

Levels in the construction of the moral personality

Daniela Jeder

“Ștefan cel Mare” University Suceava (Romania)

Suceava, Romania

e-mail: danielajeder@yahoo.com

Abstract - Placing the analyses in an interdisciplinary manner, the present paper follows to catch and value, from a moral-formative perspective, the interpretations of the ethical theories regarding the evolutions in a moral plan, in order to build a structural model of the morality development levels, with all the complex and dynamic components that this one transmits.

We have proposed that this should have as final purpose the transfer and focalization of this data over the significant space of forming the human being as a moral, autonomous and responsible personality, by offering, we hope, in the terms in of efficiency, a rich space, a more complete and operational form about the levels of morality and moral education.

Keywords: *levels of morality, levels of personality structure, behavioral sciences, education.*

I. INTRODUCTION

If the future is deciphered also through the moral level that we define ourselves, we consider that each of us should assume the responsibility of the way in which he is preoccupied to exceed his own moral levels. The education is mostly very responsible for the step that defines the educated morality, of the community, of the society and a re-thinking, a re-structuring and direction of the moral education on different levels is, we think, a way of responding to the challenges of today and tomorrow's world.

To reflect upon the morality by level adjustment, means to see the individual from the perspective of development and of its moral faultlessness, of accession to perfection. We can also say that the human being, in his moral essence, receives value and sense, takes shape of an exemplary, by acknowledging the fact that the norms, the values, the moral ideals exist only to be always exceeded. The temptation of affirmation and completion, expressed in the plan of morality, is associated inevitable with a series of questions and problems regarding the moral levels and the morality levels that every aspiring subject to perfection should attend.

II. LEVEL OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

If in the general treatment of the morality levels problem, we find out often about some examinations taken

by the great authors of the ethical thinking, the references almost missing, when the education treaties approach the problems of moral education. As a matter of fact, the disjunctions between the ethical thinking and the moral pedagogical one are observed also in the fact that the concept of level of moral development misses, and this way, there aren't any concordances between the scientific concepts used by the moralists and those used by educationalists.

Leaving from the acknowledgement that the sciences usually make use of the complex of synonymous terms: *stage, period, phase, cycle*, as diverse classifying instrument, I have chosen to use the *concept of level* (of morality) that expresses and promotes *the qualitative sense of moral becoming, of ascension by virtue or in virtue*, with the justification that it has a force of superior expression that favours the replenishment of the development picture in the moral plan.

The concept of *morality level* expresses, as proper meaning for morality, *the dimension of verticality, the qualitative sense of moral becoming* of the human being, of the communities, of the institutions etc., a sense underlined by *the ascending trajectory* of this becoming, *a spiritual ascension, in soul, in behaviour and through behaviour* that offers reality and confirmation.

The essay of clarification and revaluation of the ethical terms, wants to be an answer to the need of comprehension and operation that is more and more needed on the level of ethics and of pedagogical sciences.

The analysis is focused of the *levels of morality* not of *moral*: if in the moral plan, the levels come as moments of qualitative leap, of turning point, on great periods, synthesized in concepts and principles etc., the morality levels are born because of the moral formative process of ascension by the virtue of people and indicates, in fact, the dimension of verticality, of over exceeding, the tendency to move towards the superior and dense areas of spirituality, always discovered by creativity.

The theory of morality levels takes into account the ascensions and also the fall; the decline eras, of accentuating the sufferance because of different forms of evil have generated and conditioned the development of moral conscience that, on the other side, knows some crystallization in the conditions of progress eras, of moral equilibrium.

Thus we identify ascending and descending levels, which can support on the distinctions between the false

ascending – the pride and “descending” that ascends – the humbleness. Oriented by the Aristotle ethics and also by the church parents, Saint Grigorie de Nyssa adapts the virtue thesis, as a way between two extremes of the evil upon the requests of the Christian conception, when it says that... “all the evil is made by anything that is under virtue, or by anything that “falls” on it” [1]. We can observe that in contrast with Aristotle, for whom the extreme virtues could be collateral “a too much” or “too little” expresses in definition some quantitative criteria, where the superiority isn’t in a moral way a qualitative one. Only the examples given by Aristotle give the explanation in the plan of the ethic. Gregorian de Nyssa regards the extremes in vertical optics in the sense that the evil could be located either “under virtue”, or “by something that “falls” upon it”, evidently in an arbitrary way, by the evil power or by the abusive power used by the individual. But, in the second case, the sin “falls”, even if it’s submitted, by abuse, above the virtue.

It doesn’t mean that Aristotle didn’t affirm the idea of the virtue with the ethical understanding of superiority in relation to the evil’s extremes, even if the language is quantitative. In essence, the evil is all that is “too much” or “too little” especially that these kinds of determinants have frequent confirmations with immoral consequences of the descending against the ascending in dignity. But, the Christian Ethics sees explicitly the superiority of the virtue in its moral purity. Gregorie de Nyssa takes the example of manhood, by explaining also its extremes: “the cowardice means the lack of virtue, but the foolish boldness is the “fall” on it. And the virtue is something of both and is seen in the middle between the evil parts on the sides”[ibid].

This antonymic analysis by the definition of virtue comprises also the report between pride and humbleness. Gregorie de Nyssa ascertains that “Holy Writ teaches us that the fall under earth is the end of the ascending through pride”, declaring that “someone... that didn’t mistake by showing the being of pride as a down ascent”. It is in fact, the antinomy “ascent-fall in the interior of the same behaviour, that of pride. It’s a false ascent, that probably the more is growing the more is changing, in the same measure, into a fall and into morale depreciation. But, in Christian spirit, the great theologian opposes to this pride, the humbleness that means, backwards the fall that ascends. Because, meanwhile the pride decays by the fact that... “ Those that have risen themselves over the others, have depressed somewhere down...”, the pride becoming “... the deepest fall”, the humbleness as humility rises, because “it always teaches to judge” [ibid.] and also the following; it is also the condition of wisdom which is able to measure the good in relation with the future.

The ethical perspective of the levels of the religiousness that expresses the Christian moral virtue as the ascent by thinking and facts, the continuous completion of the believer, his closeness to divinity, clarifies and completes with new understandings the approached problematic. The virtue superiority is expressed in its moral purity. The steps towards the completion of moral religious life, as we have met at Gregorie de Nyssa, Origene, Ioan Scăraru etc.

suggests us some models of moral Christian ascending and we find them with understandings of morality levels.

III. LEVELS OF MENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In relation to other sciences, psychology uses the preferred path of findings. Its theoretical elaboration regarding a theorized level of development is translatable in technical measurements, to show what was "observed", "found", "emerged" at certain moments of development.

However, the data from these measurements are also observations of the levels of responsibility, of human accomplishments and falls. The psychological level of development it’s relevant to the knowledge of the moral level of development, but, vice-versa, the moral life is, in its turn, significant for the understanding of the psychological dynamics that since the dynamic, tense order of the moral values requires alignments also from the order of mental movements.

But the report morality-psychological knowledge supposes graduations even in the hierarchal order of the structural sides of the psyche:

a) the emotional line: impulses, emotions (basic, emotions conditioned by the cultural horizons, of the axiological experiences, etc.) feelings, cultural formations of affection but also of experiences (fueled by experiences from moral situations), passions as higher formations of the soul, focused on essential directions of life and activities specific to man as a distinct being or personality;

b) the development of reason also supposes graduations, but not detached from the affection (but their intermission) : informative thinking, practical, with increasing significance for basic guidelines, then with more extensive areas for behavior, valued thinking (axiological) on the summative criteria of what is good and what is bad ,what is allowed and not allowed (the formation of the sense of measure and distinctions between values), the formation and assertion of the moral reasoning (practical) or of the ethical or moral conscience;

c) will that starts from the voluntary act until it arrives at the good will and the deliberate act all the way through several developmental stages. Naturally, the evolution of the steps through which the development of moral life has to pass, and the whole human being, faces competition not only at different levels among themselves, also with their own internal demands, and with the motivational biases, interests, options, etc.

So that, both the evolution on directions of the mental and moral structure, and the whole one are going through contrary, tense processes, generated and maintained by complex motivations with contradictory orientations and trends. Therefore, the level of morality, from a psychological perspective, it is often the product of the settlement of conflicts, twists and definitive, radical jumps. Confirmed not only by individual psychological and moral dilemmas, but also through spiritual crises, including moral ones (community or collective, group). Hence both

crossings to the next grade or level do not occur easily, by themselves, quietly, but through clashes and sometimes abrupt jumps.

The new level means a jump or a radical turning point, noting the dramatic change, the decisive shift from bad to good. The moral psychology confirms radical phenomena of shift: we deny a harrowing and overwhelmingly past, we change the resentment with the option or even the creation of a new system of personal and moral values of life, the elimination of bad deeds and self-instructing about the new principles of life, breaking with vicious, dangerous relations, and the choice for quality relationships.

The mental levels and also the falls also favor falls of morality, not necessarily explained by the individual's failure to his compromising or vicious lifestyle, but also by decay due to the misses and failures, disappointments, betrayals, depletions of energy: indifference, lack of trust in collaboration with exaggerated suspicions and hesitations etc. At the macro levels, the new transformations occur after big spiritual psychological crisis, moral and other of companies.

In conclusion, the levels of moral life, without being considered a copy or a transcription of the levels of psychic life are, however, dependent on them, the mental levels are a kind of infrastructure of the levels of moral life. Here we tried to make a draft which stimulates future searches at deeper and more systematic levels, but also more ample ones.

IV. FROM INFRAMORALITY TO MORAL CREATIVITY

From our investigations it is especially concentrated over the ethical literature with the purpose to discover the extension and the deepness of the approaches over the problem of the morality development. We owe this to the ethics, R. Le Senne - *Traité de morale générale*[2] E. Dupréel - *Traité de Morale* [3], Ivan Gobry- *Les niveaux de la vie morale*[4], especially, to their significant contributions, that on one side are very similar by the unity of ideas, and on the other side, are different by the accent transfer over some different dimensions of morality and also through the original ways of argumentation and indication of some ethical details in formative purposes.

At Ivan Gobry, the first level that he calls it inframoral is expressed (as at Le Senne and Dupréel) under the form of all impulses, tendencies and moral feelings. In contrast with the others, Gobry suggests that the most important elements of this level could be valued in education.

Referring to the second level we can observe a concordance in what regards its consideration as a nucleus or area of the so-called outlining of morality. If Le Senne calls this level *medium stage*, E. Dupréel considers it to belong to the *existing conscience* and for Ivan Gobry it appears as the *level of moral life*.

The third level is named differently by thinkers: Le Senne, inspired by certain elements of moral theology of

Saints lives, speaks about *the superior level of sanctification*, Dupréel speaks about *moral ideal* and Gobry, inspired by Freud's ideas regarding the Super Ego, names this last level, one of the *supramoral life*.

The interpretations of primary levels – with the impulses, tendencies and inframoral feelings through which they are defined, of the moral levels – expressed by distinct elements- as the responsibility, the merit, the obligation, the duty, the virtue that devote etc., and of the superior levels – with the aspects of completion, have the merit to help to divide, on specific types of valuing, the contributions of the analysed authors.

Once identified in the moral philosophy, the three levels of morality could be valued in structure of the moral education; but we propose in a more ample structure, that could be more determined for the needs of the innovators.

The proposal of a structure on levels of the education is in fact an essay of support and orientation of the formative actions towards some significant aspects: the valuing of inframoral, the construction of elementary moral rules, the orientation towards reciprocity, the character structure, the moral self-adjustment, the superior aspirations and least but not last, the moral creativity:

- *The level of inframoral valuing* – the education receives the inherited background that figures the humanization and exerts over its elements, the orientation, the attenuation and coordination in a different way. If we refer to this level, it seems that Jung's affirmation that "God made us all morally equal" could be contested, taking into consideration the differentiations that are imposed even from the beginning in what concerns the dominants that influence in one way or another the creation of the moral personality.

- *The level of elementary moral rules* – a level that we call it of moral alphabetisation, and it is characterized by rules enunciation, but not in an abstract form, but under the form of guidelines and concrete motivational stimulations, which are differentiated and individualized. At this level, the educative action is developed from behaviour to conscience – moral competencies are formed that will lead the child from a life dominant of instincts and impulses to a life dominant of ideas and reason, passing by different superior levels of morality.

- *The level of orientation towards reciprocity* – designs the exit from the selfishness; at this level is registered a remarkable leap from the self-knowledge towards the other person knowledge, the order being always this one: by knowing yourself, you can find out. From an educational point of view are imposed some explications given to children about the way in which their behaviour affects those around them, a fact that opens a new vision over the world and its rules.

- *The level of character restructuring* – it is the level of the most consistent transformations, evolutions and structuring of the moral personality- it is the level of forming the durable attitudes and of essence of morality.

- *The level of moral self adjustment or the level of moral reliability* - it refers to the formation of the capacity of correcting, of adjustment, of improvement of behaviours

that are based on incorrect judgements from the moral point of view, caused by superficial analysis, rushed by situations, contexts, caused by false connexions that dominate the appearances etc. We consider that we could translate all these by an education focused on forming the responsibility towards the personal moral decisions.

- *The level of superior aspirations* – supposes the adherence to a system of norms and moral high values that represent the reference point of the individual life, and in this sense are created functional models that could stimulate and allow the moral improvement expressed by getting out of inertia, by moral self determination, self management of values, etc. The education is responsible for the way in which the moral actors aspire to efficiency in morality. But this prospective opening supposes more than aspiration, supposes also creativity in a moral plan.

- *The level of moral creativity* – is the level that comprises the whole structure that supposes the formation of a straight personality that has prospective capacities, by anticipating the real chances of becoming and improving. We find out that for the creative level of the moral education is needed a superior educational system that could reject the self-sufficiency, selfish interests, rigidity and limited spirit, the double behaviour or the errors considered as moral truths and also to promote the spontaneity, inspiration, critical spirit etc. [5]

We think that the real morality or the high level superiority must be understood especially as an action of creating the moral values and of participation at the creation of moral laws and norms.

The prospective character of the education imposes as fundamental purpose the anticipation of the changes and implicitly of forming the subjects for changing in the sense of “developing the specific and moral aptitude, consisting in elaborating by them of their own meta-norms” [6] that could reflect new orientations in the life philosophy.

In the trial to accede to a superior level of the creativity in the moral plan, to form productive personalities, live and capable of creation and self-creation, the creator elaborates new models of pedagogical assistance, by directing the students towards the valuing of the contents in the anticipation of unpredictable situations, in understanding the complexity of the problem situations and in resolving them, by simulating the creative imagination, the divergent thinking, by developing the attitudes and creative aptitudes [7]. Each of these levels of the education values the accumulations of the anterior levels and simulates new ones.

The common denominator of most of the behavioral sciences, it’s the asserting of the role of the ranking techniques ON levels of moral development, in shaping a coherent image as a broad recovery of the various dimensions of the personality, in other words, a new morality [8].

We maintain that such an interdisciplinary perspective finds SOME relevance in some important arguments. The hierarchy of the levels of morality [9]:

- it allows a better understanding of the evolution, the progress and the moral development of individuals;

- it offers the opportunity to explain both the dynamics of the general structure of morality and also the characterization of each level and sublevel in part;
- it supports a deeper knowledge by studying the levels, the moral education;
- it supports the use of educational resources in different actions;
- it contributes to the formation of the capacities of moral evaluation and self-evaluation, of the capacities to create moral values, thus to the formation of actual ethical skills and increasing the quality of life [10].

As it is known, the problem of levels derives from the problem of development and progress that involves ancestry. On the other hand, the problem is not unequivocal in a structure: the levels are smaller structures within broader structures and this is what we have called *the macrostructures and microstructures of the levels of morality*.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis focuses on evidence from real life which show that although the path of morality includes several levels, many people go through only some of them, stopping in their evolution at a certain moral level and continuing to use an appropriate moral reasoning to solve various moral issues. Or, the logical and necessary way, progress is still required as a continuous dimension and it can not be made by itself, but it must seek the effort of education and self-education involving several factors and first of all individual active and creative subjectivity .

We believe that the study based on the criteria of level it’s a visionary incentive for higher aspirations, for high performance of the moral personality. In fact, the man gets through these structural models of the levels of morality and moral education, more clear criteria of evolution of his activity towards superior performance of life.

In conclusion, the education for a success level in the moral sphere, as it is that of the moral creativity, is focused on the idea that the world should always be re-evaluated, reinterpreted, re-contextualized, that imposes the need of improving in the spirit of originality, of renewal, of the wish of completion and of implication, of interest for performance, of assuming the risks, of anticipating the future and of creating new rules, norms and values that could define an authentic moral world.

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