Bosch, M. (ed.). (2020). ***Desire and Human Flourishing: Perspectives from Positive Psychology, Moral Education and Virtue Ethics.*** **Springer. 451 pp.**

In recent years, moral education, emotional intelligence, and character education have been a focal point in the studies of human action theory and affective formation. However, philosophy addresses the role of desire in action theory and affectivity poorly. It has not been studied systematically; thus, a greater understanding of its nature and role in human development is required. Based on these considerations of the role of desire in moral life and virtue, and as a result of deep reflection and research throughout her academic career, Dr. Magdalena Bosch lays the first stone in constructing a bridge between virtue ethics, desire, and character formation.

Due to its relationship with human action, desire is of enormous relevance for character formation. It is necessarily a moral formation that shows how to tend towards the good with freedom and joy. The key to this type of education is the *learning of desire*, for which the representation of the good through imagination, beauty, and the joyful experience of the good play a fundamental role.

For Bosch, "trying to create habits without educating desire would leave individuals in a situation lacking moral quality and internal coherence" (2020, p. 35). The rationale behind this statement is that "another way of learning virtue is possible" (p. 34), one in which behavior analysis highlights the decisive importance of an element prior to action: desire. So, education of desire aims to go beyond the scope of action and anticipate behavior by entering into the scope of decision prior to action. From this perspective, desire is considered a positive and necessary factor for human growth and a state of flourishing, where the challenge of moral education is to make the educated subject *want* the good.

When internal elements influencing action are consistently taken into account, Bosch suggests that it is possible to reshape two false myths in moral life: that of *reason vs. passion* and one that considers desires and tendencies as necessarily misleading action. However, "true moral conflict does not occur between reason and passion, but between two different ways of wanting: the will […] and another more intuitive type of desire that is not directly linked to reason" (p. 29).

Bosch's proposal sets the tone and provides the common thread of the entire work. Her merit and originality are the consideration of a type of desire that connects with reason. Specifically, intellectual desire enables a dialogue with the non-rational desires and opens the way to a moral education from within the person. The dialogue between rational and non-rational desires entails learning to reflect on which desires to satisfy and why desires become reasons for the person to act. Moreover, by acting for these reasons, the agent manifests her freedom and humanity. To ignore what this manifestation of freedom consists of is to ignore the essence of our humanity, an ignorance of what being us fundamentally consists of (Lear, 1988). This perspective constitutes an approach to understanding and forming desires with an enormous capacity to positively influence human beings and make their growth possible.

This novel approach to desire in virtue addresses all kinds of desires and seeks their integration. In Bosch's view, the agent needs to integrate reasons and desires—rational and non-rational—into all factors related to decision-making. What is at stake is the integrity of moral action: if the agent neglects desires, moral education quickly resorts to repression. It would not be a comprehensive moral education either if it focuses only on emotions; in that case, it would be a partial, biased moral education. This proposal also provides an alternative to the problem of the *hard good* through the force of good wishes.

However, an approach conceived this way requires the integrated collaboration of various areas. The authors of *Desire and Human Flourishing*, therefore, elaborate on multiple strategies to understand desire in the context of a moral education that links it to virtue. Thus, this book addresses the role of desire in human development from an eminently philosophical perspective and, at the same time, with an interdisciplinary vision: psychology, education, psychiatry, and cognitive theory. The common ground of all considerations is to affirm that rational and non-rational human inclinations are not only at the origin of action but must be adequately integrated into the development of human behavior to form the basis of moral development. Therefore, the morality of human flourishing requires a proper development of the theory of desire.

At first sight, the book may appear complex and uneven, dealing with a relatively novel area of research, which is still in its somewhat risky development phase. Nevertheless, once the central arguments are

identified, the reader will find this book full of meaning and insights worthy of being tested and put into practice.

The first part of the book (ten essays) focuses on key concepts regarding the education of desire. Following the pattern set by Bosch, Barrio Maestre addresses the notion of habit as a way of *being* rather than *doing* or *having*, which enables the formation of virtuous operational desires. Bastons, for his part, delves into the relationship between rationality and desires in the context of human action through a comparative synthesis between Aristotle and Kant. He reflects on the interaction between rationality and affectivity, assumed by Aristotle but not resolved by Kant. Subsequently, Bernal provides a brilliant dissertation in which she relates desire to the passion of joy and suggests that if joy is a sign of the realization of good, it should be more present in education —especially character education—and in the educator. To the question, "Are we responsible for our emotions?," Echavarría responds by stating that for desires to enter the field of responsibility, they must be assumed within the category of human acts. Assuming desires into human acts means that they can be deliberate and voluntary. Thus, he introduces human freedom in experience and the task of desires. On the other hand, Jiménez-Hijes presents the complex and dynamic nature of motivation for action and its evolution towards desires or internal forces that lead to decision-making. In Plato and Aristotle, harmonizing reason and emotions is a task for the inner dialogue of human tendencies, which allows the agent to act in harmony. The seventh chapter of the first part of the book is by Mercado, who considers various contemporary psychological theories (Selingman and Eckman, for example) that, from their own spheres, coincide with some aspects of desire as conceived in classical thought. Miró, following Aquinas, expresses that the inner development of intellectual life inevitably leads to the education of desire. The author of this essay develops his thesis by explaining the influence that the capture of beauty has on desire, which results in an aesthetic experience: due to its beauty, the trustworthy entity becomes desirable as something good, he affirms.

One of the big questions about desires is whether education primarily consists in reinforcing or inhibiting them. Various thinkers have opted for one position or another based on radically opposite principles regarding the nature of desire. Thus, Murillo takes up this theme and argues that human action, as opposed to mechanical movement, is carried out from an inner cause, desire, which is why it must be reinforced and educated

in a way that guides human development. In this reinforcement, virtues have a primary place. Finally, to close the first section, Orón proposes that the education of desires be based on improving one's capacity for perception and appreciation, especially the person's appreciation. The basic argument is that an appropriate education of desires must establish sensitivity at the core of education. To develop this argument, the author relies on the anthropology of Leonardo Polo and Levinas.

The ten chapters of the second section delve into some of the most significant authors who have discussed desire, from Plato to Freud, truly discovering new aspects of it beyond its historical value: desire and madness in Plato's dialogues (Páez); moral education as education of desire based on classical Greek authors (Solans); the education of desire in Aristotle (Pearson); practical wisdom and its relation to desire, based on the Aristotelian conception of *correct* desire (Winter); the concept of educated desire in the Stoics (Vázquez); how desire in Origen of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa addresses the divorce between *eros* and *agape* and a comment on the *Song of Songs* (Limone); the salvation of desire from the perspective of St. Augustine (Pérez-Soba); the education of desire according to Aquinas (Martínez); the relationship between attention and education of desire in Charles Pierce (Nubiola); and, finally, desire in Freud (d'Avila).

The third and final section is devoted to applied education and presents nine communications from various areas of human development and activity. Some refer to the future realization of proposals, and others to previous experiences and results. Thus, Alonso-Stuyck proposes the education of desire through the realisation of family lifestyles under human dignity and happiness, which she addresses based on psychological, cognitive, and affective elements of desire. Aparicio, for his part, addresses the education of desire concerning the use of information and communication technology. The argument is that proper use of ICT requires prior training of desire. Through an interpretation of Plato's *Gorgias*, Cohen de Lara considers shame (a disturbance of the mind caused by the awareness of some fault committed) as an emotion that could educate desire. Martínez proposes the way of astonishment and admiration as a cause of the wishes for the good. Méndiz, for his part, asks himself, "Is advertising not a powerful way to promote desires?" He analyses initiatives in various professional areas aimed mainly at children and young people. These initiatives

aim for a critical reception of advertising that counteracts consumer impulsiveness.

For Musaio, desire plays a central role in forming personal identity since its intrinsic anthropological character enables the knowledge and forging of identity from within. The objective of a pedagogical reflection from this approach is to discover in the humanistic sense of desire a "vector" that moves towards the search for oneself and helps future generations explore their identity. Naval defines *education* as teaching to love and, more explicitly, teaching to love knowledge. Within this framework, contemplation reconnects the will with feelings, allowing reason to act in its entirety by integrating feelings and love. Part of the development of this approach involves a proper understanding of desire and its relationship to contemplation, love, and knowledge.

In the penultimate contribution, Ortiz highlights the importance of identification with some wishes more than with others through an example of a conflict of wishes. This identification ultimately depends on our various loves manifesting in a specific order. The moral agent discovers different desires by considering the precedence of love over desire. Thus, educating our desires in a way is possible only in the context of an appropriate order or hierarchy of loves. To close this masterful work, Pakaluk proposes to educate desires based on rectifying appetites through moral virtues. The essay is full of practical reflections, supporting the Thomist-Aristotelian teaching that learning to correct wishes is not possible by instruction alone. Thus, moderation in eating is offered as a concrete, approachable, and non-controversial example to illustrate the thesis.

Throughout its 451 pages, this book presents vital references, explanations of central concepts, and practical applications of the ethics of desire that are highly significant in various areas of human thought and action. However, despite its extension, it lacks the consideration of current critical approaches to philosophy of mind and cognitive theories; perhaps a second volume would be required to touch upon all the influential voices on the topic. Despite this, the book as a whole is consistent with its purpose: to contribute to the development and application of a moral theory that unites inner tendencies, freedom, and the good for human flourishing.

This book can significantly interest students and researchers in positive psychology, positive education, moral philosophy, and virtue

ethics. The exemplary quality of the binding and printing reflects the quality of its content.

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