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VALUE PARADIGMS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION*

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When speaking about the value component of character education, one usually means, first and foremost, the value *content* of education associated with educational goals. A look at the current network resources only confirms this impression. For example, the authors of online publications deal mainly with the problems of patriotic, civic, ecological, and democratic education; to a lesser extent, also with moral (which is often reduced to patriotic and civic education) and esthetic (artistic, musical); there are also publications on Christian, especially Orthodox education.

There is no reason to believe that diversified education can be effective. However, as a preparatory intellectual elaboration on ideologically heterogeneous content to be incorporated into character education, such an approach, analogous to subject-differentiated learning, may have practical significance.

The relationship between values and character education has two aspects. One concerns the value content of character education. Here, it is appropriate to discuss the values of education programs. The other concerns the value bases, the value component of the educational activity itself, and the ethos of education. The theme of the value paradigms of character education, mentioned in the title of this article, emerges here. The educator implements a specific value system in their activity. However, the particular educational activity is not always directed at forming the underlying value system.

The basis of axiological reconstruction

In the most general sense, values are generalized, stable ideas about what is significant¹ for individual objects (material or ideal), or, in other words, they are ideas about something that is essentially and fundamentally preferred as something good, i.e., about what corresponds not only to some needs, interests, intentions, goals, plans of the individual, but expresses his or her ideas about the ideal, perfect. From an empirical point of view, the value reflects the individual's attitude towards an object, an event, or a phenomenon, i.e., a relationship in which the latter is recognized and to which certain importance is attributed. In this sense, the value attitude differs from the indifferent attitude. Just as needs and interests are different, so is the weight of the various values and their importance in an individual's life. Nevertheless, the very characteristic of value as something through which and based on which value is given points to something else – the individual's attitude toward an object, an event, or a phenomenon is predetermined by value consciousness; something recognized as significant because it appeals to certain inner feelings.

An essential methodological question that arises here is what is the starting point, and what is the initial data of the axiological analysis? Various approaches are possible here. Relatively speaking, the metaphysical approach hypostasizes a certain realm of values that exists in itself,

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¹ For a detailed interpretation of the concept of meaning and value, see [1].

transcends reality, and is grasped by a person with direct discretion (N. Hartmann) [2]. In the existential-anthropological approach, values derive from the conditions of human existence and the primary needs that arise from these conditions (E. Fromm) [3]. In the sociological approach, values are derived from the conditions of the community's existence and the community's needs for its own reproduction and stable development (E. Durkheim) [4]. Here, a normative approach is proposed, which is subordinate to the above one because it starts from a certain cultural reality, which is directly given to a person and may have been created by the interaction of the factors mentioned in the above approaches. As such a reality, we define the givenness of moral practice expressed in a rule that is widespread in all historically known and relatively developed cultures – a rule we call the *golden rule* of morality.

Its most familiar form reads, “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31). However, in the broader normative context of developed morality, this rule has a double projection that expands its potential ethical content.

The inverse projection of the Golden Rule leads to the Talion Law. Strictly speaking, the Golden Rule in its negative formulation (“Do to others as you would have them do to you”) is the result of rethinking in the form of the initial principle of the Talion Law; just as in its positive formulation, it is the result of rethinking in the form of the initial principle of the Rule of *Gratitude*¹. In its most detailed form, talion is presented in the Book of Exodus, and its key formula is “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.” (Exodus 21:24–26)². In later moral philosophy, the analysis of the talion is carried out taking into account its refined and generalized formulation, in which the principle of reversible equality is expressed quite clearly: “Behave toward others (strangers) as they behave toward you and your relatives.”³

The progressive projection of the Golden Rule leads to the *Commandment of Love*, known in Christian doctrine as the double commandment of love of God and love of man: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27). There are various interpretations of the relationship between the Golden Rule and the Commandment of Love, but in all approaches, the Commandment of Love correlates with the Golden Rule rather than with the Old Testament. The distinctive feature of the Commandment of Love is that it is complex. It combines two commandments from the Pentateuch: the commandment to love God (Deuteronomy 6:5) and the commandment to love one's neighbor (Leviticus 19:18, 33–34).

Talion, the Golden Rule, and the Commandment of Love constitute the primary normative content of value consciousness, especially morality, and are characterized as follows. First, all of these rules regulate the *relationship of one person to another*: The Talion limits the degree of retribution that is permissible in response to the Other's evil; the Golden Rule establishes equality and reciprocity in all respects for the Other and establishes the source of the standard by which the Other must be treated; the Commandment of Love indicates the need for a caring and loving attitude toward the Other. Thus, in the continuum of internal normative dynamics, attitudes toward the Other(s) should be built under a set of principles ranging from “*Do no harm to the Other*” (pro-actively) to “*Be fair, respect the Other*” to “*Show care for the Other, treat the Other*

¹ For more on the transformation of talion and gratitude into Golden Rule formulas, see [5, pp. 73–85].

² See also Leviticus 19:21; 24:19-20; Deuteronomy 19:21. In other Old Testament books, the severity of the sanctions imposed with talion is increasingly relaxed. See Numbers 35:19; Ruth 2:20; Proverbs 24:29; Psalm 18:15; Isaiah 41:14; Ecclesiasticus 27:24-29; Wisdom 11:16; 12:22. The pattern of such dynamics is confirmed by the similar evolution of the talion in the Koran: 2:178–179, 194; 4:92; 5:45; 16:126; 17:33; 22:60; 42:40-43.

³ This formulation is by A.A. Huseynov, see [6, p. 65]. Huseynov, see [6, p. 65].

with love¹.” The second, the Golden Rule and the Commandment of Love relate to a person’s *relationship with themself*: The latter appears as the standard for the relationship with the Other. Third, in the Commandment of Love, the relationship to the Other and the relationship to oneself is ultimately determined by the *relationship to the highest principle*, to God, or the ideal.

The sphere of value, then, is formed by the relationship of a person’s attitude to oneself, to others, and the highest – in the above specifications.

Limited diversity of basic value orientations

The two main internal opposites of value consciousness: “*universal (general) – particular (private)*” and “*I – others*,” can be considered as the foundation on which the whole edifice stands, its fundamental imperative values or ethical systems. If these opposites are represented as coordinates, then the fundamental values or principles are formed at the intersection of the coordinates – pleasure, benefit, personal perfection, and merciful love.

The Ethical Square can illustrate this.

Table 1

	Particularism	Universalism
I	<i>Hedonism – ethics of pleasure</i>	<i>Perfectionism – ethics of personal perfection</i>
the Other(s)	<i>Utilitarianism – ethics of benefit</i>	<i>Agapism – ethics of humanity</i>

From Table 1, we can see that the combination of a priority attitude towards oneself with the dominance of private interests characterizes *hedonism*, i.e., such a value system according to which good is pleasure and evil is suffering. In hedonism, one’s highest value and goal is pleasure, and all man’s duties are ultimately subordinated to the desire for pleasure.

The combination of a priority attitude toward others with the dominance of private interest characterizes *utilitarianism*. What helps achieve a specific goal is recognized as valuable, i.e., helpful, and a person should perform useful actions and strive for success.

The combination of a priority attitude towards oneself with the dominance of a common interest characterizes *perfectionism*, according to which the highest value is perfection, and everyone should strive to achieve it.

The combination of a priority attitude towards the other(s) with the dominance of a common interest characterizes *agapism*², according to which the highest value is a person and the duty of each is to contribute to the good of the Other.

This classification of values and the moral positions resulting from their primary preference and corresponding normative programs is based on primary values’ assignment. The *ethics of happiness* is not included within because, in further analysis, one or another idea of happiness is reduced to one of the most essential Primary values. Likewise, the so-called *ethics of duty* has no place in it because the idea of duty specifies the nature of the motivation for action (as opposed to, for example, coercion, obedience, or arbitrariness) and specifies the subject of duty implies certain value specifications.

The above table represents the basic view of value consciousness and, as a diagram, does not claim to convey the entire variety and the entire completeness of this content. Nevertheless, some

¹ In the ethical sense, the love relationship is expressed in the recognition of the Other . The depth of love depends on the degree of recognition of the Other.

² From Agape (Greek αγαπη – love < αγαπαω – lovingly receiving, showing love – αγαπαζω). Agape is a term that expresses the concept of Christian love (mercy) in the Scriptures and patristic literature.

explanatory remarks must be made. Particularity reveals itself, in other words, as Private Interest, but in the context of axiological reasoning, particularity first manifests itself in isolation, and alienation.

Moreover, this alienation is expressed in the person's rejection of both the higher – the ideal – and the alongside – others, sometimes oneself. In hedonism, a person cherishes their desires, but this benevolence toward one's yearning may well be mediated by harmonious relationships with others – with partners and support in satisfying their desires. In perfectionism, the priority of attitude toward oneself is expressed in a personal striving toward the ideal and thus a focus on changes in oneself to get closer to the ideal. In agapism, turning toward others also means, in a sense, turning away from them – turning away from their lower aspirations in the name of their spirituality.

If we try to present the selected positions as models of behavior, then the Ethical Square can be modified as follows:

Table 2

	Particularism	Universalism
I	Hedonism: <i>people promote their own goals based on their understanding of the good</i>	Perfectionism: <i>people promote their own goals based on the fact that any reasonable person would consider this a blessing</i>
the Other(s)	Utilitarianism: <i>people promote their own goals based on the happiness of the greatest number of people in a society or a group</i>	Agapism: <i>People contribute to the good for others based on the fact that any reasonable person would consider this a blessing</i>

These descriptive sentences can easily be reformulated into imperative statements. The possible extremes in each position can be expressed as follows:

Table 3

	Particularism	Universalism
I	Hedonism: Sublimation – <i>in creativity.</i> Deviation – <i>in sadism</i>	Perfectionism: Sublimation – <i>in asceticism.</i> Deviation – <i>in pride</i>
the Other(s)	Utilitarianism: Sublimation – <i>in charity.</i> Deviation – <i>in self-interest and group selfishness</i>	Agapism: Sublimation – <i>in selfless devotion.</i> Deviation – <i>in paternalism</i>

Of course, the Ethical Square as a schematic representation of morality does not reflect all intramoral differences and specifications. It should also be borne in mind that none of the derived principles in themselves guarantees that a person will fulfill the moral law and ensure the path to true perfection by his or her choice. Perfection consists of a person embodying all the principles in his or her actions and way of thinking. When a person has a high ideal and strives for its realization, he finds means for practical realization appropriate to the goals and suitable to the situation.

The value paradigms of character education are consistent with the identified general value positions. This can be seen in the rich material of *pedagogical literature*. However, one can see that it is not special pedagogical literature but artistic and pedagogical, for example: *Philosophy in the Boudoir* by D.A.F. de Sade, *The Brothers Karamazov* by F.M. Dostoevsky, *The Glass Bead Game* by G. Hesse, *The Pedagogical Poem* by A.S. Makarenko. The composition of the selected exemplary works should not seem strange or arbitrary. In fact, only one is considered canonically pedagogical in this selection, namely Makarenko's novel. The inclusion of *The Glass Bead Game* is also understandable. This novel is often treated as a kind of pedagogical utopia; but according

to the plot, the protagonist of the novel, Joseph Knecht, who is at the peak of his career, leaves both his ordination and his Castalia to become the educator of a young man who is the son of his friend, confused and out of control.

Furthermore, it is impossible to overlook the pedagogical component in Dostoevsky's last novel, perhaps his most ideological of all ideological works. The novel can be easily interpreted ideologically as a kind of panorama of the practice of mercy in all its diversity, including deviations from this principle and its desecration. In this respect, the character of the elderly Zosima, who, although not central to the plot, is essential from the ideological content point of view, acts as a kind of tuning fork in the novel. The elder is a righteous man and a spiritual mentor, and in this sense, he represents a certain pedagogical strategy. The author reinforces his mission not through a plot but a composition – like an appendix to the novel “Notes of the Elder Zosima”. Finally, *Philosophy in the Boudoir* is essentially a pedagogical or antipedagogical (if you will) novel, from the epigraph with which the author recommends his book to parents as an indispensable guide for their young daughters, to the composition of the work itself. *Philosophy in the Boudoir* can not help but be a how-to manual. The novel is structured like a lesson that takes place over a long period of time, during which there is a lecture, a training session, and a workshop. The whole process of enlightenment (instruction, education) is led by the mentor Dolmanse, who actively participates in it. He teaches with brutal pleasure, while he is strict in his instructions, but at the same time attentive and caring. It is significant how Roman Viktyuk expresses this pedagogical dimension of the novel in the set design of his production of *Philosophy in the Boudoir*: the foreground of the stage is a classroom with the desks indispensable for the class, and the back part is an alcove with a gigantic bed.

An analysis of these works (unfortunately not within the scope of these notes) should present the value paradigms of education in an expanded form:

Table 4

<p>Hedonism – <i>“pedagogy of pleasure” Dolmanse (D.A.F. de Sade</i> <i>“Philosophy in the Boudoir”</i>)</p>	<p>Perfectionism: <i>Josef Knecht's Selfless Pedagogy</i> <i>G. Hesse “The Glass Bead Game”</i>)</p>
<p>Utilitarianism – <i>Collectivist</i> <i>pedagogy S.A. Makarenko</i> <i>(S.A. Makarenko “The Pedagogical Poem”)</i></p>	<p>Agapism – <i>Merciful Pedagogy</i> <i>Elder Zosima</i> <i>(F.M. Dostoevsky “The Brothers</i> <i>Karamazovs”)</i></p>

Discipline and Excellence

As a separate task, it is of interest to analyze the value composition of each paradigm. Let us take the opposite positions – perfectionism and that kind of utilitarianism expressed in the *social ethics of discipline*.

Discipline is based on the order. The order does not necessarily mean oppression, although it does not exclude it. Obviously, the order can be based on different kinds of discipline and disciplinarity, depending on the organizational space in which they are allowed. In a narrow sense, *discipline* is an order mediated by the restriction of the freedom of choice and will of individuals who are voluntarily or involuntarily, and in the latter case arbitrarily or forcibly, involved in that order. Association, partnership (or private club), corporation, order (or similarly constructed and functioning political or criminal organization), sect (or similarly constructed political or criminal group), fighting unit (or similarly constructed emergency unit), penal institution-such disciplinary spaces, differing in character and functional purpose, necessarily or optionally confer the way of life and thought of the individuals contained within them.

Whatever form of *social ethics* we choose – contractual, communal, or corporate- is all disciplinary. In them, *adaptability* dominates perfection. In disciplinarity, the external order is important in itself. Disciplinarity can be interspersed with authoritarianism. However, there are significant differences between them. In an authoritarian educational strategy, authority itself is a dominant and primary factor, and discipline is a means of enforcing authority; in disciplinarianism, the order itself is important, and authority is used to maintain order. Authoritarian character education requires a high degree of adaptability; adaptability in contractual relationships is lower because it is determined each time by the decision of the participants in these contractual mini-communities themselves, they themselves set the terms of these relationships, and they are usually free to continue or break off these relationships. In contractual relationships, the participants themselves are subjects of discipline; in authoritarian relationships, authority establishes discipline. Character education based on the contractual type of human relations can appear democratic and be democratic. The crucial factor here is the role of liberal democratic principles in contractual relations, which in reality is not determined by the fact of contracting itself, but should be regulated separately.

Discipline restrains, but authoritarian discipline oppresses, and restraint takes the form of oppression. Disciplinary sanctions are predominantly negative, although they can be positive (expressed in the appropriate badges of honor). However, since they do not touch the essence of the thing that constitutes discipline, they are also negative in content: through them, a person is reduced to order as such. Discipline presupposes diligence, but not only diligence but diligence in the sense of obedience – diligence that seems to come *from the heart*. Discipline must be observed in good faith. A breach of discipline places the transgressor in a special position within the group. The transgressor can be condemned both by the educator and by the ordinary members of the group – the students – so that he or she understands their incompatibility with the disciplinary rules. Public condemnation of the transgressor is shameful; public recognition is honorable. Discipline requires an extroverted personality type: the reaction of the educator and other members of the group should be decisive for them. If the attitude toward discipline is not expressed in diligence, the personal, individualized response may be disobedience. Within the limits of exclusive resistance to the order of discipline, disobedience is an expression of obstinacy. From the standpoint of discipline, all disobedience is anarchism. Those who secretly rebel against discipline and secretly disobey have the hope of not being noticed.

The pedagogy of perfection is primarily focused on the Sublimation¹ of the personality. In perfection, there is an elevation above the ordinary and thus a rejection of the routine order of daily life.

It would be foolhardy to see perfectionist motives behind every rejection of the order. This rejection may simply express a nihilistic attitude toward any norms as externally imposed limits on individual behavior. Normativity as a sign of prohibition or punishment (commandment) can also be rejected with moral pathos – the pathos of an individualized, original, critical attitude toward the generally accepted norms of behavior that exist in mores and are spontaneously reproduced. But here, there is a special understanding of personality not only as its inimitability but also as its rebellion against orders (special understanding of inimitability). Personality is thus understood as an opposition to the ordinary, as an opportunity for creative self-realization; virtue is affirmed by the fact that it is not subject to domination but is its own domination.

It is generally recognized that a character education aimed at forming a creative personality is carried out to a greater extent by motivation than by prohibitions. The requirements of the educator are not a threat; their sanction is ideal, and they are addressed to the individual as a

¹ This word (from Latin *sublimis*) is understood in its direct meaning of elevation, without reference to the Freudian concept.

conscious and free subject. However, this clarification does not free the educational strategy built in this way from its restrictiveness. As soon as a certain norm is established, every rationing, even in the form of an abstractly declared ideal, thus refers to the unacceptable, that is, to the forbidden. In other words, any rationing is a limitation of specific actions by the generalized experience of such actions, in pedagogy – by the axiomatized experience of culture.

Perfectionist resistance to order is itself organized, principled, and thus already ordered. The external, repressive order is here contrasted with the internal order that spiritually elevates the individual. The concept of perfection presupposes the notion of a higher standard. Furthermore, the goals and results of the educational efforts undertaken are related to it. From this, it is clear how important the ideal is to perfectionist-oriented character education. The ideal is an important value-orienting factor in human behavior. The person of perfection devotes himself to the ideal, serves it, and through service attains self-control. By striving for the ideal, man is given the opportunity for independent, personal, creative realization – self-realization. The personality determines its way to the ideal and forces itself to it. It turns toward the ideal as if responding to the Call, which is a kind of Value reaction, but to the extent that this reaction is conscious, unyielding, and unaccountable, it is *initiating*. A perfect man may revere authority, but he is not authoritarian; his authority is internalized and revealed in the voice of conscience, in acts of conscience.

In its content and meaning, perfectionism as an imperative value system is opposed to social ethics. Overcoming the ordinary in perfection begins with resistance, perhaps not so much to the temptations of the flesh but the spontaneity and stereotyping of human social and functional interactions. However, this perfectionist resistance itself manifests itself in the awareness of spontaneity, in the rethinking of habitual life, in the rejection of life as a stream, and the rejection of meanings imposed from without. Perfectionist striving involves personally defined self-realization and self-organization. So the idea of perfection also develops as an idea of how a person organizes his or her own life. Perfectionism of any kind inevitably involves a disciplinary program.

It is clear from what has been said that discipline and perfectionist educational strategies are incompatible only from a superficial view. Discipline is a limitation. Self-perfection (self-improvement) is spiritual elevation. Improvement is understood as personal emancipation and creative self-determination with a humanistic approach. However, with a rigorist-ethical understanding of perfection, elevation also appears as self-limitation from its other possible side. Self-perfection as spiritual elevation of the goal of personal effort not only excludes discipline – external and internal (self-discipline), but also external and internal (self-restriction) limitations. So the contrast between discipline and perfectionism is relative. Perfectionism cannot be other than disciplinary (though, of course, not all disciplinary departments in education necessarily mean improvement in the sense of personal elevation).

The real hardships of the personal path to perfection are reflected in the well-known perfectionist paradox, as formulated by L.P. Karsavin: “Imperfection is the moment of perfection” [7, p. 216]. The active zeal mediates perfection for virtue and the preceding – inner – preparation for it. This preparation is expressed in one form or another of asceticism, which is the individual’s effort at self-transformation: the rejection of the imperfect self in pursuit of the better. The self-perfection of the individual thus presupposes three levels of discipline: discipline in relation to oneself, discipline in communication and interaction with others, and discipline in relation to the highest (whether an appeal to the ideal or an attempt at deification).

Thus, although discipline and perfectionism are word symbols for different pedagogical (educational) programs, they can be accurately combined in their typological description as

aspects of a particular pedagogical practice. Furthermore, they will undoubtedly be combined in the consistent implementation of a particular, namely perfectionist, educational program.

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