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MAN AS A VALUE – FROM CONSCIOUSNESS TO MORALITY

Contents of Article: Man as a Fundamental Value – The Inner Dimension, The Ontological Dimension of Reflective Consciousness and its Importance, The Development of Consciousness as a Condition of Moral Welfare, Bibliography.

To be in agreement with what refers to mores always proves to be a difficult task. This is because the mores are very diverse and answer to contexts that sometimes are so different that even the comparison between them cannot be valid without extremely profound studies which frequently exceed the possibilities of the researcher. However, it is certain that every society is composed of individuals and constitutes a fundamental condition for the development of its members. In the interaction between individual and society, the personal dimension acquires particular importance, even though the distinction between the individual and the personal dimension is not always clear.

It is also evident that the interaction process of the constituent members of a society generates a series of objectivations in the environment that we denominate technology, science and culture in general. They reflect and promote the needs and possibilities of those individuals in the process of their development. The importance of clarifying the pattern of ethical behaviour which will permit better conditions of life and development of everyone has been pointed out repeatedly. This may be theoretically possible and adequate, considering that the individual and the person, from a theoretical point of view, is capable of understanding and internalizing such ethical values by means of a social educative process which guarantees the exercise of personal freedom and optimal functioning of society.

We can consider the inherent difficulties in achieving these objectives from two different viewpoints:

- a) The process itself of transmission and internalization of values involved in personal and social development;
- b) The subject of such a process, which is the individual in his personal growth and as a member of the society. Is there any valid reference which lets us recognize when a culture guides and favours personal and social growth and when it puts them in danger?

MAN AS A FUNDAMENTAL VALUE – THE INNER DIMENSION

If we analyse the essential characteristics of the human being in relation to the rest of the realities which surround him, we cannot deny that the inner self, authentic consciousness, and the freedom they generate, constitute his most proper dimension. If the development of man who is capable of having an inner self, consciousness and freedom is the first goal in the development of a society, it is essential to search deeper into the problem of these dimensions, in the processes which make it possible to find the objectivity in the valuation as the only guarantee of a positive human and social development in the future.

We believe that "moral health", as it is proposed in Dr. Dąbowski's theory, is a verifiable, true and authentic answer for this serious problem as we will show later on. Man actually has in his hands the destiny of humanity, and since the future of our history depends on him, we must deepen his exigencies of authentic development. Morals, ethics and the need for a common agreement over what is better for the whole social community, with respect for the

individual's initiative and creativity in so far as it also respects the needs and possibilities of others, is a difficult task to achieve.

If we consider the need for liberty (freedom) and the necessary limits that the liberty of others presents to it, we approach almost a paradox, something of a contradiction that puzzles the mind and amazes the intellect. Considering the problem of proper human dimensions: inner self, authentic consciousness and freedom, and the fact that man is the first goal in the development of a society, these are the dimensions that should be studied in order to discover the conditions for reaching real mutual understanding through a growing objectivity of valuation.

As we pointed out at the Second International Conference on the Theory of Positive Disintegration (Montreal 1972), it is necessary to deepen and clarify some basic notions, especially the problem of development and the growing apprehension and assimilation of reality. Development means "the changes in the structure and form of an individual organism, from its origin up to its maturity" (Warren 1964). This concept is different from evolution which means "the series of philogenetic changes in the structure and conduct of an organism" (Warren 1964). Nevertheless, the term "evolution" by itself does not imply any idea of progress or regression. It designates all the transformations that an organism or a society undergoes, independently of knowing whether these transformations are favorable or unfavorable (Lalande 1966).

The transformations due to evolution and development appear to point to a particular direction: "It seems that the history of life is no more than a movement of consciousness veiled by morphology, mainly psychical transformation in which the higher terms on each nerve are recognized each time by a greater range of choice and depending on a better defined center of coordination and consciousness" (Teilhard de Chardin 1959, p. 167).

This process in man is marked by a very clear difference with the previous degrees of consciousness, due to its particular capacity for reflection. "Can we seriously doubt that intelligence is the evolutionary lot proper to man and to man only?", asks Teilhard de Chardin, "...the reflective consciousness makes the difference: the animal knows, but it cannot know that it knows. Therefore, it is denied access to a whole domain of reality in which we can move freely" (Teilhard de Chardin 1959, p. 165).

If evolution is leading towards consciousness, and we imply the inner dimension of being, it is clear that this type of being and particular property that opens a whole domain of reality, must be considered favourable and deserves the greatest attention and interest as a being to be known in the specific dimension that reveals this new horizon of possibilities. Here lies the secret, the capacity and the need for a deep understanding of self and of others, as well as the exigencies of sense and purpose for human personal life and its full individual and social organization. Are scientists approaching the problem of reality correctly?

THE ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF REFLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS AND ITS IMPORTANCE

The tremendous significance of this new type of being can be perceived from the perspective of cosmic evolution, "from the threshold of reflection onwards, we are at what is nothing less than a new form of biological existence" (Teilhard de Chardin 1959, p. 301). The philosophical analysis comes to the same conclusion: "Psychic life is not, by any means, a

supraconfiguration of corporeal life. It does not admit in itself the organic processes. It does not make them an integral part of itself" (Hartmann 1954, p. 172). In the desire to be coherent with larger ideological systems, there is a tendency to state the ultimate nature of reality with a rather aprioristic attitude: "There is... no reason to oppose the psyche as such, as the specific activity of matter in its higher stage of development to the material activity taken as a whole...The psyche and the physical phenomena as such, as elements of a series of properties or manifestation of the material world, cannot be opposed to each other" (Rubinstein 1963, p. 294).

According to Rubinstein, the more general laws of the spheres of being which are at an "inferior" level, extend their action to all the spheres situated on "superior" levels, without being an obstacle to the existence of specific laws for these spheres (Rubinstein 1963, p. 295). This statement cannot be quite accepted if it true that "all the categories of the inorganic world do penetrate in the realm of the organic being, even though many of them only develop a completely subordinated role", as Nicolai Hartmann's deep phenomenological analysis demonstrates. "There is a particular level (ontological) where the penetration of the categories comes to an end. This level is precisely in the limits that divide the organic from the psychic. What happens here is different from what happened in the inferior limits that separate the physical from the organic world" (Hartmann 1954, p. 171).

If we consider the specific activities which belong to this new type of being, then one of its essential traits may be considered to be its capacity of reflection, which can be defined as "the power acquired by a consciousness to turn in upon itself, to take possession of itself as of an object endowed with its own particular consistence and value" (Teilhard de Chardin 1959, p. 165) and with the capacity to discover within itself a whole new world of meaningfulness, purpose and evidences that opens a new dimension and sense to man's commitment. If we disregard its characteristics and ignore the innermost evidence of thought which enlighten these processes and allow them to take place, we may well be losing the best chances to discover an aspect of reality that is quite different from the lower aspects of reality, the less complex, which have been referred to as the "material" world. This new property of being cannot be ignored nor reduced: "the being who is the object of its own reflection, in consequence of that very doubling back upon himself, becomes in a flash able to raise himself into a new sphere". There is a whole universe open to it, "Abstraction, Logic, reasoned choice and inventions, mathematics, art, calculation of space and time, anxieties and dreams of love" (Teilhard de Chardin, p. 165).

In order to intensify the peculiarities of this new type of being, the searcher must recognize that man has a particular situation among all other beings. "He is a living being; but the part of the world that is accessible to him has the organisms as objects". His own body is "given" to him in a two-fold way: subjectively he feels it immediately, as his own, but at the same time he can see and touch it objectively, as other spacial and material objects. If these two ways of being given are considered attentively, one will find that neither of them corresponds to organic life. Properly speaking: "Our knowledge equipment has no organ to grasp life as such. We have a highly differentiated one for the apprehension of things, and, within certain limits, we have also one for our own psychic interiority" (Hartmann 1954, p. 122). Therefore, man's claim of reaching and knowing reality and being must undergo a process of revision.

The effort to reduce the problem, and to close it according to certain patterns of thought that have been proved efficient in relation to the spheres of beings which are immersed in

the categories proper to the physical world, would signify a blindness towards the real exigencies of reality on those levels of beings concerning consciousness and man which interest the searcher, and for which this incomplete interpretation of reality may prove suicidal. Being cannot be reduced to the externally cognizable reality. It would compel to discard the greatest evidence of knowledge and to make real knowledge impossible. Perhaps some of the greatest dangers in the history of thought are those analyses that wish to disregard the very essential aspects of thought, that is, its intelligibility and light, its inner intuitions and evidences. The exigencies of this new type of being who is a fusion of the knower and intuitional inner lights that make this knowledge possible, postulate even further types of being, quite different from the "external" aspects of the knower and very much closer to the "inner" aspects of the knower himself.

The fulfillment of these intuitions seems to be one of the most dynamic needs of consciousness, the type of need inherent to its own and unique kernel of existence and action which is in itself light, meaning, inner lucid intentionality, purpose, decision and realization of freedom in existence, which means love. Thus, the inner evidences of intuitional knowledge presented systematically for the time in an "objective" scientific way in Max Scheler's extraordinary analysis, show a new dimension of knowledge at hand to investigate and deepen its radical richness, incorporating into our available instruments of knowledge a vast realm of experience and of being, especially of that particular being which does not coordinate its constitutional categories with the main characteristics of the physical phenomenon.

This is the trend where evolution seems to be leading the cosmic reality: towards an increase of consciousness; this appears to be the constant urge of all the most serious efforts of thought throughout the history of mankind. Whenever the interpretation of reality is much too partial to either one of the poles of this universe of physical, organic and conscious properties, the balance necessary for further equilibrium and advance and for new discoveries of higher modes of being becomes frustrated. Even the development of humanity may be at stake.

We now face such a phenomenon. The prevalent interpretation of social phenomena and human development tends to dismiss all inner evidences from its range. The need for objective knowledge is in danger of closing the very sources of its lucidity and may lead to the absurdity of treating "scientifically", in an "external" way, a reality that has an inner "incommensurable" dimension which is precisely its highest richness, which may manifest one of its powers through objective external knowledge, but does not exhaust itself in it. On the contrary, it flourishes in much more powerful and meaningful types of knowledge — the internal objective type of knowledge — without forgetting that it will never exhaust the inner dimension of being, as Kierkegaard saw so clearly: "L'intérieur ne peut être complètement exprimé".

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS AS A CONDITION OF MORAL WELFARE

The most complete scientific approach to a serious study of the development of consciousness and its empirically verifiable levels of psychic functions together with their respective levels of the apprehension of values and the degree of objectivity to each of them, has been thoroughly conducted by Professor Kazimierz Dąbrowski and masterly synthesized in the so-called Theory of Positive Disintegration.

The type of descriptions, evidence and phenomena presented and analysed therein are in

close relation with the descriptions, evidence and phenomena studies by Max Scheler, Nicolai Hartmann, Philipp Lersch, Edouard Spranger, Karl Jaspers, and present many coincidences which confirm the precision of the analysis. If the philosophical studies of Scheler, Hartmann and Jaspers coincide with the main outlines of the Theory as regards the confirmation of levels of values and consciousness, the pedagogical approach of Spranger recognized the same need for respect in relation to the inner dimension of the subject and the radical importance of its active participation in the process of the interiorization of values.

Nevertheless, none of them is able to discover the very deep and complex stream of processes experienced by the individual consciousness in its progressive discovery of the higher values, the inner suffering needed to open up vitality into the higher spheres of the spirit and to meaningfulness. At this point, the phenomenological analysis of Philipp Lersch mentions that: "...it is precisely through suffering, through pain, where life experiences alteration, is it possible to open a way towards the spiritual dimension" (Lersch 1966, p. 199).

Consciousness opens a new dimension of being: "The animal nature in man is confronted by a value in him which is superior to animality, it begins with consciousness which reaches the depth of the subject, out of which arises the fullness of experience, in so far as it is not conditioned from outside" (Hartman 1963, p. 13). In fact, in the first levels of consciousness, according to Dąbrowski, this "independence from outside" is not yet achieved. Primitive integration and unilevel disintegration are only considered in relation to the first two factors named in the theory – the "first factor" and the environmental or "second factor". Only if the developmental potential of the individual is sufficient, he may reach the third level, that is the "multilevel spontaneous disintegration" where the dynamism of autonomous development begins to appear, and a search for a better understanding and comprehension of the world, of others and of himself. This type of autonomic dynamism is called the "third factor" and is proper for accelerated or autonomous development.

It is at this point that the capacity for objective valuation starts shaping itself and perfects itself at the IV and V levels of development. The objectivity of valuation becomes then a reality. What does that mean? In the first two levels, valuation refers itself only to the individual and is therefore "subjective". Agreement between different individuals is a matter of chance, or of personal interests. There is no possibility of sincerely reaching the same viewpoints since there will be no common reference. Once the individual enters multilevel disintegration, his capacity for objective moral judgement becomes more and more consistent and accurate, and it is possible that he may arrive at the apprehension of higher values, those that are beyond personal considerations and carry within themselves the positive essential directions for growing lucidity, deeper understanding and a wider grasp of multilevel reality. The new sphere of reality that opens itself to consciousness gives to it the inner dimension of reality. This reality is only accessible to higher levels of mental global development.

The greater or lesser degree of objectivity in value judgements will be in direct relation with the higher level of emotional and instinctive functions, whose empirical verification may be realized with the empirical criteria, given by the Theory of Positive Disintegration, for the distinction between primitive and higher emotional and instinctive functions (Dąbrowski 1972, pp. 111-112). It is only at these higher levels of development of mental functions that an individual consciousness may be able to thoroughly understand, assimilate and stand for the universal, superior, objective values. The latter are the only ones that are able to

incorporate in a coherent context all the essential higher aspirations of man, with the greatest respect for individual freedom and even with the superior strength of being the fundamental conditions for the further development of this freedom in the only way in which it can grow: through the consolidation of autonomous dynamisms of the inner psychic milieu that are able to integrate higher levels of empathy, inner psychic transformation, responsibility towards oneself and towards others, in the authentic conquest of the personality ideal that will be, at its highest level, in the service of society.

Any other trend of the evolution of consciousness, outside the one where the autonomous dynamisms are capable of growing with the other higher level dynamisms of the inner psychic milieu, (and with the capacity of attaining the authentic global realization of the personality ideal, at the highest service of others and of human society as a whole) will eventually lead to the destruction of that same liberty. The only guarantee for individual freedom, respect and work for the benefit of self, society and humanity, is a capacity to develop the higher levels of consciousness that enable to reach the objective hierarchy of values. Thus we may reach the conclusion that if freedom and consciousness are the specific capacities of man, then in order to obtain their real accomplishment, there is a great need to cultivate and look for the ways in which society may help its members to obtain, authentically, higher levels in the development of consciousness that will ensure the optimal functioning of society and the future coexistence of nations.

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