

SOCIAL VARIABLES IN THE MORAL EDUCATION FROM THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: The moral-civic conduct represents the externalization, the objectifying of the moral-civic consciousness in acts and actions of various concrete situations in which the child is. One plan covers “the interior” plan, the other one “the exterior” plan of the moral personality. Morality can be sketched, provisionally defined as a *real*, collective and individual phenomenon, comprising both *rules* (principles) that govern the human *relations* and human types of *activities* and all the (subjective and objective) *manifestations* which are made in various degrees and ways into these rules, which assess the collective and individual *appreciations*. (Cățineanu, T., 1982: 60-62)

Specifying the social, extrinsic tasks related to a social order, makes it possible to sighting the location and the status that ethics plays in the social disciplines. Ethics has a dual status, being a theoretical discipline of a philosophical and scientific nature.

Keywords: moral education, curriculum perspective, psychological variables, moral norms

1. The moral subject and the moral conscience

The human being is not born as a moral human being, but he becomes in time, and the manner in which he does it, it essentially depends on education receives it. Moral education aims the internalization of norms, rules, morals and involves not only a cognitive dimension, but also an emotional and practical size, operates in the context of which will occupies he an important role.

First, morality is a social phenomenon, by its genesis, structure and by its historical functions and operation. It appeared when mankind and people appeared and it will last as humanity and people last. Secondly, as a social

phenomenon, moral is driven by the society infrastructure, but it also has a relative autonomy and a specific consistency, as it possesses a structure, components, its own functions and levels. Third, morality is a form of social consciousness. The forms of social consciousness are distinguished according to what they reflect from the existence and how they reflect. Morality exclusively reflects the human relationships and they mainly reflect them through norms and imperatives. Fourth, morality is a practical-spiritual assimilation form of the existence. (Cucoş, C., 2009: 113-114)

The moral subject is the manifestation *agent* with a moral significance of the event, so of the manifestation which has a definite report with norms and it is the subject of the evaluation or the assessment of good -bad criteria. According to the moral subject model, the subject is not in the “center” of the morality, but it is one of its moments. (Pleşu, A., 2010: 14). Like other moments, the subject as a no real agent is not an entity, but a crystallization and a “hub” in a complex network of moral and infra moral relationships. The premature obsession of the “abstract interaction” should be avoided and the “moments” of the interaction or its terms must be bounded. In its abstract use, the “interaction” tells us everything, and it also tells us nothing. But the result of this analysis is not to directly indicate the subject’s position in its moral fact, but to distinguish between individual and collective subject. The moral subject is part of the moral fact as a conscious, distillate subject and also as an agent of action and of relationships that bind them.

The moral conscience is a structured and oriented ideas, representations, feelings, moods, inner attitudes assembly, with respect to what is right or wrong in the human relationships, a whole goal in the moral manifestation. This simple and simplistic definition is just a starting point and a landmark in investigating the phenomenon of such an extraordinary complexity: the general consciousness and the moral conscience in particular. A necessary step in the investigation of the problem is an overview of some models of moral conscience, developed in the history of thought of this theme. The most relevant models which can serve to us both on their positive side, with a reflector value and on their negative, critical side are:

In the collective moral conscience there are the *moral norms* and the *moral assessment*. The support of this consciousness is the collective or anonymous subject, the collectivity being a creative subject and a targeted object by his own creation, or, in other words, it is an agent and a *referent*. In other words, *the moral norms* and *the moral appreciation* are two fundamental levels of the collective moral conscience, which must be analyzed in their mutual correlation, in their correlation with *expression* and other related spheres related to practice or social normativity.

2. Ontological determination of the moral education

The specifics of moral education is determined, on the one hand, by the morality particularities, as a social phenomenon, which gives it content, on the other hand, by the socio-psychological conditions that are involved in its realization. Reporting to the society and to the topic - these are the two indispensable frames of reference of the pedagogical and moral education (Jinga, I., Istrate, E., 2008: 150-151).

Morality, as a social phenomenon, reflects the relationships established between people, in their depiction of real subjects they interact with, in a social context delimited in space and time. From this perspective, it appears as a form of social consciousness, differing from other forms by the reflected subject, by the way in which the reflection and its effect on the object reflected realises. Regarding the object, it is about certain social relations between people appearing in their interaction process. Obviously, not everything related to the extension of social relations and their depth is an object of morals. It is only those relationships that were previously acquired by social consciousness and refers to the interaction between people, as real subjects.

Reflection is not simply capturing events or features, fit to these ratios, it also includes an appreciative note with a regulatory function of human coexistence, stimulating and guiding human behavior consistent with social requirements. Hence the moral normative character of what is required in the form of ideal models of behavior acting externally on humans for the adoption and implementation relations that fall within the moral ideal perimeter promulgated by the society. Moral reflects both concrete manifestations of relations between people as they express in their behavior and their ideal sense, how these relations should be achieved. For an adequate circumscribing of the moral education, we start from the methodological distinction between moral and morality, social (the society moral conscience) and individual (the society individual conscience) moral. The first includes the moral system of the society seen as a whole, while the other - individual morals or morality - is not merely a reflection of the conscience of the individual content that the social moral incumbs. (Mărginean, N., 1973: p. 84)

From this point of view, we believe that social morality has an objective and an ontological basis of moral education. Every educational action undertaken in this regard is reported continuously to this "given" which is both the starting point, giving the content it needs and the arrival point through the criteria for which the assessment purpose and its yield is done. Who provides

the moral education content and on what basis we appreciate its return? The answer to these questions implies a permanent social morality.

Its content is focused on moral ideals, values, norms and moral rules. Taken together, all these components form the moral system. *The moral ideal* is at the heart of any moral system. It reflects what is characteristic and defining for the trend of the behavioral choices of members of a community or society as a whole. It is the axis around which all other elements of the moral system revolve. It is regarded as an image of perfection from a moral point of view, comprising a pattern, a moral quintessence of human personality. By its contents, it appears to us as a prospective model, surpassing the existing reality, without being totally detached by it, offering a field of possibilities and options that employ the human personality into a continuous process of self-improvement. It is, in other words, a foreshadowing of the general sense of behavior depending on social imperatives. (Stoica, S., 1974: 81-84)

Saying that the moral ideal has a prospective nature and involves a field of possibilities, this means that it will not ever achieve in its entirety, and thus the real people behavior will not be able to exhaust its content. This relative distance between real and ideal represents the source and the driving force of the ideal human behavior modeling. It is understood that when the distance is too high, the ideal is turning into a chimera or illusion, which on a behavioral plan manifests by renouncing, but when it approaches a state of passivity installs. Significantly for the moral ideal it is the power of attraction it exerts on the human behavior.

The essence of the moral ideal is manifested in values, norms and moral rules. *The moral values* reflect certain general requirements that are imposed under the moral ideal of the human behavior. Among the most significant moral values are those of patriotism, attitudes to democracy, work, freedom, honesty, honor, responsibility, courage, cooperation, modesty, etc. They have a polar character, each value corresponding an anti-value (dishonesty, selfishness, individualism, dishonesty, misconduct, etc.). Moral values do not refer to a specific situation, they prescribe certain requirements covering a wider field of situations and behavioral manifestations. Moreover, no concrete moral act, however generous it may be, as no amount of moral acts, however many they may be, will exhaust the content of the moral values, since the postulate requirements are inexhaustible. "However great the number of documents that will satisfy the moral value is, it always remains an infinite amount of unrealized demands and situations. The value action area always remains intact, indefinitely, and therefore invincible". (Stoica, S., 1974: 81-84). Because of these features, all moral values to which the individual motives adhere, become a powerhouse with strong domestic human behavior in the most diverse circumstances of life. "Values are not only pressure but also

callings". (Mărgineanu, N., 1973: 84). At the same time, moral values have not only a general-human character, but a historical and concrete one.

The norms, precepts and moral rules are regarded as models of moral behavior or prototypes developed by the company or a smaller community and applicable to a given situation. By expressing the requirements of one or more values through their individual moral attitude, their deeds and actions externalize. They are the ones that give substance to the ideal, generating direct behavioral requirements in the form of "action models". The norms of the professional ethics, morals schools are leading examples in this regard. Their spheres intersect and are mutually interdependent. After their form of expression, these norms, precepts and rules may be expressed by a set of sentences in the form of bans (obligations) and permissions (imperative). The first is characterized by prohibiting or placing some restrictions for people's behavior, while the others guide and direct this behavior. They have a normative force that ensures by means of special mechanisms such as public pressure, customs, traditions, censure, disapproval, etc. The origin of this normative force is in reality, namely in the coexistence of people in "their general belief" about the validity and usefulness of respecting them, join them contributing to the achievement of social and individual interests and aspirations at the same time. As long as certain rules are not materializing in people's behavior, the majority of them, or, in other words, as long as it does not manifest itself effectively as a statistical average of the social behavior, will not have this normative force of targeting the individual behavior of people.(Stoica, S., 1974: 88-89)

At the social level, these norms were crystallized through a long process of filtering and assessment of specific actions of individual moral facts, using the moral judgment. The moral norm and the ethical judgment are closely linked. First precedes the action or the moral act, prescribing how it should be, while the second one succeeds the behavior, assessing its finality by comparing it to its standard ideal and its recognized and accepted moral values.

3.The importance of moral and moral education concepts

It is not possible the formation of personality without taking into account the issues that should dominate our entire spiritual life: the moral aspect. Until recently, the share of the moral education in human life in the Romanian school was understated, the intellectual dimension of the human being lying in the foreground. The gap between the technical-scientific and moral process was one of the causes of disharmony in the educational plan between intellectual and moral component. It requires a general effort in the human moral recovery process, to ensure the liberty of each individual's dignity and capacity for creating and self-creating, for rehabilitation of the moral education in school.

Among the ways to rehabilitate the moral education in society and in the Romanian school we must talk about:

- The personal, conscious and systematic effort of moral self-improvement; the role of self-education. It is necessary to understand that each should work with himself from a morally point of view. The understanding must lead to a lasting moral exercise.

- Increase of school responsibility in moral education of the young generation. Education should reconsider its content, methodology, relationship educator-educated and primarily educational goals, among which the moral should be in the foreground.

- The contribution of other educational factors to the achievement of the moral education. Family must increase its efforts to form the moral profile of the young generation, because the foundations of moral character shall be made in the first seven years of life. A new table of values; reexamination is required to values table; the moral value has a privileged role. (Piaget, J., 1980: 187-192)

The specifics of the moral education is determined, on the one hand, by the morality specificities as a social phenomenon, which gives content, and on the other hand, the socio-psychological conditions that are involved in their implementation.

Morality is a form of social consciousness, reflecting all concepts, ideas and principles (rules) that guide and conduct people's behavior in their personal relationships, family, workplace and society in general.

The moral content includes a whole ideal of moral values, moral norms and rules that regulate human relationships with others, with society. *Moral ideal* is regarded as an image of perfection from a moral point of view, comprising a pattern, moral quintessence of the human personality. *Moral values* reflect certain general requirements and exigencies that require human behavior under the human ideal.

The norms and the moral rules refer to a specific situation; they are expressed by a set of prescriptive sentences as obligations, prohibitions and permissions relating to the moral action.

Morality designates what the human or the human group is from a moral point of view. Herbart understood by morality or virtue the consent with the moral ideas, in Kantian terms, the agreement between the will and the moral law.

Education is defined as a process of achieving morality, as a factor of transition from ethics to morality. *Moral education* is an education component through which the formation and the development of consciousness and moral behavior, moral formation of personality profile, developing social-moral behavior realises.

The essence of the moral education is to create an appropriate internalizing framework for the social moral components in the moral personality structure of the child development and stabilization, on the basis of his moral profile, consistent with the imperatives of our society.

4. The essence and the purpose of the moral education

The social morality components have a decisive character towards people's individual moral knowledge. The acceptance and the assimilation of the former is always done in a psychosocial context by each individual, everything is filtered through the prism of its subjectivity (experience, insight, interests, needs, aspirations, emotional states etc.).

The transition from moral to morality, from the individual to the social moral conscience is not direct, it is mediated by a series of social and psychological variables. The social ones imposed by the social context in which the moral education is realized, that it always takes place on the background of "moral relations practice" which put their imprint on the process of introspection, the psychological ones being imposed by the uptake and adherence to the social morality which is always done by a concrete subject, emotionally involved and engaged against the social moral.

Thus, the moral development of human personality is the result of dialectical interdependence of social determination, reflected in the demands of social morality and personal empowerment, represented by domestic factors, subjectively involved in this process. The essence of the moral education is to create an appropriate framework component internalizing the social morals of the moral personality structure of child development and stabilization on this basis of the moral profile with its moral imperatives of our society.

In this respect, the fundamental purpose of education is to form the moral individual as a moral issue or as a subject who thinks and acts in the spirit of social morality needs and requirements, the ideals, values, norms and rules on which it rests. Synthetically expressed, it is the moral profile of the individual. In a pedagogical sense, the profile appears as a reality in a continuous transformation as a construction which consummates indefinitely and whose project or goal is to achieve it in the educational action frame.

5. Social and psychological variables in moral education

Social morals act outside the individual moral conscience, representing, in this aspect, the moral climate in which man lives and acts. However, the social

morality is not a self-reliant entity, it exists with the help of the individual knowledge of its society members. This means that, from the earliest age, man as a social being, is engaged in a series of practical moral relations and thus, becoming their topic.

Hence, we can say that, from a pedagogical point of view, the individual is and remains permanently the subject to moral relations, whether he is or not the scope of the educational action. As a member of a community, he is the subject of what the moral relations at that level constitute. Moral education will not independently be achieved by the social practice that occurs in the community, by the whole activity taking place here.

Thus, one of the peculiarities of the moral education is that it extends not only on individuals but also on the relationships between them. The organization and the management of these relations will have repercussions on their carriers. The formation of the moral subject, objective of the moral education, appears as a full and practical moral subsumed relation that is established within that community. Against this background, the individual presents a double aspect, the subject of these relationships and his actions exerted on his education. Everything he accumulates in the position of subject of practical-moral relations is the educative action support being exploited by it, and everything is achieved by education will manifest itself in the attitude and conduct of the individual as the subject of the practical-moral relations.

Moral education is not possible outside the social relationships established between people's relations that always have a moral coloring or relationships which are eminently moral. The social variables result from how these relations work, based on the internal organization of the social framework in which they are established. Knowing such variables, we can discover the origin of contradictions that arise between the two planes, social and moral, on this basis, deterring educative action occurs, organizing these relations in another in a different way. The pedagogical frame of the moral education is co reporting them to the society and the individual. (Nicola, I., 1996: 206-213)

Looking at the psychological peculiarities of the moral subject formation, we start from the proposition that individual's moral conscience is not simply a reflection of the social morality, but the result of ongoing elaboration of what the social moral offers. The development means that the coverage is conditioned by our subjectivity that reflects the individual moral conscience or morality thus differing from one individual to another. What are the internal factors involved which give to the individual morality a unique character? We distinguish, on the one hand, factors related to the individual experience accumulated up to that moment, and on the other hand, factors arising from the particular ontogenetic development of the individual. The first category includes the worldview and the moral conscience the respective

person touched. The conception of the world leaves its mark on the whole personality, it determines a certain way of understanding the social commandments, purpose and meaning of life, a certain way of interpreting the relationship between the individual and society, all requiring a personal touch for all values, principles and moral rules.

The worldview concept will have a specific effect of different moral values. Because the individual is the subject of the practical-moral relations from the earliest age, it means that at any moment his moral consciousness has reached a certain level, thus becoming a filter for all the influences exerted from the outside, including the educational order. The level of the moral individual consciousness relates to knowledge and beliefs they possess, the traits of will and character which were formed, the ability to assess the facts of moral and moral judgments on emotional states and feelings they live and make it vibrate against manifestations of moral sensitivity and moral sense, the internal motives that make him act in one way or another.

All these do nothing but to differentiate and qualify the process of social moral internalization, they enrich moral life of the society due to its inverse connection. Exaggerating this individualization and the individual creative attitude adopted against social morality commands can lead to its nakedness its objective content he possess and thus to annihilate its normative character. Sliding on the subjectivism and voluntarism glide slope becomes, in this case, imminent. The interpretation and the creative assimilation of the social morality is not objective sacrificing its content. All the above components of subjectivity, which circumscribe the moral conscience of the individual, will amplify the effect of educational action as it relates to the social morals, being themselves in advance determined by this.

Regarding the factors related to the child's ontogenetic development training, it is presumed that morality is conditioned by some psychosomatic features corresponding to various stages of development. Dealing with this problem, J. Piaget distinguishes the moral realism stage and the stage of cooperation during childhood. Their delimitation based on the interpretation which are regarded as "inter-most characteristic sense of moral life," he expressing the value attributed to a person, distinguished from others, and considered as a whole. When this value is assigned by someone inferior, or considered superior, we are dealing with unilateral respect and recognize the value of each other when we are dealing with mutual respect. (Piaget, J.,1980:187-192)

The stage of the mutual realism corresponds to children up to the age of 7-8 years. The relationship between adult and child is unilateral, meaning that the adult is the source of all black lists and obligations are imposed, due to its presence, the child is obeying its virtue and a value which recognizes. The so-called moral obedience is fueled by the inequality feeling of a child to an adult.

The rules of conduct are regarded by the child as a given, as the outcome of an external authority and his superior, without any connection with the actual situation. They are not assimilated and transformed into an interior cell. What lead them to obey is the unilateral respect, based on affection and fear. The disease appears as an expression of identifying and recognizing an adult person who embodies the command (parents or others), knowing that usually the child is not subject to anyone, and fear is a reaction against the adult authority. Its moral conduct guiding and directing the child, is dictated and imposed from the outside and to a lesser extent it is the result of his internal necessities. The child's tendency is to consider the values and the moral norms as existing in themselves, imposing, independent of his conscience. They appear as something external and not as a result of the personal interpretation.

The cooperation status (or the moral autonomy) corresponds, in genetic terms, to the age of 7 to 12 years. Characteristic is that now the respect is no longer unilateral but reciprocal (or mutual). Therefore, rules and moral norms will internalize and become internal conduct motives as related to the natural consequence of a coordination process in which both poles are trained, each with a relative freedom and acting under internal trends that were formed as a result of the interpretation and filtering the external commands.

Coercion through external rules and regulations cease to be a force in itself, putting its mark on conduct only if it manages to trigger and stimulate domestic resorts of individual moral conscience. If in the first stage, a rule imposes an appropriate conduct under obligations emanating from the person, in this stage, the same rule will have an effect in terms of conduct only if it becomes an expression of consciousness, acting, therefore, not only by external force, but also by internal one. Normally that as the child grows, the role of the "conscience" as the internal, mediator factor amplifies freedom of action being increasingly higher. (Nicola, I., 1996: 229-230)

Autonomy is not possible outside of cooperation, mutual relationships outside of eventually facilitating internalization of external moral commands, they now act on the inside individual behavior. "Autonomy appears only as reciprocity, mutual respect when it is so strong that individual interior feels the need to treat another as he would like to be treated by someone else". (Piaget, J., 1980: 164-168)

Adolescence (which also includes pre-adolescence) is further placed between 12-18 years. In terms of moral autonomy the mechanism is enriched with new issues as a result of socialization and integration into adult society. What is significant is the finding that adolescence is the "age of the great ideals", incorporated in the mechanism of autonomy, individual independence which amplifies these ideals, it acts not only on the present reality, but also anticipate future requirements. However, the subject has the ability to operate morally on various moral values posed by the moral ideal. Their constitution is

possible due to the development of formal thought. Once shaped, they become internal motives and will have an impact on all the facts and practical-moral relations in which the individual is involved. Henceforth, he acts on behalf of the ideal that inspires, interpreting the social imperatives and in terms of its headquarters.

The above only circumscribe essentially, from an ontogenetic perspective, what the psychological support of moral education consists of. In fact, all these peculiarities, the child's evolution, manifest differently from one another, because of the individual features, specific to each student.

It follows therefore that the moral education is one of the most complex educational branches as it always takes place amid unity of the social and psychological weight of their relationship modifying both on the context in which it occurs and in depending on the ontogenetic development of the child. As such, any oriented education action for this purpose can not be effective unless it is based on knowledge of social and psychological variables involved in its development.

6. Curricular goals and perspectives of moral- civic education

The term *curriculum* is of Latin origin and means "short informational and action election (selection) for education needs". The concept of curriculum in contemporary pedagogy has various meanings: the whole program of educational activities, scientific content selection for development (organization) objects (subjects), education system components of the educational process: objectives, content, strategies, etc.

Conținutul învățământului (curriculum-ul) reprezintă ansamblul de valori ideatice și de abilități practice sau ansamblul de cunoștințe, priceperi și deprinderi selectat din tezaurul cunoașterii și practicii umane, care se transmit și se dobândesc pentru dezvoltarea personalității și formarea profesionalității tinerelor generații, în vederea integrării lor socio-profesionale.

The content of education is expressed by the subjects, which is an information system selection and practical skills in a particular field of knowledge and human practice: art, science, culture, art, etc. The information and practical skills can be expressed in the singular - plural or content of education - education content when it comes to the variety of educational disciplines. The curriculum content represents the essential fundamental component of the instructive - educational process.

The content of education has two important characteristics: quantity and quality.

The amount represents one side of education highlighting the number, the crowd, the size and the expansion of information and practical skills, in other words highlight the volume of theoretical and practical knowledge that is

selected for a subject depending on the degree, profile and instructive-educative objectives thereof. By quantity, the education content answers the question how much education should be transmitted and learned at an educational discipline and education assembly, causing the informative character content.

Quality is the educational content that highlights the value side, essentiality, the depth, the functionality, performance, durability, reliability and effectiveness of formative knowledge and training in personality development professionalism, intellectual and professional skills development of the youth. Quality answers the question what is transmitted and taught, causing formative content (Bontaş, I., 2006: 67-68)

Between the two sides there is interaction, in the sense that it is necessary to send a certain amount of information volume to be selected as essential notes of quality, applying the Latin saying: “Non multa sed multum” (not many, but much). So, not loading the content with much knowledge, but with the knowledge that says much in terms of meaning, value, sustainability, efficiency, and that are of quality.

Education responds to training needs in various fields of human personality: intellectual, physical, behavioral, socio-moral, aesthetic, etc. Consequently, the components or the fundamental fields of education, training corresponding to the essential dimensions of the human being are: *intellectual education, moral education, religious, aesthetic education, vocational and technological education and physical education.*

Moral education is an aspect of education that has as an ideal the formation of the moral profile of the personality and social behavior - moral man. In terms of contemporary society, democratic society, the roles of the social relations and the individual's responsibility to himself grow, towards others and towards society, defending the new issues of ethics and behavior (conduct) of the individual and of society members. In this context, the importance of moral education lies, as education for democracy in schools and beyond.

In the Romanian pedagogy, G.G. Antonescu showed a keen interest in moral education of pre-adolescents and adolescents. The Romanian teacher believes that the fundamental problem in moral education, as in religion, can be formulated as follows (1972): *How can we create the moral discipline to a student? How can we strengthen the power of resistance to temptations?* G.G. Antonescu says that there is a superior trait of the human soul that we find in any normal man, more or less: *the moral heroism* or the power that each of us have to overcome ourselves. The moral heroism thus refers not to huge facts, but to the petty things of everyday life. This heroism must be identified and cultivated by the educator, but before you cultivate, you have to have lived

himself as “a man who has nothing holy, who has just fought for an ideal, the educator may not cultivate this heroism into the children.”

Conclusions

We can say that the educational, moral finality takes place amid the extrinsic and contextual factors. They could be systematized into two categories: social morals and micro-collective morality in which the child is included. In the category of the contextual factors we can include the group morality too. The child is not an isolated human being. From the earliest age he is involved in a system of human relationships that are formed on the groups to which he belongs to (family, circle of friends, class collective). Operation of any group inevitably generates a certain degree of morality, the result of filtering, adaptation and acceptance by its members of norms and rules of the great “spring” of social morality. The group morality exercises the same influence on the child interacts with continuous education actions initiated and organized by the teacher.

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