

Necessity of Rudolf Dreikurs

Prof. Psic. Yair Hazán

There are milestones in life that we look with a nostalgic or optimist feeling. In 1972 Dreikurs died and I entered the teaching formation, without even knowing he had existed. The following year came the coup d'état, and a dictatorship was imposed from the north in collaboration with the fascists in the south of the continent. Previous one had been a turbulent year, with electoral fraud. Also in 1972, *Editorial Paidós* published "A parents' guide to child discipline" by Dreikurs in association with Loren Grey. This is the only legal edition we have in Spanish language. We need to have it reprinted together with the rest of Dreikurs work as a practical-theoretical guide to positive discipline, without punishment or rewards, with Adlerian logical consequences. This is pure democracy, and that is the reason it could not thrive in the authoritarian model of which I have been making reference. That work, as all Dreikurs books, have slept in the shelves and it is essential that we nourish and change psychotherapist, social workers, teachers, parents, and all society with it. Because it postulates equality between all men based on the logic of living together, as well as the Adlerian key of man as social being.

In 1997, once the democracy returned, we were able to establish the Center of Adlerian Studies and acquire a legal character, after more than ten years of preparations. There have passed sixty years since the death of Adler and a century after Dreikurs birth. We had to wait in antechambers many days to find a place to make the tribute, and the presentation in society. We had to explain who was Adler in different state offices, what was his work, and his contribution to psychotherapy and humanity. The only place where there was no necessity to reiterate the explanations was the Pedagogy Museum, that afterwards became the principal confine of our symposiums, in order to share culture and formation, without asking anyone to pay for their attending to them.

Dreikurs used to say, speaking of change, principal objective of psychotherapy and counseling, that it is possible to change our lives and the ones beside us, just changing ourselves. That is essential but difficult to understand. To the revolutionaries of Parisian May '68, they needed twenty years to realize it; revolution begins within each one. That inner change there is a coincidence with a high exponent of Spanish philosophy, Ortega y Gasset, who says: I am me and my circumstances. In an Adlerian note, it is what we call internal and external ambient.

How wonderful that he has spoken of democracy and equal participation, in the most competitive and capitalist country in the world. Participation and democracy, where many people do not vote. What he was looking for was true democracy, of which someone said, today is "a way of life and almost secondarily a form of government". That is the same as socialism in liberty.

He taught us to identify our mistakes, our mistaken goals, according to the Adlerian doctrine, as Lidia Sicher said "neurosis is unmasked as a social deviation". That is why he prepared and systematized with efficacy the prevention or psycho-hygiene, above all through child guidance and group therapy. Especially for alcoholics, where he integrated important contributions from a gestaltic of the first times as Kurt Lewin.

He insisted to change the name of the bad understood individual psychology, for "teleoanalysis" that means analysis of purpose, the goal of our behavior and thoughts. He found ICASSI, open Adlerian summer schools, meeting forum to help continued

training, as contribution to knowledge and congeniality based on respect. We invite you to assist sometime. Next year is in Romania.

Dreikurs was a socialist and labor union activist, where he met Adler and started to collaborate with him. I think of him as a man who felt a prophetic mission and was knocked by exile and ostracism, when fascism swept the psycho-pedagogic clinics that helped prevent so many neuroses, psychosis and diminished delinquency in the fecund Vienna of his first times.

Once Adler had disappeared, he went to the place he had occupied to continue his work and save it. In opposition to others, as Titze inform us, he never was a crypto-Adlerian, or a shameful Adlerian, but he declared it in his teachings and attitudes.

I recall, as you may remember, the story of Is, that ingenuous story of a village drowned by the sea, as narrated by French Breton fishers, that Renán tells in "Remembrances of infancy and youth". Fishers assure that in days of calm you can hear the distant toll of its melodious bells, and in days of tempest you can see the top of the submerged church towers. There isn't a more hateful mistake, says Renán, than believing that you serve a cause slandering its founders. All the events in the history of profound psychology are pages of the same book, and as Renán would add, "I never feel firmer in my liberal faith than when I remember the miracles from the past faith".

Those who knew him directly, tell us he had virtues as comprehension, which goes beyond to be a good listener. Dilthey's comprehension where to comprehend is to penetrate. He had a singular and efficient understanding of Adlerian theory, and contributed with his artistic creativity. He was a grateful man. Allow me another digression, for some time ago an old Presbyterian called me to thank me the success in the psychotherapy of one of his remitted patients, and marked out that a grateful man is surely a happy man. That is why I am certain that Dreikurs was a happy man. To that, he added his social commitment for a constant preparation of a better society, always perfectible. Here, he found support in the Adlerian assumption of Kurt Lewin, that there is nothing more practical than a good theory. Therefore the necessity to be consistent, and he was. He understood what our old teachers of philosophy taught: the need of coherence between theory and practice, what we call *praxistica*. This is related to the new concepts of *autoplastia*, *aloplastia* and resilience, with germs in Adler theory.

In our lifestyle there is a private logic, concept he created as synonym of private intelligence of Adler's. If nowadays, Gardner can classify intelligence and Goldman speaks of personal, interpersonal, or emotional intelligence, it is because Dreikurs had previously prepared the field for these concepts to be assimilated in this time. The essential of that intelligence is interpersonal relations, and learning to live together.

I want to quote some illustrative endorsements to his contribution, people who coincide in seeing him as an outstanding and modernizer disciple of Adler, one is Bela Szekely, and the other Flachier del Alcazar, who together with Michael Titze hold that his writings can be considered the official expression of Adlerian doctrine.

Dr. Neufield worked for the denomination of our practice as teleoanalysis, according to the Adlerian idea of analyzing goals to overcome our mistakes and furthermore to reach a better future. Loyal to Adler's consign "the past you have already lost, now you have the future". From there, Berne goes on to show that some conspicuous representative of profound psychology forgot future and lost themselves and their patients "playing Archaeology".

When Erich Stern published his monumental work "La psicoterapia en la actualidad", reedited by Editorial Universitaria from Buenos Aires (EUDEBA), he summoned Rudolf Dreikurs as lecturer from the Adlerian psychotherapy. There, he

wrote a luminous article that is a major textbook in the formation of our psychotherapist and counselors. In that text, he elaborated that to delimited situations of practical compromise it is necessary counseling and education, whereas to modify the structure of personality (sic), psychotherapy is essential. Adlerian psychology has three singular characteristics: to be holistic, teleological and social. He bequeathed us a guide-concept in psychotherapy, in diagnosis and prognosis: “to label is to disable”. That is where we find an unsuspected communion between Thomas Szasz and our postulates.

Dreikurs insisted in working with early memories, praxis assumed by the new models in psychotherapy, and though they may not recognize the contributions of Adler and Dreikurs, we welcome them, because both of them were more interested in the progress of science than in personal acknowledgement. It is none of the less significant his technique of *paradoxical intervention in psychotherapy*, from which Victor Frankl and Milton Erickson have taken as well as the systemic psychology.

The Adlerian method as explained by Dreikurs consists of four steps in a continuum: 1. relation patient – therapist, 2. analysis or research of personality or lifestyle, 3. Interpretation or explanation, 4. attitude change or reorientation. If this last point is not achieved the therapeutic process or counseling is ineffective. Point 1 and 4 are common to psychotherapy and counseling. Everything is expression of the Adlerian teaching that errors are made during childhood that deform the world for the child and the adult he/she will become.

To this point, we have made a succinct summary to the need of reediting his work in Spanish language and forwarding his thinking. This is our tribute, carrying on his example for the time to come. The same said LePlay respecting French Revolution: the only way to honor revolution is continuing it.

In the centennial of the first edition of Adler’s work, Study of Organ Inferiority, we carried out the first International Adlerian Congress that took place in Latin America, here in Uruguay. There, Mag. Shaul Shalev, a direct disciple of Dreikurs, gave a workshop in parenting and counseling, and a few days ago we made a similar one with teachers and children from a public school in La Teja (Montevideo), that culminated with the picture showing part of this tribute. This is mobilization of kindness, in the understanding, with Alba López de Quiroga, that a man who loves children is always good.

Adlerians are also a family, as Dr. Ugo Sodini has written to me. This means that we also have similarities and differences, some which can be overcome reading and understanding the chapter matter of words that can be found in “*Logica viva*” by our greatest philosopher, Carlos Vaz Ferreira.

Let’s remember what Hegel said, a free man is not envious, he rejoices in the existence of greatness. That is why Dreikurs could collaborate with Adler. In accordance to the Pauline epistle “to all that is beautiful and virtuous and worthy of praise, we should pay attention”. This is the foundation of positive psychology, psychotherapy and discipline, without magical thinking, with much work, sympathy and humor, for the progress of science and Humankind.

Piaget, a constructivist exponent as Adler and Dreikurs, showed us the cognitive conflict and conceptual change. Dreikurs prepared us to make it effectively, in the less traumatic way. This knowledge is indispensable for every institute of teachers training (*Instituto Normal, Instituto de Profesores Artigas, Enseñanza Técnica, Centro de Formación de Educadores Sociales, Licenciatura de Ciencias de la Educación*, and so forth) and all the agents of the educative system, formal or not.

The efficacy of this practice is more than demonstrated with results and epistemological solidness.

Today, we have here a convergence that involves the Cronos and Topos, similar concepts in the language of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Adler and Dreikurs: the Zegeist and the Orgeis. The former concept is the spirit of the epoch that makes possible and necessary this tribute, and the second one, the place of meeting of these spirits. Like in Kant, when he pointed out that space is the form of our external experience (context), while time is the form of our internal experience (subjectivity).

I think all the Adlerians in the world are looking this way given the presence of Eva Dreikurs Ferguson, vigorous activist of ICASSI. And also because this woman occupies the chair of Adler.

I will conclude these words with the feeling and thinking that could have expressed Dreikurs at the end of his lifetime, in a verse by Saint Paul: "I feel that the end of my career is near, I have fought the good battle, I have preserved the faith".

Thanks!

Montevideo, September 9th of 2009.