

## ABOUT EDUCATION AS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN DIMENSION

Cristiana BĂLAN

“Spiru Haret” University, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences Braşov,  
Romania (cristianabalan777@yahoo.com)

DOI: 10.19062/2247-3173.2018.20.42

**Abstract:** People are, above all, cultural beings; the central elements of culture are values, they direct the spirit of any culture and function as a selective grid towards cultural creation and diffusion. Culture involves all the products of human activity, values and modes of behavior objected by certain communities to other human communities and subsequent generations. As a global process, education could be characterized as a quick and abridged recapitulation - because it is selective - of the cultural experience of humanity as a whole and, in particular, the experience of the community and the reference group.

Biopsychological maturation processes, socialization and culture can only be conceived through intimate correlation, they are three facets of a single process. Therefore, the mature psychological individual, the social and the cultural being are just hypostases of the Ego, because it is an existential unity.

**Key words:** education, existential unity, open cultural finality, cultural being.

### 1. EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

Educability is the ability of man to benefit from the action of education and to achieve in this way accumulations on the behavioral plane. At the basis of the psychological development and evolution of the human personality lies:

- internal factors (heredity, individual experience);
- external factors (education, environment).

Educability is the significant characteristic of the human being to designate the capacity to be receptive to educational influences and to achieve accumulations materialized in personality structures.

*Hereditary (inherent) theory.* The advocates of this theory believe that internal factors underlie psychic development and personality evolution. According to them, man is born with a multitude of skills that can not be exchanged through education. They minimize or even deny the role of external factors. According to John Lock, the child's soul at birth is a "tabula rasa", a blackboard on which any kind of information can be engraved. Heredarians believe that at birth all children are equal, the differences between them being due to education and the environment. This minimizes the role of internal factors.

*The theory of double determination.* This theory includes four fundamental contributions: Freud (psychoanalysis), Piaget (construction of genetic mutations), Wallon (person building), Vygotski (personality development should be seen as a self-development determined by the interaction of internal and external factors). This theory determines the weight of internal and external factors in the development of personality as well as the ways of interaction between them.

There are three major foundations of education:

- slow anatomophysiological maturation of the human being;
- the predominance of intelligent behaviors on instinctive;
- the essential role of socioculturalization in human anthropogenesis and human ontogenesis.

These major fundamentals show once again that education is one cumulation of biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors. Totalitarian political and educational systems have replaced education with a permanent "general" training, leading to the emergence of "new man" as the product of this de-training process.

Almost all traditional pedagogy brings to light such a conception of education. Even today, some educators prefer training techniques to training conscious processes for reasons of "efficiency or time-saving". As if the purpose of education would be a quick storage of knowledge, skills and abilities, and not the formation of a complete and harmonious personality, through the collaboration between the educational ideal and the cultural ideal of the individual.

Man is, above all, a cultural being; the central elements of culture are values, they direct the spirit of any culture and function as a selective grid towards cultural creation and diffusion. Culture involves all the products of human activity, values and modes of behavior objected by certain communities to other human communities and subsequent generations.

As a global process, education could be characterized as a quick and abridged recapitulation - because it is selective - of the cultural experience of humanity as a whole and, in particular, the experience of the community and the reference group.

The values of culture in its entirety are virtually unlimited, but three major categories of values can be distinguished:

a) Eternal human values - are the values related to the generic man, promoted by the double millennium of humanism, the values of classical Greek culture and the "universal man" of the Renaissance, from Christian mercy to the modern scientific spirit; these values form what we usually call the "cultural patrimony of humanity".

b) The values of the national community - are those established over the history of that community; have the character of stability and certainty, by virtue of their preservation in the national cultural heritage; some of them succeed in penetrating the universal patrimony, others retain their idiomatic character.

c) Values of the century - are specific to a certain age in the history of the world and the community, are unstable and unreliable values because they have not been subjected to time, but they also introduce novelty, prove the originality and creativity of that era; some of them will be selected, others will not, but it is certain that there are no perfect spiritual desert eras.

Finding a fair balance, a fair measure between these three value categories is one of the most striking problems for any education system. Whoever manages to solve this problem has actually solved the issue of educational content. To put the center of culture at the heart of values is, at the educational level, to put the core of the content of education, all its values. But doing so means recognizing a necessary shift of focus - the shift from the predominance of instruction to that of education proper, from in-formative to formative.

There is a need for another education - dynamic, formative, value-centered. Mentalities can only be changed through education. At present, this is still strongly marked by the de-training of trainers, after half a century of ideological pressure on education and education, but also by the fact that new orientations and educational technologies penetrate slowly and with great difficulty in our East European space.

When information is treasured in treaties, archives, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, libraries, databases, almost all accessible, it would be absurd to limit education to a simple storage and storage operation.

A well-formed individual, so armed with the techniques and strategies of orientation in the world of culture, educated in the spiritual values, will succeed in correctly forming whenever he or she will feel the need or will have to feel this need.

A fundamental need, the lack of which is intense, is the rediscovery of the role of models in education, the re-enactment of a pedagogy of models, whose meaning was lost in our time. Like values, models have a rather formative role, they are in fact an embodiment of values.

## 2. ROLE - STATUS RELATIONSHIP - CULTURAL MODEL

Biopsychological maturation processes, socialization and culture can only be conceived through intimate correlation, they are three facets of a single process. Therefore, the mature psychological individual, the social and the cultural being are just hypostases of the Ego, because it is an existential unity.

In order to understand this process - education - we need to call upon the concepts of status, role, cultural model, ideal personality and educational ideal. Quoted clearly for the first time by American H. H. Mead, these concepts are defined as:

- *The role* - close to the concept of attitude - implies a self-concept in relation to the group, understood as a generalized ALT.

- *Status* - represents the place, the position occupied in a social system, of any subject.

Role refers to the cultural patterns associated with that status; the cultural model, status and role must be seen in their intimate interdependence - the cultural model defines the status, gives it "substance", and it manifests itself through the role as a "role play".

The subject is under the influence of a practically undetermined number of cultural models that contribute to its formation. These are offered by the family, social proximity, educational system, and all of its socio-cultural experience. These intensely formative contacts contribute to shaping the cultural ideal of personality.

For any educational system, the most important issue is the quality of the models offered, because without doubt the quality of the cultural ideal is directly dependent on the quality of the model offer. The cultural ideal is structured following an uninterrupted "struggle of models", which does not end at full maturity, and man is in fact an open-cultural being. The cultural ideal is formed in childhood and adolescence, it is interiorized and structured to maturity and becomes the foundation upon which the entire personality of the individual, the totality of his acts and capacities, his function as a cultural being. Between education and the cultural ideal there is a relationship of mutual influence, never interrupted. Education, through the cultural models offered, is the one that structures the cultural ideal. The issue of the variety of models is, of course, important, but more important is their quality.

It is the cultural ideal that gives the person his own style of referring to culture. Through this very complicated dialectic of status, role, cultural, dialectical models we can call education with one word, man becomes what is essentially a cultural being.

## 3. EDUCATIONAL IDEAL AS A DESIRABLE PERSONALITY

We can not conceive an education lacking an educational ideal. Education always aims at something specific - the formation of its subjects in the spirit of a certain configuration of values considered essential by the community in which an educational system operates or another.

The educational ideal is the result of a "smart compromise" negotiated between the educational system, the system of culture and the social macrosystem. At the community level of the macro system, the issue of the educational ideal is a policy of education and education.

Every society aims to form individuals in the spirit of the values that characterize it, in which it believes and wishes to preserve them. So the educational ideal represents, from this point of view, the type of personality that the respective community wants to form and multiply it among its future citizens. It's the type of desirable personality. In the practice of education, the educational ideal is concretized into educational goals and objectives, from which the actual objectives of education are set. These form the scientific preoccupation of pedagogy.

Education can not be reduced to a simple transfer of socio-cultural knowledge and experiences from adult generations to younger generations. It is necessary that this transfer - always fast, abridged and focused - is accompanied by a formative striving (nisus formativus) towards the authentic values, brought together in the educational ideal. For cultural pedagogy, central values are the truth, the good, the beauty and the feeling of the sacred.

***Historical outline of the educational ideal***

1. For the ancient Greeks - Truth, Good, Beautiful - reunited in the classical concept of Kalokagathia - beautiful body, good soul and a spirit oriented to the search for truth.

2. The educational ideal of ancient Rome - "Mens sana in corpora sano" - being, as a matter of fact, all that Roman culture meant almost entirely a takeover of the Greek ideal.

3. The Middle Ages proposes two types of desirable personality, two educational ideals embodied in monk (monk) and knight.

4. The Renaissance comes as a return to the classical ideal of the Greeks; Uomo universalis is the full, harmoniously developed man.

5. Modernity - the man with the sense of risk and responsibility, the discoverer, the entrepreneur; the modern age adopts classical values (truth, good, beautiful, spirit of the sacred) along with so-called social values: freedom, equality, fraternity, the French Revolution, legality through the Cromwell and American Revolution. All these values define the educational ideal of modernity.

The personal cultural ideal develops through education, uninterrupted contact with culture, is an effect of this contact. The individual is not only formed through school, through the specialized educational institution. He is, from his birth, at the crossroads of different and even contradictory formative influences: family, socio-cultural proximity, cultural and information institutions, etc. On the other hand, great merit of human nature is unrepeatability. People are different from all points of view. These differences should not be abolished through education but, on the contrary, encouraged through an educational offer as varied as possible.

Because the characteristic of the personal ideal is its enormous diversity, it is clear that the educational ideal, with all its normative firmness, must be sufficiently general and flexible, not to contradict the enormous variety of personal ideals.

No community can survive without a well-articulated educational system according to an educational ideal that satisfies the common requirements, without placing the individual ones in brackets. To solve the problem of the relationship between the ideal of education and the personal cultural ideals is to begin to truly solve the socio-cultural aspect of society at a given time. Otherwise, we will continue to maintain and introduce institutions that will remain "forms without substance" and we will still wonder that almost nothing fails to function optimally. It is absurd to believe that we will succeed in making the free economy and democracy functional, without changing mentalities.

It is equally absurd to think that they can be changed without changing the education system. And this must be changed from the "top", from the educational ideal, from the reformulation of a coherent ideal with the way we are looking for our community, therefore synchronous with the one that works in modern societies.

In formulating an educational ideal, not only education experts, but also policy makers, system beneficiaries, cultural institutions, expert groups, interests, or pressure should be involved. At the level of society, of the macro system, the problem of the educational ideal is a policy issue of education and learning.

Along with science and democracy, modernity has made education one of the main resources of development. With respect to the educational ideal, modernity has preserved the values of Greek-Christian humanism, discovered so-called social values, widening the circle of fundamental values to eight: Good, Truth, Beautiful, Spirit of the Sacred, Freedom, Equality, Fraternity, Legality.

#### 4. THE IDEAL OF MODERN EDUCATION

Modernity has thus revealed the axiological framework through which we can think of education as a human being, which is considered to be the subject of education, not a mere object subjected to the processing by an external will - whether this will an educational system, an agent, culture in general.

The feeling of belonging to the European system of values, to the European Community, does not exclude membership of a more limited community that defines us before we realize that we are Europeans. In fact, pedagogy needs to understand how the values (both fundamental and associated ones) translate into educational goals. It is not indifferent whether we are adepts to permanent education or education limited in time, if we are the promoters of a rigidly separated discipline education, or, on the contrary, if we try to propose synthesis and interdisciplinarity.

In the traditional Romanian education, the asymmetry between the results obtained in the cognitive field and the more modest results obtained in the affective and the psychomotor field is striking. The information itself is virtually of no value to the subject of education if it is not annoyed to judge, interpret and use it in a context different from that of primary education. That is why the educational, formative and operational side of the learning systems should be emphasized. We can not but emphasize the need for the educator, the trainer, to regain the cultural model he once held. Like a physician, psychologist, priest or artist, the teacher can not be a mere clerk, but a man who knows he has a vocation and a mission. To be a true and radiant cultural model, the educator must identify himself with the cultural-educational ideal and live in the values of it. For him, the fundamental values of humanity must really exist. If it is not able to do this identification and this type of experience, then it is better to withdraw and move to another field of activity, but not to the formation of people.

A reform of education must begin with the definition of an educational ideal, radically different from that of a man-machine, which in fact constituted - even if never confessed or recognized as such - the guiding idea of the old (and unfortunately still existing) system.

In this context, there is a problem that proves to be the most difficult to solve - that of staffing to move real reform. It is necessary to re-fund the specialized institutions for the research of education, as well as an intensive "recycling" of the teaching staff, which amounts to more than a quarter of a million teachers in Romania. There is no question of changing them - it would be temporally impossible, costly and, of course, inhuman.

But what can be done is changing their mentality through an activity that does not have anything to do with the routine of formal, "lacking" actual and effective content.

These teachers are the trainers of future generations, others can not yet have; but neither with their current level of training nor with their current profile will we be able to reach the desired future. In order to guide young people towards open horizons, they must first open their horizons, they must be created the conditions that allow them to enjoy and enjoy another level of their becoming as soon as possible professional and human.

Only a trainer with decent values and decent motivations, deeply assumed, can try and succeed in building, developing and perfecting a human being in the true sense of the word. Otherwise, it risks contributing to the bringing into the world of either an inert and null individual, or, more seriously, of an individual broken by humanity or seated against it.

### **REFERENCES**

- [1] Antonesei, L. (1996). *Paideia – Fundamentele culturale ale educației*. Iași. Editura Polirom;
- [2] Hilton, S. (2016). *Mai uman. Crearea unei lumi în care oamenii se află pe primul loc*. București. Editura Publica;
- [3] Neacșu, I. (2010). *Pedagogie socială*. București. Editura Universitară.