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EMPLOYABILITY
& ENTREPRENEURSHIP:
**TUNING UNIVERSITIES
& ENTERPRISES**

E-BOOK
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

1st & 2nd July 2009
Catholic University of Portugal
Porto, Portugal





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“I am the size of what I see,
not the size of my height”

Fernando Pessoa

Summary

09 FOREWORD

13 **KEY SPEAKER:** *Katerina Ananiadou*, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) - OECD

15 PANEL I - EMPLOYABILITY: WHO IS EMPLOYABLE?

(Professional profiles; National Qualifications Framework, Results of Learning)

17 *Maria Teresa Paixão* "Qualifications and Mobility in the labour market"

23 *Anna Buchner | Jeziorska* "Implementation of the Bologna Process- European comparative perspective"

27 *Isabel Machado | Anabela Rodrigues* "Marketing Employability: Graduate Trajectories, Skills and Performances"

33 *Conceição Soares* "Ethics as an active self construction of the human"

35 PANEL II - TOWARDS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

37 *Anthony Mendes* "Entrepreneurship: An American Perspective"

39 *Vitor Figueiredo* "National Project for Entrepreneurship Education"

Ana Sofia Ferreira | Leonídio Fonseca | Lilian Santos "Are "entrepreneur students" the future entrepreneurs? A preliminary assessment of the contribution of junior enterprises for entrepreneurship" (*working paper not submitted*)

47 *Rui Magno* "Entrepreneurship in the Creative Industries of Knowledge and Well-being, the construction of the new European Economy Model"

51 Key Speaker:

Dana Redford "Personal Marketing, International Networks & Entrepreneurship"

57 PANEL III - TOWARDS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

59 *Cristina Soutinho* "The Enterprising School: a global citizenship-based vision"

Cristina Bastos "Day-to-day actions of a living school" (*working paper not submitted*)

65 *Manuel Au-Yong Oliveira | Ramiro Gonçalves | José Miguel Oliveira | Manuel Aroso | Miguel Barbosa | Romão Santos | João José Pinto Ferreira*

"Social Entrepreneurship and the role of Universities"

77 *Ana Meireles | Agnieszka Dziedziczak-Foltyn* "Gender Policies and Practices across European Higher Education Institutions: Some comparative data and the particular case of the Polish reality"

85 PANEL IV - CO-OPERATION UNIVERSITY/ENTERPRISES

87 *Aurora Teixeira* "University-Firm relations in Portugal. An empirical assessment"

91 *Caroline Staedtler* "Junior Achievement Programme"

93 *Oscar Cubillo* "Identifying Graduate Skills for the Knowledge Society Job Market"

97 *Belmiro de Azevedo* Co-operation University/Enterprises: the Sonae Experience"

103 CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE BY RAPORTEURS

105 **Key speakers-** *Teresa Proença*

107 **Panel I -** *Isabel Guimarães*

109 **Panel II -** *Miguel Sottomayor*

115 **Panel III-** *Raquel Araújo*

117 **Panel IV-** *José Pedro Amorim*

Ethics as an active self construction of the human

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In our contemporary world, there is a clear tendency to look at ethics as something that "cures all wrongs, all unbalance and all evils from the environmental to the business ones. Consequently, there is nothing better than to turn to ethics in order to "moralise" the system and the world, when the numerous news of fraud, injustice and scandals are a part of everyday life in the business world and in our society. But, is this the role of ethics? Can we reduce the aim of ethics to a mere technique of management?

In this paper, I argue that ethics needs to be replaced in the epistemological scale of knowledge, where until now it has occupied a place at the top. Ethics needs to be repositioned in a different level of knowledge where we may find the roots of its foundation. It is in the core of being that the experience of action takes place and develops and in it ethics takes root.

Nowadays, in spite of the question of ontology being outmoded, I would like to turn back to it. For a long time ontology has been understood as the source of all immobility, identified as the essence of the natural original forms, that is, as the antithesis of all transformation. To this negative sense of ontology we should add another one with a positive sign, which tells us that the life of being expresses itself through determinations without fixing itself in none of them, pointing to new possibilities and not to finished manifestations or to definitive configurations. It is in action that this positive sense of ontology takes place and in action it makes sense to look at the question of ethics in a different way. To do that one needs to establish a fundamental difference between acting and *techne*. In western culture action has been often confused with *techne*, contaminating all the complexity of the process of action. *Techne*, goes hand in hand with a culture which considers life as an often uncontrollable surplus, that one needs to control and dominate, appearing as a technique to eradicate all evil.

If we reduce *Techne* to a mere technique, it fulfils such aim. However, the acting cannot be reduced to a mere technique if we take into account mainly the energy of the action itself. If the aim of *techne* is planned beforehand, which implies the fulfilment of certain functions which are previously calculated, the action manifests itself at the same time it is happening, with the intentionality of expanding its own possibilities as far as possible. *Techne* always starts from a certain and planned reality, which corresponds to a constructed mental reality, more than a given dynamics, it always impels to the searching of a certain meaning and aim. Unlike *techne*, in *action* the fulfilment of the aim only makes sense in relation to the energy of the impulse which has motivated it and which does not follow any external principles.

Scientific ethics, which I have just mentioned before, can easily be characterized as an action reduced to *techne*, and to a human *techne*, as if we were dealing with a technique. But, if one understands ethics as a dimension of the experience of *action* itself, more than controlling reality, ethics expands that reality, not only within the boundaries of human reality, but also in

the development of all reality. Although action is a complex and rich experience of a difficult characterization, it is possible, at least, to underline five of its main specificities:

- 1) It is the essential experience of the human being, although it does not just limit itself to the anthropological dimension.
- 2) What provides value to the human is the being and not its nature. The human is an adjective expression of being.
- 3) It is an exercise of manifestation, of development and affirmation of the value of reality. It demands from the human being, its main protagonist, an attitude of faithfulness to that impetus of being and it does not reduce itself to the perimeter of human nature.
- 4) It is an experience of unity and of differentiating unification – part of given representations, but which opens itself in a renewed way to new manifestations.
- 5) It is an experience which places all beings in relation – because the ground is ontological and not anthropological. Human beings are not in relation with other beings as if they were "alter egos" but they are also differentiated and differentiating manifestations of the same being in which they all participate. Ethics, understood as this experience of being, does not reduce itself to rules or duties, but it points to movements of openness and development, where what prevails is cooperation and not the insatiable struggle of some which leads to the undermining and even the extermination of others.

Therefore, it is the role of ethics to develop reality as far as possible, although not only human reality, but also and, for instance, environmental reality. In this sense, what I am proposing is a broader understanding of ethics which does not reduce its own foundation to the human nature, but expands its grounding in the dynamic movement of being itself, which can be translated in a relationship of affect and responsibility towards all forms of reality and which inevitably will lead to an other understanding of the role of ethics in our world.