

8 Morality as emotions in process

Neuropsychanalysis, behavioural economics and global citizenship

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Introduction

If morality is the backbone that governs human behaviour, then affects are the means to achieving the end of a better society. Different disciplinary areas reflect such connections between morality and affects, linking formal conceptual frames of reference to everyday situations and happenings. Heidegger (1954) inaugurated such a direct approach to human existence through the notion of *Dasein*, “being thrown in”.

Morality, understood as emotions in process, may be interpreted through the critical reading matrixes of different disciplinary areas, such as neuropsychanalysis, behavioural economics and global citizenship.

Post-industrial societies create new research challenges related to morality. In particular, to the role that is played by emotions in determining morality standards. The ideal and utopian drive for the creation of a better world and a more just society is, fundamentally, an open and dynamic process. This dynamism includes core processes related to learning and to the repetition or rejection of previously accepted norms.

Using the reading lenses of different conceptual frameworks, it is possible to argue for the need of an evolutionary and developmental perspective on morality, taking emotions as the impetus of such dynamics. Three different perspectives may be explored. First, neuropsychanalysis links biological and psychoanalytic insights in order to study the self. Second, behavioural economics highlights the importance of considering the psychological aspects of decision making. And, third, global citizenship represents a constellation of constructs that include sustainable development models, cyberpolitics and socio-technical systems, such as industry 4.0. The key assumption is that morality standards are determined through an open process that dynamically transverses different societal and scientific areas.

In the present text, emotions and affects are used interchangeably, though they have different uses in other contexts. The core focus is on feeling as an evidential experience of existence. Words change, the thought behind each word changes rapidly and the affects that words carry change even faster. However, the unit of meaning is not a word but a sentence, which is present and visible even in a

sentence as simple as “Go!” Gonçalves’s (1996) philosophy of action captures this dynamism present in natural language. The world of affects is the gateway to the irrefutable intelligibility of quotidian reality. And it is through dynamic rationality processes that humans make sense of their worlds.

Maria Zambrano’s (e.g. 2011) poetic rationality is an inspiration; it is that which may enable solving the contradiction between the bio and *Positivismus* perspective of the neurosciences, on one side, and the ideological and *Weltanschauung* focus of psychoanalysis, on the other. Zambrano’s poetic reason establishes a common ground between poetry and philosophy, in which “philosophical thinking, more than the expression of the final structures of reality (the Being), is the creation and opening for the unexpected (the process of being)” (Bezerra, 2012: 7).

Rationality is empowerment. It is a process of capacitating and of enabling action and thought. To be empowered means that all resources are being employed to their best possible use, and this is as much a singular and personal experience as it is a civilisational and collective achievement. The expression related to the assertion of the best possible use, of whatever resource, is a synthesis of economic rationality. This highlights and formalizes that which is common to all individuals, that is, the search for the best possible options, no matter the circumstances. Several authors address economic rationality within the context of post-industrial societies (e.g. Piketty, 2000). There is a “paradigm shift as the influential behavioural school is challenging and remoulding its very foundation, i.e., homoeconomicus model” (Veetil, 2011: 199). The crucial aspect here is *what* is to be considered to be the best and *who* is able to define, in concrete terms, common good. In abstract terms, it is indeed problematic to capture the decision making process itself, which may distinguish between one option and the alternative one that offers better returns.

Nevertheless, in everyday situations, only a few minutes may be necessary to interpret and to identify real possibilities to improve current situations. That is, situations where, using spontaneous rational reasoning, it is possible to identify options where benefits exceed costs. This is especially true if a broader perspective is taken, not only addressing individual but also social gains and costs. In other words, it is possible to incorporate the negative and the positive impacts at a social level. Once these are included, these positive and negative externalities, again an economics concept, it is indeed obvious, in practical terms, that there are concrete and real gains to be achieved by choosing a better alternative.

The works of Charles Sanders Peirce (1974), the founder of the American School of Pragmatism, with his eclectic and broad-spectrum approach to language, science and philosophy, captures these complex determinations of human action. Economics, as all modern sciences, follow the ideals of the Enlightenment movement and the belief that human knowledge will help to solve human problems; human problems are global problems, especially today. This stresses that the ideal of the common good is implicitly present in knowledge production, in institutional framing and in the concrete dialogues that represent free trade or market operations. If reality is different from this ideal, it means that it is still

evolving and not that the ideal is wrong. Psychoanalytic theory fights against morality blindness through managing emotions as a form of empowerment (de Klerk, 2017).

Rationality is empowerment and vice versa. Empowerment is necessarily a question of starting conditions, limitations and determinations, and these imply an event or situation that triggers action. In other words, they create a state of novelty, of irrecusably trying something new, as an inner drive to achieve something. Lyotard's (1990) work on knowledge, Levinas's (1989) ethics of care and Henry's *La Barbarie* (1987) capture this urgency to rethink contemporary challenges. Emotions, understood as a dynamic process, where evolutionary patterns are visible both at the level of an individual intimate occurrence and as a visible civilisation drive, are the engine behind morality.

Piketty (2000), an expert in wealth and income inequality, argues that social injustice is the dark side of present progress. Social injustice is both a cause and a consequence of its own existence, as a self-organised vicious circle, which systematically powers its own feedback loop. It is its symbolic power that justifies this perverse perpetual cycle. *Status* is more important than sex or death, taken from an individual perspective. From a collective perspective, *status* is the outcome of over 4 million years of human evolution, the estimated age of bipedalism.

Contemporary contexts of globalisation, rapid change and turbulence may open new and fertile inquiring routes to solving world problems. Ecological, social and economic problems need a common ground for the design of truly global long-term solutions promoting peace and prosperity for all and not just a few.

Affects trigger morality expectations, which in turn force social and cultural change, in the sense of promoting human development at individual and global levels: "Beyond simple economic self-interest, basic moral values may have important and independent effects on political behavior" (Mooney and Schuldt, 2008: 199). Markets change when consumers change; therapies change when the ideas that explain illness change; and social expectations, desires and needs change when a few citizens become aware of their power to change the world order, even if they are looking at their own backyard.

Moral standards have a long history in economics. "Smith sought to do for moral philosophy what Isaac Newton had done for natural philosophy: to imagine and represent those invisible connecting principles that determine the course of nature" (Evensky, 2005: 110). Adam Smith taught moral philosophy in the 1750s. The search for common good and for an ideal society is a quest that is present throughout the history of humankind. Such ideals agree upon conceptualisations of morality that imply different modes of interpreting the real. Societal analysis assumes a series of interconnected conventions and expectations, which, in turn mould social behaviour as well as research results.

Transdisciplinarity and neuropsychanalysis: bridging loose links

Neuropsychanalysis is an example of how a new scientific discipline emerges out of research concerns, which includes language, meaning and the urgency of

the real. Metaphysics, transcendence or imagination help design an ideal of a better world and future. Within this framework, moral standards are the visible side of such collective imagery. And the connection between the neurosciences, with their biological determinism, and the inner world of psychoanalysis, which includes imagination, memory and willpower, are rich sources of insights for interpreting the role of emotions in morality.

The collective endeavour of aligning social conventions and moral standards works through affects, which are influenced by social pressures. Moral standards emerge from contexts in which “socio-cultural groups and geopolitical factors are relevant” (Gold, 2016: 214), yet such factors “exploit underlying individual and group vulnerability, by exaggerating external danger and pinpointing those who are allegedly culpable” (*ibidem*).

Modernity and the emergence of the feeling of the self, of self-awareness and of selfhood as *ipseité* are part of a long evolutionary journey (Henry, 1985), where it is possible to identify both the evolution of humankind and the developmental process that each individual human being may experience throughout her or his existence. In other words, whatever it is possible to be felt, experienced and lived in a deep and authentic singular fashion is also that which is directly linked to the universality of what it means to be human. Dense and intense affects are universal precisely when they are experienced as inaugural moments of pure discovery. Moreover, evolution happens in no other way as through the infinite trial-and-error efforts of searching for meaning by singular and unique individuals. Such rich inquiry is performed not by astonishing celebrities but by the everyday life heroes who continuously question and inquire the poem or the geometric theorem as a form of bringing order into chaos. Popular graffiti may illustrate such influences: “Chaos is an order to be deciphered”; or “Every drop of water matters to form an ocean”, in the sense that the apparent chaotic and formless aspects of quotidian reality are similar to layers and layers of millions of years of individual contributions to the evolution of humankind and of common good.

Making sense of the world, of the world within themselves and of the world around them, is the ultimate task of rationality. Denying the power, the empowerment energy of using and developing thought and action, is pure waste. As Michel Henry argues, that is the barbarian reality: “The Barbary is unused energy, it is pure waste” (Henry, 1987: 126).

Both as a theoretical body and as a living practice, psychoanalysis brings together that which may empower individuals. In other words, to empower means to help to alleviate the burden of the negative aspects of life and to strengthen the positive ones, such as the power of building significant and authentic relationships.

As symbolic reasoning, psychoanalysis is a powerful tool for personal and social growth. By enabling individuals to acknowledge the double movement of identifying frailties and strengthening the adequate resources to deal with such frailties, on one hand, and of identifying competencies and of finding ways to put such positive attitudes and capabilities at work for the benefit of both the individual and its community of interests, on the other, psychoanalysis potentiates concrete personal and social behaviour and, ultimately, human action. In order to serve the long-term interests and visions that make life significant in individual and

in collective terms, psychoanalysis enables capacitating and concentrating new energies to deal with life's challenges in creative and innovative ways.

Donald Winnicott was a British psychoanalyst whose work has never stopped having a growing influence in varied areas, including standard psychoanalysis and education and social work. As Winnicott (1986) expresses, adulthood is empowerment, it is the ability to use power in effective and pragmatic ways. "Mature adults bring vitality to that which is ancient, old and orthodox by re-creating it after having destroyed it" (Winnicott, 1986: 254). Yet this is not an abstract process and, therefore, it must be restricted to available empowerment, to that which is already there, present, "ready at hand" (Heidegger, 1954).

The connections between psychoanalysis and neurosciences have to be understood as a creative tension between two confronting perspectives regarding human existence. Symbolic power versus biological determinations implies that the complexity of human reality may become more understandable and meaningful once such confronting and apparently mutually exclusive perspectives are aligned and integrated. That is the role of neuropsychanalysis: to make ends meet and to offer richer and more sophisticated approaches to interpret human reality.

Neuroscience focuses on the physical and chemical processes that affect the neurologic system. Intensity of love and hate, of positive or negative events, is processed in terms of their quantitative degree or impact and, as such, they cannot be distinguished. It is *a posteriori* that interpretation will distinguish and process information according to a value system that is itself dynamically influenced by cultural contexts. Linking social and individual dimensions and biological and self-related material, neuropsychanalysis functions through multilayered and multifactorial interpretations. "Socio-cognitive views can be understood as both alternatives to the cognitive sciences and as internal approaches or movements within the cognitive sciences" (Hjorland, 2002: 258). In other words, neuropsychanalysis links the symbolic aspects related to the power of culture and of ideas to influence human behaviour and the biological and emotional related determinants of such behaviour.

Under this line of thought, research related to the power of ideas and of epistemological concerns is relevant for developing the argument of the influence of affects in determining morality: "the influence of ideas is a central but puzzling problem in the social sciences" (Armour, 2004: 390). Ideas trigger imagination and intentionality, as they structure the self through cultural and symbolic influences, which condition both individual and collective imaginary and visionary power. "Basic ideas that organise experience become embedded in the public mind and structure the ways in which issues are tackled. Through much of the twentieth century, Darwinism, Freudianism and Marxism are central clusters of ideas" (*ibidem*). Freud's influence has been key to explaining this. And Armour argues that "on a smaller scale, ideas that begin in academic settings can quite quickly spread into politics" (*ibidem*). Some general notions work as anchors, which "may structure whole eras". According to Armour (2004: 392), one of the most powerful in our time is the 'new gnosticism'. As this author explains, there

is always an “underlying basis for the power of ideas”, and many present ideologies are adaptations of the Christian tradition: “The form they take depends on the challenges of the hour and the nature of the surrounding cultures” (*ibidem*).

Neuropsychanalysis is an example of crossing strong ideas from opposing contexts. It addresses the biological patterns of neurologic networks and their connectivity. Affects and emotions are taken as a black-box resultant from such interactions. Psychoanalysis, on the contrary, addresses the inter-relational processes as well as the cultural and environmental contexts that mould the structures of the self. Linking both perspectives, neuropsychanalysis may help to bring together impulses and drives, both inner and external stimuli, as catalyzer processes for human development and evolution, both at an individual and at a collective level: “Whatever is being felt with no intermediation, that is affectivity” (Henry, 1963: 52). In other words, the most direct and unique experience in terms of access to the full power of each individual existence is through the world of affects.

Behavioural economics: intelligibility, rationality and drive for satisfaction

Economics is the science of choice. Choice implies that there is scarcity, which forces decisions upon alternative use of resources. Neoclassical economics takes land, labour and capital as the main factors of production. However, the new economic context brings in knowledge as the main asset and production factor, which indeed reverses the logic of previous models (Olssen and Peters, 2005). The more knowledge is used and shared, the greater its value. These paradoxes and contradictions motivate new perspectives of analysis of economic problems, such is the case of sustainable development models (Hodgson, 2012). These take a holistic perspective and link ecological, social and economic dimensions of development. The complexity of current contexts is a motivation towards valuing historical analysis of society’s evolution. “The analysis that Scholastic writers made of the economic phenomena of their time has been enjoying a resurgence of interest since the 1950s” (Muñoz, 2001: 14). Complex relations connect theology, and its medieval development, with modern economic science. It is curious that fertile insights may be explored from such connections. “The various schools of moral theology, which traditionally only attracted the attention of historical theologians, have now become the object of study for economic historians” (*ibidem*). Science implicitly takes the mandate of working in favour of the interests of humanity and of the common good. As it has already been stressed, this is a direct inheritance of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment movement. Again, morality is present as the outcome of the world of affects’ dynamism, which underlies value systems.

It is *process* that really matters in the proposition “morality as emotions in process”, suggesting there is a movement that one may acknowledge, individually and collectively, which cannot be traced either to its origin or to its destination, but that may be captured as a whole, as a feeling of identification with

humankind and with its evolution. The experience of life, of existence, as an event, a surprise and an act of bewilderment is part of the adventure and of the journey of being human. Human is an adjective of being; it is one form of being and of the ontological manifestation of reality.

The basic idea behind the assertion that emotions are the primordial determining factor in defining morality, as a concept and as a set of standards and practices, is that emotions – affects – are the backbone of rationality itself. To state it bluntly, human rationality is the tip of the iceberg of a world of affects. As Henry (1985: 125) explains, Descartes' genius assertion, "I think, therefore I am", indeed signifies "I feel, therefore I am".

The structure of this line of reasoning follows a simple premise, that texts, in the form of articulated sentences, form a unit of meaning. A single sentence is the unitary carrier of signification. Consequently, multiple alternative routes can be taken when analyzing morality. It is possible to identify the interdependency between emotions, morality and specific disciplinary knowledge as a transversal phenomenon present in all spheres of action and in all historical ages. Humans create meaning; humans are interpreting beings; humans are producers of the living matter that is constitutive of humanity itself. Evolution occurs through the evolution of real-life individuals and not through abstract conceptualisations of what it means to be human. Signification is a given; it is from a point of view already ordered according to some moral mind frames that individual meaning making is initiated. But behind such morality there is emotion – emotion as the conducting element between different stages of evolution of both individual and collective realities.

Thomas Piketty (e.g. 2000) is a strong name in the design of a reality that may lead to a more just global society. This reality, as has been argued in the present work, is simultaneously a dream and a utopia as much as it is something that is already there, present and active, creating concrete opportunities for better lives for youth and for marginal fringes of society, including long-term unemployed, people who have handicaps or ex-prisoners. Moreover, such initiatives and projects are also present in developmental areas, including the extreme situations related to catastrophes, war zones and migration issues. Utopias took millions of years to emerge as an explicit concept and formalised reality. What is critical to highlight is that someone is showing the way. The digital economy enables access to information; yet the capacity to eventually benefit from such access is fundamentally a human and, indeed, social issue, as Castells (2011) argues.

Piketty has a large and diversified work, yet it is inequality issues that create a common ground for his research. He explicitly revises the theoretical body of literature on inequality, namely in his study, a book chapter, which "reviews the existing theories of persistent inequality across generations . . . discusses total economic inequality both in wealth and in earnings and focuses on the inter-generational mobility dimension of total inequality" (Piketty, 2000: 430). This author stresses the controversy that such literature represents and the persistent inequality across generations.

Social mobility is part of the changing conditions, in which case globalisation has both created new opportunities and new threats – consequently, the controversial nature of inequality and the need to reflect upon current value systems, morality standards and how affects are working throughout these phenomena, the so-called emotions in process in the present context.

Global citizenship: socio-techno-politico-digital ecosystems

Global citizenship refers to civic engagement in favour of worldwide causes, from social justice to ecological concerns. This involves language in its full complexity. Language use and participation in social practices conducive to community building and to the creation of shared meanings are effective operations of human action (Peirce, 1974). These processes are present whether there is a positive and optimistic or a negative and pessimistic worldview, mind-set and mentality.

The endless and continuous process of construction of social beliefs, forming a cultural predisposition and a self-reinforcing process of self-fulfilling prophecies, constitutes the backbone of social phenomena. Singular individuals or collective gatherings alike face this reality test of existence, no matter the temporal or space context being considered. This account stresses the apparent arbitrariness, absurdity and paradox of human reality. Indeed there is a human dependence upon symbolic reasoning and the capacity to produce and to interpret symbols in a never-ending sequence of accumulation, reinforcing, rejection, repetition, destruction and reconstruction of statements, discourses and narratives. Lyotard (2000), stresses the importance of local narratives, understood as more modest accounts of efforts to make sense of reality, specifically rejecting the oppressive power of meta- and of grand narratives.

Whatever the pressures of each epoch and the dominant thinking prevailing in each circumstance, there is the here-and-now immediacy that enables each and every individual to think and act anew, exploring the narrow margin which remains open in free thought and in authentic action. Limiting situations, in particular, are paradigmatic cases of unexpected developments, where human beings may excel beyond unimaginable limits. The heroes of everyday life represent the endurance, resilience and praise of life that resists the conflicts, paradoxes and ambiguities of social life. Morality is present through these patterns (Veetil, 2011).

The absurd itself may be, after all, a consoling narrative that serves the purpose of enabling humans to keep going, no matter what. Arts, science, history and philosophy are human products that testify to this endurance. Technology and religion, in particular, are examples of construction of tangible and intangible mechanisms enabling both the capacitating human action, expanding its potential to the limits, and of abstract idealisation, integrating desire, willpower, imagination and creativity in order to survive and to make life bearable and, preferably, pleasant and, perhaps, meaningful. Hodgson (2012) stresses these evolutionary and moral sides of science.

The rationale that is adopted here is the parallelism between how reality manifests itself, open to infinite interpretations, and how humans participate in such manifestation: reality manifests its intelligibility, and humans, being part of such reality and intelligibility, offer their rationalisation capacity. This links the world of affects, the irrefutable intelligibility, the dynamic rationality and, as part of this movement, the available empowerment. That is, citizens' engagement and their voice are potentiated by such *momentum*.

Global citizenship implies the application of economic concepts such as effectiveness and efficiency, or the "no waste" policy. Unemployment and pollution are examples of lost resources. If they subsist, it is because they have not been a priority in current policy making. Not being a priority also shows the state of neglect in terms of their position in present value systems. Current times of transition bring turbulence and complexity as they pressure the development of new organisational models at a societal level (Castells, 2011). It is trust and openness that are the currency of the digital age. This trust works as a motivation and an attraction, felt as an experience of excess, whenever significant action is achieved. In other words, citizens' engagement and civic action, the sheer power that it enacts, understood as capacitating action, appropriation, resolution and disposition to change and to innovate, is itself a source of new energy. Ideal worlds are brought to life through someone's imagination; the accessibility, attainability and availability of new dreams are pre-conditions for social change to occur. This reflects Zambrano's (2011) concept of poetic rationality.

Socio-techno-politico-digital ecosystems refer to the close interconnectedness between core dimensions of fundamentally social behaviour. The digital world brings novelty through stressing the importance of a millenary-long evolution of social relationships. These characteristics were present in primitive societies. The mutual influences between technology and social and political dimensions is a constant in human development, as Veetil (2011) argues, linking economics and law. In the cave ages, the use of technology directly affected social and political links; for example, the creation and use of hunting tools impacted on, and was the product of, the capacity to create strong social links in order to promote cooperation and collaboration, exploring synergies and working towards common good; building resilient communities and fostering continuing innovation and evolution reflect the presence of technology and its relations to social and political dimensions.

It is through the living experiences of these safe and secure intimate atmospheres within strong communities where close social ties create the opportunities for both language and individuation to develop. Individuation is a question of degree of differentiation. Social behaviour and working towards the common good, the social and political dimensions of human behaviour, represent more than repetitive and biologically programmed, predictable, organised behaviour. Organisation, when referring to humans, must highlight creativity, resilience and ingenuity, and this was true in the cave ages and is true today. Heidegger (1954) argues in favour of this community base dialogue as a source of organised behaviour.

Trust has always been a fundamental social tie, yet the digital age, as it is focused in the exchange of information and knowledge, implies that trust becomes the central protagonist and acquires an all-or-nothing importance, that is, it may “make or break” any social interaction. Several authors have stressed the difference in evolution of the technology and of the social dimensions in contemporary societies. The argument, for instance, of Manoel Castells (2011) is that the network society, as he names the present circumstances, is over-developed technologically and under-developed socially.

Times of transition are characterised by creating extreme conditions, which trigger even more extreme reactions. In other words, it is possible that when better conditions are developed and there is access to more tools and resources, some people will indeed evolve and create new ideals and dream up new forms of organisation and of working towards the common good, whereas others will regress and try to go back to previous models in the desperate effort to avoid facing inevitable change. Examples of ecological models which foster holistic thinking and cooperative behaviour contrast with recent examples of the financial crises in 2008 of aggressive, fierce and self-destructive competition and increased social inequalities, both within developed economies and at the global level.

The command-and-control model of industrial societies no longer fits the needs of the post-industrial world. Collaborative models, open-source technology, co-working spaces, Fablabs and Makerspaces, where transdisciplinary mind-sets and skills enable a rapid and effective response to the complexity of current global environments, are examples of the radical changes that are occurring worldwide.

Morality is not a static set of rules, immune to concrete reality. On the contrary, it presents that extra freedom to explore that which may break previous patterns, which may have served humanity in the past but that no longer fits the needs of present times. Hodgson (2012) stresses this evolutionary character of morality. Each society lives according to its highest ideals, in the sense that it is that frame of reference that justifies the suffering and the handicaps that are felt in the quotidian.

Present societies are heirs of the modern tradition, where individuals may develop their best potential in an individuation process. There is a win-win relationship between better conditions in the social environment, which may potentiate the development of greater expanding potential individually in a virtuous circle.

Cyberpolitics refers to the use of digital technology resources to achieve political ends. Wide ranges of activities are included, from political parties or presidential campaigns to electronic voting and e-government facilities. However, the most outstanding impact has been the emergence of new digital-based civic movements. The Arab Spring, which started in 2011 in Tunisia with the Jasmin revolution, is an example of the viral power of the digital world. It is interesting that the assertion that, in light of the poverty and chaos that has succeeded, it was a negative event may sound plausible; yet this naïve interpretation forgets the difficulties in the process of creating today's stable regions.

The civil war in North America in the second half of the nineteenth century or the religious wars in Europe throughout its centuries of existence are a

shocking reminder that today's taken-for-granted peace and prosperity were hard to win. In 2007, when the fifty years of European integration were commemorated – and in 2017, in its sixtieth anniversary – there was the need to stress this achievement: these were the first fifteen consecutive years of peace the continent has ever experienced. As with divorce and second marriages, the experience of hardships and the memory of suffering press the need to prevent disruptions and to actively fight for better quality in relationships.

War and peace are not merely alternative states of conflict or dialogue; they both reflect foundational principles and ideals that structure societies. Such principles include the value systems and the morality ideals, which work as an active utopia that continuously and persistently reinforces the message that there is something to be achieved, something worth fighting for, an ideal world that may be made concrete, here and now, and for the generations to come.

Cyberpolitics may analyze specific events, such as a political party campaign. An example is the work of Dader, who stresses the importance of cybercommunication and of cyberpolitical use for strategic coordination: “the general characteristics of the evolution that political party websites have undergone in countries enjoying the most advanced forms for applying techno-political tools” (2009: 45).

Facing changes of democratic evolution, from representative to deliberative forms of participation, implies that each new technological tool will force the rethinking and reinforcing of the core elements of the political mandate, that is, how each political initiative indeed is able to present evidence of its effectiveness in promoting the common good. Fostering greater citizen and voter participation and engagement is key: “changes in functions of civic deliberation, supply of detailed information and mobilisational interactivity are not given enough attention” so that “political parties and candidates should, in the future, devote more to these areas within their websites” (Dader, 2009: 47). These rapid changes in the political cybersphere also press new forms of operation in the provision of public services and on fostering e-government activities.

Governments are striving to deliver more efficient and effective public services in order to achieve better public service quality, with reduced waiting times, improved cost effectiveness, higher productivity and more transparency. It's an issue of doing things in new ways that requires fundamental change in the provision of public services in the future and a complete new approach for Governments to work and interact with their citizens.

(Kokkinakos et al., 2012: 34)

This doing things in new ways is a condition for development and evolution throughout the development of humanity. In other words, that is the mandate every generation receives. However, the critical point is to be able to state that it is the common good that persists as a condensing factor and social glue that will enable the conjunction of efforts towards a common goal. The contradictions, conflicts and inequalities that are present in current turbulent times, are

the negative side of the coin. On the other side, there are paramount changes, in terms of opportunities for effective progress, for both territorial development and human development, both as an individual and as a collective achievement. In other words, the negative aspects often hide the vast potential for positive and much needed progress, in terms of opportunities for change and social innovation. Kokkinakos et al. (2012) highlight the role of Web 2.0 and of social media as emerging forms of mass collaboration. The creation of cooperation platforms and applications is promoted by public administrations as they try to harvest the benefits of the civic movements' activity and of citizen engagement.

Concrete projects are being implemented and developed worldwide, research projects that articulate both theoretical and applied knowledge. The transdisciplinary focus is a kernel issue; for instance, Kokkinakos et al. (2012), stress the characteristics of a specific project on governance in terms of the "next generation public service delivery" as being fundamentally a synergetic and transdisciplinary approach.

The limitations of the present work are the discursive register that may accommodate different language practices, including different transdisciplinary fields. From these limitations, future work may incorporate other kinds of registers. For instance, dramaturgical texts, using direct dialogue, may prove to be an efficient reflexive practice in order to shed light upon the win-win relationships between morality and the world of affects and between morality and emotions in process. At the methodological level, action research and ethno-methodologies may help to collect evidence of these relationships, in particular, in sensitive and structuring sectors of the economy, including education, health, justice and technology-related areas.

Conclusions

The central statement of the present text is a call for engagement, for change and for renewal; a manifesto about the power of emotions to bring long-desired change; and a revolutionary silent cry for world-level social justice, in particular, in the name of future generations and of the present less privileged. Zambrano (2011) and Castells (2011) voice this social critique and need for the renewal of the thought processes that justify the present state of affairs.

There is an ideal, taken as humanity's capacity to dream, to desire and to create fictional narratives, upon which it is possible to design concrete reality actions; such an ideal is a double mirror as it reflects present perceptions and describes future projections, thereby opening new grounds for novel thought and action. This ideal is itself a working hypothesis as the search for meaning and signification may be interpreted as an arbitrary game and humans as pathetic entities inventing stories that may free them from the absurdity of existence. Winnicott's (1986) psychoanalytic theory expresses such need to create idealised visions because such illusions help to cultivate positive attitudes towards reality. These positive attitudes are the source of trust and openness, which, in turn, create new opportunities for novelty and change.

Patterns and structures are unavoidably present, which may help to identify the narrative being used, whether positive or negative and whether oriented or nonsensical, lost in the chaos of the cosmos. Patterns, structures, norms, models, methods, strategies and diagrams are artefacts that help to trace connections, identifications, similarities and differences between alternative modes of existence and between alternative value systems, as Peirce's (1974) work has helped to explain. The search for meaning, for answers and for explanations triggers humanity's ingenuity. Signification and meaning making, the capacity to inquire and to interpret reality, is a long-lasting constant in all civilisations, and it is also present in individual events of thought and action, that is, it is a constitutive characteristic of human beings. As Heidegger (1954) argues, all knowledge, including scientific knowledge, emerges from a direct contact with quotidian experiencing of reality, which is affects driven.

Beyond meaning implies that the absurd, the paradox and the random event may also gain meaning, as long as it is possible to connect and to articulate its unique differentiation factors in a plausible way. In other words, it is possible to assume the hypothesis that, eventually, meaning will emerge, even as a distanced historical account. Therefore, there has to be something prior to meaning, which may explain the emergence of signification, interpretation and learning. Levinas' (1989) ethics refers to these as deep transformation movements and Zambrano (2011) as poetic rationality. The present text proposes that something is the world of affects and of emotions. It is affects which capture the movement, the dynamism and the positive and desire-driven focus on action, on participation and manifestation, as a reality test. It is an irresistible drive to succeed; to find gratification, reward and pleasure; to be recognised and acknowledged as relevant in individual and in social terms, which structures the moral practices upon which affects may find a reference and an operational guideline.

The interpretation of morality, understood as emotions in process, and the phenomenological and ontological approach to specific knowledge areas, may be summarised in the following statement: reality is manifested in multiple and differentiated forms, and this differentiated unity is not external to individuals' existence, but rather is simultaneously internal as it is a participation process. Reality is manifested as being intelligible, and humans' participation is rationality itself. That is, it is the use of language and the engagement in social practices that is the enabler of affects and the creator of morality, with morality understood as emotions in process. Henry's (1963) life philosophy contributes to the understanding of this dynamic reality. The reality test is the reasoning that produces meaning out of dispersed facts and events. Each singular life is the proof of such workings. Meaning is a given, and it is not something to be taken for granted and therefore ignored. Rather, meaning, not the precise and descriptive explanation, but the meaning-making process itself, is intrinsically and unavoidably an assumption to be tested in life alone. Different authors from different contextual perspectives highlight the need to bring to the surface such hidden conceptual determinations (e.g. de Klerk, 2017; Veetil, 2011; Hodgson, 2012).

The early decades of the twenty-first century represent a paradigmatic change in the world order, politically, economically and culturally. The Internet alone is not the trigger of the present turbulence. In other words, present times call for a rethinking of basic concepts, including that which is connected to the origins of humanity, which has to do with the essence of humanity itself. That essence is emotions, the world of affects. It is a question of degree, the fact that humans have developed sophisticated traits related to their social needs, namely learning, interpretation, symbolic reasoning and artistic creativity. The world of affects represents the building blocks of such a multidimensional puzzle, as Lyotard's (2000) hypermodernity concept captures.

Present societies are the direct output of the social changes that occurred 100 years ago. The history of the world is characterised by both continual and disruptive changes, yet 1917 witnessed atrocities that are still being denied. This means that the lessons learnt, and many lessons were learnt, have difficulties in being spread and disseminated. Such is the argument of Levinas' (1989) ethics of care, which is hard to spread.

As a synthesis, morality is not only related to ideas, to utopias and to wishful thinking discourses, but it is about action: human intentional and resolute action. Academic texts such as the present one represent a possible line of action because they may highlight and clarify counter-intuitive interpretations of reality. The assertion that, taken as a whole, contemporary societies may suffer from self-denial – namely, of evidence-based anti-rational choices which call for a serious effort of deconstruction and re-interpretation – is an open mandate. It is what Henry (1987) names the *Barbary*, that is, how developed societies create perverse incentives that promote and replicate mediocrity and waste.

In short, morality includes but is not limited to moralistic discourses. Science, disciplinary and specialised knowledge, already implicitly and invisibly incorporates value systems and moral mandates. What is necessary is for such informal and foundational structures to be assumed and brought to the light in public forums. Contemporary societies need a collective innovative therapy, a pragmatic, economic, world-level best practice and, fundamentally, they need a voice; they need to give voice to their citizens. At least that could be a starting point, one that would recuperate the energy behind the nineteenth-century civic movements, which fought for freedom, justice and world peace.

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