
MODELLING THE PERSONALITY

THE TRAINER'S DILEMMA

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Abstract

The Orthodoxy is a source of knowledge very little valued and exploited by the humanistic sciences. In general, for the modern pedagogue and experimental psychologist, a speech about man that starts from God could lead to misunderstanding and suspiciousness, or even hostility due to the fact that such a subject is tackled without following the objective and scientific path. If we really want to understand the human being in order to model and to transform it - the eastern Christian thinkers suggest a sure source to start with, which is not a method, but a Person, is Somebody and not something, is a vivid and perpetual current model. The conscience of a personal God and of the communion with Him through which one can become a person in the thorough meaning of the word (more than the psychological meaning) is something that overcomes an so-called trump-card in the educator's professional training who merely helps his disciples in the searching of their own identity which could withstand depersonalisation - this psycho-spiritual noteworthy effect of the modern world.

Thus the philosophy of the eastern spiritual *paideic* act that value the beginning (birth) and the end (death) of the human being (ignored by humanistic sciences) allows the revealing of a deeper sense of life in this world, a sense which any educator should not ignore, but on the contrary he should incite his disciples towards a personal search of it.

Keywords: spirituality, person and trainer

1. Another meaning of the person

The Orthodox Tradition is a source of knowledge and spiritual experience very little valued and exploited by the humanistic sciences (mainly by psychology and pedagogy), especially in the fields of the human personality's knowing and modelling. The reasons that can be tackled to justify the low interest for this Christian subject, as for instance: the lack of scientific validity of the data, the difficulty in scientifically defining some behaviours that are linked to the inner life of the human being, the difficulty in understanding the writings in this area, etc. – are not sufficient arguments for accepting or questioning data that can be highly used by experts. Several aspects that trainer should consider –

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those that can define the identity of the human being and those that are related to the knowledge of the soul - make from pedagogy an area that can be enlarged, and from psychology a science that can accept another view for the human being, being aware in the same time by its limits (recognized by some psychologists as well): "How much from the real psychology of the human being can be noticed from measurable facts and numbers? One who enters deeper in the essence of psychology, and asks more from psychology as a science - meaning that psychology should not be restricted to the methodological limits of the natural sciences - should realize that nowhere and never will he or she succeed with an experimental method in explaining the essence of the human soul, nor in designing an accurate image of the complicated soul phenomenon." [1]

Reading and analysing writings in this area reveal another aspects of psychology [2]. These aspects, even if they do not follow a very scientific path, they accurately describe the inner human life. The psychology as a science will never be able to argue, being limited by its scientific method, as Young emphasized as well [1]. Far away from only containing simple psychological reflections, the above mentioned texts prove a high power of penetration in the intimacy of human being, knowledge where one cannot aim without a *substantial help*, which was the revelation about man given by God, who became man. The Logos - in the Orthodox Christian conception - will explain to people what is man as man and can find meaning only in connection with God. Therefore, "the complexity of the body, of the thinking, of the emotions, will prove that man was endowed with these qualities, not for trembling while facing life and death, but to fulfil his mission." [3]

For the modern educator, and the experimental psychologist, a speech about man that starts from God may lead not only to misunderstandings but to hostilities as well. "If we start from God in a conceptualised way, it is obvious that the deduction about man are rather frustrations, the modern man – being sensitive to his own autonomy and liberty – will strongly react and will prefer to use instead one of his limited models". [4] The thinkers of the Eastern spirituality will propose another way of beginning. How? In the Orthodox Tradition and for those who know it not only as a doctrine but as a living experience, God is Something alive, a Person that stay in touch with its creation, who is present in a hidden way giving the man the liberty of choice: to ignore Him or to accept Him.

Only through this personal relationship with a personal God, who has in the same time unknown heights and depths, an authentic knowledge of man could be reached. This knowledge sums all perspectives, which are partially exaggerated by sciences such as: biology, physiology, psychology and sociology. The characteristic of the man to be a person, is founded on the personal character of Divinity, that includes and surpasses the psychologist understanding of the person concept (that defines the man, being aware of his own character traits, of his liberty and possibility of self determination). The authors in this thinking space propose a richer understanding of the word

“person”, the man revealing himself as a whole person in a spiritual way just when he lives and is aware of the fact that the divine reality is the most intimate presence in his life and existence.

Vladimir Lossky, developing the concept of “person” in the Eastern Tradition showed up that the psychological concept of “person” is insufficient when it is related to the spiritual level, which in the mentioned tradition, will generate a true theology and philosophy of the person: “By characterizing a person through traits that are common to other subjects, we finally understand that what is more important in a person, what makes to be itself, remains undefined, because nothing is in the human nature that will belong to the person, is always unique and incomparable. The determined man, acting through his nature, in the virtue of his own natural traits, through his own character, is the less personal”. [5]

The above quoted text does not try to deny the value of the character as a central dimension of personality, but to emphasize another sense of the “person” concept, the spiritual one which reveals itself in communion with Him who makes it clear in man. The deeper quality of being personal - associated to the *Face* of God in man (“To make man according to our *Face* and *Alikeness*” – Genesis 1:26) – makes the man a human being extremely complex, whose personality with a coordinated and integrated structure named EGO does not entirely include what is more intimate and personal of a subject. What defines man in itself, “one’s own” escapes from any methodological approach to define it, if this is not searched and understood in connection with The Person who put it in him, who will remain closer than he will ever be able to be to itself.

2. Another trainer’s ‘face’

The paradox character of the human being - to be in the same time known and unknown - represents the likeness with God: “God is transcendent for me and I myself I am transcendent in the same way. God is hidden for me and I am hidden for myself in the same way. There is a *Deus absconditus* and there is a *homo absconditus*... The later proves the profound origins of man and thus there has to be a negative anthropology, which aims to the man’s mystery included in the person mystery [6]. Therefore the perspective of modelling the personality is not diminished or blocked, but in contrast it gains through the awareness of the vertical dimension on which the modelling of the personality should go, the spiritual one. In the actual Romanian educational context, at the practical level, the educational act has difficulties especially in the relation between instruction and training (this fact being determined by the conflict and tension between the two roles of the professor: that of being an instructor which transmits knowledge and that of being an educator interested in the modelling of the personality). In this context, I believe that the teaching and spiritual experience offered by the Eastern Christian Orthodoxy, are becoming valuable mostly in the activity of training the trainers.

It is known that the measure in which the two roles are combined may have multiple consequences in the educational act; the lack of equilibrium can highly affect the teacher-pupil relationship, which has a great impact on learning. Often, the teacher remains only a source of information, formalized in the relationship with the beneficiaries of education. Therefore for a dynamic, formative, valued education, but also centred on person, that takes into consideration the problems of the contemporary world, there will be necessary a thorough attention on training the trainers. Such an education from the humanistic perspective – specific to the Eastern Christian spirituality and partially to the humanist-existential therapies - is a matter that belongs not only to the professional training but also to the personal involvement and to self-development. The ideal theoretical model of the trainer taken by the professor will be polished in its personality, a philosophy of the *paideic* act combined with the knowledge of the spiritual trainer's experiences facilitating the optimal combination of the two roles and mainly the overcoming of the simple instructor status.

The profile of the trainer proposed by Orthodoxy – which is somehow similar with the psychological-humanistic one – will emphasis the following aspects:

1. To be a trainer is not merely a task with professional motivations, but with human motivations, which are connected to the personal, moral and spiritual abilities of those who take over the status of trainer.
2. Although the personality modelling act seems a one-way direction at the educational level (from professor to pupil), it is in fact bi-directional meaning that the trainer is trained himself but at another level. The true trainers did not consider that their own personality development ended or reached a sufficient level that would determine them to avoid this aspect. Maybe here is the sensitive point of being a trainer. The educator, who considers that he is done with his self-improvement and works only to educate the others, will limit himself in the educational process.
3. None of the true trainers will ever consider themselves as an accomplished model, but on the contrary they will show a permanent search, inspiring the others according to their level of development. Therefore we speak about trainers as 'transformational models', even if in their own consciousness they occur as static ones. A model will never become a standard - even if the model looks broad - but he/she will get adjusted to the personalized reality of everybody.

All these things describe a philosophy of the *paideic* act that any trainer should have in mind, mainly because this is a good time for knowing the human dimension, the diversity and uniqueness of persons, the limits and the unknown resources that can astonish anyone. The relationship with a vivid model, whose presence is occurring not only through his or her theoretical concepts and practical methods, but also through his personality, better emphasizes the former traits. The trainer, who manages to impose himself through his personality without wanting this in an obvious way, has found in himself unknown

resources, because the one who looks deeply in his soul will surely meet God there [7]. This is the reason why the eastern spiritual Fathers were persons who attracted people through their way of being and this had the greatest impact on their disciples transforming them.

3. Conclusions

Thoroughly considering the above models, the future trainers can acquire qualities which will motivate pupils, they can develop informal relations, raise consciences and the sensitivity for value, provide trust and enthusiasm, on the way of professional and personal evolution. The conception of the teacher-pupil-school relation as a dynamic and vivid one can be a real fact only when the teacher will efficiently combine the two hypostases. This will allow him to conduct not only through his/her theoretical methods and concepts but through his/her personality as well, that will be perceived as one that rises the value of the didactic act, of the relation and of the educational partners.

References

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