

An Introduction to Carles M. Espinalt's Psycho-aesthetics: A Psychology of the Mutual Influences between Form and Essence

Carme Giménez-Camins and Josep Gallifa

Universidad Ramon Llull (Spain)

This paper presents the different dimensions of Psycho-aesthetics. Psycho-aesthetics is a set of psychological concepts created by Carles M. Espinalt (1920-1993) that help conceptualize the mutual influences of form and essence. Language, an individual's character, personal image, leadership, and one's "way of being" are understood in Psycho-aesthetics as cultural artifices that exemplify the complementary aspects of form and essence. The present study investigates ways of changing or educating form, and how essence may be influenced or modified. We also describe the implicitly Aristotelian epistemology of Psycho-aesthetics, as well as the rationale behind the Psycho-aesthetic approach.

Keywords: Carles M. Espinalt, Psycho-aesthetics, Aristotelian epistemology.

Este artículo presenta las diversas dimensiones de la Psico-estética. La Psico-estética es un conjunto de conceptos psicológicos creados por Carles M. Espinalt (1920-1993) que ayuda a conceptualizar las influencias mutuas entre forma y esencia. El lenguaje, el carácter del individuo, la imagen personal, el liderazgo y la manera propia de ser se entienden en la Psico-estética como artificios culturales que ejemplifican los aspectos complementarios de la forma y la esencia. El presente estudio investiga modos de cambiar o educar la forma y cómo la esencia puede ser influida o modificada. Así mismo, describimos la epistemología aristotélica implícita en la Psico-estética, así como la racionalidad tras el enfoque Psico-estético.

Palabras clave: Carles M. Espinalt, Psico-estética, Epistemología aristotélica.

Origins of Psycho-Esthetics: Its Creation by Carles M. Espinalt (1920-1993)

Brief biography of Espinalt

Professor Carles M. Espinalt was born in Montesquiú 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: 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-esthetics. 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, and he also counseled the former president of the United States, Jimmy Carter. 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.

An Initial Definition of Psycho-esthetics

Psycho-esthetics can be initially defined as the science –in the broader sense of the term- that studies human beings through the artifices that they need to survive, and especially the role that self-affirmation has in surviving. Artifices are not only the instruments, but also the ornaments, the art, and generally speaking the culture. Some means for surviving are –as has been explained- instruments, like language, but also other artifices including the role that clothes have in affirming the personal image. In Espinalt's words: "Psycho-esthetics is the science that studies human beings through the artifices that they need to survive and assert themselves" (Espinalt, 1988). "Traditional and contemporary esthetics

limited their scope to human productions. Contradictory opinions of esthetics are a consequence of the fact that the human being is the first work of art made by himself... I recognize and define Psycho-esthetics as the following process: The artistic valuation of oneself, depending on an experiential equilibrium between the physical aspect and the character, conducted by the aim of perfecting and presenting the figure in a pleasant way, harmonizing it with fashions or with personal beliefs" (Espinalt, 1971).

Objective

The objective of this study is to specify and define the concept of Psycho-esthetics in Carles M. Espinalt's formulation, through the interpretation of his writings, in order to incorporate some of his innovative and original theories and approaches into contemporary psychological reflection. These theories have not been in the mainstream of ideas and concepts, but the definitive influence of image, through the media today, makes these approaches interesting enough for contemporary Psychology.

The main questions to answer will be, therefore: What are the key concepts of Psycho-esthetics? And what are Espinalt's most original psychological contributions?

Method

To answer and clarify these questions a hermeneutic process was carried out, by applying Gadamer's hermeneutics (Gadamer, 2004). We followed the three elements of this hermeneutic process:

- The *subtilitas intelligendi*, the understanding.
- The *subtilitas explicandi*, the interpretation.
- The *subtilitas aplicandi*, the application.

Gadamer's hermeneutics is based on the postulate that understanding is interpreting. To understand texts, we have to understand the social and political events at the moment of writing and also their meaning for the interpreter today (Gadamer, 2004). We analyzed all Espinalt's writings with the purpose of interpreting them from the point of view of finding the interest that his concepts or approaches have for contemporary Psychology. Espinalt wrote in a time of censorship in Spain, and because of this, and because he wanted to introduce ideas that were not in the mainstream in his time, he had to write with prudence in expression and special care was required to explain his ideas. But the essential interpretation –as has been stated- is the meaning that the ideas have for today's issues in Psychology, not only for the historical interest, but for present and maybe future consequences.

After interpreting and applying the psycho-esthetical approaches (one of the authors), we have the necessary background to present Espinalt's main ideas. Sometimes a psychological approach is better understood when summarized and interpreted. That happened, for example,

with Jung and the works of Jacobi and Von Franz. This is our purpose: To summarize and interpret the main concepts of Psycho-aesthetics formulated by Espinalt in his theoretical writings and lectures.

Results

After the hermeneutic process, we found different dimensions in Espinalt's concept of Psycho-aesthetics. These dimensions can be summarized as follows:

Psycho-aesthetics as an Anthropology

Human beings survive because of their instincts (biology), and the artifices that they create (culture). Culture-transmitted instruments and especially language are some of these artifices. The phylogenetic dimension of these instruments has been thoroughly studied by contemporary psychology (Bruner, 1984; Bruner, 1990). Other anthropological artifices that are central to Psycho-aesthetics are the individual's character and leadership. These artifices also help in surviving. Other artifices are related to image such as ornaments which serve as self-affirmation and also contribute to survive. Artifices humanize human beings. In Espinalt's words: "Human beings need artifices as the air that they breathe". This is the principle of their affirmation in front of nature. In large amounts, artifices may alienate, but in their right measure they are strengthening. The mission of Psycho-aesthetics will be to give these measures and to allow us to reason on what can be positive or not for example in the artifice of appearances or in the inches of pedestals" (Espinalt, 1971).

We are well familiar with the idea of artifices concerning language, but less so concerning other artifices; nevertheless, the principle to be applied is the same. If humans lost their artifices, they would dehumanize. On the other hand, artifices can weaken or reinforce some of the aspects of individual character. "One of the particularities of modern techniques, especially in their mechanical aspect, is that they force individuals to multiple repeated gestures. For example: Who drives a car is forced to repeat identical movements for long periods of time while manipulating the parts of the vehicle. Repetition of gestures, if systematic, creates habits of character. In this sense, technique automates volition and reduces the field of initiative, protecting the individual with a detachment of habits" (Espinalt, 1970).

Other artifices are also artistic productions related to the spiritual or religious dimension.

Psycho-aesthetics as a Method to Reinforce Individual Character

Character is also an artifice of culture. Character is formed mainly by the action of human will. The human will belongs to the conational domain, which has not

been studied as well as the affective or cognitive domains (Giménez, 2008; Huitt & Cain, 2005). The human will mediates between the environment and the organism, and character can be understood as an individual construction done by will. "Globally we can set that will is a conscious drive that prevails over the other inclinations of the ways of behaving; it rather opposes a system of brakes, elaborated by intelligence and feelings, to each one, which also have the force to overcome obstacles and resistances. From this point of view, will is the thoughtful volition that presses over the unconscious forces and the environmental obstacles" (Espinalt, 1966).

"Personality is the collection of psychological factors that form our way of being, and character refers to the attitudes and resolutions of the ego in front of the environment" (Espinalt, 1961). "We say (especially in Latin languages) that a person has no character when he/she does not take on attitudes, when indecisive facing the facts. It can be observed that there are individuals with strong personality, due to their feelings or their intelligence, but they have a lack of character because, despite their singularity, they are unable to find the time of taking determinations" (Espinalt, 1963). A distinction should be made, therefore, between character, personality and temperament, habits, instincts and the education of these dimensions. A clarification of these concepts was Espinalt's starting point. Espinalt often used graphical diagrams to explain concepts. The use of images as a way of transmitting knowledge was very common in some Catalan thinkers in the Middle Ages such as Ramon Llull (Giménez, 2008). A figure about these dimensions used by Espinalt points out the mediation that

Psycho-aesthetic diagram on the double function of will in personality

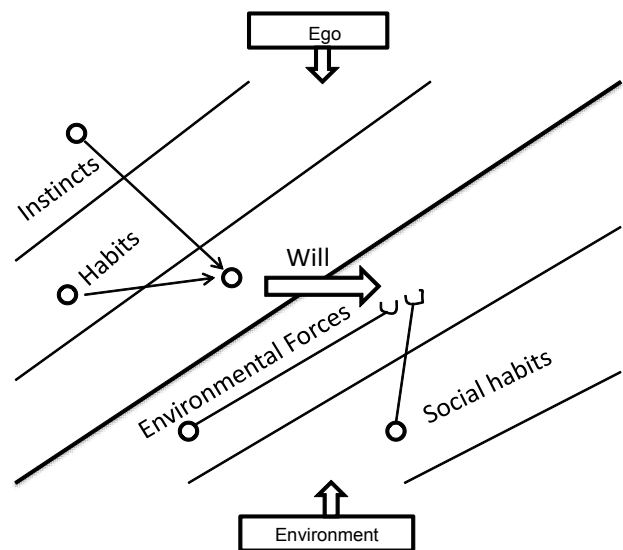


Figure 1.

will represents between the individual's outside and inside:

Reinforcing character via education is a way of acquiring the psychological resources that are necessary to survive.

Psycho-esthetics as a Psychotherapy

A way of understanding psychotherapeutic processes is to consider psychotherapy as a reinforcement of the individual's conscious part. This may be understood as a reinforcement of individual character. "With efficient psychological knowledge, events do not disorientate us and criteria are more concrete. Observe that a high number of our troubles and mental states are out of focus or are not valued adequately due to basic ignorance of their causes and relationships" (Espinalt, 1966).

A social orientation is promoted: "The person that is not sure of their contribution to social concert coexists cynically, as a conformist or frustrated person, but never in full mission. To create an authentic climate of human relationships, we should follow a psycho-sociological approach to everyone's professional contribution, and this is necessary to be discovered, encouraged and vitalized" (Espinalt, 1961).

Constructivist approaches understand human beings to be reinterpreting themselves. The people's vision of themselves is part of their construction of reality. The vision of their own individual traits, for example, as fixed traits or incremental traits (subject to change and evolution) influences reactions of individuals - for example, helpless versus mastery-oriented responses (Dweck, Chiu, and Hong, 1995). Helping to develop individual character is a way of helping in this transformation. From Psycho-esthetics, transforming personality includes a change in essence but also in form. Moreover, changing the external form is a way of changing essence. "In this sense, the mask is seen rather disparagingly, but Jung forgot an uncontroversial fact: In the individual's way of being, both form and essence, container and content, are influential. The one is inseparable from the other, and it is a mistake to underestimate the value of the former, as well as the importance of the latter" (Espinalt, 1970).

The social and historical contexts of individuals are also influential in personal consciousness, and allow to expand it in relationship with themselves and the human evolution. A more realistic approach to the history, instead of the common trend of expanding myths, is another characteristic that Psycho-esthetics can contribute with in the social dimension of personality and character.

Psycho-esthetics as a Psychology of Image

Psycho-esthetics studies the concept of human image composed by the external factors that make the personal image up. Sharing the Aristotelian view that there is no separation between form and essence, psycho-esthetics

focuses on the importance of form, understood also as shape or figure. Personality is developed in the confluence between essence and environment, which are part of the form.

For Psycho-esthetics, the first and most important image is our own image. The external aspect is so important that the sense of living is weakened if there is some loss in our own image. "Remember that clothes, fundamental pieces for being humans, are made of fabric, like flags, and, like them, they can be transformed into symbols" (Espinalt, 1983).

Anthropologically, personal image, which includes clothes and ornaments, is a representation of the human group. Cultivating the form is as important as cultivating the essence. Changes in form result in changes in essence. Espinalt explains, for example, how a relaxed attitude towards information may affect the capacity to remember it. There is a dynamic relationship between form and essence.

Psycho-esthetics analyzed our society considering the trait of the overvaluation of image. We live in an "imagocracy", a society where image counts very much, and that is influential for individuals. "The constant inflation of graphical images makes modern individuals live in a dream that lasts forever, but consigns them to a wakeful sleeping that dream requires. The intensity of images of an illustrated magazine or a TV screen that catch our look, making individuals not have time to understand with logic, but they keep on being captivated by their spell. Idolatries are intensified. We could speak about the modern individual's sleepwalking. Totalitarian propaganda takes advantage of this. This is one of the most singular phenomena in today's world. Probably, what could explain that better, while men have the highest cultural level ever, they can be dazzled and fascinated as a child distracted by four dolls that represent the adventures of a second-rate hero... The force of visual communication is stronger than reasoning dynamics. More than communication, it is dissemination. It is an accelerated penetration. The speed of the ray of visual propagation makes men be already convinced before even being allowed to think" (Espinalt, 1968).

Psycho-esthetics as a Psychology of Societies and Cultures

Espinalt developed the concept of character of countries and analyzed particularly the Catalan character. Through the particular historical experience of this human group, he understood the particular way how the collective dimension can influence the individual. He determined how collective mentality affects individual personality. Espinalt believes that "peoples exist and have a way of being. A community is forged by hundreds or thousands of years of history, the climate of a land, the singularities of a culture, the configurations of a language, etc." (Espinalt, 1970). "A people can not be fully understood without knowing

their collective psychology: The peculiarities that made them up, the habits that condition them, the attitudes that singularize them, and the level of historical evolution that they present” (Espinalt, 1983).

Therefore, only through understanding the history of the different nations can their collective character be understood. Language and gestures are expressions of national character that can be understood as characteristics rooted in their collective identity and particular history. Espinalt states: “Apart from opinion polls, there are endless public signs that reveal the criteria of people: I can confirm, in my psychological researches, that a careful study of publicity posters found on the walls of a city can give a complete idea of attitudes, mentalities and reactions of its citizens. Details worthy of analysis go from abundance of one color or another to the writing of advertising sentences. The collective soul has also its graphology. Every human group has its own traits” (Espinalt, 1957).

Espinalt created the concept of time’s character that helps to study the effects of fashion on societies. Regarding contemporary society, Espinalt said: “I believe that, besides the considerations that our time may deserve, this will be the time of the know-it-all. At least the know-it-all will be in the background” (Espinalt, 1959); and “there are a lot of people who want to devote themselves to the easy life of quick and big profit. From things, they only want to have a thin veneer to get out of a spot. When it is time to talk, they want to make believe that the veneer is a thick layer like a city wall. This subterfuge is one of the causes that contribute to create the know-it-all climate more. People know a little of everything, but want to make believe that they have plenty of knowledge” (Espinalt, 1959).

Ironically he wonders: “Why should we give importance to Aristotle’s thinking if he was a man who did not even have a car? There is a discredit of the past no matter how brilliant it may be. In the past, when somebody started a discourse by saying ‘Experience has taught me’, they could easily have an audience, and their words were valued. Now we would consider them as deadly boring. What impresses most today is somebody with “groundbreaking speech”, who can point emphatically “according to the latest innovations...” What somebody can invent or not about their experience is what interests and dazzles” (Espinalt, 1970).

Fashion deserves special consideration. Fashion is a witness of changes in mentalities and transformations that humanity experiences. For Psycho-esthetics, the human models have a role as originators and in spreading a particular fashion. Fashion allows us to study the evolutionary dynamics of a society. “The mission of fashion is to break with the boredom that seeing oneself always in the same way produces. Fashion expands horizons. In change, individuals search for new possibilities at the minimum risk. It has been said that women get dressed up for the other women. What is really true is that men

and women get dressed up to enjoy themselves. Fashion satisfies, first of all, the demands of the ego and their form of expression in each period. Fashion translates archetypes of the collective unconscious that emerge in each time. Without a clearer concept of fashion, some pieces to determine the Philosophy of History are missing” (Espinalt, 1970). “For Psycho-esthetics, the canons of human figure are not unchangeable. Nobody has said the last word. We can enjoy the Greek figures, but we want to try other forms of self-interpretation, even if it is only to create with garments the doubt whether or not we are a Greek statue inside. The answer that we want to give to life at this moment is more powerful than seeing oneself forever as a perfect Greek statue. Human beings have to present themselves in different forms if they want to continue appreciating their own beauty; when we are tired of seeing ourselves in the same way, we don’t know how to appreciate the beauty that we may have. For this, every new fashion seems to revalue and rediscover ourselves” (Espinalt, 1971).

Psycho-esthetics as an Intervention Instrument in Collective Psychology

There are two levels that Psycho-esthetics studies: Individual and collective. Individuals also interpret themselves through the collective interpretation, which is common in their surroundings and environment. In Espinalt’s words: “Without a coherent reinterpretation of oneself and of the people were oneself is rooted, nobody can have the desired personality. The mentality of the country where we live marks us definitely. It adjusts to us as a mold. And even: We’ll be interpreted, whether we want to or not, more by that condition than by any other one” (Espinalt, 1976).

Nations present similar pathologies to individuals when submitted to aggressions or psychological wars against their way of behaving; In Latin languages “way of being”. In this sense, Espinalt explains that “especially in places where two cultures coexist, in situations of political inequality, education is transformed quickly into expansive propaganda of the most powerful culture and into a tendentious valuation of things. Even geography may be adulterated and merits of eminent persons may be silenced, while the most insignificant of viceroys enters the dictionary” (Espinalt, 1968). Espinalt studied the case of Catalonia with intensity. He understood Psycho-esthetics as a perspective of human beings born in Catalonia, and influenced by their particular “way of being”. “The educational vision of tomorrow, if a harmonic balance between peoples is desired, will be that in schools children are taught something that should never be forgotten: Do not underestimate small peoples and cultures that are not imperialist. History demonstrates that from small human communities the greatest individuals emerged” (Espinalt,

1970). Every nation has their own visions and singularities that influence the creation of knowledge. For Espinalt, what is a brake for the evolution is the “imperial” bureaucracy, not the desire of small peoples to survive.

Figure 2 presents the dimensions of personal interpretation, including social interpretations:

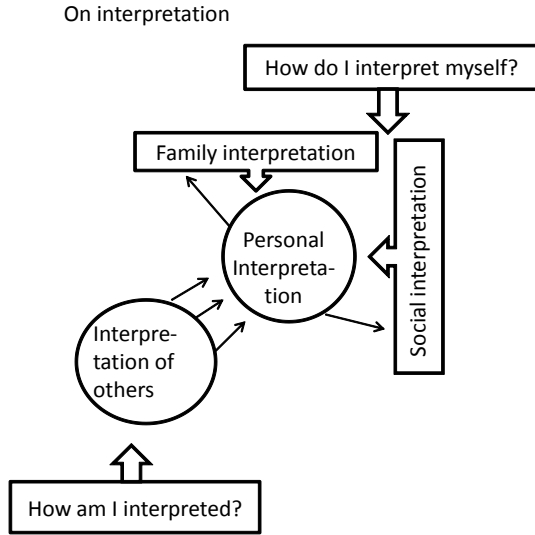


Figure 2.

Psycho-esthetics interprets some collective complexes as national character disorders that make individuals that belong to these countries insecure. “The collective soul really disconcerts, unless we understand all the causes that determine the corresponding effects... The causes that shouldn’t be forgotten while talking of people are: First of all, the mutual influence between people and, second, the influence of the environment over the group of persons” (Espinalt, 1957). It studies the instruments of collective intervention and affirms that a public recognition of injustices that generated deforming effects in the past is necessary. Individuals have a political dimension and that dimension counts in the global style of personality and individual character.

Psycho-esthetics as a System of Evaluation and Training Capacities

Modern Psychology has been very concerned with diagnosing and labeling individuality, and –from the Espinaltian vision- with the lack of techniques to strengthen individual character. Human beings have to be considered as they are, instead of trying to discover the ultimate mystery of man. This principle is especially important in

case of creating a stimulating environment for personal development.

Personal image can be stopped or promoted. In the following figure, we can see the relationship between personal image and models:

According to Espinalt, numbers cannot totally represent human beings. For this reason, he developed new instruments to identify and select personal traits in an individualized manner. For example, the so-called test of models is a projective technique that has two functions: Diagnosis and training of capacities. “In the domain of human conceptions, the more exact truths cannot be demonstrated with figures but with words” (Espinalt, 1959). The test of models helps to qualitatively know the traits of personal image.

Espinalt developed other similar qualitative and projective tests, such as the test of expressiveness, but they cannot be fully developed in this general presentation.

Psycho-esthetics as a Psychology of Language

Language is a psychological vehicle for personal and collective psychological expression. Language evolution includes mentality changes that have taken part in time and have a component of form. Espinalt proposes some examples: “One example is the transformation of the word ‘irresponsible’. Some time ago it was only applied (in Latin languages) to call an individual who, because of a lack in judgment capacities, responsibilities could not be demanded from; now it is also applied even to individuals who, though having judgment capacities, do not want

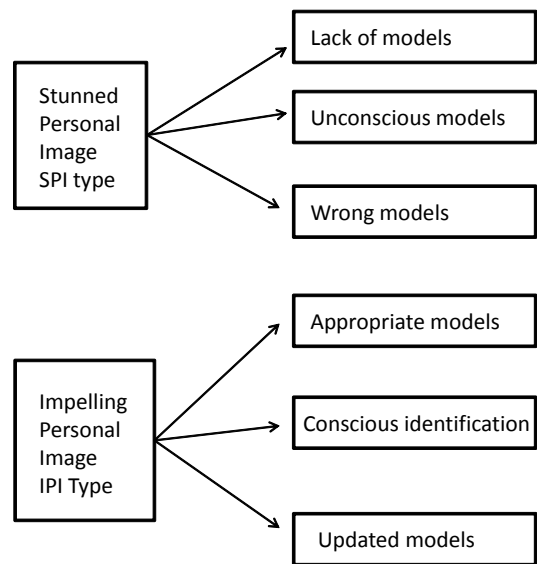


Figure 3.

Draw the personal image of the five people that have exerted more admiration, suggestion or interest in your life. Write their names.

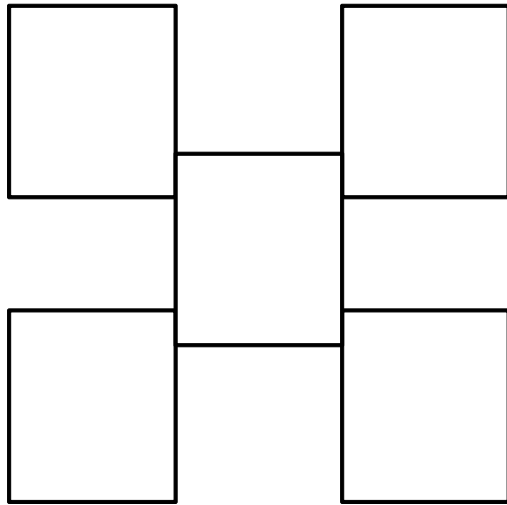


Figure 4.

to use them. In this domain the word has become really popular.” (Espinalt, 1957)

According to Psycho-aesthetics, language has the potential to transform character. For example, some changes in meanings can result in changes in behavior and lack of interest in language (slovenliness) and can affect the individual psychological structure. “It can be said that the name does not create the thing. It is true that you cannot judge a book by its cover but –as I have explained many times- it has to be recognized that the cover certainly contributes to create the book. Adequate language is a stamp that promotes character and usually determines part of a way of acting.” (Espinalt, 1970). Some part of social behavior can be explained in relationship with the transformation of words in colloquial speech. Language is a sign that promotes character and frequently determines a way of proceeding. Espinalt also studied characteristics of nations through expressions of language, ways of giving meaning to experiences, which are common in culture.

Aspects of form and essence are analyzed by Psycho-aesthetics. In oral communication, expressiveness is music with subliminal effects on personality. Oratory is also important in social expressiveness and essential for democracy. Personal expressiveness can be analyzed by Psycho-aesthetics, for example through the following diagram:

Psycho-aesthetic study of the argumental expressiveness

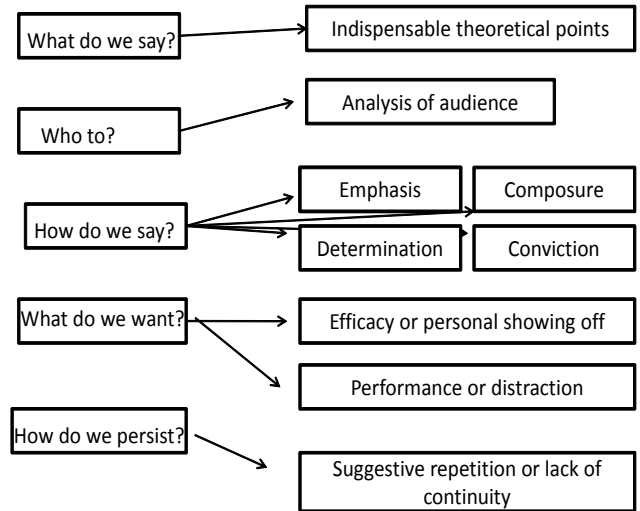


Figure 5.

Psycho-aesthetics as a Psychology of Managing Character and Leadership

Espinalt maintained that we are experiencing a managing crisis at the social level (he thought mainly of Europe). There is a lack of leaders with trained character. Leadership is an essential artifice that humanity has developed. Their importance is similar to the importance of an orchestra conductor or a shepherd.

“The trend in people is to imitate what they think that people they consider to be singular or comfortably off do and use. Whatever their behavior and origin, leaders create a collective character. They are agents for mentality changes and the others want to follow them. We live in a climate of psychic transmission” (Espinalt, 1970).

A manager is a model for society. Individuals model themselves and their character via models that managing people offer. The manager is a necessary figure that has to be trained. Managing character needs a development of specific functions such as expressive or preventive function. In the following figure, there is a presentation of the different dimensions of managing character:

A criticism to contemporary university that does not train the character of professionals is made by Espinalt. There is a lack of balance between the requirements of contemporary life and the absence of character instruments to cope with them. “Right now, individuals can be more cultivated in

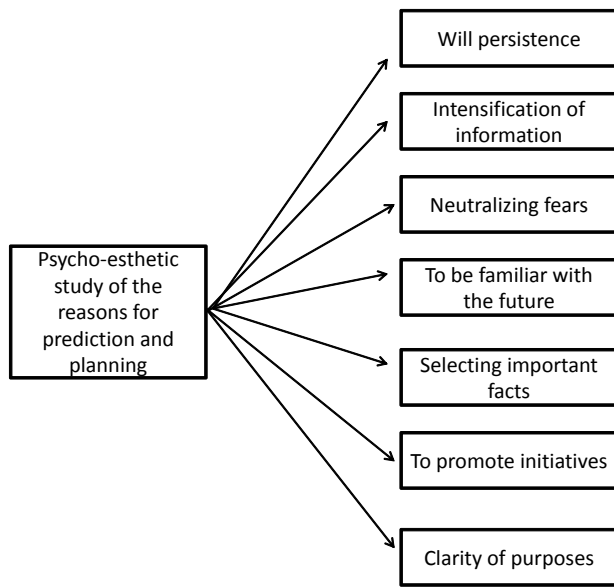


Figure 6.

everything because of the broader extension of knowledge and higher education, but they are less secure if they do not reinforce with psychological methods their life, which is located into a daily changing environment. Individuals have to be focused. At present they know a lot of things superficially and they have not enough time to assimilate with all the consequences. They are amazed by the success of technique but, at the same time, they are afraid of the big effort that they will have to make to reinforce character, if they want to behave as this interplanetary individual that has already been born.” (Espinalt, 1970).

Managing character requires will as an essential element to interact with people: Regularity, confidence, punctuality... This configures leadership roles. Motivation, capacity to pass their state of mind on, and capacity to inspire confidence are essential traits of leadership and managing character.

Espinalt explained the psychology of the person that pumps air into the organ, who is as necessary as the organist, as a way to explain also the character of the managed individual. This metaphor also illustrates that the leader should not depreciate followers, because without air the organ does not sound and art is not possible. “Strictly speaking, the subordinate, unconsciously, requires the leader to have a set of certain conditions, which not all leaders usually have. Bearing in mind the demands of the subordinate, it has been stated that leading is an issue of prestige. It is a partial theory, but it points at the fact that there are psychological conditions that the leader should constantly have. On the contrary, the subordinate will consider that it is unjust to be managed by a person that does not have the necessary traits.” (Espinalt, 1957).

Epistemological Issues and Interrelationship between Elements

Espinalt considers Psycho-esthetics as a science (Espinalt, 1988). The concept of science is not the concept of science in the Galilean tradition or in the so-called logical empiricism. We can understand that the concept of science that Espinalt uses is inside the Aristotelian tradition (Spence, 1982; Spence, 1994). The Aristotelian tradition, also referred to as conceptualism, has a different ontology and methodology from the logical-empirical tradition. The preference for studying a single case, the use of signatures and correspondences such as analogy, the need for authority to create knowledge... are some of the characteristics of conceptualism. Psychoanalysis can also be understood as a conceptualistic science (Spence, 1994). Probably Espinalt reached these Aristotelian formulations due to his familiarity with Freud and Psychoanalysis and his cultural background in classical authors and in French literature and philosophy. The influence of Aristotle on European culture has been very important from scholastics, as well as the continuous reinterpretations of his works. But the originality of the formulation is that this epistemology is coherent with his Psychology: Correspondence and identification between form and essence, discerning from signs, are clearly Aristotelian traits. The really new aspect is that transforming the traits of the form will result into changing essence. Can it be more Aristotelian? It is the Aristotelian view led to their last consequences, in the field of the psychological insight.

Psycho-esthetics interprets human beings from the vision where artifices created and transmitted by culture have a central role. It also specifies concrete tools to help individuals to develop an essential artifice: Individual character. The collective and historically conditioned dimension of human beings is studied by approaching societies and cultures in an innovative way. Special attention is given to understand individual effects that come from social constructions. Catalan character is particularly studied. Personal image, leadership and language are other focused artifices. The case of language is better known, because it is an updating of Rhetoric, also in coherence with Aristotle, but the issues of personal image and fashion are really innovative. Especially interesting is their relation with managing character and leadership.

Psycho-esthetics, on the other hand, configures a methodology that helps to understand the “normality” of individuals, and to apply this knowledge in the treatment of psychological troubles or disorders. The clarification of psychological concepts and education are key factors in the psycho-esthetic intervention.

The dimensions of Psycho-esthetics can be summarized as follows:

Psycho-esthetics, in sum, represents an attempt of presenting a global psychological system that studies the

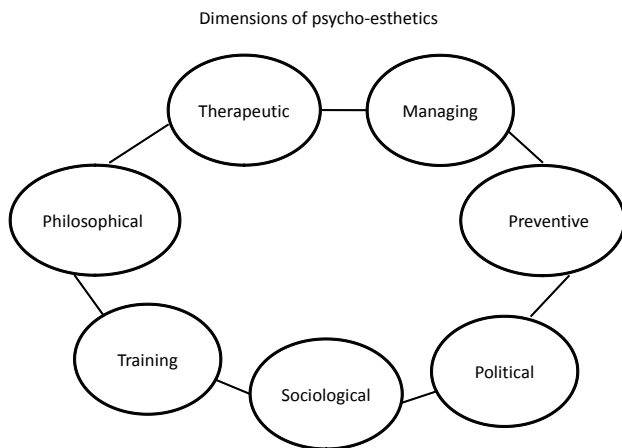


Figure 7.

civilization that human beings created, from an original perspective, focused on cultural artifices and individual character as one of its main expressions. Psycho-aesthetics points out that culture is a valuable artifice and, if we lost or distorted some of the acquired factors that human beings have developed, we would reduce our level of humanity.

Conclusions

The body of this research is already a summarized presentation of the main traits of Psycho-aesthetics. Final remarks as conclusive statements can be as follows:

Psycho-aesthetics tries to be a global theory of human condition. Its ultimate justification is anthropological. Artifices of culture are the center of the psycho-aesthetic study and consideration.

Psycho-aesthetics is an Aristotelian or conceptualist psychology, sharing the hylemorphic view of identification between form and essence, and achieving the psychological consequences of this principle.

A particular relationship between organism and environment is understood in the concept of individual character, one of the artifices with influence for individual development. Identity, ethnic belonging, the group as a motivator of human condition are taken in account, and especially the influences for individuals in particular historical conditions of the human group of reference. The case of Catalonia is largely studied, and through it the importance of collective mentalities for the well-being of individuals.

Psycho-aesthetics is a psychology that gives importance to the form, and to personal image, also to fashion, as important artifices that shape individuality. Some balance between form and essence, aesthetics and psyche, is promoted and their mutual influences studied. For this reason, the name Psycho-aesthetics may remind these influences, and gives such explained dimensions of form their importance for the individual and for the human cultures.

References

- Bruner, J. (1984). *Acción, pensamiento y lenguaje*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Dweck, C. S., Chiu, C., & Hong, Y. (1995). Implicit theories and their role in judgments and reactions: A world from two perspectives. *Psychological Inquiry*, 6(4), 267-285.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1957). Psicología de la gent. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 45-92). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1959). Esperit de setciències. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 129-160). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1961). Saber-se entendre. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 93-128). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1963). Els orígens del caràcter. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 243-258). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1966). Un mercat pel senyor Esteve. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 291-308). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1968). Propaganda totalitària. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 333-354). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1970). Canvis de mentalitat. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 381-470). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1971). Modelar-se la figura. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 471-512). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1976). L'evolució del caràcter català. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 635-656). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1983). Pensar en català. In C. M. Espinalt (Ed.), *Obra escrita (collected works)* (pp. 667-778). Barcelona: El Llamp.
- Espinalt, C. M. (1988). *Tacte i contacte (lecture)*. Barcelona: Associació de practicants de la psicoestètica.
- Gadamer, H. G. (2004). *Truth and method*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Giménez, C. (2008). *El concepte de psicoestètica en la obra de Carles M. Espinalt*. Unpublished Ph. D., Universitat Ramon Llull, Barcelona.
- Huitt, W., & Cain, S. (2005). An overview of the conative domain. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Retrieved December 18, 2008 from <http://teach.valdosta.edu/whuitt/brilstar/chapters/conative.doc>
- Spence, D. P. (1982). *Narrative truth and historical truth*. New York: Norton.
- Spence, D. P. (1994). *The rhetorical voice of psychoanalysis: Displacement of evidence by theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Received July 21, 2009

Revision received February 15, 2010

Accepted March 08, 2010