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PERSONALIST CONCEPT OF TUTORING AND EDUCATION

Keywords: upbringing, *παιδεία*, personalism, holism, man, person, potentiality of being, contingency of being, will, Saint Thomas Aquinas, tutoring

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to show the personalistic dimension of education as consciously and intentionally organized social activities, aimed at causing changes in human personality, shaping the right attitudes, beliefs and assimilation recognized by specific social environments – family, school, group – values, norms, behavior patterns and goals life, which is a dynamic and complex process that usually occurs in personal interaction.

In particular, I would like to strongly emphasize the fact that in philosophy, education is included in metaphysical, anthropological, ethical and axiological aspects. The beginnings of philosophical reflection on upbringing date back to the Greek *παιδεία* – the ideal of formation for mature humanity through harmonious physical, mental and moral development towards good and beauty. In the circle of European culture, this ideal has become synonymous with universal principles of education.

The contemporary multiplicity of the concept of upbringing forces researchers to holistically capture the essence of upbringing, which can be provided by realistic philosophy and the personalistic concept of man embedded in it. In this perspective, the basics of upbringing and self-education are rooted in the ontical structure of the human being, its potentiality and contingency. For this reason, the European pedagogical tradition is not exhausted either in collectivism or in individualism. The educational tradition of Europe is *παιδεία* and a stream of philosophical realism complemented by Christian culture. This tradition is guided by the principle of personalism in upbringing, and the truly personalistic upbringing concerns the real man, it is an update of the living abilities inscribed in human nature. This applies by all means to tutoring.

Christianity, next to ancient culture, is the second pillar on which European culture is based. In this context, the understanding of education developed in Christianity is the result of a synthesis of the Greek concept of education and Christian doctrine. One might think that Christian *παιδεία* is a continuation of classical Greek *παιδεία*. She uses the achievements of ancient pedagogy, where upbringing was associated with updating good performance through virtues. The turning point in his-

tory was the teaching of Jesus Christ – as an educator – about God, as the source and purpose of human life, which at the same time revealed the ultimate meaning and goal of human education, namely the pursuit of salvation. Consequently, the Bible took the place of Greek literature in education. Thus, biblical teaching should be adopted as a Christian *παιδεία* (Jaeger 2002, p. 21).

The concept of human being as a person is an important contribution of Christian culture to the philo-

sophical aspect of education. The human person is the substantial-personal “I” of man, constituting his self. Its existence is directly recognized in internal experience. The phenomenon of self-awareness, characteristic of the human world, testifies to the existence of the inner self, which is the center of human personality. The human person is a substantial being which is identical and permanent in its species nature. The manifestations of its spiritual dimension are reason and freedom. It is the composition of the immaterial soul and material body. In contrast, the spirituality of the human person is more than the ability to think and consciousness, which are only its manifestation. They may periodically disappear, but the spiritual dimension of the person is permanent. A spiritual being has an existential depth related to having internal life, and at the same time goes beyond the time and space limitations of matter. The human person, being the subject, is an end in itself, not a tool in achieving other goals. It exists in itself and for itself, which does not undermine its pro-social character (Kowalczyk 1995, p. 161).

The human person as a living individuality and a complete being in structural and functional terms constitutes a closed whole, distinguished in the world of nature and human society. The individuality of a human person means its uniqueness in both somatic and psycho-spiritual aspects. Each human person is unique in its specificity, internal life, physical and mental properties, choices made and values implemented. He cannot give up his subjectivity or “suspend” his living status. The human person is constantly changing: physically, mentally, intellectually and ethically, yet he is still the same person (Krapiec 2005, p. 38).

In this context, the discourse on the nature of God in the context of Christological disputes and the problem of the Holy Trinity brought important for human theory the distinction between nature and person, which leads to the recognition that man in the order of personal life is shaped in the image and likeness of God. This is a real similarity, although in essence proportional. For a Christian thus formed, Christ is a real model of personal life. Therefore, dedication to another person is a path leading to salvation, which is the ultimate and social goal of human life and at the same time the purpose of education of a human being (Gajda 2006, p. 31).

Education is consciously and intentionally organized social activities, aimed at causing changes in human personality, shaping the right attitudes, beliefs

and assimilating recognized by specific social environments – family, school, group – values, norms, behavior patterns and life goals, which are dynamic and a complex process that usually occurs in personal interaction (Krasnodębski 2008, p. 28).

Education in Christian culture is characterized by the following factors:

- 1) recognition of the absolutely final goal, which is achieving full perfection in direct union with God,
- 2) a Christian-specific way to the goal of imitating Christ and perfecting ourselves in good deeds, especially in the active love of God, yourself and your neighbor in God,
- 3) educational measures specific to Christianity, such as liturgy and sacraments – alongside common educational measures based on the needs of human nature (Wilk 2003, p. 15).

According to classical tradition, man is the subject – “I”, having a personal center of action, thanks to which he can reasonably choose the good and make decisions intelligently. Good is a measure of the rationality of human decisions and a criterion for assessing their purpose. Subjectivity and agency set for man is shaped in his life mainly thanks to educational activities that are a transfer of the socialization deposit from generation to generation. Hence the responsibility of man for the realization of his humanity towards himself and towards other people. Two entities participate in the upbringing process, having the same personal nature, but with a different degree of updating their subjectivity, which is why the educator bears more responsibility for shaping the pupil. An educator is the one who indicates the good and improves his realization (Wielgus 2000, p. 8).

In a speech given on September 12, 1982 at the University of Padua, Pope John Paul II said, among others “Only when one understands well what a man is in himself and what is the ultimate goal of human life, the problem correctly and logically emerges how to lead a man to his personal goal” (John Paul II 1988, pp. 162–163). The above words accurately reflect the concept of man, which has its source in the classical definition, formulated by Boecius, a Roman philosopher living in the sixth century: *Persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia* (The person is an individual, individual substance of a rational nature). This definition in a special way emphasizes the unity and uniqueness of a person as a substantive being, noting that it is “Someone” and not “something” (Wroński 1978, p. 111).

Looking for the conditions for effective tutoring in this context, one should adopt the anthropological concept in which man is perceived both as a person created in the image of God – Gen 1: 26–27, as well as a bodily and spiritual being – *corpore et anima unus*. Thus, this concept takes on a Christian dimension and, as such, determines specific rights and obligations, including the need to treat a person as a person with a unique dignity that results from God's origin and participation in eschatological reality. This vision also requires treating a human being as a thinking person who strives to achieve his goal through his own perfection and contact with a being more perfect than himself, which inevitably translates into the master-student relationship. The adoption of this concept also implies the need to perceive the human person as a subject, while excluding any signs of objectivity. This is especially important in the current reality, in which in various ways one tries to objectify a man, stripping him of his dignity, and convincing him that his value is determined by the state of possession and not the good of himself (Gałkowski 2003, pp. 117–118).

Emphasizing the subjectivity of the person participating in the tutoring has a significant meaning, especially in the aspect of assimilating various methods of methodological actions in the master-student relationship. It should be clearly emphasized that they have a unique role to be fulfilled in tutoring, but only when it is accompanied by full awareness of the inviolability of each person's dignity, and when the desire to treat another person instrumentally and to reduce him to the instructional sphere is excluded from the human consciousness. It should be remembered that man is not an object, he is not an animal that requires training. Man is a unique creature among all living things, and only man is a person. For this reason, he is entitled to personal dignity, which should be treated as his most valuable asset and unique gift (Zuchniewicz 2015, p. 116).

This understanding of man eliminates the treatment of tutoring only in the categories of social engineering. In this way a person cannot be treated instrumentally. If such a phenomenon occurs, it not only leads to impoverishment, but also to a huge simplification of the entire reality hidden under the term "tutoring". Thus, a person is the subject of tutoring and as such is the starting point for all reflections and searches related to this process of education and upbringing (Wilk 2003, p. 17).

As we know, the tutoring is attended by persons: a master, i.e. a teacher and a student, who undertake

specific activities and perform specific roles specific to them. This fact implies the need for specific actions. As a result, the master should be aware that he is a person with inviolable dignity, constituting his most valuable gift, and that he is a person predestined to perform certain deeds and tasks. He is first and foremost the person who, recognizing his dignity and related prerogatives, lovingly communicates this fundamental truth about man as a person, to another person whom he brings up and teaches (Sarnat-Ciastko 2015, p. 98). In this way, a unique, unique exchange takes place between them at the level of reason and knowledge, and thus complement each other. Mutual enrichment occurs, which results in the so-called communion of people using the language of St. Thomas Aquinas – Doctor of Angels – *communio personarum*. This allows us to state that from the moment of his existence, throughout the period of his development, he is stuck almost constantly in the relations between "I" and "you", building the interpersonal dimension, as well as in the configuration 'we', implementing his action in the social dimension (Sorkowicz 2010, p. 69).

A person or people between whom a special type of relationship develops, is involved in personal relationships. Over time, the sense of belonging, mutual responsibility, sense of acceptance and affirmation also increases. An authentic interpersonal community is created between these people – *communio personarum*. This community is only possible when there is mutual affirmation of the dignity, transcendent value of a person. This community has its basic dimension. The basic dimension of such a community, both in metaphysical and normative terms, is to treat "another man as himself" (Każmierczak 2003, p. 53). Since the relationship between "I" and "you" is a relation of a specific exchange or even a change of roles, then one can speak of the constitution of the human 'I' through the relation to the human "you". It should be remembered that this change of roles is not yet a community, but allows you to test your "I" in the light of the other "I". In this way, the process of self-affirmation takes place both in the personality of the master and the student (Sienkiewicz 2003, p. 26).

In interpersonal relationships, when a *communio personarum* appears, an important process may follow that follows the imitation of specific personal patterns. It is particularly important for upbringing and self-education. This process comes to real realization especially in family, ecclesial or school or social relations.

Wherever the subjectivity of many people is taken into account and the basic principles of personalism are met, one can speak of so-called communion of people (Sorkowicz 2010, p. 71). The above statement allows us to conclude that personalism boils down to four basic principles in which primacy can be seen:

- 1) Human being before the thing,
- 2) ethics before technology,
- 3) to be before to have,
- 4) of mercy before justice (Gałkowski 2003, p. 120).

An exceptional role in the implementation of these principles is played by the teacher – the master, for whom, as for every person, in interpersonal relations, the main subject of search should not be truths about facts or philosophical truths, or at least the formation of interpersonal relations should not begin with them (Każmierczak 2003, p. 25). One should first look, as John Paul II notes in the encyclical *Fides et ratio*, about the truth about the person himself: who the person is and what he reveals from his own rich interior (John Paul II 1998, p. 125).

This truth is the basis for the existence of a community between people, in particular the community between teacher – master and student. In striving to make this community a reality, it is necessary not only to have a clear, specific vision, to know the conditions and possibilities of its occurrence, but also to be convinced of its rightness and to express readiness to participate in its creation (Zuchniewicz 2015, p. 118).

Tutoring cannot therefore be limited to the transmission of specific content or skills, regardless of whether it is done by language or technical means. It should be treated much broader primarily as a meeting of people. Particular emphasis is placed on people and their subjective treatment, as well as on the specific climate and atmosphere of the meeting, rather than on technique and skills (Sarnat-Ciastko 2015, p. 129).

This is closely related to the problem of personalistic education as a consciously and intentionally organized social activity, aimed at provoking changes in human personality, shaping the right attitudes, beliefs and assimilation recognized by specific social environments – family, school, group – values, norms, behavior patterns and life goals, which are a dynamic and complex process that usually takes place in personal interaction (Barlak 2006, p. 10).

It should be noted here that one of the most important goals of upbringing is improving, enabling the subject to be talented, i.e. in this case the pupil-ward, so

that he would like to take over the leadership of his own development process. Upbringing is understood here as “Excite a person” in the charge – so-called *maieutics* of a person using Socrates’ language (Czekalski 2006, p. 27).

The foster child cannot be treated as a thing. He cannot be treated as a being subjected to various exercises or training. Therefore, the upbringing process should be carried out in such a way as to “arouse” a person in it so that it has the conviction of being a person. Pupil – the foster child as a person is not owned by either his family or the state. No one is granted any hegemony in this respect due to any aspect. It is only when the pupil-pupil reaches the consciousness of the person and the dignity arising from it, one can hope for a *communio personarum*. The above “excitation of a person” and subjective treatment also applies to the teacher – master. In this situation, when both parties are aware of their own, unique dignity and the basic rights and obligations arising from it, then there will be a chance for effective and good relations throughout the whole process of upbringing and teaching (Sorkowicz 2010, pp. 70–71).

In philosophy, education is recognized in metaphysical, anthropological, ethical and axiological aspects. The beginnings of philosophical reflection on upbringing reach, as is known, the Greek *παιδεία* – the ideal of forming for mature humanity through harmonious physical, mental and moral development towards good and beauty. In the circle of European culture, this ideal has become synonymous with universal principles of education (Jaeger 2002, p. 22).

Plato provided the basis for the concept of virtues of educating the individual in the service of society. In contrast, the Aristotelian conception of man became the foundation of a realistic approach to education, the purpose of which was identified with the purpose of human life, happiness achieved by goodness and righteousness. It is worth emphasizing at this point that the synthesis of ancient thought with Christian doctrine resulted in the concept of human being as a person, giving education a subjective dimension and eschatological purpose (Krasnodębski 2008, p. 83).

In the modern period, the possibilities of learning about the reality of understanding nature, and thus the final explanation by the philosophy of education, have been questioned. Modern upbringing concepts refer to the theses of philosophical idealism, finding application, among others in the theory of collectivist

education in the form of modernism and the theory of individualistic education – postmodernism (Chudy 2006, p. 53).

Nowadays, the multiplicity of the concept of education forces researchers to holistically capture the essence of education, which can be provided by realistic philosophy and the personalistic concept of man embedded in it. In this perspective, the basics of upbringing and self-education are rooted in the ontical structure of the human being, its potentiality and contingency. This point of view explains the internal composition of human being – act and potency. The possibilities are human physical, mental and spiritual properties that can be updated in the course of life. Potentiality and contingency point to the possibilities and limitations of a person's development and determine the sense and need of educational activities. Its ontical structure includes the need for support in updating its capabilities and overcoming existential shortcomings. The approach to education understood in this way, taking into account the dynamics of human being, is referred to as metaphysics of help. The sense of upbringing confirms the ability to transcendence, associated with the ability to cognitively master reality, including yourself, through the intellect (Wałęjko 2012, pp. 81–82).

According to Boecjusz and Dr Angelic, it is necessary to involve the will, which forms with the intellect the spiritual dimension of man, which determines the personal nature of human existence, determining the goals and principles of the upbringing process also in the area of tutoring (Wroński 1978, p. 113).

A man with dignity always remains a person. This process is accomplished through human deeds, of which only morally good deeds contribute to life as dignity possesses. This is how the upbringing process is shaped. It is a full and full improvement of humanity. This fact implies permanent and integral, i.e. covering all spheres of man – bodily, mental and spiritual, the nature of the educational process and its axiological conditioning. On the other hand, truth, love, freedom and dignity indicate the purpose of education and at the same time the postulated shape of educational interactions based on the relational character of a personal being. This being constitutes ontical separateness and non-transferability, which requires complementing by a relationship with another person and constituting an opportunity and verification of the development process. This is done, among others through tutoring (Chudy 2006, p. 63).

The relation of the educator and the foster child is feedback. The personalistic norm regulating their mutual references excludes this treatment and enables personal development through participation in the humanity of the other. A specific kind of educational relationship is created which reflects the philosophical categories of meeting and dialogue. Characteristic for them are mutual relations: openness and commitment, they serve to educate and realize humanity in each of the subjects of education. It is important here to guide the pupil to discover his own dignity. The guiding route remains the testimony, i.e. a direct example of a educator's dignified life, motivating him to follow a specific pattern. This allows the ward to enter the process of self-education, in which the key role is played by agency and the ability to self-determination, associated with the trait of living substantivity and the intellect and will of man. Thanks to them, he can be about himself and take the trouble to work on his own development. Recognizing the truth about yourself and your dignity is the starting point and the principle of self-education. It should be emphasized that upbringing and self-education occur simultaneously and depend on the stage of development of the pupil. The fullness of humanity, which is the goal of education, finds its realization in the temporal and supernatural dimensions (Czekalski 2009, pp. 32–33).

It is worth noting here that the very concept of "personalism" today has made a unique career in the theory of education. In this approach, any view that deals with the individuality of a person, his dignity or values, freedom or even absoluteity is considered personalism. However, many education theorists, referring to the term "personalism", are in fact far from the assumptions of personalism, operating more on the grounds of individualism and voluntarism (Szudra 2006, p. 239).

Calling the personalism of every vision of man, which emphasizes his uniqueness, the supreme position in the world of nature, is an abuse of this word. "Personalism" understood in this way can be reduced to humanism, defined in various ways, but always in a reductionist way. Declaring personalism is only the first step on the way to defining a philosophy of education that can form the basis of educational programs. As part of personalism, rooted in the tradition of philosophical realism, the concept of man as a person was most fully developed. She notices that a person's personal life is realized through cognition, freedom, love, subjectivity to rights, separateness and religious dignity (Każmierczak 2003, p. 152).

For this reason, the idea of subjectivity in education is important. Accepting subjectivity, understood as full autonomy of action and deciding about oneself, results from the belief that a juvenile as an autonomous subject cannot be the object of educational efforts. Therefore, he has the right to take actions of his own choice and to independently come to all truths, program them according to their lives for which he is responsible. Education consists only in creating conditions for the child's activity and development as the creator of his own destiny (Chudy 2006, p. 68).

This approach contains an internal contradiction, since it absolutizes the subjectivity of the charge, and at the same time speaks of his responsibility. This contradiction does not allow to answer the question why and to whom the charge is responsible. He has the freedom to shape his actions according to his own taste (Gajda 2006, p. 218).

This is connected with the idea of dignity. Human dignity is sometimes understood as a significant criterion of education. This popular view today is associated with Kant's idea of freedom, according to which man is not a means but an end to action. In educational practice, this means that the pupil, understood as an autonomous entity, decides about himself in any way (Szudra 2006, p. 239).

The idea of values also plays an important role in the education process. It results from the fact that many modern educators want to base their education on so-called axiology and in this connection speaks of the so-called upbringing into value. In their view, the purpose of education is to show the pupil various values as life ideals and criteria for choosing one's own actions (Kowalczyk 1995, p. 115).

The idea of freedom in upbringing cannot be omitted here. Freedom is understood here as a human being and the source manifestation of humanity. Voluntarism defines freedom as no obstacles to action, which results in the view that upbringing consists in eliminating all obstacles to the pupil's freedom, and that the removal of civilization and cultural requirements will cause liberation in man. authenticity. It is – as the supporters of the thesis themselves note – “upbringing without upbringing”. The apotheosis of freedom in education is accompanied by the requirement of tolerance, understood as unconditional acceptance of everything, treated as a moral postulate (Gałkowski 2003, p. 98).

To sum up, it should be stated that tutoring is essentially personalistic because it takes place between

specific people. In connection with the above, it is necessary for the master and the student to create a sense of being aware of being a person, as well as occurring between them as persons proper didactic and educational relationship, contained in the statement: *communio personarum* (Sorkowicz 2010, p. 73). The adoption of the above assumption assumes the simultaneous acceptance of specific prerogatives resulting from this condition. It is all about adopting a uniform anthropological concept, and hence the subjective treatment of persons with their inviolable right to dignity. It is also important for both the master and the student to realize that their relations are heading towards a common goal, namely to create a community of people, thanks to which they will be able to achieve the assumed didactic and educational goals more easily (Gałkowski 2003, p. 194).

It is worth emphasizing at this point that the European pedagogical tradition is not exhausted either in collectivism or in individualism. The educational tradition of Europe is *παιδεία* and a stream of philosophical realism complemented by Christian culture. This tradition is guided by the principle of personalism in upbringing, and the truly personalistic upbringing concerns the real man, it is an update of the living abilities inscribed in human nature (Wojtyła 2000, p. 73).

Indeed, the personalistic theory of education arises from reading who a man is. Man is born in the world, but at the same time through his personal life he transcends this world. Each person is a person regardless of race, sex, age, views, health or social position; he is from conception until natural death and in the perspective of eternal life. The theory of personalistic education is, by its very nature, universal – it applies to every human being. At the same time, it is neutral – it does not bring any ideological oppositions with it, hence it is rightly referred to as “*pedagogia perennis*”. From the realistic theory of personalism and personalist education based on it one should distinguish Christian education, which is based on Christian personalism, and thus on the theological and philosophical interpretation of man, built on the basis of Christian revelation (Śliwerski. Szkudlarek 2003, p. 71).

To sum up, it should be stated that tutoring is essentially personalistic because it takes place between specific people. In connection with the above, it is necessary for the master and the student to create a sense of being aware of being a person, as well as occurring between them as persons proper didactic and educa-

tional relationship, contained in the statement: *communio personarum* (Sorkowicz 2010, p. 73). The adoption of the above assumption assumes the simultaneous acceptance of specific prerogatives resulting from this condition. It is all about adopting a uniform anthropological concept, and hence the subjective treatment of persons with their inviolable right to dignity. It is also important for both the master and the student to realize that their relations are heading towards a common goal, namely to create a community of people, thanks to which they will be able to achieve the assumed didactic and educational goals more easily (Gałkowski 2003, p. 194).

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