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Educational anthropology of Emmanuel Mounier

1. Emmanuel Mounier – the classic of personalistic philosophy

In spite of the fact that the issue of personality has been an objective of philosophical anthropology since the early patristics and during the period of scholastics it even became the central theme of philosophical and theological discussion about a human and the triune God (the best-known are Boethius¹ and Thomas's² definition of personality), a human, in the full meaning of the word, appears in their rationality and individuality, but also reflexivity, interpersonal relationality and horizontal phenomenality only in the modern definitions of a personality (*cf.* continuity of personal consciousness in time and space by J. Lock³ and moral dimension of defining a human by I. Kant⁴).

Philosophical personalism [...] was originating in the philosophical environment of radical positivism and materialism, the currents that in the expansion of natural sciences unanimously maintained the positions of logization, mathematization, quantification and materialization of exact sciences as the basic criteria and fundamental claims to any veracity of philosophical or religious attitude⁵.

Certainly not by a chance, in the middle of the 20th century, marked by a massive dehumanizing frenzy (the two world wars, collectivistic totalitarian regimes, genocides, marginalization and instrumentalization of an individual, *etc.*) a personalistic cultural wave was born, whose aim was to bring back the value and dignity to a concrete human, in their final non-reductability, non-objectionability

¹ „*Persona est naturae rationalis individua substantia*“. (Person is an individual essence of rational naturalness) in Boethius (480–524): A. M. T. S. Boethius, *Contra Eutychem et Nestorium (Liber de persona et duabus naturis)* Available online: http://la.wikisource.org/wiki/Contra_Eutychem (cit. 10.10.2010), c. 3.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ P. Rusnák, *Pravda, veda, symbol*, Filozofická fakulta Trnavskej univerzity v Trnave, Trnava 2008, p. 17.

and inalienable authorization. Even if the notion “personalism” or “personalistic philosophy” has been used more in its broad sense at present (like every philosophical effort whose central interest is a person, human person in particular, their value, dignity, physical-psychic-spiritual constitution, without reference to philosophical approach, applied methodology, or with the application of present methods of phenomenology, hermeneutics and existential philosophy), or, for different reasons, the term is being left out from the philosophical discourse and is being replaced by other terms (*cf.* the final part of this study), the main intention of personalistically oriented contemplation can't be understood without descending to the personalistic conceptions in the narrow sense, i.e. to the concrete philosophical current that was established and developed in certain historical and cultural conditions, especially in the first half of the 20th century and in which, after a lapse of time, we can identify some personalistic “schools”⁶. Personalism as a philosophical current was clearly defined for the first time in Europe by Ch. Renouvier in 1903 (in the work *Le personalisme*) and after him it was B. P. Bowne in America in 1905 (in the work *The Personalism*). Personalism as a broad cultural movement spread in 1930s especially thanks to Emmanuel Mounier and his revue *Esprit*, which gathered other French philosophers around⁷. Thus, when we mention the notion “personalism” today, in the classic, narrow definition, we encounter Mounier and his philosophical legacy for sure.

Emmanuel Mounier (1905–1950) is known for being a socially committed philosopher who against the declining society – infected by isolation and alienation of a human in the middle of the culminating capitalism of the 1930s – offers a positive change, not only the inner, individualistic one, but the one spreading from an individual further on to social structures. In 1928 he graduated in philosophy in Grenoble, defending his diploma thesis under J. Chevalier. Among his professors and friends – intellectuals were J. Maritain, M. Péguy, N. Berd'ajev, G. Marcel, too. In 1932, Mounier together with Gaston Izard and with the help of Maritain and Berd'ajev established the magazine *Esprit*, which became an

⁶ Ján Letz (*Personalistické metafyziky*, Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis, Bratislava 2006, s. 358) differentiates seven groups of personalistic scholars of the 20th century especially according to the provenience: *American and English* personalism (e.g. B. P. Bowne, G. H. Howison, F. H. Bradley, E. S. Brightman, E. Bowen), *francophone* personalism (E. Mounier, J. Lacroix, M. Nédoncelle, L. Lavelle, R. Le Senne, P.-L. Landsberg, P.-H. Simon and others), *Italian* personalism (e.g. A. Carlini, L. Stefanini, F. Battaglia, L. Pareyson, G. Flores d'Arcais), *Polish* personalism (e.g. J. Woroniecki, A. Póltawski, F. Mazurek, T. Mazowiecki, C. Bartnik, B. Suchodolski), *German and Austrian* personalism (e.g. M. Scheler, P. Tillich, L. W. Stern, H. Rotter, O. F. Bollnow, B. Häring), *Russian* personalism (e.g. N. Berd'ajev, P. Florenskij, S. N. Bulgakov, L. I. Šestov, B. P. Vyšeslavcev, P. Evdokimov, V. N. Losskij) and *dialogical* personalism (e.g. F. Rosenzweig, M. M. Buber, Ph. Nemo, F. Ebner, K. Löwith, B. Casper, G. Marcel, K. Vrána, J. Poláková).

⁷ Some of Mounier's original works, including complete volumes of the journal *Esprit*, as well as some selected secondary publications can be downloaded from the following address: http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Mounier_Emanuel/Mounier_emmanuel.html.

intellectual platform of committed Christian scholars not only in France, but in the whole Europe. Thus, a movement of philosophical and at the same time political reflection originated, which reacted against cultural and civilization crisis, whose perceptible manifestation was the economical ebb from 1929. Mounier criticized materialistic society based exclusively intentionally on ownership relations in service of individual egoism. Mounier's personalism was not only a theory, but a social practice in particular, which emphasizes primacy of a person above all material, collectivistic and technical means. The aim of this effort should be

creation of a personalistic civilization, in which all the forms of life will subordinate to one purpose, this purpose being development of spiritual and moral personality of every human and the society as a whole⁸.

Following this intention he published his program work *Manifeste au service du personalisme* (*Manifesto in the Service of Personalism*, 1936), where he reveals the proprietary and possessive base of capitalistic individualism and Marxist collectivism and calls upon the efforts for communitary personalism. A revolutionary ferment is present in the engaged work *La révolution personaliste et communautaire* (*Personalistic and Communitary Revolution*, 1935). The extensive psychologizing publication *Traité du caractère* (*Tract on Character*, 1947) followed after WWII. In order to understand Mounier's personalistic thinking it is important to mention his synthetic study *Qu'est-ce que le Personalisme?* (*What is Personalism?*, 1947) and a synoptic monograph *Le personalisme* (*Personalism*, 1949), which provides a panoramic overview of basic personalistic principles. We'll draw on these two works the most in the following paragraphs. After his untimely death (he died before he reached 45) he was replaced in editing the journal *Esprit* by Albert Béguin and after that by Jean-Marie Domenach. The association *Association des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier*, which is still active in research and development of Mounier's thinking, was established in 1951.

2. Basic characteristics of a human as a person

Mounier claims that a person can't be defined, since only objects outside a human are a subject to defining – and a person is not an object.

A person is a spiritual being constituted as such by a manner of subsistence and of independence in being; it maintains this subsistence by its adhesion to a hierarchy of values, freely adopted, assimilated and lived, by a responsible self-commitment [...]; it thus unifies all its activity in liberty and *develops*, moreover, by means of creative acts, its own unique vocation⁹.

⁸ J. Letz, *Personalistické metafyziky...*, p. 61.

⁹ E. Mounier, *Místo pro člověka. Manifest personalizmu*, Praha 1948, p. 65.

Thus, a person is what can't be objective in a human. It represents a centre of human universe, constituted from several basic structures. These structures will be briefly introduced here, following the phenomenology of the author himself¹⁰.

1. **Three-dimensionality of personal existence.** The supporting structure of personal life of a human is formed by three basic dynamics, three movements of existence: incarnation, communication, vocation.

a) Incarnation. A person is an incorporated, incarnated existence (existence incorporée), i.e. a spiritual existence in its full meaning and a physical existence in its full meaning. The incarnation of a human in nature (outer natural environment, own corporeality, psychical unconsciousness, impersonal social relationships) can't be perceived negatively, as a curse or a source of evil for a human, but since nature is the place of manifestation of impersonal and objective, it represents a constant opportunity for alienation. Spirituality of a human is on the other hand a principle of human transcendence and a guarantee of authenticity: a person transcends nature, its physical and biological determinisms (transforms nature to culture, overcomes instinctive tendencies, is capable of love), breaks its fatality and personalizes the world. Human finds themselves in-between two tendencies: depersonalization (loss of identity, homogenization, indifferentization, dehumanization) and personalization (self-identification, historization of time and the world, sensualization, axiologization, transformation, love). This vertical tension is exhibited in the daily human drama, in their fight for dignity: on one side, a dim, dark, external element of nature, which resists, is constantly present in it; on the other side, it is the energy of a subject urging to domination over nature, to asceticism and integration and to creation of a unique life experience of a human individual. It's about a real active dialectics; "personalism is not a philosophy for a Sunday afternoon" (M. Nédoncelle).

Between the undemanding optimism of liberal or revolutionary illusion and the impatient pessimism of various fascisms there winds the genuine road of a human, the tragic optimism (un optimisme tragique), in which they find the correct disposition in the atmosphere of magnanimity and struggle¹¹.

b) Communication. The basic experience of a person is communication. In contrast to Heidegger and Sartre, according to whom communication is pushed aside by the need to own and to make subordinated (Sartre, "hell is other people"), Mounier claims that a person in a human can be developed only if it's being purified from its own individuality and becomes more disponsible and transparent to one's self and to the others. Communication is a primordial fact of a human – since their birth, even before it, their personality is preceded by relationality, "the

¹⁰ E. Mounier, *Le personalisme*, Paris 1947. In Italian translation: E. Mounier, *Il personalismo*, Roma 1989.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

first experience of a person is the experience with another person: you and then we, comes before I, or at least it accompanies it"¹². Human, since they expose themselves, "stake oneself" to the other one, becomes more and more a person.

When communication is slowed down or damaged, in my depth I lose myself [...] alter (the another one) becomes alienus (strange) and I become strange to myself, I alienate. Truly, I exist in the measure I exist for others; after all, to be is to love¹³.

E. Mounier describes the development of dynamic personal relationship in five steps¹⁴ (which can be applied to educational relationship, too): 1. *to go out from the self* (decentralize from one's self, dispose one's self to interpersonal openness, to free one's self from narcissism and individualism, to be aware of personal destitution of others); 2. *to understand* (to give up one's own view, to accept singularity of attitudes and opinions of the others, to develop empathy), 3. *to take upon oneself* (to share the life of the others, to learn to enjoy their happiness and grieve over their sadness), 4. *to give* (to stimulate generosity and self-sacrifice in one's self and the others without a claim for retribution, to do the justice by forgiving, to cultivate trust), 5. *to maintain faithfulness* (to support the continuity in the sense of constant flux, to integrate a person by giving and reaching brave promises, to maintain hierarchy between the present and the eternity). Mounier is perfectly aware of the captiousness and difficulties of communication, but at the same time he points out to the fact that there's no other way to a just society than the effort to create communities of persons (*comunio*), in which being exceeds any owning. Communication as an authentic creative dialogue constitutes the horizontal dimension of personal existence.

c) Vocation. The third movement of existence is a movement inwards – outwards, which penetrates the depths of inner life of a human and is expressed by outer deeds. A human is constantly immersing into their own interiority in order to assume themselves and to model their lives in the dynamics of a repeated concentration and con-version. Spiritual concentration, focus on the centre of one's own personality, protects a human in front of absent-mindedness, discontinuity, fragmentarity and shallowness of living out. The interiority of a person's intimacy is protected by timidity (shyness, shame), which secures exclusivity of the closest personal relationships. Reflection toward the interior of a person is transformed to an intention and projection outward by a converse movement. Human action is thus a constant movement of interiorization and exteriorization and a person is responsible for the consequences of this movement. A person is not given once and forever, but it is a constant act of self-assumption and self-acquisition. This

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 47.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 48–49.

movement toward one's self and back from one's self to the deeds is best expressed by the notion vocation. "Every person has such a meaning that it can't be replaced at the place it takes in the universe of persons"¹⁵.

2) **Dependence of freedom.** Dependent freedom forms another basic structure of personal existence of a human. Freedom is not a thing in the world of things, but it is an excellent affirmation of a personality. In the middle of determinism there sprouts an irreplaceable initiative of a human, which is rooted in the fibers of a substance and limited by its own blindness, but it's an independent answer to a given promise (it is its fulfillment or betrayal). What holds true for a person is that they become free only through the freedom of other persons; freedom is "infectious": freedom creates freedom around itself, just like estrangement creates strangeness. To be free, means first of all to accept the conditions of one's own situation and to change them into a support of one's own plan. Freedom is spread only through decision-making, overpowering the obstacles, bringing sacrifices. Freedom is thus not an absolute condition of human action (Sartre), but it is a process of freeing. Apart from that it is an opportunity of choice, first of all it is an opportunity of selection and acquisition. "Free is the *man* whom the *world* asks questions and who is able to answer them: he is a *responsible man*"¹⁶.

3) **Horizon of values.** Values can't be perceived as universal ideas, existing Platonically on their own, because they exist always only in an incorporated form of a concrete, individual or collective subject. Though values have their historical life, it's only thanks to the intimacy of living persons. They are not applied to reality like principles settled in advance, but they appear in the depth of freedom, through the act of decision-making of a human. They are not completely subjective in the meaning of arbitrary projection of a subject – they exist only from a relationship and in a relationship. "All in all, a person is a movement toward the transpersonal that equally proclaims both the experience of communication and the experience of valorization"¹⁷. This movement towards the transpersonal is a struggle, conquering, often a bloody redemption. The horizon of values is the horizon of struggle of the living persons. Values can be reached through various ways in a life of a person: through providing of happiness, science, knowledge, ethical pursuance, art, creation of history, religious faith. Morality is connected to the values in a specific way, because there's no value where there's no freedom, and it is in freedom that a moral deed is decided about. "Personal universe defines the moral universe and coincides with it"¹⁸. Moral lapse and immorality belong to moral universe of a person, too, but impersonal automatism and habit, fidgetiness

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 97.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 105.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 112.

and egocentrism, indifference and moral blindness don't belong there at all. The slavish legalism, classifying the others into the "good ones" and the "bad ones" according to the formal criteria of social dictat, is the biggest enemy of personalistic ethics.

4) **Dimensions of pursuance.** "Theory of act is not a kind of appendix of personalism, but takes a central position in it"¹⁹, writes Mounier and outlines four main dimensions of pursuance: transformation of the world, transformation of self, contemplative pursuance and co-influence with the others²⁰.

a) Transformation of the world. Pursuance in the sense of "forming" (Greek *poiein*) is aimed at organizing and taking control of the outer substance. It's an economical activity, a work with things, production and productivity, use of natural forces to the benefit of a human. Industry, whose rate is efficiency, belongs to this area as well. But a human is not satisfied with constructing and organizing if they can't find their dignity, extent of solidarity with the co-workers, crossing the borders of mere utility in this activity. The economist who ignores these conditions is turned to a technocrat, approaching the interpersonal relationships as object regularities in the world of objects.

b) Transformation of self. Pursuance as "practicing" (Greek *prattein*) doesn't head towards construction of the outer piece of work, but toward the formation of the one who is pursuing, their skills and abilities, their personal unity. The aim and the rate of ethical pursuance is authenticity: it's not the work profit that counts the most, but it's the way of work and the impact of work on the participants themselves. The problem of the relationship of aims and means is not possible to be solved by a simple separation of technical means from human means:

As a consequence of the presence of a human, material means become human means, living among people, transformed by people (and people transforming) and this mutual influence is integrated to a total process²¹.

Technology and ethics are two inseparable poles of human pursuance.

c) Contemplative pursuance. That part of our pursuance which explores values was called *theorein*, contemplative pursuance, by the Greeks. It's not only about "theorizing", a purely rational activity, but it's the only activity of the whole human whose aim is perfectibility and universality, mediated by a concrete work²². Contemplative pursuance has an impact in the field of practice in two ways: indirectly – by induction of "useless" activities (mathematical speculations,

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 121.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 124–130.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 127.

²² An apt analysis of inseparability of contemplation and practice in the improving pursuance of a human is offered by Slovak religionist Martin Dojčár in his work *Mystická kontemplácia*, Bratislava 2008, especially p. 101–112.

theological disputes, *etc.*) into the expansion of culture, directly – by energetic prophetic intervention into practice (heroic deeds, deeds of reservation in conscience, hunger strikes of dissidents, *etc.*).

d) *Co-influence with the others*. A human becomes more a human through a community of persons, et vice versa, a community is a human society only when it's built upon relationships of persons. Mounier's personalism is getting to a social and political plain, on which it is trying to cross the limits of capitalistic individualism (based only on ownership) on one hand, and on the other hand the dictatorship of socialistic collectivism (reducing a human to a numeration unit). Pursuance of a person is never a pursuance of an isolated solitaire, it's always a co-operation, co-influence, even if the work is signed by one author. Pursuance is a language, that is to say, in which it takes part and whose echo is perceived by a community of many persons, maybe separated in time and space.

3. Principles of educational personalism

Between the 1930s and 1950s an educational current represented by pedagogues and educators of various traditions, which in a rough outline referred to a central idea of a person and basic human dignity, got prominence with a certain kind of urgency. From a socio-cultural perspective, this current was directed at strengthening of communitary-democratic system of education, in contrast to idealism and secularism, and in the political plain in contrast to fascism and communism, to capitalistic and collectivistic excesses.

- A common general thesis of various personalistic schools is an assertion that educational activity is aimed at a free, responsible and socially engaged development of a human person.

- Personalistic pedagogues, in contrast to empiricists and behaviorists, agree on the fact that an educand is not an empty receptacle that has to be filled by education or a natural organism that needs to be exercised, but it is the first factor of educational process, while the person of an educator is his first "guide" (Greek *agogos*). The position of "secret" (dignity, sacredness) of each person, a child as well, in the middle of plurality of stimuli from various institutes of education, has a special significance.

- Further on, there's the agreement in a claim that educational relationship is fundamental for education and has educational priority before educational methods and technologies. Methodical initiatives must be bond with the development of personal interiority of the educated.

- An important thesis is also an assumption that school education is an integral part of a broadly perceived education, focused on integrity of personal life in the process of freeing and valorizing of an individual. The complete "humanity" of an individual gained and acquired through natural sciences education and

technical education, but also literary or artistic education should be the content of school education.

- General framework of education is a differentiated perception of a human in the dynamics of three dimensions: determination – freedom – transcendence. Transcendence is the human mightiness that enables education to overcome deterministic tendencies of nature and society.

- Personalistic epistemology explores differentiation of the stages of knowing in relationship to fundamental unity of cognition of human, who is *capax veritatis*, capable of attaining the truth. The aim of cognition is the unity of cognition and life, which is achieved by a human by a continual conscientious differentiating (*cf.* „distinguer pour unir“ – differentiation for the sake of unification, J. Maritain).

- Personalistic educational reflection maintains the critical view of pedagogy and of historical and social forms of educational practice, in order to defend the rights and dignity of a human person in the middle of pedagogical and meta-pedagogical discussions, and in order to inspire to the inevitable epistemological sobriety against the fashionable educational trends.

In order to capture the particularity of Mounier's contribution to educational personalism, first we need to differentiate, either in general or in pedagogical field, between a personalism perceived generally, as an attitude of antiideological reaction to Marxist collectivism and existential individualism (a broad sense of the term) and personalism composed as a concrete theoretical perspective that is being born from the original intuition of a person as a centre of a meaning and value, from which the ethical task to transform the being into its benefit emerges (a narrow sense of the term). Mounier's position finds itself in the second sense of the term "personalism".

4. Particularity of anthropological-educational conception of E. Mounier

The thinking of E. Mounier originates as an engagement inspired by Christianity, as an answer to world crisis of 1930s and to European spiritual nihilism. Mounier together with his friends reacts to "constitutive disorder" and suggests "new Renaissance" – in so called "personalistic and communitary revolution" they offer a recourse from the halt of a human in the economic determinism, either a communist or neo-capitalist one". He understood personalism not only as a conceptual system, but as a perspective of the "struggling thinking". The absolute centrality of a person, whose basic structures are incarnation, communication and vocation, appoints a norm of any human activity for it. A person, even the ill one (like his daughter Françoise) or a persecuted one (like himself during the war) "is sacred like the host on the altar"²³. Thanks to the

²³ C. Nanni, *Emmanuel Mounier. Il pensiero pedagogico. Un'antologia*, Rím 2008, p. 24.

original and sagacious connection of many theoretical inspirations (C. Péguy, H. Bergson, J. Chevalier, Husserl's phenomenology) he created a conception through which he escaped the traps of existentialism, Marxism and philistine capitalism. Mounier's appeals against some intimistic or spiritualistic escapes, or conservatistic attitudes of Christians either in a relationship to totalitarian systems or in a relationship to social engagement in the period of the post-war reconstruction are not less urgent. In accordance to the stimuli of biblical theology he outlines the task to educate an open, responsible, brave, dialogical and social human.

The particularity of Mounier's ideas is reflected also in his contemplations about education. Mounier presents an image of a human who is "dramatic" and "total", a human who develops their own personality in the struggle with environment and corporeality. At the same time, it is a human who opens up for activity and conscious communication with the others. Education as a supporting and formation pillar is incorporated in these personalistic processes of an individual and community. The role of education is not a "creation" of a human, but to arouse in them a personal and communitary horizon. "What is the role of education? [...] By the very definition a person is aroused by appealing and not produced by exercising"²⁴.

A person doesn't belong to institutions (family, school, state, church) although it's formed through them; it belongs only to itself. "Transcendence of a person requires a person to belong only to itself. It's not *Res Societatis*, *Res familiae*, nor *Res Ecclesiae*"²⁵. Mounier acknowledges the educational function of a family, but also alerts to the risks of authoritativeness and social conformism of family education. He reveals the false neutrality of school and educational etatism: a school is not a purpose as such and definitely not a tool of functional subordination of market and state. In contrast to ideology of laicism (secularism) at schools he suggests a consistent pluralism in service of families and communities. He anxiously rejects adultism, intellectualism, authoritativeness and antidemocraticism of traditional education (he calls it "massacre of the innocents) because it ignored the person of the educated. But at the same time he casts aside uncritical and fanatic takeover of the alternative of so called "new schools" which are according to him deformed by a shortsighted liberal optimism and naturalistic image of a human. We need to take into consideration that school is just one of the educational tools and it's a mistake to reduce education only to abstract schooling. The after-school education, which should dispose of maximal possible freedom, plays an extraordinary role in the whole education of a human.

²⁴ E. Mounier, *Il personalismo...*, p. 160.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

5. Mounier's legacy to contemporary education

Educational personalism, just like other great theoretical systems of the 1950s and 1960s (laic Neo-Enlightenment, Neo-Marxism, Historicism) were affected by structural and cultural crisis at the end of the 1960s, due to which they write about the “hard 1970s” nowadays – the crisis of humane sciences is being spread and later on, in 1980s it grows over to postmodern era and “weak thinking”. In this context on the 50th anniversary of the journal *Esprit* in 1982 Paul Ricoeur, whose philosophical “career” originally began in the movement *Esprit*, announced that he understands

reserve, or even disgust of the generations younger than me, to the usage of the term personalism, although they maintain a critical faithfulness to the work of Emmanuel Mounier [...] My thought could be summed up in one sentence: let personalism die, having on mind: let it die..., maybe it's better for it to die, just let the person return²⁶.

He simply wanted to emphasize that cultural fact that the suffix “-ism” placed personalism among many other “-isms”, which have seemed to be rather strong conceptual categories with absolutistic claims to their definitive validity in the last decades. After all, even Mounier himself in the Foreword to the work *Qu'est-ce que le Personnalisme?* wrote,

The best destiny that personalism could have is this one: after it arises a complete sense of human in a sufficient number of people, then it will merge with everyday life in such a manner that it will disappear and leave no trace²⁷.

What can Mounier tell us today even after twenty-five more years? Together with Ricoeur we could wish for the “return of the person” into the centre of our intentions, namely in three plains: in the epistemological, anthropological and educational plain²⁸.

1. **In the epistemological plain.** Mounier's emphasis on the secret and inexhaustibility of a living person can stimulate the search for such scientific modes that would respect unspeakability and “depth” of a person. He also exhorts to interdisciplinary dialogue directed chiefly at the mystery of persons who are “opposite” to us and who present themselves in an “encounter”. Yet before analytical approach, before mobilization of our mental categories, it is a priority to listen to the world, to “give the word to the things” (Husserl), or listen to the appeal of living persons. Apart from that Mounier recommends to be aware of the close

²⁶ P. Ricoeur, *Meurt le personnalisme, revient la personne*, „*Esprit*“ [Paris] 1983, vol. 51, n° 1, p. 113.

²⁷ P. Ricoeur, in C. Nanni, *Emmanuel Mounier...*, p. 114.

²⁸ Cf. C. Nanni, *Emmanuel Mounier...*, p. 115–117.

connection between science and meta-theory, vision of the world, vision of a human and life and to take ethically engaged position in scientific research, too. Scientific choice is not dependent only on subjectivity of the researcher, historical context, need of the period or scientific and methodological traditions, but it follows from the necessity of internal relationality, human communication, or even *philia*. The appeal to prophetic pursuance in historical time was being fulfilled by Mounier himself.

2. **In the anthropological plain.** Mounier's thinking can help to form the in principle "personalistic" mentality. Several elements are needed here: disponibility for an encounter, for relationships, for the others, a sense of secret of personal universe, perception of a human person as a cultural and value intersection of all activities. Apart from that, a persuasion that the vertical-transcendental dimension is connected with the depth-impulsive dimension in the person of every single human.

3. **In the educational plain.** The perception of education as "awakening" and "arousing" of a person and their relationship to "totality of a human" can help us to understand educational activity as a part of personalization of a human: a person is the beginning, the principle and the mean of education. Mounier's ideas about mutual conditioning of education and about the priority of a relationship and communication before contents need to be understood within this framework. Educational relationship is a relationship of schooling, but first of all it is a form of interpersonal community and an expression of individual and community love. Pedagogy that is targeted like this, implies a continual self-education of the educating.

Mounier's wife, Paulette Leclercq, wrote in the foreword to his collected publications, "A fundamental act of a person [...] is not to separate, but to communicate (to join). A community with people was his greatest passion"²⁹. Perhaps she gave a true picture of the essence of his educational message here.

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²⁹ C. Nanni, *Emmanuel Mounier...*, p. 117.