

Review Study

Code of ethics in Psychology and ethics of existential-phenomenological inspiration: a current and necessary dialogue

Código de ética em Psicologia e ética de inspiração fenomenológico-existencial: um diálogo atual e necessário

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ABSTRACT | OBJETIVO: This article intended to build reflections on ethics from the Psychology code of ethics and Existential Phenomenological ethics, inspired by Martin Heidegger's Phenomenology and in his studies on Ontology. **METHOD:** The article inserts in the qualitative, theoretical, original, exploratory, and descriptive research modality, whose research method rescues in Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology a comprehensive reading of ethics from the studies of canonical texts on the theme of ethics and the deontological codes that regulate and support professions, for example, the code of ethics of Psychology. Methodological possibilities for comprehensive reading settled on the phenomenological method emphasize that the Heideggerian hermeneutic circle does not admit that prior conditions for describing and understanding phenomena are clear and unalterable. So, the methodological possibilities seek articulate components of the hermeneutic circle: previous position, previous vision, and previous conception in the sense of approaching the provisionality of the phenomenon of ethics. **DISCUSSION:** The objectives of this study are demonstrable of the investigated problem: how are possible reflections on ethics in Psychology from dialogues since a code of ethics in Psychology and existential-phenomenological ethics? So, we admit ethics distinct from morals and problematize the usual way in which ethics is summarized, in Psychology, by the Code of Ethics, expanding our reflections on the ways of being ethical and privileging approximations to the phenomenon of ethics. **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS:** This work points out other ways of reflecting on ethics and contributes to a comprehensive approach to ethical issues to be prioritized in Psychology practices, including approaching the ethics of everyday human relations.

KEYWORDS: Ethics. Code of Ethics. Existential Phenomenology. Psychology.

RESUMO | OBJETIVO: O presente artigo pretendeu construir reflexões sobre ética a partir do código de ética da Psicologia e uma ética fenomenológico-existencial, inspirada na Fenomenologia de Martin Heidegger, e em seus estudos sobre Ontologia. **MÉTODO:** O artigo insere-se na modalidade de pesquisa qualitativa, teórica, de natureza original, exploratória e descritiva, cujo método de investigação resgata na fenomenologia hermenêutica heideggeriana uma leitura compreensiva da ética a partir dos estudos de textos canônicos referentes ao tema da ética e dos códigos deontológicos que regulamentam e apoiam profissões, por exemplo, o código de ética da Psicologia. Possibilidades metodológicas de leitura compreensiva, assentes no método fenomenológico, ressaltam que o círculo hermenêutico heideggeriano não admite que condições prévias para descrição e compreensão dos fenômenos sejam claras e inalteráveis. Assim, as possibilidades metodológicas articulam conjuntamente componentes do círculo hermenêutico: posição prévia, visão prévia e concepção prévia no sentido de aproximar-se da provisoriabilidade do fenômeno da ética. **DISCUSSÃO:** Os objetivos deste estudo são demonstráveis no problema investigado: como são possíveis reflexões sobre a ética na Psicologia desde diálogos entre código de ética em Psicologia e uma ética fenomenológico-existencial? Assim, admitimos ética distinta de moral e problematizamos o modo usual como ética é resumida, na Psicologia, ao Código de ética, ampliando nossas reflexões quanto aos modos de sermos éticos, bem como, privilegiando aproximações ao fenômeno da ética. **CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS:** Este trabalho aponta outros modos de refletir sobre a ética e contribui para a aproximação compreensiva da ética como tema a ser priorizado nas práticas da Psicologia, inclusive, aproximarmos-nos da ética do cotidiano das relações humanas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ética. Código de Ética. Fenomenologia Existencial. Psicologia.

From the name of this title, a question can be addressed: why unite, in dialogue, ethics and the code of ethics of Psychology? The proposed reading based on the encounter between ethics and code elects as necessary to discern that ethics and Psychology code of ethics are not synonymous. However, these notions are often equated, and these movements are demonstrative of the lack of knowledge about each notion's implications. We also emphasize that usually the term deontological code is not a customary statement, although most of the time, the codes of ethics that legislate the professions, for example, in Psychology, are deontological codes whose main designation is dedicated to regulating, guide and clarify rights and duties that the professional must take into account in their professional performance (Amendola, 2014; Caldeira, 2019).

The issue that we are willing to investigate involves the following understanding: how are possible reflections on ethics in Psychology from dialogues between a code of ethics in Psychology and phenomenological-existential ethics? To do so, let us start with the common term: ethics.

Ethics, in this article, will be circumscribed within the scope of Psychology from the professional code of ethics. Discussing ethics and code are not just saying that ethics go beyond the professional code of ethics. Likewise, it is insufficient to express strangeness regarding the complexity belonging to those mentioned, as these are not matters that are of interest or disinterest, exclusively, to a group, this would be equivalent to delegating to the interested parties the guardianship regarding the observance of our existence one-with-them-others. This last argument would serve to make it official that the human condition carries within it a force that needs to be watched and penalized.

In everyday life and the exercise of professions, it is not always possible to clearly find the professional expression code of ethics. As seen in Psychology, Science and Profession in Brazil, the most common is when alluding to the code, one reads the expression:

Psychology's¹ professional code of ethics. This simplified way of naming carries brevity regarding the exercise of reflection and the enforcement of norms. In addition, it simultaneously refers to a generalization, therefore, a comprehensive reduction of ethics.

In this article, we focus on understanding and reflecting on ethics based on dialogues with the code, updating the importance of not reducing ethics to the rules regulating professions such as Psychology. The urgency of this debate concerns the growing threat of nullification of the reflective exercise, raised by ethics, in favor of the enforcement of procedures that make our commitment to care for the way we inhabit the world more flexible, as observed by Sá (2016), Sousa (2016), Mattar (2017), and Caldeira (2019).

The fact that the science of Psychology lives with the challenge of guaranteeing itself scientific at the same time that it feeds on unmeasurable and apprehensible contingencies, such as we can find in the natural and exact sciences, according to Caldeira and Dutra (2018), makes the exercise comprehensively proposed here is an opportunity to demonstrate the Heideggerian phenomenological method and orientation for the humanities. In this way, the orientation that inspires the proposed reading, supported by the production of Martin Heidegger's, breaks with the prioritization of explanations and interpretations as means of an analysis of the way we live and deal with restrictions of possibilities concerning updating our condition of being project, despite the appeals for human beings to have similar data subject to verification and adequacy. Therefore, the way we favored sensitizing the dialogues on ethics reflects a theoretical path on the subject and accompanies the article's entire construction, with special attention to the **Possible paths for dialogue with the ethics** section. In this section, we propose a historical retrospective of ethics, taking into account some historical milestones that aroused greater interest in the topic of ethics and, especially, highlighting our reading of ethics of phenomenological-existential inspiration.

¹ "The primary mission of a professional code of ethics is not to standardize the technical nature of work, but to ensure, within the values relevant to society and the practices developed, a standard of conduct that strengthens the social recognition of that category" (Code of Ethics in Psychology, 2005, p. 5).

In this article, the interest in updating and demonstrating the importance of the dialogue between ethics and code, inspired by Martin Heidegger's Hermeneutic Phenomenology, highlights how we weave our understanding supported by the phenomenological method. The method is not circumscribed in our proposition to a section on research development. On the contrary, the notion of method defended not only refers to an attribute that provides the replication of the study in a universal way but inspires the promotion of other comprehensive exercises contributing to the production of knowledge of psychological practices and the understanding of human relations. Based on Heidegger (1979), the phenomenological method reveals a proposition as to how to position ourselves and that, in this article, we situate this proposition in relation to ethics and our requests for it.

The method, supported by this philosophical orientation for developing this comprehensive reading, highlights the circular dynamic between description and investment of meaning in which we find ourselves involved, the similarity of what the hermeneutic circle makes possible (Heidegger, 1979; Maux & Dutra, 2020). Since we are constituted by the possibility of pre-understanding (Heidegger, 1979, 1987/2009, 1927/2012), it is important to point out that the phenomenological method is not consistent with use but an orientation for theoretical or practical investigations. The exercises of understanding and reflecting on our way of being in the world, guided by Heidegger's phenomenology, open paths whose foundations announce that in our constitution as human beings, there are possible strategies that allow us to build meanings and make us break with the naturalized character to which we are used. Specifically, for the work developed here, there is an invitation not to deposit in ethics a character of saving life investment, as if it were a generic solution, a kind of delivery to ethics of a constructed character that solves problems, just by the fact to allude. On this occasion, ethics is resumed through its disclosure

in codes and equally discuss implications of ethics regarding the collective/singular mode that assists us.

Some questions reverberate throughout the article, starting with the title announcement: why ethics? What brings newness and the need to discuss ethics and codes? These issues are proponents of other important fronts in this work, such as objectives that guide us to investigate: denaturalization, as a resource, for example, from the formulation of questions about the ethical phenomenon that set precedents for us to confuse ethics and morals, and the questioning the obvious condition of ethics that, in most cases, makes it go unnoticed as to its implicative character, that is, its commitment to the position.

Psychology, in the exercise of offering help² to human life, it raises questions that we refer to as instigating to understand ethics, for example: how do we inhabit the world? How do we live together? Being available for these questions, from the knowledge of (science and professional) Psychology, is an expression of the way in which Heidegger's phenomenology contributes to inaugurating another way of thinking, which goes beyond identifying and explaining, guiding us to understand the ways of being in the world, each time, with more appropriation.

In this reading, ethics is displaced from a position that reduces it to a subject or discipline, as well as to a characterization of ethics composing an adjective phrase, as if ethics were a synthesis referring to a qualification of something or someone, for example, ethical humans, for the elucidation of ethics as constitutive of the way we humanize and relate to one another.

Reflecting and building strategies in order to bring ethics closer to the way we live/live together prompt us to go through comprehensive paths of ethics. These paths supported by Heidegger's phenomenological foundation are composed of the circularity of Heidegger's phenomenological method.

² In Zollikon Seminars, Heidegger states that Psychology offers help.

The circularity of the Heideggerian phenomenological method

The methodological path on which we rely on the investigation/understanding for the proposed themes is based on the existential-phenomenological psychological clinic and the hermeneutic phenomenology of Martin Heidegger. However, when inquiring about the place of ethics and how its relationship with normative instruments takes place, we confront the search for epistemological foundation as necessary support, not always evident, to develop and bring ethics closer to the scientific and professional dynamics of Psychology, thus stimulating the circularity of meaning that constitutes us.

From exploratory and descriptive content research, we attest that ethics, before being a theme for Psychology, finds its origin in Philosophy, as [Caldeira](#) (2019) defended in the literature review of his research. Considering that there is an extensive and complex History of Ethics in Philosophy, which we will demonstrate in the section **Possible paths in the dialogue with ethics**, by adopting the comprehensive/reflective exercise as an invitation to investigate ethics, we observe, when we focus on the theme, the need to adopt criteria, inaugurating dialogues and achieving development. These components integrate a circularity within the Heideggerian phenomenology and mobilize a restlessness thanks to the not allowed way of presenting the phenomena and their outcomes in view of developments.

The work involving phenomenological circularity is unique for the non-stagnant character of its components: prior position, prior view, and prior conception, according to [Azevedo](#) (2013). Therefore, the comprehensive dynamics that involve the investigation of this theme provokes sensitivity,

openness to the relationships and unfolding of the theme regarding the dimension of life to which we are a part, and we do not always realize it, as we are often busy with being effective, precise, committed with intentions. that the paths of investigation always obey the same conditions of development in order to be replicated.

The method follows the proposal of highlighting the phenomena and, in turn, offers a way of reading the world from its unveiling condition. It also mobilizes differentiation so that no behaviors and thoughts are waiting to be discovered. The tracing that runs through the method, according to [Heidegger](#) (1979), is the revealing of what is being built. That is, the method reveals itself as a path under construction. Thus, an opportunity is inaugurated by Martin Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology: harmonizing the appreciation expressed in understanding experiences and investigating the Foundation. Thus, according to the philosopher, what constitutes us is a demonstration of the existential core that contemplates us. However, most of the time, it is difficult to grasp, leaving us to propose the analysis of documents from the Heideggerian legacy, in which the philosopher joined forces to share his reflections on existing and thus expose/share understandings of issues of existence, together with topics requiring daily placements.

The method, based on Heidegger's phenomenology, confronts us with the truth, it is Heidegger's unveiling truth which exposes the essence of truth which, in turn, is distinguished from truth/adequacy.³ According to [Heidegger](#) (2009), "method means the way in which the character of the field to be known is open and limited" (p.143). Therefore, we read that the philosopher evidences the uninterrupted and unique character of the method.

³ [Heidegger](#) (2009) drew attention to those interested in the phenomenological method regarding the need for a different way of thinking about the way men and women are encouraged by modern sciences. In the way of thinking to which we were/are used to, we admit as a source of understanding a paradigm of truth inspired by the influences of scientific criteria by René Descartes. Descartes worked with the concept of truth as adequacy, a combination of truth and certainty. We emphasize that this approximation, truth and certainty, results in an environment for carrying out experiences governed by something outside. This way of situating men, women and their experiences can be observed daily in the requests for positioning the part of psychological knowledge, ensuring that it can quantify and measure relational experiences. In [Heidegger](#) (1953/2007), the philosopher dedicated himself to understanding the notion of truth, highlighting it as an opening between humans and their experiences considering reality, for example, in an approximate way to a horizon of meaning that we constitute and are constituted. Thus, the German philosopher overcame the logic of something outside and above experiences by regulating what is true or not.

The method present in this path invests in the need to reflexively access understandings about the presence of ethics from the analysis of documents. For example, the codes are similar to Heidegger's work on existence. In ethics, the constancy made present and updated reveals indications of essential positions for community life. Regarding the method, it is found in its outline the reconstruction of paths that, based on the proposed theme, are admitted as ethical paths, ways of returning the question to human beings about their relationship and respect. Step by step, in unveiling that how we issue evaluations and judgments to sentences are not naturalized, we are asked to intervene in daily life. This daily routine that is hybrid, involving **questioning-building-creating**, collaborates to build ethical commitment, together, to the exercise of norms that guide professional activities without giving up on inhabiting ethics, in tune with our existence.

Hermeneutically, comprehension is announced as a denaturalizing experience; there is no agreement with the exercise of privileged hierarchies between understanding and interpreting since, together, they manifest themselves. The pertinence of Hermeneutics for analyzes involving human relationships is demonstrated in an occasion so that experiences are accessed. At the same time, they are being lived and moving away from notions that sterilize the strength of experience by transporting them to time and space previously measurable.

Harmonizing understanding and interpreting paths are inaugurated in which the unveiling of the senses follows the cadences that are possible, and not ideal, regarding the ways in which human beings deal with their lives, with dilemmas, with their finiteness, and regarding the experiences that involve us, even in the face of individualistic scenarios that want to make us believe that there is only one answer, definitive and immutable, correct and adequate and that must be prioritized. Without restrictions on the issues of existence, the factual context exposes a horizon that we admit as the horizon of the ethical path, which we travel in our ways of being-in-the-world, as this ethical path collaborates to singularize the awakened senses and mobilizes to authentic encounters.

Investing in the dynamics of Heidegger's phenomenological circularity, we advance to converge ethics as close to us and, thus, raise our condition as unique human beings that mobilize the unveiling of meanings that help us to situate ourselves/position ourselves daily.

The common of ethics

Ethics is present among us, even if we do not realize⁴; moreover, he is instigating for placements. The thematization of ethics sensitizes observations and investigations through the fertile field surrounding it, that is, the questions of existence. As we mentioned, in order to allow us to be questioned by ethics, a comprehensive path needs to be inaugurated. It is not simply a choice by method, like someone looking for a step-by-step approach to approaching and investigating hypotheses. As we chose to call the approximation of ethics to psychological practices and our relational experiences as humans, the common of ethics rests on the construction of bases that guide, updating the exercise of thinking. This other way of thinking for ethics rescues the effort by another way of thinking like [Heidegger](#) (1987/2009) encouraged those interested in the phenomenological method to approach the experiences of patients who were not able to be supported by the modes of care prevailing in the nineteenth century. In the previous section, we drew attention to this fact with regard to the notion of truth. However, it does not refer exclusively to this notion and may even allow us to glimpse other ways of understanding notions such as health, illness, etc. The way of thinking that ethics calls us, based on the reading defended here, requires a different path to which we are used; instead of investigating, we think that existence and ethics are ways of keeping us in motion, allowing us to conduct our stories since, together with other entities, we form the world as we know it.

Ethics carries and opens non-conforming precedents. Reconciling this condition that relates ethics to university education in Psychology and the continuing education of psychologists, gradually,

⁴As we found in the thesis *The issue of ethics in psychotherapy: contributions of Hermeneutic Phenomenology* by Martin Heidegger, [Caldeira](#) (2019).

a fertile meeting is evidenced for the exercise of bringing ethics and psychological knowledge into our daily lives, especially in the psychological clinic and in care offered to people who experience some level of emotional suffering, as demonstrated by [Borges-Duarte](#) (2017) and [Dutra](#) and [Maux](#) (2017).

We cannot neglect the historical horizon that contemplates societies today. Ways of living demonstrate ways in which we relate to requests for meanings and meanings. Evidencing the topic of ethics, above all, regarding the commonplace of its presence in our experiences, became urgent in the post-world wars (1914-1918/1939-1945) and in the imminence of civil conflicts that put at risk the lives and sociability of the human beings. After and in the force of these occurrences, the contexts of life became fertile scenarios for the questions of existence to acquire strength in Psychology, for example, making room for what is called the third force of Psychology, Humanistic Psychology.

For Psychology, build its bases and turn attention to issues of existence (which are linked to the condition of humanity, even more, after the atrocities that we are historically living and that open space for phenomena related to emotional suffering in our contemporary age, as [Dutra](#) and [Maux](#) (2017, 2021)⁵ it contemplates a singular relationship, in which we associate the request that human beings need to be understood and made aware of the commitment to relating to themselves and to others. In the reading we propose, we reawaken a notion of ethics, according to [Caldeira](#) and [Dutra](#) (2021). Ethics uniting human beings is admitted by articulating the issues of existence with

commitment and regarding the implicative way of thus raising positions. In this case, we associate this articulation with a way of understanding, and not the simplified reproduction of explanations that can fit in the most diverse situations, for example, as if ethics were a standard ready to pacify the vital exercise of commitment to the human life and life on Earth. Being in the world, as we live/experience, is about being a life that moves everything, being movement and building our historical horizon.

Viktor Frankl⁶, for example, when explaining his ideas and sharing how he articulated his understanding of the phenomenon of the genocide of his people, and also Hannah Arendt⁷ and Hans Jonas⁸ who elucidated in their works the terror of a humanity that, apparently, had reached the worst, that is to say, indifference, not only share stories, but sensitize so that issues of existence and ethics are not relativized or even eliminated.

In the historical path that humanity has taken, we have, nevertheless, the rise of psychological knowledge aimed at improving psychological tests and psychological assessments, according to [Muniz](#) (2018) and [Jesus](#) et al. (2007). Hyper valuation of behavioral-based studies and even expansionist advances in an attempt to delimit what are the pathologies of mental disorders, added in astonishing amounts to each version of the DSM's, as demonstrated by [Angell](#) (2011); the approximations between Psychology and other areas of knowledge such as Neurology; new work perspectives such as Positive Psychology, inaugurated in the 2000s⁹, between others. In this brief exposition on the rise

⁵ The growing number of refugees who are taking land or sea routes in order to leave their region of origin. Human lives that cannot be maintained and preserved with dignity in their territories of birth and that, when leaving their territory, suffer humiliation, exploitation and the risk of not being accepted in other nations; citizens who in their countries are unable to experience their rights; men. Women, young people and children deprived of the right to be cared for based on the condition of vulnerability they present, among numerous other topics covered in the books organized by [Dutra](#) and [Maux](#) (2017, 2021).

⁶ [Frankl](#) (1985), "What human beings really need is not a tension-free state, but rather the search and struggle for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task. What it needs is not the release of tension at any cost, but rather the challenge of a potential sense awaiting its fulfillment. Human beings need not homeostasis, but what I call "nodynamics" ... I dare say that nothing in the world contributes so effectively to survival, even under the worst conditions, as knowing that our lives have meaning. There is much wisdom in Nietzsche's words: "Whoever has one to live for can bear almost any how" (p. 95-96).

⁷ [Arendt](#) (2004), "They simply traded one value system for another" (p. 107).

⁸ [Jonas](#) (2006), "Man as an object of duty includes responsibility at the center of ethics, ensuring human authenticity, guaranteeing man his ability to choose: "precisely the preservation of this possibility, as a 'cosmic' responsibility, is what the duty of existence means. Exaggerating, it could be said that the possibility that there is responsibility is the responsibility that precedes everything" (p.74).

⁹ Positive Psychology and the growing wave of alternative therapies that are based on not retaking the human for what constitutes it, but appeasing and alleviating emotional suffering in order to strengthen us, retakes us in a blunder is not the infantilization of pretending that there are no problems. Psychology, regardless of the dialogues with other knowledge, needs to find ways to enable us to bear suffering, learn to live together, empower us as human beings who own our stories and are not disconnected from the suffering, the life we have, and those who are at the around us.

and diversification of psychological knowledge, we demonstrate the approximation of ethics with Psychology over the years and events of collective life that end up requesting improvement in the way of caring and conducting mechanisms and protocols that ensure the best adaptation of the life we build in the world. Be it with regard to questioning and implicating reports regarding the human condition, or in the improvement by controlling and predicting the behavior of human beings, similar to what [Jesus et al. \(2007\)](#) demonstrated, what happens is that we live together in a race for the maintenance of life. In addition, in this sense, the dialogue between ethics and psychological knowledge can lead to questions for the knowledge and profession of Psychology, for example: how do we live with ourselves and with/in the world since the sense of collective is threatened by the interests of a few?

When we name this section the **common of ethics**, it is a question of elucidating the character of the ethics of proximity to each human being. When we defend the **common of ethics**, it is not the same as saying about its similarities with statutes, but rather giving voice to the question: "how ethical are we?" while we move about and with the world. While we are the world and the life of this planet we inhabit, what is possible in defense of justice, compassion, citizenship, respect, freedom, and care? The **common of ethics**, in our ways of being, draws attention to how close and distant we are to ourselves and others, equally, to our limitation in taking refuge in tests, norms, protocols, distancing ourselves, personally and professionally, from the human that we manage to be to be connected with what matters.

Furthermore, the **common of ethics** is our reservation to the possibilities of ethics, so that it is not put to use, including a use aimed at banishing problems and adversities, as if it were possible to suspend the demanding dynamics of the life of our correspondence as we stand and correspond. Being the life that moves everything around us, is the movement itself, is admitting responsibilities, even the required standards, which Psychology as a science and profession faces, in the attempts in which it is required to intervene, for example, when needing habits (more or less adequate) to regulate a social

place, are demanding of an ethical position. However, keeping an eye on ethics among us, clinicians or not, is not a trivial task. Our attention, as human beings, is a way of valuing the life we move. Successively, being ethical reminds us that the required standards of normality and adaptation to socializing in society mean nothing if we cannot understand that our feelings and actions are not stopped waiting for an external norm that tells us "how," "where," and the "why" of acting as we do.

In defense of a present and updated ethics, our paths do not become clearer or more predictable. On the contrary, our paths become, possibly, more familiar since nothing is concluded or waiting to be saved in this mystery of transience that involves human life. What is **common to ethics** is the incessant and limited possibility of moving life, despite the efforts to beware of waiting for an explanation.

In the continuity of the **common of ethics**, which does not mean unity or essence, and which comes close to assuming our place of movement and life force as we live together, we return to important points of history, the philosophical foundation of ethics, because in this digression we believe to trace possible paths in the dialogue with ethics, whether for psychological knowledge or in the care of human relationships.

Possible paths in the dialogue with ethics

Three paths are unveiled in the disclosure of ethics and its dialogue with codes. In the first, we highlight a brief philosophical history of ethics and how it influenced the professional code of ethics in Psychology, and we warn against the emergence of this instrument that places ethics as a destroyer of impasses. In the second, we highlight ethics and professional code as important arguments that support the formulation of criteria and values and the importance of these facts for life guidelines. Finally, in the third, which we understand as not excluding other paths, it acts as a proposition, in which ethics is evidenced by helping us, clinical and non-clinical, as to the ways of inhabiting the world.

In the development of Philosophy, ethics has its history based on Aristóteles¹⁰, the diffuser of ethics in the molds as it is currently recognized, as a philosophical discipline. The valuation of well-being adding freedom and responsibility are Aristotelian inheritances in the formulation of deontological codes present among modern sciences, for example, the code of ethics of Psychology in Brazil.

Socially, we act and distinguish our way of relating to ourselves and others based on ordered actions, in the direction of what we intend to execute or plan. Interested in human behavior, [Aristóteles](#) (1825/2015) joined efforts to access happiness because human actions were directed to lead life towards happiness. This would be supported by virtuous positions and behaviors, that is, excellence. Therefore, Aristóteles systematized ethics to enable a good life, happiness, and/or self-fulfillment. The philosopher's work contributes to the primacy of ethics that starts from the understanding that reason is available to humans, and at the same time, ethics directs the affected/sensitized understanding based on experiences. Thus, happiness would require us to cultivate reason and emotions.

The idea of the human, as a practical notion, is a principle of action and, equally, attention is paid to it in terms of its end, that is, its limit. It is in acting that the human can fulfill his possibility as an ethical being. Action is a human production, and its meaning lies in this. According to [Aristóteles](#) (1852/2015): "practical knowledge is acquired only when it becomes action performed. That is, it does not matter only to know what the extreme possibility of the human is, but to know how that possibility exists in it, according to its becoming excellent. Knowing what to do is not enough. You have to act" (p. 11).

The ethics mentioned in the codes comes, in general, to help us in our actions to learn to deal with ourselves. In the reading, we emphasize that Aristóteles propagated ethics that does not aim at the middle ground. Instead, the ethical action would

demonstrate itself moving us to think and take behaviors without balancing the parties.

From the ethics that drive us daily and require us to take guidelines in our lives to the demands and social complexity, we end up requiring ethics that act as ethics of duty. The main representative of the ethics of duty was Immanuel Kant. The modern philosopher worked in defense of duty that echoed respect for the human and what constitutes it. Kantian ethics inevitably spread the universality in which only reason would allow us to know the possible circumstances/ contexts. In this sense, reason justifies the possibility of the supreme principle of morality (categorical imperative). The categorical imperative, a sign about knowledge, is imperative because it reaches us like order and categorical because it is rationally extensible without considering adequacy between purpose and objective as primordial. The Kantian universal law formula synthesized that our actions were taken to become a universal law; moreover, its maxims are valid as principles.

According to [Kant](#) (1785/2014), morality would emerge from the culturalization processes in which we are socialized. This propensity so that our actions were based on the possibilities of being converted into universal laws presents a Kantian direction that the human being can self-govern from the regiment of the end itself. The modern philosopher helps us to distinguish morality and ethics, referring us to morality and its direct relationship with the culture of each social organization, this being a source of discernment regarding the values of groups, for morality, there are ways of being ethical, as modes of placing ourselves, relating and evaluating the influence of our values daily. Ethics, in [Kant](#) (1785/2014), witnesses the understanding in relation to happiness in which there is no possession or dependence. Since [Kant](#) (1785/2014), a refusal to ethics is exposed when synthesized into a beneficial agreement, whose principles of morality are supported to favor only a few.

¹⁰ Disciple of Platão (philosopher of the classical period of Ancient Greece); systematizing ethics as a philosophical discipline.

For Kant, we act, contradictorily, when we make choices opposing our goals, or when, given contexts, we conform to applications opposite to reason, neglecting to recognize what would be driving our choices and preferences. The practical reason is which protects the morality that maintains its place of importance in human relationships and is not shown to be inferior to ethical exercise. The philosopher exposed our daily concern with universalizing knowledge based on particular cases that would concern morality and cultural values directly related to society and do not necessarily correspond to being ethical in a generalized way.

Kant's universal law observes humanity harboring the notion of respect. Being rational, a Kantian imperative, enables representations based on laws, since, for Kant, everything resides in the representations of laws. Kantian virtues exposed by Adela Cortina¹¹ emphasize the service of fulfilling the duty (Cortina, 2003) which, in turn, manifest the liveliness of categorical imperatives. Kant (1785/2014) when presenting his purpose for happiness, exposed happiness as an enabling dynamic to appropriate our lives, which we approach in this article, which develops an existential-phenomenological reading of ethics, of the character of exercising ethics as a way of correspond existentially.

Ethics, in addition to the dimension that formulates norms and rules, presents dimensions that we propose as important to be encouraged, for example, posture and positioning. Ethics triggered by codes is not always streamlined to its implications for care, according to Caldeira and Dutra (2021). We draw attention, considering the codes of ethics of Brazilian Psychology, that ethics is not an expressive guarantee of parameters and limits in the intervention on human beings, as if it were possible to delimit, for example, a posture on the part of the professional, before the event of the facts in question.

The idea of ethics adopted through the way it is present in deontological codes is sensitive to the

contexts that precede the need to gather guidelines and principles in the coding instrument. Similar to the presence of ethics, it was trying to eliminate the impasses between professional practice and requests for moral and ethical positioning in everyday life. From the rescue and investigation of the legacy of the philosophers mentioned and of the contemporary philosopher whom we rescue for this reflection, we apprehend that ethics expresses the need for positioning via reflective exercise.

Philosophical ethics, as Moral Philosophy, rationally explain the human moral dimension without focusing on totalizing dogmatisms that we are used to dealing with when delimiting experiences, naturally, as good or bad. Cortina (2003) defended the idea that the different applied ethics, such as those working on in deontological codes, contributing to the dissemination of civic ethics, are not removed from the social dynamics and cooperate in dynamizing, transforming the interests of citizens as a whole. In Cortina (2003 and 1990/2004), we find elements that help us to discern between ethics and morals, without depreciation, but an expanding understanding of how ethics can be read by building knowledge and promoting practices with regard to how they position themselves facing life and regarding the moral values cultivated in society and in the experiences that it integrates. For Cortina (2003), global ethics encourages what Kant defended as an ethical community with common moral laws.

In this understanding, ethics common to humans from the philosophical influences that relate it, for example, to happiness, would not place in ethics the limit of the pages that make up professional codes of ethics. Our attention to issues involving ethics is an opportunity for continuous reflection. Therefore, succinctly, ethics from a story about the ways and models of community life to the present day continues to change. However, it is perennial when confronting human beings about their condition of existing and being-world-with-others.

¹¹ World reference in the work on themes such as ethics, moral education and citizenship.

In tracing the chosen path to expose our understanding of ethics by dialoguing with code, as we have seen, we are not presented with ethics that would destroy the impasses of existing and of being with each other. On the contrary, we even highlighted the awakening of footprints on ethics and codes, which raise criteria and values as important guidelines for how to act/live.

As we developed in the previous section, the **common of ethics** is crossed by *ethos*, in the Latin sense, as it is not dissociated from reflections on the way of living and with the ways in which we are living. Thematizing ethics confronts us with the criteria of importance, the values, that is to say moral, that validate guidelines for our living. When we mention importance by criteria, we need to restore interest in self-knowledge and knowledge regarding the criteria that underpin our society. Paying attention to the criteria exposes us as ways of knowing evidenced, for example, as belonging to human relationships, how the human has been constituted, how women and men are crossed, whether they like it or not, by social, economic, cultural, and biological aspects.

According to [Arendt](#) (2004):

moral and ethical issues, issues around individual conduct, rules and standards of behavior that allowed us to distinguish between right and wrong, as well as the experiences that gave rise to and founded them, are among these things, they judge to be permanent and long-lasting and that they have shown themselves to be surprisingly fragile (p. 228).

By inviting to the discussion here proposed, the attention to the approximation between ethics and values. As we have called attention to in this work, it is important not to fall into the error of equating ethics and morals.

Knowing the distinction between ethics and morals is fundamental in the collective life we experience. Ethics accompany us in disseminating the comprehensive/reflective exercise and guiding us in our duties, actions, and values. As a philosophical discipline, the institutionalization of ethics does not make it a compendium of certainties, much less when we equate ethics with the code of ethics. As highlighted in this discussion, these are not certainties, answers, or, perhaps, truths along the lines of adequacy. Philosophy reserved the character/criterion of orientation for ethics, rescuing primordial tasks of

Philosophy, such as thinking and reflecting, added to the valorization of acting, that is, "how to act."

In the similarity that reason influences ethical ways of being similarly, the reason is associated with moral ways of being. On the one hand, in the sense of morality being involved by practical reason, concerning habits, then morale distances itself from ethics, as the habit belonging to morality does not require any implication. On the other hand, just as we see ethics as a continuous exercise, the reason that comes closest to ethics is the reflective reason. The practical and reflexive reasons, each one in its own way, are compatible resources to the human being to transform everyday life in a bearable way. When we referred to Aristóteles and Kant and how these philosophers grounded their ethics, we were working towards discerning ethics and morals. Affirming that ethics and code underlie criteria and values that guide our daily practices converges with [Cortina](#) and [Martínez's](#) (2005) proposition that ethics and morals are related to norms. It is the norms, the requirement of these, that we relate to approximations and distances between ethics and morals. In [Cortina](#) (2003), we can observe that morality is related to concrete actions and ethics and indirectly regulates everyday actions. In this way, we revive the philosopher's call to reflective exercise, including in the moral field.

We cannot forget that morality is a source of inspiration for codes of principles and personal/collective conduct. In morality, there is an announcement about us, our preferences and values, what makes us human beings similar to others. [Cortina](#) (1990/2004) defends the idea that morality works as a kind of rational knowledge that helps our capacity for human understanding, as practical knowledge, to act punctually, and that we end up designing so that morals can act in a broader way exempting us from the reflexive exercise of ethics, especially when we are highlighting an ethics of existential-phenomenological inspiration that is dynamic and updated with human existence, that is, in an unrepeatable, corresponding and meaningful way. An example that we are alluding here concerns [Cortina](#) (1990/2004) in her investigation of Kant on moral ends. These would be contributions to the exercise of our humanity in the sense of creating and following laws. In [Cortina](#), we find the defense of ethics that helps to understand the human moral dimension, that is, ethics that even guide us in considering the customs, without referring them to naturally given facts that

cannot be questioned or modified. In defense of this reflective ethics that unites attention to rational and affective aspects, we announce, influenced by the contemporary philosopher, the alternatives for dealing with difficulties, directly and indirectly, linked to living.

In Psychology (science and profession), we have been following, in the last years of the last century and beginning of this century, the interest in the systematization of moral development. For this reflection, the references we retrieved are based on [Piaget's](#) (1932/1994) and [Kohlberg's](#) (1981/1992). Scholars dedicated themselves to studies related to childhood in an attempt to be able to regulate and anticipate moral decisions throughout life. Nowadays, [Gilligan](#) (1993) implements discussions that expand Piaget's studies, mainly to consider gender issues.

Nowadays, ethics and morals are crossed by questions that modify formal and universal aspects regarding the value of goals, the notions of a self, of we, and of what we conceive for another. Ethics and morals are updated in terms of conventions that sentenced them to possess a cognitive nature. When reflecting, we implement an exercise that is not merely cognitive and to which we are called in ethics to guide us while we integrate feeling and thinking, reasoning, and affecting ourselves, and concerning this mode of conciliation, we are urgently challenged.

After going through two proposed paths, we dedicate ourselves to ethics, helping us inhabit the world. These ethics present the insufficiency of summarizing the issue of normativity in ethics. Ethics and professional codes do not precede the human being. In this way, we announce an understanding that it is via human beings, clinical and non-clinical, whether attentive or distracted to the theme of human relations, that comes from ethics, norms and how we agree to manage these constructs and our lives with urgent and concrete demands.

With the emergence of modern sciences and the privileging of metaphysical thinking that prioritizes the formulation and execution of natural scientific criteria, there was gradual and perennial naturalization of the formulation that reason (cognition/practice) concentrated the forces of absolute knowledge. Consequently, human beings occupy a prominent place together with modern sciences, which means

that these beings had absolute knowledge about their lives and other beings and nature insofar as they demonstrated their resourcefulness and power with the formulation of laws, norms, and criteria.

Apparently, we skipped questions about the "why" of not giving up laws and protocols to live in harmony with our scientific knowledge and with that knowledge that are only possible in coexistence/relationships. Errors, changes, transiencies are the most fearful items in the attempt to show ourselves as absolute and irreplaceable, that is, in the cultivation of scientific criteria. While fearsome, these items reveal possibilities for self-knowledge and knowledge about our life, our social integration, therefore, the ways in which we have invested in our reading of the world, that is, the world we are building. Socially, we are reflected in the notions of right and wrong that are institutionalized. Norms, laws, codes are examples of our perennial attempt to control, exercise control in order to eliminate similarities as to the ways of existing, possibilities that constitute us and make us unique, demonstrable in [Jesus et al.](#) (2007), [Angell](#) (2011), [Muniz](#) (2018), [Caldeira](#) and Dutra (2021).

In this last item of our argument, we enter into the movement of warning about the dangers of instrumentalizing ethics and conceiving a type of humanity that subverts its own to be endowed with the condition of existing. In this section, we defend ethics as the possibility of getting involved and not equating ourselves with objects to forge irreplaceable utility.

Implementing ethics and human behavior is still a mode of control, domestication, and exploitation, almost as if we could forget that we are finite. Ethics and deontological codes are not disparate, to the point of making dialogue impossible. Ethics and codes are not synonymous, and we cannot substitute one for the other. Ethics and codes allow us to dialogue and contribute to harmonizing relationships, for example, human and technical beings and overcoming a legalistic temptation that does not restrict ethics to the code instrument, as can be seen in Brazilian Psychology, with regard to the condition of professional effectiveness. Ethics and norms do not give up cooperation/correspondence without falling into voluntarism. It is not about voluntarist ethics that we are dedicated to, those that are used only for the convenience of situations,

for example, "with my patients I am demanding, I suggest the rules, I exemplify them, I am not flexible to exceptions; on the other hand, I feed prejudiced positions on a daily basis, I defend that people should be more active and less victims; I value behaviors that centralize relationships in more active people, I don't care about consumption, etc."

The narrative that ended the previous paragraph is free, in the sense that it can be attributed to countless people; its variations could be found in the dialogues in series, soap operas, movies, or around the neighborhood. In this narrative, we exemplify ways of being in the relationships that escape us, most of the time, regarding the presence of ethics. By cooperation/correspondence mentioned above, reflection and action are combined, and contexts are not pre-established. The alluded narrative and the reference to correspondence as existential, we understand that they are present daily as to our thinking and acting, professionally and personally, expose our ethical ways. Being ethical cooperatively calls us to the foundations of our knowledge so that, by not dissociating life and work, we can sharply build trust and involvement in what we are and what we do.

The commonly held idea that ethics can put an end to adversity says about the need that socially privileges ethics that protects and secures us. However, why do we often claim this role for ethics? We return to the transitory issue, according to the reading of ethics of phenomenological-existential inspiration defended here, in which ethics among us is based on questions of existence, as we associate with the philosopher's work in [Heidegger](#) (1927/2012). Our invitation to think and linger on a human being open each time to being one whose dynamics frighten us distances us from our attempts at truth/adequacy, as we mentioned. Prioritizing the scientific aspects of Psychology, reiterating its place of legitimacy in society, does not simplify its care professionals with the maintenance and understanding of the human condition that assists them, not just its objects of investigation.

Since the Declaration of Human Rights (1948), we can follow the interest in the human that culturally each society ends up shaping. In this statement, it is evident that the human condition is surrounded by an atmosphere of vulnerability that was not restricted to the post-war period; however, it is evident, in this (post) period, our vulnerability that in trying to circumvent the transience places us, each

increasingly, at the service of scientific production, read, technique.

This aspect of human vulnerability was observed by [Jonas](#) (2006) as related to responsibility for life. Jonas (2006) highlighted the condition experienced humanly in the post-war period, placing us in a technological society that has a man at its center, a position that is not compatible with requests, to which we are called. We warn in this article that the way we relate to the technique is not an exclusive feat of what [Jonas](#) (2006) defended. Similarly, [Heidegger](#) (1959/2007) took care of this task of alerting about the relationship that we dynamize with the technique. However, we reiterate the exercise proposed by Jonas since he rescued the Kantian categorical imperative of "an end in itself" and, in a widespread way, ended up influencing different codes of professional conduct.

By emphasizing the influence of technique on the human condition, especially the relationship between technique and humanity, we launch the challenge of permanently caring for and taking care of our ways of life. In this direction, we show ourselves more attentive to the impossibility of ethical neutrality. By ethical neutrality, we recover [Giacóia](#) (1999), who defends that the ethical burden that humanly contemplates man does not allow us to distinguish between possession and exercise of power regarding the inherent positions of our ways of being and doing.

As [Heidegger](#) (1953/2007) mentioned, the philosopher stopped to warn of technical restrictions to relationships, which even threatened our freedom. This dynamic is present as we address to technique the power of approaching/comparing human beings to species of means to ends, "(...) technique is therefore not merely a means. It's a way of homelessness" (p. 380). Even the homelessness of the issues of existence to which we are led in the face of the hypervaluation of technique, in this article, we reflect that it can drive us to look for our place and the place of technique in our collectives, reveals itself in positions in which each of us reviews the place that sentences the technique to replace the human and its relationships. For [Singer](#) (2017), **science-technical-ethics** are part of an interrelation of orphanhood, which is still read as helplessness, in terms of protecting the human being, as it ends up recalling them to take a stand in the face of requests. Singer's warning moves the reflections/questions: how to reinvent our place as human beings? How to devise new ways to hold ourselves accountable?

With no ready answers, however, with knowledge being built, we move forward in the guise of considerations and propositions so that Psychology develops populated by sharply reflective interests without neglecting that reason and affections are revealed together. Accessing the senses of how we personally and professionally take care of ourselves and clients/patients is the realization of cognitively and affectively coherent comprehensive/reflective exercises. The unveiling of the meaning of what we emphasize for ethics and the place of deontological codes illuminates and makes accessible the experience of being with each other, and when we find ourselves in tune and coherent as to the meaning that is required of us each time, that we can expand our appropriation of our ways of emotional health and, thus, inhabit the world in free, responsible and caring ways.

Final considerations

The considerations to this article are far from being conclusive, and we admit there are limitations to this study. Nevertheless, the questions remain alive in this direction: what is important when we articulate ethics and codes? And what change can we make?

Within the limitations of covering a univocal understanding of ethical dialogue and codes, we defend that other possible points are to be elucidated and invited to dialogue with this present article for future work. At the same time, we reinforce our commitment to triggering new studies, enriching the production of knowledge in Psychology, and highlighting the need for new investigations.

Through this work, we share our efforts to contribute to the development of Psychology, and we believe that our task proposes a coexistence with changeable conclusions and brings us closer with attention and care to unveiling the limits that we are humanly challenged daily. However, given the inhospitable of the common, we remain open to proximity to what really matters, with the molding of senses and meanings to make practical knowledge an ally of cognitive, reflective, and affective knowledge. Only, together, the human entity manages to land and build its bases so that, faced with the transitory period, it does not become frightened but rather mobilizes

courage, the apprehending of strength to be reborn at the dawn of new days. The indeterminacies and our efforts to understand human beings in their personal and professional daily lives are ethical opportunities. In this context, through this article, we update efforts to understand our human condition more and more through psychological knowledge.

In the experience of encounter/care that the psychological clinic allows us, the impasses remain. We continue to orchestrate criteria and values, trying to discern which ones sensitize us and which ones are driven in us. We continue to seek/build help to inhabit the world, organize our home, experience rest and guide how we move part of the daily exercises of dialoguing about the ethics common to each one of us, whether it is highlighted in the codes or in the ways of relating to each other, with others.

Authors' contributions

Caldeira DGS participated in the conception, design, and writing and in the scientific article. Dutra EMS participated in the orientation, design, and writing of the scientific article. Bezerra CG participated in the review of the scientific article.

Conflicts of interest

No financial, legal, or political conflicts involving third parties (government, companies, and private foundations, etc.) have been declared for any aspect of the submitted work (including, but not limited to grants and funding, advisory board participation, study design, preparation manuscript, statistical analysis, etc.).

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