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THE PARADIGM OF EGO – THE FUNDAMENTAL PARADIGM OF EFFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT: *The present research starts from the assumption that the paradigm of Self is the fundamental paradigm of efficiency, fact for which self-competence and social competence are the base for the professional competence. Trying to study the reality of Self also from the subject's own perception, of the sense he gives his own Self and the events it involves in, we will treat things in a phenomenological way. This approach values the epistemological role of conscience, the importance of living and experiencing. The paper stresses the importance of the subject's convictions about himself, the world, the others, own prejudices, the subjective perceptions in decoding the paradigm of Self and the objective reality.*

Keywords: *ego paradigm, the paradigm of efficiency, phenomenological approach*

1. EDUCATION – THE NECESSARY UTOPIA

Members of the International Commission for The 21st Century Education think that, in order to cope with the communication age, education must give each individual the resources needed for discovering and enriching each one's own creative potential. Teaching must be organized around four fundamental learning types that are pylons of knowledge: learning to know, getting the tools for knowing; learning to do, the individual in relationship with the environment; learning to live with others, cooperating; learning to be / become, integrating element, result of the first three.

The educational system tends to favor gathering information (learning to know), against all other competencies. But today it is vital to set education in a larger image as a tool of an active, successful life, a process strongly individualized and, at the same time, of building social interaction network. "Individual development (…) is a dialectic process that starts with self-knowledge, to open later towards relationships with the others", the Commission report shows [1].

Human development and social existence demand a continuous information exchange and negotiating senses between individuals. At a closer look, the experience of our life is integrally modeled by education in its largest sense and by communication in its broadest meaning. Education, this "necessary utopia", to quote J. Delors, is the paradigm by which we perceive the world and ourselves, while communication is the tool with which we decode that paradigm. We have, on one hand, the internal communication – those things we imagine, we tell ourselves and we feel inside, and, on the other hand, the external communication – words, voice tones, facial expressions, attitudes and physical actions through which we manifest in the environment. The level of skillfulness in intrapersonal and interpersonal communication seems to be the

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key factor of personal success. Leaders in the science of personal development, such as Anthony Robbins (2002, p.18), think that "all we do in life is determined by the way we communicate with ourselves". From this perspective any communication is in fact a process of building an universe of significations, both at individual and social level. "Through communication, modern human being analyses himself and those he interacts with and – lastly – can find his own way of investigating the surrounding world" [2], thus getting functional autonomy, trademark of a mature, independent personality.

2. A NEW TYPE OF CONSCIENCE

A new current grows stronger nowadays, about personal development and growing self-aware. "The new type of conscience necessary to solve personal, professional, international or organizational problems is, I think, self-conscience or self-knowledge, linked indirectly to self-respect" [3]. Self-knowledge is more than simply acknowledging facts, it includes the necessary forces for developing a different way of being or of seeming to be. It combines cognitive moments with valuing moments, self-appreciation being a valuing action of self for self.

A peculiarity of self-knowledge, implicitly of self-image forming, as a specific self-knowing process, is the presence and importance of subjective-affective factor: feelings, emotions, and subjective self-appraisals, dominated by desires, needs, ambition, impulses and personal goals. Self-appreciation is based on rational knowledge and on the action of fundamental instincts of Self: appreciation, prestige, self-affirmation, personalization. In

a certain measure this is natural, as self-appreciation supposes not only to build relations between knowledge and existence, but also to trace the lines along which existent becomes possible. Organizing information about oneself depends on the emotional attitude towards oneself, on the self-respect, on the tendency to see oneself in a better light.

The present paper starts from the premise that the paradigm of Self is the fundamental paradigm of efficiency, fact for which self-competence and social competence represent the basis for professional competence. Seeing these premises, we appreciate that for the students in socio-human sciences it is very necessary to cultivate self-competence and social competence, as a solid foundation for the professional competence. In this professional domains, their main resource will be the human one. In order to fully make use of the professional competence they will need psychic and emotional balance, clarity of the personal identity, of their intrinsic value, but also of the ability to relate to others, communication and teamwork skills, ability to motivate and persuade. We appreciate that giving the student life skills (such as self-competence and social competence) is to give him tools for personal and professional continuous development.

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Fig. 1. Key competences for performance

Let's decode each level of the pyramid above, from the perspective of the newest personal development school, coaching:

• **Self-competence – being in agreement with oneself**
Clarity in personal roles, balance between private and professional lives, psychological and emotional stability, courage, self-control, independence, access to creativity and intuition

• **Social competence – being in agreement with others**
Communication and teamwork abilities, leadership, ability to motivate and persuade

• **Professional competence – being in agreement with the activities**
The discovery of one's owns abilities, talents, and the pleasure to learn and think in theories, methodic competence, and culture.

Self-competence and social competence represent, as we see above, the basis for professional competence in all we accomplish. All these competencies come from the multiple experiences we get involved in, either with the significant others and the world or with ourselves.

By the mechanisms of self-knowing and self-appraisal, by auto-validation come complex psychological states as self-conscience, self-acceptance, self-valuing, self-efficiency, trust and optimism, all making up a solid foundation for professional performance. These states, that we will call resource states, provide the energy needed for the transfer between pyramid levels towards performance and success. Having the conscience of individual value, of the resources at hand and of the practically unlimited potential, each of us can train, fully aware, to develop professionally and personally.

3. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

Man is a being in a continuous search for meaning. He fills each experience with sense and signification, making each one unique. Loaded with subjectivity, this feature of human experience cannot be altered. The phenomenological approach values the epistemological role of conscience, the importance of living and experiencing. Phenomenological psychology studies "the way individuals understand their own actions and consciously see the associated emotions" [4]. In trying to study the reality of Self from the perspective of the subject's perception, of the meaning he sees for his own Self, we will take a phenomenological approach. The subject's beliefs about himself, his prejudices, his distorted perceptions, the errors in perception and judgment, the contextual significations given to the events

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give us, in a phenomenological approach, an image about what the subject is.

Self-programming for success starts with taking conscious contact with the dynamics of Self. By understanding the way it works, the processes that define it, the mechanisms inside, we can acquire a certain degree of control over it. With some effort, we can re/program the Self at will or introduce new programs in accordance with present needs and skills. New programs mean new thinking and behavior models, new strategies towards present goals. We thus become aware of the fact that we have the responsibility for our state of mind and for the direction we evolve in.

The notion of self-conscience got new meanings both through philosophical thinking history and science. In philosophy, when self-conscience is about the reflexive activity by which an individual represents himself as a person to whom “intentional predicates of faith and desire, and the host of related words” [5] can be applied. The efforts of the specialists focus on understanding the way one applies these mental predicates to oneself, predicates seen as the origin of action and conscience.

Adepts of mental philosophy and philosophical psychology state that based on the behavioral interpretations and conscious introspection, intentional descriptions can be applied to oneself. This intentional attitude that determines the reflexive activity favors self-descriptions, being proof of the cognitive-teleological consistency of the human being. Generally, intentional descriptions unify one's autobiography with one's plans for life and future behavior. This explains that human identity is seen by Dennet (1991) as “center of narrative gravity” [5].

In the need for meaning, man assiduously searches his identity and place in the world that forces a double opening to “Ego-system” and “Eco-system” with the goal of taking control on both internal and external reality. The personal striving for sense implies one's ability to represent his own skills at ever superior levels. This favors not only flexibility in solving problems, but also the conscious knowing, specific only to human beings. In computational terms, this “representative redescription” could be seen as a move from procedural knowing to declarative knowing. Initially implicit knowing of a certain behavioral ability becomes explicitly represented to a superior level, thus object for conscious change and manipulation. Self-examination implies, thus, one's ability to take into account the facts and change one's actions.

But these are nothing but schematic ideas, vague descriptions of man's ability to generate explicit representation about one's behavior. They correspond largely to empirical researches on self-conscience in the 20th century, inside philosophy and psychology of personality. Their merit is to have given impulse to researches in the second half of that century. Some 2000 papers were published on the issue of “the conscious being” – the Self. Their object is the structure and components of Self (self-image), the processes and operations involved in self-knowledge, self-appraisal, self-control, the degree that self-image is adequate and the role these have in regulating individual behavior.

In the last years, phenomenological approach gained footing in the socio-human sciences, coming as a reaction to the positivist paradigm seen by some specialists as inadequate to looking into human phenomena. The main critic to positivism is,

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first of all, that it ignores the epistemological role of conscience. Conscience is a filter of reality. It makes human perceptions filled with subjectivity, thus making meanings of events unique to each person. Man co-creates the significance of the world he lives in and this is worth studying from a phenomenological approach. Reality does exist independently from conscience, but it can be known only through the mediation of the human being, who takes conscious contact with reality. The map – that looks more like the cartographer than the territory – is worth looking into.

Phenomenological psychology studies the life experiences, "the way one understands one's actions and consciously sees the associated feelings" [4]. What might that mean for the study of the paradigm of Ego and its dynamics? According to the phenomenological paradigm, the psychologist's task is to describe the nature of this dynamics as seen by the subject and understand the meaning he gives to processes associated to it. Beliefs, errors in everyday life are more important than theoretical abstractions. The psychologist has to explain implicit structures and develop the meaning of human experiences [4]. Thus, the phenomenological approach in psychology is not about behavior study, but about the study of the subject's experiences of life. Phenomenology rehabilitates the epistemological role of conscience, the main filter the subject uses in perceiving the objective reality and in deciphering the paradigm of his own Self, the main paradigm of efficiency.

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