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CONTEMPORARY MORAL CRISIS?

František Krejčí replies in 1922 to all those proclaiming pessimism in connection with the development of science and technics:

"I don't believe in this decline. There has always been immorality side by side with morality ... Things are not as they should be but they are not any worse than in former times either; otherwise we should have to accept the principle of decadence instead of the principle of development. We need not fear that ... The decline in morality had been lamented before; this decline, however, existed in certain strata of society only ... He who compares can see the progress and the victory of moral ideas in the whole history of the human race, including the contemporary period."[1]

We are not going to give up this optimistic and hopeful outlook, notwithstanding the great memento of the Second World War. On the other hand we must not overlook a few circumstances which are being brought out more clearly with the lapse of time.

The ever increasing number of the population of the globe accompanied by a simultaneous improvement in the means of transport and in mass communication media have lead to the formation of compact social units intensively unified in social and economic aspects. There's another fact to consider: although the world is politically divided, the outlook and opinions and needs of the masses of people tend to become unified. Psychological differences even between geographically distant people grow less important. The pursuit of the ever higher living standard, motorism, modern eroticism, the latest fashion, all this brings together the American and the European, the inhabitant of northern and southern hemispheres.

With the growing conformity and similarity among individuals as well as among whole groups there develop conditions for both the mutual understanding and for an induction of socially harmful influence. The potential moral vacuum can now spread to vast units. The "isolated

social strata" of previous epochs had not been affected by such widespread moral crises. The more urgent is now the need to do a bit of hard thinking over the moral structure of the present times and to ponder on the way in which education may become more effective.

TWO ETHIC CONCEPTIONS

When examining ethical systems as to the process of psychological obligation as formulated in the past centuries, two basic poles can be established. They are theoretically antagonistic but in practise — owing to the inconsistence of most people who are not professional philosophers — there are numerous transitions between the two extremes.

The first type is usually called immanent, positivistic, materialistic, natural, while the other type is named transcendental, supernatural, idealistic.

(1) Transcendental ethics derives its moral principles from the reality standing above the man. The principles are eternal, absolute, man can perhaps discover or successively learn them but never create them. Aby discussion of these moral principles is out of question, the principles just require strict obeyance. This transcendental viewpoint can be found in many thinkers, from Socrates to our days, but a representative system of this type is met in Kant[2, 3] only.

(2) Immanent ethics derives its moral principles from human experience and convention, underlining the extreme relativity of the morale, its dependence on situation, individual dispositions and the like. Ethos becomes the subject of a democratic discussion. From the innumerable thinkers of this type lets us single out at least Democritos, who, at the dawn of European civilization, demands the morality to be independent from metaphysical preconceptions, David Hume[4] deriving morality from social usefulness, and marxist ethicians with their confidence in the almost unlimited power of the changed surroundings exerted on the moral consciousness of the people.

Psychological observation brings quite a lot of evidence that the trans-conception. That's why there can be observed in marxism an emphasis on the morally binding authority of the Party, which for an individual member becomes an equivalent of the transcendental factor of the non-empirical ethical systems.

For a great number of modern people, however, as an outcome of the general relativity of values, it's the feeling of variability, instability and questionability of moral principles that prevail, plus the acceptance of the personal benefit or the benefit of the family or another narrow social group as a principle of guidance in one's behaviour.

While the society puts restraint on the individual because of the growing social ties of the individual, the latter develops various forms of self protection and protest, often dictated by the excessive stress of the state organization and by the individual's egoism as well. The uniformity of the style of life and the technical achievements does not necessarily mean

a uniformity in moral efforts. Transcendental, aprioristic ethics, which could help here, in our opinion loses its influence and instrumentality (this being an era of science), wheras empirical ethics, on the other hand, fails to reach a wide enough spectrum.

DYNAMIC STRUCTURE OF ETHOS

The life in the social "macrocosm" and "microcosm" of the personality depends on mutual equilibrium of regulated and regulating factors of the influence. The hierarchy of various levels of "management" belongs to the same general sphere as does the existence of eternal struggle and unification of contrasts.

In this general connection mention should be made of Freud's principle of reality according to which reality is gratified and at the same time restrained by libido. The basic correctness of Freud's observation is beyond doubt, the directing sphere of the superego is first closely connected with parental experience, then with experience achieved with various single types of authority and finally with the authority of the society in the widest sense of the world. The primordial parental relation is, however, just a section of the social spectrum surrounding the personality. Ethical problems are the problems of interhuman relations: the presence of the other people is necessary for any form of human existence, yet at the same time it exerts restraint on man. J. P. Sartre in his drama "A huis clos" formulated merely the negative half of this dependence in his aphorism: "Hell is the others". We believe that the limiting and regulating influence of the society as summed up in the superego keeps its restraining function but the experience "homo homini lupus" depends on the social structure and the ethos of the individual. Restraints of oneself by a moral authority need not produce disagreable sensations, which is corroborated by the well-known psychological fact of "moral satisfaction".

The phrase merely states that the possibility of satisfaction may originate from moral sources, too. An ingeniously and logically unified system of ethics built up on the consideration of the welfare of the society or the benefit of an individual as a member of the society may lead to understanding and rational assent with the logical correctness but this does not guarantee personal obligation as Kant's simple "du sollst" does. It is an empirical fact that an individual may and does draw his benefit at the cost of the society. This may produce another egoistic or solipsist though no less logically ingenious succession of thoughts. Ethos becomes effective only when the man acknowledges the existence of the law above him. Is there any real truth behind the constantly denied and yet ever recurring feeling that the ethical stands above the individual? Is a standpoint like this acceptable for the scientifically reasoning modern

When outlining the two ethical conceptions we have passed over the fact that current practical ethics is inconsistent in the sense of the abstraction "transcendence — immanence". The deeper causes of moral

motives cannot be corroborated by reason, which is in agreement with the tenet that thinking does not create motives, it just classifies and clarifies them and puts them in interrelations.

In some individuals (probably through the influence of the structure of their characters) the realization of the obligatory force of superegoistic aims has a decisive power (e.g. sacrificing the interests of the family to the welfare of the mankind to come, or leaving one's family for the kingdom of God in the New Testament). But this a rather exceptional ethical ideal, not the kind of motivation to be often met in practise. In the psychology of the daily life rather an apposite trend is to be seen, namely the sacrificing of distant or superegoist goals to family and personal interests. The secondary quality of superegoist motivations results also from the doubts whether the required sacrifice may not be in vain, whether it will not be misused: the control of similar goals is usually outside the sphere of the individuals power, and frequent reversals of values have strengthened the mistrust of them. A normal man is always more excited by the news of his child having attracted measles than by a piece of news of hundreds of unknown people being struck by an earthquake. That accounts for our reserved attitude to the views of D. Riesman, B. Stokvis, and M. Pflanz,[5] claiming that the type "der außengeleitete Mensch" is on the increase. According to them sensitive perception of one's surroundings produces the altruisation of the man. The authors have established this type especially among the teenagers of big European and North American cities. Yet even here the immediate "face to face situation" plays a great role.

The effectiveness of moral motivations is mostly due to the feeling of proximity to other people. "... the main cause of the non-altruistic relations among people is the fact that they do not know each other and therefore mistrust one another."[6] Man must first be exposed to another man before his ethical motivation becomes effective. All this bears out the theory that moral attitudes are in the long run based on instinct, as it has been systematically concluded e.g. by K. Leonhard[7] in his treatment of social instincts.

The factor of the irrational, the experience of the superegoist motivation, of the unconscious pressure which in the sphere of consciousness becomes an object of deciding in between various motives, have their source in instincts. Thus it is no gnoseological transcendence towards the "world of phenomena", it is a case of psychological transcendence toward the sphere of the "rational".

Thus we are not primarily concerned in the technique of instruction and moral enlightenment but in seeking a way of how to appeal to social instincts. How to reveal man to his fellow-man. We know that big social formations require higher morale outreaching the sphere of immediate sympathy and identification, the require the awakening of responsibility and the sense of duty within the most general framework of human community.

EDUCATIONAL EXPLOITATION OF MORENO'S THEORY OF THE ROLE

As we cannot sufficiently rely on any logical way of acceptance of moral clues, other means of instigating moral motivation must be sought than mere reasoning or propaganda work.

The process of moral education is fundamentally a process of evocation and channelization of instincts by means of a differentiation of the competence of one's own role as against the role of other people.

Are there any efficient media available at the present time which could bring knowledge of this kind to large groups of mankind? This role has been assumed by radio, television, film and theatre. The spectator's experience comes from the process of identification, projection and introjection and thus brings together his own and other people's roles, no matter how distant in space, in social background or in psychology may these "strange people" be. That's the way the drama performs its function.

A work of art intends (we wont go into the question of good and bad works of art) to brings nearer to us the world of virtue and generosity as well as the world of cynicism and amoral attitude. As a result of the ever growing differentiation of cultural regions modern art lacks the ethical-artistic unity of the ancient epos or the Greek tragedy.

If I make a rapprochement with the inner world of a murderer or a sadist I begin to understand him psychologically and when I want to judge his deeds from the standpoint of the good or the bad I must divide myself into two parties, the prosecuting and the defending. This is not by any means so easy. Because of frequent performances of psychological dissections of human wickedness by mass communication media,[8, 9] the boundary between the good and the evil is tending to get blurred and more and more relative. Thus no ethical effect can be eo ipso expected from the most graphic and widespread branches of art — and it is by no means certain that we may reproach the artist on that account. Modern art does not create the morale, it only presupposes it. Nevertheless dramatic art keeps powerful educational potentiality, which wos seized upon by St. Ignacius of Loyola, who put the theatre at the disposal of the Counterreformation.[10]

MORENO'S PSYCHODRAMA, SOCIODRAMA AND THE PRINCIPLE OF EXCHANGES OF ROLES

The tradition of the clasical theatre where the possibility of identification is simultaneously regulated by the chorus, i.e. by the voice of the socially binding consciousness, has been renewed in a sociotherapeutic sense by J. L. Moreno.[11, 12] The chorus is represented by a psychodramatic team with its provoking, helpful and directing functions. The three steps between the functions of the director, the alter ego and the auxiliary ego form a transition to the audience. The psychodrama enables its participants not only a passive participation as does the film and the theatre in the traditional sense, it enables them to take part in it actively,

because of the high permeability of the audience and the stage. The psychodrama brings a real possibility of the dramatic confrontation of the inner world of the individual with the social world and leads thus to the knowledge of cohesis and hierarchy of roles including the hierarchy of regulating, i.e. moral clues. A certain amount of suggestive atmosphere must be present in the psychodrama — and without this atmosphere it cannot be effective — but the main contribution of the psychodrama should be seen in the opportunity it gives for interpersonal activity in the mimic-gesticulatory dimension, in which the fictitious (the performed, the personified) and the real (represented) situations merge. In the planned manipulation with the fictitious and real situations, with the suggestive and the rationally analysing approaches we see the basis of the effects of the psychodrama. The sociodrama can then follow on the instinctive interest in ethical evaluation, the educational importance of which has been pointed by Kant[13] and interpreted by L. Leonhard as the instinct of justice.

The psychodrama thus represents an original medium of education of social instincts and an elaboration of the sensitiveness of moral assesments. In this respect the technique of an interchange of roles is of special value; it has been borne out by the experience shared by many therapeutists and pedagogues.[14, 15] The natural function of a role exchange in the child's mental development has been pointed out by J. L. Moreno.[16]

The psychodrama does not claim the mass effectivness of the sound radio or television. It can, however, make itself felt on a wide scale in school education, in specialised education, and of course in rehabilitation pedagogics and psychotherapy. It can exert a wide influence on the public through the exploitation of film and TV techniques.

Naturally we do not regard the psychodrama as an "ethical panaceum". In our opinion, it does provide, however, a chance to bring about the meeting of man with another man and it represents an effective appeal to the social ethos, an opportunity which should not be dismissed during the modern search for methods of mass education.

Translated Peprník

REMARKS

[1] F. K r e j č í, *Positivní etika, Praha 1922.*
[2] I. K a n t, *Kritika praktického rozumu, Praha 1944.*
[3] I. K a n t, *Základy k metafysice mravů, Praha 1910.*
[4] D. H u m e, *Zkoumání o zásadách mravnosti, Praha 1899.*
[5] B. S t o k v i s, M. P f l a n z, *Suggestion, Stuttgart 1961.*
[6] *Comp. 1.*
[7] K. L e o n h a r d, *Biologische Psychologie, Leipzig 1961.*
[8] F. W e r t h a m, *The scientific study of mass media effects, Am. J. Psych., 1962, 4, 306—311.*
[9] H. G r i m m, *Eine statistische Betrachtung über Kinder und Jugendliche als Gegenstand von Pressemeldungen über sexuelle Delikte, Ärtzliche Jugenkunde, 1961, 81—84.*
[10] *Československá vlastivěda, VIII — Umění, Praha 1935.*
[11] J. L. M o r e n o, *Gruppenpsychotherapie und Psychodrama, Stuttgart 1959.*

[12] J. L. M o r e n o, *Psychodrama, in American Handbook of Psychiatry, N. Y. 1959, 1375—1396.*

[13] *Comp. 2.*

[14] S. L e b o v i c i, *L'utilisation du psychodrame dans le diagnostic en Psychiatrie, Ztschf. Diagn. Psychol. Persönlichkeitforsch., Vol. V, 1957, 3—4, 197—205.*

[15] H. Š i r o k ý, *Diagnostické aspekty psychodramatu, Čs. psychologie, 1962, 2, 154 to 165.*

[16] *Comp. 11.*

[17] K. K r e j č í, *Svoboda vůle a mravnost, Praha 1910.*

[18] W. K e m p e r, *Psychoanalyse und Gruppen-Psychotherapie, Ztschf. Psychoth. Med. Psychol., 1959, 4, 126—133.*

PSYCHODRAMA JAKO MODERNÍ PROSTŘEDEK MRAVNÍ VÝCHOVY

Postupující individuální i skupinová kulturně psychologická unifikace, resp. uniformace moderních lidí v důsledku rozvoje techniky a masových sdělovacích prostředků, připravuje vytvoření jednotné celosvětové duchovní atmosféry, v níž mravní úspěchy i krize nezůstanou omezeny na izolované areály, jak tomu bylo v minulých dobách. Těsné sepětí lidstva nárokuje vyšší typ mravního vědomí. Zdá se, že moderní člověk přijímá snáze empirické nežli transcendentní morální principy. Budování etiky na rozumovém apelu a agitaci nemá účinnost „kategorického imperativu". Jak spojit závaznost transcendentního elementu s myšlenkovým světem moderního člověka, který je zbaven magie? Metafyzickou transcendenci nelze udržet; je však držitelná „transcendence psychologická". Základ etosu je v nevědomí, v instinktech. Výchovná praxe musí tedy hledat cestu k člověku především branami apelu na smysly, instinkty. Domníváme se, že tomuto požadavku odpovídá drama, zejména ve formě psychodramatu. Morenova koncepce rolí usnadňuje pochopení dynamiky výchovného procesu. Člověk je exponován jinému člověku, potkává se sám se sebou v jiných lidech, lidé se setkávají ve svých radostech, touhách i bolestech a uvědomují si svou pospolitost, která je kořenem morálky.