

# The Foundations of Education and of the Educated Person<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The vision of education and the educated person here defended, inspired by the classical tradition, assigns to education the central goal, which is the well-being of the person, which is seen as a tranquillity that emerges from self-sufficiency. Such tranquillity is the result of a constitutive luck in relative absence of some sources or forms of disorder, as a certain comparison and fear, seen as their enemies. These visions intend to favour a loving human essence, which is in contrast with what is supposed to be the current predominance of a competitive-hedonistic one, generating an aggressive elitism, unfavourable, both, to education and pedagogy.

Key words: education, pedagogy, elitism, luck, disorder.

## Foundations

*“There has been a strain of philosophical thought which identifies the end of life as happiness, happiness has reflective tranquillity, and tranquillity as the product of self-sufficiency – what is not in the domain of the self is not in its control, and so is subject to luck and the contingent enemies of tranquillity”*

*Bernard Williams (1981, p. 20)*

Since classical antiquity, a period referred to by the philosopher Bernard Williams in the opening quotation, the thought has persisted that the purpose

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of living life as a good life is the well-being (happiness)<sup>3</sup> of the person. This could not be more in accordance with the view of the foundations of education here set forth. In fact, in this quote, the fundamental ideas that underlie the conception of education and the educated person, which is developed and defended, are quite explicit: a) the purpose of life is to live it in well-being ; b) well-being consists of a reflexive tranquillity; c) such tranquillity emerges from a state of self-sufficiency of the person; d) but self-sufficiency is not under the total control of the person and therefore is subjected to luck and contingent enemies of tranquillity, which may arise and affect him.

Williams (2006, p. 44) mentions, as regards the central problem of justifying the inclusion of Good in the Good Life of the person, which the classical view justifies by anchoring "morality" - the life of good - in nature's own original human nature<sup>4</sup>. That is, if at the heart of the essence of human nature, first of all, resides in fundamental disposition for good, than life outside can be seen only as deceptively good since in the end the most essential part of the person and, therefore, such tranquillity is put into disarray, offended and disturbed, although this may not be recognized in the domain of your most superficial consciousness as usually seems to occur.

But in addition, we may underline Williams's reference to one of Plato's dialogues<sup>5</sup> in which a certain "beauty of the soul" is pointed out, a supreme good, as a result of progress "towards the highest and final mysteries of love" (2006, p. 125). This allows us to add the following to the above: e) the disposition for good, at the heart of the essence of human nature, is something that can be placed under the name "love" - "... something that always is and neither comes to be or passes away..."- as Williams quotes directly from the dialogue. Therefore, something eternally present.

Such views can now be expanded in order to begin to introduce the contours of the main foundational concepts, as they are here articulated: a) education is seen as defined by its central objective, life in well-being, and therefore, as the process of learning to defend the dispositions more essential to human nature that allow the person to live the good life; b) well-being

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<sup>3</sup> It is preferred here to use the concept of Well-being to that of happiness, because it is understood ethically more comprehensively, and its use is evident in important currents of studies of contemporary education. The concept of well-being seems to be closer to the view that living a good life implies living this life, cumulatively, as a life of good. In the thinking of ancient Greece referred to by Williams, with its various schools and prominently with those of Plato and Aristotle, one can read the concept of eudaimonia, sometimes translated as happiness. But for today's understanding, translations of this concept, considered closer to the original, "human flourishing" or "well-being," may have more scope and depth, especially when it comes to education.

<sup>4</sup> Williams also points out, for example, that David Hume's moral theory is expressed through the natural tendency of the person for "sympathy" and "benevolence" (Williams, 2006, p. 270). The same movement, in our days, is also suggested by James Griffin (1988) who exposes the theories of well-being of desires satisfaction and objective lists. The latter can be seen, in the negative way, as framing the view of well-being due to the absence of forms of disorder, brought here.

<sup>5</sup> This is Diotima's speech at the Symposium.

consists of a reflective tranquillity, seen as emerging of an emotional apparatus defended by a life in reasonable absence of what here is designated by seven “forms of disorder”, explained at the front, and considered as the “contingent enemies of tranquillity”; c) such tranquillity is the reflection of a state of self-sufficiency, state of autonomy, here seen, above all, as a certain ability to be alone that characterizes the educated person; d) but this autonomy is subject to luck throughout our lives, linked to the frequency and intensity of occurrence of sources or forms of disorder, contingent enemies of tranquillity; e) this autonomy as a capacity to be alone is seen as implying greater availability for the other and for the possibility of a certain giving that is the expression of love, essence that defines us as the humans we are and in absence of which we dehumanize and then ugliness and barbarism take place, carried in the arms of the forms of disorder.

Thus, education for well-being in the absence of forms of disorder is seen here as a complex learning process of living that aspires protect the capacity for love, in the essence of our human condition, in order to favour the flourishing of the educated person as the ethical and autonomous person, rooted in a certain ability to be alone and that enhances the best availability for the loving act towards the other. Everything happens to improve the “constitutive luck” of the person, by a careful attention to the occurrence of the contingent enemies of tranquillity: the forms of disorder.

It therefore seems essential now to make a first presentation immediately of what is understood to be the seven sources or forms of disorder. Only by the Titles: Comparison, Corruption, Dependence, Division, Fear, Self-disintegration, and Violence.

Additionally, the “Forms of Disorder” are broken down with some sub-items, as follows. Intense interpersonal comparison, through competition, envy, jealousy, vanity, prestige, relations of superiority and inferiority (which really are only inferiority), winners and losers’ podiums, and comparison of industry, physical, artistic, and intellectual capacities. Corruption of intention. Dependency in relation to substances, people, objects, organizations, and traditions. Division by: nationalities, regional ties, languages, professions, sexual orientation, “races”, social classes, religions, gender, ethnic tribalism, physical or mental impaired and not diminished, old and young people, human and non-human animals. Fear, highlighted in schools, for example for fear of exams, fear of showing ignorance in public, fear from the student to the teacher, fear from the teacher to the students, fear of colleagues and the culture of cruelty and thrashing of the mob in the classroom or in the hallways, fear of public speaking, etc. Self-disintegration by lack of basic goods for the body such as: shelter, clothes, food, but above all, the caused by affections of the mind that can be inscribed under the title of neuroses, like depressions and anxieties. Violence that can take forms of oppression

by domination, power, exploitation, greed, hatred, punishment and humiliation.

Williams (2006, p. 165) points out Plato's tripartite formulation to the essential of the human soul: the just, good person; the combative and competitive part; and the part of hedonistic desires. This tension between the primacy of the loving, selfless, or from the competitive-hedonistic, selfish part, can lead to different social morals. The author also denounces here, in classical antiquity, the social morality which stipulates as criteria of admiration and respect some types of competitive success and the inheritance of position, leading to ethical conceptions of aristocratic structure (Williams, 2006, pp. 36,37). In this competitive-hedonistic part of human nature and in the moral that follows, the causes of the forms of disorder can be recognized. So, unconsciously, in the eagerness to help students to acquire the indispensable instrumental knowledge, families and schools adopt intense but subtle practices, permeated by forms of disorder.

Starting from these fundamentals, we begin by trying to better characterize this moral of aristocratic structure, here articulated as being a certain type of aggressive-elitism that is believed to be prevalent in the school system and common at work. Then, the concept of education for the absence of disorder is developed, contrasting with the concept of instruction and making some comments on the ways of disorder. Finally, a brief reference is made to the educated person and a vision of what may be the love that resides in it.

### **Aggressive Elitism as Social Morality – Elitocracy**

“... the principle of perfection ... it is the sole principle of a teleological theory directing society to arrange institutions and to define the duties and obligations of individuals so as to maximize the achievement of human excellence in art, science and culture. The principle obviously is more demanding the higher the relevant ideal is pitched.”

*John Rawls (1999, pp. 285, 286)*

“*Rawls also associates this narrow perfectionism with elitism defined as ... the idea that the proper function of political society is to serve the interests of a minority of its members*”.

*Richard Arneson (2000, p. 1)*

The social morality that it adopts as criteria of admiration and respect for certain types of competitive success and the inheritance of position, as it turned out, had already been denounced by classical antiquity. Such distribution of positional goods, as prestige, is correlated often with the greatest privilege in the distribution of material goods and these can reach clearly exaggerated levels. From here it easily follows the predominance of an ethic of aristocratic structure that, interestingly, does not assume itself as such, but, rather, it tends to cover itself up first in a supposed justice that rewards the effort to “maximize the achievement of human excellence in science, art and culture”. Initially, therefore, it is not assumed to be aristocratic but on the contrary, it dresses up as democratic when advertising itself as an equal opportunities provider for all, namely for the most disadvantaged. Only after this staging of supposed justice and virtues does it break out claiming and appropriating such positional and material goods that reward those of high merit. Currently, societies, even the so-called democratic ones, are saturated and deeply permeated by this social morality. This occurs at work and, more particularly, in schools where it all starts, and we all internalize this.

Values such as merit, effort, excellence, talent, genius, results, unique achievements, creativity, effort, hard work, etc., are enhanced. Furthermore, this social morality, being the crucial problem, clearly and aggressively takes the party on the competitive-hedonistic side, seriously disturbing and injuring the most fundamental loving-altruistic part of human nature. Such disturbances, can only lead to lives experienced in disorder and greater suffering. It is the frustration of the educational process, itself. So confront us, in the centre of our human condition, dehumanizing us. Sadly, particularly the families, in their eagerness to promote the possibilities of social mobility for students, pushing them roughly down the ladder of success, seem to enter in a dangerous insensitivity to the importance and delicacy of emotional stability of who they love most.

But there seem to be several questions that need to be addressed urgently. Did not say that the good life could be seen as a flourishing of the person? This flourishing should not contain the maximum development of its potential, without which there seems to be useless waste? Are not natural the different potentialities of people, and inevitable their differences of performance? It is not evident that society benefits more with the leadership of the best? But can we have something against merit, genius, excellence, etc., per se? It will not be indefensible to reward the most mediocre and less capable, or the claim of levelling everyone to low levels?

To try to clarify these issues we will first address the issue of luck and talent, claiming that the latter is largely outside the domain of the Self and seems to be another statistic linked to the contingencies that luckily face the people

throughout their lives. Next, we will argue that elitism assumes aggressive contours, constituting an aristocratic ethics, a neo-aristocratic elite, when it exhibits a particular superiority that presents itself as absolute. Speaking here of superiority versus inferiority more at the psychological level.

## **Luck and Talent**

*“We are also inclined to take personal credit for our own character and talents, as if we ourselves had created them. This attitude of ‘infantile competence’ is indeed silly.”*

Mary Midgley (2002, p. 89)

*“A claim to the paternity of any idea is absurd; it comes from the egotistical fictions of divinity which, lurking at the bottom of our psychology, pretends that we are the First Cause of the Universe. In reality the individual never creates anything; if man creates it is as universal man, anonymous, and as manifestation of the Principle. In the ages of truer wisdom artists, scholars and thinkers, did not dream of attaching their names to the works which took form through them”.*

*Hubert Benoit (1995, pp. 244, 245)*

Against massive evidence that we are all terribly fragile, deeply interdependent and inevitably subject to the winds of luck, the competitive-selfish social morality and, it should be stressed, the undeniable and terrible illusory power of the ego that throws us all into a permanent, chaotic, more than defective and intense interpersonal comparison, working on the illusion that we are the main workers of ourselves.

According to Bernard Williams (1981, p. 30) we can collect the idea that “the personal luck refers to those elements that are essential to a result, but that are beyond your control”. We can also speak of “constitutive luck” or “intrinsic” to the person, which has to do with what the person is and becomes, or “extrinsic luck” to itself, but which in context encompasses it (1981, p. 26). As for personal will and free will, luckily, such a volitional disposition needs, itself, having previously being installed itself in the person.

Consider the general case of all being born in a particular family and at a certain time and place. How could we have done something worthwhile to deserve more, the most favourable opportunity in such occurrences. How

do not recognize how decisive they are for our lives and how determined are they by luck? Having emotionally balanced parents, well integrated into a society, themselves with reasonable levels of security and material well-being, can change everything compared to the alternative of having alcoholic parents in a country, or neighbourhood, of indigent poverty.

In this context, talent can be seen as a statistical occurrence as in the case of the “gifted” child, or an Einstein, or a Mozart, that nobody, including themselves, knows exactly how they got there. Often it can be said that these people have or had a gift which, significantly, indicates something that luckily was “given” to them - that is, it appeared in them without any other justification. In fact, today and in many ways, the products of these type of genius are already in excess and are a banality. Who in the arts can read all the works of all Nobel Prizes in literature, enjoy all the exceptional paintings, music or movies? Who in science has time to read everything that scientists produce in any given field? Who in sport can follow all the events available, in the myriad of existing modalities? Who in companies does not have the most diverse managers available, whatever the positions?

In a global world of rapid information transfer and widespread systems of instruction, it seems that this is no longer possible. What seems to be increasingly difficult is someone who wants to excel in the midst of so much competition will often have to resort to opportunistic strategies that require various tricks, making this aggressive-elitism become an opportunistic-aggressive elitism, as we will see later.

Colvin (2010, p. 56) reports that in a comparative study on performance of violinists the crucial point was the number of hours of deliberate practice, for improve such performance. But deliberate practice at high levels can mean an intense effort for which only a few are available, and luck, particularly in childhood, is crucial for this availability (Colvin, 2010, pp. 72, 79). That is, even the strong will for hard work has to be a pre-condition implemented in those who have it, obviously linked to “constitutive luck” lifted from the complexity of the course of their lives. Acting as if it does not its naively to convey an image full of illusion, anecdotally figured in a certain Baron of Munchausen who “lifted himself up in the air, pulling by his own hair” (Howarth, 2010, p. 96), similar to which the various self-made-men think to build themselves and their successes, taking their own legs and applying hard work, sacrifice and genius, of their entire responsibility and authorship. It remains to be noted that strenuous efforts to touch violin, or whatever it may be, can represent a painful life.

If someone is born, has parents, knowledge, teachers, is healthy, he had doctors, and even had those who collect the garbage, indispensable for public health and lack of pests, which rid us all of disease. All of this, in an

evident interdependence that everyone involves. Believing that you are the author of yourself and your ideas can, at last, seem just silly childish naivety and absurdity, as Mary Midgley (2002) and Benoit (1995) claim. But it is precisely such absurdity and childishness that the dominant social morality and its aggressive elitism assume. We should now enquire why is so.

### **Elitocracy and Superiority-Inferiority**

*“Instead of seeing myself as equal with the outside world, I see myself either as above it or below, either on high or beneath. In this perspective, in which “on high” is Being and “beneath” is Nullity, I am obliged to urge myself always towards Being. All my efforts necessarily tend, in a direct or roundabout manner, to raise me up, whether materially, subtly, or, as one says, “spiritually”.*

*Hubert Benoit (1995, p. 237)*

The word elite, apparently a Gallicism, can contain an innocuous concept meaning just what is best in a society. This may not imply attributing to such elite, or such elite itself exhibit, a disruptive superiority over others. Speaking, for example, of an elite troop within the armed forces may not give them much greater and exaggerated importance compared to, for example, the logistics or the command and control services, because it is known that everything works in close interdependence. The former may not work well without the others or may not work at all.

What is the problem then, in general, in schools and in society? When does elitism become an aggressive and disruptive elitocracy?

At the scale of human life, these short lives of fragile beings who, apparently, have no fundamental role in the progress of the universe, but which often are caught in the illusion that they dominate it and are its first reason for being, competitive-hedonistic society perceives people as being very different from each other and constantly focuses on those differences. Dominates intense interpersonal comparison and the metrics, supposedly strict, to scale out such differences. This society, given its competitive nature, remains permanently under high evaluative pressure.

But in the smallness of such a human scale it seems to be evident that people have different skills in the fields of science, the arts, industry capabilities or physical capabilities. It would perhaps be strange if this were not so, given the constitutive luck linked to the complexity of the differences in each person's private life.



A virtuous pianist plays better than most people. It is obvious that a financial sector manager who spent many years there can outdo its peers and, of course, in relation to people who do not followed this professional path. If they found themselves in that particular career path, out of candour of giftedness or hard work, what should they have learned about, after all? Inevitably, in any metric to scale, the “first” can be found. Just refine the measurement for such a purpose. The problem, then, is not whether under any conditions there are individuals, genuinely or not, who are said to be better than others.

The biggest problem is not even that to these individuals may, reasonably<sup>6</sup>, be allocated more positional and material goods. The problem occurs when these elites, in arrogance, are supposed to be superior beings, not already in any operating capacities, but in an absolute sense as people in general: they are better than others in an absolute sense and fly psychological superiority over others. They are better individuals and therefore more valuable and worthy of dominating the rest with an attitude of absolute superiority. Such dominant absolute superiority is therefore the distinctive feature of elitocracy that constitutes an aggressive elitism for showing off above others to break the contact that humanizes us. The posture is disruptive of the essence of loving communication between people. In fact, ceases to be communication to be just the poverty of the dominating display of such absolute superiority. Here, then, is the deeply dehumanizing trait and tragedy of this neo-aristocracy.

As perhaps easily agreed, such an imperative need that prevails about the other feelings of someone proving to be superior at all, only can have a root and *raison d'être*: the need to overcome an inferiority reigning and underlying in his psychology, lacking the admiration of others or the dominance about these. In fact, in this field, superiority is not the opposite of inferiority. The two are in the same movement of psychological inferiority. This hides from us our “universal dignity”. The transcendence of it all, as we spoke of the educated person, it will be true autonomy or self-reliance as self-confidence in being alone that dispenses with this type of comparisons and remains in a “reflective tranquillity”. And this makes all the difference to the aimed life in well-being or the educated life.

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<sup>6</sup> Reasonability, as we know, is something that is not defined in itself, but in a certain social context. We all have to shape it based on the great principles of right living.

## Opportunistic Elitocracy - “being good at claiming that you are good”

*“... they fall into the feeling that they are inferior to themselves and react to it, fantasizing virilities they didn't have, representing courage that they didn't prove it, taking pride in works that they feel bad, titling themselves as much as possible, decorating themselves as much as possible, talking as much as possible, photographing themselves as much as possible; inferior as much as possible because they want to be superior ...”.*

*Agostinho da Silva (2000, p. 114)*

As mentioned, the supposed “excellences” that throw us into aggressive elitism seem to be nothing more than in fact banalities already in excess, and what is difficult is stand out in the middle of this swamp in search of notoriety. This is where it becomes popular an interesting elitocracy, whether or not including part of the first, because it can show itself as having qualities that in fact it does not have. It takes on aggressive and disruptive opportunisms that add to the previous disruptive aggressiveness, reinforcing it.

The rampant competition for fame or money, imposes environments of envy and aggressiveness. It results naturally an opportunism led by those who are willing to focus on a curious activity: they keep trying to be good at saying that they are good. Live poring over themselves and what they perceive as *curriculum vitae* well in line with fashion and the norm. They specialize and flourish in the more detailed assessments systems of elitism.

Such advertising and competitive enthusiasm also involves strategies of the finest refinement in the field of flattery of superiors, treacherous actions towards equals and, in an inevitable mimicry, flattery demands by those who are inferior to him. After fantastic rises in hierarchies are then assumed to be unique and indispensable, to whom others should be grateful for the favours of their high leadership because without them and their high performances everyone else would be disoriented and lost in life. It is more or less at this point that this aggressive and opportunistic elitism claims the right to exorbitant amounts of positional and material goods. Agostinho da Silva, quoted above, seems to have a lot of fun with all this and points out the inferiority that is projected as superiority, in its most diverse vanity fairs. It is only from the extreme poverty of this elitocratic social morality that one can try to better understand the enormous discomforts of school and work.

## Education for Absence of Disorder

Two and a half thousand years later classical thought lives in important currents of the current philosophy of education that consider education defined by its objectives and as its central objective, well-being (J. White, 1990). Accordingly, it was assumed that education can be defined as a delicate and uncertain learning process that has as main objective to provide the person the capacity to live in well-being, consisting of reflective tranquillity, derived from a state of self-sufficiency or true autonomy.

It was also assumed that the enemies of such reflective tranquillity were seven forms of disorder, adopting the *via negativa* to represent well-being as the absence of such forms of disorder. That is, an ethical environment in relative absence forms of disorder can improve confidence in setting up a certain educational process, in order to favour the flourishing of people in reflective tranquillity, protecting the love in their core and the availability for the other, because living a good life in true autonomy. Here, is the opportunity to a better and more successful pedagogy<sup>7</sup>.

With this base, for a better characterization of this vision, we will briefly address: the place of instrumental knowledge in relation to education, the way in which the educational process and its “substance of form” are evaluated, and a brief comment of the forms of disorder.

## Instruction versus Education, and Discourse

*“The ignorant are not ipso facto heteronomous and well informed and autonomous is not a tautology”.*

*Peter Gardner (1988, p. 99)*

*“Language is the house of being”.*

*Martin Heidegger (1982, p. 63)*

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<sup>7</sup> A Pedagogy for Well-being will aim to create environments in the absence of disorder. As examples of school transformation that would need to be explained further, we can think of some measures to mitigate fear and comparison, like the creation of Assessment Centres in School (ACiSs). These would increase the number of access by each student, abolishing exams of unique opportunity and freeing from summative assessment the teacher who teaches, create the possibility of confidentiality of the results of evaluations, finish with the tribe class by establishing a credit system that allows greater mobility between classes and still do away with the figure of “year pass”

To have instrumental knowledge, that is, as an instrument for an end, in the science, arts, or whatever, is no guarantee of being an educated autonomous person. This is the fulminating evidence that the acute and elegant quote from Peter Gardner (1988) throws at us. It is clear that any scholar can live a dependence on substances and people, or even his own illusion of greatness, in order to live a life of inner conflicts and diverse anxieties that deny him the enjoyment of autonomy. Alternatively, an illiterate person can have the wisdom of life in reflective tranquillity, feeling good with everyone and, before more, with him even when alone, enjoying full autonomy.

This vision of education in true autonomy takes up the distinction between instruction - acquiring instrumental knowledge, from education - learning the good life. More than that, points to the urgency of changing the unfortunate discourse that confuses them, for the sake of both. It would not be necessary to note the many who point out the importance of discourse to, in particular, give full credit to Heidegger (1982), when he warns that although the word is not the thing, there is no-thing without a word, or the word itself creates a thing. They also warn that the meaning is in the use of the word. If I use repeatedly the word "education" connoting it with "instruction", the first pure and it simply disappears annihilated by the second. This is the seriousness of the issue.

This results from the disorientation in not having a solid enlightened, and guiding concept of education. That allows the massive invasion of an alleged aristocratization of instruction-pedagogy. This occupies the entire stage by appropriating the word education. In desperation of cause and lack of a better, one word is exchanged for another and, naively, we hope that the instruction is transmuted in virtues more connected to such ineffable education. Unfortunate mistake to wait that a quadratic equation generates honesty and resilient emotionality. More, regrettably, we lose the pedagogy-education dialogue that is indispensable and can only benefit everyone, since instrumental knowledge is, of course, very important and useful in our modern society. All of us teachers should be, simultaneously passionate researchers of education, which is to say, of the good life.

To word, for example, the "school system" as the "education system", the "statistics of school exams" as "the state of education" or the simple material and equipment of classrooms as "educational material", is to put instruction in place of education and eclipse the latter. Furthermore, it is to hinder the instruction itself, which can only benefit from the awareness of what the correct educational environment is and the care that everyone must have for this and the inevitability of participating in it.

Advantageously, the government ministry responsible for schools, once designated in Portugal only as ministry of instruction and that became designated only of education, it should be called “Ministry of Instruction and Education” (or pedagogy and education). Besides, all those who are passionate about the good life that results from education, no doubt the majority, will want to change the discourse because the good life is too precious to get lost in favour of whatever it is. It is about living the good life for us and our children, their education, that we are talking about. This, of course, it has nothing to do with the poor quadratic equation. It is therefore urgent to change the discourse.

### **The Place of Education or “The Substance of Form” and “The Nobility of Error”**

*“... people can have a good life even though their lives are not free from moral blemish”.*

*Joseph Raz (2000, p. 215)*

It was said above that it was inevitable that we would all be permanently involved in the education process. Unlike instruction, education has no specializations. It belongs, inevitably, to everyone. But where, in what way, does education occurs? Can it be evaluated?

In the relationship that is life, when we interact with someone, we can distinguish the substance - what we do or say - and the form - the way we do or say. A reprimand from a teacher to a student can be harsh in substance but loving in form. The same words, the substance, on the other hand, given in an apparently tender way, can hide the form of the violent public humiliation. It is, therefore, in this emotional charge of the form, here designated “substance of form”, which takes place in the subtlety of the educational process that destroys or supports us for life. There may be a style associated with form, cheerful, playful, sarcastic, etc. But, once this is clear, what counts is the loving quality of the way we do and say, the substance of the educational transaction. The education to be more or less facilitated depends on whether the substance of the form is more or less contaminated by forms of disorder.

But in order to avoid perfectionist unrealism, it is important to underline that not only is human to err, but the “error” - mistakes, insecurities, doubts and diverse limitations which include moral blemish, as recalled by Raz (2000)- much more than an eventuality is part of human nature. Knowing that man makes mistakes persistently (Heidegger, 2000, p. 113), this “error” can be

seen as noble because it keeps us out of the illusion of self-levitation, as we have seen be possible in aggressive-elitist. Sensibly, what we should aim for is an education in the absence of forms of disorder but with the inevitable “nobility of error”. From all this complexity it can be understood that education, as wisdom to provide us with a good life, is not possible to evaluate with metrics of the type of those of the instruction. But, cautiously, what you can do is evaluate the educational environment and the presence or absence of forms of disorder.

### **The Forms of Disorder**

*“The noblest virtues are negative, they are also the most difficult, for they make little show, and do not even make room for that pleasure so dear to the heart of man, the thought that someone is pleased with us”.*

*Rousseau (1762/1993, p. 81 )*

*“Nobody thinks they are capable and everyone feels inferior to the ideal norm of competence. ... Fear of appearing to be afraid, of appearing weak, incapable, ignorant, mediocre”.*

*José Gil (2007, pp. 69, 70)*

The forms of disorder, urgently lacking empirical research, are the practical guidance for education. Only very briefly mentioned below individually act, as it is reasonable to suppose, complexly interconnected and blend in a myriad of nuances and intensities. It is therefore assumed that from a life reasonably experienced, seen in a negative way, in the absence of a significant incidence of these forms of disorder but with the inevitable “nobility of error”, can emerge the good life - the educated life.

One of the most prominent forms of disorder at work and school is the Intense interpersonal “comparison” that easily unfolds in envy and diverse forms of superiority-inferiority. With gravity David Hume (1992, p. 594) credits the comparison with the removal of “sympathy”, making us feel pain with the happiness of the other, and feel happiness in his pain. Known that any exercise in distributive justice may involve comparison, when is that it constitutes a form of disorder? This is because in the ethical environment there is the possibility of aggressive elitism and absolute superiority-inferiority. This disorder in comparison is accompanied by “Fear”, a pain that anticipates another pain, which is another prominent form of disorder to

prevail in schools where we feel terrible incompetence, as pointed out by José Gil (2007).

The feeling of “Division” of the other can arise in many ways, including the most childlike ones. But again, disorder can arise from aggressive play of superiority-inferiority seeing myself separated from others of another nationality or, simply, from another sports club. The “Dependence” of people, things, or organizations, is a frontal blow to the capacity for autonomy, therefore to the educated person, that can affect life severely. The “Corruption” indicated here is mainly that of intention that can be present, for example, in the student who studies something without true passion for the thing itself, but only to receive elitist praises. The form of disorder of “Self-disintegration” of the body and mind, recognizes the lack of basic goods, such as health and food, and emotional affections such as neuroses. Finally, “Violence” in different physical or psychological forms, from humiliation, public indifference, or pure physical aggression, may already be a last stage of the complex action of forms of disorder and the response to them.

When discussing schools and the many discomforts of students and teachers and the goals of instruction, the discourse can hover over themes like the dimension of classes and curriculum, new technologies, teacher training and prestige, class time, families' social status, etc. What is clearly stated here, apart from the fact that such discussions are generally inconclusive and the school is more or less the same as two hundred years ago, is that none of this is crucial for education and even, to a large extent, for instruction that is inevitably soaked in the “substance of form” of a certain educational environment. The heart of such serious discomfort is not even in grades and exams per se. It is in the prominent presence in the usual schools of forms of disorder, with relevance for the aggressive comparison of inferiority-superiority and the powerful fear it generates. Without mitigating these, it will never be possible to change the school and their discomforts in a minimally relevant way.

### **The Educated and Loving Person**

*“To recognize the Other is to give”.*

*Emmanuel Levinas (2003, p. 75)*

The educated person whose emergence is expected to be favoured by an education in absence of forms of disorder, but with the “nobility of error”, is the autonomous ethical person dispensing games of superiority-inferiority and, therefore, with the dependencies on the recognition of others. It is the

person who is beyond the more restricted autonomy, of Kantian inspiration, able to lead a life by his own laws. He is not a loner. This educated person is the one from his reflective tranquillity, even though he is truly alone, he sees naturally the greatest availability for a discreet well-being of the other who forgets himself and who is love for the other – the educated act and the centre of education. Such giving is a “secret virtue” and “without recognition” (Suzuky, 1991, p. 131).

This giving is trivial “little kindness” or “kindness without thought” in discretion, but transcend selfishness, gently displacing it from the “substance the form”. It may be the important giving, which is to give the opportunity to the other to give us. These are acts and intentions that live discreetly in everyday banal life, perhaps glimpsed in giving a Good-bye when it is a giving to recognize the other, as Levinas points out (2003). It is the act that binds us and reconnects us. It is the act of our deepest humanity that humanizes us and reveals the truth of our true self, for which we yearn. How can there be a relationship of reconnection when prevails the ugliness of absolute comparative inferiority - superiority? It is this act and the core of being at its origin that the aggressive elitism that prevails at school and at work savagely breaks and crushes, in short, dehumanizing and hurting us, causing severe suffering that dwarfs us for life - a useless, pitiful and unreasonable, painful waste.

### **Coda**

The views of the classical era brought by Bernard Williams seem to be perennial in its rigor and vigour, proving to be immensely valuable for the concerns with the foundations of education, the educated person and pedagogy-education. After two and a half thousand years, before a social morality based on a part competitive-hedonistic view of human nature that generates a neoaristocratic ethics of a tremendously aggressive elitism for everyone, it seems to be perhaps time to give, with faith, an opportunity to the most fundamental part, the loving one. These societies of work and schools seem sadly disoriented and desperate, both in the field of instruction and in the field of education. In this update of life in well-being, the educated life, we hope to build the humility of infinite dignity of what ultimately humanizes us and defines us as the humans we are, a loving education with the “nobility of error”, originated in a reasonable absence of forms of disorder.



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