



# For a pedagogy of values Per una pedagogia valoriale

Manuela Valentini

Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo - manuela.valentini@uniurb.it

## ABSTRACT

This work aims to reflect on education and the drifting of which it is often protagonist, especially in the young generations who nevertheless draw the older generations into question, making them the protagonists of a deterioration which is to be halted. Family, school, institutions must together understand or, better, take action and intervene in this educational emergency. Taking up again a book, the book

“Experience and Education” by John Dewey, rereading it and bringing up original parts by the author, one discovers, rediscovers his thought, which are deep and meaningful and which helps us to find, to find once more the road we have lost, the road we must travel along, without creating or inventing special effects from goodness knows where. In the book we find written in black and white, for social control, good practices which can put the education machine back on the right track, a machine which seems to have crashed against a wall of nonsense, at a point of non-return. We must all restore the right balance to this machine, and give back meaning and value to that which characterizes us: humanity.

Con il presente lavoro si vuole riflettere sull'educazione e la deriva di cui spesso è protagonista in particolare nelle giovani generazioni che chiamano comunque in causa le vecchie, coinvolgendole in un degrado al quale bisogna porre limite. Famiglia, scuola, istituzioni insieme per capire o meglio agire, intervenire in questa emergenza educativa. Riprendendo in mano un libro, il libro, “Esperienza e educazione” di John Dewey, rileggendolo e riportando parti originali dell'autore, si scopre/ riscopre il suo pensiero, profondo e incisivo che ci aiuta a trovare/ritrovare la strada smarrita, da percorrere, senza escogitare, inventarci effetti speciali andandoseli a prendere chissà dove; nel testo sono scritte, messe nero su bianco, per il controllo sociale, le buone pratiche per riportare in carreggiata la macchina dell'educazione che sembra aver sbattuto contro un muro del non senso, in un non ritorno di cui dobbiamo, tutti, trovare/ritrovare il giusto equilibrio, dando significato e valore a quello che ci caratterizza: l'umanità.

## KEYWORDS

Education, Experience, Values, Family, School.  
Educazione, Esperienza, Valori, Famiglia, Scuola.

## Introduction

The fundamental aspects of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Nice, December 2000) provide for: Chapter I. Dignity. Chapter II. Freedom. Chapter III. Equality. Chapter IV. Solidarity. Chapter V. Citizenship. Chapter VI. Justice.

Words that undoubtedly mark, determine, and underline a society that is ethically correct and true. But the way of life that each of us is required to follow is not only determined, represented, as we all know, by rights but also by duties, all in equal measure to be kept in mind without shortcuts. The historical moment we are living is marked by facts, tragic events so alarming that not only destabilize, disquiet but seem to petrify us: by now, every day, every minute, every second are marked by atrocities that go beyond the imaginary, beyond the human, beyond the unlikely, beyond. Moral sense has taken the place of nothingness; the full of ethical meaning turned into the emptiness of human misery. Guilt is pour again into the society in general, into the amorality that has taken over. More than a reflection, it is necessary to do a *mea culpa* as well as always pointing the finger. First of all, we try to investigate that social nucleus that we know and that we live daily: the family, first true essence, not only blood bond but social bond.

Pope Francis in his Prayer for the “Synod on the Family” (2013), writes: “Holy Family of Nazareth, never again should families experience violence, closure and division: anyone who has been wounded or scandalized should soon know consolation and healing” (website 1). The binding rules are not outdated, there must be no exceptions: everyone (and each one) is responsible for our actions, words and deeds that make, will make a difference for better or for worse; “become responsible forever for what you have tamed. You are responsible for your own rose” (The Little Prince, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, 1949, p. 98). A dry, odourless, withered rose, where the water, the nourishment of the formation, education seem not to arrive, they struggle to reach the roots to restore vitality to the consciences. An instantaneous, present, pressing, permanent era, of the same period: once we lived in the city, at the most metropolis, today the village is global and is called the world. And what happens at the antipodes echoes in us instantaneous, immediate, current and persistent. It makes us feel close to what happens in other regions, states, even continents, making us united in misfortunes and virtues.

### 1. The education at the basis of a society based on the rule of law

Education is not only about traditional school problems (such as curricula, grades, tests), but is instead closely related to the particular cultural context (Bruner, 2001, introduction to the text). Certainly, the culture of education is not static, immobile but subject to change, adapting to the historical, economic, political and social context, but without ever denying its mission. Incorrect behaviour, screaming dialogues, exaggerated attitudes seem to have taken the place of those expressed in a low voice, of that extraordinary normality that is no longer news, but rather considered outdated, not fashionable; what makes our life so beautiful is the daily life full of actions, gestures that are part of the human, simply, and not in the beast that increasingly seems to dominate. Values offended, denied, forgotten and eliminated. “A value is a concept of the desirable, explicit or implicit, which distinguishes an individual or characterizes a group, which influences the selection

between modes, means and ends of action, possible" (C. Kluckhohn, 1951, p. 388). Women raped, disfigured, stabbed, killed; children abused, beaten, kidnapped; teenagers beaten up by baby gangs, "baby gang children are not budding camorristels, they are the by-product of a camorra that no longer exists from the traditional point of view. Precisely for this reason, it allows for forms of overcoming the camorrist system itself and therefore emerge these paranzas of young people who try to find new balances in the territory. To show off and return to the camorra as a new method of affirming oneself" (Iavarone, interview with Arcolaci of 10/02/2018, website 2). "Public opinion must be outraged because mine is not a private drama but must be a fact that concerns the civil conscience of all" (Iavarone, 2017, website 3). Teachers beaten, scarred; old people mistreated, mistreated, tortured; men, women, children drowned, driven away, marginalized; parents killed. We have taken and spent brutal words from the vocabulary to describe the beast we are living: use all. Bad-education as behaviors contrary to the law and morals; education defaulted to arrogance, to the boldness of those who can do anything, emphasizing it with a knife, considering noble, strong, those criminal actions with respect to extending the hand, apologize, considered weak behavior and then not as super men. Everything has been overturned, the pietas understood in its deepest meaning of "iustitia erga parentes pietas nominatur", Cic., Part. Or.; 78, The word shame also disappeared: "the most painful and burning emotion, toxic and annihilating" (Anolli, 2000, introduction to the text), the sense of shame off. But do values belong more to young people? "The choice of the type of value model has significant differences depending on the gender. Girls have a higher average than boys in all scales that propose positive values and lower in scales that present negative values; they tend to prefer altruistic, pro social values and values related to the protection of rights, they show a greater desire to find a balance between work and family life, while boys tend to make more individualistic choices" (Lucisano, Rubat Du Mèrac, 2016, p. 83).

## 2. Dewey's education

To pick up and reread, reflecting, Dewey in his "Experience and Education" could help us to unravel the issue. Going into the heart of his words without translations, filters to dwell on the meaning he wants to convey to the reader making us still, if possible, more involved in a reasoned reading. We will stop in particular on concepts that once again make us remain without words for originality, depth; precursor of the times, a forerunner that with his writings, still today, enlightens us. "The main purpose or objective is to prepare the young for future responsibilities and for success in life, by means of acquisition of the organized bodies of information and prepared forms of skill which comprehend the material of instruction" (Dewey, 1967, p.2). Objective: to prepare young people for future responsibilities. Certainly a school task, but it cannot be separated from the family. A learner, a child ready or however initiated, brought to an inclination towards receptivity, socialization, availability of healthy behaviours and lifestyles, essential prerequisites to fit not only into the school community. "The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are mis-educative. Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" (Dewey, 1967, p. 6). Uneducational experiences must be stopped, red card in unison with no if and without but from family and school, strongly, openly, uni-

tarily. Justifying, minimizing negative situations by mum and dad only creates confusion, disorder first of all to the son who no longer has control over his behaviour, his destabilized experiences even by his parents. "Our options are Deweyane: they are for a school as a democratic community capable of achieving the development of all, and thus participate in the promotion of a radical democracy, in which every man is an end in itself and can fully expand his personality" (Baldacci, 2017, p. 36). A school that develops critical thinking, that cultivates relations for healthy social relations, "Development must be given priority and not human capital. Not encourage efficient producers, but free thinkers". (Baldacci, interview of Ercolani del 27/02/2014, website 4). "Education as growth or maturity should be an ever-present process" (Dewey, 1967, p.20). Education as growth or maturity should be an ever-present process What we live now, the present will condition the after, the future, a connection that must make us think, reflect: our current behaviors will determine, will cause a consequential after more or less positive depending on how we manage it. "Children at recess or after school play games, from tag and one-old-cat to baseball and football. The games involve rules, and these rules order their conduct. The games do not go on haphazardly or by a succession of improvisations. Without rules there is no game. If disputes arise there is an umpire to appeal to, or discussion and a kind of arbitration are means to a decision; otherwise the game is broken up and comes to an end" (Dewey, 1967, pp. 21-22). The game, the sport teach: the rules must be respected, are an integral part of the game itself "They are not outside of it. No rules, then no game; different rules, then a different game" (Dewey, 1967, p. 22). Getting started with sports could be a deterrent for those young people who have nothing but wasting time on the street, without goals, without a life project full of positive content for themselves and for the community. Institutions that involve everyone in recreational and sporting activities, from the young to the old; it is not necessary to specialize and mega galactic structures but also the spread of a constant and regular physical activity can contribute to an integral, all-round health of the subject. The value of sport can help to strengthen that harmony between the self and the other of which there is an absolute need. The rediscovery, the awareness of those dormant, forgotten values that are the basis of our uniqueness, of our essence. "But capacity for such intellectual activity marks a comparatively late achievement when it is continued for a long period. There should be brief intervals of time for quiet reflection provided for even the young. But they are periods of genuine reflection only when they follow after times of more overt action and are used to organize what has been gained in periods of activity in which the hands and other parts of the body beside the brain are used. Freedom of movement is also important as a means of maintaining normal physical and mental health. We have still to learn from the example of the Greeks who saw clearly the relation between a sound body and a sound mind" (Dewey, 1967, p.28). The critical thought is accentuated, it is also concretized in pauses, intervals in which space is given to situations / meditated actions where the young person can, with his natural element, movement, play, body, reveal, express his own self more easily, naturally-mindedly. The action of the body, in the body, offers the possibility to autograph by hand its essence, its normal physical and mental health; history teaches in this context, the Greek one in particular. "The amount and the quality of this kind of free activity as a means of growth is a problem that must engage the thought of the educator at every stage of development" (Dewey, 1967, p. 28). The quantity and quality of this kind of free activity as a means of growth must be present in the thinking of the educator and encouraged. In doing so, in the action of a moving body, it will be possible to grow and find well-being both at a qualitative and quantitative level,

and the educator will be able to pursue the formation of the subject, at all ages, in a context of ongoing formation. A development in toto of health understood as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not simply the absence of the state of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization, 1948, website 5). The crucial educational problem is that of procuring the postponement of immediate action upon desire until observation and judgment have intervened” (Dewey, 1967, p. 31). The observation, the judgement will represent aspects, substantial parts of the education. The autonomy of judgment, of acting, of thinking, of pondering, of meditating, of measuring one’s own thought and action will allow a greater awareness and a deeper reading of the context and the situation. “Mental habits of a critical nature are at one with the scientific attitude, which is an essential component of the democratic spirit: a school that forms the critical attitude is a school that forms the democratic attitude. Forming the critical spirit and forming the democratic spirit must be faces of the same coin: a school that is a democratic community and a community of free doubters really seems to me the good school” (Baldacci, 2016, website 6). Thinking minds, pulsating minds that know how to evaluate, discern, clearly distinguish good from evil, beautiful from ugly. “The Mind that thinks is called to recognize Knowledge as the first source of thought/plural: an indispensable source for forming well-made heads (and not full heads) among the younger generations” (F. Frabboni, 2010, p. 13). Do not put inside notions but “the freedom of reason and the gamble of fantasy” (F. Frabboni, 2010, p. 39). A stimulus of divergent thought that leaves room for the differences and diversity of each and every one. “The development occurs through reciprocal give-and-take, the teacher taking but not being afraid also to give” (Dewey, 1967, p. 33). A give and gave himself in a perspective of union with the other and unity of knowledge, a take to then put back into play in order to an I that turns into a us. “The educator more than the member of any other profession is concerned to have a long look ahead” (Dewey, 1967, p. 35). The then, always needs a look, the understanding of the first to avoid mistakes and repeat the same mistakes. The educator must see beyond. . “No experience is educative that does not tend both to knowledge of more facts and entertaining of more ideas and to a better, a more orderly, arrangement of them” (Dewey, 1967, p. 39). More experiences have value allowing us more knowledge, stimulating more ideas and tidying up. “What we want and need is education pure and simple, and we shall make surer and faster progress when we devote ourselves to finding out just what education is and what conditions have to be satisfied in order that education may be a reality and not a name or a slogan. It is for this reason alone that I have emphasized the need for a sound philosophy of experience” (Dewey, 1967, p. 44). True words: education, not a slogan but a concreteness, a hands-on experience with behaviors, attitudes, experiences that know how to make a positive difference. A society of values where “good manners in manifestations of politeness and courtesy” (Dewey, 1967, p. 26) are not optional but indicative of behaviors, normal manifestations, habitual of mankind.

### 3. Affective-mind education

The feeling brings positivity, significance to our living, when it is less manifests an out, an out of the rules of civil living. The affective sphere is not an accessory, it must be taught, accompanied, oriented both in the family and at school: to guide affectivity in its deepest meaning. “Mercy makes us understand that violence, resentment, revenge have no meaning, and the first victim is those who live with



these feelings, because they deprive themselves of their dignity. Mercy warms the heart and makes it sensitive to the needs of the brothers with sharing and participation" (Pope Francis, 2017, website 7). "Letting go of resentment, anger, violence and vengeance are necessary conditions to live happily" (Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 2015, website 8). When mothers and fathers are absent in this process, the path is undoubtedly negative, generating already from very young hotbeds of violence: not being produces nothing. Parents who are too complicit in their children, always, today, ready to excuse them, justify them, cover them up, attributing responsibility to teachers, not only to words but also to slaps and fists. After all, a good part of the hateful bile on the Net, just a little flaying the surface, comes from fathers, from mothers, professionally started, who unleash their anger behind a computer, offending companions, their parents, teachers; a keyboard to spread poison. Not only used by the children. "The spread of digital media, their presence in everyone's life, the alarm of cyberbullying and other misuse behaviors, make it necessary for educational agencies to take on a task - that of "teaching" the media - that ends up coinciding with the education to citizenship" (Rivoltella, 2017, introduction to the text). A young generation that is too protected, placed in a glass bell filled with too many yeses, always supported, as if the resolution of everyday problems did not belong to them; parents who channel failure, failure by attributing responsibility to others. Disappointment, error if managed, are useful to understand that life is made of pros and cons, beauty and ugliness, yes and no, we have to deal with and control it in the best way respecting and respecting each other. For a 360 ° well-being is necessary a job, a constant training, continuous, permanent. "Well-being training must therefore consist in making everyone aware of well-being, based on the idea that we can all learn to feel better and that well-being is not only a question of the quantity of resources but above all of the quality of individual and social choices" (M. L. Iavarone, T. Iavarone, 2016, introduction to the text). The family must associate itself with the decisions of the school without if and without but, to make body in order not to destabilize the young person giving idea of union and educational compactness. Parents more affectively present, substantially, close with the heart that is often at large; a hug, a kiss more certainly will not solve everything but a shield, an antidote to be put in place. The school will also have to play its part with qualitative and quantitative interventions: training teachers to deal with the latest generation of young people; more pathos, more affective, emotional, empathic charge in dealing with pupils; more trained for aspects concerning the age of development and put us beyond the head the heart. For a better effectiveness in the transformation of teaching into learning, not only of disciplinary contents, but of binding rules important for the whole community, it will be indispensable also to reflect on the group-class, creating a group identity, an intense and scrupulous work, which will need time and a psycho-pedagogic methodology of observation-listening of our young people to understand their expectations, desired objectives, seeking as much as possible sharing and mediation. A personal teacher-student relationship that with so many students is almost impractical to start: humanly impossible to have the situation of everything and everyone under control, teaching thus becomes only education and less education. A heartless generation? Is there an answer? If family and school are activated together, we can have a chance on this educational emergency that can no longer be postponed by dusting off those young hearts that can give so much good.

## Conclusions

Fortunately, however, there are those young hearts of which we are all proud, who do not back down on actions that endanger life itself. However, we do not ask for heroic gestures, everyday life is made up of simple, elementary behaviors, rules to be reread and made our own: this is the true noble revolution from which to start again. Today society has also changed in a positive way: an aspect not to be underestimated is that the distortions of the past are no longer hidden under the carpet (perhaps with the shame of the victims themselves) but, sooner or later, they overflow; ad hoc interventions and a new reading of the social are needed. Bullying has always been a scourge, but is for the first time subject to protection, now; sexual violence and harassment, respectively, were once repairable with a marriage and completely peaceful (at work, on the street, etc.); the baby gangs had already been introduced into the underworld since then (in order to escape from criminal punishment, they contributed to the sale of twelve-year-olds). Then a couple of world conflicts in the space of half a century should be contextualized, certainly not the result of these young people today. In part, perhaps, then, the criticism of today is part of the canonical discourse that persists over the millennia so that yesterday is better than today and will be even tomorrow. So it is a fake as far as joking memory game is concerned that if it is extreme it is also dangerous: no one could and would like to go back in concrete terms to the glorious Italian Sixties in which the rape of a woman was lawful, if then the same victim was married to her executioner; in which the mafia did not exist; the “impossible” divorce, the femicide and the bullying did not even exist on the dictionaries; the hazing was taken as a viaticum of life rather than as a socially deplorable and even criminally configurable practice. We want to give confidence to young people, to these young people of heart, many fortunately, who will govern us, assist us, protect us. It seems to us more than effective to write at the end of this reflection, a phrase that summarizes better than many other words, the focus of our little contribution on this subject so great: “If nothing remains of these pages, we hope that at least our trust in the people remains. Our faith in men and in the creation of a world where it is less difficult to love” (Freire, 2002, p. 200).

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