

COMMUNICATION AND VALUES MILIEU FOR COMMUNICATING VALUES

One of the currents of pedagogical thought being most investigated today is the theory of "milieu", especially in the field of games and creativity. This means of communicating values applied to an educative context has hardly been investigated despite the research done in recent years concerning educational values. To introduce ourselves to the theme, we might use Alfonso López Quintàs's concept of "milieu" as

"a playing field created by the structural interaction of elements which join to make a system more or less strict in form (...) A milieu or atmosphere arises when various elements integrate in such a way as to create a field of free expression (...) The milieu or playing field is made up of every reality that can be co-related by means of converging notes or the interplay of diverse tendencies".

Values need a milieu: this milieu is created by the value's own interior dynamism. A value has its own field: spiritual, ethical, esthetical, social, cultural, material, etc.. Because of this, it exists historically in a continuous flowing. Thus, man who is subject to values, uses his own milieu in a vital manner to create other milieus in the field of liberty, judgment, communication, behavior, interpretation of reality, etc.. But above all, values create a "meeting ground" in any educational system that unites a number of formal or informal elements that become a powerful force in the larger milieu which is society, composed of the family, church, means of communication which have their own system of values where they they take on a special meaning, as we shall see.

Concerning the milieu, we can compare the reality of values to a vast circle made up of concentric circles whose inter-communication creates a field of action for known or perfectible realities by the internal force of values and by others unknown that come to light. Values don't destroy themselves, they are replaced by others. Values of pre-technical times served to lay the foundations for the values of this technical

era which in turn serve as a pivot for values to be attained in the XXIst century. Thus, in the course of history, the concentric circles will interiorize themselves more and more until they irrupt in the parousia of the great Milieu, the Supreme Value which is God.

Human existence develops in an atmosphere of liberty, liberty which gives meaning to life. When one accepts this meaning of liberty in a personal and responsible way, a surrounding milieu is created, made up of commitments which take on greater force as they incarnate values or contribute to promoting values in their own field or where they project themselves by means of words, gestures or behavior: this is communication of values. The surroundings are influenced by values, but values also need a concrete world: material and human. Thus, for example, artistic values exist in literature, in works of art, in cinema, in nature, material or cosmic, etc. just as moral values exist in human relationships, and because of this, they need norms, laws, "fields of action created by the structural interplay of various elements". When communicating, values respond to the call of other milieus because they are not only to be held or possessed, but they are very specifically meant for relationship, participation, donation, recognition, commitment, presence.

From the preceding, we deduct that values give man a great ability to create fields of action which become "events" in his life: material or economic values concerning production, the just use and distribution of the things necessary for life, for the individual and for society, at all levels. Corporal values, biological or vital, related to the transmission, reproduction and maintenance of life (health, lodging, food, work, etc.) cultural values which embrace wisdom and knowledge, technology and scientific development, but above all, esthetical values which mean to create, produce, amplify and appreciate the meaning of beauty, the splendor of truth. Social and political values which mean relations and inter-relations among men or communities, and generate milieus for living in common, for communication, solidarity, subsidiarity, etc.. Moral and religious values corresponding to that totally harmonious period which situate man in a transcendental milieu. Finally, as values intermingle and interact with each other, they acquire concrete and precise meaning, and at the same time, give rise to complex situations which reflect new sensitivities to which man must respond.

N. Hartmann (Ethik, XX, 6) quoted by J.M. Méndez, says "that creative energy, productivity and actualization proceed from values. Va-

values are the power behind the "what should be", the center of gravity, the first entelechy of the moment".

In order that this creative process that Hartman refers to can take place, values have to be found in man: "A value is something in itself but in relation to someone", in an open, creative and communicative relationship where the person and the value are not the same reality but are inherent and inseparable.

"This creative process, says Alfonso López Quintás, is the privileged spot of self-revelation in man, because the privileged part of his constitution and his expansion within the reality of his milieu".

And he points out five concrete actions concerning milieu which man must attend to:

1. He accepts the reality of his environment, the situations that frame it, situations that helped create it.

2. He makes his option according to the environment and its exigencies.

3. He draws up his personal projects according to the demands of the environment and the resources it offers.

4. He creates milieus of inter-relationship with other realities, especially human ones.

5. He self-reveals his personal condition and promotes his personality by means of co-creating milieus.

If the life of each student is a project of values which he must carry out in a daily commitment, the others benefit from this action because communication has a very fundamental anthropological dimension.

The communication of values is the communication of an "ego" who lives certain values and not simply the communication of value contents which would be a cold state, without life, or as I. Lepp would say: "the communication of an être de raison". A value is not only a norm of conduct but it also orientates conduct both for the person living it and for the one who comes under its influence: this is solidarity of values which goes much further than simple sociability of values which would be the social resonance of optional

values. The solidarity of values is living with others the plenitude of values chosen in common, which, in a school milieu, takes on a very special meaning: the choice of values and a personal commitment to them becomes an offer made to others; this is what caused Sartre's anguish: for him "hell is the others". The attitude of solidarity where values are concerned is expressed in a communicative manner by means of connotative language because the reality of the environment influences others, the group, depending on one's personal concept and experience of the reality. But it must not only be connotative communication (let's also call it cognitive) to avoid a manipulation, it must be accompanied by emotional and sentimental communication where objectivity and subjectivity find a good equilibrium and generate an authentic model of communicating values with interaction of persons and society.

There is a difficult which consists in drawing the lines which separate the two milieus of values: personal and social. In passing, it is to be remembered that the objectivity and subjectivity of values are their philosophical aspect and their aptitude to change and modification are their sociological aspect. Values are objective when considered as goods or aims; and subjective when taken as pleasure or personal preference. Consequently neither objectivity nor subjectivity, but rather objectivity and subjectivity; neither permanence nor change, but rather permanence and change. Thus real man prepares himself for a society full of possibilities of change.

Thanks to human nature, the mutability of values is a privilege which makes it possible to evaluate, reform and perfect scales of values that have been preconceived or inscribed in determined historical or cultural eras. To educate is not so much to create a scale of values as to "furnish the individual possibilities of constant change and renewal, including values".

Brother Alvaro LLANO, Visitor

Carrera 50 - N. 53-51

Apartado Aereo 2501

MEDELLIN (Colombia)