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ESPINALT'S CONCEPT OF HUMAN WILL AND CHARACTER AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR MORAL EDUCATION¹

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Abstract: This article deals with the human will and the individual character and their relevance in the moral sphere. After introducing the conative domain, it argues for the need to have a psychological and educational model of human character. The paper presents Espinalt's (1920-1993) concepts of will and character and their consequences for education. After having explored human will and understanding the causes for the relative lack of consideration of will by modern psychology, a definition of character is presented as a result of exercising human will. Three different dimensions of character are considered: One more connected with instincts, another with culture, and the most distinctive of individual *self-engraving*. The third dimension leads to different considerations of education that are briefly explained. The Espinaltian vision is contrasted with other contemporary visions of human will and character. The social and historical forces with an influence on the education of the character are also considered. Finally the paper argues for the centrality of these approaches for a moral education which is based on Aristotelian views.

Keywords: *Espinalt, Human Will, Moral education, Aristotle, character*

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INTRODUCTION

The Neoclassical Model of the Human Psyche

Traditionally the human psyche has been divided into three components: Cognition, affect and conation (Hilgard, 1980; Tallon, 1997). Mayer (2001) explained how this triune vision dates from the 18th century and, for that reason, it is referred to by some authors as the neoclassical model of the human psyche (Diessner, Frost & Smith, 2004), and identified as a framework embedded in the visions and researches carried out in an important part of modern psychology. Cognition refers to the process of getting to know and understand; of encoding, perceiving, storing, processing, and retrieving information; affect refers to the emotional interpretation of perceptions, information, or knowledge; and conation refers to the connection of knowledge and affect to behavior, it is the personal, intentional, deliberate, goal-oriented, or striving component of motivation, the proactive (as opposed to reactive or habitual) aspect of behavior (Huitt & Cain, 2005). Connation is the mental process that activates and/or directs behavior and action. Various terms used to represent some aspect of conation include intrinsic motivation, goal-orientation, volition, will, self-direction, and self-regulation.

Considering these three dimensions separately, we can observe that cognition has received an important part of the attention from modern psychology and has been considered crucial to prepare children and youth for adulthood through thinking skills and critical thinking (Gallifa, Pérez & Rovira, 2002; Huitt & Cain, 2005), but the awareness that cognition is not the whole story, even in understanding intellectual functioning and development, has been growing (Dai & Sternberg, 2004). On the other hand, emotions have an important tradition in psychology, although sometimes have been seen by the western mind as disruptive for the conscious mind. Damasio (1994) called this phenomenon the Descartes' error related to -attributed to Descartes-dualism, which separates the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa* giving centrality to the *cogito*, more identified with cognition. The field of neuroscience has, after a long period of looking at the other way, again embraced emotion as an important research area (LeDoux, 2000) and the development of constructs and research on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997) have strongly focused attention of contemporary psychology on the

affective domain. At the beginning of modern psychology, conation was considered central to its study; however interest in conation has declined. Many contemporary researchers believe volition, defined as the use of will, or the freedom to make choices about what to do, is an essential element of voluntary human behavior and human behavior cannot be explained fully without it (Huitt & Cain, 2005). Some authors propose and work in views that integrate the three dimensions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Dai & Sternberg, 2004; Diessner *et al.*, 2004). In practice, it is not easy to separate these dimensions and, for example, the concept of emotional intelligence in Goleman's (1995) formulation clearly includes cognitive, affective and conative dimensions. Another example can be measurement: Some perspectives find fundamental commonalities among particular measures of cognition, affect, and conation (Ackerman & Beier, 2003).

Understanding the Conative Domain

We argued that the conative domain is constituted by complex processes that can receive different names like motivation, goal-orientation, volition, will, self-direction or self-regulation. These processes are not exactly the same in terms of their biological basis or level of consciousness implied. Some are more related with cognition, others with affects, but all require some level of motives and very often conation is referred to as motivation (Dai & Sternberg, 2004).

Motivation can be understood as a biologically driven system, responsible for inward bodily monitoring that indicates important biologic needs and urges: The body's need for food into hunger, the need for water into thirst, and the need for self-defense into urges for safety or attack (Mayer, 2001). Some better knowledge on the functioning of the limbic system can help to understand the mechanisms of motivation that are central in neuroscience. Major motivation concepts that have historic importance or have influenced the interpretation of behavioral neuroscience research are: Homeostasis, setpoints and settling points, intervening variables, hydraulic drives, drive reduction, appetitive and consummatory behavior, opponent processes, hedonic reactions, incentive motivation, drive centers, dedicated drive neurons (and drive neuropeptides and receptors), neural hierarchies, and new concepts from affective neuroscience such as allostasis, cognitive incentives, and reward *liking* versus *wanting* (Berridge, 2004). The study of emotional brain and fear mechanisms may also contribute

to understanding the neural circuits of motivation (LeDoux, 2000).

In a more psychological level, one way of defining conation is to describe a taxonomy of the conative domain. Atman (1987) proposed five conative stages:

1. Perception: Openness to multiple forms of sensory and intuitive stimuli. It is important at this stage for the individual to be able to perceive relationships and flow among phenomena.

2. Focus: the ability to distinguish a particular stimulus or pattern from the background. This is the stage at which the individual establishes a goal or desired end result.

3. Engagement: the individual begins to more closely examine the goal and its features, beginning to develop an action plan as to how the goal can be accomplished.

4. Involvement: the individual begins to implement the action plan. Depending upon the level of attention shown in each of the previous stages, this involvement can range from minimal to absorbed.

5. Transcendence: the individual is completely immersed in the task in such a manner that the mind/body/task become one. A variety of researchers such as Maslow, Assagioli, and Csikszentmihaly have described this stage as peak experience; joyous, transpersonal will; and flow, respectively (Huitt & Cain, 2005).

Another way of studying conation is to describe the processes of conation as an approach to the classic definitions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in light of contemporary research and theory. Intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1973) remains an important construct, reflecting the natural human propensity to learn and assimilate; and extrinsic motivation can vary considerably in its relative autonomy and thus can either reflect external control or true self-regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A major benefit of this approach is to distinguish internal from external motivation, again as a guide to facilitate the development of competencies necessary to successfully develop conation. From this perspective there are three aspects of conation or volition (Huitt & Cain, 2005):

Directing: Defining one's purpose; identifying human needs; having aspirations, visions, and dreams of one's possible futures; making choices and setting goals; developing an action plan.

Energizing: Overcoming inertia; high self-esteem; physical fitness, high physical energy; attention focusing; positive self-talk; ability to manage emotions (arouse and dampen); getting started, initiating task; positive social interactions with family and friends.

Persevering: Engaging in daily self-renewal activities; monitoring thoughts, emotions, and behaviors; self-evaluation using data collected in the monitoring process; reflection on progress; completing tasks.

Another approach to motivation or volition is the relationship with personality (Maslow, 1970). After reviewing the research in the domain of personality traits, Huitt (Huitt & Cain, 2005) identified 4 conative styles:

Fact Finder: Gathers data and probes for more information; most oriented to activities that encompass defining, calculating, formalizing, and researching.

Follow Thru: Seeks patterns for known information; most oriented to such acts as arranging, coordinating, integrating, and implementing.

Quick Start: Seeks to be creative and innovate; most oriented to activities that involve brainstorming, intuiting, inventing, and risk taking.

Implementer: Desires to demonstrate knowledge and skills: “most oriented to such acts as building, crafting, forming, and repairing.”

In very important fields of applied research, motivation has been a useful construct: In commitment in relationships (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001) or in employees' commitment (Myer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004); in brand loyalty (Alwi, 2006; McMullan & Gilmore, 2003); students' motivations (Pintrich, 2004; Weiner, 1990). These few examples illustrate the importance of the field of motivation and volition.

Relevance of the will in the moral sphere

Without the purpose of going in depth in the contemporary debates on moral theories, we'll point out the renewed interest in virtues by some authors that had revived virtue ethics as a modern evolution of

Aristotelian views. For Aristotle human *eudaimonia*, happiness, consists in the exercise of the virtues. The central theme of this vision is that human nature is perfected through virtue. Much of Nicomachean Ethics is taken up with portraits of the virtuous individual intended to attract one to a life such as his. For Aristotle, all of the *practical* virtues will be possessed by the truly virtuous person, the individual of *practical wisdom*. The Aristotelian view of ethics is that

far for being based on general abstract principles that can at one and the same time be universal, invariable, and known with certainty (he argued), ethics deals with a multitude of particular concrete situations, which are themselves so variable that they resist all attempts to generalize about them in universal terms. In short, Aristotle declared, ethics is not, and cannot be a science. Instead, it is a field of experience that calls for a recognition of significant particulars and for informed prudence: for what he called *phronesis* or “practical wisdom” (Jonsen & Toulmin, 1990, 19).

Virtue theory is a general area of philosophical inquiry concerned with or related to the virtues. It includes virtue ethics, a theory about how we should act or live.

It is worth noting that there is a difference between acting virtuously and doing a virtuous action. One’s doing a virtuous action may be seen as doing the action a virtuous person would do in those circumstances, though one may not oneself be a virtuous person. Virtue ethics, then, concerns itself not only with isolated actions but with the character of the agent. There are reasons for doing certain things (such as kind things), and also for being a certain type of person (a kind person) (Crisp, 1998).

Crisp (1998) explained how virtue ethics is usually seen as an alternative to utilitarianism or consequentialism in general: Utilitarianism says that we should maximize human welfare or utility. A utilitarian, however, may advocate acting virtuously for reasons of utility. For Crisp ethical theories are best understood in terms not of what acts they require, but of the reasons offered for acting in whatever way is in fact required. This account of virtue ethics enables Crisp (1998) to distinguish it from its other main opponent, deontology or Kantianism. A Kantian, for example, might claim that my reason for telling the truth is that to do so would

be in accordance with the categorical imperative. That is a property of the action of telling the truth quite different from its being honest. Much of virtue theory has been concerned to develop Williams' criticism of utilitarianism and Kantianism that through their impersonality and impartiality, utilitarianism and Kantianism violate the integrity of moral agents (Crisp, 1998). Foot (1978) developed these critical arguments in a direction favorable to virtue ethics. According to both the principle of utility and the Kantian categorical imperative, moral reasons, being universal, are independent of the desires of agents. Foot (1978), impressed by the rationality of fulfilling one's own desires, argued that moral reasons do depend on the desires of the agent. Modern virtue ethicists can thus adopt a position on the demandingness of morality between the extremes of Aristotle and their modern opponents. For they need claim neither that self-interest is constituted entirely by being moral nor that morality completely overrides self-interest (Crisp, 1998).

McDowell (1979) argued that we cannot postulate a world as seen by both the virtuous and the unvirtuous, and then explain the moral agency of the virtuous through their possessing some special desire. Since moral rules run out, any object of desire could not be made explicit. This has clear implications for moral education: it should consist in enabling the person to see sensitively, not only in inculcating rigid and absolute principles (Crisp, 1998). This is one of the strands in the feminist critique of modern ethical theory, itself closely tied to virtue theory. Gilligan (1982) argued that the moral sensibility of women is less rule-governed than that of men, and this influenced the *ethics of care*, for example.

A problem for moral education

Because the will and the character are relevant for morality, at least in the Aristotelian or virtue ethic traditions, a clear problem comes up for moral education: There is a need to bear in mind the conative domain and having both a psychological theory on character and suitable models for character education. Without models for character education is difficult building a moral education in these traditions. The present paper aims to introduce an author who gives centrality to the will and character and points out to the importance of their deliberate education. This author is Carles M. Espinalt (1920-1993). Presenting some of his main ideas we'll try to make know the relevance of his approach for moral education.

We are not supposing that these ideas are the only ones interesting for character and moral education. We don't want to write the last word about the topic, but for the clarity of concepts and for the in depth analysis we are convinced that Espinalt's approaches can contribute to make sense to some educational needs. After presenting the theoretical approach we'll illustrate with a concrete example how these ideas can work in the day to day of the educational situations.

ESPINALT'S VIEW OF HUMAN WILL

Carles M. Espinalt was born in Montesquiu near Barcelona in Catalonia (Spain) in 1920. After graduating, he joined the army at the front in the Spanish civil war (1936-39). This experience marked his life decisively. He lived near death and tried to understand what could motivate the behaviors he saw under war: Aggression, violence, heroism,..., and also how people reacted under war circumstances. In 1950, he founded Barcelona's school of Graphology. He replaced Max Pulver in the Psychometric Department of Nestlé and Sandoz in Barcelona. In 1953, Espinalt published some books: One of them, *Del poble català* (Of Catalan people), was published under the pseudonym Pere E. Bauló, due to the prosecution of ideas and of Catalan manifestations ruling in Spain at that historical period. With this book he became well-known in other countries, especially in France. In 1960, he promoted the manifesto *Per la llengua catalana* (For Catalan language), signed by one hundred people. The manifesto claimed for Catalan language to be used in schools again, withdrawing its current prohibition. This manifesto was very influential, and it started the public struggle to recover Catalan language. With the book *Modelar-se la figura* (Shaping the figure), he initiated his theories on the balance and mutual influences between the individual's external aspect and character. In 1971, he created what he called Psycho-aesthetics (Giménez-Camins & Gallifa, 2010). His books were translated to different languages, and he was a prestigious lecturer (outside the Academy, because at that time in Spain universities were still ideologically controlled by the regime). Espinalt was counselor of democratic politicians that in time became influent. He was vice-president of the National Catalan Council, and was committed to the cause of Catalonia, sometimes refusing political responsibilities due to his loyalty to his ideals and to maintain his freedom of thought. He died in 1993.

Espinalt (1966) stated that human will is a conscious impulse that prevails over other inclinations of the temperament, opposing a system of *brakes* to each one, elaborated by the intellect and affect that have at the same time the power to remove obstacles and resistances. Will is reflective wishing that presses over unconscious forces and over the obstacles coming from the environment. It can easily be converted into a moral or perverse vector of our acting. It manages a flow of urges or lets the person drown in them if they make no use of will to materialize the conscious dictates (Espinalt, 1966). The internal unconscious forces are instincts and habits; the external forces are environmental forces and social habits. Will starts in childhood as the instinct of hunger. Due to this origin, a person that has not evolved from this stage, when having to do a task, is not guided by determination, but by having or not *ganas* (lit. *hunger* in most Latin languages) to do it (Espinalt, 1966).

To understand the functioning of will, Espinalt (1966) proposed that will is organized in three phases: Purpose, planning, and duty. Purpose in itself is not enough, because programming and overcoming instincts or habits that lead to more suited or passive alternative actions is needed. Will also generates the condition of duty, that is, to force oneself, thus ordering human consciousness through an act of the will.

People with firm will that have exercised this factor have a characteristic behavior: They are used to being self-confident in that they can obtain what they want; they stare out steadily, without blinking pointlessly; they do not put off until tomorrow what could be done today, they like acting with efficacy; when they want to, they can change their moods; they can refrain from things that they like very much if they know that they are against their interests; they do not believe that their future way of earning their living is written in advance. Knowing how to act gives them confidence (Espinalt, 1966). Whoever has firm will also has a high degree of organization and discipline. Will is not totally innate it can and must be trained with education (Espinalt, 1970). Otherwise the people without firm will cannot overcome the uncontrolled drives of their instincts. Some dialectic between the pleasant satisfaction of the immediate urge and the long term purpose that will proposes is confronted by the individual in a varied range of situations. Furthermore, without will there is no freedom. When somebody wants to dominate human beings in the social or political arena will is attacked, not intelligence or affect. The human being is dominated by weakening his will and is liberated by reinforcing his will (Espinalt, 1992b).

Reasons for the Lack of Interest in the Conative Domain

As the human will is so important, what is the reason for the apparent lack of consideration it is given in comparison to the intellectual or affective domains? Espinalt (1992b) explained how will fell into disrepute in the last century due to different ideological trends that distorted its meaning: Freud, for example, created a similar concept of will with the concept of super-ego. Freud's concept of super-ego proposes that, as children are subdued to their parents and forced to obey them, the ego is subdued to the categorical imperative of the super-ego (Giménez, 2008). For Espinalt, a genius like Freud did not understand what will represents for human beings and its description as a repressive factor helped to create a deep dislike against will (Espinalt, 1992b). These theories generated psychological tendencies and social movements that postulated a criticism towards any kind of organized behavior that could restrict the confidence of the ego. For Espinalt, will has to be repressive because it has a double projection: Outwards, for the impulse of the ego and for the decision of achieving; and inwards, to have a control of our ego's habits and our instincts (Espinalt, 1992b). Will is a heritage of the western world, from Greece to today, and without the Roman Empire will would not exist as we know it; on the other hand the 20th century was characterized by the systematic destruction of human will that took 2,500 years to be developed (Espinalt, 1992b).

A factor that can be easily mistaken for will is instinct. This confusion has also led to the disrepute of will, and it can be historically dated:

A lot of writings have explained the consequences of Nazism, among them the outbreak of the Second World War, but for Espinalt (Giménez, 2008) the confusion of Nazism between human will and the power of survival and destruction instincts has not attracted enough attention. Espinalt explains how Goebbels and Rosenberg, who was the philosopher of Nazism with the book *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, one of the books that the Nazis read, promoted this confusion. When someone asked Hitler's opinion about Rosenberg's book, Hitler answered: "I have only read a small part, because it is a difficult book to understand". Espinalt (Giménez, 2008) ironically says that Hitler was doing an intelligence test with this answer, because he showed that he was not able to understand his own philosophy. The issue is that Nazis found Rosenberg too intellectual because he talked about the importance of human will, but it was unnecessary to be so smart. Goebbels knew that men could be dominated in a simpler and

more comfortable way, because he discovered that men could be moved only through survival and destruction instincts. Why should they make the effort of structuring will if promoting the destruction instinct, for example, of the police, explaining how to torture people's spirit, increasing their survival instinct and making them obey their orders they would obtain the desired results more easily? Fromm in *Escape from Freedom* (1941) devoted a chapter to the psychology of Nazism, where he showed the manipulation of concepts that were the result of these fateful writings by Goebbels: The aim of education was to teach submission to individuals not to make their personality stronger. Already from childhood, at schools individuals had to learn to be submissive, not only when they were fairly punished, but they even had to learn to take injustices in silence. They wanted to make their people believe that personal will does not count, that it is only the power of the strong against the weak that can be preserved to survive, while behind this proposal, human individuality was smashed to bits, dissolved into a superior power that destroyed the volitional force. This is a cruel form of slavery and domination in a very confusing way because it was presented as if it was the human will! Will was never dealt with or understood. But this confusion gave the world, and particularly the USA, the false idea that obsessive will is a hateful thing, because they thought that Nazis tried to dominate everything with an excess of will, when Nazis actually did nothing else but using vilely the human beings' survival and destruction instincts (Giménez, 2008). This confusion (will-instinct) has been another of the historical reasons, from the Espinaltian perspective, of the particular disrepute of will to our days.

The other historical motivation for the disrepute of human will comes from Soviet Russia. Lenin talked about free will as a shameful myth. He did not believe in individual will, because his thought was that everything was conditioned to the determination of the historic materialistic laws. For example, in the textbooks of the Faculty of Psychology, the starting point for the maximum development of the Soviet man was to reduce his individual will and subordinate it to the requirements of social duty. Free will could not exist, and the Psychology books at Moscow university explained that man should raise some aims and try to achieve them, and at this point will had to intervene. The point is how will is interpreted: Espinalt (Giménez, 2008) presents a text of Moscow university entitled *The Psychological Content of Voluntary Acts* where "personal will is the activity directed by the consciousness of social duty, by the social need". Here the individual subordinates all his acts to social requirements. That

means that everybody had to channel his will for the common good. This attitude reminds one of a flock of sheep rather than that of a free individual (Espinalt, 1963).

These are the two dramas from the point of view of will: Nazism and Communism. This made the consideration of human will historically difficult (Espinalt, 1992b). When there is a lack of individual will, moral character or moral ethics are not possible. Without will, there are no ethical shades of meaning. Any person deprived of his will is vulnerable, is or can become corrupt. Due to this, it is difficult to stop corruption, because there is so little basis of will (Espinalt, 1992b).

TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF CHARACTER: ESPINALT'S VIEW

A direct consequence of this lack of consideration of the importance of will, or confusion of what human will really is, is the misunderstanding of what individual character is and what the importance and meaning of character education is. These issues have crucial consequences in education.

The word character comes from the Greek word *charaxo* that means *to engrave*, with reference to behaviors deeply engraved or embedded in the psyche, in form of habits or attitudes literally *engraved* in our minds (Naranjo, 1994). These character-driven behaviors are difficult to change because of inertia and homeostasis. Overcoming them is not easy but with purpose and energy new behaviors can arise. For Espinalt (1963), character is the ways of living acquired by the individual through the action of his will and the force, hostile or favorable, of the environment. Rationality is necessary because character needs some kind of deliberative action. Character directs, controls, and modulates our temperament in front of internal or external stimuli. Character is manifested through attitudes of the *ego* in the face of life events. We say in Latin languages that a person has no character if they take no attitudes, if they are doubtful in front of the facts.

Character should not be mistaken for temperament. For Espinalt, temperament unites human beings to physiological determinism (Giménez, 2008). If only temperament existed, no free acts would be possible. Character is superimposed over temperament. On the other hand, character should not be mistaken for personality or the traits of our way of being, either. There are individuals with great personality, due to their feelings or intelligence, but with absence of character, in spite of their singularity

they do not find the right moment to make decisions (Espinalt, 1963). Character requires will and is part of conscious life (Espinalt, 1992b).

But because of the already explained situation concerning the lack of consideration of the importance of human will, this Espinaltian concept of character has had no pre-eminence. Instead of it, other visions of human character have been more influential:

Some authors define and study character as a set of non-intellectual components. The concept is wide and it includes temperament, affective traits, habits, etc. This temperamental way of understanding character can be understood as a first dimension of it. The central point in this dimension is understanding character as a psychological notion that refers to all the habitual ways of feeling and reacting that distinguish one individual from another (Freud, 1957), partly to inherited dispositions, and partly to the effect of environment, under which a particular significance is ascribed to up-bringing (Abraham, 1925). The concept of neurosis is related to this view of character (Naranjo, 1994). This view praises the unconscious, temperamental-based or personality like view of character. The *engraving* of character is related to instinctive repression or neurotic strategies that compete with instincts (Naranjo, 1994).

A second way to understand character is related to the capacity of the environment to influence attitudes, habits, values, etc. For this vision, character is usually moral character (Kohlberg, 1964; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005; Piaget, 1965) or national character -shared perceptions about the personality characteristics of the typical member of their own culture and of typical members of other cultures (McCrae & Terracciano, 2006). Differences between cultures are studied (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004) and these kinds of studies raised for example some doubts about the reality of the stereotypes (McCrae, 2001; Terracciano *et al.*, 2005). Another form of studying this concept is through character education understood as socialization (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Lickona, 1993; Lickona, 1996). Davies pointed at some problems in the interpretation of character education as citizenship (Davies, Gorard & McGuinn, 2005). The *engraving* here is from the outside and what is engraved is the *super-ego*. This is also consistent with the former view. This second dimension of character can be called moral-cultural dimension of personality.

Espinalt explains how, due to the strong influence of psychoanalysis on our society, some educational principles emerged that were not good for character development. Freud's genius was to find out that men are not

rational beings par excellence, even though they boast of it, but instincts turn human beings into irrationally guided beings. Freud detected the causes, but did not fully reach the adequate remedies (Espinalt, 1961). For Freud and psychoanalysis, education is viewed as an oppressive external factor that represents the demands of civilization. In accordance with psychoanalysis, civilization has been conquered by renouncing to the satisfaction of instincts and forces that each individual follows. Freud tended to believe that *super ego* with his norms inhibited the normal evolution of instincts. That was the origin of neurosis and unhappiness. Freeing unconscious tendencies that tried to emerge or acting without repressions would be the way towards avoiding psychological tensions and psychopathological deviations. Freud, on the other hand as a man of great character, projected with force his theories on libido to oppose magic trends of his time. In a conversation with Jung, he said: "It is necessary to set my sexual theory as a norm since it is the only defense of reason against the possible irruption of the wave of the occult" (cited by Espinalt, 1990). But Freud could not imagine that his efforts to focus on the unconscious would give, as a result, a reinforcement of the instinctive part over the conscious one. Humanity had taken a step but this was not enough. Little by little, an idea emerged that nobody could be happy unless connected with their instinctive roots and living according to the dictates of their inner life. The Hippie movement of the sixties was, for Espinalt, the culmination of this spirit that was against impositions from a society that restricted the individuals' free expression. There is no reason to argue about pacifist and brotherly ideals, but the strategies to achieve them caused this movement to launch a new vision of human personality that worshipped the instinctive part. Hippies eliminated time, had no watches, regulated themselves by instincts (hunger, thirst, sleep), did not want to have their freedom restricted by the dictates either of time or society, nobody and nothing could organize their lives. Responsibilities and obligations were not made for them. They wanted to go back to live in the country, they thought that living again as cavemen would make them freer from problems. This false idea of freedom, consisting in the primacy of instincts, has been influential, even today a lot of young people –even well educated– share this view (Espinalt, 1990).

The identification of ruling dominant passions or neurotic mechanisms that compete with instincts as an adapting answer to the lack of love, that can be understood in their psycho-dynamics, view that is shared with object relations theorists (Naranjo, 1994), in practice leads to the

same result identified by Espinalt: Primacy of unconscious mechanisms over conscious ones.

These influences, added to the lack of consideration of human will, lead to the situation where the modern man has half the character of that of the 19th century man, why? Because modern technologies give him a false illusion of character (Espinalt, 1986).

Character has, for Espinalt, a necessary third dimension, because character gives the possibility of changing and overcoming capacities that we lack by nature. If character did not exist, we would have an unchangeable personality. Some people show this thought by saying "I am like that", and this is a factor that may incapacitate to understand the transforming function of character in personality. Dweck *et al.* (1995) studied how people's implicit theories about human attributes structure the conditions by which they understand and react to human actions and outcomes. She reviewed research showing that when people believe that attributes (such as intelligence or moral character) are fixed, trait-like entities (an entity theory), they tend to understand outcomes and actions in terms of these fixed traits ("I failed the test because I am dumb" or "He stole the bread because he is dishonest"). In contrast, when people believe that attributes are more dynamic, malleable, and developable (an incremental theory), they tend to focus less on broad traits and, instead, tend to understand outcomes and actions in terms of more specific behavioral or psychological mediators ("I failed the test because of my lack of effort or poor strategy" or "He stole the bread because he was desperate"). The two frameworks also appear to foster different reactions: Helpless versus mastery-oriented responses to personal setbacks and an emphasis on retribution versus education or rehabilitation for transgressions (Dweck, *et al.*, 1995). The dimension of incremental theories introduces the individual to the possibility of change.

Character development needs intelligence, emotions and will. Primitive human beings had to develop characterial forces to overcome their condition and constructed a more complex environment compared to other species (Espinalt, 1963). In front of the passive dimensions of character together with temperament or personality, the more affective, or culturally or educationally conditioned, more intellectual passive, character has the possibility to be constructed by the action of human will on personality. This is an active exercising of will. Because of the aforementioned misunderstanding of will in contemporary times, this explains the lack of consideration of individual-personal character in our

times in comparison with other historical times. Will needs purpose and energy directed to fulfill it. In terms of oneself, exercising will means personal purpose to achieve and practicing these new traits. This is a personal motivated *engraving*.

Using this third dimension, character is to make decisions, keep them, and change them whenever appropriate. Character is not only good intentions or subjectivities, but facts and determination. In two words: steadying oneself (Espinalt, 1963). This requires being in shape. As muscles need to be trained, character ought to be trained. Character is like a true helm that guides and regulates human actions under intelligence. When we find an individual that does not know what path to take, hesitant, indecisive or, as a weathervane, praises where the wind is blowing, we say that this is an individual without character, but in the same statement we understand that he is a being undermined by lack of security (Espinalt, 1961).

Adler believed that we are decision-making beings responsible for our own behavior and capable of changing it (Adler, 1931; Adler & Brett, 1998). This third view, which consists in *self-engraving*, in having an intentional, proactive and determined concern in one's development, requires training. Two different worlds are possible: reactive, easy-going, instinctive-neurotic driven, or intentional, proactive, and self-engraved by character.

Character, on the other hand, could not be mistaken for bad humor. In Latin languages we have the sense of character as in *strong character* meaning a tempered or nervous person. Self-affirmation is not to be necessarily equivalent to neurotic nature. In Latin languages, a person that has strong and violent reactions is referred to as having character. This led to mistaking character for insensitivity, egoism or lack of concern for others. Enforcing respect for rights should not be mistaken for the *bad character* of one who does not tolerate the opinions and rights of others (Espinalt, 1961). In a world where the logic of adaptation to the masses is more and more present, character imprints personal and differentiated traits to the individual. While temperament or socialization makes individuals uniform and is stereotyping, only character personalizes and individualizes, it makes them singular and unique human beings (Giménez, 2008).

To summarize the perspective presented: We have three dimensions of character, one constructed on top of the next. The first dimension is the temperament-personality dimension; the second is the cultural-socialized dimension; and the third, and this is the special meaning for Espinalt, the self-intentional dimension. In a comparison that can be meaningful, we

can compare the temperament-personality dimension with learning the process of drawing different letters, the cultural dimension with learning the reading-writing process that the former requires, that is, how to read and write words and connect them with meaning. In this example, the individual dimension of character can be compared with the process of writing and composing a complex text. Given the former dimensions, personal writing is a singular expression, it involves culture, but goes beyond it because there is individual self-expression. Each of these learning dimensions are complex processes, and each dimension is necessary for the next dimension to appear, but succeeding dimensions do not necessarily derive from earlier dimensions. To develop these complex processes, exercise and practice are needed. Drawing is closer to biology, words to culture, but self-expression is more individual and can be developed or not. Similarities with individual character are eloquent.

Evolution of Individual Character

Espinalt explains how the psychoanalytic concept that the decisive time to develop character is early childhood needs to be revised. Childhood is an important time, but it is not the most significant for Espinalt, because the beginning of adolescence and the affective elections that, apart from family, are produced are a more determining fact than the experiences of diapers or crawling (Espinalt, 1972). Personality is more easily influenced in childhood and adolescence. In these periods it is easier to teach positive habits, but character can be formed at any age of life and it is never too late to create it, as well as to lose it (Espinalt, 1972).

Children, even if they have shown earlier signs of intelligence, do not start giving signs of authentic will until the age of four, and then very modestly. As Freud said, children are subdued to their parents' will; then their will shall be mastered by the will of the superego in the case of forming a will (Espinalt, 1992b).

As muscles have to be exercised, to be in shape, character also has to be exercised, because if life is a struggle in any dimension, it is in the constant care required to develop character through exercise (Espinalt, 1972).

Modern and contemporary psychology do not have this direct concept of character. Some concepts in recent intelligence research like Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1995) or Successful Intelligence (Sternberg, 1999) have conative dimensions and characterial traits but without an explicit definition.

Human Types of Character

Espinalt made a classification of human characters in four categories (Espinalt, 1970):

The restless: They are individuals with passionate tendencies that are happy in whatever is innovative. They are attentive to modernity, sensitive to changes. They like living and finding new challenges in life. They are adaptable and have few routines.

The mimetical: People that do not generate enough dynamism for self-determination, but they are sensitive to others' acts. Especially they let themselves be led by the passion that they find in the restless, who, with their motion and enthusiasm, exert a strong influence on them. They are attentive and have a certain level of dynamics, although they are not impulsive, and can anticipate change.

The pondering: They are individuals with a personal belief that, in front of life, before acting, a lot of precautions have to be taken. To be secure, they are irresolute. It is not reasoning or indecision that stops them but a matter of slower dynamics and are not as imperious as the restless. The pondering need time and stimuli to assimilate changes and to act. Fear, "what others may say", "things have always been like this or that", etc. are common expressions and they lose ascendancy over leadership.

The outcasts: They are outside social processes, they can have good ideas but have no power or strategy to put them into practice. The outcasts tend not to get involved.

History is made by the restless, and the pondering just comment on it. Vivacity and vehemence lie with the restless or with the mimetic that copy their facts or gestures. The others are spectators (Espinalt, 1970). To understand the influence of a person on a group, it also has to be understood what level of social evolution the individual is in: initial, qualified, power, glory; or what their characteristic personal attitude is like: frustrated, conformist, cynical or collaborative (Espinalt, 1970). See the figure below for the different possible combinations:

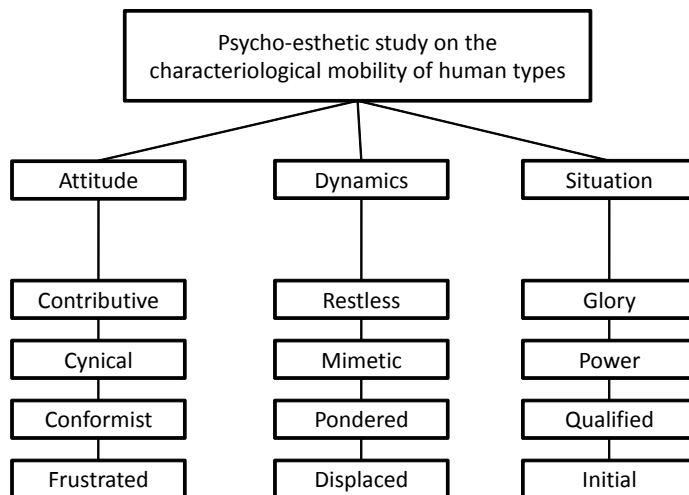


Figure 1

Implications of the formation of character for moral education

After the evaluation of what character is and what the will represents in human beings, is interesting deducing what are the consequences of the lack of training in these important issues for moral education.

We explained that character's development requires will and the will is always an effort, because it interacts with temperament, i.e. with the instincts and habits, and in turn reacts also with the forces of the environment and social habits. If the will, as a fundamental part of character, is not well formed, the dominating forces are temperamental, that is the most basic instincts of the person. Without the will, instincts are seeking immediate pleasure, the instantaneous satisfaction of the primary needs. In this case the functioning of the personality requires no effort and in any case can consider moral principles. On the other hand, will represents the control (no repression) of these forces to achieve a more sublime satisfaction, because the reward is in the same effort that models us and helps us to refine the personality (Giménez, 2008). Willpower also involves a modification of the primary negative emotions, either towards oneself or towards others.

Nevertheless the forces of environment and social habits represent powerful environmental elements with which the character has to interact. If it is weakened, individual will be quickly influenced and will find difficult

to keep the moral principles that anticipated. For example if a young man knows he can not drink alcohol while driving but people who interacts with him don't consider this a significant issue, he must maintain a very firm attitude when their fellows incite him to drink or make fun of him.

Training the will will be possible insofar as education is proposing to value the role of effort, mitigating the consequences of a society that promotes leisure and the idea that everything should be easy and fun. Moral decisions can not be maintained without firmness. The inappropriate influence of the environment and the instincts led the person to move along the easier path. Without strength of character in situations fraught with difficulties integrity can not be maintained.

The consequences of the underestimation of the will can be found today, among other symptoms, in the increasing unethical behavior concentrated especially in some political class that acts usually as anti-model of respect for other persons and views (Giménez, 2008). Without increasing the dissemination of positive models in the media and without appropriate education of willpower, will be difficult to maintain moral principles or virtues. If the purpose of education is to promote individuals who are directed to social good or to the personal self-improvement, we can't forget that the impulse to achieve it comes from willpower.

Character education acquires new meaning when based on Espinalt's dimensions of character, further away on the concept of education only as social adaptation. Influences in childhood are important in the creation of character. The incoherence in influences, for example inconsistencies between parents and school, creates character disorientation (Espinalt, 1963). The most important influences are: family, school, peer group, and media. All of them have a powerful influence on childhood education. These mutual influences consciously or unconsciously shape character (Espinalt, 1963).

Espinalt is critical of character education at schools: Our schools do not educate character, at least to the spirit of our culture and at the level that is required in our world (Espinalt, 1963). Despite the intellectual training that young people receive, the lack of training to make decisions and take on responsibilities generates a lot of anxiety that could be prevented with some adequate character education. The requirement of managerial capacities of an individual doing a professional career is an example of the need to review curricula (Espinalt, 1961). The causes of this situation have been analyzed above.

Human models

One of the most useful tools to enable the willpower, and that has been extensively studied for Espinalt is the role of human models. The study and analysis of relevant human figures is the main road that leads student to realize the importance of effort to achieve the goals that will lead him/her to self-improvement, both individually and socially. For example, in this respect would be important to ensure that school subjects were studied along with the characters that developed these approaches. So mathematics should be studied next to individuals that, with particular directed efforts, developed these ideas in response to some social or intellectual situations. The human qualities are transmitted effectively when we see them embodied in people. It's very difficult to inculcate them only in theory. The effectiveness of the models is based in the fact that humans can learn from the experiences of others (Giménez, 2008). To illustrate this point we can observe how an historical figure such as Antoni Gaudi, which was severely criticized when he began creating his original architectural works, but he continued his work through his strong character that prevented that he felt demoralized and influenced by his companions.

Exercises to Train Character

For Espinalt, human beings need to constantly train and prepare character through these different ways:

1. Creation and analysis of models. We learn the use of the will from human models. To learn the effort of individuals which created knowledge, for example, side by side with the subject is a way to understand will.
2. Will of communication and overcoming shyness and lack of need to communicate the own points.
3. Bringing the incentives that give meaning to life, the motivations that impel the individual to achieve goals in life alive. This mean knowing the individual motivations and passions.
4. Updating personal forms according to the character of times. Each time and culture has their particular way of expressing character.
5. Analysis of the updating. Self analysis of personal traits.
6. Motivating instructions. Short sentences that represent the aims that we propose for ourselves and that generate motivation and life. Transforming the purposes in short sentences and repeating them.

Some Techniques to Reinforce or Develop Character

Espinalt (1988) presented three kinds of exercises to perfect character:

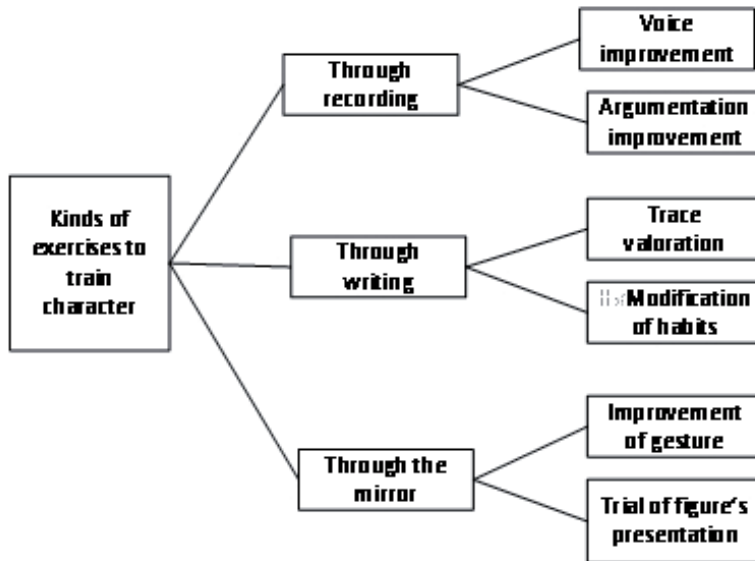


Figure 2

1. Voice. Recording one's voice is a technique that helps to identify the person with his way of speaking. Many people do not identify their own voice or reject it as they find it not very pleasant. Only through identifying the sound that we produce when speaking can we develop security and dominion of our relationship with others. Our voice, for Espinalt, is like some music that we constantly listen to and has subliminal effects on our mood. Changing voice tone is a common Espinaltian exercise. Having our voice recorded allows us to listen to ourselves, knowing if our arguments are adequate, if we have enough vocabulary, if we make ourselves understood...

2. Writing. For Espinalt, writing is the expression of personality. Written self-expression is also a way of self-knowledge used by Espinalt.

3. Mirror. Espinalt stated that man's best friend is not the dog but the mirror. Self-observation of our own figure in the mirror and exercising it in gestures, in face expressions and look, will be fundamental to reinforce

character and have an adequate personal identification. Espinalt explains how, for centuries, the reflected images have been interpreted as the personal soul.

Five characteristics favor character training (Giménez, 2008): domination of habits, domination of instincts, experiential maturity, will to communicate and compensation of the inferiority complex

Split of Character and Personality

The lack of development of character, so characteristic of our society and already analyzed, leads Espinalt to describe the split or lack of integration between character and personality. This figure illustrates this situation (Espinalt, 1992a):

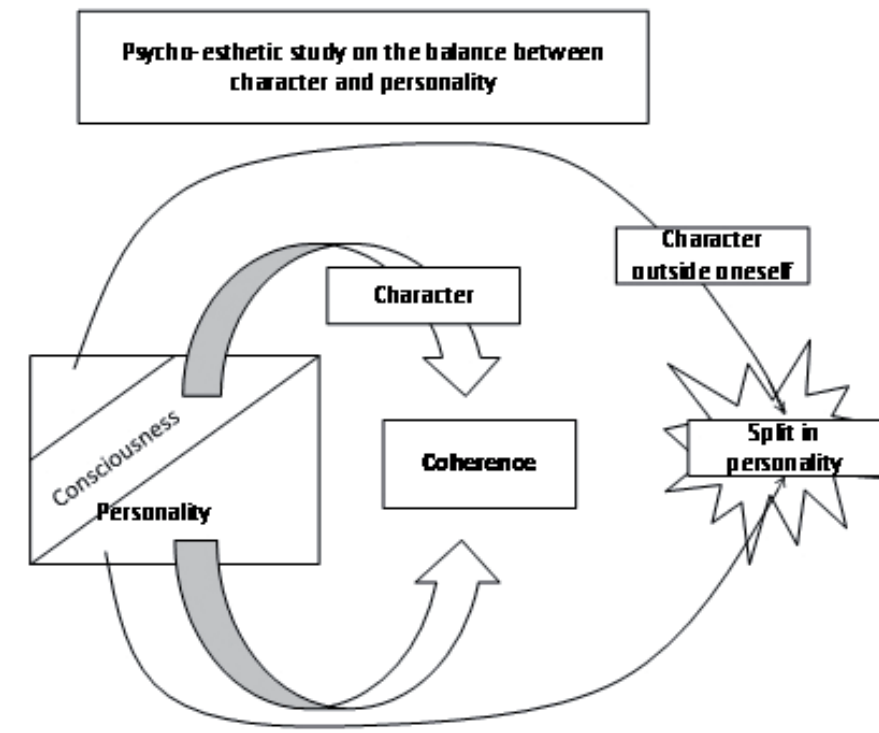


Figure 3

On the one hand, personality, more unconsciously rooted, and on the other hand character, more consciously produced, need to be coherent and balanced. When there is some lack in this balance, there is what Espinalt called a split between personality and character.

This situation of split is common today in people that do not have their own opinions and believe the last person that tries to convince them. The influence of media, especially TV, exacerbates this situation (Espinalt, 1992a).

An example: the loss of the ethic of hard work in Education.

We will present a problem of our time, which Espinalt identified, and we're going to explore the consequences of this problem in a relevant example for moral education: The ethic of hard work or the problem of having lost the work ethic or the satisfaction of a job well done. We'll show why character education (understood as Espinalt does) is a useful approach in this so common situation in our time.

According Espinalt the individual who developed character and the individual guided by temperament are in two very different positions. Because character directs, controls, and modulates temperament, an individual guided only by temperament can not resist their immediate needs. These immediate needs can come from the unconscious (like instincts, complexes or intuitions) or from the environment. These two positions are characterized as the full-conscious individual (directed by the character) or the mini-conscious one (directed by the temperament) (Espinalt, 1992b). Because the mini-conscious position, according Espinalt, is very common in our time there are some consequences easily identifiable. One of these consequences is the loss of the ethic of hard work in education. This means lack of effort, laziness, unwillingness to take certain works, and lack of motivation for a job well done. This loss can be understood as a loss of work ethic which may include also being reliable, having initiative or maintaining social skills. It is also a loss of the belief in the moral benefit of work and its ability to enhance character. The consequence is a lack of pleasure in the job well done. An illustrative case on the importance of work ethic and job well done can be the Gaudi buildings. Gaudi was a genius of the architecture. Nevertheless his works could not had been possible without the cooperation of all kinds of very skilled artisans (bricklayers, carpenters, glaziers, blacksmiths...). Without the work well

done and the Gaudi's culture from this detailed work, his architecture wouldn't have been possible. Contemplating a Gaudi's building is an evocative form to understand the culture of what effort means, or what means the job well done.

The Espinaltian proposal to cope with this not uncommon situation in Education is through educating the will and developing character. This education doesn't imply only to teach moral rules, but the development of character. The Espinaltian development of character can be understood, as the acquisition of the Aristotelian *phronesis* or practical wisdom. To develop character (the full-conscious person) and to get out of the mini-conscious position controlled by temperament is an educational version to learn virtues, as some virtue ethic theories propose. For this we can consider the espinaltian approach as concrete psychological and educative models useful for moral education.

CONCLUSION

We presented an author, Espinalt, who gave centrality to the human will and character, proposing a psychological framework and educational ideas to consciously educate character. Is not the only one perspective presented on the importance of the conative domain and we presented some other authors that pointed out to the same direction, but maybe without the emphasis and personal commitment than our introduced author. This personal way of explanation and interpretation allows for rethinking the relevance of the conative domain. The lacks of consideration of this dimension and the historically produced confusions have been presented, together with the consequences for the individual. The interpretations of Espinalt include some educational perspectives to educate character. Some problems as the lack of satisfaction for the job well done, not uncommon at schools, are addressed by the espinaltian approach and explained as a concrete example.

The interest of these interpretations is that the espinaltian development of character can be understood as a concrete way of developing Aristotelian *phronesis*, in the sense that modern virtue ethic theorists understand virtues and their relationship with motivation and personal character. This is an alternative to morality understood only as a rule-based thinking. The distinction between acting virtuously (being a virtuous person) and doing a virtuous action is at the heart of this moral debate. We presented diverse positions on moral issues and explored one of the approaches.

With psychological and educational models for character education, like the introduced here, moral education will enhance by having new approaches and concrete models in one of the main traditions which the Aristotelian influence represents.

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