



## INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY ІНКЛЮЗИВНА ПЕДАГОГІКА

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### THE SEARCH FOR WHOLENESS. THE INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITIES IN RELATIONAL PLAY.

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*The article discusses the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in achieving full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.*

*The article emphasizes the importance of the person-environment relationship and its impact on the growth and development of individuals, particularly those with disabilities. It recognizes that the process of achieving social inclusion involves various stages of personal development, from self-management to navigating different environments. The article acknowledges that encountering obstacles during these growth phases can hinder the attainment of full autonomy and social inclusion for individuals with disabilities.*

*Furthermore, the article touches upon the social implications of body image and the role of significant others in shaping one's perception of their body. It is important to note that disability intersects with various aspects of life, including relationships and societal norms, and understanding these intersections can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of disability and its implications.*

**Keywords:** *disability, relational play, social model, relationships, adaptation, body, identity, perception, ableism, stereotypes, family, relationships.*

### ПОШУК ЦІЛІСНОСТІ. ЛЮДИНА З ОБМЕЖЕНИМИ МОЖЛИВОСТЯМИ В РЕЛЯЦІЙНІЙ ГРІ

**Д. Аргіропулос**

*У статті обговорюються проблеми, з якими стикаються люди з інвалідністю в досягненні повної та ефективною участі в житті суспільства нарівні з іншими.*

*У статті наголошується на важливості відносин "людина-оточення" та їх впливі на ріст і розвиток індивідів, особливо з обмеженими можливостями. У статті обґрунтовується, що процес досягнення соціальної інтеграції включає різні етапи особистого розвитку, від самоуправління до орієнтування в різних середовищах. Визнається, що зустріч з перешкодами*

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на цих фазах зростання може перешиходити досягненню повної автономії та соціальної інтеграції для осіб з обмеженими можливостями.

Крім того, стаття торкається соціальних наслідків образу тіла та ролі значимих інших у формуванні сприйняття свого тіла. Зазначається, що інвалідність перетинається з різними аспектами життя, включаючи відносини та суспільні норми, і розуміння цих перетинів може сприяти всебічному розумінню інвалідності та її наслідків.

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**Ключові слова:** інвалідність, реляційна гра, соціальна модель, стосунки, адаптація, тіло, ідентичність, сприйняття, здатність, стереотипи, сім'я, стосунки.

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**Introduction of the issue.** In considering the problem of finding wholeness, which is extremely important for people with disabilities, let's focus on aspects of difference and adaptation that lead people with disabilities to make significant efforts to minimize their differences. This is relevant because the social pressures that people with disabilities often experience force them to conform to societal norms.

Due to the psychological influence caused by social expectations and norms, as a child with disabilities grows older, his adaptation to his body tends to decrease, compared to the initial sensations and perceptions when he feels completely natural. This highlights the importance of reframing disability as a social problem and creating a "Social Model of Disability" that focuses on social barriers rather than individual impairments to create an environment where people with disabilities can fully participate and thrive.

In our analysis of the presented problem, we have relied on the following studies: the aspects of social integration, specifically within the realm of disability, as explored by Andrea Canevaro; the conceptual perspectives derived from social and clinical psychology; the significance of family support, as elucidated by Vittorio; the studies addressing the intricacies of married couples' and families' lives conducted by Michele Corsi; the utilization of personal writing tools to attain a retrospective understanding of one's existence, with the intention of engaging in an ethical dialogue with the natural and social environment, as advocated by Demetrius Duccio; the model of training intervention in human systems, which transcends the

individualistic and cumulative perception of knowledge, as proposed by Laura Formenti.

**Current state of the issue.** Thoughts, feelings, emotions, desires, depend on the relationships we live with others, the position we think we occupy in the intertwining of our relationships immersed in our environment, rather than the one we would like to occupy, or that we feel we are subjected to, determines from time to time our moods of well-being or malaise.

If we try to identify ourselves with those who live their daily lives with a physical disability, the perception of the self arises from direct comparisons.

The physical impairment is an exceptional event that appears, to the interested parties, all the more unjust the rarer it is, it is a fact which, with its permanence, requires a continuous modification of the adaptation to reality according to socially divergent canons.

Living together with others with a different body, or a different mind, is often uncomfortable, leading the subject to make enormous efforts to blend in and erase this difference.

In physically disabled children, we observe how they spontaneously adapt to their compromised body (when they are not yet aware of their "lack"), organizing reality according to their residual capacities [15: 107].

As growth proceeds, this adaptation to one's body tends to disappear, giving way to anxiety, frustration, inadequacy.

The expectations of others, the methods used contrast with the reality of the child with disabilities, making the operational strategies spontaneously implemented, abandoned as non-positive, inadequate.

It is necessary to pause to understand how the cultural leap from the individual conception to the social model is possible in order to know and understand the type of social disadvantage associated with disability, which is generally qualified as an individual matter, capable of generating compassion.

The individual social model that came and is centered on the diagnosis, on the severity of the deficit, ends up identifying the person, with and in, his lack.

The alternative to this paradigm is the "Social Model of Disability" which, as opposed to focusing on individual deficits, approaches disability by basing the analysis on the processes and social forces that cause people with obvious impairments become people with disabilities [12: 555-561].

The new way of thinking highlights how people with disabilities are not hit by a misfortune nor, much less, somehow "guilty" of their condition or of not doing enough to overcome their limits [8: 541].

The cultural leap we are referring to, was subsequently also corroborated by legality effective also in Italy since 2009, it is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations of 2006, stipulated in New York and implemented with law n. 18 of 2009.

The Convention states that: "Disability is an evolving concept and is the result of the interaction between persons with impairments and behavioral and environmental barriers, which impede their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" specifying that: "Persons with disabilities are those with long-lasting physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with barriers of various kinds, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" [8].

The conquest of full social inclusion, of any human being, is achieved through a process that goes from the individual to the outside world: the individual-person first of all enters into a relationship with himself and his own body, learning to manage himself, then learn to live and move in a closed and protected

environment such as the familiar one; growing up, he becomes able to move outdoors (in both an anthropological and spatial sense). Only at the end of this path, if he hasn't encountered obstacles that have compromised its regular development, is the subject capable of being independent and can be said to be socially included.

**Outline of unresolved issues brought up in the article.** This anthropological trend is particularly delicate in the event that the growing person is affected by a disability. In fact, each of the growth phases that normally follow one another physiologically is particularly complex, risking compromising the achievement of full autonomy. This is the reason why the issues, in the presence of a person with a disability, materialize, in a peculiar and specific way, in the person-environment relationship, person and life contexts [8: 544].

**Results and discussion.** On the subjective and social construction of meanings around the healthy body and the sick body.

The juxtaposition between healthy/sick body has historically defined, for example, the belonging to beauty or ugliness, potentiality or lack, participation or isolation/marginalization, mobility or immobility, seeing alternating multiple body models and these are not always linear interpretations.

Preserving the body individuality should not be understood as a way of interpreting the body as an "objective fact or space", but as a "life space, a psychological place made up of experiences, experiences and relationships, subjectively connoted on a representational level and for this possible horizon of interpretative-cognitive sense" (Cunti, 2015; Gamelli, 2001; Malpeli, 2007; Mannucci, 2003) [13: 315].

The anthropological reflection on disability useful for the purposes of this discussion can be the deepening of that proposed by Murphy who, starting from an emic perspective (therefore from the point of view with which a person with

disability understands its conception and personal manifestation), traces the story of the progressive estrangement of the body of those with disabilities, thus assuming the role of "sick".

Regarding the management of the change perception mentioned above, Murphy argues that people with disabilities face four main phases which are: 1. reduced self-esteem; 2. invasion of thought of physical deficit; 3. existential anger (accompanied by guilt and shame) and finally, 4. "at the acquisition of a new, total and undesirable identity".

The question of identity becomes the repository of major criticalities, placing the person with disability in a condition that Murphy defines as "liminal"; it is a conformation of arrest and identity indefiniteness since "they are neither sick nor healthy, neither dead nor fully alive, neither outside of society, nor fully participating. They are human beings, but their bodies are deformed or malfunctioning, leaving their full humanity in doubt" [11: 13-15].

**The experience with the other.** The way we learn to love or hate our body is a fact that has strong social connotations since they are structured starting from the interactions with significant others and from what they send back to us with respect to our body through forms of mirroring; thanks to the people we meet, to the things/objects we use and the experiences we have to indicate the body to us, i.e. feeling that there is a resemblance and attributing to the other something that is one's own

On a cultural basis, bodily intelligence is nourished thanks to those significant experiences, above all of encounters between bodies, which trace the individual's history, becoming the first cause of ways of being in relationship with oneself and, subsequently, with others.

The relation to the empathetic encounter between bodies is that the link with one's own body is not built in a social vacuum, but on the contrary, it depends on the way in which the "individual-body" entered into relations with other "individual-bodies", experienced by life contexts and models of care [11: 13-15].

**Embodied body and culture.** The body is the seat of thoughts, emotions, primordial instincts, the home of the soul, even when it becomes the seat of the cogito, it is not seen as anything else by an instrument at the service of reason [4].

Thriving for some time in Western thought, this opinion has hindered the recognition of the wholeness of the human being, preventing us from understanding that every act reveals that our existence is bodily and that the body is nothing other than the way we appear (Galimberti, 2002).

French philosopher Merleau Ponty states that the size of the body is increasingly studied no longer as an object of the world, but as a means of communication with it (Merleau Ponty, 2003).

Approaching this perspective, we therefore deduce, on the one hand, the idea of a total functioning of the person, but on the other, the concept of health which is no longer described as the absence of disease, but as the sum of the interaction between different factors, aimed at protecting conditions of well-being.

The path of knowledge of one's bodily identity can only take place with respect for individual differences and requires the presence of a knowledge that opens up from the constraints of historical and cultural ties dominated by Cartesian dualism.

Overcoming the reductive vision of a body separated from one's mind, scientific research has progressively directed its investigations towards the articulated study of the functioning of living organisms, both with respect to the specificity of their physical, cognitive and affective functions, and in relation to situations of which they are an integral part.

The body is no longer considered only in its "organic and mechanical" guise, but its perceptive, sensory-motor and affective aspects are valued [3].

In the last thirty years, anthropological disciplines have deepened and expanded the theme of the body.

The concept of habitus is at the center of the theory, the study of actions undertaken by human beings and of knowledge, elaborated by the French socio-anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu since the 1970s (Pierre Bourdieu, *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, 1972).

Knowledge is "acted practice": it proceeds through the incorporation of the structures of the social world. The notion of habitus, of which Bourdieu provides innumerable definitions and rearrangements, goes beyond and integrates Mauss' definition denominated "body techniques" as a set of "traditionally betrayed" practices.

The body is for Mauss: "the first and most natural technical object, and at the same time a technical means, of man" and the techniques of the body are "the ways in which men, in different societies, and according to tradition, know how to use their bodies" [2].

The habitus is therefore an act learned according to tradition, handed down and reproduced, which is why it is immediately included in a complex system of symbolic connections typical of the society that produced it [16].

In Bourdieu's theory, the set of continuous dispositions that act as a set of elements that predispose our "place" in the world is indicated as habitus, it is partly defined by economic, social, ideological, political, etc. ... relations, a in turn, at the same time, it has the tendency to condition and shape the outside world.

In a certain sense, the body anticipates the "normality" of the world: Bourdieu defines this primary process of knowledge as "connaissance par corps". The onset that generates, and brings together the components of the habitus, is that of the "socially informed body"; the foundation and place of habitus is therefore the body as an entity through which men come into contact with the world, allowing it to assume the characteristics of an organic and coherent vision of the world. Incorporation (or embodiment) is therefore the key word to describe the

process through which we know the world and at the same time we shape the world.

American anthropologist Thomas J. Csordas wrote, in an article on *Ethos* journal, arguing that it is possible to identify two predominant methodological orientations in the study of the process of incorporation: one – which has already been mentioned above – attributable to Bourdieu's reflection, sees in a central position the habitus; the other, however, finds its nucleus in the concept of *pré-objectif*.

Merleau-Ponty extends his reflection in which he considers the body as the primary locus of perception and human experience.

We could therefore say that at the origin there is only the body in the world and the perceptual experience begins in it.

The *pré-objectif* concept allows to study the embodied process of perception from beginning to end: "If our perception ends in objects", argues Csordas, "the objective of a phenomenological anthropology of perception is to seize that moment of transcendence with which perception begins which, in the midst of arbitrariness and indeterminacy, constitutes and is constituted by culture" (Thomas J. Csordas, *Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology*, 1990). Embodied existence is not a priori of culture; on the contrary, *Pré-objectif* does not mean pre-cultural; "[...] consciousness projects itself into a physical world and has a body, just as it projects itself into a cultural world and has habits" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 1945) [2].

Thomas J. Csordas owes the theorization of the "paradigm of incorporation" for which the body is "the meeting point of the intersubjective production of meanings, from which the self and culture emerge, inseparable from each other".

The body is seen as the "creative subject" par excellence «existential foundation of culture and of the Self» (Thomas J. Csordas, *Embodiment and experience*. The existential ground of

culture and self, 1994), and culture is the product of experience which takes place in a situation of "intercorporality" between subjects [2].

**The formation of the couple in contemporary society.** We describe an interpersonal relationship with the term "couple", indicating the involvement of two people, who possess an intersubjective dimension: through sociality and in the relationship with the other, that each of the two members manages to pursue their goals, realize their ambitions, creates an emotional, moral and professional identity, expanding one's preferences on tastes and inclinations, starting from the primary relational base of attachment developed during childhood [9]. It is defined by Vella (1992), as a voluntary interpersonal relationship, which is based on the union of the intellectual, emotional, economic and social forces of the two partners aimed at satisfying common needs (implicit and explicit) and at achieving goals shared, such as, for example, supporting each other or becoming parents.

"Io, tu, noi" Satir (1999) underlines how the couple is indeed formed by two individuals, but an important element for all aspects relating to the relationship represents a fundamental point as much as the stories and experiences of the individual partners.

From the training phase, to the various critical events, to the ability to reorganize and adapt, up to the eventual breaking of the couple's pact, the couple has always been considered the focal point of the entire family structure (Andolfi, 2003) [9].

The couple represents the central axis of the family structure and of greater vulnerability, being between the older generation (grandparents) and the new one (children).

In that relational space that we can interpret as central, the greatest intergenerational pressures weigh, which often takes the form of partial or incomplete agreements or separations.

The couple is the field of negotiation between generations, between different

educational models and normative schemes that organize life [9].

If we place ourselves in a longitudinal perspective, through the main configurations that the couple has assumed, we start from the patriarchal model of the early twentieth century, in which individuals are forced to marry, the woman is dominated by the man and the sex (seen as taboo) performs only the procreative function; in the 50s and 60s we move on to romantic, passionate and irrational love, which sees partners choose, complete and desire each other.

We then moved on to emancipated love, characterized by the themes of freedom and pleasure and by the challenge of the partners for the construction of the "we", continuing the desire for intimacy is opposed by the need for individualism, the public and private spheres merge and the couple begins to enter into crisis with postmodern love. Today we participate in the phenomenon of rising life expectancy and the increase in the elderly population, simultaneously in the family, slowing down the process of separation and identification of young adults who are increasingly slow to leave the house, extending the "full nest" phase, slowing down the transition to a relationship-centered and more balanced relationship [9].

**The fiduciary pact allows the couple to be as it is.** Simultaneously with the phase of the formation of the couple, we identify changes starting from the context within which the traditionally known courtship processes are adopted, in fact, real places are often accompanied by virtual places (social networks, online dating sites, chat, etc.) that allow you to experience the phase of falling in love through schemes and filters that present different ways of interacting (Salerno & Lena, 2016).

The systemic-relational theory identifies the primary motivational systems, namely that of attachment-care and sexual, the choice of partner is possible only if these two basic needs are satisfied (Angelo, 1999) [9: 44].

The purposes in which the couple then decides to continue to remain united can

be many: economic, organisational, social, opportunistic; these objectives outline fundamental themes for the conservation of a condition of security among its members and of the survival of the human species. As we have seen previously, from birth, attachment and caregiving needs are correlated with the need for security in

Relationship that is created, as opposed to the danger of separation and loneliness, in the suffering of being left without a partner and important help in case of difficulty, therefore, of a reference figure in life [9: 41-42].

The main need that emerges is the one linked to trust in the bond, whether we are talking about safety or maintenance of the species, to trust in the other coming from the bond with the primary attachment figures. Scabini and Cigoli (2000) talk about the same trust that is referred to the symbolic exchange of the gift. there is inevitably the expectation of "giving to the other person" when he needs it, or the trust that the other will reciprocate when we have certain needs.

In the relational-symbolic paradigm it is called a fiduciary pact, the conjugal bond that two partners decide to build. It is based on norms of reciprocity, in an encounter between similarity and difference, considering being able to entrust oneself to the partner, being able to expect to be reciprocated and giving oneself to him. This trust allows openness to consideration towards the other, defining a relationship that passes through the gift and which is determined in the care of the other in his difference and uniqueness. the element that founds and organizes the relationship is the fiduciary agreement; this pact is made up of a double aspect: an explicit and conscious, ethical dimension, linked to the mutual commitment manifested, or the declared pact; and from a dimension considered a secret pact made up of deep unconscious needs of an affective nature that each of the members tries to satisfy in the couple; the peculiarity of that couple, its novelty is the unconscious intertwining of mutual choice, the interlocking of needs, relational and

emotional needs, the need for protection and renewal of the bond, brought by each of the two partners, starting from their own personal and family history.

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According to Angelo (1999) the choice of partner is accomplished by placing a subtle balance between the intergenerational, family and individual aspects. To influence the choice we find, on the one hand, the family myth and the relative roles connected to it, if the family history will be very tormented and desperate, the more the individual's bond with it is undifferentiated (Bowen, 1979), the greater will be the influence taken on in this choice, which is taken either in continuity – acceptance of the same experience, or in discontinuity – revolt with it, implementing a series of compensatory expectations to be met in the new bond that is being built [9: 46].

**The metaphors of familiar phenomena.** Each theory of the family is the bearer of one or more metaphors, questioning the different disciplines and the different approaches, we would have a framework for moving (with the utmost caution and always a critical attitude is desirable), addressing the issue according to specific coordinates, the images on the family they tend to convey, between stereotype, myth, metaphor and model, which underlie the different disciplines, with their theoretical-epistemological approaches [5: 24-25].

– **The family as a "feeling":** a very widespread image, it is indicated by the family as a value, a field of expression of affectivity and a source of emotions. The metaphor of the family as a sentiment is the result of a slow and long evolution: historical research has in fact highlighted how this vision was produced relatively recently, the result of a radical change in lifestyles, in the use of time and space, in the way in which the relationships between the different generations were conceived; the concept of family that we have in mind has not always been as we experience it today, but as a parallel emergence of a complex of intertwined and very intense feelings; the discovery of childhood inspires new emotions, protection, attention and care, it makes its appearance in the seventeenth century; pedagogical reflection and schooling make their contribution decreeing new moral, spiritual and educational functions of the family. The feeling of the house, understood as a symbolic and non-symbolic living space in which to live together in intimacy, which highlights in its organization the new emotional relationships between its inhabitants. The house can be understood as "loving, nourishing, procreative living" [7: 166], which is understood and experienced as a shell that protects and welcomes [5: 28]. The transformations did not immediately concern the entire population, but initially only the noble and bourgeois classes. Today very different family models coexist, and if the sentimental family is widespread, there is no shortage

of families in which the relationship with the children remains unexpressed and educational awareness appears absent. Rapid socio-economic changes are modifying the structure of symbolic references, and the family is no longer legitimized in view of a social order, but in relation to the needs of each individual. The overcoming of biological plurality (adoptive families, foster families, de facto families, single parents...) only accentuates the relational and sentimental character of these human systems [5: 31-32].

Placing ourselves in a critical perspective, let's examine the limits that this vision presents us: the image of the family as a feeling places a lot of emphasis on affective processes as if they were almost completely independent of the economic, political, material and structural dimensions in which to insert life family, in addition to this the risk is that of not taking into account the variability of the models, in fact there are many possibilities of understanding and experiencing family ties, and there is the risk of excessively idealizing relationships, ("If you really love each other, every obstacle is overcome"), or to generalize unduly ("Those who do not live for their children do not love them") [5: 60-61].

– **The family as a living being:** it is seen as a real organism, immersed in an environment to which it is adapted and on which it depends to satisfy its needs; the quality of the family atmosphere, its ability to transmit values, are correlated with collective life, almost assigning a salvific task towards society. The family is imagined as an "open system" the continuous exchange with the environment guarantees its survival, the mutual dependence between organism and environment is in co-evolution, realizing itself in circular continuity of interaction (input – internal processing of the input – output-feedback); this concept proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy's General Theory of Systems (TGS), in which it is expected that the family is an organized unit, which is made up of the reciprocal interactions of its components.



Thinking of the family as an organism means underlining its relationships with the environment, risking treating them in an overly concrete way, as substantial, objectifiable realities, with boundaries but material properties. Furthermore, the functional view tends to attribute more unity to the family than it perhaps possesses in reality. Cohesion and consensus are excessively emphasized, running the risk of transforming this metaphor into an ideology, an ought-to-be [5].

– **The family as culture:** culture is a complex system of knowledge, ideologies, values, laws, norms and daily rituals. A relatively closed and cohesive group of people (a group that shares a story, a we) will tend to share places and spaces, objects, gestures over time, articulating their coexistence on the basis of redundant, repetitive and normative structures. The inclination will be to develop a language, but even more a symbolic system of signs, the boundaries of which are established symbolically through the use of kinship names, in the complex of rules (incest taboo, exogamy, reciprocity, preferential union ...) and marriage alliances. Assuming an ethno-pedagogical gaze, in which every family is culture, in the sense that it is able to develop within it a system of beliefs, patterns of action and routines, which identify it as a particular and unique society, distinguishable from others [6]. This approach provides us with some methodological indications on how to observe interaction processes, a first aspect to take into account are the practices of family interaction: in families we behave as if there were specific rules and behavior models, only rarely explicit, yet strongly normative (and any deviation from it is sanctioned). Culture is a continuous process of construction of reality, not a simple variable in the social or organizational world, a constitutive process whereby, through interacting people, they create and recreate the worlds in which they live. The subdivision of the private spaces in the house, the tasks of each one, the objectives, the shared values, the description of oneself

and of the others, are just some of the ways that the family concretely uses to exist, to confirm its belonging to its members. Alongside practices, a second area of observation are family languages: verbal, non-verbal, apothecary, symbolic expressions... Each modality expresses a modality of distinction, with special accents placed on events, processes, people. An aspect of the message is also contained in the materiality of the family culture, i.e. those concrete aspects in which the family manifests itself as a world of meanings, through easily recognizable, experimentable and recountable forms.

The family as a socially constructed reality is a world of shared meanings, co-constructed and maintained through interaction [5: 54-55].

**Relational-symbolic approach: the relational.** It should be emphasized that, both at an empirical and theoretical level, the terms relationship and interaction are often used as synonyms, however it is considered important to distinguish the two terms. With interaction we indicate "the action between the parties", what is observable in the here and now, the exchanges, the communication that takes place in the family in everyday life, what the subjects build in common action and is the level of observation from which the researcher begins the process of getting to know the family. The interactive perspective aims to know the ways in which family members act and construct the meaning of events [14: 48]. Family relationships cannot be reduced to a sequence of reciprocal actions that we can observe and, within certain limits, we can even measure. The family relationship aspects of bond, which of references of meaning (re-ligo and re-fero), refer to another observable aspect, namely the bond that precedes the ongoing interaction and constitutes its significant context. It cannot be observed as the interaction is observed, as one could only interfere, the numerous interactions and exchanges that fill the daily life of the family, can only be fully understood if one considers a typical characteristic as members of that particular family; they

are deeply connected upstream having a common history. The active subjects who carry out actions and decisions are linked and bound to the history of the generations from which they come and who physically and psychically generated them. The relationship, therefore, is what binds family members together, even unconsciously, and it is what creates an alliance, uniting husbands and wives, parents and children, it is their family history and the history of their culture of belonging, that is, everything that "has settled and continues to settle in terms of values, myths, rites and models of functioning" (Scabini 1995). Unlike the interaction, the characteristic of the relationships differs for the longer times and for the connection between them, for the level of analysis centered on the interaction, single segments and sequences of exchanges between family members are identified and examined, while the level of relational analysis tries to reconstruct an intertwining, a plot that takes account of the group dimension of the family in its being more than the sum of the parts. The quality of the bonds between the members of the couple and the type of exchange between the generations are the peculiar elements to be taken into consideration especially in critical moments of transition [14: 48-49].

**Relational-symbolic approach: the symbolic.** The other category that defines this approach is the symbolic one, as the etymology of "symbol" suggests (the term derives from the Greek symbolon, which derives from the verb syn-ballo, which means to put together, to approach. In particular, it was a sign of recognition constituted by the meeting of the two halves of a single object [Sini 1989; Cortellazzo and Zoli 1979-85]). It is only by maintaining and connecting the two affective and ethical qualities that the sense of the term is produced: family, that is, the symbolic matrix of the link between the sexes, generations and lineages. There are specific qualities that must be respected and developed for there to truly be a family, as it is the place par excellence of the deepest affections, but also the place where responsibilities are

generated towards all the other members who have each other towards others. The affective and ethical aspects manifest themselves in varied ways according to the cultures to which the families belong. The condition that allows the family to constitute a versatile resource for the well-being of individuals is that of increasing its relational-symbolic sap, the family contrasts the degenerative processes that every era and every family knows [14: 57].

Family relationships unfold between gift and debt, between giving, receiving and reciprocating and each type of relationship is nurtured in its own specific form of care: of responsibility (in the marital relationship), of reciprocity (parental relationship), care of inheritances (relationship between lineages); these are the three symbolic tasks that move families, not only out of moral obligation, but moved by the desire to give back and donate in turn. The identification process is therefore crucial. In order to pass on their physical and mental life to a new generation in turn, young parents must have had the possibility of identifying themselves, as children, with beneficial, that is, donating sources. The restitution takes place over the generations, reciprocity is over the long term and can be achieved if it is supported by a tenacious trust and hope in the bond [14: 61-62].

**Ability and stereotypes about disability.** The aspect concerning the discriminatory gaze of a person without disabilities towards a person with disabilities, i.e. ableism.

"Ableism manifests itself in a crescendo, from minor expressions, such as paternalism or prejudice, to large-scale prevarication. The term 'ability' derives from the fact that physical, intellectual, relational or sensory ability is used as a criterion for discriminating against people" [10: 24].

Ability also has as a consequence the possibility of self-discrimination when the person with disability, born and raised in a social context that discriminates against them, does not realize it and believes it is normal for them not to be

able to claim rights. In these cases we speak of "internalized ableism" and it consists of a self-devaluating attitude that makes it difficult to apply one's rights, one's personality and holds back the overall development of the person [10].

**"The eternally disabled guy":** Some forms of intellectual or motor disability, such as to lead to non-self-sufficiency (the inability to communicate autonomously or to move freely on their own), cause parents to continue to see the own child with disabilities as a child even in adulthood. A reasoning that arises and consolidates within families, especially when parental guardianship is very assiduous and in some respects necessary. An even unintentionally paternalistic or friendly attitude is put in place towards disabled people. Everyone finds themselves in this stereotype, there is a tendency, for example, to talk unformally even when you hardly know the person, without even asking the question of whether this attitude might please them or not, or there is a tendency to use childish language, to accentuate even in the behavior gestures and situations that adhere to the care of the person when he is in childhood or adolescence [1].

**"It is better for the disabled person not to put himself on the line, then he sets expectations that he is unable to fulfill and suffers":** One of the most frequent situations is that we always tend to underline the state of handicap, not the abilities, the potential, the aspirations that have to do with a life project. Especially in a mentality of a support type in which very often disability is connoted in a negative way, starting from an analysis that applies the diagnostic criteria of the classifications deriving from the medical/health/rehabilitation field, i.e. the disabled person captures what is not there is or what doesn't work: deficits, pathology, incapacity, immutability. In this kind of situation, the stereotype of "not getting involved" is quite evident. For this it is necessary to relate to any other interlocutors who may be from time to time the school, a sports, cultural, associative environment, work, loved ones

... it is essential that the disabled person, like everyone else, has the possibility of "get involved" even at the risk of "banging your head against a wall" and also experiencing disappointments.

One of the aspects of the protective attitude of families, both to defend in some way the possibility of dramatically realizing the difference between oneself and others deriving from disability, which could jeopardize their serenity is the tendency to make sure that the disabled person does not take emotional risks. Everyone goes through this risk in their life, regardless of the presence of a form of disability or not, there are desires and aspirations in each of us that often collide with reality or with situations that do not allow their realization [1].

**"The disabled person to be pitied":** This stereotype contains a very precise idea: disability is a situation that has somehow ruined an undesired, unwanted existence, making it more fragile. It is thought to establish a relationship of sharing a hypothetical suffering, on the one hand it makes those who are next to the disabled person feel better, on the other it wants to be a form of participation in them. The fact is that a person with a disability does not want to face his or her condition in this way, but would like exactly the opposite: to overcome it, taking it for what it is, that is, one of the possible situations in life, the one that has happened, which connotes, but which must be managed in the best possible way. The sharing that passes through compassion (which means: "to suffer together"), is very difficult to carry out because in reality "we don't suffer together", and it is a form of hypocrisy that does not help in the least improvement of the situation. Instead, the need for understanding, attention, competence and friendship is considered necessary [1: 31].

**"The disabled person is an example for everyone, he gives us strength in how he faces his condition":** We must bear in mind that there are two consequences with respect to this attitude: the first is the opinion that disability is a form of heroism, of

enormous capacity and potential; the second is connected to the word "disability", understood as a different ability, as if it were a preference and there were individual abilities that are in some way determined precisely by the form of disability. It becomes evident that each person lives and tries reasonably to use the skills he possesses to the fullest, and that he is capable of developing if properly encouraged, oriented and educated. In itself, disability is not a condition of superiority or inferiority, it is an attribute determined by a deficit, the weight of which can be greater or lesser depending on the context in which it develops. Disability is not a disease to be ashamed of, it is an objective condition which must be taken into account in order to better organize one's life project.

**"The asexual disabled person":** the person with disability is a man, a woman or can obviously also have a different sexuality, but is not asexual. We discuss the theme of love, affection and sexuality after adolescence and precisely the difficulty of having a "normal" emotional or sexual relationship represents the real handicap. This stereotype is one of the most delicate issues to deal with, it contains one of those taboos with respect to which only an education in sexuality and affectivity can change the frame of reference and help change things, but it is a long process of generations, it cannot be resolved easily except through individual situations. There are many demonstrations to the contrary and therefore an ability to tell, without exhibitionism, in a simple and correct way that one can experience disability (and also one's sexuality) is needed, obviously taking into account one's personal situation and with great respect for the dignity of the person [1: 31-32].

These are the fundamental elements that need to be known and understood in social and school educational practices in order to be able to trace the lines of a pedagogy of individual and social Wholeness. The work involves research

and direct, interested activity. It involves the development of proximity, of equitable proximity towards all human existences which, due to disability, appear distant and impossible to consider and include. It involves institutional and social efforts.

Above all, it is a job that should become a constant for every educator (man or woman) who learns to see, revisit and reread himself. A punctual work that starts from the educator who wants to meet and educate the person with disabilities and moreover a person with disabilities of minor age, or a person who grows up.

**Conclusions and research perspectives.** The article delves deep into the transition from an individual concept of disability to a social model. It argues that our thoughts, emotions, feelings, and our perception of our position in society depend on the relationships we have with others. The article highlights the challenges faced by people with disabilities, who often strive for inclusion and attempt to minimize their differences. It further contends that as children with disabilities mature, their adaptation to their own bodies can be overshadowed by anxiety and societal expectations.

The article expands upon and refines the concept of the social model of disability, which emphasizes social and environmental factors contributing to inclusion rather than focusing solely on individual disabilities. It rejects the notion that people with disabilities bear responsibility for their condition or that they are not exerting sufficient effort to overcome their limitations. The article argues that the perception of disability is not static but evolves constantly through the interactions between individuals with disabilities and social barriers. Additionally, it acknowledges the intricate nature of the transition to independence for individuals with disabilities and underscores the significance of considering the person-environment relationship when addressing disability-related issues.

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