after-life" gives no consolation. On the contrary, if we are to find purpose, value and joy in our life, let us find them in "this worldly reality" – in enlarging our rational understanding of nature and hence our personal freedom and well being as parts and inhabitants of this nature.[8]

Similar to Aristotle, Spinoza's philosophizing is motivated by a quest for the ultimate good of Man; stable and secure inner happiness that will fill him with peace of mind and contentment. Again, like Aristotle, Spinoza finds that the world of sensual pleasure, material wealth and social prestige does not address the demands of happiness, and that the way most suitable for Man in his quest for happiness is the development of his or her singular intellectual elements, *i.e.*, life in accordance with reason. The path to reason, Spinoza says, develops in four stages: knowledge deriving from hearsay; knowledge deriving from direct and unmediated sensual experience; scientific knowledge, that induces particular experiences and reaches formulas that indicate the laws that are at the basis of natural phenomena; and intuitive knowledge, which relies on scientific knowledge but is experienced as holistic, reorganizes the relationships between particular "sections" of knowledge, and form a clear and coherent understanding of full existence and the inevitability of individual cases within the whole.

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[8] Yovel, *Spinoza and other Heretics*, p. 6.

Spinonza's theory – as a philosophy of life and ethics – is regarded "as the most serious alternative to the historical religions."[9] All there is in the world, according to Spinoza, is "the single nature," or "God." Spinoza denies the existence of a personal, world-creating, law-giving, and personal-supervising God – who at times is loving and merciful towards his creatures and at times vindictive and wrathful. Although this fictitious idea well serves the manipulations of the religious and political establishment, it is incompatible with the judgment of reason. In the framework of nature, Spinoza claims, every entity – including Man as a natural entity and a "mode" of nature – has an inner drive to preserve and empower his or her existence according to his or her inner nature. As far as this relates to human beings, the way to achieve this is embodied in a life conducted according to reason, which as a result of its awareness of the nature of things, knows how to promote the development and prosperity of human beings: to free them from the misery and frustration which are the result of ignorance, prejudice and external influences, and empower their existence towards achieving stable and secure personal happiness.

Spinoza's naturalistic-humanistic ethics derives from his metaphysical theory. In other words, our human nature is the only source of our values and judgments: good and bad should not be regarded as absolute terms that stem from the imperatives of God or religious laws, but as characteristics of things that bring us closer to, or distance us from realizing our happiness in accordance with our nature.[10] "In so far only as men live in obedience to reason," Spinoza contends, "do they always necessarily agree in nature"; "the highest good of those who follow virtue is common to all, and therefore all can equally rejoice therein"; [and] "the good which every man who follows after virtue desires for himself, he will also desire for other men."[11] From here he continues to specify those humanistic "goods," the main ones of which are knowledge, love, generosity, freedom and peace.

We will conclude our review of Spinoza with his topical words on the relationship between reason, liberty and peace; or to be more precise, the value of these human qualities in light of the ignorance, prejudice, oppression and wars characteristic of tyrannical regimes. In his preface to *A Theologico-Political Treatise* Spinoza points out that the majority of people who are ruled by superstitions, abandon reason and turn to nonsense and illusions which they attribute to God's endeavor. These people, whose minds are addled by religious superstition, reach a state in which "they may fight as bravely for slavery as for safety, and count it not shame but highest honor to

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[9] Ben-Shlomo, *The Philosophy of Spinoza,* p. 7.
[10] Spinoza, *Ethics,* "Preface" to Book IV.
[11] Ibid, Book IV, Sentences 35, 36, 37.

risk their blood and their lives for the vainglory of a tyrant"[12] – something that could not happen within the realms of a free and rational community. Through prejudice, he adds, they "degrade man from rational being to beast, which completely stifle the power of judgment between true and false, which seem, in fact, carefully fostered for the purpose of extinguishing the last spark of reason"; or even worse, "men who despise reason, who reject and turn away from understanding as naturally corrupt, these, of all people, are thought to possess light from on High."[13] Spinoza concludes this point: in order to free oneself from the subjugation of the kingdom of nonsense and prejudice "everyone should be free to choose for himself the foundations of his creed, and that faith should be judged only by its fruits; each would obey God freely with his whole heart, while nothing would be publicly honored save justice and charity."[14]

The second philosopher in this review is John Stuart Mill, who was outstanding in the 19th century as the most eloquent spokesman of humanistic liberalism. He believed that the ultimate good of man is happiness (of all members of the community), and that the most appropriate means for realizing this goal is strict observance of individual freedoms, cultivation of rational and critical thinking, and multi-faceted and harmonious development of the individual's character. It is worthy of note that the combination of these elements in this form differentiates between humanistic liberalism and "pure" liberalism: in both cases the individual is regarded as a sovereign and autonomous being; but contrary to "pure" liberalism that commits itself to ethical neutrality regarding the issue of the proper life for human beings, humanistic liberalism believes that developing the individual's personality according to universal yardsticks should be recognized as the ultimate commitment, both of the individual towards himself or herself and of society towards its citizens.

In the preface to *On Liberty*, Mill posits the first condition for Man's development and prosperity: Man's freedom of consciousness should be protected, both from the overt tyranny of authoritative regimes and from the covert tyranny of "majority opinion" and social conventions. In other words, basic political tolerance will not suffice in preventing the abomination of burning philosophers and creators at the stake, for we need true pluralism and tolerance that will prevent society from shackling by its conventions the development of autonomous people, even if their position runs counter to the accepted public stance. "This Principle," he argues, consists in the understanding "that the sole end for which mankind are warranted,

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[12] Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise, "Preface."*
[13] Ibid, ibid
[14] Ibid, ibid.

individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others."[15]

The model of a proper regime that respects Man is, therefore, a liberal democracy that provides all with the "liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character; of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may follow: without impediment from our fellow-creatures, so long as what we do does not harm them, even though they should think our conduct foolish, perverse, or wrong."[16] A society committed to the protection of all individuals' rights to the freedom of thought, belief, conscience, quest for happiness, expression, association and action (as long as it does not deny others the equal right to exercise these liberties) has a special value associated with these rights, which is the advancement of Man through the advancement of truth. In the spirit of scientific thinking, Mill claims that any supposition, standpoint, assumption or claim to truth is susceptible of being erroneous, and that the story of the extension of human knowledge is the story of truths that were refuted and replaced by other truths after they achieved substantiation through joint human experience. Hence we learn that the freedom of thought, research and debate is a necessary condition for advancing truth, and that people have the right to claim that their positions are valid and true only if they succeed in permanently standing the test of scientific and critical reason. Conversely, imposing truths by virtue of authority, or inculcating them in young people through indoctrination, has nothing whatsoever to do with the truth, but only with corrupt, thought-stagnating and ignorance-perpetuating abusive power.

We have reached the last issue concerning the development of the individual's personality. Men and woman as individuals, and humanity in general, do not possess assets more promising than a free spirit, rational thinking, moral sensitivity and creative imagination – human beings' vital sources that constitute the basis of their unique dignity and ability to create for themselves an enlightened and flourishing culture. These assets, by their very nature, are successfully realized only in the proper habitat: in the personalities of human beings who are allowed to use their reason, sensitivity, conscience and imagination in a free and critical manner, within a pluralistic and tolerant society, with a plethora of life styles, public controversies and competitive theories. In other words, "he who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need

[15] Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 135.
[16] Ibid, p. 138.

of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself, employs all his faculties."[17]

Mill's conclusion is that the subjugation of the spirit of Man to a tyrannical regime, authority based on tradition or the "majority opinion," results only in stupidity, misery and mediocrity. The way to human happiness and human progress should be paved with humanistic education, which will encourage "the highest and most harmonious development" of the students' powers "to a complete and consistent whole"; making them "well-developed human beings" with "greater fullness of life" and far greater contribution to mankind.[18] This kind of personality – that activates the full spectrum of its abilities, and betters them, in intensive and autonomous involvement in cultural existence – is worthy of the word "personality"; in other words, a personality that in its unique way well expresses the sublime in human beings and is worthy of its masters.

The third humanistic philosopher presented here is Sidney Hook, who served for a number of years as president of the American Humanistic Association. In *The Humanist Alternative*, after an introductory discussion by Paul Kurtz of the various cultural and ethical meanings of Humanism, Hook addresses "The Snare of Definitions." Examining the difficulty that lies in defining terms such as democracy and humanism, Hook points out that the difficulty, pitfall or snare results from the need to be at the same time both clear – so that the definition will have "teeth" and will be able to serve as a basis for distinction and criticism, as well as open, flexible and pluralistic – so as not to dogmatically and monolithically negate all those who disagree with the interpretation of the concept under discussion. Ultimately Hook chooses the converse and in six points presents those that he believes are unworthy of being considered humanistic: (1) who support practices that impose one pattern of culture on all members of the community; (2) who believe that by virtue of their religious belief or their belonging to a special group or class, they are entitled to privileges and rights that are denied to other people; (3) who support minority rule and tyranny and stand as opponents to democratic regimes; (4) who deny community responsibility to provide all with civilized standards of education, health, welfare, and housing; (5) who solve intellectual and social conflicts by the use and abuse of force rather than by rational, open and fair discussion; (6) who place loyalty to a group or an ideology, in the name of which they neglect their commitment to human dignity and the basic and universal rights that make it possible.[19]

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[17] Ibid, pp. 187.
[18] Ibid, p. 186-193 (here Mill quotes the German humanist Von Humboldt).
[19] Hook, *The Snare of Definitions,* pp. 33-34.

2. HUMANISTIC EDUCATION: AN INTEGRATIVE AND NORMATIVE DEFINITION

Assuming that a central condition for the success of humanistic education is a clear and detailed definition, and based on the four humanistic heritages and the definition of the humanistic worldview I presented earlier, I would like to propose the following definition of humanistic education. Humanistic education is characterized by *general and multi-faceted cultivation of the personality of those being educated, in a climate of intellectual freedom and respect for human dignity, towards the best and highest life of which they are capable in three fundamental domains of life: as individuals who harmoniously and authentically realize their potential, as involved and responsible citizens in a democracy, and as human beings who enrich and perfect themselves through active engagement with the collective achievements of human culture.*

Since this definition of education aspires to be integrative, normative and humanistic, and no definition of this kind can be accepted as self-evident, distinctions, clarifications and expansion are necessary. The simplest is the integrative characteristic: as I explained in Chapter One, I do not believe that the entire humanistic truth (with its different intellectual and pedagogical aspects) can be comprehensively found in any one of the humanistic approaches to education, thus negating the validity and vitality of all others. The challenge, as I understand it, is to combine selected insights and practices of the various humanistic approaches, and choose the proper emphases and measures, in accordance with the abilities and needs of the students and teachers who participate in the educational endeavor. A significant manifestation of the integrative character of the proposed model can be found in the section (later in this chapter) that deals with the ultimate goals of humanistic education. Quality of culture, autonomous thinking and authentic personality will be presented there as both counter and complementary ideals.

Clarifying the status of the normative definition is slightly more complicated. The concept of education, like that of culture and morality, functions in everyday language on two different levels: one is descriptive-factual, while the other is judgmental-normative. On the descriptive-factual level there is no one who has not received an education, there is no one who is not cultured, and there is no one who does not act in accordance with moral values. On this factual level of reference, there is no good or bad, worthy or unworthy, high or low, but only qualities or characteristics that identify and define. One example of this is the dictionary definition, the like of which we can find in The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, "the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge,

developing the powers of reasoning and judgment and generally of preparing one's self or others intellectually for mature life."

We cannot argue with such a definition, and therefore it is useless to our discussion: it explains a concept in accepted terms that are true everywhere and at all times, ignoring the central questions that the concept raises both in relation to worthy ideals (an autonomous or herd-like person, a racial or egalitarian society, a democratic or dictatorial society), and the proper means (rational convincing or threatening coercion, open-mindedness or indoctrination, grounded in the assets of culture or in the nature of the child). This is also the case in relation to sociological definitions that identify in education, for example, a process in which society inculcates in young people its knowledge, values and all other cultural assets, in order to maintain its existence and unique character and promote its development. This kind of definition regards education, first and foremost, as a social function in the framework of the socialization process, and in this respect there is no essential difference between socialization in Sparta or Athens, the United States or Cuba, an oppressive dictatorship or a democratic and peace-loving nation.

When they impose standards and criteria, definitions acquire a normative meaning and accordingly a philosophical and moral meaning, which if not fulfilled, disqualify the theory or the endeavor as illegitimate. As an example, let us examine the following definition: "education is an intentional intervention in the process of the evolvement and formation of personality, which is characterized by the kind of goals and means that contribute to the prosperity of the individual and of society." This definition, even if it is not "closed" from an ethical point of view, declares that education worthy of the name will be regarded as such if it can prove – by means of theoretical and factual evidence – that its goals and ways indeed promote the development and welfare of both the citizen and society in general. We will find normative definitions par excellence in the frameworks of religious and ideological worldviews. Examples for this we find in a religious perception that regards education as a learning and internalization process of the "straight and narrow path" who God, by his grace, has shown us, as well as in a liberal perception that identifies education with the nurturing of an enlightened person with a democratic personality. In such cases, educational systems (in the factual sense) that do not strive to nurture the prescribed image of Man will be disqualified as un-educational, and perhaps even anti-educational (in the normative sense).

Now that the meanings of "integrative" and "normative" have been clarified and the humanistic worldview presented – in the historical, ethical, intellectual and pedagogical frameworks – we can set out to clarify the components of the definition of humanistic education presented above. At

the beginning of the suggested normative definition of humanistic education lies the act of *cultivation*: not inculcation, not acquisition, not shaping and not learning. Cultivation is defined here as an activity directed towards developing and improving the potential embodied in Man – the latent human ability inherent in the student, to which we attribute value, and to which we mobilize ourselves to assist in realizing itself, and also expand and improve it. The obvious analogy is to the sphere of agriculture: by the same token that we speak about cultivation of the soil so that yields will be greater, both in quality and quantity, we cultivate the physical, intellectual, moral, and artistic powers of our students so that their yield will be better, for the benefit of both the individual and society. Further in this analogy: cultivating an orange tree according to its orange-ness, and caring for the avocado according to its avocado-ness will benefit them both: any interchange – cultivating oranges according to the nature of the avocado and vice versa – means the death of both or retardation. In this sense "cultivating" the child is "educating the child according to his or her nature," while manifesting sensitivity to and consideration for his or her immanent attributes and inclinations.

The second characteristic of the definition indicates that cultivating according to humanistic education should be *general and multi-faceted.* This characteristic differentiates between education *qua* education and teaching and occupational training. At times teaching and vocational training are compatible with educational endeavor, but this is not a necessary condition, and are often anti-educational. In the sphere of teaching, as we all know, a teacher can teach his or her students computer science, physics, literature or playing a musical instrument, and totally focus on the student's achievements in the specific sphere. This is also the case in vocational training, during which a person is trained to become a reception clerk, a computer programmer or a salesperson – interest in the person being trained is, first and foremost, in the quality of his or her functioning in the profession in which he or she is being trained. In education, on the other hand, there is no specific sphere of knowledge in which achievement is measured, and there is no professional sphere of specialization: training in education is for the art of life; "toward the most complete achievement of varied activity expressing the potentialities of that living creature in the face of its actual environment";[20] for the gradual introduction of the person being educated to skilled, successful, and just activity in the various spheres of human life. For this reason, as we have already seen in both Aristotle and Rousseau, education should not be specialized or particularized. It should be

[20] Whitehead, *The Aims of Education*, 39.

general from the point of view of broad education and multi-faceted from the point of view of personality.

There is a great deal of truth in the criticism leveled at the contemporary specialist and professional – who knows almost everything about one minute thing and knows almost nothing about everything else; this is a tried and true recipe for narrow-mindedness, cultural paucity and moral and political irresponsibility. It is extremely dangerous to intensively cultivate one facet, skill or specific talent in a child, while ignoring or consciously sacrificing other facets of his or her personality. A coach in a field of sports such as gymnastics, or in an intellectual field such as mathematics, has a strong interest in the maximal utilization of the student's talents (physical or mathematical). On the other hand, from the viewpoint of the child's educators, attention is given to the proportional and harmonious development of his or her physical, emotional, mental, social, artistic or other facets. They are concerned about any exaggeration of one facet at the cost of temporary, and at times permanent, damage to the child's full personality. Curiosity and love of knowledge, broad horizons and learning skills, moral virtue and social skills, consideration and a sense of proportion, criticality and creativity, a healthy mind in a healthy body, and the various types of intelligence – are all qualities that educators strive to cultivate, in a well-balanced and integrative way, while their guiding light is the advancement of their students towards attaining a full, decent and successful human life.

An additional aspect of the *general and multi-faceted* characteristics of humanistic or liberal education is related to going beyond the "provincial mentality," beyond fixity to the "here and now," which "applies standards acquired within limited area to the whole human experience [hence] confounding the contingent with the essential, the ephemeral with the permanent."[21] This means freeing people from the shackles of prejudice, social conventions and distorted perceptions of reality that all forms of socialization with which the consciousness of those being educated is linked. The process of emancipation is gradual and related to students' maturation processes, empowering their inner strength in the face of socialization's gravitational forces. This process can be described as a tree which develops simultaneously on three levels: one, as development of the autonomy of the student who frees him- or herself from heteronymous conformity and grows into independent and critical formation of beliefs and positions; the second, an authenticization process of those being educated, who free themselves from passive acceptance of their collective identity, and develop towards the definition of self-identity, which stems from their unique nature and free

[21] Eliot, "What is Classic?" p. 397.

decisions; and the third, as a universalization process of those being educated, who free themselves of the provincial patterns of the "here and now" towards a comprehensive, profound and multi-directional vision of human spirit in a variety of past cultures and the diverse facets of present human existence.

The third characteristic of the proposed definition consists in *adherence to intellectual freedom and human dignity*, as two criteria that serve to distinguish between humanistic education and other forms of shaping human personality, such as indoctrination, propaganda, and conditioning. Here "intellectual freedom" or "open-mindedness" represents the *intellectual criterion* that mandates humanistic teachers to conduct an open discussion, free of threat and coercion, that is research-oriented and critical, and in which teachers and students alike are committed to rational and responsible substantiation and reasoning of their positions. In this definition, "human dignity" represents the *moral criterion*, according to which humanistic teachers are obliged to treat their students equally, decently, courteously, and with the respect they deserve as autonomous, rational, sensitive and singular beings, students who are entitled, like everyone else, to seek their happiness, shape their own worldview, and define themselves according to their best understanding and awareness. This kind of educative teaching, says Israel Scheffler, is marked by "its special connection with rational explanation and critical dialogue: with the enterprise of giving honest reasons and welcoming radical questions.... The teacher is revealing his reasons for the beliefs he wants to transmit and is thus, in effect, submitting his own judgment to the critical scrutiny and evaluation of the student; he is fully engaged in the dialogue by which he hopes to teach, and is thus risking his own beliefs, in lesser or greater degree, as he teaches."[22]

This is not true of indoctrination and propaganda, humanistic education's two major competitors (and often pretenders) for the soul of the student. Their common point of departure regards the student not as an end in himself or herself *per se* (as an equal and autonomous person), but as a means or function of fulfilling exterior goals – religious, ideological or economic; yet each of the two has its own singular characteristics on the road to fulfilling its goals. *Indoctrination*, in its accepted sense, indicates tendentious, authoritative and oppressive intervention in the lives of human beings, similar to brainwashing and taming, striving to take over the content of their consciousness and shape their way of life. It is defined by both its goals and its modes of influence: from the standpoint of goals, indoctrination attempts to inculcate a worldview, ideology, theory or position so that it will become strongly and permanently based in personality and behavior; from the point

[22] Scheffler, *Conditions of Knowledge*, p. 299-300.

of view of its ways and means, it is embodied in the ways of teaching, which on the one hand present ideas, values and positions as unequivocal absolute truths, and on the other, bind and oppress any inquisitive, critical and creative search that seeks alternative perceptions.

As such it is clear that indoctrination contradicts the principle of "open-mindedness," which both negates the pretense for monopoly of groups or individuals about what is true and right, and encourages students to critically question the self-evident and be original and creative as far as possible. There is also a blatant contradiction between indoctrination and the principle of human dignity: indoctrination oppresses the spirit of man (totalitarian regimes in the 20th century are good examples) and deprive them of their natural right – as free, rational, ethical, and unique beings – to actively and critically participate in the shaping of their personality and worldview.

Like indoctrination, *propaganda* (religious, political or commercial) disseminates and presents its ideas and values as completely magical and valid. Their difference lies in the fact that propaganda's messages are less complex, designed for a shorter range of time (short-term deception) and its manipulation of people is more sophisticated and focused (the election propaganda of any party candidate or marketing a new snack, in comparison with indoctrination towards a religious or ideological way of life). A.A. Simon's[23] eight criteria for differentiating between methods of propaganda and education are enlightening:

1. Education appeals to the individual while propaganda appeals to the masses: the first appeals to the individual through personal and basic contact as well as to the individual's independent and critical consciousness; the second appeals to the masses both by employing mass psychology and by appealing to the vulgar (vulgar drives and primitive emotions present in all individuals).
2. Education deals with the future, it is patient and is therefore prepared to relinquish shortcuts and immediate results, while propaganda races to realizes its achievements and harvest its fruits in the here and now – even at the cost of causing people harm.
3. Education employs ideas and values with the clear-cut intention of cultivating the ability of students to examine the relationship between the symbol (of ideas and values) and the symbolized (in human reality), while propaganda uses language not to describe reality, but to freely present it in a way that is compatible with its needs – therefore it obfuscates public discourse and voids symbols of any concrete meaning or content.

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[23] Simon, "On Educational Influence."

4. The educator employs rational, critical and well-grounded discourse in order to present positions and argue their validity, while the propagandist offers parables, metaphors and associations that do not prove much, but arouse memories and emotions and terminate the volition and ability to perform mental criticism.

5. Education appeals to students' self-awareness and acts towards reinforcing its clarity and responsibility, while propaganda appeals to drives and instincts (straight to the hormones) of the unconscious, as the more efficient way to motivate human beings to perform deeds, or consume items without really considering their value or necessity.

6. The educators-instructors present themselves as one of the people, one among equals, whose strength and weaknesses are open to their students' criticism as a basis for their own development, while propagandists-leaders present themselves as being above the common herd, having sublime qualities that overshadow the mediocrity of others, while directing their audience to revere them and relinquish the critical examination of their standpoints and actions.

7. The educator's goal is to clarify opinions and assumptions, examine their validity and offer alternatives, and therefore he or she encourages the continuation of discourse and argument, while the propagandist seeks to inculcate in people dogmatic positions and fix them permanently in their minds. Therefore he or she acts towards silencing critical discussion and blunting its importance.

8. Education treats the student's psyche with caution, limiting the spheres of its intervention and respecting the privacy of those being educated, while propaganda knows no boundaries or limits. It strives to achieve total and intrusive influence even over the individual's most sensitive and latent foundations.

The next characteristic of humanistic education (in the above-mentioned definition) indicates the general purpose of humanistic education: to assist human beings in attaining *their best in the main spheres of human existence.* First we must clarify the meaning of good humanity, or man at his best. As we have seen in Chapter One, those who support humanistic education disagree about the guiding ideal of "full humanity at its best." However, I think that we can show a certain formalistic perception of "Man at his best" (men and women), which will be common to them all. By this I mean that it is our duty as humanistic educators to examine "good human life," both in its *objective-qualitative* and *subjective-experiential* meanings. In the spirit of Aristotle's view on eudemonic man, whose human life is full and good, we must help students and guide them so they will become excellent human beings; i.e., that from an objective point of view, by comparing their human

functioning in common spheres and challenges, we may say of them that their personality and way of life manifest excellence or high quality in the main human functions (such as inquisitiveness, open-mindedness, broad horizons, rationality, criticality and creativity – in the intellectual sphere; honesty, decency, generosity, consideration of fellow men and women, courage, and blamelessness – in the moral sphere).

On the other hand, we cannot speak of an educational ideal of good human life without the individual experiencing it as good and successful. In other words, when we wish human beings a good human life, a subjective-experiential meaning of a relatively permanent personal feeling of happiness or satisfaction or gratification from life, is added. It seems to me that this combined perception of "good human life" can also pass the test of human reality: parents wish for themselves that their children be developed or excellent human beings as well as happy individuals. In order to fulfill this qualitative goal they will occasionally prefer to somewhat impair their children's spontaneous and immediate happiness (since after all, a "happy fool" is not really their heart's desire). In other times, in order to fulfill the "happiness" criterion, they will lower their level of demands and qualitative expectations of their children, so as not to make them miserable (the image of a bitter talented child or a miserable martyr is also incompatible with the ideal of "man at his best"). In any event, as we will see later, the appropriate balance between these two meanings of "man at his best" is of decisive importance. It is important both in the direct experience of educators in advancing their students to achieve their best according to their perception (that of the educators), and in their attempt to equip their students with the same storehouse of knowledge, critical consciousness, individual autonomy and feeling of self-value that will allow their students to form their own independent perception of "the good life" and realize it in practice, according to their own understanding and choice.

We are now left with addressing the last characteristic of the proposed definition: *the central spheres of human existence.* As we have seen in Chapter One, humanistic educators agree that humanistic education is a training for the art of life, which should not be subjugated to collectivistic purposes (religious, national, ideological or economic) or professional training in any sphere whatsoever. In Plato's *Protagoras*, for example, Protagoras declares that he will make his student into "a better man"; and in his response to Socrates' question regarding the sphere in which he will improve him, Protagoras responds that he will make him skilled and successful in both the private and the public spheres of his life. In *Emile,* Rousseau presents a similar standpoint, according to which it does not matter if his student is "destined for the military, the church or the law," because he must first be a human being: "all that man should be" – in a merging of self-

realization and good citizenship, sensitivity and reason, personal benefit and the good of all. We also find a similar standpoint in Adler, the neo-classicist, and Giroux, the critical-radical, two 20th century humanistic educators. They believe that educational cultivation should equip students with the best knowledge and skills so that they will be able to live a meaningful and dignified life, as individuals and members of the community.

Stemming from this is that the common denominator is devoting thought to two spheres in parallel: the personal sphere of self-fulfillment and the public sphere of the space in which the individual develops and acts and where he or she gradually becomes a partner, responsible for its shaping and regularity. In the above definition of humanistic education I employed one category of personal fulfillment – that of authentic and harmonious self-realization. In the public sphere I employed two categories: the first – political, the second – cultural. An alternative way of treating the public and the personal spheres is to include good citizenship in a democratic society in the framework of education towards culture, while dividing the cultivation of the individual into two categories: the autonomy of thinking and the authenticity of personality. In this spirit I will now present the three ultimate goals of humanistic education.

3. THREE PRINCIPAL GOALS: QUALITY OF CULTURE, AUTONOMOUS AND CRITICAL THINKING, AND AUTHENTIC PERSONALITY

(a) Quality of Culture

At the beginning of this chapter we clarified the difference between the descriptive-factual definition and the normative-prescriptive one, and pointed out that concepts like education, morality and culture function on both levels in language. Discussion of culture, not to mention education towards quality of culture (some may say "high culture"), is extremely problematic, particularly in light of post-modern arguments related to the craving for power and hegemony latent in every argument dealing with culture's qualitative hierarchies. As a result it seems to me that there is no escape from briefly discussing culture's different meanings, as a preface to discussion of the principal goals of education towards quality of culture.

In Chapter One we dealt with a number of milestones in the perception of culture as a central component of the idea of humanistic education. We saw that in ancient Athens the concept of *paideia* indicated what we today call the ideal of high culture – as an assemblage of physical, intellectual, moral

and civic virtues, which all human beings should strive to fulfill in their lifetime. In 1st century Rome, the Greek *paideia* was translated into *humanitas*, as a concept that stood for both the educational process of developing Man's humanity, and as the desired product of civilized humanity – full and at its best. During the Renaissance, "Cultured Man" was identified mainly with a polymath who was knowledgeable, educated, and proficient in a wide range of fields, possessing broad horizons and conversant with the masterpieces. From the 17th century, a perception became prevalent in Europe that identified the educational process with cultivation and the educational product with culture – a perception that compared educational endeavor to agricultural endeavor. According to this perception, similar to the process of tilling, bettering and improving the land so that it will give a better and more abundant yield, educational endeavor was perceived as an activity directed towards fulfilling, developing and improving the potential embodied in human beings – our physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and artistic powers – in order to promote them from an initial condition of ignorance, instinctual behavior, savagery and coarseness, to a more advanced cultural level of education, reason, autonomy, morality and refinement. In the 19th century, as we have seen in Arnold's perception, culture is first and foremost a striving towards the most sublime in us: *the love, learning and internalization of the excellent and sublime in human existence*. "Culture," in its original and classical sense should be understood as "the nobleness of life";[24] *the epitome of the spirit of Man; a high level of thinking, morality and creativity in the most essential spheres of human existence: philosophy, science, ethics, law and the arts*. A cultured person is therefore one who knows, respects, and embodies in his or her quotidian life those attributes and virtues that *should be present in Man* qua *Man*.

From the 19th century, culture acquired an additional meaning: culture as the *assemblage of beliefs, values, customs, modes of thinking and expression that characterize the ways of life of a given society*. Culture in this sociological and anthropological sense is different from the philosophical-pedagogical (classical) perception on at least four counts. First, it does not deal with the developmental goals and processes of Man *qua* man, but focuses on the heritage and patterns of life that characterize societies and communities. Second, it does not feign to be a normative judgment on a vertical-hierarchal axis of developmental grades, but is satisfied with a descriptive-normative position on a horizontal-equalitarian axis of a given social reality (there is no one who is not cultured). Third, contrary to the classical perception of culture which focuses on the best, sublime and lofty

[24] Mann, "Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Contemporary Events," p. 359.

created by the spirit of Man (in the philosophical, scientific, moral and artistic spheres), the new perception of culture also comprises technology, folklore, bureaucracy and all other components of quotidian social existence (and thus also bestows on culture the meaning usually attributed to the term "civilization"). And fourth, education according to the new perception is regarded mainly as a process of socialization that directs towards the internalization of the modes of thinking and behavior accepted in a specific society among the younger generations; this, without any pretense of transcendental human ideals beyond those accepted in a specific point in time and place.

Together with the humanistic-classical and sociological-anthropological approaches, culture has another, third, meaning which can be successfully combined with the first two. In its third meaning, the term "culture" indicates *a system of goals, values, knowledge, skills, norms and criteria that direct the proper modes of action in a sphere of life or in a specific and shared social practice: on the communal, ethnic, national, religious or universal levels.* In this context, we tend to speak of the culture of thought and the culture of speech, the culture of morality and the culture of law, the culture of dwellings and the culture of environmental preservation, driving, singing, theatre, government, civil service, culinary culture, etc.

Public discourse and educational theory employ the different meanings of culture, at times separately and at times combined, but usually in an undifferentiated manner – a fact that makes a serious and fruitful discussion difficult. Moreover, in contemporary (modern-post-modern) society, which is characterized by multi-culturalism, moral relativism and intellectual pluralism, and the breaking down of the barriers between high and popular culture, the meanings attributed to culture have a direct implication on educational policy. Among these implications are the following social issues: social integration and the "melting pot" model; the curriculum and the desired image of the school graduate; the character of cultural literacy and its status in relation to critical literacy; equal opportunity for both genders and equal opportunity for ethnic groups and minorities; as well as the desirable stance regarding the division between high, popular and low culture. One should also mention that in our times a teacher who strives to educate his or her students towards culture is faced not only with cynical skepticism (which is based on ethical relativism) but is often also accused of (according to post-modernism's code of political correctness) interest-oriented and oppressive patronizing.

Equipped with these insights and reservations, we will now proceed to the issue of education towards cultural quality. We usually perceive the acculturation of Man (which includes processes of development and formation) as the inculcation, acquisition and internalization – usually of

young people – of the thinking and behavioral patterns that are considered valuable to society. In the framework of our discussion of the goals of humanistic education we will use this principle of acculturation on two levels: as *foundational* and *qualitative* principles. The foundational aspect indicates that every person is formed and develops in the framework of specific cultural horizons, within an inter-subjective human existence that comprises three spatial spheres: the sphere of connotations and denotations that constitute the shared ideational and normative consciousness of the community; the sphere of ideals, standards and criteria for appreciation and evaluation of the lived experience; and the sphere of emotion and affections that makes one a caring member of the community – son or daughter in a large family.[25] Therefore, as presented by Taylor, the "I" (of each of us) always exists in the fabric of public discourse; *i.e.*, "there is no way we could be induced into personhood except by being initiated into a language. We first learn our languages of moral and spiritual discernment by being brought into an ongoing conversation by those who bring us up."[26] In the course of the individual's maturation process, he or she can of course create and form an independent and singular stance in relation to society and his or her image, but this innovation will materialize only in the linguistic and ethical fabric in which he or she lives. In other words, our cultural foundations participate in our endeavor throughout our lives – at times of acceptance and of rebellion – as a central factor in shaping our positions, emotions and artistic taste; and the better and richer this foundation is, the better the individual will be equipped for coping with the challenges of life. In Livingstone's words: "What more important service can school or university do for their pupils than to show them the best things that have been done, thought and written in the world, and fix these in their minds as a standard and test to guide them in life?"[27]

Aristotle says that we cannot overrate the importance of the foundation of cultural formation: "It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference."[28] And from another angle, which focuses mainly on the educational value of literary works, Booth says that our education depends to a great extent on the friends we make and "the company we keep."[29] As every parent knows, our human, communicational, and literary environment has a considerable effect on the formation of our adult image. Therefore, says the philosopher Montaigne, long before the

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[25] Silbert, "Educations towards Culture in a Multi-Cultural Society" (Symposium), p. 10.
[26] Taylor, *Source of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, p. 36.
[27] Livingstone, *Education for a World Adrift, p.52.*
[28] Aristotle, *The Ethics*, book I, 1.
[29] Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction.*

communications era, "as our mind is strengthened by communication with vigorous and well regulated minds, it is not to be imagined how much it loses and deteriorates by continual intercourse and association with vulgar and feeble-minded people. There is no infection that spreads like that."[30]

John Dewey, one of the founders of progressive education, also pointed out the importance of cultural formation. In *My Pedagogic Creed*, Dewey discusses the social elements of the individual's personality and claims that "all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race...shaping the individual's powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions."[31] In *Democracy and Education,* Dewey speaks about "a fact of life" – in all societies inculcation and the imparting of habits of work, thinking and feeling are a vital mechanism that ensures the continual renewal of social and cultural life. In this context it is worthy of mention that Dewey is not only descriptive in his attitude towards society and culture but also presents a normative position: "unless pains are taken to see that genuine and thorough transmission takes place, the most civilized group will relapse into barbarism and into savagery."[32]

In Dewey we find a synthesis of the descriptive and normative approaches of the concept of culture, and this synthesis is of course not accidental: culture, as we mentioned earlier, has one (descriptive) meaning that indicates an assemblage of ways of thinking, life and expression that characterize a specific community and makes it unique; and a second (normative) meaning that indicates a progressive, sublime and refined way of life, the opposite of which is barbarism, ignorance and discourtesy. And these two meanings of culture, as we can see in Dewey's writing, are bound together in an closely-tied knot: every culture, in the descriptive-sociological sense of the word, has an ideal of culture, or high culture, which comprises standards of excellence in the spheres of activity important to the community; while any normative and qualitative perception of culture necessarily maintains affinity to qualitative standards and criteria embedded in specific societies.

Despite all that has been stated above, the humanistic perspective, by its very nature, strives to break through and go beyond the historical and cultural boundaries and instate the qualitative ideal of the "culture of man": the universal ideal of *paideia, humanitas, bildung* or *culture* which constitutes an exemplary model for full, ethical and satisfying human life; human life at its best which all human beings, as human beings, should strive

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[30] Montaigne, *Essays,* p. 287.
[31] Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," p. 19.
[32] Dewey, *Democracy and Education, ch.1.*

for and act towards its realization. Acculturation in this *qualitative* sense, Gadamer says, has a double meaning: "the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities" as well as "promotion to the universal."[33] The final goals of such an educational process is: "the attitude of mind, which from the knowledge and feeling of the total intellectual and moral endeavor, flows harmoniously into sensibility and character."[34]

It entails a process of humanization through an ever widening exposure to the multiple and diverse modes of human experience, aiming toward a synoptic and deep understanding of what it means to be human and of the standards we should live up to in order to reach true and full humanity. Such pursuit, he tells us, could be carried out by means of an on-going, open-minded, and sensitive hermeneutical process: utilizing our best existing resources – in the sciences, ethics, and the arts – to identify and appropriate those meanings and values that seem most enlightening and edifying. This task, of "reaching up to humanity," surely requires acts of distancing oneself from one's own idiosyncratic beliefs and purposes: not, however, towards any Platonic extra-perspectival position, but rather towards the diverse human ways of seeing, thinking, and acting that constitute the "conversation of mankind,"[35] so as to later "return" to oneself a more "multi-stringed," "synthetic," and humane individual.[36] It is to engage oneself in the distinctively human activity of overcoming, transcending, and creating oneself without losing oneself.

An additional component that should be discussed in this context of culture as a qualitative principle is the student's self-motivation. A necessary condition for a student's successful cultural formation is a passion or drive for perfectionism, which stems from an awareness of qualities higher than those we normally exhibit and an attraction to everything that is excellent and sublime.

Numerous philosophers have dealt with the centrality of this drive or passion as a condition for cultural flourishing: as we have seen in Chapter One, the Athenian leader Pericles praised the heroes who "were ashamed not to meet the standards of excellence"; Plato posited the "educational Eros" as a basic principle underlying all human excellence; Aristotle posited the moral obligation to make every effort possible to live in accordance with the

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[33] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* pp. 11 and 13.
[34] Ibid, ibid.
[35] The "conversation of mankind" serves here as an anthropocentric or sociocentric epistemological notion, one which has been endorsed by philosophers such as Michael Oakeshott, Richard Rorty, Richard Bernstein, H. G. Gadamer, Martha Nussbaum, Charles Taylor, and Jonas Soltis as an alternative to both absolutism and relativism.
[36] On the nature of these personal qualities see Nietzsche, The Portable Nietzsche, p. 57, sec. 281 and p. 320, sec. 19; also in The Will To Power, secs. 259, 881, 883, 1051.

noblest elements embedded in our human nature; Arnold identified culture with the harmonious expansion of all the forces that add beauty and value to human life; Nietzsche claimed that personal growth is possible only by a strenuous and perfecting self-overcoming. Most significantly, it was Ortega in his book *The Revolt of the Masses,* who focuses all these insights in his statement that the quest for perfection is the touchstone that divides human beings into those whose lives are "noble" and those whose lives are "regular." On the one hand, "a life of effort, ever set on excelling oneself, in passing beyond what one is to what one sets up as a duty and an obligation"; and, on the other hand, the inert life of "those who demand nothing special of themselves, but for whom to live is to be every moment what they already are, without imposing on themselves any effort towards perfection; mere buoys that float on the waves."[37] If this theme is sound, that nothing of value could be achieved without an active engagement of the will, than it should have special implication for education: a failure to cultivate and generate such perfectionist passions in students would only solidify the already prevalent phenomenon that knowledge and virtue rarely meet.

To conclude the discussion on the issue of education towards quality of culture as one of the ultimate goals of humanistic education, I believe it is important to underscore two central points: firstly, that at the end of the 20th century, the time has come to free ourselves from the destructive dichotomy of "all or nothing"; i.e., either we possess unquestionable and absolute knowledge about what is true, sublime, lofty, beautiful and just, and thus it is legitimate for us to impart to everyone the worthy cultural perception; or we do not possess any objective criteria whatsoever for the nature and quality of human life, and therefore everything has equal value, everything is equally genuine, just, beautiful and worthy, and education towards quality of culture is a meaningless idea and devoid of any content.

Resolution of the distress that is related to the "all-or-nothing" dichotomy can be found in the understanding that the continuous conversation of mankind[38] is the only context in which we can ground evaluations and judgments: that religion, philosophy, science, ethics, art, law and sports, etc., are different social practices, through which human beings establish their human cultural world, giving meaning, reason, value and purpose to their lives. According to this perception there is nothing sacred or absolute in the assets of human culture, but then again it is the best we have at our disposal. It would therefore be irrational and irresponsible to ignore our collective experience and relinquish the best achievements of humanity in philosophy,

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[37] Ortega, *The Revolt of the Masses*, p.65 and p. 15.

[38] On the meaning of this concept see the writings of Oakshott, Rorty and Bernstein.

science, morality and art as the basis for developing and advancing our lives in the present and in the future.

This "middle-point" perception of moderate objectivism, situated between absolutism and nihilism, also indicates pluralism as the central characteristic of "human discourse"; no longer a demand for monolithism and cultural hegemony in the name of ethereal ideals, inherent genes or an advanced ideology. The proposed alternative can be found in the image of a multi-cultural humanistic discourse – not lacking criteria but egalitarian, open, rational and attentive – in which on the one hand every community enjoys the right to present and preserve its singular characteristics in its authentic voice, and on the other, is committed to the basic and overarching humanistic standards, and chooses for itself the proper equilibrium between the elements particular to its culture and those that originate in the encounter between other cultures and communities.

The second point is particularly important at present in light of the contemporary repudiation of the foundational and qualitative foundations of culture. The education system should continue acculturation: (1) as an extension, refinement and improvement of the students' modes of experience through guided familiarization with the achievements of human spirit; (2) as the cultivation of inner motivation and perfectionist commitment, directed towards the highest standards that can be achieved in the diverse spheres of life. Since intelligent discourse requires resources in the areas of "knowing that" and "knowing how", and in light of the sophisticated forms of manipulation that exist in society, a rich cultural heritage and perfectionist sensitivity are the minimum with which we can equip our students so that they will be able to understand the reality of life, examine it in the context of its alternatives, and choose their path as rational, moral and free entities. This is also true of our public life: a democracy made up of uneducated citizens rapidly deteriorates into a *mobocracy*, a tyranny under the aegis of the mob. If for no more than these two reasons, we should not relinquish the classical ideal of cultured man: a person whose thoughts are directed to the high standards of truth, justice, beauty and social responsibility, and in his or her actions is careful not to descend below certain standards of morality and culture.

(b) Autonomous and Critical Thinking

Education towards *autonomous and critical thinking*, as the second principal goal of humanistic education, symbolizes on the one hand the acculturation of the student, but on the other it is also a critical and often subversive element in light of, and at times in opposition to, dominant cultural order. It seeks to nurture human beings who have the ability and

tendency to form their positions in rational, critical, and independent manners, so that they will be master of their thoughts and actions and not herd-like prisoners of external authority, social conventions, prejudice, superstition, habits and fashion. It cultivates autonomous-critical thinking as a supervisory and screening element in the processes of internalizing culture, with the intention of examining the essence, validity and value of things, beyond their external impression and accepted meaning.

The literal meaning of autonomy (in ancient Greek) is self-legislation or self-determination of values and principles according to which a social organization or individuals lead their lives. The *nomos* or *law* component in autonomy – which is a component of action-guiding principles of relatively permanent and balanced character – shows us that individual autonomy should not be confused with different kinds of individual freedom such as spontaneous behavior, "doing your thing," or freeing drives and momentary emotions. We can define critical thinking as *the intellectual ability to thoroughly and unbiasedly examine the essence, quality, value and validity of things (phenomena, people, statements) beyond initial impression and in light of relevant criteria and evidence.* In accordance with Socrates and Kant's rational-critical philosophies, I seek to regard critical autonomy as the quest for the "good life," based on the individual's relying on his or her knowledge and intellectual skills: by developing a high degree of thinking, not enslaved by external authority and personal inclination; by a continuous examination of the validity, value and relevancy of the goals and criteria that serve him or her in decision-making; by rational and critical involvement in cultural and societal life; by being accountable for their decisions and actions. On the unique value and dignity that are added to human beings' personality when they are autonomous, Isaiah Berlin writes:

> I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind, I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside. I wish to be somebody, not nobody; a doer – deciding, not being decided for, self-directed and not acted upon by external nature or by other men as if I were a thing, or an animal, or a slave incapable of playing a human role, that is, of conceiving goals and policies of my own and realizing them... I wish above all to be conscious of myself as a thinking, willing, active being, bearing responsibility for his choices and able to explain them by reference to his own ideas and purposes.[39]

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[39] Berlin, "Two Concepts of *Liberty.*"

The importance of critical autonomy, which is first and foremost an intellectual quality or virtue, touches on all spheres of life. Scientific and technological development, as well as progress in ethical theory and human rights, would not be possible if it were not for this stubbornness of people to think and judge for themselves independently of what their parents, teachers, employers and rulers have considered right and proper. In people like the Israelite prophets Isaiah and Amos, the philosophers Socrates and Spinoza and Rousseau, the scientists Galileo and Sakharov, the authors Henry David Thoreau and Virginia Woolf, we find examples of autonomous and critical individuals who, when faced with a hostile and corrupt community, voiced their opinions which in their times threatened social convention, and today have been adopted as culture's assets of permanent value. The regretful fact is that in most cases people who are prominent in their critical autonomy are forced to pay a high personal price as a result of persecution by the regime. The regime, as Nietzsche harshly put it, "they call themselves the good and the just...the believers in the true faith.... Whom do they hate the most? The man who breaks their values, the breaker, the lawbreaker; yet he is the creator."[40] "They crucify those who invent their own virtue for themselves – they hate the lonely one."[41]

In this context we can examine the "negative" aspect of the contribution of autonomous and critical thinking, *as critical consciousness* or *critical literacy* which enables the examination of the value and vitality of cultural myths, exposure of false "masks," reading the "writing on the wall," and strengthening oneself against manipulation and political deceit. In the spirit of the radical approach to education, critical literacy should be regarded as obligatory equipment for every citizen living in a modern society: equipment that will serve as a trenchant and critical perspective of the reality of his or her life, that will enable him or her to properly identify the forces and interests that shape the trends of society and its way of life, and bring in its wake attentive and sensitive consciousness to everything that calls for personal involvement and mobilization.

A shining example of this can be found in the life and death of Socrates, who was accused of impiety, sophistry, and of corrupting the young Athenians. But as we learn from Plato's testimony in the *Apologia* and in *Criton*, he was "framed" only because his autonomous and critical philosophizing exposed the true nature of the dignified members of Athenian society, as people who pretend to be learned and wise but in fact are simply arrogant and ignorant. Even in face of a death sentence, Socrates announced that he adhered to his goal of "examining myself and others" because, "life

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[40] Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p. 135.
[41] Ibid, p.176.

without enquiry is not worth living for man.." When he was offered a conditional punishment, he rejected the compromise so as not to be untrue to himself and thus relinquish his independent thinking. When it was suggested that he escape from prison, he sought to examine, together with his student Criton, whether such an action would be proper and just: would it not be the victory of sentimentality over reason, would it not mean subjugating wisdom to the opinion of the majority, would this not be a victory of opportunist egotism over commitment to consistent and unbiased thinking, would this not mean injustice and a breach of contract of his relationship with the state, and would the good of adhering to his moral principles be equal to the misery and sorrow he would inflict on his children who would become orphans after his execution?

A second example of the nature of critical autonomy can be found in the American philosopher Henry David Thoreau, who, in the middle of the 19th century, preferred to go to prison rather than pay income tax to a government which would use his money to enact moral injustice: a government that perpetuated black slavery and began a war of conquest against the Mexican nation. The following words, from *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, clearly present his position on the matter:

> Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience, to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said, that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation *with* conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well disposed are daily made the agents of injustice.
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> The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies.... In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well.... And as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the devil, without intending it, as God.[42]

An additional example of this issue of critical awareness or critical literacy in its negative and purifying actions can be found in George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*, in which he exposes the barbaric nature of many of the values and habits in which British society took pride. "When a

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[42] Thoreau, "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience," pp. 334-334.

man wants to murder a tiger," writes Shaw, "he calls it sport: when the tiger wants to murder him he calls it ferocity... The conversion of a savage to Christianity is the conversion of Christianity to savagery... [and] self sacrifice enables us to sacrifice other people without blushing"[43] Man, Shaw says, measures his strength by his destructiveness: "in the art of life man invents nothing; but in the arts of death he outdoes Nature herself... The plague, the famine, the earthquake, the tempest were too spasmodic in their action; the tiger and crocodile were too easily satiated and not cruel enough: something more constantly, more ruthlessly, more ingeniously destructive was needed; and that something was Man, the inventor of the rack, the stake, the gallows, the electric chair...above all, of justice, duty, patriotism, and all the other isms, by which even those who are clever enough to be humanely disposed are persuaded to become the most destructive of all the destroyers."[44] What is needed, says Shaw, "is not to replace a guillotined criminal: it is necessary to replace a guillotined social system.[45]

In conclusion, we have seen that the value of the autonomous-critical approach goes beyond the philosophical, scientific and literary dimensions towards the existential subjects of life and death, human rights and social justice. This approach exposed awareness to the fact, particularly through culture's courageous critics, that most of the bloodshed in the world was performed in the name of the most sublime values; that rulers, legislators, men of the cloth, judges and military officers are often revealed as the most brutal and corrupt of men; and that the great preachers for equality and modesty are exposed time and again as egotistical and greedy misleaders. Since this is the state of affairs in human reality, it seems to me that contemporary educators have an obligation to redefine their goal so that they can equip their students with individual autonomy and critical literacy thus enabling them to protect themselves from the disguise of deceit and trickery to which they are exposed; we must equip them, in the terms of Neil Postman, with "crap detecting kits."[46] Autonomous and critical thinking, based on solid cultural literacy, is undoubtedly the most vital equipment or tool for human beings for their survival, as well as their development and prosperity; it is far more essential and vital for life than computer literacy which so many parents and teachers tend, in their short- sightedness, to place at the apex of our pyramid of knowledge.

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[43] Shaw, *Man and Superman*, "Maxims for Revolutionists."
[44] Ibid, pp. 151-153.
[45] Ibid, "Maxims for Revolutionists."
[46] Postman & Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, p. 218 and also in Ch, 1.

(c) Authentic Personality

Personal authenticity, as the third principal goal, is different than critical autonomy, mainly because it is not limited to conscious and reflective intellectual activity but is all-embracing and expresses the individual's overall personality and set of dispositions – including the unique and latent elements for which people cannot give a rational account. In other words, authenticity is expressed in peoples' lives not only as "thinking for themselves" but "being what they are." This involves leading ones life with special attention, respect and loyalty to his or her human existence and unique nature. Such individuals produce their life-plan and spiritual content through self-nourishment and self-motivation, and adhere to the compatibility between the content of their inner world and its manifestation in public behavior. In praising people for their personal authenticity, we are actually expressing our special respect for them for not being "inertial," routine, "molded," "die cast," "standard," banal, artificial, fake, self-alienated, robot-like, or simply a poseur – whose inner life is hollow and he, or she, is nothing more than pretentious and empty of any real content.

As I indicated in Chapter One, the romantic and existentialist approaches interpret authenticity each in his own way, while both perceive human beings as entities capable of estranging themselves or turning their backs on the goal their nature has determined for them. This image of Man first appears in Rousseau's philosophy, becoming a foundation of the romantic-naturalistic perspective of education. According to it, children, from an early age, are required to obey external authority instead of being attentive to their inner voice and unique personality. They are supposed to fall into line with social convention, instead of deriving the meaning of their existence and defining their identity based on the yearning, emotions and insights that characterize their inner world. The result of such a counter-authentic and alienating education, says the humanistic psychologist Maslow, is that most people are "out of touch with their own inner signals. They eat, defecate, and go to sleep by the clock's cues, rather than by the cues of their own bodies. They use external criteria for everything from choosing their food and clothing to questions of values and ethics."[47] The remedy, Maslow says, is embodied in true humanistic education which will assist students in becoming honest with themselves, discover their unique identity and goal in life, cultivate an attentive and sensitive ear that can penetrate beyond the noise of cultural conditioning and absorb the sounds and messages that emanate from their original and inner "I."

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[47] Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* p. 184.

Let us look at a representative example of the cultivation of the authentic personality in the framework of the naturalistic-romantic approach. It is taken from Strain's *Modern Philosophies of Education*, which presents the perception that situates the "child at the center" and regards educators as learning facilitators and generators of a climate for growth:

> Direction is provided by the child's own level of development, by the maturation processes of inheritance, and the aim for well-rounded personality. Since the controls and goals of nature are built into each child, education must cooperate by giving the child free reign in his growth. He must not be restrained or coerced by adult traditions and manners. The child must learn to be himself by following his own natural rules, and he can follow them only in an environment of freedom and self-initiative. A child is good, not evil. He becomes a tyrant or a misfit only through adult interference. A teacher or parent is like a husbandman whose task is to cultivate the environment and destroy the weeds in order that the organism can unfold according to its own internal developmental plan.[48]

In contrast to this naturalistic and romantic conception, the existentialist interpretation of authenticity negates the botanical model and replaces it with the artistic model – in the vein of "you are what you make of yourself." Since "God in heaven," "true reality," "the world in-itself," "the real I in us" are perceived by existentialism as cultural fictions and conceptual constructions, regarding these terms as objective realities and sources of authority is nothing less than self-deception and "philosophical suicide." The alternative they offer can be found in the identification of authentic life with individuals undertaking the conscious and courageous responsibility to define their identity, shape their image and determine their values, give meaning to their lives and leave their mark on the world, through awareness that in all their actions they participate in determining the image of Man and the world.

In a specific and certain sense, it was Renaissance humanist Giovanni Pico Dela Mirandola who presented a perception of existential authenticity when he describes Man as having an open and unfinished nature – "Creating oneself and shaping one's own form." But in the full and accepted contemporary meaning, as we have seen in the previous chapter, it was Sören Kierkagaard and Friedrich Nietzsche in the 19th century, who brought to the "stage of history" the argument that the value of human life is mainly measured by its subjective truths: by the relationships between Man and himself, in the framework of which he, as a free person, is accountable for

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[48] Strain, *Modern Philosophies of Education,* p. 21.

creating his image and self-definition, by providing meaning, content and direction for life in general and his own life in particular.

Three well-known examples will be presented here of the meanings involved in an authentic personality, from the writings of Nietzsche, Camus and Sartre. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Nietzsche repeats time and again the educator's demand that his students be loyal to themselves, follow in their own footsteps, not denigrate their free selfhood in the face of religious or romantic fables, and with the power of their free creativity impart meaning and purpose to life. "We want," Nietzsche says, "*to become those we are* – human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves."[49] The image of man to which we are committed here is one who lives his life as a work of art: "to give style to one's character – a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye."[50] And in other words: "a person achieves full and worthy existence only by means of placing upon himself the strenuous demand to achieve full and valuable existence: my existence will be full and worthy only to the extent that I make of myself something of value – living as a work of art."[51]

As we have seen in the above paragraphs and in those that appeared in the previous chapters, humanistic educators' concern for cultivating the authentic personality of their students obliges them to empower their students so that they can separate themselves from their teachers and create for themselves the source of their vitality and their own path – the personal "generator" and "compass" which are what give human beings their dignity and human uniqueness. No public or objective truth, according to this perception, great and important as it may be, can replace personal truth or replace the most authentic of human activities – giving value and content to life in self-overcoming and continual self-creation. However, Nietzsche also believed that not everyone is ready for this type of creative maturity. He believed that the process of self-creation involves pain and danger, and that as long as man is incapable of being his own master, it is desirable that he commits himself to society's conventions. We find some of the pains of creation and self-overcoming on Man's path to self-definition, in the section, "On the Way of the Creator":

> Is it your wish, my brother, to go into solitude? Is it your wish to seek the way to yourself? Then linger a moment, and listen to me.

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[49] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sec. 335.
[50] Ibid, Sec. 290.
[51] Zemach, "Personal Identity as a Work of Art."

> He who seeks easily gets lost.... But do you want to go the way of your affliction, which is the way to yourself? Then show me your right and your strength to do so. Are you a new strength and a new right? A first movement? A self-propelled wheel?....
>
> You call yourself free? Your dominant thought I want to hear, and not that you have escaped from a yoke.
>
> Free from what? As if that mattered to Zarathustra! But your eyes should tell me brightly: *free for what?* Can you give yourself your own evil and your own good and hang your own will over yourself as a law? Can you be your own judge and avenger of your law?[52]

In Camus' philosophy, like that of Nietzsche, authenticity is associated with an existential predicament and strenuous self-overcoming – a creative and courageous overcoming which refuses to accept self-deception and false consolation. *The Myth of Sisyphus* opens with a profound certainty of the absurd: the divorce between man and his life: the estrangement from a world in which we sought to find a God, purpose, meaning, justice, or even some moral order and logical coherence. The world, in other words, seems to be empty of all these and totally indifferent. With the inability to bridge the gap between the soul's yearning to find itself as part of a rational, just and meaningful world, and the certain and daily awareness that the world is not so – devoid of God, rational order, moral reward and sublime purposes – in such a world, "divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger."[53] Human beings feel themselves in exile, alienated to the backdrop of their life, lacking an anchor in which they can place their trust, as a safe haven for their life's journey. Camus compares this man – numerous among us in the 20th century – to the mythical figure of Sisyphus, living our lives with all our might, facing the future, motivated by strong drives and high hopes, all this beneath the permanent horizon of nothingness, devoid of meaning and hope, of final and certain death.

Under the yoke of this burden, human beings are left with a choice: either to deny their consciousness and condition and invent consolation through belief in false gods, or to courageously and lovingly accept their human singularity and decide that since there is no meaning or purpose to human life except that which they themselves give it, they will be, through freedom and responsibility, the ones who give reason to life and enrich it with content and meaning. Human beings, by choosing the truth of their consciousness, Camus says, in their adherence to human authenticity even when it is absurd, affirm their life and human world: he "makes of fate a human matter, which

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[52] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathrustra,* "On the Way of the Creator."
[53] Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, p. 5.

must be settled among men."[54] In a world devoid of God, absolute truths and magical solutions "the struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart."[55]

For the final image of an authentic existence in the existentialist spirit, we will turn to Jean Paul Sartre. Similar to the previous examples we have given in the writings of Nietzsche and Camus, here, too, our interest in authenticity is not purely abstract or philosophical but seeks a way to highlight contemporary Man's authentic modes of coping with life's challenges. Sartre's point of departure, following Nietzsche and Heidegger, is that man is a creature "which is what it is not, and which is not what it is."[56] In other words, since human nature is not closed and defined, and because the most essential attribute of humans is freedom – which is actualized in affirmation and negation, in emotion and in thought, in sense-making and in creativity – any attempt to define our identity in a final or reductive manner will miss the truth and erode human dignity. The nature of human beings as subjects in the world is actualized in their freedom to make of themselves, at every moment during the course of their life, what they want; nothing in any belief, stance, act, inclination or profession at a given stage of their life, can constitute a basis for defining their nature as a concrete person. Human beings' singularity, the source of their dignity and vitality, are derivatives of their being open (towards the future) entities that form themselves as a self-project, and therefore receive their final definition only after death. In other words, the identity of all individuals is the sum total of the decisions they made by themselves and for themselves during the course of their life.

This image of human authenticity, which seemingly appears to be promising and optimistic, embodies the burden of Man's absolute responsibility for his or her stances and deeds. "No excuses," Sartre says: there is no God or Satan in heaven, no instruction of the clergy or the military, no drunken father or prostitute mother, no orders from society's political tyrants, no tyranny of our own libido – we are accountable for all our actions, and any attempt to shift responsibility from ourselves will be lying to the other or self-deception, and in most cases, both.

Sartre's perception of authenticity can assist us in understanding the processes of the cultivation of human dignity as well as its being trampled underfoot. In *No Exit* Sartre puts in the mouth of one of the characters the well-known saying "hell is – other people." An accepted explanation is that since human dignity derives from human beings' being open and free subjects who continually define themselves in their thoughts and deeds, any

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[54] Ibid, p. 91.
[55] Ibid, ibid.
[56] Sartre, *Essay in Existentialism,* pp. 160-180.

attempt on the part of the other to "catalogue" the individual (adult or child) sociologically and stereotypically, thus negates his or her human essence and reduces him or her to objects, things or articles in the world. Moreover, if it were not enough that the other wants to fix his or her personality for his or her own needs, at times we do not succeed in escaping the external image we tried to make for ourselves in our relationship with our fellow men and women, and so, caught in our own web, we can perceive ourselves only as our image gazes back at us through the eyes of the other – and then he or she is our hell.

A different explanation of the infernal dehumanization the other inflicts on us (as individuals) is also related to the nature of Man's relationship with himself. Every person has intimate moments with himself, as he wanders and examines the content of his consciousness, and seeks his singular and original foundations. At times, the only things we find are the routine and banal element common to the masses – dreams, desires, values and stances that are present in the consciousness of all our friends and neighbors. At moments like these, against the backdrop of our yearning for selfhood, for an identity that is mine alone, the "collective other," which like a malignant tumor consumes any spark and iota of originality and singularity is infernal, *is the Angel of Death for the subject which is me.*

Another type of inferno, more concrete and public, is the one we can bring upon our fellow men and women when we fix not only his or her personality but especially our own. By this I mean, Sartre's analysis (as well as that of other philosophers and psychologists) that at times we seek an easy and convenient escape from the burden of our freedom and human responsibility, and find refuge, albeit for a short time, in the "rocklike" or "woodlike" existence – impervious to all emotion, reflection, criticism or conscience. The dangers that this kind of escape entails – of a person who wishes to replace authenticity that burdens human existence with a natural and undefined existence of an object in the world – Sartre describes in *Portrait of the anti-Semite:*

> A man can be a good father and a good husband, a zealous citizen, cultured, philanthropic and an anti-Semite at the same time.... It becomes obvious that no external factor can induce anti-Semitism in the anti-Semite. It is an attitude totally and freely self-chosen, a global attitude which is adopted not only in regard to Jews but in regard to men in general....
>
> But how can one choose to reason falsely? Because one feels the nostalgia of impermeability. The rational man seeks the truth gropingly, he knows that his reasoning is only probable, that other considerations will arise to make it doubtful; he never knows too well where he's going,

> he is "open," he may even appear hesitant. But there are people who are attracted by the durability of stone. They want to be massive and impenetrable, they do not want to change: where would change lead them? This is an original fear of oneself and a fear of truth. And what frightens them is not the content of truth which they do not even suspect but the very form of the true – that hinge of indefinite approximation. It is as if their very existence were perpetually in suspension. They want to exist all at once and right away. They do not want acquired opinions, they want them to be innate; since they are afraid of reasoning, they want to adopt a mode of life which reasoning and research play but a subordinate role, in which one never seeks but that which one has already found, in which one never becomes other than what one already was....
>
> He considers himself an average man, modestly average, and in the last analysis a mediocre person.... He is afraid of any kind of solitude...he is the man of the mob: no matter how short he is, he still takes the precaution of stooping for fear of standing out from the herd and of finding himself face to face with himself.[57]

In conclusion, education towards an authentic personality in the two meanings discussed here, strives to revive and reconstruct in students the feeling of the "original and singular I" which in our times is constantly exposed to pressure and temptations to denigrate itself before the great authorities of religion, state, ideology, science and technology, bureaucracy, majority opinion, the "boss," tradition and routine. It cultivates in the individual the belief to give his life meaning that is singular to him; to pave his road in life for himself, through freedom and responsibility; to produce the content of his life through self-motivation and self-nourishment; to develop original perspectives and modes of expression; and to preserve compatibility between the contents of his inner world and the modes of his public behavior.

The value of this kind of quality of personality for the development of human culture is self-evident: it enriches life with insights, meanings and sensitivities, which would be difficult to expect of the opposite of an authentic personality – of an artificial and false or routine and banal person, who evades his human designation to actualize his singularity and shape his image. The point of departure of the educator towards authenticity is that "there is no more detestable and empty creature in nature than the man who runs away form his daimon [Genius], and then casts furtive glances right, left, backwards and all around. One can no longer seize hold of such a man, for he is all exterior without any core."[58] The educator towards authentic

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[57] Sartre, "Portrait of the anti-Semite," pp.329-335.
[58] Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer as an Educator*, p. 2-3.

personality must say to his student that "one repays a teacher badly if one always remains nothing but a pupil," and that "no one can build a bridge on which you must cross the river of life, no one but you alone."[59] However, educators must not only arouse and encourage young people to pave their own unique path in life, but also challenge them that the path they chose will be their source of dignity and pride from the point of view of its content and value. Without this stipulation, that ties the authentic and the subjective to the objective and universal, we may be left with the nihilistic position according to which everything is equally good and beautiful and just as long as the individual's choice was authentic – a position that has no place in the intellectual and ethical framework of humanistic education.

4. THE WAYS OF HUMANISTIC EDUCATION

The transition from a discussion on the essence and goals of education to a discussion of the ways and forms of realization and implementation is difficult. The test of theoretical statements is first and foremost in the sphere of abstract ideas, while the test of principles that guide educational practice is first and foremost in concrete reality. In such situations it is only natural that the gap between the content of words and the quality of action comes into the limelight.

Philosophers of education, as education theorists find themselves immersed in a problem similar to that of the philosopher and esthetician: like the philosopher, the lover of wisdom who envies the wise man for his real wisdom, and like the esthetician, in whose words tries to characterize the beauty which artists create and bring into the world, the philosopher of education, who excels in outlining educational programs and building educational bridges, is in most cases left behind, gazing in admiration at the skilled educator marching confidently forward – navigating through syllabi and crossing bridges – towards the promised land. In the spirit of Aristotle's words on the wisdom of action (presented in Chapter One), words will always fail to explain the *how* of the good dancer, the skilled skier, the successful military commander or the talented educator. This is the art of the total organism, that recruits a variety of its skills – sensory, motoric, rational, emotional simulatory – and orchestrates them at the right measure and appropriate harmony in time and place, for well-skilled and successful practice. Therefore, again in the spirit of Aristotle, good education is education performed by the good educator. On the other hand, without the

[59] Both citations are from Nietzsche: the first is taken from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 190; the second from *Schopenhauer as an Educator*, p. 4.

theoretical categories with which educational theorists equip us, we would not know what to look for, not to mention the fact that we would not be able to locate and identify the qualities that make an educator "good," and distinguish him or her from their lesser colleagues.

In the most general terms we can say that the basic characteristics of the teacher-educator worthy of the name comprise broad education and erudition in the field of teaching that enable him or her to place this knowledge in a broad intellectual and ethical context. These consist of a caring attitude, openness and respect for the students and an interest in their development and wellbeing; an aspiration towards quality and development in the diverse spheres of life and the ability to inspire the students with this aspiration; a didactical and pedagogical ability to inculcate knowledge and develop moral virtues and life skills; and of course, teachers who in their speech and manners will constitute examples of humanistic values and virtues.

With the same degree of generality we will suggest here the characteristics of the graduate of classical humanistic education: from the intellectual perspective, he or she will be endowed with curiosity and intellectual flexibility, open-mindedness and broad horizons, skills of distinction and reasoning, and rational, autonomous, critical, interpretive and creative thinking. From the social perspective, it is important that he or she be characterized by love of his/her fellow men and women, courtesy, honesty and decency, a sense of justice and sensitivity to the needs of the other, as well as involved caring and responsible solidarity in the community and society. From the intra-personal point of view we must strive towards a graduate who excels in sincere, sensitive and demanding caring for the nature and identity of his or her personality as it is manifested both in his relationship with others and with himself.

These are but several clarifications on the in-principle possibilities and limitations of any discussion of the educational endeavor, and the presentation of a general outline of the concrete goals towards which we should guide our actions. We will now deal with several principles raised in the theoretical discussion, but which demand additional clarification vis-à-vis the modes of their application.

(a) A Balanced Combination Between Approaches and Goals

The first principle is a balanced combination between the four humanistic approaches and the three principal goals of education reviewed above, in which time, place and the student and teacher population should be taken into account in all cases. The basic insight upon which this principle rests is that similar to the art of life that demands the correct balance between emotion and mind, family and career, physicality and spirituality, the art of

education also requires us to critically examine the widest variety of elements and resources that will be at our disposal, and interweaving them in such a way that they will maximally advance the student (in terms and directions of the humanistic approach presented above). Hence, in the spirit of the classical approach, it is important to bring the students into an encounter with the best assets of human culture, cultivate their pedagogical *eros* towards the most sublime, develop their spiritual skills, and encourage them towards idealism and moral commitment. All this, however, must be done by "infecting" them with the sensitivity and passion of the radical approach – so that they will not be blinded by sterile and alienated elitism from seeing the profusion of falsity, oppression and injustice in our everyday existence. An additional example should be given in this context, and here perhaps is the place to learn something from John Keating, the teacher in *The Dead Poets Society,* that the way to the apex of culture must also pass through the heart and soul of the student: if romantic and existential insights into the autonomous and authentic involvement of the entire personality, are not taken into account, we will reap misery instead of happiness, and recited, indifferent knowledge, alienated from both man and society, instead of rational and sensitive wisdom of life.

Further examples of the principle of the balanced combination will clarify the necessary interweaving between the ultimate goals of quality of culture, autonomous and critical thinking and authentic personality. The basic insight in this matter is that culture devoid of individualism is sterile and uninspired, and that individualism devoid of cultural content is empty and of little value. Let us imagine a guitarist like Eric Clepton who seeks to improvise on a well-known theme: equipped with musical knowledge and skills, his individualistic improvisation will lead the music to new, unique and wondrous realms. However, lacking the appropriate cultural basis, the sounds of this spontaneous creativity may yield discordant and worthless "nonsense." This is something like students in a classroom: one must strive to cultivate a "cultural growth medium" for all students, so that their souls will be sufficiently mature and fertile for absorbing the most subtle and complex of the manifestation of the human spirit. It further requires to enrich their consciousness with insights and sensitivities, in order that they will serve them as "litmus papers" for making sense of experience.

We should not, however, be satisfied with "acculturated" students whose statements always express what the consensus wants to hear. A student who does not analyze and interpret what he studies in an autonomous and critical way, who does not seek to shatter social convention and cultural myths, who does not at times rebel against the abyss that lies between reality and what is worthy should be cultivated and empowered in such a way that his statements, choices and actions will express his independent and critical

opinion. A student whose modes of action are both cultured and autonomous, but who tends to derogate the unique "inner grammar" of his personality before official and public language – for him one must develop intimate educational spaces in which he will dare to say directly: *I* think, *I* feel, *I* prefer, I chose myself, express myself, respect myself and ask you too to respect me as I respect you. Of course balance is also important in the opposite case; namely, in those cases in which "super" autonomous, authentic and spontaneous students trample, with their egocentric or narcissistic individualism, any cultural criteria of knowledge, logic and courtesy. These students should be shown explicitly, courteously but decisively, that not "anything goes" and one cannot be tolerant of everything, and that their individualism would be more powerful and significant if they would only bother to charge it with a grain of culture.

(b) Between Orientation and Information

The second principle is related to the proper combination of ideas and values, that constitute a frame of reference or a network of coordinates for guiding thought and practice, and mastery of knowledge and skills that enables us to skillfully and successfully follow the path we have chosen. The essence of this principle, so it seems to me, is embodied in the following statements: "Where there is no vision, the people perish," (Proverbs, 29:18) or in Neil Postman's contemporary assertion that "if education has no end it will come to its end."[60] In Nietzsche's words that "scholarship that is not guided and limited by higher maxims of education" can "barbarize men just as much as a hatred of knowledge";[61] in Whitehead's critique on the deterioration of modern education from direction towards humanistic idealism to satisfaction with the mastery of "text-book knowledge of subjects"[62]; and in T.S. Eliot's questioning lament in his poem "The Rock" "Where is the wisdom we have lost for Knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost for information?"

These statements express the basic idea we discussed earlier in relation to the worldviews of Plato, Aristotle and George Bernard Shaw: the value of both theoretical and practical knowledge should be measured not only within the spheres of knowledge, but also in the cultural and ethical trends it serves. Put differently, the blessing and curse of science and technology are always

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[60] Postman, in "Education is in Need of a Vision not Technology" and in "The End of Education."

[61] Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer as an Educator*, p. 10 and *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, pp. 30-31.

[62] Whitehead, *The Aims of Education*, ch.3.

embedded in the use we make of them, no less than in the potential they put at our disposal. We find explicit examples of this in the use of science and technology for advancing the well-being of man, side by side with their destructive and annihilating usage, and in Dr. Schweitzer's use of medicine for saving life side by side with the use made by Dr. Mengele for its destruction and distortion.

Against this background, humanistic educators and teachers should cultivate in themselves and in their students the understanding that science and technology will never be able to serve as a substitute for philosophy and ethics; that it is a dangerous illusion to assume that technology in general and computers in particular can address the basic human questions. The science of physics does not include laws about the correct usage of its powers, technology is indifferent to the ethical results of its actions, and the computer is a complete idiot in all matters related to the autonomous and ethical examination of the goals it serves. It performs the tasks its creators programmed it to do with wondrous technical efficiency.

Hence we can learn three things: (1) humanistic education should be valued in terms of the human quality of life and not by conversancy in spheres of knowledge; (2) the intellectual quality appropriate to the actualization of this goal is wisdom (as the art of employing knowledge for advancing Man's development and well-being) and not knowledge or information; (3) humanistic education in this spirit mandates continuous and critical occupation with the general orientation of things – from the point of view of social context, intellectual meanings and ethical implications of the knowledge gained. Ignoring these insights and diminishing the place of intellectual and moral education at schools will increase the disasters that humanity has experienced in the 20th century: extermination and oppression of millions of human beings (in the name of religious and ideological ideals), systematic damage to the natural world (by greed that feeds on nature instead of with it and next to it), the cultural deprivation of broad strata of the population (by perpetuating their poverty and ignorance), the dwarfing of the humanity of so many people and reducing them to conveyor-belt and consumer functions (by propaganda and advertising in the mass media, which are directed towards perpetuating the spiritual poverty of the individual and relegating him to the lowest common denominator).

(c) Educational Climate

The third principle (in the practice of education) relates to the educational climate desirable in the school. The key points are amiability, human dignity, taking needs into account and a promise of the good. In the physical aspect of the structure, classrooms, and open spaces, schools should

"broadcast humanity" in its size and design: it should serve as a space for activity for the community of teachers and students (and to a certain extent for parents as well), a space that enables individual safety, an esthetic atmosphere, a home and communal feeling, familiarity, group and interpersonal learning and social encounters, areas delineated for individual work and areas designed for games and alleviating stress. In any event, large buildings, similar to prisons or industrial buildings (and there are still many of this kind), that give an atmosphere of functional, cold and alienated massiveness, should be avoided.

The human-social façade is no less important: if we wish to make the young caring, amiable and fair, then we should provide them with a social culture that reflects, in actuality, these very human qualities. One should ensure that students feel wanted on a daily basis, from the moment they enter the school area: a warm, empathic, inviting and accepting "Good morning" – face-to-face and with a personal intention – is the basic vocabulary of a humanistic social climate. This humanity, as an interpersonal means of contact should also pass the test of demands and confrontation: the ultimate challenge of the humanistic teacher is to impart to his student the belief that he, the educator, is there for him, and that beyond any criticism, grade or punishment, this educator has the good of his student in mind, as a purpose and value in itself. We should ensure that the student feels that always and in every situation – besides the demands for quality of thinking, endeavor and creativity – his environment follows him and attends him with human tenderness and unconditional sympathetic caring. He must be confident that even if he falls and fails, there will be someone who will take care of him so that he does not disintegrate, so he does not break down, and that he has not been abandoned.

Demands or expectations of students are an integral part of the educational climate, if only because possibility of enjoying the rights and goods by some are a consequence of commitments and demands that others have directed towards themselves in their relationships with others. By demands and commitments – directed towards teachers and students alike – I mean first and foremost human relationships characterized by equality and decency, open-mindedness and tolerance, attentive and supportive dialogical relationships. It also implies freedom of expression and the right to be different, common responsibility for the atmosphere and practices, and the avoidance of any harm or injury to individuals and the community. The importance of fulfilling these commitments is twofold: it imparts habits of thinking and behavior that join forces and are transformed into a moral character, and it posits necessary conditions for the existence of a learning, moral and pluralistic community. In the absence of these conditions, students

may be deprived of their basic rights and of the possibility of attaining self-actualization and individual well-being.

(d) The Curriculum

In light of the definition of humanistic education presented above, we should regard the curriculum (the fourth principle) as one of the main means of developing and actualizing the student's personality, reinforcing an enlightened democratic society, and making students active partners in the assets of national and human culture. Guided by the four educational approaches and the three ultimate goals discussed above, the preferable curriculum should clearly be of an integrative, rather than an extremist or uni-directional, nature. At the basis of every humanistic school curriculum should be a basic compulsory curriculum directed towards cultivating all the humanistic elements and values discussed earlier. This compulsory curriculum will be spread over approximately 14 years of schooling (from kindergarten through high school graduation) and perhaps over 17 years, thus including B.A. studies in the institutions of higher education.

The curriculum may be organized in various ways, but in all cases it should adhere to two principles: generality and choice, or in the opposite order – choice in the framework of boundaries. The principle of generality relates to the fact that students must be exposed to a wide variety of spheres of knowledge in order to enable multi-faceted development of their personality and capacities for rationality and sensibility. These acquired qualities would enable them to make the best of their lives and enjoy its cultural assets, and so that they will be citizens who are involved in society in an informed and critical way. In this context one may think of the "*paedeia* curriculum" presented by Mortimer Adler, which comprises three learning clusters – science and mathematics, the social sciences together with history and geography, and the humanities subjects including language and art.[63]

We can also use the division proposed by Paul Hirst – into mathematics, the natural sciences, the social sciences, history, philosophy, religion, literature and art.[64] The curriculum can also include, in the spirit of our times, the new literacies: linguistic, numerical, technological and computer, scientific, cultural-historical, philosophical-critical, health, moral-political, humanistic-artistic, and social-communicational literacy (see the extensive discussion on literacy in Chapter Four). The principle of generality (according to the holistic approach) also implies that the curriculum must

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[63] Adler, *The Paideia Proposal.*

[64] Hirst, "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge."

challenge and activate the full spectrum of human skills, sensitivities and knowledge: as accumulated knowledge of reality, as thinking strategies and creative skills, as theoretical insight and practical wisdom, as ethical sensitivity and a sense of proportion and tact, as esthetical discernment and refined taste – as intelligences in the verbal, logical, spatial, musical, plastic arts, emotional, social, interpersonal, technical, etc., spheres.

With regard to the principle of choice, it is designed to enable a certain degree of freedom without which learning will be purely mechanical and devoid of relevancy, interest and personal involvement. Choice will be manifested in openness and flexibility towards tendencies and preferences of communities, schools, teachers and students on three levels: in emphases, content and ways. The emphases level relates to a certain flexibility in measure, while allowing the broadening of selected study spheres; content relates to a certain openness about subjects, works or periods which will be taught de facto; ways relates to the fact that the most efficient way of study should be adjusted to each student according to his or her ability and inclinations (for example, everyone will be obliged to study the natural sciences, literature, art, history and civics, but within these frameworks variance and flexibility should be allowed in accordance with learners' individual or cultural uniqueness).

(e) Connective and Communicative Teaching or the Tree of Knowledge as the Tree of Life

The fifth principle denotes the singular character of humanistic learning and constitutes a kind of conclusion or summary of the idea that has been the leitmotif from the beginning of Chapter One: in the review of the theoretical approaches, normative definitions, the three ultimate goals, and the practical principles of pedagogy. By this I mean the idea that humanistic education is first and foremost *the development of the human spirit and a training for the art of life* – directed towards full and successful actualization of every individual's personality, and closely linked to the most sublime, both in the individual's personality and in human culture. Thus in the first two chapters we have seen a refusal to adhere to a single defined theoretical conception (thus relinquishing other alternatives) or to accept the devaluation of the humanistic ideal, reducing it from "full humanity at its best" to erudition, education, justice, beauty or any other single component that is unique and specific to the human race. The clear message of humanistic education is that through the entire process of education (or formal education at least), from kindergarten through high school and the initial stages of academic studies, the acquisition of knowledge should not be regarded as the supreme goal and certainly not an exclusive one. We should regard it not as an end to itself but

as an important means for the overall and multi-faceted nurturing of the student's personality, in order to bring him closer to a meaningful, good and honorable human life. In other words, in the framework of humanistic education *we must regard the Tree of Knowledge as the Tree of Life both for those being educated and for society as a whole.*

Most significantly we have seen in the works of Socrates, Aristotle, Montaigne, Spinoza, Mill, Nietzsche, Whitehead and Dewey an overall tendency to view education's most significant test in overall human excellence, well-being, spiritual strength, self-actualization and personal growth – each of them according to his own worldview and style. In each of these examples, however, their intention was not merely an accumulation of knowledge but rather a certain ideal of overall human vitality and excellence that combines the qualitative-objective element with the experiential-subjective one.

As we have seen earlier, Aristotle states explicitly that his interest lies in the proper way toward a profound and successful human life, thus implying that our main concern with matters of morality and education should be not for the purpose of knowing how to speak of them eloquently, but in order to be moral and wise. In the 16th century, it was Montaigne who viewed with contempt the learned scholars whose erudition gave them neither vitality nor wisdom. Spinoza, in the 17th century, believed that learning was a means for Man's actualization of his unique nature and for the extension of his happiness. Mill, in the 19th century, considered the combination of maximal development of personality and maximal extension of overall happiness as the supreme goal. Nietzsche, also in the 19th century, stated that "I hate everything which merely instructs me without increasing or directly quickening my activity," and longed for the day when "artistic energies and the practical wisdom of life will join with scientific thinking to form a higher organic system."[65] Whitehead and Dewey, both 20th century thinkers, argued against the inertial erudition which lies worthless in our consciousness and neither contributes to nor yields any benefit for the individual or society.

From this we may posit that humanistic education cannot be identified with any sphere of learning other than human life itself, with all its rich strata and facets – with human experience per se and its multitude of aspects and avenues as a broad human repertoire that offers the free and creative spirit life materials with which to build itself. In other words, the heart of the matter is a longing for humanistic knowledge that is wisdom in the art of life: in the words of Ecclesiastes, a longing for wisdom that "giveth life to them that have it" (Ecclesiastes 7:12); in Terence's famous aphorism, "I am

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[65] The first citation is from *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life,* Preface; the second is from *The Gay Science*, sec. 113.

a man, I count nothing human foreign to me"; in the words of Faust, who seeks: "Whatever to all mankind is assured/ I, in my inmost being, will enjoy and know/ Seize with my soul the highest and most deep/ Men's weal and woe upon my bosom heap/ And thus this self of mine to all their selves expanded, Like them I too at last be stranded."[66] And we find this spirit again in the words of the first godless prophet, Zarathustra, who longs for a noble soul: "for the soul that has the longest ladder and reaches down deepest...the most comprehensive soul, which can run and stray and roam farthest within itself...the soul which, in having being, dives into becoming...the soul which flees itself and catches up with itself in the widest circle."[67]

This kind of learning, which is not measured by disciplinary yardsticks but by the art of life, must touch all of personality: it must significantly and experientially combine the objective layers of life with subjective interpretation and meaning and create a new existential truth. Dewey called this kind of learning an educative experience, but it seems to me that the term does not fully elucidate the desired goal. It may well be that we should speak in terms of "experinsight" (*experiential insights* or *insightful experiences*) as humanistic education's basic educative units. What is meant by this is a kind of insight through which a facet or basic element of the human prototype found in each of us becomes clear to us; in which truths essential to a life-style or the spirit of the times are revealed; in which longings and meanings and goals of the soul's deepest strata are revealed and manifested in conceptual, metaphorical, plastic or other symbolic forms. These insights affect us, modify our perceptual framework and the ways in which we think, give us new eyes and open windows onto new realities and meanings, excite and deeply penetrate us, at times generating a prolonged silence, trembling or sweating, and leave us slightly different, knowing ourselves differently in the world.

Let us take, for example, historical knowledge (we might as well take geographical knowledge, as did Saint-Exupéry in the encounter between the Little Prince and the learned geographer who never left his planet). We can learn and become familiar with dates, institutions and prominent

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[66]Goethe, *Faust,* "Study," part 2.

[67]Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* p. 320-321. This perception of knowledge of life also appears in *The Gay Science*, sec. 382, "Whoever has a soul that craves to have experienced the whole range of values and desiderata to date...whoever wants to know from the adventures of his own most authentic experience how a discoverer and conqueror of the ideal feels, and also an artist, a saint, a legislator, a sage, a scholar, a pious man, a soothsayer, and one who stands divinely apart in the old style – needs one thing above everything else: the *great health.*"

personalities; we may also become experts in processes and trends; but how can we (more or less) experience the spirit of the times? We can, for example, learn about the technological advances of the modern era, and do so in technical terms; but we can also experience history in the making. We can, for example, join a wagon-driver on his wooden-wheeled cart, and perhaps even the neighborhood watermelon man in his rubber-tired cart – and during this very ride, try to feel, smell and sense, sit and listen. We can then do the same thing – sit and listen attentively – in an old-fashioned bus (still found in the country-sides of third world countries) and sense the vibrations of the motor chugging along, and the jerks and bounces when the driver changes gear, take in the noises, sounds, music, crowdedness, talking and relationships that take place on the bus and between its passengers. Finally, we should sit and listen in the spaceship-like bus in one of those highly developed countries, and listen to the mechanical smoothness, human silence, the melody of the automatic shift, and the atmosphere of modern humanity. It is through such sensual, emotional, and cognitive impressions accumulated in the above three different experiences that a true and profound historical understanding is formed.

Justice and injustice, love and friendship, beauty, generosity, vitality, death and bereavement – how can we know these stuffs of life from the inside? Not verbally or numerically, but in a seemingly personal way, as if we are swimming in the "lake of the symbolized" itself. There is no answer other than making students part of the drama of life, which the humanistic educator should attempt to generate in the classroom. Experiencing justice, for example, is possible by reviving the Prophet Isaiah and Reverend Martin Luther King, and through the contexts, facts and words, kindle the students' thoughts, arouse their emotional distress and mobilize their cognition, move their interpretive imagination and moral conscience towards coalescence into a concrete statement relating to themselves and their community.

Experiencing old age, which is not only geriatric but also always tragic, is also possible through an encounter with King Lear's hubris of old age that impaired his judgment, turning good into bad and bad into good[68]; and with the Duke of Gloucester in his dotage, whose eyes were finally opened only when they were plucked out, and only then could he truly differentiate between his disloyal and loyal sons[69]; and with Israeli poet David Avidan, who so wanted to escape old age since "An old man, what does his life hold for him... what do his mornings hold... what does his evening? No king, he will fall on no sword."[70] Experiencing the anxieties of death and sorrow and

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[68] Shakespeare, *King Lear.*
[69] Ibid, ibid.
[70] Avidan, *A Sudden Evening.*

bereavement is possible (in Israel, for example) through the poet T. Carmi on his deathbed, who understands that he is nothing other than "terminal," and must notify all his friends that cancer is consuming his body which will soon become a corpse; namely "A jackal besiege my home/ hasn't wiped the mucus from his nose/ nor wiped its wet claws/ No ring, No greeting/ coming at dawn/ its belly distended from howling/ its eyes dripping night."[71]

One can also experience the human anxieties about the horrors of war, through the mother who rejects the logic of all wars, since it means "finding myself one day on a road with my house in ruins, and my boy dead in my arms."[72] It can likewise be experience by the shock of post-war bereavement, through the poet Yehuda Amichai, who meets Mr. Beringer, who "lost the weight of his son who fell on the Suez Canal front."[73] And we can equally experience the cruel truth of unrequited love and deep despair at the graveside, through despondent Margaret who as a result of a forbidden love lost mother, brother and son, and now her lover estranges himself from her. Then she tells him: "The best place give to my mother/ And close beside her my brother/ Me a little to one side/ A space – but not too wide!/ And put the little one here on my right breast/ No one else will lie beside me!/ Ah, in your arms to nestle and hide me/ That was a sweet, a lovely bliss!/ But now, much as I try, it seems to go amiss/ It seems to me as if I must force myself on you and you thrust me back, and yet it's you, so kind, so good to see."[74] It is the curriculum of life, guided journeys through the realms of the human soul; images and metaphors that broaden and extend our lexicon of life and enrich our repertoire in ways of being human (and their cost as well).

The meaning and credibility of this kind of example – of this type of human truths – stems from the fact that our encounter with them causes the reader to encounter himself and his world: our very gazing into the sights of the human spirit embodied in philosophical texts and works of art causes something latent and obscure in our consciousness to be discovered and clarified. With such existential insights, says Maxine Greene,[75] the educator motivates his students to go beyond what is taken for granted and the humdrum of day-to-day reality – from the vulgarity of the city, industry and trade, from indifference to suffering and wrongdoing, from the sacred cows and cultural myths, from the lies of life and politicians' deceit, and from the penetration of technology and bureaucracy into all of life's strata. By addressing the student's freedom and stimulating his consciousness with alternative perceptions and facts – about what is not but can still be – the

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[71] Carmi, T., *Poems and Images under Duress.*
[72] Sartre, *The Reprieve*, p.89
[73] Amichai, *Elegy*, p.87.
[74] Goethe, *Faust*, "Prison."
[75] Greene, "Literature, Existentialism and Education," p. 76.

educator seeks to assist the pupil in breaching the banality of quotidian life and through the cracks and fissures thus created enable him to see reality in a new light, define himself within it, again and again anew, by according it his own interpretation, meaning and value.

My task, says the educator to those learning the skills of life, is "to make you feel – it is before all to make you see. That – and no more, and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there according to your desserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm – all you demand – and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask."[76] No doubt not all examples and sights are relevant to all people: there is a certain nucleus of the classics whose power lies in actualities that go beyond time and place, and there are works of art that build themselves roads to groups and individuals who have specific characteristics. In light of this situation, the great challenge for the humanistic educator is to know how to select those examples through which he will succeed in generating experiential insights in his students. It is the ability to present to his students, and through them, life dramas and realms of life that will arouse the full mobilization of their senses and talents, will leave them with rational, emotional and ethical impressions and will ultimately effect the meaningful learning of the entire personality. We will call this educative activity, which renders *the Tree of Knowledge the Tree of Life,* connective teaching (between fields of knowledge, value judgments, cultural ties and personal experience) and communicative teaching (as a dialogue between teacher-educator and the student's direct world of experience).

Connective teaching is marked by its employing inter-disciplinary and multi-dimensional learning in order to establish meaningful humanistic learning. The inter-disciplinary approach is currently accepted in teaching and learning: it combines, for example, Bible, geography and history studies in order to render a complete, multi-directional picture of specific events in the ancient Eastern world. By the same token it combines geography, biology and ecology in order to learn about the state of nature in a specific region. And as I demonstrated earlier, it can combine geriatrics, literature and philosophy in order to comprehensively "know old age."

Multi-dimensionality adds another layer: an approach that seeks to view the studied issues as problematical and challenging on the extra-disciplinary dimensions as well – on the value and interpretive dimensions as they coalesce in social and individual consciousness, i.e., how all "these things" affect me, are relevant to my life, blend into my cultural vision, my *weltanschauung*, my personal life plans, and the place they should be allotted in public and individual priorities. Multi-dimensionality seeks to add

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[76] Ibid, ibid.

the actual, political and existential, to the curriculum. The value of the Prophet Isaiah can also be found in opening students' eyes to abuse and evil around them and in "kindling" in them the flame of his admonition against the corruption that took over the regime (and this is almost always true). The value of American history is also in critical awareness of the gap between a glorious constitution and oppressive slavery, between national slogans and avaricious and murderous imperialism. And the value of the civics lesson is also in its success in arousing dismay regarding the image (for example) of the State of Israel as "the only democracy in the Middle East," in light of the fact that for over thirty years it has occupied territories, ruling over approximately three million Palestinians who have no human or civil rights. It is certainly not out of place to emblazon the question on the escutcheon of advanced technology – is this really progress?

Communicative teaching is a bridge, the spiritual highway, merging the realms of consciousness, turning the distant and foreign into the close and familiar. It is the outstretching of a pedagogical hand to freeing and gathering the ends of the thread, from the teacher to the student and from the student to the teacher, in order to rise to loftier realms, to a more lucid, comprehensive and farsighted vision. The teacher has no other way of reaching his students but by openly and sensitively becoming closer to their concrete world and routine daily life – their language, images, desires, self-image and all their other personal and cultural life materials. As we stated earlier (in relation to Rogers, Maslow and Buber), the way to the student must be dialogical and directed to his complete personality. This is what happened in cinematic pedagogies such as *Dead Poets Society* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses,* in which the ways to development and educating were paved from the students' concrete and authentic realities of life; and more important, this is what numerous educators actually do in the classroom and on street corners.

Here the humanistic educator is in need of a rare talent: to be simultaneously "multi-cultural" and send out sensitive sensors towards many and different people, adapt his image to changing situations, and at the same time maintain unity and integrity within the variant and the ever-changing. Such educators are required to possess the ability to be empathic, to have a discerning eye, tact and the ability to tempt, while being critically alert to the corruptive element of manipulative temptation. They need, in the language of the well-known image, a flexible key to the souls of many and different children. In the spirit of Plato's parable of the cave, we must always imagine them in action: on their way to their students and on their elevating march with their students – creating, changing and

reconstructing educational communicational channels for building the materials of "full humanity at its best."

Chapter III

EDUCATION TOWARDS HUMANISTIC MORALITY IN AN ERA OF VALUE CRISIS

By three things is the world sustained: by truth, by justice and by peace.
Simeon ben Gamliel

Where I could not be honest, I never yet was valiant.
Shakespeare

The highest good of those who follow virtue is common to all, and therefore all can equally rejoice therein.
Spinoza

The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point, however, is to change it.
Marx

The important thing is not, as yet, to go to the root of things, but the world being what it is, to know how to live in it.
Camus

1. POINT OF DEPARTURE

In this chapter I seek to present an outline of a conception of moral education that expresses the spirit and principles of the humanistic worldview, and to locate it in our daily and concrete reality – in a period which due to its modern-post-modern characteristics is termed by many, "an era of value crisis." I do not wish to reinvent the wheel of morality or presume to have devised far-reaching innovations in my method of moral education, but rather to somewhat refurbish some of its components and integrate them into new orders and structures so that the "morality wagon" will be suitable to the present day and will efficiently serve us in the domains of moral education.

Despite my modest goal, the challenge is of the utmost importance: restoring vitality and meaning to the discourse of morality, to which on the one hand (almost) everyone accords supreme importance (therefore incessantly argues about its role in the formation of the image of the individual and society), while on the other, (almost) everyone regards it as

lacking objective foundations, as if it is all a matter of personal taste, thus rendering it sterile, superfluous and burdensome. I therefore believe that success in enriching the moral discussion with vitality and meaning can contribute to the most practical matters with which those dealing with the educational endeavor and teaching have to cope, day in and day out.

Since we usually ground the majority of our arguments in the discourse on morality on some primary principles – beliefs, values, intuitions and assumptions regarding the nature of humankind – it is crucial from the outset to openly assume them; in other words, we should present the primary principles that will serve us as the central axes of our discussion.

"Showing our hand" at the outset is not only logically and technically important (as a strategy for developing arguments), but also bears ethical importance as it expresses a commitment to critical consciousness and intellectual integrity. It manifests the idea that no moral position is engraved in stone, but is rather the result of human thought and creation. It further suggests that "no person speaks from nowhere," but rather from an affinity to a certain philosophical or cultural tradition, and that all progress in ethical discourse mandates a basic agreement on the part of the participants regarding certain basic principles related both to content (such as the sanctity of life and the equality of the value of humankind) and form (such as freedom of expression and the obligation to provide reasoning). With regard to the primary principles per se, which I seek to accept as the basic assumptions for the entire discussion, these are grounded in the *weltanschauung* that was presented in the previous chapter, and comprise (1) a humanistic worldview; (2) a democratic approach, with regard to the desirable political order; (3) an enlightened intellectual approach towards the pursuit of truth and resolution of social disputes.

(1) As we have seen in the previous chapter *the humanistic worldview* maintains that the development, well-being and dignity of human beings should be regarded as the ultimate goal of human thinking and endeavor. It regards human beings as free individuals who establish their own world and are responsible for their destiny, and accords to all people unconditional and equal self-value, as free, thinking, moral, creative and singular entities. As a worldview it also aspires to social justice grounded in the sanctity of human life, equality before the law and equal opportunity, the love of humankind, respect for individual freedom, and solidarity between people and nations.

(2) *The democratic approach* is not confined, as many erroneously tend to think, to "majority rule." If we were to seek short and succinct formulations, it would be better to use the literal meaning of "government of the people," to take Lincoln's famous statement that democracy is the "government of the people, by the people and for the people," or the statement (which I like best) that democracy is *the government of free and*

equal citizens who form together – in manners that are fair, pluralistic and tolerant – the character and customs of their society. In our context it is important to examine the necessary characteristics of contemporary liberal and pluralistic democracy: (a) the source of the legitimacy and authority of government is the citizens of the state; (b) all society's adults are free citizens who enjoy human and political rights; (c) periodic free elections are held under this regime; (d) government policy is determined by majority decisions made by the elected representatives of the people (when the majority does not have the right to impair the three previous principles).

(3) *An enlightened intellectual approach* is characterized first by inquisitiveness, open-mindedness, broad-mindedness, critical and autonomous thinking, pluralism and tolerance. It has its foundations in an awareness that truth has numerous facets and variations, that no belief or position is resistant to error, that all human beings have the right to believe in their own truth and justice and act towards their personal fulfillment. It further implies that, on the one hand, no person or group should be permitted to hold a monopoly over what is true, just and proper, while on the other, scientific research and ethical discourse should be conducted with openness, by employing a rational and critical approach, and a willingness to resolve disagreements on the basis of the most valid knowledge at our disposal at any given time.

These three primary principles were not chosen by chance. They express, as they were presented at length in the two previous chapters, the humanistic and democratic ideals that constituted the main social contracts of modern times: the United States "Declaration of Independence," in the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen," and in the United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and "Declaration of the Rights of the Child. These historical facts have particular relevance to our discussion.

In order to succeed in advancing moral education it is not enough that we think that our basic principles are defensible per se on a purely moral basis, but there should also be wide agreement on the part of the public and a willingness to cooperate. In other words, the fact that the principles of humanism, democracy and enlightenment have been accorded high rank among the community of nations over the years, will on the one hand facilitate their being accepted as the central axes and delineating boundaries of my proposal vis-à-vis the image of desirable moral education in our times; on the other hand it also constitutes certain support for my argument that any racial, power-abusing or other position that a priori denies certain populations equal opportunities for enjoying full and dignified human life, should be disqualified as illegitimate.

2. THE SPHERE OF MORALITY AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In the Biblical Hebrew, the word "morality" – *moosar* – indicates guidance, admonition and punishment, which are all directed towards the inculcation, acquisition and fulfillment of the code of proper behavior. Ethics, as a parallel concept in Ancient Greece (that acquired status and usage in international language) denotes customs, habits and virtues that characterize the character or the way of life of individuals or a specific public. When we use these concepts today to characterize a specific group such as the morality of Judaism or Protestant ethics, we mean the setup of values and rules that shows members of a specific group the ways of proper behavior in all matters pertaining to their inter-personal and social conduct. But it is common knowledge that ethics is also something else – moral philosophy and ethical theory. According to this meaning ethics indicates a sphere of knowledge – in a philosophical framework – that methodically, rationally and critically deals with the nature of the proper and desirable life for humankind and the ways of attaining the just and humane organization of social order.

Hence we learn that in the initial stages of our discussion we should make the same differentiation that we made previously with regard to education and culture: i.e., we should make a distinction between the factual-neutral aspect in which the various ways of morality, devoid of gradation of ethical judgment, are presented side by side on a lateral axis, and the normative-judgmental-hierarchal aspect in which moral ways are gradated on a vertical axis, in accordance with the degree of compatibility with the objective criteria of moral quality.

This is easy to explain: the American philosopher Thoreau, who was mentioned in the previous chapter in the context of autonomous thinking, expressed his discontent at the fact that accepted morality in his time was totally immoral, since it unquestionably condoned black slavery and the conquest of Mexican territories. It is also worthy of note that the figure of Levin, the moral protagonist in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, who cannot concede to accepted morality vis-à-vis the exploitation and oppression of the Russian serfs, and who, in the name of higher, absolute or objective moral values, regarded it as his duty to free them and treat them with the respect worthy of all humankind. There is no lack of examples in every culture at all times. The important thing, however, is to be aware of the fact that in every philosophical discussion of morality the objective is not to deliberate on the nature of any given moral order and use it as a yardstick, but rather to rely on the best knowledge and skills at our disposal, to move beyond what exists, and form or legislate the principles for proper moral conduct.

We will embark on our voyage to the "morally proper" of normative ethics with our basic human experience: we care about what happens to our environment and us and the conscious expressions of this caring manifests itself in our judgment of the nature and value of the events under discussion. All of us – some more, some less – attribute importance to our human image, our image as individuals and the nature of our behavior towards our fellow men and women in the variety of communities in which we are members (familial, communal, professional, religious, national, as well as humankind). Or, in the spirit of the first chapter of this book, from the day human beings become aware of themselves they are conscious of the fact that their lives were shaped, and continue to be shaped, by numerous and diverse factors – hereditary, psychological, cultural, linguistic, etc. – but nothing in these can conceal from human beings the fact of their freedom and responsibility for their relationship with themselves. Hence, we challenge our being with existential questioning and wandering, such as: what do I want to be when I grow up; what kind of son or daughter do I want to be to my parents; and what kind of parent do I want to be to my children; which objective will I set for myself in the framework of self-actualization, and which "red lines" will I take care not to cross on the way to achieving my objectives; how will I gain a good reputation among my friends and how will I plan my actions so that in the future I will be able to look back with pride and say to myself: I lived a beautiful, decent and worthy life.

There is nothing new in these statements. The same Ecclesiastes who said "there is no new thing under the sun" is the same one who asked "see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life" (Ecclesiastes 2:3). In The Ethics of the Fathers, the question is "Which is the right course that a man should choose for himself? That which he feels to be honorable to himself, and which also brings him honor from mankind." In Socrates' words, the main question involves the "supreme virtue" that will make the soul "as good as possible" and from which "comes both money and all other good things for mankind, both in private and in public."[1] Or as Aristotle pointed out: our search for what "is fine and just," and for "the highest of all good achievable by action," will enable us to be like "archers who have a mark to aim at, and more likely to hit upon what is right."[2] These are only a few of the examples to be found in both the philosophical and literary works of all cultures, and in the daily burden of freedom that seethes in every one of us as human beings.

This preoccupation of human beings with the individuals' overall proper and worthy life, in directing their desires and actions according to what is

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[1] Plato, *Apologia*, p. 28-29.
[2] Aristotle, *Ethics*, book I, 1-3.

true and just, is what establishes the sphere of moral discourse we presented earlier as ethics.[3] To the best of our knowledge this sphere is unique to human beings and distinguishes between them and all other creatures living on our planet. We will first clarify this point by indirect demonstration: a raging storm that causes the death of hundreds of people and leaves thousands homeless is not locked up behind bars; a snake that bites and kills an innocent child who merely put out his hand to pick a piece of fruit is not judged or censured; a female praying mantis that beheads its partner after it impregnates her is not called an exploitive and murderous witch; and a lion who lazes under a tree and sends his lioness off to hunt is not called a male-chauvinist. We believe that animals have a primal instinctual nature and inherent behavioral patterns, and in the words of the scorpion who, in the middle of the river stung and killed the frog who was carrying it on its back across the river (thus dooming itself to death) – nature is strongest of all (and is what dictates animal actions and reactions).

Human beings are different. The fact that they are conscious of their self-awareness, their ability to logically and imaginatively examine the implications of the actions of others, their freedom of choice and autonomy in any given context and their willpower and self-restraint in the face of inner desires and external pressure – all these establish in them the category or dimension of moral experience – as a sense, sensitivity, awareness and conscience. In other words, "the fact that human beings' awareness can become the subject of their observation...to reflect on their selves as if they are outside their selves...and to perceive themselves as differentiated from others...to recognize their thoughts and actions as belonging to themselves...to be proud of themselves or ashamed of themselves...to be aware of their characteristics, regard them as positive or negative, and in such a way accept their responsibility for them" – all these distinguish human beings from the "kingdom of nature," and render them moral creatures who can be judged, and establish the culture of morality and law.[4] In light of this, it is clear why morality should be regarded an inherent element in human existence: human beings (at least sane and healthy ones) cannot live outside or escape this dimension of their humanity. This, however, does not negate the possibility that human beings, as "rational creatures" will live unreasonable lives; as "moral creatures," they will act immorally, and as "civilized creatures" they will behave in an uncivilized manner.

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[3] For an inclusive and systematic discussion of the characteristics of ethics as a theory of morality, see the following: Ewing, *Ethics*; Frankena, *Ethics*; Peters, *Ethics and Education*; Williams, *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics.*

[4] Neumann, *The Preeminence of Man*, pp.147-155.

Moral discourse on human experience is of a unique nature not only in comparison with the world of other creatures but also in comparison with the diverse ways in which human beings perceive and evaluate their own world and the reality of their lives. Moral debate is characterized by the judgmental categories of good and evil, justice and injustice, praiseworthy and reprehensible, duty and right, legitimate and illegitimate, permissible and prohibited, noble and contemptible, a source of respect and pride or a reason for shame and condemnation. These categories distinguish, for example, between morality and the scientific categories of true and false and correct and incorrect, categories which relate to the degree of correspondence of statements to phenomena in reality. Moral discourse similarly distinguishes between morality and the artistic categories of beautiful and ugly, refined and crude, harmonious and discordant, sublime and kitsch, which relate to subjective and sensual feelings on the esthetical dimension of experience. And likewise it distinguishes morality from the categories of efficacy, output and self-interest, which relate to the relative value of a thing from the standpoint of its economic benefit.

An additional characteristic of morality that renders it unique from other aspects of human experience is its all-embracing exigency. Morality is a kind of edict imposed upon human beings, obligating all of us to constantly take stock – with regard to ourselves and to others. In contrast to the dimensions of scientific knowledge and esthetical judgment that do not necessarily oblige everyone, the moral dimension obliges us all, all the time. No one will reprimand us or regard it as a flaw in our personality if we are not scientifically updated or if we ignore magnificent works of art, but in the moral sphere of our public conduct our entire personality is always in the balance – we are either guilty or not guilty – and deserve either praise or condemnation. Each of our decisions and each avoidance of making a decision, every conscious and unconscious choice, every sensitivity and attention and every act of indifference or ignoring – in all of these we are perceived as responsible, as if they were our conscious choices that make us morally accountable. People, the philosopher Tillich says, live under a constant moral burden – similar to the constancy of barometric pressure – of choosing their image and human vocation:

> Man's being, ontic as well as spiritual, is not only given to him but also demands of him. He is responsible for it; literally he is required to answer, if he is asked, what he has made of himself. And he who asks him is his judge, namely he himself, who, at the same time stands against him.... In every act of moral self-affirmation man contributes to the fulfillment of his destiny, to the actualization of what he potentially is.... The judge who is oneself and who stands against oneself, he who knows

with conscience everything we do and are gives a negative judgment, experienced by us as guilt. The anxiety of guilt...is present at every moment of moral self-awareness and can drive us toward complete self-rejection."[5]

The second instance is public. In this case the characteristics of an all-embracing exigency is related to the fact that there is almost no event or act in the public behavior of human beings that is not part of the "moral coordinates grid." Morality is not like a sphere of knowledge or a profession, neither from the point of view of the differentiation of content nor from the aspect of theoretical or skilled specialization. Morality is not optional but present – everywhere and on all levels – in the day-to-day existence common to us all: How will I survive in this world, in which direction will I strive to develop, by which "red lines" will I restrain my ambitions; what stance will I take on minority rights and gender equality, what action will I take on the suffering of distressed populations, and what will be my attitude towards tyrannical regimes and acts of genocide; how will I behave towards the elderly and the disabled, will I bother to "move inside" on the bus in order to make room for more people who seek to reach their destination, and to what degree do I adhere to the rules of driving and parking; how do I behave with regard to children's rights and violence against women, and what position do I hold with regard to the gaps between the rich and poor and between the developed and the Third World countries. The list of demands with which reality – mediated by our morality – challenges us is endless. The philosopher Sartre goes further still and says that every person is responsible not "for his own individuality, but is responsible for all men.... I am responsible for myself and for everyone else. I am creating a certain image of man of my own choosing. In choosing myself, I choose man."[6]

Let us move on to a different kind of clarification regarding the singular characteristics of moral experience, now not in comparison to other creatures or spheres, but to the three elements it comprises – values, virtues and principles – each of which uniquely contributes to the establishment of a moral order and the educational cultivation of a moral person.

(a) Values

In the most general meaning of the term, values are materialistic or spiritual qualities, in diverse spheres of life, to which we attribute importance and by which we wish to be characterized: esthetical values (beauty and harmony), economic values (money and a well-developed

[5] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, pp.51-53.
[6] Sartre, *Existentialism is Humanism*, pp.56-57.

economy), health values (physical and psychic strength), technological values (efficacy and simplicity) and moral values (decency and honesty). In this general meaning of the term, the person who tells us about the great value of his watch (for instance) will be totally clear to all of us: it tells the exact time – hence its functional value; it is made of gold and its price is high – hence its economic value; the person received it from his young beloved – hence its sentimental value; he thinks it is beautiful – hence its esthetical beauty; it is equipped with a heartbeat meter – hence its health-related value. From a more focused and functional point of view, values are *a special kind of ideas (in the private consciousness of the individual as much as in the shared normative consciousness of the community) to which we accord importance as a touchstone for evaluation, judgment and action.* Values, in other words, constitute a sort of *basic standpoint which relates to things as they should be, serves us as criterion for evaluating things as they are, and guiding us towards actions whose purpose is to reduce the gap between the ideal human reality and the actual reality of our daily experience.*

Within the discourse of moral education, it seems to me best to envisage values as consciousness' antennae or radars (and perhaps litmus papers) that constantly follow up processes in the public overt reality as well as in the private one of our inner life, and transfer their judgment to our reflective, normative and deliberative consciousness. Let us turn to the following example: a person who believes in the importance of *gender equality* enters a meeting of a board of directors of a governmental institution, where he realizes that it is attended by 18 male managing directors (determined and full of self-importance) assisted by 18 female secretaries (who obediently and subserviently serve their "bosses"). From what we know of his ethical commitment, it seems reasonable to us that in this given situation his "equality" antennae will send out angry alarms, since a situation in which a person's gender determines his or her status blatantly contradicts the value of equality in general and the value of gender equality in particular. It is reasonable to assume that this person will undergo a similar experience and his antennae will "fly off the handle" when he discovers that all those who enjoy life's pleasures belong to the same ethnic group or have the same skin color, and that those who serve the "pleasure seekers" come from a different ethnic background or have a different skin color.

Another example is related to the value of truth. People who are particularly devoted to the "truth," to which they accord central importance in their thoughts and actions, will probably manifest it in manifold ways: in broadening their education so that they will have deep knowledge of what is happening in reality, in seeking the "roots of truth" in matters relating to allegations and disputes, in expecting of themselves to act truthfully and

honestly with their fellow men and women, in keeping their promises, and in authentically being truthful and honest with themselves. Along these lines, we may generalize that no matter what the values are (moral, aesthetic, economic or ecological) and who hold them (people of all nations and cultures), the "antennae" of the valuators would critically report any impairment to the values they uphold, praise people who promote them, and guide towards actions that actualize those values in the lived reality.

By the same token we should be conscious of the fact that things will often be incomprehensible to a stranger, since a value judgment in reality is often relative and biased: what appears to one person as a grave injustice, such as discrimination against women and black people, will be regarded by someone else as natural and matter-of-course; the evil that one person will see in abandoning the weak and the poor will be experienced by another as a necessary and vital product of the "survival of the fittest"; concern about flora and fauna will be called by some "the eccentricities of the Greens," and the "red lines" and "black flags" of "blatant illegality" will not be seen at all by many, as they were raised to be oblivious to these tones of morality.

From these examples we can learn that cultivating moral values – in the family, the education system and society in general – means first and foremost equipping people with tools for seeing and feeling that enable the very identification of moral situations. We learn further that the problem of education towards values is twofold. The first difficulty lies in fostering vigilance, sensitivity and ethical vitality in diverse spheres of human experience (as a preferable alternative to a personality with dull senses, vague feelings, crude differentiation, and a superficial ability to analyze). The second difficulty surfaces when people are endowed with ethical sensitivity, replete with alertness and vitality, but among some of them the concrete content of values runs totally counter to those of others (or in the worst case, counter to the basic and most universal humanistic values of equality, dignity and freedom).

(b) Qualities of Character

Character qualities, attributes or traits are the actual patterns of behavior and reaction that characterize the personality in its interactions with people and situations. Several examples of the attributes of character are (by juxtaposition): courage vs. cowardice, temperance vs. impatience, generosity and unselfishness vs. misery and petty calculating, modesty vs. conceit, meticulousness and thoroughness vs. sloppiness and superficiality, empathic and sympathetic consideration vs. egocentric and alienated selfishness, will

power and strength vs. a weak and irresolute will, kindheartedness and compassion vs. malice and hardheartedness.

In a certain sense one can definitely see in the qualities of character the translation of values from the language of thinking to that of praxis. Moreover, the moral virtues (desirable qualities of character) are the most important and decisive product from the point of view of moral education, since, as Aristotle said, our interest in studying morality is not in order that we know how to speak eloquently about morality but so that we be moral in our relationships with others, i.e., that we should possess moral virtues.[7] It was indeed Aristotle who disagreed with his teacher Plato and called our attention to the fact that intellectual excellence or theoretical knowledge of morality is insufficient for being a moral person (high intelligence and broad education per se, as history has shown us on numerous occasions, are not enough to make a person moral). There is a vast distance between attributing importance to values such as equality, honesty, courage, empathy, tolerance, decency or loyalty and the practical fulfillment of these values, in quotidian attributes and behavior (as evidenced by those who "love humanity but hate people"). Courage, empathy and honesty, for example, are not things that can be learned by listening to lectures, but rather through authentic life experiences that challenge us to perform courageous deeds, feel empathic or behave honestly; a courageous, empathic or honest human being will be one who will again and again, in the face of harsh reality and its temptations, successfully overcome the challenges and embody in his or her behavior the sought-for attributes.

It is clear therefore that the task of nurturing a moral character must take the elements of temperament and emotion into consideration, side by side with intellectual nurturing: negative qualities of temperament such as a tendency towards anger, servility, aggression and impulsiveness can overshadow even the purest intentions; the positive qualities of temperament, such as tranquility, peace of mind, stability, balance, attentiveness and concentration can constitute a moderating effect even on an "evil mind." This is also true of our emotional elements. To a great extent they are formed during an interaction with the human environment during childhood and have a considerable influence over our character: sensitivity vs. obtuseness, a feeling of self-value and self-respect vs. self-effacement and self-contempt. Empathy and love for the other vs. selfish egocentricity, love of life and *joie de vivre* vs. depressed passivity, the ability to give and receive love vs. distant and distancing coldness, attentiveness to the emotions and feelings of yourself and the other vs. self and social alienation; all these and the like (which have been recently classified as emotional

[7] Aristotle, *Ethics*, book II, 2.

intelligence or emotional literacy) are qualities that affect our desires, motivation, actualization of goals, interpersonal relationships, and the overall setup of things about which we care, that "touch" us, and motivate us towards thought and endeavor.

In conclusion, theoretical knowledge, ethical consciousness, temperament and emotion, join forces as the elements that establish character. The attributes of character manifest these elements, not as raw material but integrally: as habits and patterns that have been nurtured and internalized – externally by the significant environment, and internally by the individual's free choice – to coalesce into basic behavioral tendencies that are integrated into the creation of a "second nature." In any event, as the Roman Stoic Seneca said, the shaping and preservation of moral character mandates constant and arduous labor by the individual on him- or herself: "You have to preserve and fortify your pertinacity until the will to good becomes a disposition to good."[8]

(c) Moral Principles

Moral principles are guidelines for deliberation, decisions and actions in the sphere of morality – they show us what we should consider and how we should think, choose and act in diverse human situations. The best known example of a system of moral principles is the Ten Commandments, the most universal of which are: *honor thy father and thy mother, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor,* and *thou shalt not covet* (Exodus 20; see also "to do justice and judgment" as a characteristic that defines the People of Israel as a light to the nations in the book of Genesis 18: 18-19). Additional contribution of Judaism includes the following guiding principles: "*Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not...And thou shalt not take no gift...thou shalt not oppress a stranger*" (Exodus, 23: 7-9); "*Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the might but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.*" (Leviticus, 19: 15-18; see also Deuteronomy, 16: 19). "*But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were a stranger in the land of Egypt* (Levitcus, 19: 34); "*Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.*" (Psalms, 34: 15); "*Nation shall not lift up sword against nation*" (Isaiah, 2: 4); "*Hate the evil and love the good and establish judgment in the gate*" (Amos, 5: 15); "*If*

[8] Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*, p.63.

ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow and shed not innocent blood" (Jeremiah, 7: 6); "*Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom*" (Proverbs, 4: 7) and "*Let not mercy and truth forsake thee*" (Proverbs, 3: 3); *"What is hateful to you do not do unto others"* (Hillel, the Talmud); base your life on *"truth, judgment and peace"* and *"Let thy friend's honor be as dear to thee as thine own"* (Ethics of the Fathers 2:15).

A further example of moral principles in ancient times can be found in the words of Socrates when he argued with his friend and student Crito on the idea of escape from prison.[9] First, he said, not life itself but the *good and worthy life is the ultimate goal* and therefore survival per se should not justify all means. Second, as in matters of medicine, great importance should not be accorded to the majority opinion but *to the opinion of those who are in the possession of knowledge and reasoning.* Thirdly, moral decisions should be based on *rational reasoning* and should not be taken according to desire and emotional disposition. On the fourth count, moral reasoning should be treated *consistently and without bias*; i.e., the situation should be examined in light of general principles, and one should not abandon a principle simply because its meaning to you now is a loss, or a payment for damage that you must bear. On the fifth count, and this is the arch-principle of all and any moral considerations, *injustice should not be done: there is a prohibition against and injury to the life, body, soul, freedom, dignity and possessions of innocent people.*

There is not enough room here to present, let alone explain, all the moral principles that have been added to human culture since ancient times and until the present day, but I will mention the most notable in modern times. First, it is important to present the view of the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, who identified moral consciousness with the "general will" and moral judgment with insistence that *individual goods that we desire to achieve will be compatible with the general good.*[10] In contrast to Rousseau, who avoided presenting his moral perception in terms of imperatives, the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who was greatly influenced by Rousseau, posited two categorical (absolute) imperatives as the touchstones for human beings' moral thoughts and decisions: the first, "act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law"[11] (so that this kind of behavior by all people in a similar situation will be justifiable); the second, that one "should treat himself and all others, never merely as a means, but always at the same time

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[9] Plato, *Crito.*

[10] Rousseau's position appears in various forms in *Emile* or *On Education*, and also in *The Social Contract.*

[11] Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, p.88.

as an end in himself"[12] (never dwarf your personality or that of the other to the degree of functionality in any social or interest-oriented system).

A different moral perception, which focuses on results rather than on intention, was presented by the British philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, who identified moral reasoning with the utilitarian principle; acting in such manners that would produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people (or that would minimize human suffering to the smallest amount possible).[13] Another approach was presented by the philosopher Nietzsche, who grounded the supreme morality of authentic and sovereign human beings as an antithesis both to the deontological moral theories of Socrates and Kant and the result-oriented utilitarian morality of Bentham and Mill. According to Nietzsche, "in man creature and creator are united" and therefore there is nothing more worthless than conformity to "herd-like morality" – be it rational or hedonistic. Nietzsche's perception can be presented in two principles: those who wish to lead a full and meaningful life should live in such a way that in every moment of their lives they will be able to say to themselves that they would want to continue and live their lives (as they have lived them) innumerable times and for eternity; the second principle is to live one's life as an authentic person, being truthful to yourself and making more of yourself by constant self-perfection and self-overcoming that are guided by the ideal of creating one's own style and identity.[14] The last in this catalogue of examples is the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber who, in the spirit of the principle of the dignity of Man and through awareness of the barbarism embodied in the dehumanization of the other, postulated a demand to base our social life on the "I-Thou" relationship: human relations that comprise mutual interest, openness, sensitivity, enrichment, trust and respect, avoiding as far as possible relating to a person as "the other," like an object, tool or function for one's own use.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF VALUE CRISIS

In the mid-19th century Dostoyevsky said, through Ivan Karamazov, that "if there is no God than everything is permissible," and towards the end of that century Nietzsche announced, "God is dead...we have killed him!... What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is

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[12] Ibid., p.101.

[13] J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism and Other Writings*.

[14] On the integration of creature and creator in Man, see *Beyond Good and Evil*, sec. 225. On the characteristics of "Master Morality ," see *The Gay Science*, Sections 270, 335; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "The Way of the Creator," "On the Generous Virtue," "On Tablets Old and New"; *Beyond Good and Evil*, secs. 203, 211, 260.

it moving now? Whither are we moving?... Is there still any up and down?... Is not night continually closing in on us?[15] Dostoyevsky was a religious man while Nietzsche was a proclaimed atheist, but they both shared the same anxiety about a barbaric direction that would overpower the human race as a result of a drastic transition from absolute faith in moral values (grounded in God's imperatives) to total negation of all cultural and moral yardsticks regarding the existence of a proper and dignified human life. "Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us?" asks Nietzsche.[16] And he adds his analysis: now that dogmatic belief in religious truth is replaced by zealous belief that all is false and irrelevant, and therefore everything is permissible: "the entire idealism of mankind hitherto is on the point of changing suddenly into nihilism – into the belief in absolute worthlessness, i.e., meaninglessness."[17] (It is worthy of note that Nietzsche understands the necessity of the crisis and believes that it is merely a pathological stage in the life of Western Culture, and that it will be overcome by people who have themselves overcome both absolutism and nihilism – who have triumphed over both the divine and the emptiness).

Belief in God was the first victim, and in fact some regard the combination (in the 17th century) of the scientific revolution and Spinoza's naturalistic philosophy as its primary undertakers, but belief in God was surely not the last victim. Jokingly, but somewhat painfully, someone said that "God is dead, Marx is dead, Darwin is dead, Nietzsche is dead, Freud is dead, and Sartre and Camus are dead, and we're not feeling too well either." It seems to me that recently a growing number of people are stating that communism is dead, capitalism is committing suicide, the ideologies have collapsed, idealism is on its deathbed, even post-modernism is loathsome, and cynicism and hedonism are having a ball. With the shattering of all the gods there is no longer a belief or a standpoint that is accepted by the general public as possessing absolute validity (in the religious and metaphysical sense), or even objective validity (in the scientific knowledge sense).

This is true not only on the religious and ideological level but it can also be seen in the fabric of daily life: in positions relating to masculinity, femininity, childhood, and the rights that pertain to them; in the status of scientific knowledge, moral values and artistic judgment; in the kind of resources necessary for survival and developing strength; in the boundaries between the national and the international, between home and the workplace

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[15] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sec. 125.
[16] Ibid.,ibid.
[17] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, vol. 2, p.80. See also vol. 1, pp.9-45; and also *Beyond Good and Evil*, sec. 55.

– in such an ever-changing reality the task of self-definition and moral education becomes more difficult than ever.

One might add that the distress and crisis (mentioned earlier) do not stem from the strengthening of one position at the expense of another, but from the emptying of all standpoints of real and significant content. This is due to the all-embracing agreement that has become the prejudice of an entire generation, that in any event "this whole moral thing" lacks meaning and validity, and does not change anything in the world.[18] Truth, justice, beauty, generosity, courtesy and all the virtues that traditionally constituted the core of moral and educational discourse have been currently relegated from the public arena to a personal niche. Morality has become privatized and thus moral knowledge and moral discourse have been emptied of content, rendering individuals, allegedly for the good of their personal freedom, devoid of the basic tools for conducting an intelligent and critical examination of their own personal morality and that of society.

According to this logic, since every person has his or her conception of truth, good, justice and beauty, and there is no objective and common yardstick for evaluating their validity and value, any engaging in cultural, moral and educational ideals is perceived as a superfluous bother and some even regard it as tendentious and depressive patronizing. As a conclusive slogan of the spirit of the times one might say that "ought is out, is is in," "the ideal is dead, long live the actual and the concrete." The "rating" principle has replaced striving towards cultural quality, public relations shift serious deliberation and moral considerations into the periphery, economic and marketing logic overcome educational and pedagogical ideals, "one night stands" and momentary excitement become the main "materials of life," and technocratic and bureaucratic considerations of utility replace serious consideration of moral values. Hence it seems that there is a great deal of truth in the argument of cultural critics that this combination of scientific positivism, ethical relativism, technocratic consciousness and capitalistic economies become the hegemonic ideology in the second half of the 20th century, and proves highly efficient in neutralizing any critical discourse that can present alternative ideas and values.

And again, from the moral point of view, it is not theoretical matters per se that are disturbing but their practical representation in our daily life. Side by side with the benefits gained by humankind as a result of its freeing itself of the various types of absolute and totalitarian systems – benefits gained from expanding freedom and deepening democracy, extending life

[18] For an analysis of this phenomenon and its being an obstacle to the acquisition of education and culture, see Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind;* and also my book, Aloni, *Beyond Nihilism*, chs. 3-6.

expectancy and raising the standard of living – we cannot ignore, as the sons and daughters of the 20th century, the horrendous barbarism that we have brought upon ourselves. We have witnessed barbarism of the murderous annihilation of over one hundred million human beings in wars, national revolutions, civil wars and attempts at genocide. We have also "succeeded" in creating many other forms of barbarism: the barbarity of the destruction of the natural environment; the barbarity in dwarfing numerous people and transforming them into producers/consumers who identify the human quality of life exclusively with the material standard of living; the barbarity of the big cities, in which the culture of wealth expanded together with the expansion of a culture of disadvantage, poverty, neglect, illiteracy, violence and hopelessness; the barbarity in inflicting calculating, quantitative and practical thinking on all spiritual spheres; and spiritual barbarism that in leisure time seeks entertaining excitement and immediate satisfaction – in the tabloids and light television – because the great majority lacks the strength for and interest in what is profound, serious, qualitative and demanding.

This state of a value and authority crisis makes moral and humanistic education almost impossible. In philosophical terms we speak of the "death of God," the "smashing of idols" and an "earthquake," after which there are no longer facts but only interpretation, no longer objective vision but only perspective, no longer a common humanity but only isolating multi-culturalism; no longer philosophers who demonstrate the moral path and living according to it, but only "professional philosophers" who wrestle with the meaning of concepts, divorced from life's distresses, no longer exclamation points but only question marks, no longer the sublime vs. the lowly, deep vs. superficial, fine vs. crude, but only the different, dissimilar and unique.

On the philosophical level we are perhaps faced with interesting and fruitful problematics, but in education this is translated into a loss of value, meaning, and a sterilizing and paralyzing course. How can one educate without a belief in human destination, cultural ideals, common normative ethics or any other kind of educational vision that will provide logic, purpose or meaning to the entire educational effort? To which content and trends should the awareness of students be directed and with which virtues should they be challenged, when all the clear markings have been erased from the "signposts" of life, and they are dominated by arbitrariness and fashion? How will we activate moral reasoning when the "coordinates of conscience" have faded and have become unrecognizable, when humanistic knowledge, relegated to the periphery, is dwindling and replaced by functional and success-seeking knowledge of science, technology, "the science of money" and the technical skills of life? It must be made clear that we are not

speaking here of the problem related to teachers' and educators' loss of respect and authority, but of the fact that both educators and students no longer accord value and importance to certain human and cultural qualities as revered things that should challenge them into exerting a special effort – qualities such as human excellence that arouses respect, serves as a source of inspiration and action, and is accepted by the individual as a guiding and directive authority towards the fulfillment of a worthy human ideal.

I believe that a possible solution for the present crisis can be found in the words of the disease's diagnostician: Nietzsche, who described the inevitable and destructive character of nihilism in Western culture, also demanded that we regard it as a temporary pathology that needs to be overcome; that a life-craving and culture-craving humanity will attempt to overcome this pathology regarding the loss of value and direction as the essence of its existence and as a guiding logic for its thoughts and deeds. For the notable representatives of this perspective, Nietzsche and Camus, the matter is first and foremost a feeling of love, affirmation and loyalty towards human life: towards human beings as wondrous and singular creatures, who in their freedom, reason and imagination establish their world and afford it meaning, significance and value. And in the spirit of humanistic pragmatism (whose characteristics will be presented later) we must seek and identify within the wealth of human qua human creation neither an absolute all-embracing principle, nor an "eternal continent" for grounding our lives, but the best that common human experience offers us in each sphere at a given point in time in our life. It seems to me that this is what Socrates meant when he said that what is good for Man stems from his tireless engagement in what is good, just and beautiful – constantly learning from past experience, overcoming faults and mistakes, and seeking alternative approaches. The alternatives are familiar to us and are less desirable: the one, absolute dogmatism, whose character is false and depressive; the second, relativistic dogmatism, whose character is nihilistic and whose fulfillment lies in the destruction of education and culture.

4. THE SOURCES OF THE AUTHORITY OF MORAL JUDGMENT

There is something problematic in the attempt to examine the sources of the authority of moral judgment at this stage of the discussion, after we have already "declared" (in the previous chapters and at the opening of this one) the humanistic approach as the binding frame of reference. Despite this difficulty, it seems to me to be unavoidable, the reason for this being that in cultural and educational matters the lines of progress are multi-directional

and never linear, a kind of dynamic system that constantly examines the value and vitality of each of its components according to its modes of relating to other components. In this kind of hermeneutic activity – scholastic, interpretive and creative – each new component of knowledge enables us to see things slightly differently, and may challenge and undermine our prejudices and "firm" standpoints. The new overall perspective that we adopt eventually serves us for a richer and fuller examination of each of the old and new components that are at work in it.

It is common practice to divide the sources of the authority of moral judgment into five approaches or basic standpoints. The first regards the source of values and moral imperatives as a supreme, superhuman and sacred being – God – who gave the human race the "straight and narrow path." This perception, accepted by the three monotheistic religions, accords an absolute and eternal status to the principles of morality, as a result of the supreme source of moral law. The second standpoint grounds morality in human rationality, while some thinkers attribute moral knowledge to cognitive intuitions related to the nature and content of the good and proper (Plato); others, like Kant, focus on the structure and logic of human rationality and rely on it as a basis for the articulation of the formal principles of moral consideration (universalization). The third, bases moral consideration on the nature of Man (Aristotle, Mill, Maslow); i.e., an empirical examination of the final goals to which human beings strive – such as happiness, self-actualization and development – and finding conditions and ways (as efficient means) that will maximize attaining and fulfilling those goals. The fourth approach attributes moral principles to the cultural framework that various societies (Western civilization, Far-Eastern civilization, the Eskimo civilization and other civilizations and social and communal sub-civilizations) developed for themselves, and therefore morality – like religion or pornography – depends on geography; i.e., a standpoint of cultural relativism. The fifth standpoint, which is often called subjectivism, claims that moral principles and values cannot be substantiated or rationally justified in any way because they are nothing more than an expression of the personal preferences of each individual according to his or her singularity, just like our priorities that relate to food or clothing.

Against the backdrop of these differentiations I wish to propose an alternative approach, which I will call *humanistic pragmatism*. Let us first define it indirectly, suggesting that it negates both the religious and subjectivist approaches. The religious approach cannot be accepted for three reasons: because it presents moral principles as deriving from a supra-human source (that is relevant only to believers and not to all thinking people), because their supra-human source renders them "resistant to the critique of reason and human knowledge," and because different religions have

different perceptions of morality (leaving us with no objective and impartial criteria for examining their value and validity).

The subjectivist approach should also be rejected on three counts. First, it is misguided when it situates moral arguments on the same plane as preferences related to food or clothing. True, a culinary preference of chicken over pork, and an esthetic preference of a turtleneck over an open collar cannot be argued or rationally explained, but with regard to moral questions concerning killing innocent people, racial prejudice, child abuse, and the perversion of justice, one can argue, and resolutely so. In such arguments an attempt to convince is conducted by the substantiation of facts and ways of thinking which have an objective nature. This process includes the following: clarifying facts that are relevant to a given event, researching the involved factors, examining the consistency and logical coherence of arguments, striving towards a neutral and unbiased judgment, examining the possible implications of specific processes on the public – these are examples of the public aspects of moral discourse that accord it objective foundations.[19] A second reason for rejecting the subjectivist standpoint lies in the fact that it does not lend itself to critical scrutiny – denying a priori the very possibility of the existence of any objective basis whatsoever for overall human morality. Thirdly, this standpoint should be rejected on pragmatic grounds, since it serves as fertile soil for moral nihilism according to which any deed or form of behavior is considered good, just and proper just like any other.

More positively, in the spirit of Martha Nussbaum's worldview, humanistic pragmatism begins with Protagoras' famous determination that "man is the measure of all things": neither the subjectivist sense that every individual is a yardstick for his- or herself, nor according to the cultural relativistic approach that claims that every society is the yardstick for itself, but rather in the sense that the human race – whose humanity is common to us both in biological existence and cultural creativity – is the basis for and sole context of moral judgment.[20] This approach, which has a variety of names – ethological, anthropocentric, and socio-centric – is humanistic both in essence and purpose. Its point of departure relates to the distinctively human qualities – free will, the powers of reason and judgment, moral sensitivity and creative imagination – as the source of human dignity and the ability of humans to shape their image and lead their lives for their own benefit. Its final purpose is advancing human beings on essential dimensions

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[19] See Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*; Morgenbesser, "Approaches to Ethical Objectivity"; and Scheffler, "Moral Education and the Democratic Ideal."
[20] Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness.*

relevant to their existence – health, well-being, freedom, development, happiness and self-actualization.

This approach is also pragmatic on two counts. Firstly, it does not pretend to expose the absolute and eternal basis of morality, but, similar to the scientific approach, seeks to expand knowledge and eradicate erroneous perceptions in the light of accumulated human experience. Secondly, it is not dogmatic but rather enables, by its openness, the use of insights taken from numerous and diverse moral approaches, and examines to what degree they "work" for us – contributing, in real life experience, to the advancement of Man's development, well-being and dignity.

In the combination of these two elements (if this can be termed as such) the authority of humanistic morality is created: people who do not necessarily enjoy formal authority (like judges or military generals), but whose ethical positions, moral deliberation, and personal qualities "convince" us to give special weight to their moral judgment (in the spirit of the "decent people" to whom Socrates directed his student Crito, telling him that their opinion was preferable to the "majority opinion"). In light of the characteristics of humanistic pragmatism it appears that these people, who can assist us as a moral authority (as a kind of serving elite) should meet three criteria: (1) their words and actions will prove their caring and commitment to values, principles and virtues that promote human beings' development, wellbeing and dignity; (2) they should be equipped with a broad knowledge of culture, morality and psychology as well as with a wide variety of sensibilities and abilities for evaluation and judgment, so that a suitable basis will be created for placing issues in relevant cultural, theoretical and normative contexts; (3) they exhibit open-mindedness, flexible thinking and a willingness to examine their standpoints in the light of the evidence of experience and alternative standpoints.

When these conditions are fulfilled, it appears to me that it would not be groundless to compare morality to a bridge and the sages of morality to engineers: pedestrian bridges and moral paths can exist in countless formal and stylistic variations; nevertheless, beyond variance and variety, there are certain basic principles that must be strictly observed so that crossing the bridges and walking along the paths will be safe and successful – otherwise both bridge and morality will collapse and the human toll in both cases will be heavy and unnecessary.

In this context it is important to highlight three additional aspects. The first is that the humanistic pragmatic approach provides some protection against modern-post-modern nihilism: by renouncing any pretense for absolute and eternal truth, it assists in our immunization against the human "disease" of "all or nothing." In other words, if a person whose hope of finding an absolute and permanent anchor in life (such as absolute morality)

is proven false, there is the danger that he will "surf" in the direction of the opposite extreme – a total negation of all moral criteria. On the other hand, those who recognize morality as acquired knowledge – and therefore also open to error – will not despair as a result of their disappointment, but will be stimulated to continue to learn and improve their moral strategy, as a human mechanism for furthering human growth and well-being.

The second aspect offers a way of coping with cultural relativism. In the spirit of the humanistic worldview presented in the previous chapter, the pragmatic approach differentiates between the core of morality, whose content should be accorded an objective and universal status, and ever-broadening circles, from the center to the periphery. At the basic core of morality we are committed to the values of human life, equality, dignity and freedom (and to an absolute prohibition to injure the life, body, freedom, dignity and well-being of innocent people). As the circles expand, we pass through "gray areas" about which we may still argue with regard to common criteria, finally reaching absolute freedom and ethical preferences (communal and individual) about which there is no point in arguing.[21]

The third aspect deals with a preference to foster virtues rather than repress wrongs. In the spirit of Aristotle, Spinoza, Rousseau, Dewey and Maslow, and counter to the approach of the monotheistic religions and Kant and Freud, the moral perception of humanistic pragmatism maintains that the worthy and effective way of cultivating human beings to behave morally with their fellow men and women, is bound up primarily with a directive nurturing of their abilities and natural tendencies (in the mental, emotional and volitional spheres) towards virtues of character, and less with a restraining or normative suppression of the nature of the child (which is ostensibly instinctual and problematic). In other words, "the imagination of man's heart" (Genesis 8:21), according to the humanistic moral perception, is not naturally good or bad but contains an infinite repertoire of possibilities. It is better to rely on the positive powers embodied in the child and on a positive self-image than on a battle against the negative powers and an image of man as a fundamentally evil sinner.

The list of prominent philosophers that belong to this heritage of thinking includes (with a variety of emphases) Protagoras (according to Nussbaum's interpretation), Aristotle (whose moral perception I presented extensively in the first chapter), Spinoza and Mill (upon whom I expanded in the second chapter), Dewey (as a philosopher of "human growth"), Abraham Maslow (as a humanist psychologist of "self-actualization"), Erich Fromm (as a philosopher who believed in the objective and universal status of life-enabling and life-expanding values), Albert Camus (upon whom I expanded

[21] Foot, "Morality and Art."

in the second chapter) and Jorgen Habermas. More than any other contemporary philosopher, Habermas represents striving towards an objective and universal humanistic moral contract, on the one hand, which will freely and by common use of reason be accepted by the public, and, on the other, will be totally committed to preventing another "Auschwitz".

As an example of the importance of a moral philosopher whose perception expresses pragmatic humanism I will mention Albert Camus here: he is the one who in the midst of the human *Plague* sought a way to be "a saint without God."[22] When he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature it was said of him that he was "the conscience of Europe in its darkest hour." In his "Letters to a German Friend," a polemic that Camus sent to a German "friend" who chose to become a Nazi, we find the most powerful and succinct expression of the acceptance of "man (or humanity) as the measure of all things" and a commitment to the sanctity of life and human solidarity:

> I have never believed in the power of truth in itself. But it is at least worth knowing that when expressed forcefully truth wins out over falsehood. This is the difficult equilibrium we have reached. This is the distinction that gives us strength as we fight today.... What is truth, you used to ask. To be sure, but at least we know what falsehood is.... What is spirit? We know its contrary, which is murder. What is man? There I stop you, for we know. Man is that force which ultimately cancels all tyrants and gods. He is the force of evidence. Human evidence is what we must preserve.
>
> For a long time we both thought that this world had no ultimate meaning and that consequently we were cheated...but I have come to different conclusions than you used to talk about.... You never believed in the meaning of this world, and you therefore deduced the idea that everything was equivalent and that good and evil could be defined according to one's wishes. You supposed that in the absence of any human or divine code the only values were those of the animal world – in other words, violence and cunning....
>
> Where lay the difference? Simply that you readily accepted despair and I never yielded to it. Simply that you saw the injustice of our condition to the point of being willing to add to it, whereas it seemed to me that man must exalt justice in order to fight against eternal injustice, create happiness in order to protest against the universe of unhappiness.... I merely wanted men to rediscover their solidarity in order to wage war against their revolting fate.... I chose justice in order to remain faithful to the world. I continue to believe that this world has

[22] Camus, *The Plague*, p. 237.

no ultimate meaning. But I know that something in it has a meaning and that is man, because he is the only creature to insist on having one...hence he must be saved if we want to save the idea we have of life.[23]

5. THE METHODS AND LIMITATIONS OF HUMANISTIC MORAL EDUCATION

Engaging in the moral education of others invokes weighty responsibility. This is the result of both the potentially pretentious and intrusive intervention in the freedom of others in matters pertaining to the formation of character and the fact that the greater the chance to mend and better, the greater the risk of spoiling and corrupting. As we have seen in the 20th century, teachers and educators (by their vocation) were often partners to and collaborators with tyrannical and murderous regimes, joining forces in the corruption of the character of the young and in the shaping of monsters who disseminated murder and destruction. Instead of education in the humanistic sense of the word, they operated methods of indoctrination and propaganda that impaired the discretion of the young, emasculated any critical thinking and moral emotion, stripped them of their human form, thus creating conditions for the negation of the humanity of groups and nations – both by their physical annihilation and by trampling their rights and human dignity.

In light of this, when we seek to outline the characteristics and methods of moral education, we should first impose limits or initial cautionary rules that will prevent us from "slipping" away from educational methods that better the character of human beings and expand their humanity, and from allowing them to fall into the hands of those who corrupt them and impair their human image. For this reason we will employ three limiting principles mentioned in the previous chapter as being fundamental to the characteristics of humanistic education.

The first relates to the student's overall and multi-faceted development. This is stated in the spirit of the Athenian educator Protagoras, who defined education as the art of guiding the young person towards attaining a full and successful human life,[24] as well as in the spirit of Whitehead's modern version, that education is the instruction of individuals in the art of life and towards maximal and successful actualization of their abilities in the

[23] Camus, "Letters to a German Friend," letters 1 and 4.
[24] Plato, "Protagoras."

concrete reality of their lives.[25] In other words, as humanistic moral educators, we have an interest in the full and harmonious development of their full abilities and skills. We care about them not as learners of corpuses of knowledge, not as trainees in professional specialties, not as devoted soldiers in the service of God, not as functionaries in the civil service, not as efficient robots in the service of industry, not as greedy consumers in a capitalistic economy, and not as emissaries of the "right" ideology – but first and foremost in their normal development and well-being as full personalities who enjoy meaningful and dignified human lives. For this reason, we should be on our guard not to use the name of moral education in vain, and, for the sake of its alleged progress, cause students to mortgage their critical awareness, moral sensitivity, independent thinking and authentic self-actualization.

This issue of extending the range of student abilities and sensitivities brings us to the second principle: strictly adhering to open-mindedness and human dignity. In the spirit of commitment to humanism, democracy and enlightenment, this attribute leads to the total negation of indoctrination, propaganda, blind training, conditioning and all other manipulative and power-abusing methods for shaping human beings' worldview and character. As we have seen in the previous chapter, it is mandatory that teachers conduct discussions on education, even on the most sensitive subjects, in an atmosphere of open-mindedness and human dignity. It should be pluralistic, tolerant, free of threat, and encouraging the formulation of critical and autonomous normative positions – in writing as much as in free and open discussions.

The third limitary principle is based on the previous two. It indicates that we should prevent our students from becoming foolish and obedient followers of the values that we, as educators, seek to nurture in them – even if they are, in our perception, worthy. In other words: "one repays a teacher badly if one always remains nothing but a pupil,"[26] and educators who have not empowered their students' freedom and ability to go beyond what they have imparted to them, have not faithfully fulfilled their duty. According to this approach, educators who are worthy of the name, do not merely focus on nurturing conformity to existing norms, but also attempt to cultivate their students' individual autonomy so that they will be capable of criticizing and going beyond these norms. They are not satisfied with their students internalizing the community's collective identity, but also urge and empower their students to achieve a definition of their individual identity as unique individuals in the community. They certainly are not satisfied with their

[25] Whitehead, *The Aims of Education*, ch. 3.
[26] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p.190.

students' tribal mentality, provincial perspective or ethno-centric pride, but encourage them to extend and deepen their spiritual world through a geographical, historical and cultural voyage through the domains of human existence and creativity. The success of true educators is thus measured by their students becoming active personalities who are able to differentially and effectively utilize their acquired knowledge and values; going beyond the framework of the external influences that shaped them, and in their critical and creative vitality screen and mend reality and establish new and better moral insights for the future.

On the basis of the approach and principles I presented regarding the essential characteristics of education and morality, I seek to offer a formal definition of the main objective of moral education: *to create among students, both in theory and practice, a commitment to a system of values, virtues and principles which will outline for the individual the norms of worthy behavior in all matters pertaining to inter-personal and social behavior.* We have also seen that as a result of our basic commitment to humanism, democracy and enlightenment, and in light of a cultural reality characterized by a value crisis, we do not and cannot want to ground moral education in absolutes – be they religious, ideological or philosophical. In my opinion the desired approach has been outlined by the educational philosopher John Dewey, who regarded education as a process directed towards human growth, of both the individual and society, by shaping young people as the "inheritors-partners" of the accumulated treasures of knowledge and morality.[27]

Assuming that the purpose of morality is enabling optimal human conditions for the development, well-being and dignity of humankind, it has accumulated in its sphere, similar to science and technology, values, virtues and principles that have objective credibility as effective promoters of the desirable purpose. In the context of moral aggregation, similar to what has been manifested in the UN universal declarations regarding human rights and non-discrimination, nothing in the humanistic moral code is held sacred, but by virtue of being more rational and more universal than its alternatives, it is the best moral code that is currently at our disposal.

For this reason, moral education cannot but rely on the assets in moral cultural heritage, and nurture these qualities among the young generations. But at the same time, in order to respect the freedom, reason and independence of those being educated, and in order to prepare them so that they will be capable of repairing the existing ills and shaping a better future, we also need to train them in thinking, debating, moral deliberation, and decision-making, which bear the attributes of pluralism, rationality,

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[27] John Dewey, "My Pedagogical Creed" and also *Democracy and Education.*

autonomy, criticism and creativity. In the following sections I will present the aspects that in my opinion are the most significant for the promotion of moral education.

(a) Reciprocity as a Point of Departure for Moral Consideration

In a humanistic, democratic and enlightened society, not only political rule enjoys legitimacy and authority by virtue of the people's free and equal choice. This is true also of "moral rule." Any moral debate, like any political one in such a society must assume the basic equality of all human beings as free, rational, autonomous, sensitive, creative and unique beings. The point of departure for a moral discourse or debate is one that is conducted in an open atmosphere, free of threat, aware of the equal value of human beings and their right to be different. It is characterized by a shared effort to reach a rational agreement on society's desirable character as well as on the principles and priorities that will maximally ensure that everyone has an opportunity to lead a meaningful and dignified human life.[28]

Such moral debates do not constitute a periodic event in the entire society, but one that takes place simultaneously at all times in the various cycles of life: within the family unit, sports, the school, the youth movement, the neighborhood, the workplace, the legal system, the political system, the international system, and so forth. What is common to these debates, assuming that they are indeed moral, can be defined as the awareness of *mutuality or reciprocity*, which possesses both psychological and philosophical facets.

From the psychological point of view, mutuality consists in experiencing the humanity of the other: awareness that he or she has a body, consciousness, emotions, drives and desires that are familiar to us through our knowledge of ourselves. This consciousness develops into a consciousness of the common denominator that links all of us as human beings: the preference of security, health, sympathy and freedom over threat, illness, rejection and subjugation, as well as the quest to actualize our abilities and desires, to safely raise our children, to enjoy the respect, fairness and appreciation of others.

Next to psychological or phenomenological experience, mutuality is conceptualized to create a philosophical tenet, in the willingness to base interpersonal, social and international relationships on principles that will apply equally to all parties because they are directed towards equally

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[28] On the preliminary point of departure of moral discourse, see: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice.*

promoting the good of all parties. Or in a different version, *mutuality* is a kind of awareness and commitment, that is based on the recognition of human equality and a feeling of partnership in the various communities in which people live, guiding the individual to prefer behaviors that contribute to the flourishing of the entire community as well as to the well being of any individual in it as an equal member in that community.

(b) Nurturing the Moral Point of View

The moral point of view is essentially a cognitive component (a "philosophical conscience" that is different from a "psychological conscience") and comprises the content and formal elements upon which moral thinking should be based. The essence of the moral point of view is that *in all matters pertaining to interpersonal and social relationships to which judgments of good and evil, justice and injustice, worthy and flawed apply, we will judge and act through an aspiration to promote the development, well-being and dignity of all; together with a commitment to the basic values of human life, freedom, equality and dignity; and through adherence to deliberation that is rational, empathic, impartial, universal, and consistent.*

This version of the moral point of view is directed towards focusing thinking on three aspects that should be accorded moral consideration: (1) basing the *ultimate end* of moral thinking on striving towards establishing conditions that will maximally and equally promote the development, well-being and dignity of humankind; (2) defining the *content core of values* on which all humanity's agreement is mandatory: the sanctity of human life, the equal worth of all humans, strict adherence to human and civic rights; (3) *conducting moral deliberations that are* rational (relying on facts and logical arguments), impartial (unbiased, objective or impersonal), universal (applying to all human beings in similar situations) and taking the other into account (relating to the needs and concrete desires of others and practicing caution with regard to the possible implications of my behavior on others).

Among the various attempts to situate the moral point of view within the developmental-educational context, Lawrence Kohlberg's psychological theory is particularly notable. Kohlberg's point of departure is cognitivist: from philosophy, he adopted Plato's notion of justice as the supreme good, and from Immanuel Kant he adopted his insights concerning the active part of consciousness in building reality as well as the universalibility principle as an essential element in any moral consideration. From psychology, he adopted Jean Piaget's theory of the maturation of mental abilities along a uniform and regular continuum of developmental stages. His innovation lies in his claim that beyond all social and cultural variance, human beings have

the same formal patterns of moral reasoning as well as in the process of maturation towards this conception.

According to Kohlberg's theory, which he examined and substantiated in empirical experiments, there are six stages of moral thinking, or six moral logics, which are discernable in types of considerations and ways of reasoning. Kohlberg also maintained that there is a uniform and regular developmental continuum of moral stages that are uniform and immutable in all human societies. Kohlberg assembles the first two stages under one category of *pre-conventional egocentrism*. The first stage is characterized by direct egocentric calculation related to the avoidance of punishment or unpleasantness, the source of which is external authority perceived as powerful and prestigious; the second is characterized by a desire for satisfaction and pleasure that can be achieved by utilitarian and instrumental mutuality (the "profitability" of self-seekers).

Kohlberg classified the third and fourth stages under the category of *conformist conventionalism*, whose frame of reference is the group or society's accepted "togetherness." The third stage is characterized by an aspiration to please the dominant expectation of the group and win sympathy for being "okay," "good," "a contributor." The fourth stage is characterized by the according of importance to authority, norms, discipline and the fulfillment of duties directed to the actualization of social order as something that has inner value per se.

Kohlberg places the fifth and sixth stages under the category of *autonomous post-conventionalism*, as a term that indicates going beyond egocentric utilitarian accounting and the authority of social conventions, towards grounding moral thinking in human reason. The fifth stage is characterized by intent towards a social contract between free citizens who possess equal rights, who together establish a liberal and flexible consensus of a legalistic-contractual nature. The sixth and highest stage is characterized by moral autonomy, the basis of which is the individual's philosophical and autonomous conscience as supreme legislator, which is intended as valid for all human beings qua human beings (the universalization of moral principles) and its content consists of the basic humanistic values of equality, dignity, freedom, and solidarity.

Kohlberg's theory has two distinct merits: the first, theoretical in essence, is that his arguments are compatible with the principal insights of the philosophical sphere of morality regarding the nature of the moral perspective; the second, practical by nature, is that according to this theory it is relatively easy to prepare educational programs for the development of moral ways of thinking and reasoning, by dealing with moral dilemmas that represent real social experiences. However, Kohlberg's theory has two

significant weaknesses that are related less to what it contains and more to what it lacks.

The first criticism relates to its exaggerated grounding in cognitive abilities, which places the entire theory in doubt. As Aristotle claimed in the 4th century B.C.E., there is no knowledge in the sphere of morality that makes human beings perform moral deeds without the complementary recruitment of emotions, will power and dispositions of character. Therefore, Aristotle contended, the essential objective of moral education is not that we become conversant in philosophizing on the subject of morality, but that we become moral people in our daily dealings with our fellow men and women. The "wondrous" ability of human beings to act with villainy and shamefulness and at the same time adorn themselves with first-rate moral reasoning must serve as a warning light. Hence, we should conceive of Kohlberg's theory as promising and valuable, not as an overall theory of moral education but only as a theory designated for the cultivation of one important element – reasoning or the intellectual power of moral judgment.

The source of the second criticism is feminist, but it appears that its validity is objective and universal. At the core of the criticism lies the argument that the criteria that substantiate a Kohlbergian developmental scale are not scientific, neutral or unbiased, but are "contaminated" (so claim the critics) by a cultural bias of "Western masculinity." Basing the entire moral perspective on rational and autonomous consciousness, so the criticism goes, is an unfounded pretense. One well-known alternative to the cognitivist model focuses on benevolence, good will or a "good heart" that seeks the good of others (manifested, for example, in helping others and performing acts of charity). Another alternative is the focus of the feminist theory on sensitive, attentive and sympathetic caring that motivates the humanity of one person to care for the welfare and dignity of the other. I believe that in this controversy it would be appropriate to adopt an alternative approach, similar to the one I adopted in relation to the various heritages of humanistic education. One should not be restricted to one approach or another, while relegating all others to the periphery, but rather regard them as complementary approaches that contribute, each in its own way, to a proper coping with the great complexity of moral experience.

(c) Sensitivity to Justice and Ensuring that Justice be Done

Justice is a social situation in which each person receives what he or she deserves by virtue of his or her rights, merits, needs and deeds. In a formulation that takes humanistic values into consideration, justice is a *social situation in which the division of rights, resources, opportunities and reward is carried out according to a fixed pattern, in such a way that people*

receive what they deserve: by virtue of human equality, human and civil rights, and their special achievements and needs as individuals.

The core of justice is the demand for the equal treatment of human beings. In Jewish heritage the idea of the equality of the value of human beings is embodied first and foremost in the idea that all human beings were "created in the image of God." In Genesis the nature of equality is the central axis of a moral and just life: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27). And as all human beings are the descendents of the same man who was created in the image of God, all people should be treated with equality and the respect they deserve: (1) we must observe the principle of the sanctity of life embodied in the determination that "Whose sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," (Genesis 9: 6); (2) we must fulfill the designation given to Abraham as the father of the Jewish people, which is to "do justice and judgment," (Genesis, 18: 19); (3) do justice impartially: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," (Leviticus, 19: 15-18, and also in Numbers 15: 19). "But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself, for ye were stranger in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus, 19: 24). We can also find a lesser and different form of the commitment to equality in classical Athens as the basis for a democratic regime. On this matter Pericles boasts: "our constitution is called a democracy because power is in hand not of a minority but of the whole people [and] when it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law."[29]

The demand for equality, says the philosopher Michael Walzer, should not be confused with demands for unity and conformity.[30] Human beings differ from one another in all the common elements that make them a single species – the human species. They are different from one another in their physical profile, their physical and mental skills, their temperament and proclivities, value sensitivities, artistic talent and esthetical taste. Based on these elements people choose their way of life and trends of self-actualization, which shape each individual's personal identity and locates and grants him or her a specific place and status in the social cultural fabric.

As a manifestation of the wondrous variance among people there is nothing wrong in this. By the same token there is no reason to nullify the interpersonal differences in the spheres of prestige, sympathy, income,

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[29] Pericles, "Funeral Oration" in Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War*, pp. 145.

[30] On the various meanings of justice and the centrality of the value of equality in the just organization of society, see Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice.*

property, education and all other social goods – any attempt to impose uniformity on these spheres is doomed both to failure (on the practical level) and injustice (in power-abusing and authoritative politics). The demand for equality, therefore, does not strive towards uniformity but rather towards affording all human beings the opportunity to enjoy full and dignified human life. It aims to provide all human beings with a fair chance to conduct a good and worthy human life which contains individual liberties, civil rights, and the social rights of education and economic security, the right to fair trial, the right to actively participate in the political and cultural arenas, and, of course, the right to be different.

In this spirit the demand for equality should be understood as a battle against trends of discrimination, exploitation, oppression and subjugation displayed by groups that regard themselves as favored and thus take privileges for themselves and deprive other groups of the right to a dignified life. As we know, they strive to this end on the basis of claimed superiority of race, gender, religion, nationality, ethnic belonging, economic status, political position or by the mere virtue of power. None of these pretexts pass the test of reason:

> Egalitarianism in its origins is an abolitionist politics. It aims at eliminating not all differences but a particular set of differences, and a different set in different times and places. Its targets are always specific: aristocratic privilege, capitalist wealth, bureaucratic power, racial or sexual supremacy. In each of these cases, however, the struggle has something like the same form. What is at stake is the ability of a group of people to dominate their fellows. It is not the fact that there are rich and poor that generates egalitarian politics but the fact that the rich "grind the faces of the poor," impose their poverty upon them, command their deferential behavior. Similarly, it's not the existence of aristocrats and commoners or of office holders and ordinary citizens (and certainly not the existence of different races or sexes) that produces the popular demand for the abolition of social and political difference; it is what aristocrats do to commoners, what office holders do to ordinary citizens, what people with power do to those without it....
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> The aim of political egalitarianism is a society free from domination. This is the lively hope named by the word equality: no more bowing and scraping, fawning and toadying; no more fearful trembling; no more high-and-mightiness; no more masters, no more slaves.[31]

Together with the idea of doing justice, which derives from a commitment to equality, there is an additional meaning which focuses on the

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[31] Ibid., Preface.

recognition of the difference or specific singularity of the individual: both in the demand for special respect that is fitting for unique excellence (meritocracy) and in the protest against the disgraceful phenomenon of "the righteous suffer, the wicked thrive" (in the workplace, classroom, public office, etc.). The essence of injustice, as the converse of justice in the above mentioned sense, is when the compensation a person receives is incompatible with his or her virtues and actions – in comparison, of course, to the virtues and actions of others (favoritism, discrimination, pushiness and bribery are among the notable elements of this kind of injustice).

In Jewish heritage we find an expression of this perception of justice as early as the book of Genesis. When Abraham received God's supreme imperative to "do justice and judgment," he rebelled against God's intention of harming the population of Sodom and Gomorrah, without differentiating between the innocent and the guilty: "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?... that be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee; Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis, 18:23). A plethora of complaints and allegations exist in the Bible, which relate to the wicked who have succeeded and the righteous whose reward was "unripe fruit instead of grapes": "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked...Behold these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches" (Psalms, 74); "And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there" (Ecclesiastes, 3: 16); "For the wicked doth compass about the righteous, therefore wrong judgment proceedeth...wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?" (Habakuk, 1). And the most notable example is "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." Nonetheless, contrary to any logic of human justice, God was cruel to him with no reason, casting upon him the plagues of bereavement and despondence that were unparalleled in human suffering.

In Judaism and the other monotheistic religions the traditional response to these iniquities is that God will recompense the righteous and wicked as they deserve, if not in this world, than no doubt in the next: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he mediate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Psalms, 1); "For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it; But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it," (Proverbs, 2: 21).

The perception of justice as the appropriate recompense for virtues and deeds is even more notable in the Hellenistic world, in which the context is humanistic rather than theistic; namely, where excellence is in "being a human being" according to human (and not divine) yardsticks, and where responsibility for recompense is not borne by God but by human beings who are members of the political community. In ancient Athens, it was held as a moral and cultural duty to praise and obey virtuous persons, and Pericles, the Athenian leader, describes the embodiment of this idea in the Athenian "order of things": in putting people to public positions, the only thing that counts is "the ability which the man possesses," and the recompense of those who are excellent, those who nobly and valiantly endanger themselves for the sake of actualizing the Athenian ideals, are those who "won praises that never grow old, the most splendid of sepulchers – not the sepulchre in which their bodies are laid, but where their glory remains eternal in men's minds."[32]

In his *Apologia* Socrates expresses absolute loyalty to this perception of justice as it is evil and despicable not to obey those who are your betters by their nature. Plato, Socrates' pupil, applies in his *Republic* the perception of justice as "an order of things in accordance with special qualities." He claims that the wise philosophers should be placed at the apex of the pyramid, under whom should come the strong and brave guards, while the craftsmen and those who sustain society should be at its base. According to the same aristocratic perception of justice, Aristotle describes the image of a "noble" man: contrary to the man who boasts and demands more respect than his qualities and deeds merit, and counter to the meek who attribute to themselves less respect than they deserve by virtue of their special qualities and deeds, the "noble" man "demands for himself that which he deserves" – because he is superior to others in qualities and deeds, and he justly demands the special respect and glory which people of his kind deserve – those who possess a rare and perfect personality.[33]

Next to justice as an egalitarian attitude towards human beings, and justice as the proper compensation for virtues and deeds, there is also a third meaning: justice as charity, mercy, compassion, pity and generosity. It is a

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[32] Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War,* "Funeral Oration," 145-149.
[33] Aristotle, *Ethics,* Book IV, 3.

justice that through special recruitment and affirmative action is directed towards both reducing the misery and cultural-deprivation of those who are innocent and suffer a cruel lot, and creates equal opportunity for the weak and the needy to lead a human life of dignity and self-fulfillment. At times the battle is directed against natural destiny (such as the various types of disability), and at times against fateful social conditions (slavery, oppression, discrimination, the culture of poverty and ignorance, cultural deprivation and various types of abuse), but in both cases doing humanistic justice is like willingly assuming responsibility so that no human being will be deprived of the basic conditions required for a life appropriate for them. We find the roots of this perception of justice time and again in Jewish heritage – with special emphasis placed on the rights of the stranger, the orphan and the widow (Isaiah, 10: 1; 11:4; Jeremiah, 7:6; Amos, 5:12); and to a lesser degree in Hellenistic heritage – with special emphasis placed on obeying the laws "which are for the protection of the oppressed."[34]

In our times this has become the accepted moral truth of almost all philosophers of ethics: affirmative action in cases of needy and weak populations is justified, since it also reduces humanity's ills that are related to misery and cultural deprivation and contributes to equal opportunities; it also reduces the social ills of animosity and violence that exist among the various strata of society.[35] In conclusion, in order to promote the "just life" according to the three meanings of justice we have discussed, and in order to reduce the ills of inequality and inappropriate compensation, I propose a "justice strategy" which combines four criteria. (1) The principles of human equality and human dignity mandate a basic attitude of fairness, decency and respect towards all humans. (2) The principle of meritocracy, a special compensation for particular excellence and the performance of justice, mandate the promotion (or some other token of recognition and the bestowal of respect) of those whose excellence – in thinking, practice or creativity – constitutes a unique contribution to culture and society. (3) On the basis of the principle of "wicked and badly off" or the prevention of the prosperity of those who advance themselves while trampling the dignity of others underfoot, doing justice mandates penal action (in the framework of the legal system) and identifying clear-cut boundaries for public tolerance: behaviors that categorically belittle the rights and well-being of others should not be tolerated, because in such a way villainy and injustice will be perpetuated as accepted and prevalent norms. (4) On the basis of the principles of charity, generosity and kindness, performing justice also mandates the special support of the weak and needy, those whose fate precluded them from

[34] Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War,* "Funeral Oration," p. 145.
[35] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* ch. 2.

enjoying appropriate conditions or basic abilities, in order to give them too an equal opportunity to conduct a meaningful and dignified human life.

The application of this "justice strategy," seems to have advantages on four counts. First, it imparts to everyone the assemblage of virtues of egalitarianism, honesty, decency, respect for Man, empathy and solidarity, as a cultural and educational ideal. Second, when we promote those who are outstanding (in thinking and in practice), we endow individuals with the proper appreciation, and society with qualitative and suitable leadership (instead of a power-abusing elite and favoritism). Third, the clear message that the public will be unwilling to tolerate malicious behavior that belittles human dignity and harms well-being will render injustice less profitable, and hence less prevalent. And fourth, through affirmative action for the benefit of society's weaker groups, we are acting towards lessening social inequality, reducing misery and cultural deprivation and reinforcing a feeling of stability and communal solidarity.

(d) Nurturing the Love of Fellow Humans, Benevolence, and Amiability

Unlike the cognitive nature of the two previous moral qualities, this quality has a personality-emotional character.[36] By this I mean that this moral quality – friendliness, well-wishing, sympathy, solidarity, the will and willingness to help others and share their happiness – should be regarded as a basic proclivity, both inherent and acquired, which flows spontaneously from the nature of personality. The value of this quality is beyond compare: without it life is experienced as a path strewn with obstacles, replete with sorrow and disputes, in which dog eats dog; with it, you may enjoy solid protection that dulls the stings of life, supporting shoulders that mobilize themselves to help you in times of decline and falling by the wayside. But the greater the promise the greater the bewilderment: how to nurture this quality in others is not at all clear or known. If the solution can be found anywhere, it seems to me that we can find it in the sphere of personal example and in a social climate that bestows much of this good on the young, thus "infecting" those who experience it.

(e) Nurturing a Striving Towards Perfection

By striving towards perfection or human excellence I mean that *individuals should demand of themselves high quality and proper standards*

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[36] See Frankena's discussion on benevolence in his *Ethics*, and MacIntyre's discussion of amiability, Chapter 16 in his *After Virtue*.

in coping with the main challenges with which human life confronts them. The value of striving towards perfection, as a component of moral education, lies mainly in the sphere of motivation, i.e., in the process of a person's self-motivation towards achieving a higher moral existence; or as Jubran points out, the foundation of goodness lies in the pursuit of the good, and that yearning is an essential element in all humans.[37] The importance of this component stems from recognition of the fact that accepting the yoke of morality and meeting the high standards that are part and parcel of it is only possible on the basis of human beings' self-demanding and perfectionist drive that strives towards perfection or to a high quality of human functionality.

According to numerous thinkers this kind of humanistic perfectionism was the driving force behind the development of classical culture in Athens. It is manifested in Pericles', Plato's and Aristotle's exacting perfectionism[38] and in Plutarch's words that "it becomes a man's duty to pursue and make after the best and choicest of everything, that he may not only employ his contemplation, but may also be improved by it...[and] that a man ought to apply his intellectual perception to such objects that, with the sense of delight, are apt to call it forth, and allure it to its own proper good and advantage."[39]

This idea was prominently expressed in Nietzsche's 19th century "philosophy of power," according to which the things of value are born only through a process of critical and creative self-mastering and self-overcoming. In other words, meaningful and valuable things are brought to life by people who are hard with themselves, challenging their human faculties and powers in strenuous manners – legislating for themselves, defining their own identities, and endowing their lives with meaning and value which go beyond the banality of the routine and mediocre.[40] As we have seen in the previous chapter, in the 20th century it was the philosopher Ortega who stated in his book *The Revolt of the Masses*, that striving towards perfection is the touchstone that divides people into those whose lives are "noble" and those whose lives are "regular." It is the difference between, on the one hand, "a life of effort, ever set on excelling oneself, in passing beyond what one is to what one sets up as a duty and an obligation," and, on the other hand, the inert life of "those who demand nothing special

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[37] Jubran, *The Prophet,* "On Good and Evil."

[38] See Pericles' "Funeral Oration" in Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War;* Plato, *The Symposium*; Aristotle, *Ethics,* Book X; and the discussion of quality of culture in the previous chapter.

[39] Plutarch, *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans,* "Pericles."

[40] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, "On the Three Metamorphoses," "On the Way of the Creator," On the Thousand and One Goals."*

of themselves, but for whom to live is to be every moment what they already are, without imposing on themselves any effort towards perfection; mere buoys that float on the waves."[41]

Even if the differentiation and analysis are only partially true, there is no doubt that cultivating the nisus for perfection is a necessary condition for the establishment of a moral life. Without it there is nothing to motivate human beings to be ashamed of barbaric behavior that serves as an outlet for their drives and needs, on the one hand, and to adapt civilized behaviors which take into consideration intellectual, moral and esthetic criteria, on the other. In other words, without this striving towards quality, this quest to excel the gap that lies between existing reality and the reality we believe should exist will be perpetuated.

(f) Nurturing a Positive Self-Image and a Feeling of Self-Worth

This component pertains to nurturing a kind of awareness of one's own self, so that individuals would perceive and experience themselves as moral beings in the world. By this I mean that for human beings to be able to morally cope with their reality they must perceive themselves as autonomous, rational, sensitive, valuable, creative and unique creatures. Otherwise, they may fall into the ways of life of "herd-like animals" who follow, undiscerningly and without consideration, the conventions of the majority and passing fashion. Likewise, and equally bad, they may adopt the life of the "foolish follower," who worships, while being self-effacing, various kinds of leaders, priests, "idols," and gurus (emperors, kings, rabbis and priests who will eventually become, as suggested by Hamlet, food for the worms, who will become food for the fish, who will become food for the poor...).

In order to prevent this herd-like mentality and cultivate a moral back bone, we must ensure that the individual is equipped with a positive self-image, a feeling of self-worth, self-respect, legitimization of his or her emotions and positions, belief in his or her right to maintain a personal and long-term life plan, and the belief in his or her ability to actualize it.[42] In nurturing this component in the personality of the person being educated we are helping him or her, according to Kohlberg's perception of moral development, to go beyond heteronomous and conventional morality and reach the highest level of autonomous morality: to a perception of his or her

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[41] Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*, ch. 7 and ch.1.

[42] On the importance of self-respect and self-worth see Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* pp. 440-446.

moral conscience as the highest instance of moral judgment whose ultimate commitment is to the just construction of human society.

(g) Reinforcing Character and Personality

In addressing Man's "character" we mean the *relatively constant uniformity of motives, virtues, habits, dispositions and priorities which are manifested in the individual's overt behavior in facing the stimuli and challenges that life presents.* As we have seen previously, at times we speak of character attributes in a general way (such as modesty and arrogance, courage and cowardice), and at times we speak of a "good character" (as in my previous example in which I referred to the love of one's fellow men and women and the good will that seeks the good of others), and at times we focus on the degree of strength of character (like the Hebrew saying, "the greatest hero is one that conquers himself").

This third aspect of strength of character is extremely relevant to moral life. By this we usually mean *the ability of people to actualize their values, commitments and goals, towards themselves and their fellow humans, while resisting pressure, temptation and opposition – whether their source is external-social or inner and personality-oriented.* One should stress that there are numerous people who are capable of differentiating between good and evil, but nevertheless perform bad acts, on both material and human levels, due to their weak will or spineless character. Responsibility, credibility, the fulfillment of promises, adherence to tasks and overcoming drives – all these are moral qualities which rely heavily on strength of character and enable human beings to be masters of themselves and act justly in their relationships with others. One should also stress that similar to what has been said about "good character," it is extremely difficult to influence moral quality by preaching or endless talk; it is nurtured mainly by the individual's significant experience with challenging tasks that activate the "character muscles" – thus strengthening them. (Woe to King David whose lust overpowered his conscience when his desire for Bathsheba caused him to send her husband Uriah to his death; Woe to Macbeth whose ambition overpowered his conscience, thus bringing down a tragedy of bloodshed on him and his victims.)

(h) Sensitive Caring for the Other, Empathic Understanding, Compassion and Tenderness

One of the important contributions of the contemporary feminist movement calls our attention to the fact that side by side with the rational and exacting "morality of principles" there is also a "morality of sensitive

and empathic caring."[43] Not only historical knowledge of "impassioned ideals" and "principled reformers," but also the direct and everyday observation of life teaches us that one should beware the evil impact of incisive intellect, honed logic and principles carved in stone that contain no tenderness, sensitivity or compassion. (Think of how much evil and misery came into the world as a result of a position adopted by the likes of the wealthy man in *Howard's End*, who defied the Schlegel sisters, who wanted to ameliorate somewhat the harsh fate of the poor man: "Never become sentimental with the poor.")

Two points are worthy of note: the first, that in nurturing this moral quality one should strive so that the sphere of sensitive and empathic caring should expand, one circle after the other, from people's relationship with themselves and their families, to the communal and social circle, reaching the circle of the foreign, the different and the anonymous.[44] The second point is that despite the fact that it was feminist-oriented scholars like Carol Gilligan and Nell Noddings who made a special contribution to shifting this kind of morality from the periphery to the center, men should not be deprived of or exempt from these moral experiences. Examples of men who possess this kind of morality can be found in the mobilization of Dr. Rieux and his friend Tarrou to the saving of human life in Albert Camus' *The Plague*; Thoreau's call (in the mid-19th century) for the freeing of the black slaves in the United States by *civil disobedience*; Levin's insistence, in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, not to accept the exploitation of the serfs and their treatment as beasts of burden; and Don Quixote's commitment to help the wretched, poor and humiliated who do not enjoy the freedom and respect they deserve by virtue of their humanity.

In these four examples, or at least this is the way they impress me, it is not divine imperatives or rational and universal moral principles that serve as the driving force, but the manifestation of sensitive caring which from empathic identification mobilizes itself to protect the integrity, well-being and respect of the other's humanity. In light of its unique characteristics I have no doubt that this kind of morality, which embodies sensitive and empathic caring, should be in the possession of all people, men and women alike, not instead of "a rational-principled morality" but as the complementary equipment for rendering coping with the complexity of moral situations more effectively. "To every thing there is a season,...a time

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[43] This kind of morality is dominant in the poetry of Yehudah Amichai and Jubran Khalil Jubran. For the morality of care as an approach in the theory of morality that developed from feminist thinking and research, see Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*; Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education.*

[44] In this matter it is especially worth attending to Bertrand Russell's *Autobiography.*

to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing": a time for sensitive caring, for empathic understanding, spontaneous empathy, mercy and tenderness, and a time for imposing rational arguments on the voices of sensitivity and emotion.

(i) Nurturing Moral Knowledge of Good and Bad

In the fourth part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza presents his position that "as for the terms *good* and *bad*, they indicate no positive quality in things regarded in themselves, but are merely modes of thinking, or notions which we form from the comparison of things one with another."[45] In light of this conception, there is nothing sacred in our concepts of good and evil, and their recognition does not derive from an immediate encounter with the "divine presence" or from a philosophical observation of the "world of ideas." Moral knowledge of good and bad (or evil), similar to other spheres of knowledge, is the fruit of a particular circle of human inquiry and discourse in the framework of human culture, which comprises well-defined purposes, basic terms and assumptions, and an accumulation of knowledge, research methods, and standards of excellence and validity.

"Good," Spinoza says, is everything that brings us closer to actualizing the ideals or models of excellence we have set for ourselves, and similar to the statement that "the yield of this mango tree is high" receives its meaning from a prior knowledge of mango trees in a wide variety of fertility, so the determination that someone is good at dancing, skiing, chess, military command, teaching, or in his or her moral behavior, receives its meaning from knowledge of diverse forms of functioning that maintain an affinity with the ideals and exemplary models that we envisage. Our knowledge and understanding of these spheres of practical reason are always based on our previous experience, which enables us – through our powers of imagination and reason – to diagnose, identify, define and place every new phenomenon in the framework of our overall worldview. Hence, just as we can talk about music that it is strident, words that are out of place, a chess move that gone wrong, thus our experience in the moral sphere enables us to express our opinion (which can be justified according to public criteria) that a certain behavior was tactless, insensitive, evil or unfair.

I will elucidate this point with several examples. The opinion that King Lear's daughters, Goneril and Regan behaved evilly and despicably towards their father (bad behavior from the moral point of view) receives its meaning and validity by comparing it to their younger sister Cordelia's different behavior. Similarly, Edgar's (the Duke of Gloucester's son) noble (morally

[45] Spinoza, *Ethics, Part IV, "Preface."*

good) behavior, becomes clear to us only by comparing it with the unrestrained ambition of the second son, Edmund. In both cases the moral stance becomes clear against the backdrop of common criteria related to parent-children relationships that developed over thousands of years of human experience. And another example: the moral condemnation of soldiers who murdered, raped and plundered receives its validity in the light of other soldiers who chose to preserve their humanity and that of those conquered – and all this again on the basis of thousands of years of experience in wars and conquests of numerous and varied people throughout history.

A third example was recently provided by American singer Bruce Springsteen who, in a television interview, protested that the nature of a society is measured not by its economic victories but by the compassion it shows towards its weaker sons and daughters and its willingness to help them. His arguments are illustrated by comparing the way in which the United States abandons its weaker citizens vs. the way in which Canada, its neighbor, and Scandinavian Sweden care for the well-being and dignity of the individual, even if they are penniless. Perhaps the best example for clarifying this issue is "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations" (Genesis 6:9). In other words, Noah's unparalleled righteousness acquires its meaning only by comparing the way in which he withstood morality's challenges (in the context dealt with here) with the ways and customs of his generation.

This kind of model, of the functional judgment of good and evil, has been presented by the philosopher John Rawls. On the question of those things that are rationally and justly considered good, he answers, that it is rational to consider objects, tools, professionals, or deeds "good" if the they possess to a higher degree than average those properties that rational people would want them to have. And, "by analogy, a good person...is one who has to a higher degree than the average person the broadly based properties that it is rational for persons to want in one another."[46] It is true that it is relatively simple to use this test to examine the nature of washing machines, pens and computers; it is more complex and difficult to evaluate the nature of teachers, psychologists, physicians and politicians; and it is extremely difficult to reach incisive answers in the field of moral activity. However, despite the complexity and ambiguity of the moral sphere, this index should not be relinquished, in the vein of "throwing out the baby with the bathwater." Awareness of the moral and cultural heritage, with all its goals, values and indices, and sensitive and critical vigilance of a person to him-or herself and towards social reality, can no doubt establish a kind of network

[46] See Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* pp. 399-439.

of coordinates for ethical orientation and intelligent and responsible moral judgment.

Some of the coordinates in this grid are noticeable from afar as lighthouses whose directives are dos and don'ts. Another part serves as guiding clues, and yet another serves as an invitation to non-binding ethical realms, given to unique preferences of communities and individuals. The following are qualities and characteristics that are not difficult to recognize as they are good for all: *joie de vivre* is better than a life of misery and bereavement, a healthy and active life is better than a life of sickness and suffering, peace and brotherhood are better than war and alienation, knowledge is better than ignorance and sensitivity is better than crudeness, freedom is better than subjugation and performing justice is better than performing injustice, equality and decency are better than racism and discrimination, self-respect and self-actualization are better than self-deprecation and neglect of one's abilities, beauty and refinement are better than ugliness and coarseness, and moderate and balanced leaders are better than "strong people" whose power is usually manifested in an uninhibited abuse of power that exacts a high price in human life, individual freedom and social justice.

We will conclude this issue: knowledge of good and bad is not only possible but also active in the life of everyone, and similar to the case of knowledge of the natural environment, the moral knowledge of the majority of us is partial, lacking and often erroneous and false. The special difficulty of "the knowledge of good and evil" derives from the fact that contrary to truth of the sciences – that describe the set of laws that lie at the basis of natural phenomena – the truths of morality are not "available" for generalization, presentation, formulation and proof at high levels of precision, clarity, unequivocalness and objectivity. But let us not be mistaken: we are unable to prove the nature and existence of love, but this fact does not annul its actuality; the immense difficulty involved in explaining the greatness and beauty of a work of art does not nullify the esthetical truth embodied in it. Similarly, the fact that we do not have the differentiated and precise tools for proving the evil embodied in the annihilation of people and the murder of individuals, racism, abuse of the weak, deprivation of freedom, deceit and fraud, etc., cannot diminish the validity of these truths.

Let us examine a few examples of moral truths. A pharmacist who diluted a costly medicine with inexpensive water for his personal profit, thus causing the death of a patient, is morally guilty of murder, fraud and breach of confidence. A politician, who, in the name of patriotism, prohibits the freedom of expression, is morally guilty of trampling the dignity of Man and of false and oppressive manipulation. A teacher who lowers the grades of his

or her students due to their ethnic origin is morally responsible of lack of racial justice. And a person who fought for his or her rights as a member of a minority group in one country, and later oppresses the rights of minorities in another in which he or she is member of the majority, is morally guilty of interest-oriented opportunism. These moral truths are self-evident to anyone equipped with the accumulated moral knowledge of the human race, and on the basis of that same knowledge they can be demonstrated and proved. It should be stressed that the problem of proof in these cases is not based on the truths themselves but on the illogical expectation of some to obtain proof of a mathematical nature for problems that are human by nature (similar to the lumberjack who goes off to work with a surgical scalpel or a surgeon who enters the operating theater with an axe).

We may have, for example, a vivid memory of ice cream that is fresh and wondrous in texture, and a memory of innocent and captivating young love, and these memories serve us as criteria in evaluating new experiences. Similarly, "memories" of a warm and friendly glance, a supportive helping hand, caring and sensitive concern, restraint and overcoming instinct, rebellion against injustice, blamelessness and performing justice (and, of course, also moral decadence and deception) – our memories of morality – charged with the richness of the moral insights of culture, become, through the tools of thinking, the active knowledge of good and evil.

6. PEDAGOGICAL MEANS

In this book I will not go into a fundamental and detailed presentation of the pedagogical means necessary for advancing moral education, and so a presentation of the guidelines must suffice. In my view the four most important pedagogical principles are: personal example and the inculcation of habits, nurturing cultural literacy, nurturing critical literacy, and the availability of experiential and relevant learning in which the unique value of knowledge is measured by its ability to serve as foundation and motivation for a moral life.

(a) Personal Example and the Inculcation of Habit

Based on the philosophical positions of Aristotle and Dewey and the modeling and imitation theory of educational psychology, it seems that we may generalize and say that our moral character is formed primarily by the personal example to which we are exposed, and by the behavioral habits which our educators inculcate. As I mentioned earlier in the section on character attributes, we acquire the skills and tendencies that establish moral

behavioral patterns in a way similar to that in which we acquire the skills necessary for success in carpentry, playing an instrument, riding, driving, military command, medicine and teaching. We are, in fact, speaking here of the ability to properly combine accumulated knowledge, perception, sensory keenness, intuition, sensitivity, factual knowledge, reasoning, a sense of proportion, decision-making ability and all the other components that render activity successful. This ability is acquired both by observing exemplary characters, professionals and artists, and by strict training and guidance that gradually shape the desired patterns of activities in those being educated.

A very general conception of education as habituation was presented by Dewey, who contended that "education is the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men."[47] With regard to the concrete activities involved in the habituation process, it was Aristotle who wrote in his *Ethics* that "the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts...in one word, states of character arise out of like activities."[48] For this reason we should present activities of a certain kind and train students in them until they become a permanent habit and second nature (caring for the well-being of fellow men and women, rebellion against injustice, and preserving public property).

In the process of inculcating habits, the educator's personal example is of crucial importance. As moral education will not be successful "apart from the habitual vision of greatness,"[49] and without a "shared normative consciousness,"[50] so it will be doomed to failure in the absence of a living and present example of moral excellence which can be pointed out, and which constitutes a source of inspiration that can be imitated, and from which one may receive guidance and training. For this reason children's educators – parents, kindergarten teachers and school teachers – should begin with self-education: with self-overcoming and self-formation, so that their behavioral patterns will be good and worthy of imitation and not something that will later involve rigorous efforts to eradicate. In their speech and attentiveness, in their behavior with people and while driving a car, in their attitude towards the law and public property, and in their treatment of their natural environment – in short, their public behavior will embody the best moral virtues, so that the moral learning of which Buber spoke, that

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[47] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 328.
[48] Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book II, 1.
[49] Whitehead, *The Aims of Education, p. 69.*
[50] Gadamer in Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, p. 262.

same immediate education through the very presence and existence of the educator, will take place during those moments in which the educator had no intention of educating them.[51] "Educators are needed who have themselves been educated, superior, noble spirits, proved at every moment, proved by words and silence, representing culture which has grown ripe and sweet – not the learned louts whom secondary schools and universities today offer our youth as higher wet nurses."[52]

(b) Nurturing Cultural Literacy

By cultural literacy I mean that the spirit of Man or one's mind is rich with a diversity of knowledge, insights, sensitivities, points of view, reference contexts, thinking strategies and criteria that allow him to intelligently refer to the central issues of public discussion and cultural endeavor. Cultural literacy or broad-mindedness is undoubtedly not sufficient to establish moral life, but without it, it is impossible: as I mentioned earlier in the section on the characteristics of morality, the fact that people are equipped with an aggregation of values, perspectives and moral thinking principles is a necessary condition for the very identification of human phenomena as "moral situations" that mandate reference and decision ("red lines" of human morality and "warning flags" of the clearly illegal). Moreover, the person who possesses cultural literacy can be likened to one who possesses numerous floodlights that throw light on the moral situation from numerous and diverse angles, thus protecting him, and us, from the damages of narrow-minded ignorance and intolerant dogmatic fanaticism. Cultural literacy contains a special blessing as a prophylactic drug against democracy becoming mobocracy; in other words, from the democracy as a regime of involved, well-educated and critical citizens to a regime of the "mobs."

John Dewey, the American educational philosopher, expanded on the importance of the cultural shaping of the student. In *My Pedagogical Creed* Dewey discusses the social elements of the individual's character: "all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race...shaping the individual's powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions."[53] And in *Democracy and Education* he adds that: "unless pains are taken to see that genuine and thorough transmission takes

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[51] Buber, "The Education of Character."
[52] Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "What the Germans Lackk,"; and *Schopenhauer as Educator*, chps. 1 and 2; and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "On the Gift-Giving Virtue."
[53] Dewey, "My Pedagogical Creed," p. 19.

place, the most civilized group will relapse into barbarism and into savagery."[54] Contrary to educational innovators with a leaning toward romantic and permissive naturalism, Dewey understood that philosophy, literature and poetry "are the most powerful of all the architects of our souls and societies";[55] that "reason does not work in an experiential vacuum...[and] the individual's imagination and character must be such that new ideas be permitted entrance into that innermost sphere of the personality where our view of reality is formed."[56]

In other words, just as with the process of introducing students to the achievements of science, technology and art, human culture is extremely important for shaping his or her moral character in light of the best of the thinking and practice in the moral sphere. Nietzsche referred to this idea in saying that the student should be nurtured to develop "antennae for all types of men."[57] The British educationalist Richard Peters argued that students should be initiated into worthwhile modes of thought and action.[58] And in the words of the classicist Livingston: the most important service that schools and universities can do for their pupils is to "show them the best things that have been done, thought and written in the world, and fix these in their minds as a standard and test to guide them in life."[59]

(c) Nurturing Critical Literacy

Critical literacy (which I discussed in the previous chapter in the context of autonomous thinking) plays a central role in moral judgment, first by preventing and exposing injustice: it is embodied in the ability of human beings to examine the nature of the reality of their lives in an inquisitive, rational, autonomous and multi-directional way; to identify the powers and logic working in and shaping society; to understand the meaning of current processes and their future implications; to examine the validity and value of positions in the framework of cultural contexts and the relevant spheres of knowledge. Critical literacy means not only the ability but also the way of "being a human being in the world": it is a caring and critical awareness that seeks – as a rational and conscientious watchdog – to continuously examine the value of the ideals that guide our lives and the degree of compatibility between what is generally worthy and that which exists (in practice) – between rhetoric and practice, between symbols and symbolized, between

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[54] Dewey, *Democracy and Education,* chp. 1.
[55] Booth, *The Company We Keep,* p. 39.
[56] Ryne, "The Humanities and Moral Reality," p. 16.
[57] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, sec. 259.
[58] Peters, *Ethics and Education,* ch. 5.
[59] Livingston, *Education for a World Adrift*, p. 52.

the high-flown slogans and quotidian facts. At its best, *critical literacy consists of abilities of discernment and judgment that have been culturally bettered, together with a radical temperament that resolutely and decisively refuses to accept fraud, distortion, injustice and deception.*

In the spirit of Thoreau, Shaw and Chomsky, we can perhaps define the role of critical literacy in the realms of morality as the prevention, or at least reduction, of the prevalent phenomenon in which even good people and decent citizens consider the killing of others as one of their duties.[60] This task is part and parcel of going beyond the limited and submissive "herd-like mentality" towards an "independent and critical consciousness," from the biased and inflamed perspective of the "fervid sports fans" to the in-principle and overall perspective of the "referee," from tribal ethnocentrism of "we vs. them" to the anthropocentrism of "Man qua man," from a deterministic or fatalistic perspective, which accepts random reality as necessary existence, to a sober and free perspective that perceived the order of things as one possible (factual) reality side by side with alternative (potential) possibilities.

The need for this kind of "remedial" process is particularly notable in light of two phenomena that have already taken their gory toll in human history. The first is the sanctity of a particular religion and nationality, including the sanctity of war in their name, despite the fact that people acquire their religious and national identity in the same way as they acquire their mother tongue – hence, their collective ideals possess no special value, truth or sanctity that can be rationally justified. The second is the tendency to sanctify the laws of the state, and in their name do the worst injustices, despite the fact that the laws of the state express no more and no less than the position of the sovereign – Pharaoh's plagues to drown every boy of the Hebrew people, the slavery laws in the United States, the Nuremberg laws in Germany and the apartheid laws in South Africa are all examples of past laws that the moral point of view requires us to oppose and dismantle.

Distinct examples of critical literacy at work can be found among the classical "preachers at the gates". Among the Greek philosophers Socrates is particularly notable. He claimed that in moral matters "we must not consider at all what the many will say of us, but only the expert in justice and injustice,"[61] and he also showed publicly that those considered wise in the eyes of the public and themselves are often empty vessels who hardly know anything of what they pretend to know.[62] Among the Hebrew prophets, particularly notable was Isaiah, who exposed the villainy of the rulers who

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[60] See Chomsky, *Language and Freedom,* ch. 1; Thoreau's *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience;* Shaw's, *Don Juan in Hell; and Camus' The Rebel.*

[61] Plato, *Crito,* p .452.

[62] Plato, *Apologia.*

"decree unrighteous decrees" and who "call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness," (10: 1; 5:20; and see also Ecclesiastes, 3:16, "the place of judgment, that wickedness was there"). In light of these examples one may say that to some extent the history of human progress is the history of critical literacy exposing false pretense, malice dressed as sanctity, superstition and prejudice adorned as confirmed truth, egotistical aggressiveness camouflaged as patriotism, evil disguised as love, war under the banners of peace, and labor camps under the pretense of "reeducation."

In the New Era, when critical thinking is more prevalent and information is readily available, it is seemingly easier to advance and nurture critical literacy. But on the other hand the mechanisms of distorting reality through propaganda, "Orwellian language" and "word Laundromats," turn identification of the "writing on the wall" into a particularly difficult task. Despite this, we are not impotent and are also able to learn more from the New Era: on the connection between interest-oriented nurturing of religiosity for herd-like domination of the masses, one may learn from Napoleon's saying that "only religion gives the state firm and lasting support...you must form believers, not reasoners."[63] On the mechanisms of colonialism we can learn from the words of Jomo Kenyatta that "when the white Europeans approached us we had the lands and they had Bibles in their hands; and when we opened our eyes, after praying the prayers they had taught us, they had our lands and we were left with their Bible."[64] We can equally learn from the widening gap between the righteous preaching of leaders in the Communist world and their power-abusing and greedy egotism (revealed when their regimes toppled), and we can likewise learn from American society's betrayal of the values of equality and freedom of which it was so proud – betrayal which Martin Luther King (in his famous speech "I have a dream") compared to an "empty check" and which means a reality of the blacks' humiliation, discrimination and suffering.

At times we recognize injustice as the fruit of a continual and pedantic effort to expose the true face of reality, and at times injustice cries out to us intuitively with a feeling of "lacking" – we expect to find honesty, justice, decency or courtesy, as a necessary and obvious characteristic of a given reality, but this characteristic is more conspicuous by its absence than any other existing component that tries to hide it. Critical literacy at its best, which combines the two processes with incisive and penetrating vision, we find in the following paragraph, in which George Bernard Shaw exposes the vulgarity, shallowness and pretense of the social elite of his times:

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[63] Stromber, *European Intellectual History Since 1789*, p. 21.
[64] Quoted in Naveh, *The Twentieth Century: The Era that Generated Turnabouts*, p. 162.

> Your friends are all the dullest dogs I know. They are not beautiful: they are only decorated. They are not clean: they are only shaved and starched. They are not dignified: they are only fashionably dressed. They are not educated: they are only college passmen. They are not religious: they are only pewrenters. They are not moral: they are only conventional. They are not virtuous: they are only cowardly. They are not even vicious: they are only "frail." They are not artistic: they are only lascivious. They are not prosperous: they are only rich. They are not loyal, they are only servile; not dutiful, only sheepish; not public spirited, only patriotic; not courageous, only quarrelsome; not determined, only obstinate; not masterful, only domineering; not self-controlled, only obtuse; not self-respecting, only vain; not kind, only sentimental; not social, only gregarious; not considerate, only polite; not intelligent, only opinionated; not progressive, only factious; not imaginative, only superstitious; not just, only vindictive; not generous, only propitiatory; not disciplined, only cowed; and not truthful at all: liars every one of them, to the very backbone of their souls.[65]

(d) Teaching that Nurtures Moral Awareness and Sensitivity

In the previous chapter we saw that teaching of a humanist nature should be connective and communicative, in order to render "the tree of knowledge" into the "tree of life." As clarifying examples we indicated Ecclesiastes' yearning for "Wisdom [that] giveth life to them that have it" (Ecclesiastes 7:12) or Montaigne's position which held that critical and sensitive thinking is more important than knowledge per se, Nietzsche's position that learning must add to the vitality of character, Whitehead's complaint that learning ends in many cases with useless inert ideas, and Postman's approach that education does not require a machine, but vision, and not information but wisdom. As stated in Proverbs, we should direct towards knowledge which is "a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her" (Proverbs 3:18).

Since the moral education of students is not conducted – and cannot be conducted – only in the framework of classes that focus on moral issues but in all the varied classes studied at school, teachers should implant moral meaning in all their lessons. Teachers should *weave* into their study subjects the ethical, cultural and topical contexts relevant to the matter at hand, nurture insights, sensitivities, intentions and ways of thinking that advance proper coping with the moral challenges that reality poses. Great potential

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[65] Shaw, *Don Juan in Hell*, pp. 82-83.

for cultivating moral awareness we can find, for example, in the Biblical stories of King David and Queen Isabel who abused the weak for their gaining personal satisfaction. Likewise, teachers can discuss the importance and relevance of the Prophet Isaiah and the philosopher Socrates as preachers at the gate against the depravity of the regime; Galileo and Andrei Sacharov as scientists opposed to the dogmatism and domination of the establishment; Virginia Woolf and Martin Luther King against a racist and discriminative society; the three Karamazov brothers as three different types of human beings; the "various animals" in confronting the moral dilemmas in Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

I will give a somewhat wider example of this matter through the works of Shakespeare, who is unequaled in creating a real and vital encounter between his readers and the moral contretemps and challenges of routine life common to us all. We will begin with the tragedy of King Lear: an elderly, very wealthy man, and the question of the division of the inheritance (which is present in the lives of all of us) arises. How should one behave in such matters, to what degree can the power of inheritance be exploited in dominating the life of one's inheriting offspring, and to what extent is it desirable to preserve resources that will suffice for maintaining a proper existence in old age and avoid being dependent on the mercy or goodwill of others? And the inheritors themselves, us, the sons and daughters of our parents – which is the worthy way to act with our "elders," to preserve their dignity, return their love and not exploit their weakness? And valuable friendship – what shape will it take? Is this a kind of obsequious friendship, falling into line with every wish and whim, that says what is expected, or perhaps friendship like that of the Duke of Kent who out of true concern for a friend also dared to say the harshest and most critical things. And when victory is promised and justice is about to be done – is that the time to settle accounts, without differentiation or limits, or perhaps, like the Duke of Cornwall, we should employ a measure of self-criticism and self-restraint and say, together with him, that we must not exercise our power unless it is for the right and just cause.[66]

The second example is from *Macbeth*. Is there anyone who is not familiar with passionate ambition, the hope and promise to be more than we are? And Macbeth, as one of us, is no better and no worse. From the time the witches inform him that he will be king, a titanic struggle begins between ambition and decency. Is there anyone who is not familiar with this inner battle between instinct and desire and reason and conscience? And who is unfamiliar with the attempt of Lady Macbeth to desensitize herself and silence her conscience in preparing herself for committing her treacherous

[66] Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act v.

and murderous act: "And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood, stop up the access and passage to remorse, that no compunctious visitings of nature shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between the effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts. And take my milk for gall..."[67]

But all in vain. Nature in its entirety, humanity in its entirety, and the single soul in each of us cannot accept murderous injustice: Macbeth has murdered the king: "Macbeth does murder sleep...Macbeth shall sleep no more."[68] Lady Macbeth's conscience exacted its vengeance and killed her, Macduff (whose family Macbeth murdered as well) kills Macbeth and puts his head on display. And in all this plot and plotting comes Banquo's modest voice; Macbeth's friend (and later his adversary) suggests an alternative to the cycle of blood: he will cooperate, but only "in seeking to augment it, but still keep my bosom franchised and allegiance clear"[69] (that in my attempt to greaten my public honor my human dignity will not be diminished).

In concluding this chapter, I would like to present an example of nurturing sensitivity and moral knowledge through teaching "learning materials": this time not Shakespeare, but from the heritage of the bible and Hebrew literature, from a heritage that is spread out over two thousand five hundred years, which underscores concern for the exploited – a heritage of morality in which the contemporary Israeli poet Aharon Shabbtai, connects to the biblical Ecclesiastes. So says Ecclesiastes: "So I returned, and considered all the oppression that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter" (4:1). And in our times Aharon Shabbtai continues these words in his poem "Morality doesn't come with a smile":

> It seems that morality doesn't come with a smile like an uncle with candy
> Only when the fire falls in the wheat the fat snakes burn.
> Oh, it's such a shame about the wheat, the good, innocent wheat!
> Only when the rich wallow in the tears of the poor, does it come.
> And these tears gather slowly, and slowly they turn into a sea,
> And in the meantime they water the pumpkins with them, the ox in the alley,
> Use them for showering, washing clothes, washing the office floor.
> Build more high-rises, more steel doors and glass windows,
> So that the tidal wave rises,
> And drowns the man taking a shower on the top floor.

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[67] Shakespeare, *Macbeth,* Act I, 5.
[68] Ibid, Act II, 2.
[69] Ibid.Act I, 1.

Only when the stick destroys the hump will the heart hear.[70]

[70] Shabbtai, "Morality does not come with a smile," *Ha'aretz*, 8.8.1997.

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Chapter IV

HUMANISTIC EDUCATION IN THE TEST OF CURRENT EVENTS

Education should not only dress wounds of past wars, but also prevent, as far as possible, situations that endanger the existence of society and the normal existence of the individual.
Zvi Lamm

Anyone who has not been to Jabalia [refugee camp] in Gaza cannot conceive human life that is lowlier than the trampled weeds.
S. Yizhar

Democracy does not safeguard itself. If we do not safeguard it, it will not safeguard us.
Aharon Barak

Education is in need of a vision, not technology.
Neil Postman

INTRODUCTION

It is not easy being a teacher-educator these days. The value and authority crisis whose characteristics we examined in the previous chapter is more detrimental to the status of teachers-educators than in any other occupation or profession. The erosion of teachers' status can be described on the three levels of teacher-student, teacher-parent and teacher-ministry.

On the teacher-student relationship level, the distress of teachers is an inevitable consequence of a pedagogical trend that places the "child at the center." As a rule, teachers make no effort to clarify the meaning of the idea and only rarely attempt to actualize it. Furthermore, almost all teachers today have a tendency to adopt it, only to understand later that they have fallen into a self-laid trap. If the children are at the center, then teachers, educators and adults, the assets of culture and wisdom of generations are only marginal, and their relative value is measured by their contribution to the child.

Who knows and how does one know what is good for the child? If the only measure is the child's spontaneous and momentary wish for fun, pleasure and happiness, then schools are superfluous and the compulsory

education law should be abolished. However, if the child's good is also determined by the views of philosophers (regarding worthy content and values), psychologists (regarding the ways of emotion and mind), and sociologists (regarding social and cultural patterns), we no longer have one center but two – child and culture. And children themselves – what are they? How much truth is there in the myth that the "real I," latent in the core personality of the child, seeks to realize its singular tendencies (and the task of the educator is to assist him or her in this process)? And how much weight should be attributed to the view that claims that the individual is always a product of the environment (cultural fields of power in postmodern lingo)?

Assuming that there is a measure of truth in both perceptions, attention to the child's hidden desires is to a great extent not "the child's inner and singular nature," but rather his or her wishes and desires that cunning marketing people in the political systems and commercial market have instilled in him or her (and they could not care less about the good of the child). In short, the widespread simplistic perception that "the child is at the center" is suicidal to education. It offers no respect towards cultural standards (in the adult world) which are worthy of aspiration, nor awareness that teacher's role in advancing the child's development is based on a combined affinity with the sublime in culture and the uniqueness of the student. Without all these, it is not surprising that students regard teacher authority as arbitrary and power-abusing. By the same token, they "get back at the teacher" by conducting aggressive battles, using coarse language, and, at times, both physical and verbal violence.

On the teacher-parent relationship level, the problem is embodied in the transition from "supportive" to "determining involvement." Parents want the best for their children, and they want it the way *they* want it; and if the school (whose prestige is low) does not properly understand this, "we'll show them what we expect." This is more or less the way numerous parents of the upper-middle class feel, and they feel they are justified: children are at the center; parents are often not less educated than teachers. In a liberal society there are no common agreements about value scales; thus parents expect teachers to teach, but they should not attempt to educate.

Under current conditions, in which education is a free market with "open registration zones," some parents say openly: "we are the consumers, and we know what's best for us"; "the customer is always right," and "we have the right contacts (among position-holders) to exert pressure on the school principal to meet our demands." Against this backdrop, numerous teachers and principals feel they are fighting for the survival of the remaining educational territories: determining the character of the school and forming its policy, selecting curriculums and teaching methods, performing routine activities and marking special events. (My own experience in this shows that

when teachers simply submit to parental dictates, without any cooperation in decision-making and action, everyone loses).

On the third level, teacher-Education Ministry of education relationships, the problem is twofold: on the one hand, in recent years the ministry of education in many countries has made "innovation and initiative" its leading ideology, and, in its name, has every now and then enforced "innovative and progressive" approaches on teachers, before the previous approaches were internalized and effectively and productively applied to the curriculum. On the other hand, very little has been done on the level of the overall ethical and pedagogical viewpoint, wherein teachers could find logic and meaning in their work. In religious schools, the problem is less acute. They share a common commitment to actualize religious ideas, and all other subjects related to the curriculum, such as teaching methods, technology and cultural enrichment are dwarfed when compared with the common religious ideal. But in the general-state education the situation is disastrous: without a common overall purpose, without a uniting and guiding vision, an end or a *telos*,[1] nothing will arouse and impel the teacher's sense of idealism and mission, a feeling of educational vocation that sustains teachers and motivates them to offer the best of themselves to their students. Just as children cannot open up to alternatives without a certain feeling of stability with regard to what exists, so teachers lose their ability to develop and become rejuvenated without an intellectual, ethical and pedagogical basis that will serve them as a professional anchor for educational thinking and endeavor.

The purpose of these introductory remarks on the distress of teachers and the factors that erode their status is not to nullify their responsibility for their part in this deplorable situation (in their behavior with their students and their demands upon themselves), nor to determine a standpoint regarding the relative responsibility of each of the factors involved in the devaluation of education's status. My intention is twofold: (1) to heighten the understanding that without broad public cooperation in advancing teachers' quality and status we will all suffer from an education system that is not worthy of the name; and (2) that developing the professional ethics and awareness of teachers (I will use the word "teacher" to denote both educators and teachers) is the best method of advancing the status and quality of education.

As might be expected (in the framework of this book), the humanistic worldview and theory of education will serve as the intellectual, ethical and pedagogical frame of reference for grounding the spirit and principles of the proposed professional ethics. I will begin with a presentation of the potential

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[1] On the importance of shared ideals and ends for the existence of vital moral and educational practices see McIntyre's *After Virtue* and Postman's *The End of Education.*

embodied in a professional ethics for teachers, continue with an outline of the characteristic and unique goals of the education profession, and conclude with the implications of a professional ethics on the various relationships in the school framework. Subsequently, our discussion will shift from the school to the social and political arena: dealing with the obligation of humanistic teachers to act in society as a contributing, and often critical and subversive, elite group, *even if this means educating in opposition to the spirit of the times vis-à-vis the most urgent current issues.*

1. THE GOAL OF EDUCATION AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS IN THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICS OF EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS

Next to a substantial increase in teachers' salaries that will allow a more exacting choice of the teacher and educator workforce, the development of professional ethics is the most significant element in advancing the quality and status of education. Such a step has two clear-cut advantages: the first pertains to gaining the respect and trust of the general public. Contrary to the mixed and often critical attitude raised by the demands of trade unions regarding the improvement of working conditions, the free initiative of teachers to raise demands for themselves in all matters regarding the quality of their work as professionals, can only arouse sympathy and esteem, and serve as a basis for a respectful and trusting attitude in the future.

The second advantage relates to improving the quality of education both in the teacher-training process and in safeguarding quality and responsibility in various educational endeavors. This goal will be advanced as a consequence of heightening teachers' professional awareness and accepting a commitment to higher standards – in knowledge, expertise and conduct – which should characterize them as professionals and make them worthy of the name of teacher. At the same time, we should be aware of the fact that in light of the moral turpitude prevalent among numerous physicians and lawyers professional ethics alone cannot guarantee public prestige and professional quality; for this, there is a need for professional idealism, appropriate remuneration and attentive supervision on the part of the professional bureau and the general public.

It is important to make clear that in developing professional ethics I mean something far broader than the formal and technical meaning of an ethical code of conduct. The wider notion I am referring to comprises conscious-subjective elements of self-image, a sense of vocation and professional identity, together with public-objective elements of personal example,

communital involvement, interpersonal relationships and quality of thought and action. As I stated in the previous chapter, the term "ethics" derives from the root *ethos* (in ancient Greek) and indicates an assemblage of values, attributes and principles which directs the proper ways of human behavior in all matters relating to their relationships with themselves and others.

Throughout the development of human culture, an awareness evolved regarding the need for ethics specific to certain liberal professions, side by side with ethics as an all-embracing moral system: ethical codes that define normative patterns of knowledge and behavior which should characterize professionals as qualified and worthy of their profession. In the beginning, this related to the medical and legal professions, later psychologists, social workers, and in some places, teachers and other populations achieved this kind of professional status. In other words, when I note the importance of a professional ethics for teachers, I mean the nurturing of *a normative awareness common to educators and teachers that distinguishes them from the general public and other professionals, and which is embodied in the specific norms of intention, thinking and behavior – some of which are defined in the professional code of the education profession and others that are intrinsic to the expectations and demands related to the images of education and teaching in public consciousness.*

Before we define what distinguishes the professional ethics of teachers, we shall briefly examine what is common to teaching and other occupations that enjoy a professional status. *A profession, in comparison to other occupations, is a kind of social practice characterized by its intent to better the condition of human beings in an essential and common sphere of human existence, through specialization in a recognized academic field of knowledge, and by a commitment to high ethical and professional standards – both in the processes of training and certification of its members and in strictly adhering to professional ethics in ongoing routine work.*

More specifically, it is generally accepted that six basic characteristics render an occupation a profession: (1) an ideal or vocation for bettering the condition of human beings in a cardinal aspect of human life (physical health, mental health, fair trial, education and care-giving); (2) a discrete and reliable corpus of knowledge that comprises theoretical tradition and public discourse; (3) an extended and controlled process of training and professional certification; (4) a specialization recognized and respected by the public for which professionals are given certification and autonomy in professional opinions; (5) a professional ethical code that defines the assemblage of values, attributes, skills, commitments and conduct that characterize members of the profession as certified professionals worthy of their name; (6) a self-regulatory professional bureau where complaints

against members are discussed, with regard to behavior that is incompatible with the professional ethical code.

It appears that in order to define the singularity of the education and teaching profession we must note two fundamental characteristics: (1) the students – who are usually young – as the target population to whose good and advancement educators and teachers are committed; (2) the assets of knowledge, morality and art of human culture, which serve teachers as a guiding frame of reference for their educational endeavors and towards which teachers – according to the simile coined by John Dewey – seek to link students both as "inheritors" and "partners." These two aspects of educational endeavor are manifested in any overall definition of education. Let us look at two examples which are separated by 2,500 years: Protagoras the Athenian (fifth century B.C.E), who characterizes the unique skill of pedagogues in their ability to guide young people towards a full and successful human life so that they will be "fine and good" citizens in society; and the 20th century philosopher Whitehead, who defined education as the guidance of individuals in acquiring the art of life towards a maximal and successful actualization of their abilities in the concrete reality of their lives.[2]

We clearly cannot be satisfied with general definitions of this kind as a basis for the professional ethics of teachers. As I emphasized time and again in the previous chapters, educational activity never takes place in a cultural and ethical void. A great deal of importance is attributed to a clear-cut and focused formulation of the ideals and values, which will serve as the content core of professional ethics and the teacher's professional conscience. In the context of our discussion the ultimate commitment is to a humanistic worldview as it was presented in the previous chapters.

More concretely, let us note that the humanist's ultimate commitment is *to regard human beings as sovereign individuals who are responsible for their destiny, attributing to all people an unconditional intrinsic value equal to that of their fellow men and women, and striving to establish a just, democratic, and humane social order, which is committed to the sanctity of human life and the furthering of human equality, freedom, solidarity, growth and happiness.* I further stated that this humanist position is based on a special relationship of respect for Man qua Man: to Man as a creature granted a free will, reason, moral sensitivity, esthetic sense, and powers of imagination and creativity. In other words, for the humanist these human attributes are the source of human beings' dignity and ability to shape an enlightened and prosperous culture for themselves. Thus the humanists' decisive opposition to any attempt – in the name of national, religious or

[2] Plato, "Protagoras"; Whitehead, "The Aims of Education," ch. 3.

ideological values – to restrain the sources of human vitality and subjugate them to other goals.

These clarifications lead us to the standpoint of humanistic educational ethics, according to which it is mandatory for educators to attribute supreme value to the imperatives embedded in it beyond commitments to all other systems of values. Just as supremacy should be attributed to the normative ethics of global humanistic morality over any religious or national ethical code; just as physicians have a supreme commitment to save human life and cure illness, regardless of differences in national and ethnic groups or religious or political worldviews; just as legalists have a supreme commitment to reveal the truth and conduct a fair trial without their judgment being tainted by foreign elements (personal or ideological); and just as psychologists have a supreme commitment to promote the mental health of their patients, over and above matters related to personal benefit or society's demands; so we must say that educators *have a supreme commitment to advance the normal development and well-being of young people so that they will be able to lead a meaningful and dignified human life.* Put differently, it is a commitment to *establishing an enlightened, just and humane democratic society that will place the vital conditions for human development and prosperity at the disposal of all.*

Just like being a physician, lawyer or psychologist, being an educator is "a way of being" – a unique form of involvement in life. Unlike the economist or taxi-driver, the industrialist or farmer, whose occupations are one part of the totality of their existence, *in the world of educators (like that of the physician) their occupation is their backbone.* An (idealistic) educator of this kind does not regard his- or herself as an agent of socialization for a national consensus, or as an official or technocrat whose sole vocation is the implementation of the curriculums that are invented in government ministries. They perceive reality through educational sensitivities and expectations, and everywhere they go – at work and during their leisure time – they experience a caring and responsible vigilance for safeguarding the conditions that will allow young people to develop, experience vitality, well-being and happiness.

In more practical terms: beyond egotistical, religious or ideological considerations, the following commitment works as the prevailing logic for the humanist educator: *to assist young people in realizing their inherent abilities for acquiring knowledge and skills for successfully and fairly coping with life's challenges, developing moral and civic virtues, and becoming sensitive and critical learners whose knowledge serves as the "tree of life" for themselves and for society.* Conversely, and in a more radical spirit, educators should nurture in themselves and their students the critical awareness and moral sensitivity required for effectively coping with

all those factors – natural and human – that threaten to impair their students' normal development and human image.

We should note further that the educator's professional vocation is not manifested in developing one dominant facet of human beings, but in a comprehensive, proportionate and harmonious nurturing of the entire personality, and that all his or her actions should be guided by respect for their students' personality as rational and sovereign partners in this unique dialogue called education. It seems to me that here, too, we can draw a comparison with medical ethics: like the physician who is committed to the promotion of human beings' overall health, not sacrificing the normal functioning of specific organs for the physical excellence of any other one (prohibiting performance-enhancing drugs in sports or preventing threats to the overall development of children as the result of the excessive development of a specific skill), and like the physician's commitment to inform his or her patients of their condition, respect their decisions and avoid any manipulative craftiness in treatment or experiments, so we must expect educators to adhere to the proportionate and harmonious development of their students' personality (with all their diverse aspects and variety of spheres of knowledge), as well as nurture in them intelligent and critical awareness as a basis for their self-ability to evaluate the validity and value of the content studied.[3]

In this context, we will note three broad definitions of humanistic education, which can serve as a guiding frame of reference for professional ethics. The first, by the moral philosopher William Frankena, attributes the educator with the responsibility to "prepare men [and women] to do what is necessary, what is useful, and what is noble or excellent, but it must prefer the excellent and consider the necessary and the useful as means to it."[4] The second, by the educational philosopher Maxine Greene, identifies education with "moving people to what are conceived to be more desirable states of mind, to bring them to care about what is significant and worthwhile...[and] to enable them to learn how to learn, to make cognitive sense of their experience, to engage with their environments as perceptual and imaginative and feeling beings."[5] The third, which was presented earlier in Chapter II, identifies humanistic education with *general and multi-faceted cultivation of the personality of those being educated, while strictly adhering to the open-mindedness and dignity of humankind, towards the best and highest life of which they are capable in three fundamental domains of life: as individuals*

[3] See the words of Sockett in the first chapter of his *The Moral Base of Teacher Professionalism*.

[4] Frankena, *Three Historical Philosophies of Education*, p. 64.

[5] Greene, "Contexts, Connections and Consequences: The Matter of Philosophical and Psychological Foundations."

who realize and develop their potential, as involved and responsible citizens, and as human beings who enrich and perfect themselves through active engagement with the collective achievements of human culture.

The logic and influence of educational ethics can be examined in two main arenas: one is in the space of the school, in the framework of teachers' activities with their students in educational institutions; the second is in the community and society in general, as professionals who by virtue of their unique sensitivity and professionalism gain the public's special attention as well as influential power in social and cultural issues. We will begin with the school arena and the teacher-student relationship. Here one should expect the teacher to act towards creating an educational climate and encounter based on mutual trust and respect, building a supportive approach and an interpersonal closeness, and nurturing open-mindedness, tolerance and sensitivity towards others and the community's needs. From the moral point of view, it is mandatory that educators act with equality, fairness and respect towards their students, be attentive to their singular needs, maintain confidential information that is disclosed to them in the course of their work, and avoid abusing their status and authority for personal gain.

On the intellectual level, they should strictly adhere to open-mindedness and intellectual fairness in presenting study content and in discussing social issues. They should nurture natural inquisitiveness, joy of learning and mutual enrichment, as well as cultivate their students' inclinations towards rational, autonomous, critical, multi-directional and creative thinking. On the personality level, they should assist their students in realizing their inherent abilities and talents, nurture their feeling of self-worth and self-respect, develop their emotional intelligence, and guide them in the formation of desirable dispositions, such as benevolence, fairness, courtesy and tolerance.

In the teacher-parent relationship, the teacher should be expected to cooperate with parents on a basis of mutual trust and respect, treat them as equals and in an impartial manner, inform them of their child's scholastic and social situation, and maintain the confidentiality of family details that have come to their knowledge in the course of their work. In the spirit of the communitarian approach, teachers are expected to encourage the supportive involvement of parents in advancing the scholastic and educational goals of the school; all this stemming from a common recognition that parents have the authority and responsibility for the child's upbringing at home and in society, while at school teachers have the authority and professionalism to determine the study content and methods of education and teaching.

In the sphere of their relationships with their colleagues, teachers are expected to act respectfully and cooperatively, share knowledge and professional experience, help in welcoming new colleagues, and avoid slander and impairing their dignity when working with students, colleagues

and educational and public authorities. As a public of "colleagues" they must work together to establish an institutional work culture characterized by caring and responsible involvement in the school and the community. They should strive to reach high standards in the spheres of knowledge, personal example, pedagogical expertise, interpersonal relations and work ethics; in common adherence to pedagogical logic vs. the demands of education authority, pressure groups, community and parents' committees; and in maintaining a communal atmosphere of empathic support, constructive criticism and mutual enrichment.

In the arena of the second group of activities – the community and the state – educational ethics is characterized by the involvement of educators as a society-serving elite. Like physicians and lawyers, educators too are given a special authority by society (by virtue of their expertise in matters relevant to the life of all people), and this authority is a measure of the way and extent professional conscience operates to expose hidden and problematic aspects of social reality and strengthen the general public's ability to make well-considered decisions on public issues that are on the agenda. For example, we expect physicians to make their professional voice heard publicly and warn the public in cases when food products, environmental pollution, governmental development projects, or military closure of a specific area may be hazardous to public health. We expect lawyers, based on their expertise in the principles of law and justice, to boldly warn us of cases in which a corrupt government, bureaucratic abuse, or racial (religious, gender, or other) discrimination may impair the basic rights of citizens.

The principle of social involvement also applies to humanist educators. We must examine to what extent the professional obligation to go beyond daily topics and routines in the educational-institutional framework and take autonomous and active initiative as a society-serving elite applies to educators (often running counter to the spirit and trends of the times). It is clear to me, for example, that humanist educators cannot accept the injury and suffering of young people caused by malnutrition, lack of proper medical care and proper living accommodations. Nor should we remain neutral and silent in the face of discrimination against gender, religious and ethnic communities; religious or national fanaticism that sends young people to their death as "living bombs" or "cannon fodder"; young girls who are sold by their families to pimps into a life of prostitution; and deprivation of young people of educational opportunities under conditions that perpetuate ignorance. In regard to all these – as anti-humanist elements in the social and cultural space in which the educational endeavor takes place – educators must make their voice heard: in teachers' organizations, the media, the neighborhoods and communities, political frameworks and social organizations.

Among these, I have chosen to concentrate on three subjects or central aspects of our lives, in which educators should have a special say: commitment to expanding peace and democracy as a means of protecting the lives and freedom of human beings in general and young people in particular, a battle against the sacrifice of the assets of education and culture on the altar of "ratings" and economic greed, and an examination of the quintessence and value of the "new literacies" as a way of renewing education and improving teacher training.

2. EDUCATION TOWARD PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

The struggle to expand peace and democracy directly derives from the teacher's professional vocation: there is no action more crucial to the advancement of the development and well-being of young people than protecting their lives, well-being and freedom. Moreover, the fact that throughout the 20th century, humanity has annihilated over a hundred million people and has compromised the freedom of hundreds of millions more, presents educators with a supreme ethical-professional imperative to promote world peace and democracy. As humanistic educators in this kind of brutal reality our conscience should not rest. As Zvi Lamm noted in *War and Education*, throughout history teachers and educators cooperated with murderous and oppressive regimes, thus paving the way for bloodshed and other horrendous atrocities. He adds in this context that the role of education is not only to dress the wounds of past wars, but to prevent the creation of conditions for the breaking out of the next one.[6]

It is also worthy of note that the commitment to human life, peaceful relationships and individual freedom does not apply only to the international level. These commitments also apply to the internal, social and communal level: bloodshed in the civil wars, such as in Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and the murder of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin on religious-nationalistic grounds, are examples of agony and suffering that populations devoid of democratic awareness bring upon themselves. For all these reasons, teachers must regard it as their right and duty not only to inculcate in their students political wisdom after the fact, but also to concentrate on preventing future wars and actively endeavor to promote peace and democracy, here and now.

Let us begin with peace. Not arbitrarily, but because peace is the greatest blessing people can wish themselves. Peace is the best attribute in the life of the natural organism, since it implies that everything works well and to our

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[6] Lamm, *War and Education*, p.5.

satisfaction – a *full, secure, peaceful and prosperous existence.*[7] Peace is primarily life (not death), personal security (not terror and fear), health (not sickness), vitality and development (not fixated passivity), psychic wholeness (not madness), wholeness of the organism (not deformity or disability), free will and action (not slavery and addiction), well-being and happiness (not distress and anguish), belonging to a family and a community (not loneliness and alienation), longevity and old-age (not a short life and miserable old-age), and finally – a normal reality in which children bury their parents (not where parents bury their children).

The blessing of peace is so great that it is the duty of educators to remove it from the election jargon and politicians' ceremonials and bring it back to the daily life of the individual and the community. People want to live in peace and be at peace with themselves, and not to be "torn" inside by conflicting mental powers (despite the fact that people who are in conflict with themselves, like Tolstoy and Nietzsche, can be extremely productive from the artistic point of view). People wish themselves bodily wholeness – not to lose limbs, and the wholeness of their homes – and not to lose family members. In interpersonal relations, when we ask other people how they are – "are you well?" or "how are you?" – we mean nothing more than a general interest in their existential condition, from the perspective of the good and well-being that people wish for themselves. And with a view to the future, we greet people with the "Go in peace," "Peace be with you," as an empathic and solidary concern regarding the well-being of the other through our awareness of the dangers, hindrances, and stumbling blocks with which life challenges us.

In the life of the society and the nation, peace is a reality of mutual openness and respect, pluralism and tolerance, consideration of the other and special support of the weak. Its opposite, as we all have witnessed too often, is wretchedness, hate, isolation, fanaticism, violence and bloodshed in the violent battles over religious, ethnic, status and partisan issues – battles that culminate in political murder and civil war. In international relations, peace means good neighborliness based on cooperation and mutual recognition of the singularity and dignity of the other, insistence on ways of rapprochement and compromise rather than aggressive and obdurate oppression, positing the sanctity of life and human dignity as supreme values as opposed to the territorial wholeness of the country and sanctity of religious law or ideological doctrine. It is worthy of note that in an age of ever-growing ecological crises, in our relationship with the natural world, peace has a clear-cut meaning: life with nature, close to nature, and a respectful

[7] In the discussion of "peace" I draw mainly on Ravitsky, "Peace" and Yas'ur, "Will the Sword Devour Forever?"

relationship with it instead of living at its expense as greedy and exploitive people who lack sensitivity to its unique value, and lack understanding of the destructive implications for us all as a result of the damage caused to it. In short, the imperative "Seek peace and pursue it"[8] commends a wide range of relationships: good neighborliness with all those who surround us, drawing on a sense of openness, sensitivity and respect for the unique value of others (human and natural), and mutual sympathy and cooperation.

As an Israeli humanistic educator, I believe that our main interest in peace should focus on the most painful and urgent issue: preventing processes that further inflame the prolonged and gory conflict between the Palestinian people and us. In all matters pertaining to the reasons for the conflict, there is nothing new under the sun. Again, as in most conflicts throughout history, religious and aggressive nationalistic fanaticism is the main reason for bloodshed and human wretchedness. The strategies of "preventive medicine" practiced by humanistic educators should be adjusted to concrete "maladies." In the spirit of the liberal-democratic ethos, the first thing that should be done is the separation of religion and politics, and of religious indoctrination from the education system. From a humanistic viewpoint, religion has constructive value as one of the ways people fill their lives with spiritual content and enrich their existence with meaning and value. On the other hand, as a source of superstition, feelings of superiority and claims of special privileges, religion is a negative and destructive force that motivates whole sections of the population to impair the life and rights of others. We should make clear to our students that religions, like languages and ideologies, are many and varied, and there is no rational and objective way to choose between them – hence the logic of liberal democracies and the profound importance of pluralism and tolerance.

This awareness brings us to the second principle: every reasonable solution (for both parties) must be based on the principle of mutuality of the equal value of Man and (in the spirit of Hillel) of refraining from doing unto others that which we would not want others to do to us. From the humanistic standpoint, we are first and foremost human beings and should act accordingly, and only later are we Jews or Moslems, Israelis or Palestinians. In other words, a fair solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is possible only when it is based on overall human moral principles and not on particular Jewish or Moslem Law. Only on the basis of this awareness can a just peace be established and accepted by all, a peace in the framework of which there is a commitment that everyone will be given a fair opportunity to realize their natural rights as human beings and as citizens. (By the very

[8] Psalms, 34:14.

nature of things it is obvious that neither side will be able to fully actualize all its desires).

Thus, we stress the importance of practical reason, as the third principle of education towards peace. Next to education towards the equality of the value of Man, pluralism, tolerance and mutuality and education towards peace are required to free students of fatalistic positions and messianic delusions, and in their place nurture a rational and critical approach: forming positions based on the best available knowledge and tools, reinforcing intellectual honesty to face reality, reaching the inevitable conclusions (instead of burying one's head in the sand), striving to apply moral principles to a problematic reality, and imposing logic on drives and justice on aggression.

The fourth principle is an experiential and simulatory experience – insightful and emotional – of the evil and absurdity of war. We dealt with this subject in the second and third chapters through Henry David Thoreau and George Bernard Shaw – when we saw that naïve and decent people cooperate with injustice and even regard it their duty to fight and kill other naïve and decent peoples. Thus it is important in the study of history and literature that teachers challenge their students and encourage them to critically put themselves into the shoes of the Crusaders and Christian inquisitors (for example), North American slave owners and the liquidators of the Indians in South America, members of the Gestapo who murdered children, the Khmer Rouge youths who murdered adults, and just "ordinary men who rape women." At the same time it is no less important to experience empathy with the victims of the Holocaust, murder, oppression and rape, and the (universal) refugee who "finds herself one day on a road with her house in ruins, and her boy dead in her arms."[9] The main point is to make you cringe inside, a shudder to pass over your skin, and the "pennies" to drop into the thinking slot. Everything will coalesce into a living consciousness that will know, at the right time and the right place, how to read "the writing on the wall," see the "warning flags" and the "red lines," and be on guard so that "ploughshares will not become swords" nor the "pruning hooks spears."

To be more concrete, from the viewpoint of humanistic educational ethics, Israeli educators cannot accept perpetuation of military rule over the Palestinian population in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Whether a person belongs to the occupying ruler or the oppressed ruled, the fact is that the reality of occupation is always one of bloodshed and loss of the human dignity by both parties. Thus, every humanist, not only humanist educators, must do everything in his or her power to advance a solution of peace in

[9] Sartre, *The Reprieve*, p.89.

which everyone is guaranteed the conditions for a secure and dignified human existence (this is an in-principle humanistic position and not a local-political one). Humanistic educators cannot remain indifferent to the killing, oppression, moral degradation and loss of human dignity that is part and parcel of the reality of the military occupation by Israel over the Palestinians in the past decade. It is a reality in which we have experienced hundreds of dead, including numerous children, in Palestinians terrorist attacks and Israeli repression of demonstrations, torture and abuse until death both by the Israeli Defense Forces and by the Palestinian forces; bombing homes, mass deportation, imprisonment of tens of thousand of Palestinians, including thousands of administrative detentions, depriving people of their basic human rights and closing down schools and universities for long periods.

This is a reality of bloodshed, injustice and suffering under occupation. No one with any self-respect will agree to relinquish their yearning for a full human life of freedom and sovereignty for any length of time. Even if an enlightened and peaceful occupation were possible, the humanist educator could not regard it as the suitable solution. I will explain this by what I said after the horrors of the Intifada at a convention of the Teacher's Association in May 1989:

> Let us assume for a moment, in a kind of make-believe world, that there is no Intifada and I don't have to shoot demonstrators, blow up houses and deport inciters. The wish of numerous Israelis has come true and the Palestinians in the occupied territories have accepted, as an act of fate, their lives as citizens deprived of their rights next to us and under our rule. This hypothetical situation, which is perceived by numerous Israelis as ideal – is a nightmare for anyone who cherishes justice and morality. In war, the battle is for your life; in morality, the battle is for your human image; victory is in life that respects human beings; failure – is contemptible life. Let our point of departure be that I don't want to rule over another people who are deprived of their civil rights in the framework of a country where first class and second-class citizens live, because it is unfair and morally evil. I don't want to swim in a pool built by a Palestinian worker who will never swim in it. I don't want to dine in a restaurant where Palestinians clean the bathrooms and polish the mirrors, but will never sit down to dine in it. I don't want to live in a neighborhood that Palestinians built but in which they will never be allowed to live. I don't want to pick up Palestinian workers at the "slave markets" in the Jewish cities. I don't want a Knesset that legislates for all the country's inhabitants but where only some are represented in it. I don't want, simply, to be superior to the Palestinians, because their

> inferiority degrades and demeans me [too]...even if there were no Intifada, [the reality of occupation] is a moral curse which we must free ourselves from.[10]

As long as peace has not been achieved (and it is never fully and permanently achieved), educators should be a serving social elite that demands that the political establishment adhere to a policy of peace; it acts towards the assimilation of the vision of peace among young people and the development of the sensitivity and thinking required for safeguarding their human image even in the "inhuman" endeavor of war and occupation. The fulfillment of this educational mission, which has both school-specific and public-political aspects, can be achieved by employing many and varied approaches.

Next to the principles I have mentioned – the neutralization of religious and national fanaticism, application of the principles of equality and mutuality, the nurturing of a rational and critical approach, and simulatory experiencing of evil and wretchedness of war – it is also extremely important to nurture non-violent ways of coping with conflicts, empathic knowledge of the world of the enemy (against trends of demonization and dehumanization), overcoming drives, and diminishing the negative emotions of aggression, hatred and resentment. Be the ways of education what they may, supreme importance should be attached to internalizing Albert Camus' demand of each of us, a demand presented in his book *Neither Executioners nor Victims*, that "in the murderous reality of our world," we should not neglect to mark daily the "terrible dividing line" between those who "accept the consequences of being murderers themselves or the accomplices of murderers, and those who refuse to do so with all their force and being."[11]

In this spirit, I would like to present the following passage. Particularly because it was written in Israel, it contains a great potential for educating towards "an awareness of peace" and maintaining the human image in "non-peace" situations. It is an important text, because it was taken from the verdict in the regional court of the Southern Command in the trial of the Givati brigade soldiers – who beat el-Shami Hanni Ben Deib to death. It was a case in which "color blindness" to the "red lines" of morality and the "warning flags of stark illegality" led young, perfectly normal Israelis to perform inhuman acts:

> It appears to us that this result, and the way in which it came about, should shock any civilized person, and anyone in whom the feeling of

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[10] Aloni, "On the Obligation of the Educational Battle against the Occupation," *Hetz*, vol.2, p.25.

[11] Camus, *Neither Victims nor Executioners*, p.61.

morality and justice throbs, for whom human life – anyone's human life – is the ultimate value in human society's scale of values. During the trial we were shocked to hear some of the witnesses expressing hate and contempt for the value of the life of another human being, one who belongs to the population governed by the military forces. We were shaken when we heard witnesses who are soldiers, who watched the degrading acts of beating helpless, handcuffed prisoners within the military camp, who were indifferent to what their eyes saw, blocking their ears to the cries of the beaten, only because those people were suspected of violating order, belonged to a hostile population, and whose blood can be spilled without compunction.

A difficult question which caused us to wonder from the beginning of the trial and which only intensified during its continuation after we became familiar with the figures in this case, was how such a situation could have come into being, in which soldiers of an elite unit, who in our opinion received a good education, could have behaved so abominably and who abandoned all the ethical baggage that their parents and educators internalized in them, undergoing a psychological metamorphosis, and were willing and able to beat "senseless" in the words of the pathologist Dr. Levy, an older person, who from the point of view of age could have been their father, and threaten his life, if not causing his actual death... we believe that the behavior of the guilty parties cannot be explained against the background of their deviant personality. Their failure is the "stinking fruit" of not safeguarding the norms, which were given legitimacy and even the support of their commanders, and regretfully, that of their senior commanders as well.

We had no doubt that an order given to soldiers to use force and beat anyone suspected of disrupting order, even after he is caught by our soldiers and does not resist arrest, is a prima facie illegal order.[12]

If peace has always been a yearning and an educational ideal (at least among individuals and groups in society), democracy is a kind of younger sister in the family of social and educational ideals; an idea that was sown and flourished (for a short period) in classical Athens, was developed and improved in the 18th and 19th centuries, and achieved the status of an

[12] Similar wording appeared in the Supreme Court decision 425/89 in the trial of the soldiers accused of breaking the bones of villagers from Hawwara: "Can we speak at all of a lack of clarity and obscureness when the matter under discussion is an order to take people from their homes, manacle and gag them, and beat them with truncheons in order to break their arms and legs? What possible lack of clarity could there be in a clearly illegal order of this kind, which in the words of the IDF Judge Advocate, "A warning flag was flying over it" and disobeying it was mandatory? Acts of this kind are repellent to any civilized person."

inalienable asset in numerous countries throughout the world in the 20th century. Despite the vast popularity of democracy in our times, and like our attitude towards peace, its continuation should not be taken for granted. Democracy is an achievement rich in blessings for Man, but if it is not closely safeguarded, it can easily be shattered, giving way to dictatorship, or dissolved and become an *ochlocracy* (in Greek), *mobocracy* (in English). "Democracy," in the words of Israeli Chief Justice Barak, "does not safeguard itself, [and] if we don't safeguard it, it will not safeguard us."[13] Contrary to the dictator (in an autocratic regime) and the nobility (in an aristocratic regime), who do all in their power to preserve their rule, democracy has no special interest groups that will safeguard its integrity and character. In a democracy, as the rule of a people or the rule of all citizens, the sovereign is "us," each and every one of us, and there is no one to protect it except us. However, democracy does have unique nurturers and guards: intellectuals and lawyers, the free press and the "the collective 'us'," of whom we are speaking here – educators and teachers.

Since there is an abundance of scholarly books and educational programs on democracy, I have no pretensions of being innovative here or adding anything to what already exists. I will only try and touch upon a number of issues that appear to me more problematic – the misunderstandings and false perceptions that emerge again and again as the main impediments to the understanding and internalization of the democratic idea. The most prevalent mistake among the public in general and teachers in particular is identifying democracy with majority rule. This identification is not only erroneous but also dangerous. Just as democracy is not the rule of the "blue bloods" (monarchs and the nobility), nor of a superior race or chosen nation, nor of high priests who act by virtue of the imperatives of a superior entity, nor the rule of philosophers who attribute to themselves knowledge of absolute truths, nor the rule of the wealthy nor that of those who excel in physical strength; so should democracy not be identified with majority rule. "Democracy is the rule of the basic values of justice, freedom, equality and human rights, [and] a regime in which the majority deprives the minority of their basic rights is a regime of majority rule, and is not a democratic regime."[14] If an absolute majority (even in a free and valid referendum) decides to deny the freedom of expression, the freedom of occupation or the freedom of religious worship from any minority group, it will be a dictatorship of a majority which runs counter to the basic principle of democracy relating to human and civil equality for all. The same is true of a majority party that decides to waive holding periodic and free elections –

[13] "Democracy does not safeguard itself," *Ha'aretz*, 20.8.1988.
[14] "Democracy does not safeguard itself," *Ha'aretz*, 20.8.1988.

which runs counter to the basic principle of democracy pertaining to the right of a people to elect its government and change its leaders.

It is important to reemphasize that in a democracy the sovereign is the people (all adult citizens of the state) and it establishes its regime; or in the words of Abraham Lincoln, it is "the rule of the people, by the people, and for the people." In a more contemporary spirit – after eliminating those patent manifestations of inequality practiced in Pericles' Athenian democracy and those prevalent during Lincoln's times – its appears to me that it would be right to define democracy as a "regime that derives its authority from all the individuals who are citizens of the state. It represents everyone, and is directed towards guaranteeing their existence, the development of their skills and well-being, without compromising the individual's basic rights and the basic values of justice, freedom and equality."[15] In conclusion, democracy is *a social order in which free citizens with equal rights shape together – in a pluralistic, fair and tolerant manners – the character and customs of the society.*

Now we will clarify and expand on the various aspects mentioned above: in a democracy (liberal and pluralistic) all citizens may equally enjoy individual freedoms, human and civil basic rights, as well as educational, health, and occupational opportunities – all this regardless of gender, race, nationality, religion, ideology, ethnicity, and social status. At the basis of these principles lies a humanistic approach committed to attribute to all people unconditional and equal self-value as autonomous and sovereign creatures who are entitled to shape their image, seek their happiness, form their positions and actualize their decisions – as long as they do not deny the rights of others. Moreover, it is important to add here that not every liberal democracy is necessarily humanistic. As we indicated in Chapter Two, when dealing with the principles of a humanistic perspective, it is not enough to strictly adhere to the formal equality of civil rights to maintain a humanistic democracy. In order to exist, it is necessary to append the principles of solidarity and social justice to the principle of equal rights; ignoring it leaves broad populations open to cultural deprivation and political impotence. Humanistic democracy, as we pointed out when dealing with both Adler the conservative and Giroux the radical (see Chapter One), is obliged to put at the disposal of all its members the necessary conditions for personal development at a level that will allow them active, well-considered and critical involvement, both in leading their private lives and in politically shaping the image of society and its mores.

In a democracy the people's representatives and leaders are elected in free and periodic elections, while accepting the following basic principles:

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[15] Eilam, "Who Would Gourd the Guardians?" *Ha'aretz*, 20.9.1998.

(1) everyone has an equal right to vote and to be elected; (2) those elected receive, upon their election, a temporary mandate from the public to lead in matters of state; (3) the overall policy in directing social issues will be determined by a majority decision of the people's elected representatives; (4) the majority, even if absolute, does not have the authority to impair the most essential principles of democracy that deal with the individual's freedoms, equality of human and civic rights, separation of authorities (legislative, judiciary, executive and the free press) and the public's right to elect its leaders in a free and periodic process.

In this context the question of obeying the majority's decisions is often raised – or to put it negatively – the question of the right of civil disobedience and conscientious objection. Without delving deeply into this issue, it seems that humanistic ethical philosophy places the following three principles as guidelines:

1. In a democracy more than any other kind of regime, the individual is obliged to observe the rules of state and accept the majority's decision. Contrary to tyrannical regimes in which the regime's authority derives from its power and therefore one may free oneself from it by virtue of power, in a democracy the state's rules and mores manifest both the individual's free will and consideration of his or her basic rights.
2. A democratic and humanist society recognizes the value and importance of individual conscience as a guiding and restorative mechanism, and in cases of adherence to clear-cut moral principles grants individual conscience legitimacy as a basis for special consideration.
3. In a humanistic democracy, distinct moral consideration is attributed to individual conscience, only if at the core of its motivation and consideration lies a refusal to harm the lives, natural rights and human image of others. In other words, human beings' imperative of conscience does not express a desire to advance the individual's personal benefit or that of his or her affiliation group, but the internal imperative to accept the duties and constraints that will prevent doing injustice to others, and harming his or her humanity.

An additional salient feature of a humanistic democratic society is a commitment to the rational word (*logos*) over the power-abusive truncheon, and a commitment to mutual and in-principle fairness over opportunistic and egotistical domination. In democratic societies, applying logical arguments is regarded as the proper means for persuading and achieving influence ("parliament" is a derivation of the verb "to speak," to discuss and converse), and a morality based on equality and mutuality is considered the normative and proper basis for settling social issues and resolving conflicts. These characteristics are not self-evident and numerous efforts were required

and a great deal of blood was shed for their achievement. They manifest departure from the power-abusive jungle of "might is right," and a liberation from false perceptions – religious and ideological – that enable the annihilation, subjugation, and unhappiness of human beings as a result of their racial, religious, national, sexual, ethnic and status groups. One should regard the open, rational and fair debate as a level of achievement or development that should be protected daily from anti-democratic elements.

In democratic Athens, Perlices' words show us the daring and decisiveness required to "properly debate" controversial public issues and maintain an open and critical discussion, as the basis for decision and action, in light of the temptation to conceal the truth from the public and lead it as an obedient herd to the destination set by the rulers.[16] As we know, there are many ways, both prominent and hidden, to silence open public debate and put an end to critical reason: by the direct and blatant force of coercion, oppression and censorship; by nationalistic or fascistic rhetoric that denounces any doubt and criticism as "an anti-patriotic act and stabbing the nation in the back"; by degrading and intentionally weakening the legislative, judicial authorities and free media, so they will not intervene in the executive authority's freedom of action; by imposing a technocratic and bureaucratic perception that presents intellectual and ethical alternatives as irrelevant; through stupefying the masses with "bread and circuses," (entertainment, sports, soap operas, the tabloids and consumption products); through emotional and aggressive rituals that glorify the greatness of the nation or religion (and scorn inquisitive, exacting and sound reason); and also by a personality cult that inflates leaders to proportions whereby the (little) individual prefers to obliterate his or her or own reasoning and arrest his or her independent thinking.

In light of all this, the good citizens of democracy should be nurtured so that they will be involved in the community in a caring and responsible way, so they will be able to intelligently and critically participate in public discourse and never relinquish their sovereignty as a consequence of self-depreciation, hedonistic individualism, degenerate conformity or a leader cult. In education towards democracy, reason and imagination are involved no less than emotion, willpower and attributes of character; methodical teaching is required for inculcating formal knowledge and developing thinking patterns. At the same time there is a need for a personal example and the active involvement of students in choosing the ever-expanding aspects of their lives.

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[16] Pericles in Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, p.147; also Peters, "The Values of Democracy and the Aims of Education."

There is a plethora of literature and numerous and good educational programs on each of these subjects. Despite this, sufficient attention has not been devoted to one essential aspect: nurturing the awareness that no human being – whether a pope, rabbi, kadi, emperor, king, president, prime minister, general, sports star or the current top entertainer – is more a human being than another, therefore we do not deserve to belittle our personality before him, subjugate our freedom and mortgage our independent thinking and personal conscience. It seems that *only when human beings deeply feel that "his royal highness" and his personal servant, "big movie stars" and common "movie goers," posses more or less the same human "materials" in drives, passions, feelings, and thoughts – only then will an end come to non-democratic rituals that on the one hand worship the elite (as semi-gods) and dehumanize common people (as only semi-humans).* In the words of Hamlet:

> Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, – two dishes, but to one table: that's the end....A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed on that worm...Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar....
>
> Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returns into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and who of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer barrel? Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay, Might stop a hole to keep the wind away; O, that that earth which kept the world in should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw."[17]

3. EDUCATION TOWARD CULTURE OR SUBMISSION TO THE CULTURE OF RATINGS

I will begin our discussion with a personal story. During a stint of army reserve service on the top of Mount Avital on the Golan Heights, we, several fathers, had a "parents' talk." One of us, a man in his forties, described with equanimity how he cannot talk with his children, not to mention understand them. "They have their own minds" he said, "and I no longer try to understand them." He went on to say that in their free time they are engrossed in television and video and computer games. He admitted that he did not know what they got out of it, but that he and his wife had found something good in it. Their children are connected to appliances and no longer require babysitters or their parents' special attention. As a good father

[17] Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, pp.147, 187.

who wants to make his children happy he took them to Disneyland. He told us how thrilled he was – with both happiness and fear – at the adventures that the amusement park offered him. His children, on the other hand, were singularly unimpressed. They moved from one facility to the next, aspiring to reach the most dangerous and exciting one. But their faces remained blank. They hardly displayed any excitement, satisfaction or gratitude. "It was okay" the children said, and thus summarized their visit to Disneyland. At the conclusion of his story I asked him whether he thought that this detachment and alienation between him and his children was not the inevitable result of his choice to leave them to the world of television and video and computer games. "Forget it," he answered, "these are today's times, you have to go along with them and that's it."

His reply cannot be accepted by humanistic parents and educators. Inertial or herd-like being carried away with the spirit of the times is incompatible with the humanistic idea of sovereign Man, who seeks to be free vis-à-vis reality, familiar with its alternatives, to examine the validity and relative value of things, and to choose rationally, autonomously and authentically what appears to him to be the best way. The new reality to which our children are connected numerous hours a day – to electronic communication devices that are always available, experiential by nature and with a hypnotic lure – has resulted in an academic, cultural and educational discourse that seeks to examine its diverse implications on the image of man and society.

From the plethora of subjects related to this discourse I wish to focus on one central issue: the relation between educating towards culture and "the culture of ratings." As we have seen in the previous chapters, one of the basic commitments of humanistic education is the acculturation of students: developing in them a relationship of love, knowledge and commitment towards the best in human creation – in philosophy, science, morality, art, law, technology, and so on and so forth. Moreover, we have seen that humanistic education worthy of the name seeks to nurture in students rational thinking and the skills for discerning and judging, moral and esthetical sensitivity, a critical and creative approach to life, and an autonomous and authentic attitude towards reality.

Education towards culture demands development and improvement through a challenging coping with content and values regarded as worthy. "Ratings" (the degree of popularity in mass culture), which has become a dominant consideration and mentality in society, contains in its definition a trend contrary of culture (in its normative meaning). Its goal is to achieve sweeping popularity through a tempting and obsequious appeal to the widest common denominator; and since it is not restricted by "inhibitions of quality," it is not loath to descend to the lowest common denominator. The

one and only logic of the "rating mentality" is quantitative, and its success is measured by the economic or political strength it gives to businessmen and politicians, regardless of the implications this rating manipulation has on society and of the cultural and educational toll it exacts from its citizens.

The implications and price are not theoretical but practical and immediate. In recent years our children have been growing up in a reality of communicational brouhaha that has become more superficial from the intellectual point of view, yellower in its gossip, bluer in its sexual blatancy, and redder in its murderousness and violence. Television talk-shows are more like gladiatorial arenas and freak-shows than serious and thoughtful discussions on public issues. Politicians render the gimmick into a system, and they have erased the well-organized platform and complete thought from the map; intense excitement that lacks intellectual and ethical context has become the most dominant aspiration of the younger generation. (In this context, it is worthwhile remembering the words of Nietzsche, that one of the signs of human decadence is embodied in the need of ever-intensifying external stimuli in order to overcome boredom and desolation that human beings find in their inner selves). The key to higher ratings is sensual excitation or "one night stands," never striving to achieve intellectual or emotional profundity, for fear that spectators might awaken from their bewilderment and move (zap) to a competing channel. There is a preference for the more intense, arousing, exciting and stimulating, and yesterday's climax is today's point of departure. (Our children can devour five "Clockwork Oranges" for breakfast, the kind that we, only a few years ago, could only digest one, due to its violence and repulsion). Against the backdrop of this trend it is not easy to excite today's children, and even harder to shock them. After they have watched every possible atrocity, their critical sensitivity to evil, monstrosities and vulgarity has become so dulled that they know how to watch the most brutal, despicable and coarse with de-sensitized equanimity and moral and esthetic neutrality.

The simple and immediate question that should be asked is "Why?". Why accept a systematic campaign for stupefying and devastating the public in general and young people in particular when it is clear to us that the motivating force behind "garbage media" is economic greed and political domination. Some harbor reservations about this criticism and claim that all this is "no more than harmless entertainment." This would be true had vulgar communications served as part of what was marginal entertainment, next to leisure activity that respects Man's humanity. But in reality, this is not the case: we live in a period in which addictive and undiscerning devotion to television has become the main element that shapes children's existence. In this medium, vulgarity prevails and quality is rare. In communicational ecology, if we can compare it to the natural environment, the balance is

exceedingly negative: inciting drives (instead of sublimating them), pornography (instead of erotica), temptation for immediate satisfaction (instead of patience and self-restraint), a joy in violence and destruction (instead of their moral negation), image gimmicks (instead of profundity and thoroughness), systematic declarations (instead of well-founded statements), blunting sensitivities (instead of sharpening them), a sexist and stereotypical approach (instead of a distinct and humane one), emphasizing the sick and distorted (while ignoring the sane and normal), and idolizing money and power as the ultimate goal (which nullifies almost all other alternative purposes and reasons).

We are not speaking here of random exposure to life's ugliness or marginal entertainment derived from murderous and destructive ritual. The media is an engaging totality; it draws the spectator's consciousness, thrills it by sophisticated manipulation, dictates its rhythm and shapes its desires and expectations as well as its thinking patterns and sensitivities (is there any need to repeat Marshall McLuhan's aphorism that the media is the massage?). In this new reality marketing people have a formative influence far greater than that of both parents and teachers. Our children "will start watching television at 18 months...they will watch 16,000 hours of television by the time they graduate from high school; by the age of twenty, they will have watched 700,000 commercials and thus advertising will become the definitive source of young people's socialization....They are on the way to becoming consumers, not citizens."[18] If we remember in this context Aristotle's words in the *Ethics*, that intellectual and moral dispositions are formed through participation in the various modes of experience and practice (intellectual, moral, political and aesthetic), and "it makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth,"[19] we must conclude that we are behaving towards our children, who are dearest to us of all, with a measure of irresponsibility bordering on moral anomie and spiritual anarchy.

It is not simply a theoretical matter of preferring the tangibility of the golden calf to a more spiritual and refined culture (in terms of Judaism) or nurturing the instinctual desire and not rational self-scrutiny (in Platonian terms). It is an acceptance of a perpetual "bombardment" of young people by interest-driven and manipulative messages which blunt sensitivity, render thinking superficial, distort reality, crumble any yardstick of value and importance, and relegate classical sublimity and the refined to the periphery. Without good ratings, nothing has the right to exist. And worst of all, due to its pervasive character, extending to both content and form, addiction to this

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[18] Klein, "The School for Rubbish," *Ha'aretz*, 23.8.1996.
[19] Aristotle, *Ethics*, p. 29.

kind of communicational culture deprives young people of the infrastructure of knowledge and norms which are required for intelligent and critical coping with life, and the distinctions between truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, and authentic and fake. In light of the bloodshed, oppression, discrimination, suffering and misery that have inundated the 20th century and the fraudulent and distorting systems that enabled them to exist, abandoning young people to "market forces" without the appropriate equipment for discerning and criticizing is more than just educational negligence. At least from the humanistic viewpoint, we are speaking here of a cynical and abusive sacrifice of both the human development of young people and the quality of society's moral and cultural life on the altar of greed. *"Ratings" is the sacrificial knife.*

The fact that the majority of the public calmly accepts the reality of a systematic campaign for the stupefaction of the spectators, mandates an examination of the forces working towards the shaping of this order. It seems to me that the success of this campaign should be attributed to the cooperation (bizarre in itself) of three different factors that have now joined forces to topple education from culture: profit-seekers who make their living via the superficiality of human beings; a type of modernists, whose positivistic skepticism negates the reality of human values only because they do not respond to precise measuring; and the post-modernists whose nihilism renounces any striving towards truth, justice, enlightenment and progress that have universal humanistic attributes. The nature of the first fact is simple and I need not expand on it; the second two are more complex and are directly related to the educational and academic world. I will, therefore, relate to them here, albeit briefly.

As with at the beginning of this chapter, employing the example of the "parents' talk," I will begin with an example taken from real life. On "Cultural Journal", a TV program, which dealt with the topic of communications in the age of ratings, the participants were a modernist lecturer on communications, a post-modernist lecturer on literature, and a journalist known for her social activism. The question posed by the mediator in this discussion focused on the legitimacy of using "tricks" for increasing ratings – for example, creating sensational news, candid camera programs and lotteries – which often deceive spectators. The modernist-positivist, characterized by ethical skepticism and a pretension of professionalism, stated emphatically that television by its "nature" and "essence" is a recreational tool from which high cultural standards should not be expected (and furthermore, in his opinion there is no real distinction between more or less cultural). His colleague in this discussion, negated by postmodern logic any distinction between reality and fiction, between essence and image, between objective and subjective, between unbiased and biased – so that

from his point of view anything goes, and there is no significant difference between news documentation and its "fabrication," between reliable reporting and illusionary or propaganda-driven production.

Their scholarly and cynical skepticism peeved the third participant in this discussion. The radical and feminist journalist put their argument to the test: is she expected to broadcast any item about a murderous terrorist attack, a brutal rape, or juicy gossip without first checking its veracity? Is there no real difference between the murder and rape victims of Bosnia, for example, and a film or propaganda-oriented production of this sort of tragedy? One must further ask: let the modern positivist and the postmodern nihilist imagine themselves as victims of oppression, rape, pillage or simple defamation – would they not cry out and demand reliable reporting and the remedy of justice on the basis of truth and morality (objective, of course)?

The critical journalist in this discussion indicated the source of the problem, but did not call it by its name: cooperation between the ratings-craving profit-seekers, modern positivists and postmodern nihilists who have joined forces to ensure the alienation of Man from any qualitative and normative perception of culture (and thus also education). In the current "opinion environment," it is not politically correct to speak of culture as an assemblage of human achievement in philosophy, science, morality, art, governance and law; nor is it common nowadays to refer to culture as the development of human beings capacities for rational thinking, moral sensitivity and the refinement of taste. The "morally ought to be" is dead, long live "what is." Today it is "politically correct" to speak about culture only in the sociological-descriptive sense and woe is he who dares to differentiate between the cultural and the barbaric, the refined and the vulgar, the high and the low, the noble and the common. Moreover, very often scorn is heaped on those who attempt to preserve a high cultural level: nerds, bleeding-hearts, heavies, "intellectuals" – not to mention the geeks. At the same time, laudatory expressions for human attributes that respect human beings and their values – such as wisdom, integrity, modesty, moderation, nobility and gentility – have lost their vitality, and no longer serve as cultural ideals by which young people should be educated.

As I argued earlier, without a normative conception of culture there is no way to justify normative distinctions between good and evil and worthy and faulty in the spheres of education, morality, creativity and politics. Let us begin at home, in the family. The collapse of ideologies and the community on the one hand, and reinforcement of technological and individualistic trends on the other, have caused numerous parents to lose their belief that there are valuable human qualities in human maturity and cultural heritage which should be instilled in young people. We are witnesses to a tremendous devaluation of the ideal of the rationally mature and cultured person so that

those qualities most characteristic of him or her – life experience, seriousness, moderation, social responsibility, self-restraint and the like – are no longer in demand in the contemporary "stock-exchange of life." Under these conditions, like the father mentioned earlier in our discussion, the majority of parents give up; they relinquish the education of their children towards wisdom and virtues, and abandon them to flow with the stream of market trends: to seek cheap excitement, to satisfy fashionable desires here and now, consume the ever-growing and indiscriminate "joys of life" that are marketed in advertisements, and all this without taking others, values and cultural norms into account.

The schools hardly deal any more with education and culture. Economic logic, aggressive competition, and image marketing are gradually replacing pedagogical logic. In numerous projects, organizational consultants have replaced educators. From kindergarten through higher education, many institutions adopt the commercial model of supplier and client: children, parents and students are becoming a source of power and authority, and educational institutions pursue them in an unstinting effort to meet their tastes and satisfy their desires. "Education should be taken out of the classroom," says Dr. Ronnie Aviram, "the classroom should be freed from the commitment to inculcate comprehensive education to all."[20] The new goal is to meet the given and immediate interests of students, and not, God forbid, shape and direct them. As a result of this, trend almost nothing is left of the original humanistic claim to excel first and foremost as a human being; it is an ideal that has been dwarfed to performance-achievement-oriented success. And thus, an ever-growing number of teachers are afraid of their students' criticism and prefer to teach worthless topics and subjects because they are easy to digest. They are simply afraid to pose demanding challenges and to be left with fine ideals but low ratings and no students.

Today, a teacher who insists on trying to be an educator for his or her students – to challenge them so that they enrich their lives with the truth, justice, beauty and meaning – is usually confronted with a gaping yawn and a cynical look: "Come on, get real." He or she must cope today with a double protest: one is the logic of modern positivists, for whom any talk of knowledge in the humanistic art of life is a false pretense (since it is impossible to measure it with empirical tools); and the second is the logic of the postmodernists who define any attempt towards cultural and ethical education as a condescending, power-abusing and oppressive activity.

On a concrete level, in the spirit of Alan Bloom's claim in *The Closing of the American Mind*, the younger generation prefers to concentrate on the external, the image, the superficial, the materialistic and the expedient, and

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[20] Aviram, "Education should be taken out of the classroom."

avoid dealing with the essential, pure, profound, spiritual and intimate. An example of this can be found in the ever-growing trend of young people to have individual or school parties in the spirit of Hollywood-type TV, while adorning themselves with all the symbols of exclusivity and successful status-seeking accessories. We should not forget the philosopher Herbert Marcuse's words on the uni-dimensionality of capitalistic society in the post-industrial era which is turning into a reality: even youth culture, which could advance an idealistic, critical and alternative view to social reality, as it has done in the past, is disappearing these days into a slick conformity to a success-oriented and functional adult world, thus enabling the cloning of a uni-dimensional reality.

Are these trends irreversible? I am not sure. It seems that critical awareness has recently been heightened and with it recognition of the price we pay for abandoning the commitment to qualitative culture. In an article titled "Suicidal Culture," Yair Sheleg expresses discontent at the treason of the cultural elite – writers, educators, academics and people who work in communications – who with their silence enable the domination of "entertainment inferiority" over television broadcasting, and even worse, relegate real, spiritual, social, and general culture, so essential to the quality of our life here, to the periphery.[21] On the same topic, albeit from a different angle, Dr. Gadi Yatziv expresses concern about the domination of ratings over society, and a particular concern that reality will be represented by the "invertebrates," whose striving towards ratings is devoid of inhibition and any commitment to non-communicational cultural norms.[22]

From another viewpoint, that of an expert in mass communication who is inspired by moral and educational responsibility, Professor Gabi Weiman proposes a diagnosis of the disease as well as preventive medicine which will reduce its damage:

> Children are not only enthusiastic television viewers but also naïve ones, devoid of all the defenses that provide barriers for cynical distancing, a sober view, and the ability to differentiate between reality and its reflections in the media...they are not yet equipped with the immunization that provides doses of acquired suspicion, with the caution acquired during maturity and life experience...and this naiveté no doubt contains some worrisome aspects. It is a magnet for manipulations, distortion of reality perception, and the continuing failure in television reading comprehension....In light of the plethora of "heavy-duty spectators" among young people [the meaning] is adopting a perception of reality that is violent, dangerous and alienated...the broader danger is

[21] Sheleg, "Suicidal Culture," *Ha'aretz*, 5.3.1995.
[22] Yatsiv, "Invertebrates," *Ha'aretz*, 12.5.1995.

not in actual imitation – adopting the behavior itself – but bringing up the idea and possibility of arranging the young spectator's reasoning...[and] this phenomenon, which researchers call ideation [acquiring the idea] has implications on numerous and different spheres, such as relationships between the sexes, parent-children relationships, sexual violence, etc...

The solution is embodied in modification of the spectators' perception...parents who will, at times, understand the heavy toll of the electronic babysitter will be able, under appropriate guidance, to channel their children's viewing, to assist them by viewing together with them which can help in teaching the skills of correct and sober deciphering of the media's content...and the education system has an important task too: as it has somewhat slowly learned how to adjust to the age of computers, it will have to learn how to cope with the children of the channels. In this coping, teachers will have to operate teaching programs for critical viewing, as compulsory lessons in the curriculum, from pre-school age.[23]

It appears that a certain amount of encouragement can also be drawn from the diminishing of the destructive forces of the postmodern spirit. Its attraction has been impaired as a result of the exposure of its groundless and meaningless statements (a touch of deconstruction and it becomes clear that the king is naked) and the growing understanding of its destructive implications on education and culture, due mainly to its longings for the theoretical and esthetic and its indifference towards the moral and political.

In a brilliant article in *Studio* magazine, Dr. Landau writes of postmodernism's ambiguous and (intentional) unfounded rhetoric:

You read, understand the words, follow the connections, but somehow are always left at the end with a feeling of missing out: you haven't penetrated the core of the text, haven't grasped the full meaning. You lose something on the way, you manage to grasp one word and two more slip between your fingers. You persist, reread; it's like chasing your tail....The reader is led by his nose through the entangled field of analogies and agrees only because he is signaled that understanding awaits at the end of the tunnel of a complicated matter that needs clarification. But whenever the text is required to interpret the analogy, the transition from x to y, it elegantly circumvents the problem, and urges you to go on, not to dwell upon trivial minutiae such as reading comprehension. The path of understanding becomes the path of abstruseness.

One way or another, the postmodernist writers fortify themselves behind impenetrable walls of roundabout academic jargon, always regard

[23] Weiman, "Heavy Viewers," *Ha'aretz* supplement, 15.5.1994.

> themselves as exempt from semantic accountability for the torrents of words with which they inundate their readers, carrying the banner of "discourse" and "criticism" that prevents any attempt at real discourse, thus immunizing themselves against criticism.[24]

In his demystification of postmodernism, Landau shifts from criticism of theoretical failures to identification of the social threats. In the spirit of the humanistic approach, he later concentrates on the postmodernist position's dangerous implications on morality and politics. On the one hand, numerous postmodernists are proud of their sensitivity for the "other," protecting minority rights and their desire to empower the disadvantaged groups whose culture has been annihilated and their "voice" relegated to the periphery; but on the other, in their very attack on the universal and objective status of rationality and morality, they deny "others, the rejected and deprived," the only alternative open for them to posit meaningful and well-grounded arguments vis-à-vis the deprivation and injustice they have suffered themselves. This is "politics that blabbers about reform but does nothing (in the best case) or undermines the possibility of reform (in the worst case)."[25] In the concrete context of our discussion, even if the intentions of postmodern discourse are good, in its irresponsible approach it cooperates with power-abusing and opportunist politicians and greedy capitalists who lack any inhibitions towards the destruction of the foundations of education, culture and liberal democracy. How absurd it is that all the "idols of enlightenment" have been shattered by postmodernism's critical linguistic sophistications – ratings remain the only "ruler."

In concluding this topic, I would like to add one closing note to prevent any confusion between a humanistic approach that criticizes the culture of ratings, drawing on a commitment to advancing Man's development and dignity, and a conservative dogmatic one that seeks to sanctify a specific cultural canon and protect it from innovative trends and approaches. The culture of ratings, as I have presented it so far, is not just an extension of popular entertainment – it is a mentality and a way of life. Contrary to the culture of pop and light entertainment that create and act side by side with serious and qualitative culture as two sectors with tangential points and overlapping areas, the culture of ratings has a total and imperialistic nature: it rejects qualitative and moral distinctions grounded in the spheres of knowledge and cultural heritages, and posits quantities of consumption, popularity or ratings as the one and only measure.

If what I have presented above is true, about the social forces and the maladies of culture resulting from the domination of the culture of ratings, a

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[24] Landau, "Shallow Talk Games," p.21.
[25] Ibid. p.28.

determined and aggressive reaction is required on the part of those for whom serious culture and qualitative education is important – in the school curriculum and public discourse. However, as I clarified earlier in the discussion on education towards culture (in Chapter Two) and in the discussion of cultural literacy (Chapter Three), the humanistic approach has no pretensions to a monopoly over "culture." It does insist on a rational and responsible approach towards its preservation and development; to guarantee, for example, the objective and universal status of certain standards of rationality and morality. For without such stnadards there will be no way of justifying the desirability of democracy over dictatorship, the importance of freedom of research, expression and creation, and the demand for equality in human and civil rights, and in adhering to the dignity of all people qua people.

The humanistic approach does not seek cultural monolithism but pluralism and diversity. This, however, not at the price of throwing out the baby with the bathwater. The educational battle against the culture of ratings is not a result of a pretension of possessing undeniable and infallible knowledge of the good, just and beautiful. Its motivating logic is protection of the very *striving* towards the good, just and beautiful from interest-motivated political and economic forces which present humanistic ideals as irrelevant, meaningless and purposeless.

4. THE NEW LITERACIES AND THEIR POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO HUMANISTIC EDUCATION

Literacy is like the latest snack. You cannot but be attracted to its charm, and the potential it embodies. It is a stylized term that comprises many meanings: the comprehensive perception of linguistic skills, the combination of "content knowledge" and "skillful knowledge," and the perfect tang of education, culture and competent functioning. In the face of this plethora of possibilities the "pedagogical *eros*" of intellectuals and educators cannot remain indifferent, and they engage in the endeavor of literacy. But this is a mixed blessing as one cannot see the woods for the trees, and the snack is indigestible. One is dizzied by the overabundance of meanings and interpretations, the countless clarifications darken the skies of our thoughts, and worst of all: we find ourselves involved in a discourse that is not only illiterate, but is also lacking in basic communication. If frustration and confusion are the lot of our colleagues in research and teaching, think about the torture undergone by students and novice teachers, whom we promise to

remain indifferent, and they engage in the endeavor of literacy. But this is a mixed blessing as one cannot see the woods for the trees, and the snack is indigestible. One is dizzied by the overabundance of meanings and interpretations, the countless clarifications darken the skies of our thoughts, and worst of all: we find ourselves involved in a discourse that is not only illiterate, but is also lacking in basic communication. If frustration and confusion are the lot of our colleagues in research and teaching, think about the torture undergone by students and novice teachers, whom we promise to endow with literacy as a "spotlight" that will serve them in paving their way securely – a "flood light" which has turned into a "spot-darkness" that hides the old and familiar paths on which they have walked securely up to now.

No, I do not want us to raise our hands in submission. My very participation in an academic community that delights in the sufferings of literacy and causing others to suffer, testifies to my view that we have a genuine treasure in our hands. But this treasure is raw material and we must establish and shape it in a language suitable for all. We have to make literacy more user-friendly, more familiar and more understandable, or else it will be rejected as yet another academic invention whose agonies are greater than its advantages. I now wish to deal with the challenge of making literacy friendlier by clarifying its meanings in diverse contexts.

This relationship between linguistic skills in written and spoken language, and being an educated or cultured person is not accidental. Man is first and foremost a "speaking animal," who not only "speaks" like other developed animals in the sense of interpersonal communication, but also uses words arranged according to logic and imagination in order to study nature and establish the sciences, and in order to go beyond the natural world and establish a moral, political and artistic culture. As human beings we think, ask questions, study, interpret, evaluate, discuss, decide and act in a world through words. Through them, the human world is established, and with their disappearance it too disappears. This idea is as old as classical Athens and served as the rationale for the education of young Athenians and Romans in light of the ideal of the orator: an exemplary and influential public figure, whose words were wise and stylized, always preserving the good of the public and the state. Through language, according to the Greek educator Isocrates, we distinguish between truth and falsity, justice and injustice. Through it, we learn about one another and enrich our world with meaning and beauty. Through it, we become free people who have the power to imagine alternative realities to those that exist, choose between them and act towards its actualization.

Through the affinity of these combined elements of "language and knowledge," and on the foundations of a new knowledge created by linguistics, psychology and philosophy, several focal points of research and

acquisition, expansion and presentation of knowledge according to criteria accepted by the higher education institutions.

We can learn about the various implications of the unity of language and knowledge in the field of literacy from the following talk presented at an inter-disciplinary symposium on literacy,[26] that took place at Beit Berl College: as a result of her interest in the development of language skills in pre-school children, Dr. Tsvia Valdan sought to identify literacy with "orientation ability and reading between the lines, together with the correct usage of this skill in the various contexts of life." In her opinion, even when teaching pre-school children, emphasis should be placed on nurturing the "buds of literacy" – "as children's behaviors which show abilities and tendencies in the field of language and knowledge...which precede the acquisition of reading and writing skills," in order to enable "successful acquisition of a variety of literacies required by the adult." She believes that the opposite of literacy is not ignorance or illiteracy but "ignorancy," "a condition in which people are exposed to an education system and acquisition of reading and writing, but do not develop their ability to acquire knowledge, examine it critically, expand and use it or produce it satisfactorily."

From the perspective of a philologist who deals with inculcating language, Dr. Emmanuel Alon compared the literacy-holistic-procedural approach to the classical-formal-normative one, and sought to focus it on the nurturing of "linguistic knowledge that promotes successful acquisition and communication of intellectual messages, expressional units, and the different kinds of knowledge." He believes that "identifying language studies with their grammatical aspects is not only ineffective but also harmful." The emphasis should be placed on broad expressional units – like a letter, academic paper, talk, lecture, symposium and literary text – while developing conversancy in the various strata of language and sensitivity to the diverse contexts which are appropriate to use.

And from a different perspective, that of the informational scientist, Amikam Marbach seeks to identify literacy not only with linguistic skills but mainly with the ways of *exemplary learning*: with the high and diversified ability for reading comprehension, the rational and critical approach, analytic and synthetic thinking, and the application of all these to learning research. It consists of a structured and systematic procedure that begins with the identification of meaningful issues and a clear articulation of the research question, continuing with identification of relevant knowledge and its critical

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[26] The citations from lectures delivered by Tsvia Valdan, Emmanuel Alon and Amikam Marbach are taken from the symposium "What (the hell) is literacy and what can be done with it in teacher-training colleges," *The State of Affairs*, vol.2.

and fruitful processing, ending with its presentation and communication in an effective form compatible with criteria accepted in the given medium. He believes that literacy is first and foremost the ability to acquire and use knowledge, and to present and communicate it for the fulfillment of theoretical and practical purposes.

Together with these research and nurturing paths, an additional trend developed which used the term "literacy" in the sense of a sphere of knowledge, cultural discourse and/or social practice, whose common characteristic is the combination of contextual-educational knowledge and skills-functional knowledge. In this context, we have recently found a reference to a "multi literacy" and "literacy network,"[27] as all-embracing terms for linguistic, numerical, scientific, technological, computer, moral, esthetic, legal, functional, communications literacy, etc. In this sense we are speaking of literacy as *the framework of knowledge and skills that enables people to understand in an intelligent and critical, albeit basic way, the discourse that characterizes a specific sphere of knowledge, and to function in its framework on a satisfactory level,* (or, in short, *a proper level of understanding and functioning in a defined sphere of cultural activity*). The advantage of the term "literacy" in comparison with terms like "knowledge and culture," as many believe, derives from the fact that the new term has a connotation of more active and skillful knowledge than the traditional ones which had a more conservative and passive connotation – one of "museum-like warehouse of knowledge."

Literacy, lo and behold, also lies at the center of a passionate ideological argument between supporters of the neo-classical-conservative stream in education and the neo-Marxist-radical ones. The discussion deals with the question: which of the two literacies should be placed at the center of educational endeavor – *cultural literacy* or *critical literacy*? Supporters of cultural literacy extol the importance of *instilling a common cultural infrastructure – educational, moral and skillful – which will allow all members of a community to intelligently and skillfully participate in public discourse, economy and cultural endeavor.*

Here, one should add, supporters of cultural literacy are also divided into two groups. The first emphasizes philosophical, humanistic and neo-classical literacy and engages in cultural literacy as a means for nurturing human spirit: in instilling the sublime and transcendent in human creativity in the younger generations, through guided encounters with the masterpieces of science, philosophy, ethics and art. For them (Robert Hutchins, Mortimer

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[27] See, for example, Givon, "The Literacy Network: An Outline of Multi-Literacies"; and also The New London Group, "A Pedagogy of Multi-Literacies: Designing Social Futures."

Adler, Alan Bloom, Russell Kirk, S. I. Hayakawa) literacy is the means for rendering man more truly human. The second group has a sociological and functionalistic approach, and regards cultural literacy as a means "to achieve not only greater economic prosperity but also greater social justice and more effective democracy.... It is the network of information that...enables to take up a newspaper and read it with an adequate level of comprehension, getting the point, grasping the implications, relating what they read to the unstated context which alone gives meaning to what they read."[28] Contrary to the philosophical-classical approach that deals centrally with Man's humanity and a perfectionist striving towards excellence in the art of human life, the functionalistic approach always refers to a given social context. It places sharing defined cultural contents – intellectual, ethical, educational and technological – as a dam both against cultural deprivation and isolationist, rift-creating and multi-cultural trends which threaten to destroy social fabric, block off communication channels and cooperation, and eventually emasculate society's vitality and paralyze its functioning.

In contrast to this trend, supporters of critical literacy argue that presenting a specific world-picture (intellectual, ethical and esthetic) as representative of exemplary culture – usually identified with the cultural world of the "white European male" – is in fact a manipulative way of perpetuating the superiority of a specific cultural group, establishing its hegemony, and ensuring its dominant status among cultures, nations and other groups. Particularly in light of our new awareness that "knowledge is power" and that manipulation has become the most dominant communicational mode in an age of progressing capitalism, we must conclude that the most important literacy is not characterized by effective functioning in the mechanisms of the existing system, but in critical awareness and moral sensitivity that examine the existing in light of what is desirable and possible. In other words, the supporters of this approach maintain that the educator should not emphasize the optimization of socialization and acculturation but rather the *empowerment of the critical abilities of young people for deciphering the reality of their lives, correctly identifying the interest-seeking factors of power that shape society, differentiating between knowledge and prejudice, reading the writing on the wall before it goes beyond the wall and takes its toll of its victims, examining value scales, shaping a worldview for themselves, acting in their environment as creatures who are aware, sensitive and socially accountable.*

Let us return to basic (net) literacy that we sought to render available and friendly, and briefly summarize where we stand. Literacy, I suggest, is *a basic intellectual ability, which enables people to intelligently and critically*

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[28] Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy*, p. 2.

participate in the central discourses and practices that constitute the cultural life of a society; an education in content and skills by virtue of which individuals can derive meaning from their experiences, broaden their minds, express clearly, and use effectively for actualizing theoretical and practical goals. It is also important to add that (1) like other abilities, such as physical or artistic ones, we cannot speak of the complete existence of literacy or its total absence, but it is always on a continuum that enables perpetual development and improvement. And (2) literacy is in part innate-organic and in part acquired-cultural; part of it is based on knowledge of content and part on knowledge of skills; at its core are overall intellectual, thinking and linguistic qualities which branch off into specific qualities, required for successful activity in the various fields of knowledge and cultural cycles.

Literacy in the basic and general sense of the term presented in the above definition is directly relevant to an education system's curriculum, as it relates to a level of basic education (content and skills) that should characterize all graduates of the education system. The attempt to delve deeply and specify the content and skills that are part and parcel of this kind of literacy lands us in the "arena" of the literacies of spheres or functions (as the proper level of understanding and functioning in a defined sphere of cultural activity). In this context the recent attempt of Yehoshafat Givon is notable in presenting a perception of a "multi literacy" as a guiding perception for structuring the curriculum.[29] Givon believes that multi literacy should be regarded as a literacy network that provides the educational basis required for successful functioning in modern society. He believes that when choosing the specific literacies and their characteristics, one should take into account the social and cultural conditions, required academic standard, and general-educational elements in contrast with the particular-vocational ones, and the mutual affinities between various literacies.

In light of this conception and the literacy trends we discussed earlier, it seems totally plausible to me that in the near future educational goals will be formulated in literacy terminology. Instead of speaking of conversancy in corpuses of knowledge of the study subjects and proper functioning in societal and cultural circles, it may well be that we will soon witness a shift to a pedagogical discourse that centers on structuring a literacy-oriented curriculum. Based on the above, I find it extremely likely that the combination of the humanistic approach to education and the multi-faceted perception of literacy will give birth to a curriculum that strives to nurture the following ten literacies: linguistic, numerical, historical-cultural, scientific-technological, philosophical-critical, moral, esthetic-artistic, civil

[29] See note 27.

(legal-political), health and social-communicational. (It goes without saying that this division should be accorded public and academic debate and the empirical test of educational endeavor).

In conclusion, I would like to add a few words on two literacies that do not appear in the list above and which are extremely important in advancing the quality of the education system. The first is academic literacy, which we defined earlier as the *assemblage of the thinking, linguistic, cultural and communicational skills which enable the acquisition of knowledge, its expansion and presentation according to the criteria accepted by the higher education institutions.* In the education system, from kindergarten through high school, the academic literacy of teachers has central importance since its content and patterns are supposed to serve as an exemplary model for students' imitation and internalization. It is obvious that in these frameworks less emphasis should be placed on the formal-technical facets of academic writing, and more on the academic spirit and patterns: intellectual inquisitiveness and striving towards the truth; an enlightened approach that is characterized by open-mindedness, broadmindedness, and a reflective, autonomous and critical approach; rational-scientific thinking that seeks an objective perception of reality, while relying heavily on valid knowledge and reliable tools that have accumulated in common human experience; application of knowledge to quotidian reality through the skills of analysis, judgment and deliberation; the ability for independent learning, expanding knowledge, evaluating and processing it; and the ability of clearly presenting ideas and standpoints, in a matter-of-fact, orderly and well-reason manner – both written and oral.

Two central difficulties hinder the teacher who attempts to "reflect" academic literacy: (1) the lack of adequate cultural and academic foundations on the part of those who apply for teacher-training programs, and (2) the prevalent disciplinary-didactic orientation in the majority of the departments of education in universities and colleges, which deprives intellectual-academic development of teachers in training. In my opinion, in order to rectify this situation, a detailed and multi-staged program should be prepared for the academic nurturing of teachers in training – from the moment they enter college (in a week or two-week intensive workshop in which they will be exposed to the central characteristics of academic culture), through nurturing academic skills in all frameworks of study (in all the subjects taught and in designated centers such as the library, center for academic writing and center for computer applications in education), through guidance in preparation of research papers in the framework of advanced classes and seminars. The ultimate goal of this kind of training program is to produce a teacher whose academic literacy constitutes an educational factor – direct and indirect – in overall humanistic education. In

order to actualize this goal the teacher-training system must nurture the following eight characteristics in teachers of the future:

1. A love of truth that is manifested in intellectual inquisitiveness, a passion for knowledge, a rational and reflective approach, intellectual integrity and commitment to the study of truth (in spheres of knowledge and social relationships.
2. A basis of cultural literacy – striving towards quality, veneration of excellence, general education and a rich and diverse world of associations; as well as of critical literacy – an intelligent and autonomous examination of things in order to determine their validity and value, going beyond first impressions and not being carried away by conformity to social conventions.
3. Awareness of the differences between information (as an inventory of data and facts), knowledge (as a combination of information and skills in the field of a specific activity, which enables one to understand and explain phenomena and effectively and successfully cope with reality), and wisdom (enabling one to correctly interpret human situations, and use the various kinds of knowledge for the benefit of Man and society).
4. Understanding the unique logic of different spheres of knowledge and intelligent use of the ways and criteria that serve in all spheres for meaningful statements, proving and disproving arguments (proving the great advantage of the sun's size over that of the moon is not like proving the advantage of the quality of Shakespearian drama in comparison with a soap opera, and disproving the argument about the earth being flat is not like disproving the argument of democratic and peace-loving political leaders).
5. The awareness and sensitivity to distinguish between the different status of statements: theoretical, empirical, practical, and normative (Hitler, for example, was in fact one of the designers and educators of Nazi society", yet we judge him as the most anti-educative element in German culture).
6. Awareness of the differences between absolute statements (above and beyond all discussion or criticism) and arguments related to objective truths (explained and reasoned through research methods and evidence acceptable by the public as reliable and unbiased), and subjective statements (that express personal preference based on an individual's personal-emotional world).
7. Adhering to qualitative standards and "minute details" in thinking and research, while maintaining openness and sensitivity to philosophical and ethical aspects, and creative and non-routine elements.
8. Skills in attention and critical analysis of things (written and oral) and the ability of expression in correct, clear, logical, rich language in content and style.

The second literacy that was not included in the "literacy network" and which should be nurtured is pedagogical literacy. In this sphere, it is extremely difficult to present definitions and characteristics because we are speaking of a kind of art and wisdom that by their very nature is not given to clear conceptualization. In the spirit of Aristotle, who said that the wise deed is the one done by the wise person, we may say that our pedagogical conception derives from our vivid image of an exemplary pedagogue. On the other hand, without conceptual categories that would bring us closer to an image of pedagogical literacy, we are unable, when necessary, to identify the exemplary pedagogue. I have mentioned all this in order to present the idea that excellence in pedagogical literacy is *the art of reasoning and use of knowledge for the maximal advancement of students' personality and character in the concrete context of their lives; it is the wisdom to identify the relative importance or priorities of ideals, values and goals, from the point of view of the advantage they may bring to the proper development of Man, combined with the choice of the most appropriate and effective means of their actualization.*

The key to understanding pedagogical literacy is based on the insight that here we are speaking about the knowledge of the whole person, that is not wholly given to categorical conceptualization nor to technical imitation. Before us is a well-developed sense of orientation, which comprises sensitive measures of scales to the specific weight (positive or negative) of all components of the whole, incisive awareness of the connections between the various parts, and keen perception for identifying the overall-pedagogical elements in a personal-concrete reality. Perhaps a sense of proportion is the key word: similar to identifying a well-tuned note, elegant movement, appropriate statement, apt reaction, good idea, wise thought and proper behavior, so is the educating deed – that enriches students' souls and benefits their personality, because it is performed at the right time and the right place, in the right way and for the right person.

In practical terms, we have already dealt (in Chapter Two) with an important and central component of pedagogical literacy that is the well-balanced combination of education into culture, education into autonomous and critical thinking, and education of an authentic personality. In the previous chapter, which dealt with education in humanistic morality, we also emphasized, on the one hand, the importance of a parallel and complementary development of rationality, perfectionism and strong personality, and, on the other, good-heartedness, tenderness and empathetic sensitivity. Now, in our discussion of literacy, we underscored the importance of stressing details and minutiae, facts and reliable research methods; we also emphasized the importance of the ability to go beyond the standard and "normal" to the non-routine and the creative. The challenge, in

the spirit of the philosopher Pascal, is not to decide between two poles and be totally in favor of one, but to be at both poles at the same time and incorporate everything that is between them.

Moreover, when thinking about promoting students' self-fulfillment, the educator should not make a decision between the ideals of freedom, quality and happiness – but activate them together, as gravitational forces or complementary spurring elements. Nor should the educator choose between nurturing neutral and objective academic speech (which is at times tediously alienating and spontaneous and authentic personal expression (which is often worthless jabbering). Rather, she should help them and demand that they know how to do the best both at the same time, and often, at best, combine them into a wondrous statement in which the personal expresses a general human truth or alternatively, that the overall and synoptic view touches upon the most intimate fibers of individual existence.

Pedagogical modes of communication have a unique holistic fabric. They combine the individual and the general, the narrative and the scientific, the emotional and the rational, the factual and the imaginary, the well-known heritage, innovative creativity, the biographical and bibliographical. This mode of communication, as Jacques Shlanger points out, is the distinctive feature shared by philosopher-pedagogues – such as Plato, Montaigne, Rousseau and Nietzsche – who by virtue of their writings left a deep impression on human culture and changed our perspective of Man's education.[30] Their writing excels in a rare inner unity; content serves form and form expresses content (the Platonic idea of dialectics is inherent in the Socratic dialogues and the Nietzscheian idea of perspectivism is manifested in his aphoristic writing); an epistemological-content aspect of the text challenges the reader's rationality while the emotional-expressional aspect captivates his soul and dominates it; in presenting the problematic nature of the discussion the cultural-objective and the personal-subjective mingle and merge; in readers' experiences the distinctions between the cognitive and esthetic are erased and become a rare experience of the truth of beauty and the beauty of truth. These philosophical-educational texts "appeal directly to the reader and do not suffer from the alienating effect of cognitive and theoretical distancing. They invite the reader into a dialogue with their meanings and messages, and at same time they equally initiate an encounter and dialogue with oneself. These texts also make the reader discover things about oneself, which he or she was unable to conceive and formulate with one's own resources."[31] They speak directly to personal authentic experience and "inspire readers to explore new perspectives and passions, and

[30] Shlanger, *Ways of Philosophers*, ch. 5.
[31] Ibid., p. 92.

simultaneously urge them to cultivate and exercise their courage and openness as well as their critical and creative powers for making such explorations truly fruitful."[32]

In this kind of writing the basic components of pedagogical excellency become clear, and perhaps also the pedagogical paradigm; but it cannot be a substitute for the living – flesh and blood – educator who mentors his or her students in the art of life within the concrete reality of their lives. *Philosopher-educators*, of the kind we have mentioned, by virtue of their *genius* inspire and challenge their readers towards the most sublime human existence. With regard to *great educators,* it is the power of their personality that makes every encounter with them an enriching, elevating, and empowering experience. In the case of *teachers who are also educators,* who know how to provide their students with learning experiences that also nurture their personality and character – in this case, we can say that their educational endeavor is by virtue of their *pedagogical literacy.*

[32] Aloni, *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche's Healing and Edifying Philosophy*, p.40.

EPILOGUE

Nothing in my mind better represents the end of humanistic education than the combination of the individualistic ideal of the *eudaimonic* person with the political ideal of a liberal, enlightened, and humane democracy. The first, as introduced by Aristotle and later interpreted by Alasdair MacIntyre and Martha Nussbaum, is an ideal of human flourishing that comprises "doing well in being well," self-actualization and well-rounded personality, excellence in the most distinctively human activities (intellectual, moral, and aesthetic) as well as personal contentment, amiability, and fullness of existence.[1] In light of more recent *eudaimonic* ethical theories,[2] I argued in the various chapters that we would benefit from enriching this classical ideal so that it includes the modern forms of self-overcoming and self-creation that characterize Nietzsche's "overman", as well as the forms of human flourishing and self-actualization by which Maslow characterizes those who achieve "full humanity." With regard to the second ideal, the political, I started with Pericles's classical ideal of enlightened and civilized democracy, continued with the Enlightenment's vision of liberal and pluralistic democracy, and concluded with modern and postmodern notions of egalitarian, humane, and multicultural democracy – adding social and cultural rights to the more fundamental or natural ones of life, equality, freedom, and property.

These attempts on my part to construct holistic and integrative educational ideals are naturally not without problem. What is to me a healthy tension between competing visions and interpretations, which ultimately balance and complement one the other, may seem to others – whose approaches were presented in the various chapters – as contradicting relations between views that are totally incompatible. With MacIntyre, for example, with respect to *eudaimonic* theories, it is either Aristotle or Nietzsche – never both. In the area of moral education, the debate is often presented in terms of either a Kohlberian cognitivist approach or a Deweyian fostering of moral habits and dispositions. Within the framework of intellectual education, there is the neo-humanist camp of the "great books tradition" and that of those who hold the cultivation of critical thinking or critical reflectiveness as the cure for all educational and social ills. From the vantage point of radical and critical theorists, the hope for change lies in the

[1] See MacIntyre's *After Virtue* and Nussbaum's *The Fragility of Goodness.*
[2] See, for example, in Norton's *Personal Destinies.*

development of critical pedagogy toward emancipation from the enslaving conditions of Capitalism. Some voices in the educational discourse consider the postmodern celebration of cultural relativism and multiculturalism as the only road for true equality in educational opportunities. Others, in contrast, believe in the importance of a shared and challenging cultural literacy and consider the postmodern trends as forms of intellectual corruption on the part of "tenured radicals." For some educationists the required change consists in the shift in emphasis from cognitive intelligences to emotional ones; for still others, it lies in the shift from the "male's type morality of principles" to the "female's type morality of caring."

The difference between the holistic and integrative approach to humanistic education and the "either/or" excluding one can be best understood in the framework of Rorty's distinction between edifying and foundational discourses.[3] The point I make throughout the book is that wisdom in general and pedagogical wisdom in particular are incompatible with foundational, let alone, reductionist approaches. From the vantage point of pragmatic humanism – be it the version of Nietzsche, Dewey or Rorty – it is inspiration, nourishment, orientation, wisdom, enhancement, growth, and ultimately edification that we seek to achieve from "the conversation of mankind" rather than theoretical doctrines concerning the ultimate nature of reality and morality. Ideas, said Nietszsche, should never become our inhibiting prisons but rather stepping stones for continuous self-overcoming and self-creation; the wisest persons are those who have sensitive antennae to all types of people and forms of human expression; and the desirable product of education should consist not in a "one stringed" individual, who is locked in the boundaries of one perspective, but the "multi-stringed" person who is capable of integrating the vast diversity of perspectives and master the rare art of "giving style to one's character."[4] We should aspire, in other words, that "artistic energies and the practical wisdom of life will join with scientific thinking to form a higher organic system in relation to which scholars, physicians, artists, and legislators – as we know them at present – would have to look like paltry relics of ancient items."[5]

Towards the end of Chapter One, I contrasted the integrative and pragmatic yet responsible approach – as represented for example by Whitehead, Gadamer, and Habermass – with both the foundational-doctrinarian and the nihilistic-postmodern approaches. In the framework of

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[3] Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature.*

[4] On these points see Nietzsche's *Will to Power*, sec. 259 as well as secs. 881, 883 and 1051; *Human All Too Human*, sec. 281, *The Gay Science*, sec. 290.

[5] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science,* sec. 113.

educational theory, Paulo Freire, Maxine Greene, and Martha Nussbaum set excellent examples of such pragmatic humanism. For Friere, the notion of humanization draws on the traditional ideals of the enlightenment – progress through the cultivation of critical reason, equality, freedom, and solidarity – as well as on the basic tenets of Marxism and Existentialism. In the case of Greene, her vantage point is never restricted to one argument, perspective, voice or discipline, but always enriches and challenges her readers with an intellectual symphony [polyphony]: "releasing the imagination," developing "moral wide-awakeness," cultivating critical reason and political engagement, showing respect for both high culture and personal authenticity. In *Cultivating Humanity*, Nussbaum frees herself from the traditional dichotomies of Left and Right, Radicals and Conservatives, Moderns and Postmoderns, and sets forth a program for reform in liberal education that is committed to universal humanism, moral cosmopolitanism, Socratic reason, empathetic imagination, democratic rule, and multicultural curriculum.

It is with reference to this tradition of pragmatic humanism that I aimed in this book to integrate the Classical, Romantic, Existential, and Critical approaches to humanistic education into one "grand theory." In the spirit of Nietzsche's pragmatic humanism, which viewed Man as experimenting with ever-new modes and possibilities of being human, my goal in this endeavor can be viewed as a search for "new and untrodden ways" for the elevation and enhancement of humanity – for a "higher, more profound, prouder, *more beautiful* humanity."[6] From the vantage point of Dewey's pragmatic humanism, the quest for an integrative model of humanistic education fulfills the "cultural function of philosophy to restore the flow when experience has been arrested by epochal change... [It should] bring a kind of 'big picture' wholeness to the junction of old and new so that a people's life's energies may be reintegrated and liberated in present action.... Philosophies as working theories of life, as general schemes of living and measures of values."[7]

In light of Sydney Hook's suggestions in "The Snare of Definitions," it is my hope that the theory of humanistic education offered here is rich and flexible enough to contain diverse and even conflicting views of humanism and humanistic education, yet provide good understanding and specific criteria for guarding us against ideas and practices that inhibit human flourishing and create dehumanizing conditions for individuals and communities.

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[6] Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, secs. 212 as well as secs. 203 and 211; Mann, "Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Contemporary Events," p.366.
[7] Waks, "Experimentalism and the Flow of Experience," p. 3.

As pragmatic humanist I am fully aware that the ultimate test of the model of humanistic education presented here will be in the real life of educational practice. The pedagogical challenge, in other words, is to find adequate and efficient ways to translate the philosophical and pedagogical insights into humanistic pedagogical practices: to empower and guide individuals to lead a vital and sound life of wide-awakeness, thoughtful deliberation, moral conduct, political involvement, and discriminating appreciation of beauty in both nature and art. It should further seek to achieve in students the right integration as well as the right tension between a commitment to high cultural standards and a strong sense of individuality in both the forms of autonomy and authenticity. Finally, to achieve all this, truly humanistic teachers would have to take the responsibility to set a personal example in the art of living as well as to create at their schools a pedagogical atmosphere of care, trust, support, dialogue, respect, fairness, tolerance, inquiry, freedom, commitment, responsibility and reciprocity. Without these last elements, even the most beautifully woven theory of humanistic education would fail to become a lived reality for its teachers and students.

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