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The Ego Communication Beyond Interpersonal

Lăcrămioara Mocanu[1]

Abstract: During our lives, within multiple and varied interactions with others, we come to interpret a series of roles, to have some statuses and related behaviours and/or derived from these social conditions. And all these have the role to deepen the relationship with the fellow man; and more, to allow "reflection and self-reflection in the other" (Cooley). Communicating with others, regardless of the relationship and reference we have with them, as well as the type of communication network applied, is an active, dynamic and irreversible process that calls for a series of "behavioural strategies" to achieve the goals pursued. For each case, we can say that we have a series of patterns, we have a "social mask" that allows us to adapt more or less to a given situation, hence the reaction of the other to our position. Depending on these established relationships, the coherency between two actors may go one way or the other. It is necessary to emphasize that each of us juggles with these attitudes depending on the psycho-social context, but one is dominant. The position of life is a way of evaluating and interpreting the moments of existence and, by all means an infallible form of being.

Keywords: interactions with others; social mask; behavioural strategies

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Interpersonal communication, irrespective of the type, degree, and depth of the relationship between actors, requires each of them to have many psychic abilities that will be reflected in the evolution of the interaction between them. Communication can easily be evaluated from the perspective of the two basic principles of the universe: the *active* one specific to the male type suggesting action, movement, increased energy and *the passive* one characteristic to the female type that evokes expectation, fixity, etc. This differentiation is related to the two mentioned forms as principles, but it is understandable that the human personality is dynamic, with a constant evolution or involution, and includes both in different proportions. The assessment of the typical female communication as passive, immobile would be incomplete as well as that specific to men. Indeed, between the communicative patterns

[1] Associate Professor, PhD, Danubius University of Galati, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd., Galati 800654, Romania, Tel.: +40372361102, Romania, E-mail: lacramioaramocanu@univ-danubius.ro.

there is a significant difference: women call to "free" - catharsis, hence the great emotional burden, while men communicate to solve the problems. But this does not exclude the idea of their separation, of total independence, on the contrary. How many of us have not met women who have been discussing punctually, strictly in line with the given situation, always pursuing a solution; as there are some men who use many details in their narrations, they remember the emotions and have a special joy when they have someone to "tell" them. However, it is necessary to recall that these communicative styles in relation to the human being can also be appreciated from the perspective of the roles "interpreted" by us in different moments of existence, the relation we want to establish with the other, through which we want the transmission to a certain attitude, a clear optic to whom we transmit not only cognitive information, but also emotions, fears, needs, etc.

Expressed in simple words but deeply understood, transpersonal analysis, an alternative to the traditional models in psychology, is a "personality theory and systematic psychotherapy centred on personal change and development". (International Transactional Analysis Association, *apud* Nuţă, 2005) By addressing in a unique way the psychological research on the individual subject is extended to the "spiritual dimension of existence" (Mânzat, 2002, p. 17), giving special attention to "the states and processes by which people can experience profound bonds within the Being (Self), overcoming the consciousness of the Ego". (Mânzat, 2002, p. 17) By looking "beyond the person" (or "above the person"), this theoretical trend provides an image of the states of the ego, a representation of those emotional, cognitive and behavioural constellations approached at a certain point in life, their awareness allows the intellectual and emotional development of the individual with respect to his fellow man. In this way, one can find the way to answer a series of questions that each of us has encountered at a certain moment of our existence: *Who am I? Why do I behave in this way?, What is the origin of my behaviours? How did I get here?* etc.; all these interrogations, as well as many other derived ones, represent the individual's desire to understand and deepen those transpersonal experiences accessible to the individual, as well as to stimulate the process of individual development through the permanent change of "psychic and spiritual structures" (Mânzat, 2002, p. 18)

According to this model of human and individual assessment, we are responsible for everything we live in, so our destiny does not have an a priori nature, it is not created by mockers or quack, but by ourselves. It is in our power to build a certain life, or to rebuild a certain "system of desires and values". In this way, the philosophical principles on which transpersonalism is based are the following: ♪ people are OK, ♪ everyone has the ability to think (excepting those individuals suffering some disorders or brain damage), ♪ the individual is directly responsible for his life, and some capital decisions can only be changed by him; this last assumption highlights the antideterministic character of the transpersonal analysis. Of course, this theoretical model accepts the influence of interaction with others, those particularities of social influence, which are very pregnant during childhood, when we are strongly dependent on the "big ones", but these decisions can be revised, adapted or replaced with others. The "affective, cognitive, but mostly behavioural, metamorphosis" approaching a *state of the Ego*, that "consistent pattern of emotional thoughts and emotions, directly linked to an appropriate behavioural pattern" (Berne, 1966), which points out that the behavioural and affective side develops and manifests itself concurrently. From a communications perspective, transpersonal analysis describes what happens when an individual interacts with another, and the verbal and /or nonverbal exchanges are called *transactions.*

At the basis of the development of the paradigm regarding the *states of the Ego* (McGraw, 2003), three models were grounded: *the state of the Father Ego*, *the state of the Child Ego and the state of the Adult Ego*, all these represent the most accessible part of the three psychological Freudian instances

(Id, Ego and Super Ego or Self, Ego and Super Ego). The two approaches to psyche cannot be overlapped, even if the Father Ego feels like the Super Ego (the one full of norms, rules, observation, and criticism), the Adult Ego state reminds the Ego, (the one who tests the reality), and the Child Ego looks like the Self (the one dominated by desires and instincts uncensored). The major difference between the two models of psychic representation is that the states of the Ego are observable behavioural terms, while the psychic instances are purely theoretical concepts. It is impossible to observe the Self of an individual, but we can easily appreciate the behaviour as the state of Child Ego through his rebellious, spontaneous, whimsical behaviour. Moreover, the three states enunciated by Bern refer to people with their own unique identities, while the Freudian instances are generalized. In other words, an individual in the child's state does not act in general, as is specific to the Self, on the contrary, it exhibits specific behaviours, thoughts and attitudes (emotions).

A. Nuță (2005, p 14) expresses the three states in a very simple manner, thus defining them as follows:

- "I am in the Child Ego state whenever I behave, think and feel the same way as when I was a child" - encompasses the instinctual ensemble of the individual: desires, needs, pleasure or contempt without a specific cause, his spontaneity and creativity etc.;

- "I am in the Father Ego state whenever I behave, think and feel in the same way as my parents"- are those cognitive behavioural and emotional components perceived by their own parents or to some significant persons in the relational space of the individual (teachers, patrons, domineering colleague);

- "I am the Adult Ego state whenever I behave, think and feel in ways that are direct answers to what happens "*hic et nunc*""- dominated by objectivism, the individual collects data and information, evaluates and interprets, listens and communicates, especially in immediate cases requiring a rapid solution to the problem.

The transpersonal analysis has triggered a signal on the *Ego states* interchange, since each of us succeeds in creating a "self-portrait" and believes that the created image is the result of the evaluations based on the self-worth of other individuals, as well as the knowledge of "exterior", of the world around us can only be appreciated by reference to our own axiological systems, this phenomenon occurs more or less consciously. Starting from this reasoning, one can explain the position towards an individual's life, namely the proportion occupied by the feeling of being OK or not-OK, this determines a certain quality of the relationship with the others. It influences the degree of openness of an individual when interacting with others. *I deserve this*! *I'm smart and well prepared*! *I have effective resources to deal with today's society! I'm nothing good*! *I do not deserve this! I'm an incapacitated*! The polarity of attitudes to one's own person influences the perception of one's own person: I + (I am OK - self-acceptance, the individual feels good in his own skin, is pleased with his potential, is in agreement with himself) or I – I am not OK - is in conflict with the own Ego). Of course, these polarizations vary throughout one's live, there are moments when we come to "embrace" ourselves with satisfaction for our own achievements, we are proud and happy about us, as there are moments when self-esteem is affected when the non-OK state dominates us a lot.

Four bipolar combinations can be developed in relation to each other

1. I+ YOU+; (I am OK, YOU are OK);

2. I+ YOU-; (I am OK, but YOU are not OK);

3. I - YOU+; (I am not OK, but YOU are OK); and

4. I- YOU-; (I am not OK but neither are YOU).

Each of these four life positions stems from more or less conscious existential beliefs and attitudes, planted in a person's minds from the very first childhood and continued through subsequent experiences, these states can juggle around two central axes, forming four dials - *Corral OK* (Frank Ernst); we use the (+) or OK + sign for the case where value is assigned and the (-) or OK (-) value for the missing value assignment. To better understand this permutation of the four positions, we propose the detailed presentation of each of them, as well as, at the same time, a comparative analysis:

1. *I am* OK, *You are* OK is how to resonate optimally with others, to be in optimal relationship with them, the individual manifests an optimistic, active attitude, which implies self-acceptance and self-satisfaction, allowing him to be open and receptive to others, to new relationships: *I believe in people. I trust you and the fact that you trust me too! I am also available because you are also available and honest*. An individual faced with a problem manifests a proactive attitude, appeals to *Winner's Optics*, seeks to find the best solution and not to find the guilty. It is specific to Adult and Free Child state. The individual manifests unreserved emotions felt at certain times. Living the position of life (++) means you only learn from time to time on the other positions;

2. *I am OK, You Are Not OK* - is the attitude of the superior who addresses the subordinates, seeking to dominate, intimidate, wanting perfection, uniqueness and vengeance, hence the hypersensitivity to criticism and hostile behavior if is not appreciated as expected. He is a fair, insensitive and tyrannical person in the relationship with others. The dominant feelings of this position are mistrust, anger, compassion; contempt and disgust, always tend to the power that he adores: *When I am in this position, I am pleasantly impressed by myself and I abhor you wholeheartedly. I am the first, then the rest*! *Everything is right to me!* The position of life is specific to the Persecutor, who not only controls his "subordinates", regardless of the relationships he has with the others, but seeks to impose their own point of view. On the other hand, he can also play the role of the Savior, who offers his help not to increase the autonomy of others, but to enforce his power and make others dependent: *Without me you will not be able to do it!;*

3. *I am not OK, You are OK* - it is the attitude of the obedient individual with a deficient self-esteem, hence the tendency to denigrate his own person, while the arrogance and the infatuation of others admire it unacceptably. Chooses a banal life, ready to pay dearly for any gesture and attention from the others, especially since these individuals are not capable of anything significant and worth not rewarding. Turning to insignificant activities, looking for deplorable partners, showing great uncertainty, hence the constant need to receive directions and approvals, easily take over the guilt of others: *I could only be so chaffed, I'm not good for nothing! I'm an incapacitated! Only you can help me! Without you I can die!* The beloved role is that of the Victim, played to exhaustion, has a very low affective tone, is depressed, disappointed, and easily appeals to self-destructive and self-centered act;

4. *I am not OK, you are not OK* denotes an attitude of resignation, of helplessness before the fate: *What is the meaning of life? Everything is superfluous! Nothing works, nothing makes sense! Why should I live anymore?* The existence of others, the unfolding of events is seen from the position of the passive spectator, confronted with problems blaming others for their own failure, always postpones the fulfillment of duties, tasks and optimal actions to improve the situation. It is dominated by anxiety and mistrust, helplessness, and appreciates everything as derisory. The position of life varies with the context, the temporary psychic disposition, the psycho-emotional maturity of the partner. They are positive when they are around the family, when they are praised by their inferior, but they become suddenly negative when they are hit by problems *they cannot face, when everything is meaningless*!

It is necessary to emphasize that each of us juggles with these attitudes depending on the psycho-social context, but one is dominant. The position of life is a way of evaluating and interpreting the moments of existence and, by all means an infallible form of being.

As mentioned above, throughout the life of the person, the individual appeals to different forms of reconfiguration of the relationship with the others, regardless of the degree of significance held by the other. Thus, the child understands at one time that he cannot always demand the attention and affection of the mother, so that he is turning to other forms of satisfaction by referring to other family members, which leads to the widening of the "social area" by appreciating the satisfaction offered by school colleges, prefects, neighbors, etc. Throughout life, the individual faces two important aspects that will determine a certain "destiny", the first one is to maintain and continue a certain affectionate mother-baby climate, and the second relates to the desire to relive this intimacy. (De Lassus *apud* Berne, 2006) These two dilemmas awaken a series of desires that run counter to general social norms, which leads to a reorganization and change of interactions with the peers. This explains the need for each of us to know how to interact with each other, to have a purpose for social action, to respond to *What are we here for? What is the reason for this gesture?* All this explains the need for a structure that is acutely felt by any person, is that form of avoiding boredom, maintaining an optimal affective level, maintaining control over the time of communication with others and ourselves. Building, developing and maintaining a balance between the three states of the Ego: *Father, Adult,* and *Child* allow maintaining an internal and external state of well-being, fruitful and effective communication with the fellow men, preventing possible dissensions and, last but not least, genuine and valid personal development.

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