

Opinion prepared for granting Professor John Raven the doctorate *honoris causa*
of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin'
(English translation).

Prof. Piotr Oleś
Institute of Psychology
The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin
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In 2016 Professor John Raven reached the age of 80 - it is a beautiful age for every person and for the scientist it is a time of drawing synthesis and meta-reflections.

John Raven studied Psychology in Aberdeen and then at the London School of Economics where he graduated in Social Psychology in 1960. He received his doctorate more than 20 years later at the *Trinity College* in Dublin. Professor John Raven's research career was mostly associated with the British Isles. At the *London School of Economics* he worked in a team dedicated to researching the impact of television on children, which at that time comprised innovative issues. His work in the *Government Social Survey Department* in London was focused on the assessment of the British primary and secondary education system. Since 1968 he has worked at the *Economic and Social Research Institute* (Ireland). He conducted research on values and attitudes, as well as institutional solutions that foster social and economic development. He also continued his research on education. Furthermore, he conducted research on civic education and political culture within international projects. In 1976 he joined the *Scottish Council for Research in Education*. At that time, he started the international cooperation focused on the diagnostic value, applications and interpretative capabilities of John Raven's (senior) Progressive Matrices test. This research has resulted in a number of international publications, including an eleven-volume manual on the method. Interests in capability measurement were intertwined with research on education. Dr. Raven's approach in this area can be described as universal and integral at the same time. This consists, on the one hand, of an assessment of the effectiveness of pre-school education and, on the other hand, of a study of innovation in teacher education. Indeed, it is difficult to take action in favour of viable, pro-development education of children without simultaneously comprehensive and inspiring teacher education; and the action in favour of teachers' professional development is difficult to detach from analysing the effects of pre-school and early school education. This comprehensive and systemic approach to education is perfectly reflected in the Professor's innovative thought and his invaluable contribution to the development of educational systems not only in the British Isles but also in many other countries.

The Professor's activity in the field of early education promoting the comprehensive human development was reflected in his research on the effectiveness of competence teaching not in isolation, but in direct contact with challenges, opportunities and requirements of the environment. Education rooted in the practice of social adaptation is another innovative idea implemented by the Professor thanks to his research and organisational and educational activity. And it is not the end of it; combining these ideas with human development in the course of life, John Raven proposed permanent education in the field of competences useful in the professional career and social life. He explored the factors facilitating the development of skills and the acquisition of competences along with professional experience, which once again manifests the ecological aspect of the Professor's achievements.

He conducted the extensive research on values and priorities, both individual and social, which have an impact on the social and economic development of society, but also underlie possible collapses and crises. He was particularly interested in interrelations between economic,

administrative and political systems and their impact on individuals and society. Most recently, he has explored sociocybernetics, i.e. the analysis of social networks that influence the behaviour of individuals and social groups. By implementing this category into systemic and interdisciplinary thinking within the framework of sociobiological sciences, Professor John Raven expressed his concern for the condition of a human being in the modern world. Many forces have an impact on an individual, an organization and society, some of which are rooted in biology and are rarely recognized, others constitute derivatives of human activity and the development of civilization. The emphasis on meeting immediate needs and short-term interests can lead to the destruction of the environment and subtle links between a human and the world of nature. Instead, Professor Raven proposes a reflexive, understanding, and I will not hesitate to write - an empathic approach to the world surrounding a human being. Only by understanding the complex relations and conditions of the social and natural world can we operate within it without disturbing the internal balance and harmony and protect the possibilities inherent in it - for the good of present and future generations. In this approach, the Professor's responsibility for mankind in his present and future times becomes visible. Many concepts of the mature personality indicate the responsibility for people living far (not only near) and for future generations as a pivotal criterion of this maturity.

A characteristic feature of John Raven's theory is a holistic approach to competence. It means that competences are created firstly on the basis of talents, but in the context of other personality predispositions such as motivation, preferences, commitment to values; secondly, in a specific social context and specific environmental conditions. Acquiring competences actually means developing talents. And this is not an exaggeration, as the Professor is interested in competences in the course of life, from pre-school through school to adulthood, and at the same time complementary competences of children, parents and teachers. But also professional, social and political competences. These are fundamental issues for civic education which, moreover, are closely linked to ethical issues. In creating a political culture, axiological foundations are necessary - and these are the issues to which Professor John Raven has devoted a significant part of his scientific activity. Thinking in terms of social ethics directed his interests and fascination with the "Solidarność revolution" and the Polish political transformation. But also an important element of the Professor's concept was the issue of developing methods for measuring various competences.

Another important aspect of Professor John Raven's professional career is connected with the method of well-known progressive matrices called the Raven's test. The author of this method is John Raven senior, but John Raven junior has no less merit in terms of the current status of this method. Following in the footsteps of his father, John Raven junior continued his work on the method, which was developed in 1938 and is still used in many countries. Raven's Progressive Matrices are known all over the world. It is a method used in the diagnosis of perception and logical thinking including the one based on analogy. The great advantage of the method is that it is non-verbal, the instruction is easy to issue and understand, and providing answers does not require the use of words. Skills assessed by the Raven's test constitute an important component of general intelligence, correlated with mathematical talents and logical thinking. Hence, the method is used in school guidance, vocational guidance, qualification tests for drivers, mechanical plant operators, and generally for candidates for various occupations. Colourful boards for children, standard boards for adults, and advanced boards for officers and for other demanding occupations turned out to be very successful. John Raven did not limit himself to theoretical studies, but he also initiated and participated in standardization studies in many countries such as Turkey, South Africa, Hungary, Kuwait, USA and Latin American countries. He pointed out the possibilities of analysis and interpretation of results, explained the possibilities and limitations of the method. It is no exaggeration to say that he formulated a three-factor theory for measuring intelligence consisting of verbal talents, logical thinking skills

(Raven's Matrix Test) and values recognised by man. The values included in the set may be initially surprising, but they determine the way and direction of using intellectual potential for pro-social or individual, not to say selfish purposes. And just as the axiological basis of motivation determines the development and use of competences, so do the values shared by people co-create a specific intellectual climate facilitating or not the comprehensive human development. Bearing in mind the social dimension of human functioning, the Professor promoted the concept of collective intelligence which brings colour to the intellectual climate of given times, leading to the flowering or atrophy of humanism. Professor John Raven was as much interested as concerned about these phenomena.

This deeply humanistic approach is particularly evident in John Raven's publications on education. Education is, of course, about recognizing and creating conditions for the development of individual talents and predispositions, and not unifying unique human beings, but it is also about building the foundations of culture. Responsibly conceived education is supposed to develop a person, contribute to a higher quality of life and human activities, it is supposed to foster development and maturity - all in all, the optimal functioning of the person. Education conceived in this way plays a truly service-minded role towards the person - a thinking and dignified being. Promoting educational transformation towards this direction requires systemic changes, because it is not individual factors or even their simple sum that is responsible for this unwanted and undesirable discrepancy between the idea of education promoting man and the practice of limiting education. This consists of a number of interrelated factors inherent in people's mentality, legal, administrative and systemic limitations, but also in motivation, recognised values, individual and social preferences. This issue is of key importance as it is a matter of what kind of civilization to build: based on consumption, hedonism, unlimited production, cripple and free market, or based on higher values, truth, beauty, empathy towards nature, self-limitation and the virtue of longevity - a civilization that respects the inalienable properties of the person and human communities. Professor John Raven's reflection on this issue is unambiguous. The Professor devoted many years of his intellectual effort to exploration of reasons for a kind of self-destruction of *homo sapiens*, expressed in the undertaking of anti-ecological actions promoting life in an unhealthy environment and in stress, and at the same time limiting and stupefying man - a human being predisposed to good and great things, and not to poor and of low quality ones. Behind the unsuccessful attempts to reform the world there is a whole system of social, economic and administrative factors, but also human fears and limitations. These forces do not constitute a mysterious network of unbreakable links; on the contrary, they are within the reach of human capabilities, here and now. Sociocybernetics, proposed by John Raven in recent years, aims to identify these forces and to establish ways of overcoming them. This aspect of the Professor's activity has clear practical implications, namely the combination of inspirations and measures aimed at innovation and change towards the creation of a society conducive to optimal functioning. In addition to numerous publications, the website <http://www.eyeonsocietv.co.uk/> is dedicated to this matter.

Professor John Raven is the author of hundreds of publications, including several monographs and over 200 scientific articles published in excellent international journals. Among the great books of which he is the author or co-author, one can mention, for example: *Young School Leavers, Pupil Motivation and Values, Parents, Teachers and Children; Education, Values and Society: the Objectives of Education and the Nature and Development of Competence, Opening the Primary Classroom, Competence in Modern Society: Its Identification, Development and Release; The Tragic Illusion: Educational Testing; The New Wealth of Nations: A New Enquiry into the Nature and Origins of the Wealth of Nations and The Societal Learning Arrangements required for a Sustainable Society, Competence in the Learning Society, Uses and Abuses of Intelligence*, or an 11-volume manual for Progressive

Matrices and Dictionary Scales, translated into many languages, including Russian and Chinese. Professor John Raven's international recognition is reflected in the fact that he has been invited to give lectures in many countries, not only in Europe, but also in Japan, India, Thailand, Pakistan, China, Peru and Argentina, to name a few. In 2013 he was awarded an *honorary doctorate* by the University of Pécs (Hungary), a university which recently awarded an *honorary doctorate* to Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council (2017).

Over the years, Professor John Raven has instilled a humanistic vision of how work and social life should be organized by conducting classes for students of our *Alma Mater*. He promoted a culture of organization and institution based on trust in people, belief in their capabilities, the concept of a society of competent entities connected by the idea of dialogue, tolerance, promotion of talent development and activity motivated by higher values. This is how he understood the world possible to create especially in the period of transformations and after the Round Table agreement (1989).

Doctorate *honoris causa* is awarded by universities for the outstanding contribution to knowledge. The whole description of the above mentioned achievements and universal ideas, which go beyond the framework of social sciences, undoubtedly prove that this criterion in the case of Professor John Raven is met. It sometimes happens that universities award honorary doctorates to people who are particularly meritorious for those institutions. And this additional reason in the case of Professor Raven is also fulfilled. Since the 1990s, he has enjoyed fruitful cooperation with researchers from the Faculty of Social Sciences. Throughout the years from the mid-1990s to 2010, Professor John Raven taught psychology of management and social and economic policy, initially as part of the Trade Union-Management Specialisation, and later in the Institute of Psychology and the Institute of Economics and Management. The classes included *Organizational behavior and human performance* as well as *Management competences in modern organizations and society*. No wonder that in 2002 he became a professor of the Catholic University of Lublin.

Professor John Raven was interested in the Polish transformation after 1989 hence he co-initiated at the Catholic University of Lublin cyclical conferences *International Conferences on Mental Changes and Social Integration Perspectives in Europe* (1991, 1992), he delivered plenary lectures and listened very carefully to the speeches of Poles. This, in fact, was the beginning of international cooperation within the framework of research programmes on mental change in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The effects of joint research and reflections on their results can be reviewed, among others, in the *Journal for Mental Changes* which has been published since 1995. Professor Raven, as one of the founding fathers, is a member of the Editorial Board of this international, interdisciplinary periodical, currently entitled *Perspectives of Economic, Political and Social Integration. Journal for Mental Changes*.

The maturity of a person and the greatness of his achievements are measured by works that are timeless yet unnecessary. Necessary are those that are a simple result of performed work, while others - not inscribed in everyday professional activity, constitute an expression of transgression, testifying to the social and civic interests of the creator, and represent His greatness.

In his research and scientific interests, the Professor combines an individual and social perspective, focuses on human and group activity, analyzes interrelations and interdependencies. Professor John Raven's scientific work includes the thesis about the inseparable relationship between person and society, the idea of complementarity and stimulation. The achievements in this field include the development and verification of the theory of co-determination: human behaviour is a resultant of subjective and environmental factors, and considering them separately cannot lead to full explanations. Motivation includes, on the one hand, a subjective attitude towards the world expressed in the preference for values,

recognition and responsibility for the development of abilities and talents, and, on the other hand, the possibility of environmental demands.

These activities reflect not only the treatment of man as a person facing development and educational challenges at every stage of life, but also an integrated approach to broadly understood education, i.e. the issue of combining professional, social and civic competences. And all this presented in the spirit of humanisation of social and socio-political life. Referring to the concept of human underlying these ideas and their implementation, we find an autonomous, talented person, responsible and free, but at the same time able to transcend individual interests and engage for the benefit of the community. These ideas are fundamentally consistent with the anthropological vision of John Paul II, whose name was granted to the University ready to award John Raven with an honorary doctorate - which is by all means justified and justifiable.