

**EDUCATION MORAL FOUNDATIONS IN TEACHINGS OF THE ENGLISH GENIA**

Shadmanov K. B.

Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor

Bukhara State Medical Institute

E-mail: [shadmanov.qurbon@bsmi.uz](mailto:shadmanov.qurbon@bsmi.uz)

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**Abstract**

The paper explores the history of philosophical aspects of educational theory and practice as reflected in the works of prominent educators of the English Enlightenment (late 17th-early 18th centuries). Of particular note in this context is the work entitled "Letters to His Son" by Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773), a prominent British figure, humanist thinker, public figure, statesman, philosopher, historian, and pedagogical follower of the great English philosopher of his time, John Locke. The author shares her understanding of the essence of this issue using the example of this outstanding representative of 18th-century English ethical, philosophical, and pedagogical thought.

**Keywords:** Morality, education, educational-philosophical, thought, reflection, letter, experience, advice, intelligence.

**Introduction**

Horizons of imagination of the human mind are not limited in time and space, and reaching its visible peaks directly depends on the level of intellectual state of the individual. Similarly, the perception and assimilation of the creative heritage of other peoples is part of the great intercultural dialogue of the human mind - both the intellectual, ideological, and moral-aesthetic part of the process of interethnic mutual knowledge [2, p.128]. The Age of Enlightenment, which began in England in the late XVII and early XVIII centuries, is characterized by the development of scientific, philosophical, and social thought based on the principles of rationalism and freedom of thought. This was a time that had a significant impact on the formation of new ideas and social foundations both in England itself and in other European countries. It was during this historical period that the great Enlightenment geni Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, George Berkeley, Christian von Wolff, Charles Louis Montesquieu, and David Hume, who made a huge contribution to the world's civilizational thought, lived and worked. The above-mentioned great thinkers covered the issues of moral education, its theory and practice in their works. However, it cannot be said that even before them there was no holistic theory of education, morality and upbringing, which would be schematically described, because over more than a thousand years of world history, from antiquity to the Renaissance, many thinkers expressed their views on the purpose of education and its place in society, its content and individual requirements for its organization.

In this regard, the genre of letters from parents to their children, related to moral education, is of interest due to its unique and inimitable originality. By the way, the genre of letters from

parents to their children is one of the most widespread and ancient genres in world literature. In ancient Byzantium, as in Europe, for example, this genre was readily used to establish the moral rules of those in power, because they saw in this genre one of the levers for establishing the strict character of the will of the father in these rules [6, p.301]. Books of the type "Advice from a Father to His Son" were popular in all Western European literature for many centuries. The earliest examples of this type are the ancient Hebrew "Wisdoms of Solomon", a collection of advice to a son, and in early English history the Anglo-Saxon "Fader Larcwidas", meaning "Fatherly Advice". Also noteworthy are the "On the Government of the Empire", written as an instruction to his son by the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959), a Macedonian, or, for example, the similar "Enseignements" of Louis IX (1214–1214). This genre, which manifested itself in world literature, found its own continuation in the history of English philosophical thought, especially during the Enlightenment. And from this perspective, Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773), a great son of Britain, a humanist thinker, an outstanding public and statesman, philosopher, historian, and a follower of the great English philosopher of his time, John Locke, in pedagogy, and his work "Letters to His Son" deserve special attention.

### Research Methodology

Theoretical and methodological foundations of such studies, as a rule, are not expressed in the form of a priori principles, but are developed, as we see, when we turn to various components of the cultural world. In general, when analyzing this concept, we pay attention to the principles and traditions of the dialectical approach to understanding the existence of man in culture: the rise from the abstract to the concrete, the unity of the individual and the social, formal and substantive. The author tried to analyze the work of Lord Chesterfield, a high-ranking political and statesman, a thinker of the classical period, unique even for the English national consciousness of the XVIII century, from the perspective of the philosophical and pedagogical teachings of John Locke.

### Analysis and Results

In history of European literature, one can trace many masterpieces of the epistolary genre, one of which, under the name "Letters to His Son", dates back to the XVIII century. This book deserves special attention and discussion, as it represents an instructive and educational direction of writing, since, according to the author, it should have been useful to his son in matters of morality, upbringing, etiquette and behavior in society. "Letters to His Son" had a significant impact on the formation of ideas about morality and upbringing in European society not only in the XVIII century, but also in subsequent centuries. This book remains a valuable source of information about the morals and customs of XVIII century England to this day. Chesterfield's "Letters to His Son" is an excellent example of XVIII century epistolary prose. In them, Chesterfield, drawing on his own life experience, gave his son useful practical advice on how to successfully live in a noble society and rise to a state career. This book was called by contemporaries the best book ever written on education, although an analysis of numerous critical articles by Earl Chesterfield's contemporaries shows that the publication of the letters

initially surprised many of them, since the content of the letters seemed too "obvious" to many, but later the letters were repeatedly published and became popular in many parts of the world. This book was highly appreciated by the great Voltaire as the best of all that was written on education, presenting the life thoughts and experience of a person from the older generation to the younger. From this it can be concluded that the author's sole purpose in writing the letters (which later became the book "Letters to His Son") was to convince his son, who lived far from his father, to build his life on the basis of high social morality and high principles, to choose the only correct way of behaving in society, and to lead his son to the heights of his career.

The letters, on the one hand, emphasize the moral integrity of the father through his personal stories and instructions, on the other hand, through these personal letters, Lord Chesterfield's deep knowledge of the classical authors of antiquity, his broad and enlightened views on the social purpose of art, his broad thinking ability formed over the years, his ability to distinguish the important from the insignificant, and, in addition, an organic intelligence distinguished by purely human qualities, a certain democracy, honesty and exactingness, and above all, a special feeling, impressionability, goodwill, warmth and sensitivity, not to others, but to himself - all this, undoubtedly, found its direct reflection in Chesterfield's "Letters to His Son".

From this point of view, the significance of this book is incomparable. In addition, the experience of a statesman and a skilled diplomat in public debates helped Lord Chesterfield to establish very close and fruitful contacts with various circles of the English and French enlightened society in the person of its most prominent representatives; this also did not fail to influence the accumulation of those foundations of Lord Chesterfield's parental pedagogy, which were later reflected in his "Letters to His Son". But it should also be noted that the achievements of advanced moral and philosophical thought of previous eras and centuries formed the basis for the formation of Chesterfield's own research. After all, most of what Chesterfield wrote to his son was based on his own accumulated experience, impressions from the adventures of his youth. In this respect, Chesterfield's "Letters to His Son" resembles the works of Michel de Montaigne, a great figure of the French Renaissance, and the "Essays" of the famous English philosopher and thinker Francis Bacon, with the only difference being that M. de Montaigne tried to understand his "Ego", while Bacon and Chesterfield, in the spirit of pure English mentorship, based on their rich life experience, show ways to develop and improve the personality of a generation from early childhood to adulthood and recognition as a person [1].

Moral and pedagogical ideas in Chesterfield's letters to his son show in many ways their similarity to the ideas of progressive thinkers of past eras, since the genre of a letter from a parent to his child is one of the most widespread and ancient genres in world literature. In ancient Byzantium, as in Europe, for example, this genre was easily used to establish the moral rules of those in power, because they saw in this genre one of the levers for attributing to these rules the strict character of the will of the father [6, p.301]. For centuries, books of the "Advice of a Father to His Son" type were popular throughout Western European literature. Many early works of this type were examples of the ancient Hebrew "Wisdoms of Solomon" in the form of advice to his son, and in early English history, the Anglo-Saxon "Fader Larcwidas", that is, "Fatherly Advice". Also included is the "On the Government of the Empire" written in the form

of instructions to his son by the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959), a member of the Macedonian dynasty, or, for example, the similar "Enseignements" of Louis IX (1214-1214).

But Lord Chesterfield's thoughts in this regard are especially close to the philosophy of his contemporary, the English philosopher John Locke. Chesterfield took a lot from him, absorbed it in his mind, but reflected what he received in his own way in the "Letters to His Son". Chesterfield understood upbringing as one of the main means of rationally organized education. He also believed that it was necessary to develop the human essence in every child, and it is not without reason that he understood this as the main goal of parental upbringing. As the most perfect creature on earth, a child has the right to develop all his strengths and talents without hindrance, but under the delicate educational gaze of his parents, of course; ultimately, a rationally educated person, according to Chesterfield, must consciously use all his strengths and abilities not only for his own benefit, but first of all for the benefit of society. Even before Chesterfield, education was not a holistic theory of morality and upbringing, which was schematically described, because over more than a thousand years of world history, from antiquity to the Renaissance, many thinkers expressed their views on the purpose of education and its role in society, its content and individual requirements for its organization.

So, what aspects of Locke's educational system influenced Lord Chesterfield's views? As a representative of his time, Lord Chesterfield was undoubtedly influenced by some of the ideas and thoughts of his time. In his letters, in which he freely expressed his thoughts and opinions on the upbringing and education of his son based on modern theories, it is natural that some trends in 18th-century society were not reflected. These trends influenced education and upbringing in the first half of this century, and in particular, the ideas in John Locke's theory of innate ideas directly influenced Lord Chesterfield the most.

Speaking about the influence of John Locke's progressive ideas on that era, including Chesterfield, it should be noted, first of all, that John Locke was an English Enlightenment philosopher and political thinker who developed an empirical theory of knowledge and the ideological-political doctrine of liberalism, and, together with Rene Descartes and Leibniz, made a significant contribution to the theory of the philosophy of language [10;12], although at that time the concept of "philosophy of language" from the perspective of the theory of meaning as a central part of philosophical research was not yet clearly understood. The fact is that most of these enlighteners were inclined to believe that language was in some way connected with reason and, perhaps, in a derivative sense, with the world, although for some of them language was a phenomenon that interested them, for others - an object of study, for still others - an attempt to correct and standardize it, for still others - an attempt to universalize it [8; 9; 12]. But Locke put forward extremely important and relevant ideas for his time, which did not go unnoticed and were recognized by the contemporaries of the great philosopher.

In addition, from the middle of the XVIII century, a new stage begins in the development of the entire education system, especially in relation to the real education system. Real education is an educational system in which, unlike classical education, ancient classical languages are not taught and the main emphasis is on studying the basics of natural, physical and mathematical sciences, as well as new languages. Real education appeared in the XVIII century in connection

with the rapid development of capitalism, but already in the XVI-XVII centuries, progressive thinkers (W. Petty, J. Milton, Francis Bacon in England, in France F. Rabelais, etc.) put forward the requirement for such education, which would prepare children for practical life and include basic knowledge of physical and natural sciences [3]. This was reflected in the works of John Locke, who had a great influence on Chesterfield's ideas, and the lord in his letters created his own educational system for young Philip, drawing ideas from Locke. Moreover, some of Locke's works were almost like Lord Chesterfield's program manuals [11, p. 317]. One of these books is Locke's classic treatise "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" (1693), in which the thinker puts forward the ideas that the decisive influence of the environment on education is based on the need to take into account the natural inclinations of the child, to form a healthy body and mind. Locke believed that the child should initially be completely under the influence of parents and educators, who should be an example for him. He believed that education should begin at a mature age, that is, after the child's character has been formed (in the family, not in school) and the foundations of morality have been instilled in him; he also believed that education should be based on developing children's interest and curiosity in learning [5].

Locke also had his own views on what subjects a young student should study. The study of ancient languages was reduced to a minimum, and the importance of learning the native language was emphasized [7, p. 159]. As a result, according to Locke, the role of ancient thinkers was reduced, they were used to a very limited extent, for example, Cicero was of the opinion that rhetoric and the epistolary genre were good for studying the thinker. He recommended reading famous poets, orators or philosophers, in particular Francis Bacon or Rene Descartes's "Principles" or La Rochefoucauld's "Les reflexions morales" (Moral Reflections) and La Bruyere's "Caracteres" (Characters). [7, p. 160; 6, XXXVII, p. 70; LVII, p. 142]. In this, Locke's ideas were somewhat in line with those of Chesterfield, and although he did not deny the importance of classical languages, he did not arouse excessive enthusiasm for ancient authors: "... when I wanted to be seen in conversation, I quoted Horace; when I wanted to joke, I quoted Martial ... I was convinced that common sense should be sought only in the ancients ... I very soon discovered that almost all my concepts had nothing in common with reality" [6, LXVII, p.175]. Although he sometimes advised Philip to read one or another ancient literature in order to instill in him some skill, for example, rhetoric or the ability to write letters correctly and coherently, diction (for this he ordered his son to read Cicero) [6, XXXI, p.63; LXIII, pp. 161-162].

Locke's contribution as a supporter of the materialist ideas of Fr. Bacon and Hobbes, which he himself somewhat supplemented and systematized, was that he laid the foundation for a general philosophy of human reason. Chesterfield repeatedly mentions Francis Bacon in his letters, and the idea of common sense is very close to him. Chesterfield writes a lot about common sense, practically putting it at the head of a number of human virtues and considering it a necessary and most important feature of human character: "Common sense (which is not really so widespread) is the best of all senses. Be faithful to it, and it will give you the wisest advice" [6, XXXVII, p.72]. Locke also believed that, along with new languages and mathematics, which especially contribute to the development of thought, the study of geography, history, the foundations of law and "natural philosophy" should be introduced. Chesterfield, of course,



shared these thoughts about the importance of geography, history and law for a person who wants to become a successful diplomat. Lord Chesterfield wishes his son just such a career. He repeatedly instructs Philip to carefully study the laws, to turn to the history and geography of a particular place: "But every gentleman, whatever profession he is in, must know well and know the most subtleties of the field. These are, first of all, ancient and modern languages, history and geography, philosophy, logic, rhetoric; and for you, especially, the constitution, civil and military system. ... " [6, XXXI, p.56; XXXYI, p.67]. But for the boy his subsequent journey through Europe was important and significant, which for Chesterfield was the most interesting part of Philip's upbringing. The letters written during this period are striking in their volume, completeness and breadth of the topics discussed [6, Letters XII, XIII, XXYI, XXXI, XXXII, XXXYI, XXXYII, etc.].

If we dwell upon the practicality of education, then Lord Chesterfield is on a par with Locke. Chesterfield is against his son's excessive hobbies, but is ready to accept activities that bring practical benefits. For example, although he does not approve of dancing [6, LXY, p. 171], he is ready to support his son in his desire to learn it, because it helps to maintain his physical fitness and self-control, the ability to move smoothly and confidently.

### Conclusion

For Locke, the goal of education was to achieve and increase human happiness, in Lord Chesterfield's understanding of ideas, to achieve power and popularity. The thinker did not see anything wrong with such ambitions; on the contrary, he considered them the main ones for achieving these higher goals and achieving success in society [6, LXY, p.171]. Consequently, Chesterfield could not pass by Locke, who played a large role in the formation of his ideas, created his own system of education based on his own experience and various ideas, which he described in his letters to his son. And finally, all this indicates that Chesterfield was really familiar with J. Locke's ideas about education [6, p.301], especially with regard to Locke's idea that there are no innate ideas, that only education and upbringing distinguish one person from another, and not his origin. Chesterfield also followed Locke in understanding labor as the goal of human activity and one of the best means of education, as can also be seen in the lines in "Letters to His Son [4, pp. 16, 38-39, 45].

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