



According to the arrangement of the stars on the date of birth, according to the celestial movements of the present, astrologers and friends of the divinatory sciences give recipes, offer advice, prevent dangers, suggest investments and recommend diets.

In ancient times there were thinkers who harshly criticized the extravagances of soothsayers. Sixth Empiric, a philosopher who lived between the 2nd and 3rd centuries of our age, wrote a treatise against astrologers, to ridicule the arguments used by those who read the future in the stars.

In the modern world, and despite the advances in science and culture, astrology has a great diffusion. We found horoscopes in the paper, on the radio, on the internet. Some soothsayers offer (at a more or less reasonable price) advice and clues to those who ask for help before making important decisions. The level of studies does not take many away from the habit of going to astrologers.

Next to astrology, perhaps in competition with it, the use of genetics has been developed, clearly oriented to predictions, to the knowledge of the future. Through the study of DNA, the information of the genes with which each one begins to exist, some seek to reveal numerous characteristics of people and their present and future actions.

The DNA would determine, mainly, the physical structure, the height, the color of the skin, the shape of the nose, the brightness of the eyes or the calcification of the bones. But it would also fix the intellectual level, the characterological disposition, the propensity to certain diseases, the tendency towards optimism or pessimism, the sense of humor, even many decisions that people consider free but that would result from the powerful control exercised by the genes.

This theory, of course, is not shared by all, because many biologists recognize that, together with the action of genes, the life of each individual depends on the environment, the culture, the personal decisions. The development of human existence would not be the result of the iron control of DNA over psychology or on the functioning of the physiological organism but would be explained from a very complete set of factors, including the freedom to each.

But the temptation to accept genetic determinism remains very present in our societies. Some seek to know their future with the help of a laboratory test, to find out if they will have colon cancer, if they will suffer from diabetes, if they will die of some form of kidney failure, etc. They believe, in this way, to acquire a science with which they could guide their future decisions and prevent (even avoid) evils to those who would be predisposed because of the constitution of their chromosomes.

In humans, however, there are inner forces and deep mechanisms that go beyond genetic mechanisms. Intelligence opens us to almost unlimited horizons. The will can choose from many lifestyles to the point that many decisions completely change the destiny not only of oneself but also of many other people who live more or less near us.

Indeed, genes will almost irretrievably fix certain events in each other's lives. But it is also true that with a "defective" and poor genetic endowment, there will be those who will know how to live according to noble values, according to good principles, according to attitudes of solidarity and dedication that beautify the world and that make possible important triumphs of the justice among men. As it also must be acknowledged, there will be those who live by selfish, unjust and violent criteria.

In the face of those who, with an attitude of arrogance, want to use genetics to say who has the right to live and who will be aborted by the "defects" on their chromosomes (to avoid a "black future"), we can and must defend the value of any existence because living as men or women is something much bigger and deeper than developing a series of chemical events based on the DNA we receive from our parents.

Genetics should not become a substitute for horoscopes (deceptive to ridiculous extremes) in the world of science. Neither stars nor genes can chain the richness of human freedom. Because we are free, each decides, in his or her concrete choices, his temporal future, and his eternal future. That is a great risk and, above all, the great wealth, of our human condition.