

PRESENTATION.

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY IN THE NEW CHALLENGES OF PRACTICE PHILOSOPHY

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The study of emotions and feelings, their mechanisms, bases and nature, as well as their role in human –individual and collective– action, has made new progress as a result of the interest aroused in recent decades, both in the field of neurology or moral psychology and philosophy. Such is the case of researchers such as A. Damasio, J. LeDoux, J. Panksepp, P. Ekman, M. Hoffman, N. Frijda, R. Solomon, A. Ben Ze'ev, J. Greene, R. Davidson, F. de Waal, A. Fischer, J. Prinz or P. Goldie, to name just a few. Likewise, emergence of the theory of emotional intelligence with the works by caruso, Salovey and Mayer at the beginning of the decade of the 90s, has been especially relevant for the respect and acceptance of the affective dimension as an object of study, since it has meant, on the one hand, an extension of the concept of cognition and, on the other hand, the understanding of emotion from an evolutionary and functional perspective.

Without doubt, the study of the affective dimension has left its traditional place as a secondary subject has become one of the possible ways to successfully navigate in order to understand –more integrally– human beings and their actions.

In particular, the inclusion of the affective dimension in practical philosophy is simultaneously developed from different perspectives. On the one hand, the idea that emotions are in some sense necessary for morality, for the formulation of moral judgments or for the development of moral consciousness has been spread. Thus, there are positions from which emotions and values are identified, and positions defending that emotions generate moral judgments.

On the other hand, but in relation to the above, granting to the emotions this integral role in morality implies opening a new debate about their role

in practical reasoning and, therefore, in normativity, which is one of the most controversial areas in this respect: do emotions entail a normative value? Should they have it? Are they a precondition to discover what we should do or could they also be a compass? The debate on the relationship between the emotional dimension and practical rationality is still alive and growing.

Finally, other researchers have focused their attention on the motivational strength that emotions can have and their role in the deliberation and decision-making process in the ethical field. Are they motivating *per se*? Are they sufficient, decisive, determining or necessary?

This thematic plurality is reflected in the works of the GERG with Scherer further ahead, in the work about rationality and emotion by Solomon, Elster, or in Spain by Broncano and Gomila, and, needless to say, by the North American experimental philosophy, to name just a few. Likewise, emotions begin to appear as an issue that traverses many projects of political philosophy. One example is the brilliant work done by the team of Sabine Roeser in the Delft University and their research on new technologies, nuclear energy, risk and ethics. Likewise, with regard to the motivational aspect, the Canadian group dedicated to *acrasia* and weakness of will with Tappolet and Stroud, as well as the already-classic work about fairness and empathy by Hoffman and Eisenberg are milestones in the international picture.

Certainly, interdisciplinary reflection has as a result the recognition of the emotional dimension as a field of scientific research and the explosion in the production of theories, experiments and multidimensional studies –unthinkable a few decades ago–. In fact, the qualitative leap in applied ethics, political philosophy and the metaethics agenda is palpable, evolving from being a forgotten and/or minority topic in the philosophical traditions to be a subject in vogue in and out of the Academy, which, although positive in many ways, also implies a risk of losing the necessary critical reflection. However, experts are also aware of this fact.

A sign of the diversity of the approaches are the following papers by new promising researchers across Europe. From the meticulous analysis by PhD. Diego Garrocho on the concept of passion and desire in Aristotle's ethics and their role in motivation to issues of moral psychology, normativity, justice, politics and intersubjectivity. Indeed, following the work by Garrocho, assistant professor at the Autonomous University of Madrid (Spain), we propose to delve into the problems of moral deliberation and decision-making. Specifically, we address the question about the limits of the normative role of emotions concerning new ethical and political challenges in relation to new technologies with the poignant work of Stefaan Blancke, member of

the Moral Brain research group and a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences at Ghent University (Belgium).

Thirdly, Gottfried Schweiger, Senior Scientist at the Centre for Ethics and Poverty Research (ZEA) at the University of Salzburg (Austria), offers us outstanding work on the intimate relationship between the feeling of humiliation, its effect on self-esteem and the emergence of injustice applied to one of the most current ethical issues, namely, child poverty and social injustice.

Lastly, Alba Montes, postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Subjectivity Research at University of Copenhagen (Denmark) and part of the Marie Curie ITN network, offers us an original and profound portrait of the ethical significance of shame and its relation to love and recognition through literature, in this case, through the play *King Lear* by W. Shakespeare.

For Spanish-speaking readers, this issue includes two reviews on two remarkable works from the recent production in Spanish moral philosophy, namely the book by Professor Victoria Camps, *El gobierno de las emociones* [*The management of emotions*], by Carmen Santander (University of Valencia/ Valladolid) and the book by Professor Belén Altuna, *Una historia moral del rostro* [*A moral history of the face*], reviewed by Gabriela Reggiani (National University of La Plata).

Needless to say, this bouquet of papers helps us remember, as Lazarus already pointed out, that, “of all creatures on this earth, humans are the most emotional.”¹

1. LAZARUS, R. S. & LAZARUS, B. N., *Passion and reason: making sense of our emotions*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994. p. 3.