

## **RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT AND THE CONCEPT OF PERSON**

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The aim of education is the well-being of the person, but "it conflicts" with his/her freedom.

This is the challenge and the fascination of education: it goes into the mystery of each person.

Education is something more than information, instruction, and training. It suggests that life contains in itself an objective, a "target", i.e. the "realization" of the person that leads to well-being. Education is, therefore, an ethical obligation to prevent the young from suffering. This can derive from life choices originating from lack of education.

Moreover, through education the person can leave the egoistic "I" projecting him/herself towards the others and then avoid the breaking of the "social contract" between people. Education is an economic investment. Beyond valuing and giving space to the youths' resources, it will contribute to the improvement of society and avoid the investments for the "recovery" of behaviours at risk.

We can broadly agree on educational purposes, but we cannot agree when we define educational modalities and curricula. In fact, every person is free to choose his/her educational model starting from the definition of person. The result on the person with education will vary with varying degrees of self-realization and health. The aim of this article is to propose the etymological meaning of "educating" and to analyse the origins of the actual differences among meanings of and approaches to education.

Key Words:

### **1. Introduction**

Humanity is "condemned" to examine for each generation the issue of education, since the adaptive behaviour is not transmitted in a hereditary way. Education represents a "conquest" that marks the strength and, at the same time, the weakness of human beings. Having to restart from the beginning exposes us to the risks of educational failure, but it is also the "instrument" that has allowed us to clearly differentiate ourselves from animals.

In fact, we notice more and more that the conscious exercise of the will,

freedom and human responsibility can only come from a fragile and hard educational art. However, it still represents the only way to pick the apexes of the potentialities of everyone, opening new horizons to the development, greatness and the dignity of human beings. Education is necessary because human beings cannot make good personal and social choices by means of instinct. The instinct needs "guiding" by the reason to obtain that true and full realization at which everyone aims. The youths themselves ask, in a more or less explicit way, to be educated. Otherwise, a feeling of abandonment from the adults and disorientation can turn into uneasiness or existential disease. Education is also a need dictated from the desire to avoid the fracture of the "social contract" that exists within a community because it is through education that a person can exit from the egoistic "I" and project him/herself towards the others.

Education is an incentive to the economy and social development because it allows us to realise the best potentialities of everyone and to avoid the huge investments for the "repair" of the damages and the "recovery" of all those people who go away from the social context because of behaviours at risks or illnesses. I believe that we do agree on educational purposes, but we do not agree on educational modalities and curricula.

What is striking is the observation that educational plans do not reach the same results with the pupil, but get results in different degrees of well-being and health. In fact, experience shows us that people react in various ways to the same problems and situations because of different temperaments and especially because of different education.

Why do we keep proposing educational plans that do not take into account these theoretical premises that proved to be effective in the past as well as today?

If it is true that we must think of the educational model as something linked to the historical moment, experience allows us to say that, to obtain positive results, we need to remain faithful to the original meaning and the true objectives of education. The aim of this article is to propose the etymological meaning of "education" and to understand the differences between various meanings and educational plans.

## 2. Definitions of education

The term "education" derives from two Latin verbs: "**educare**" and "**e-ducere**", which have three different meanings. The first is a verb meaning: to raise, to nourish, to cure, to make to grow, to inform, to instruct. Such definitions can be summarized in a single word that is *to "form", "to give shape"*. It acts on the single person and suggests that there is a person who educates and one who receive education.

The Latin verb "E-ducere" has two meanings: the first one is to extract, to let out, to draw to the light. All these synonyms indicate that the pupil is the bearer of self and innate characteristics and the task of the educator is to "extract" the existing resources. Therefore, the person being educated plays an active part even in modifying the educator. This takes us to give a bi-directional meaning to education. There is a second meaning of the verb "E-ducere": i.e., to lead, to guide towards an arrival point, to show a goal, to give a direction. The verb suggests that one of the tasks of education is to help to pick the purpose, the aim, the sense, the meaning, the plan, the objective, the target of life.

The two Latin verbs and the three meanings we have just seen give a complete vision of the two roles participating in the educational action. The **educator** informs, instructs, values and gives quality to education. The **person being educated** receives the lessons of the educator and invests his/her talent for his/her good as well as society's, thus giving a personal and creative answer to the mystery of life. The vitality and the dynamism of the educational action comes from the relation between these two identities. It has proved its effectiveness for several years allowing the development of our civilization. However, other terms have been used lately: formation, information, instruction, training. There is a high risk of misunderstanding because they are not synonymous with education.

Education is something more than information because it indicates that life has meaning and sense and is a goal and an objective. However, education differs from simple informative methods because it forces the educator to put him/herself into play through personal example by creating a relation with the pupil based on fundamental values such as love, truth

and beauty.

From these considerations, we notice how much the definition of education is interlaced with the concept of person and it is on this base that we can centre the following comments.

*The educational model is relative to the concept of person*

For a person to be able to choose his/her own style of life, it is necessary, as we have already stated, to continue to educate. However, as the current modalities are explained, too often, this means personal and social engagement that succeeds in proposing various educational models, with modest results and, sometimes, contrary effects regarding how much is expected (Brera, 1993; Hofferth, 1991; Bartlett, 1981; Rooney & Murray, 1996; Makkai, Ronda, et al.; Ross, Carson, 1988; Schaps, Di Bartolo, et al., 1974).

If it is true that the educational model expresses the conception we have of a person, it is possible to answer this single question leaving from the ascertainment of how the definition of person has changed both at philosophical and social levels in the last decades.

In the past, the meaning of “person” has changed. Many others bases have been added and: no one meaning prevails the others. Therefore, every new definition of “person” follows various meanings and models of education, yet a value scale is not attributed to these even if not all adhere to the meaning of education described above. In response to the question, “What is the person?” I have collected five answers that seem to represent what happens in current society. They are presented in the table and for each one are given these consequences: the aim of life, the type of law that regulates life, the educational objective, the results that are obtained, and the type of coping that it inspires. The meaning of coping is our way to face the truth and the diverse situations of life. It is natural that every scheme has limits. In the following paragraphs, the various definitions are discussed in terms of their influence on the educational models.

### What is the person?

***Some definitions and consequences: aim of life, kind of law, educational aim, social results, coping.***

There is no answer	<i>A "Superior Animal"</i>	<i>A "Creature with body and mind"</i>	<i>"God's own image and likeness"</i>	<b>A "Social creature"</b>
Life has no aim	<i>The aim is "to make the species survive"</i>	<i>The aim is to realize the "Ideal self"</i>	<i>The aim is to follow God's wishes</i>	<b>Everyone has his aim in life</b>
No law exists	<i>The "Law" is an obvious instinct</i>	<i>The Law is the "Natural" one "Don't do to others what you don't want done to yourself"</i>	<i>The Law is that of love "Love the others as you love yourself", "Love your enemies"</i>	The law is that created by men
Education is not needed	<i>Education aims to "Teach instinct"</i>	<i>The aim of education is to "realize the ideal self"</i>	<i>Education leads to accept God's grace</i>	Education means "respect of the social laws"
Necrophiliac society (goes towards death)	<i>Unsatisfied society</i>	<i>Mature society, integrated, loyal, harmonic</i>	<i>Society experiences paradise</i>	Multiethical, tolerant (or skidded) society
<b>Autodestructive Coping</b>	<b><i>Coping "of adaptation" (or animal)</i></b>	<b><i>Coping "of will" (human or rational)</i></b>	<b><i>Coping "of grace" (or supernatural)</i></b>	<b>Everyone has his own way coping (public and private)</b>

**a. We do not know who the person is: no need to educate**

In the first column it is possible to recognise that part of society which has been asked the question "What is the person", answers he/she does not know. He/she asserts that, since the human mystery is unfathomable, it is useless to give an answer to this question. On the contrary it is better not even to consider the question. Obviously from this "answer" we cannot conclude a meaning of life.

This can explain the meaning of renunciation to the educational task: why commit oneself to educate, why submit to rules without aim? This can also explain the intolerance of part of society towards laws, towards the limits stated by the public spirit as well as of the rules of education.

This column takes the philosophy of the "weak thought" that makes every aspect of the life weak.

Indeed for want of reference of absolute value of the person, not only do we have a weak existential meaning, but even a weak self-esteem, affectivity, health, sexuality, economy, society, and so forth.

This view leads to nihilism: to a society made of people "devoted to nothing" and to the danger of expressing their own potentialities. They do not strive toward a personal growing horizon and social development: on the contrary, they withdraw to an egoistic and depressive dimension. Prospects of cultural, emotional, economic and playful peculiarity do not attract them; on the contrary every action seems pervaded with a destructive shadow.

The ability of enjoy life is lacking in these people; therefore, they do not appreciate what can give them these feelings.

Fun, spare time, sport, food and drinks, sexuality itself are traced back to the spectre of death more than to a sunrise of life. So, any chance of pleasure is refused or produces self-destructive instinct and one's death like with car accidents, alcohol and drug consumption, anorexic behaviour, destruction of the places where parties are held, refusal of natural sexuality, or the killing of the partner at the end of sexual relations.

It is, therefore, a society that "destroys "more" than it "produces" in terms of energies and social resources. It can be called "necrophilia" because it broods over death, desires death and goes towards self

destruction.

Those who live in this dimension consider people to be inanimate objects to dispose of as much as one prefers psychological or physical destruction.

This process of "objectification" of people could explain why recent studies by psychiatrists show that when they test unjustified killers they state that they deal with healthy people. We are talking about people who behave in a thoughtless way without a reason and with lack of values towards any person or thing.

This attitude of facing reality can be defined as "coping with the nothing or the self-destructive". This quality "of the nothing" or negative coping can be assigned to either the person or to that part of society that closes its horizon of hope, does not plan for the future, and tends to drag others towards the chasm. From an educational point of view, we cannot expect anything from these people; on the contrary, there is the risk that, not only do they hamper any action done to stop this possibility, but they come to the point of making converts through counter-education.

**b. The person is a "superior animal": to educate means to train the instinct.**

In the second column the person is considered a "superior animal": it means that he/she is judged by the standards of an animal although with additional abilities. We can see a reflection of this way of thinking either in the behaviour and nowadays in the humane-like consideration of domestic animals, or in the way of dealing with expressions, feelings and human behaviour from mass-media.

Some television programs, so-called scientific, already treat people like animals, when they talk about falling in love, sexual attraction, human relations or other aspects of life, mentioning only hormones, chemical reactions, endorphins, nervous connections and conditioned reflexes. The mention of the identity of the subject to affection, to the mystery of love, to the strength of reason and will, to reasons and values that lead to

resistance to be instinctively influenced is missing or at best marginal. It has also neglected the deep meaning of our behaviours.

According to this logic, between human and animal beings, there is only a difference in species that is linked to natural evolution. This interpretative model of human reality places us in a dependent and instinctive situation, neglecting any possibility of free choice even to an educational level.

These statements lead to the conclusion that the purpose in life is to repopulate and increase the number of individuals in the group as it happens in the animal species.

As a consequence, the “law” that leads to this goal in life is the instinctive drive.

According to this way of understanding the person, the task of “education” is that of training the instinct and neglecting any possibility that the subject has a chance of choosing behaviour that is free, motivated, and full of meaning. The subject is not guided towards truth, but he/she is submitted to a process of passive adaptation. It is not that his/her freedom and responsibility is put to action. Rather, his/her conditioned, instinctive reflexes resist external pressure, recognise and avoid dangers in life, win competitions and avoid dangerous consequences of instinctive behaviours. Psychological-social educational programs and mass educational programs follow this philosophy. The first ones are based on psychological-social theory that considers risky behaviours as solutions taken at a superficial level. These programs aim to modify the behaviour making the teenager acquire capacities of adaptability through the increment of psychological-relational abilities. Mass educational programs, on the other hand, involve the social community. They are based on the spread of discouraging images through media. The aim is that of introjecting an attitude of refusal towards dangerous behaviours as a result of the knowledge of the dangerous effects and of the increasing fear of consequences.

These systems have tried to settle on instinct, without the help of reason and the critical ability of the individual on his or her rationality, affectivity, responsibility, and values. According to this pattern, to educate shows a low level of efficiency and duration for a possible positive effect. In fact,



these interventions, when controlled, showed their ineffectiveness in producing an important and lasting statistical change of risky behaviours. On the contrary, sometimes, they give birth to an increasing number of risky behaviours (**paradox effect**)(Brera, 1993; Hofferth, 1991; Bartlett, 1981; Rooney & Murray, 1996; Makkai, Ronda et al., 1991; Ross, Carson, 1988; Schaps, Di Bartolo, et al., 1988; Smart, Fejer, 1974). The use of these methods for years has deluded many parents and educators, besides having weighed on taxpayers, without having guaranteed any success.

Moreover, this educational philosophy has aimed more at a concept of reducing the damage due to the risky behaviour than on the abolition of the behaviour itself.

The result has been to educate a mode of food voracity, but paying attention to eat only “light” food with low calories, to drink alcohol abstaining from driving, to free sexuality apart from any emotional dimension and any project of living together, but protected from pregnancy and sexual diseases. What has been thought to take drugs “safely”, apart from alcohol (or in small quantities).

But in this “environment” that considers teenagers little more than animals, how would it be possible to convince males to renounce the raping of women when they feel sexual instinct? Unfortunately, even laws and the risk of punishment are not able to control the instinct.

Much reasoning could be of tolerance for the essential difference existing between people and animals, but it does not have anything to do with this article. I restrict myself to say that this point of view of humanity contradicts a reality of people who ask, consciously or unconsciously, a question of meaning and awareness of their existence.

Moreover, if the theory that declares us to be simply advanced animals could be true, everything that increases the chance of surviving should assure us much well-being and individual health as well as an increase of population in general. Reality denies this hypothesis and creates problems to this theory. In fact, the conquering of new territories and the increasing of economic resources have not automatically reduced the humane aggressiveness nor give way to a proportional increase of the population. Nor is it possible to automatically notice a rise of personal and social

satisfaction.

Among “goods” that do not guarantee themselves the well-being of the person, those that can be included are success, money, power, sex being an end in itself, and physical appearance.

Restricting ourselves to the training of the individual results in a “full up and desperate” society in that it is never happy and feels bad even though it is rich in goods.

It is a society always with an “open mouth” that complains and continuously asks for new material goods in the attempt of satisfying an unfilled “inner vacuum.”

But this kind of pattern of interpreting reality is not enough to satisfy us.

The “coping of adaptability” will be the best for animals but remains unsuited to humans.

**c. The person is a "being endowed with body and mind": education leads to the realization of the "ideal self"**

If being treated or behaving as animals is unsuited to the humane race, the headline of the third column allows us to take a remarkable step and to widen the horizon of personal meaning and value. To be defined as “being endowed with body and mind”, the mind here represents everything that goes beyond the person’s instinctive and biological structure: namely, will, need of freedom and responsibility, question of meaning, desire for an absolute, creative capability, chance of love and giving up oneself for others, and so on. According to this definition, the instinct is not denied, but ruled by reason to be in service of a noble aim: that of self-fulfilment. According to Brera, this statement, to be felt and attained, must be capable of satisfying the three basic features that are present in the “Ideal self”: (Brera, 1993) being able to love, know the truth, and realize beauty. These needs, present in every person and achieved by means of will and resources, make us feeling good (Callegaro, 1997).

According to this interpretation of human reality, the meaning of life is

to fulfil the “Ideal self,” being considered the human being’s congenital pattern that leads him to look for and to realize well-being in self and others.

To reach this goal the “minimum” law of reference is the natural one that says: “do not kill, do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself”. It is called “natural law” because it is inscribed in every person, expressed in every culture, and is not the result of learning. This simple rule allowed the development of the humane race through the ages, even though the free person has many times fallen short of fulfilling it.

In this pattern the aim in life is to realize the “ideal self” . Therefore, even education addresses to this. The goal is to make people “humane”: that is, to give biological, instinctive, but even psychical, rational, emotional, inventive vitality.

Thus, everybody can experience such a self-realisation and gratification to bring him/her away from behaving dangerously to feeling good. This can happen with respect to the experience of the mystery of life, the development of a feeling of value for his/her own life, the increase in value of personal resources, giving meaning to the risk of living, and producing love and truth and beauty that builds dignity in human life (Brera, 1993).

All this has to happen inside a teenager’s significant relationship with the educator who is involved, feels the same, and is available to go together into the mystery of life. These conditions have beneficial results on teenagers’ health and school behaviour (Berto, Busolin, Callegaro, 1997; Ronchin, Brera, 1999; Marchetti, Berton et al., 2000).

A society of people living with existential wealth and happiness is a mature, integrated, and jointly responsible society where social relations are strong. This society worries about the weak, believes in logic and science as means of the search for truth, respects the natural laws as tools of freedom and well-being, and pursues beauty and harmony. It is a society that grows, develops, and holds out against difficulties. All cultures are based and developed on these principles. The past, however, does not guarantee the future of humanity. If we want to transmit to future generations these ideals, we have to continue to educate them until they

acknowledge the worth of the “ideal self”. We have to push them to train the will to pursue it. It is the will that decides human behaviour and, therefore, even results. Subsequently, I have defined this pattern of behaviour as “coping with reality”. The challenge set by this interpretation of human reality is that of the sufficiency of human strength giving an answer to the fundamental needs set by the “ideal self”. Is it possible to love others, discover the true purpose of life, and realize beauty and harmony without a transcendent vision of existence?

**d. The person is " God's own image and likeness ".**

In this column, the person is classified as “God's own image and likeness.” Without going into the theological meaning of this statement, the statement allows us to advance in quality and a human being becomes value not only a creature of the universe but a representation of the Creator. In this case the value of life is not based only in the survival of the species or in realizing the “ideal self”, rather the goal is to go back to where we started: to the Creator's presence. The goal is to recognize the need for the infinite in every person.

The law to comply with is love. The law of love is supernatural and therefore nearly impossible to obey with human strength alone.

“Love others as yourself” and “Love your enemies” are statements that changed the way people interpret relationships, yet this is not only Jesus Christ's advise. Voices, not Christian, direct humanity to love. August Comte proposes a religion with the moral of altruism and the basic principle “to live for the other”; Feuerbach, one of the fathers of modern atheism, asserts that, “The first and supreme law must be ‘man's love for man’ “ (Lubich, 2000). To live love becomes a “reasonable” proposal even for those who stay at a human level, as we see in the above definition, because they realize that to love is the only possible solution to personal and public problems. The issue, therefore, is to understand whether it is possible to love only using human strength; or, because of its enormous effort, love needs more than one resource: the “Divine grace.” According

to Christianity we know that God never forsakes his children; rather God intervenes in different ways to help them realize themselves completely. Everything that God places at our disposal for our sake can be defined as "Grace". It is necessary to have a supernatural vision of life to recognise it. We do not have to withdraw to experience mystery.

This definition of human reality is not in contrast with the previous two and it is not unnatural. On the contrary, it exalts the intrinsic value of the person since human nature becomes a "super nature." In the medical field, research recognizes that physical and mental health is linked to religious experience and benefits from it (Callegaro, 1997). The educator's intervention suggests the same objectives as the previous one, but let us appreciate the Grace, "the Divine intervention", in activity.

The educational projects give attention to supernatural reality with the chance of a religious answer to the question of the meaning of existence.

In this definition, the person distinguishes between those who believe in God, in a Creator's stop on a level suited to make society grow.

The result of this way of living is a society that has the chance of experimenting with Paradise on Earth: mutual love, harmony, the joy of life.

This is the "coping of Grace".

**e. The person is a "Social being": the education leads to respect the man's laws**

In the fifth column a human being is defined as a "social being" and the stress has been placed on his or her ability to relate to others. Apart from the fact that not everybody looks for contact with others, there are many examples of solitary individuals, this definition does not give a clear meaning of what a human being is and aim of his or her earthly presence. This definition includes only his or her qualities. This definition refers to a social organization, such as the State: a typical answer that does not put the stress on what a human being is but on how he or she relates to others. The task becomes limited to the regulation of human relationships. It is a

kind of interpretation that can confuse us because it is not at the same level of the previous three.

The State is not concerned with people's aim in life, but what concerns it is that the relationship between people does not create social problems. The law that rules human behaviour it is not a law inside the individual, mysterious in its origin, deep and unchangeable, but one that may change according to the will of organizing an individual's relationships. So, the law is the result of the will of the majority and of powerful groups: groups that do not automatically guarantee everybody's welfare. Therefore, it is possible to decide by majority what is legal even though it could be something that is unprofitable for everybody's welfare; such as the use of drugs, euthanasia, abortion, genocide and slavery. When a law becomes powerful and only a majority can change it but, the law is weak in the sense that its value is limited in space and time. This results in a weak education because it does not refer to absolute and unchangeable values and truths that are essential for a person's effective education. But what about a principle that is valid today and will no longer be valid tomorrow? Who will be obliged to respect it? In an educational system of this type which power, credibility and patterns of behaviour do the educators have to suggest if the young already know that they need to be the majority to have social and legal power? The word education assumes the existence of a goal to be reached, but how is it possible to educate if the rule can be changed at any time?

Although it is painful to say this, the education that only asserts the respect of state laws cannot be defined as a real education in the etymological sense of the word. It is something different. While the goal of real education is the society and person's well-being and health, the education that works only for state laws can be defined as a work of "social adaptation". In other words, it is a way to make everybody accept particular behaviour as normal. This underlies the results in terms of an individual's, social health and well-being. An effect of these principles could be the educational programs of the D.I.C.E. (Development in Contest Evaluation Model) type, where the objective to be reached is a community decision. The majority decides whether there is a problem or

not and where an intervention is needed. It can happen that one type of behaviour is considered normal by a community and fought by another. This way of acting gives birth to a “multi-ethical” society. In a multi-ethical society any opinion and behaviour become legitimate and may acquire ethic value when the law recognizes it. Therefore, the absolute principles of true-false, good-bad, and right-wrong fail, create a “social tolerance” towards any action or behaviour: the person who acts is not judged and neither is the action itself. According to this logic, it is only a matter of numbers if thieves, rapists, paedophiles, and so forth are still prosecuted: when they become the majority, they will have to be accepted and protected. If the presence and the value of an absolute law is ignored, sooner or later, we will have to tolerate everything else; if absolute limits do not exist anymore, everything becomes possible.

In this case there can be nothing but confusion, uncertainty, doubts, insecurity, disorder, and superficiality of life choices on a private or social level. The educational proposals, that become ambiguous and contradictory are so because they have to respect everybody's opinions; since none of these prevail over the others, there are reflections like those mentioned above. In a social atmosphere of this type, it is possible to develop a feeling of fear towards the future. If no rule is certain, everything becomes possible. There is no certainty as regards our safety and security.

We may deduce even from the statements of Godel's theorem applied to human beings that a person needs certain and absolute rules and cannot trust only his or her efforts to judge what is good and bad. Godel, logical mathematician and philosopher, in 1931 expressed a theorem that asserts how no closed system of cybernetic type (calculator, computers) with a logical ability (in others words, coherent with fixed basic axioms) could judge autonomously. It would only be able to say that a logical procedure cannot lead to contradictory conclusions. This closed system is not able to define whether the operation is right or wrong. If it is more or less coherent with the objectives decided, it has to be referred to a more complex system: to something that goes beyond, that goes over the system at issue. If we apply this law to a human being as "closed logical system",

how can we say that the law made by us is right or wrong for the aim to which it is destined? If the aim is that of creating good relationships between people, how could we be sure that human laws assure success? Experience confirms that, in the absence of certain and unchangeable laws such as the “natural law” (or better, that of “love”), there is no guarantee of mutual respect and of good human relationships. In the absence of these laws, the “big fish always eat the small fish”.

In refusing the unchangeable laws written in the human soul, the only chance of judgement on the goodness of our behaviour is that of the verification of facts. Since now, having lived collective failures and tragedies, that are the result of choices against natural laws, we have always had the possibility and the strength to correct ourselves. Unfortunately, in applying self-correcting patterns of proofs and mistakes, it is normal that many people have to pay with pain and, sometime, with life.

In a social background of this type, coping has to be, necessarily, on two levels: public and private. On one hand, the behaviour has to follow the state laws while in private everybody is free to chose their way of coping. In this social pattern, there will be a risk for transgression, althought in an unconscious and subtle way. Who carries out unconventional actions, indeed, could feel them not as something that goes against an absolute and unchangeable law, but rather as avant-garde actions. The behaviour will be tolerated as soon as it becomes the behavior of the majority.

For this reason the deviants always try to make converts.

### **3. Conclusion**

In this variety of concepts regarding the person, different educational patterns and styles are formed. Most of them have shown their limits and failures. Unfortunately, the diverse views present among several "educational intentions" can suggest to the young the impression of relativity of every educational pattern. This impression results in a



judgement of weakness, poor credibility, or indifference towards any educational proposal. The young are at risk to having confused ideas and patterns of behaviour incoherent with the need for well-being and health. These are suggested only by obvious advantage of the moment (ethics of circumstances).

It is necessary to give parents, teachers, and politicians educational tasks clearly stating that every educator is free to choose his or her educational model. It is also true that these expected results are different and positive for people to whom our educational care is addressed. We must emphasize that the damages of a bad and limited education punish the entire society of a civil nation. Therefore, educators should not shirk their responsibilities. Besides asking for educational freedom, they must ask for efficient intervention: to respect the educated, the society that pays for the intervention, and the positive or negative consequences.

In light of a deficiency in well-being and health, the possibility of contributing to a richer and deeper education exists. We are convinced that for an education with satisfactory results at personal and social levels, we must have the courage to point the way to the "coping of the will" and allow for a "coping of Grace".

No great "battles" are needed: only serious and objective work with the conviction that eventually the best educational model results.

#### *Riassunto*

L'educazione è finalizzata al bene del soggetto, ma "si scontra" con la sua libertà. In questo sta la difficoltà e il fascino dell'impegno educativo che ci addentra nel mistero di ogni persona.

L'educazione è qualcosa in più rispetto a informazione, istruzione, addestramento perché, oltre a fornire informazioni, presuppone che la vita contenga in sé un obiettivo, un "bersaglio" da raggiungere, inteso come "realizzazione" della persona, che gli consenta di star bene.

Educare è, quindi, un obbligo etico nei confronti dei giovani per evitare loro la sofferenza che può conseguire a scelte di vita originate da una mancata educazione.

Inoltre, attraverso l'educazione si può far uscire il soggetto dal proprio Io egoistico proiettandolo verso gli altri evitando la frattura del "patto sociale" tra le persone.

Educare è un investimento economico perché valorizza le risorse dei giovani ed evita gli investimenti per il "recupero" di quelli che agiscono comportamenti a rischio.

Se sulle finalità educative siamo tutti abbastanza d'accordo, non lo siamo più quando si tratta di definire le modalità e i percorsi educativi.

Scopo di questo articolo è riproporre il significato etimologico di “educare” e analizzare da cosa nasce l’attuale differenza sul modo di intendere l’educazione e di realizzare progetti educativi.

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