

BIO-ETHICS AND YOUTH

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One of the resolutions unanimously accepted by the participants of the First International Conference of the Biopolitics International Organisation was the urgency of involving youth in our activities. It is necessary to implement this resolution, and to involve young people of every nation in Biopolitics, in order for bios (life) to serve as the "lever to lift the spirit of the world".¹

I refer to the myth of Prometheus, the heavenly fire which endows men with intelligence, wisdom and glory. This fire is akin to the power and domination eagerly sought after by men today.

The progresses in scientific fields create dangers when they make an attempt on life. By saying "an attempt on life", I refer not only to killing, but also to modern arms which are becoming more sophisticated, and more murderous. An attempt on life is also the act of intruding upon the natural environment. The problem also comprises procreation and genetic manipulations in the animal kingdom, and genetic engineering; the fusing of cells with cloning possibilities - "procreation in-vitro".

In ethical terms, we must be warned against man's irresistible propensity to progress and modernization, setting an unlimited optimism on the intrinsic value of any scientific and technological success. Not that man does not know of the potential dangers whenever he performs well. However, man seems to think that afterwards, he will be able to control problems and solve catastrophic disturbances brought on by previously considered successful performances.

It is evident that man is sleeping peacefully with the confidence that scientific progress is valuable, and any ill-effects will no doubt be annihilated so that the final balance will be fully positive. Beyond all question, man is operating without due consideration for the future, and finding favor with complete impunity; with individual responsibility being lost in an anonymous collectivity. Indeed, in such a case we are really confronted with a Promethean attitude of the scientist always looking for beating the record once more - with the approval of misinformed consumers.

The question arises, what is to happen the moment man appears to himself as only a biochemical system, resulting from manipulations carried out "in-vitro" by engineers; and, finally reduced to molecular interactions? Here is the problem of ego and consciousness. Allowing himself to be tempted to make his artificial authority felt everywhere in life, man needs to be aware of the necessity to employ vision. To learn and be trained how to foresee the possible ill-effects in undertaking a new program. Activities which man resorts to, usually attempt to control nature or transform it either for better or worse. Man must be trained to foresee the emergence of negative side-effects in time, before a situation has lost its flexibility, in order to choose among different solutions. The lack of pre-vision entails the lack of freedom in decision-making. Currently, vision tends to be made without plurality of data, method awareness, critical evaluation or cooperation.

It is urgently needed to give this activity a cooperative aspect - cooperation, including young people, who must not be overlooked. Adults neglecting to consult youth shall fail. Can we imagine why the father should have complete power over orientations and decisions of the child, as if he is holding a rank granting perspicacity, second-sight or wisdom? All of us must act according to the Centaur Chiron, who, as Homer writes, was both a pedagogue and a father to Achilles.

We are responsible for providing education, to teach patience and responsibility; to raise youth with an aptitude for participation. It is an abiological duty we must assume if we want to secure perenniality. As occupiers and not owners of this planet, we, the young and old, must respect it. We need to try and understand the mystery of life, and raise the issue of human responsibility, balancing "the power and the frailty", on both an organic and spiritual level.

In English - Youth; in German - Jugend; in Italian - Giovinezza; in Russian - Maladioch; in Arabic - Achapabe; in Greek - Inei; in Malagasy - Tanour; in Chinese - Tchinguian; and in French - Jeunesse.

REFERENCES

1. Vlavianos-Arvanitis A., Proceedings: First International Conference on Biopolitics - The Bio-Environment, Athens, 1988.

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