

Humor in Philosophy: Theory and Practice

LYDIA B. AMIR

SCHOOL OF MEDIA STUDIES, COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT ACADEMIC STUDIES, RISHON LEZION, ISRAEL

Abstract

Contrary to conventional opinion, humor has played an important role in philosophy, especially in the exoteric writings and activities that identify at present the practice of philosophy. In this article, I survey the various uses of humor in philosophy and explain how humor can be put into practice today to further the appropriation of philosophic ideals.

Keywords: *philosophy, comic, tragic, humor, ridicule, confict, awareness, deliberation, resolution*

Towards a Conceptual and Methodological Renaissance in Philosophical Practice

CONSTANTINOS ATHANASOPOULOS
OPEN UNIVERSITY, UK

Abstract

The paper will discuss the anthropological and therapeutic theories of Platonic Socrates, Aristotle, Augustine and Carl Rogers and how these can be applied to current philosophical practice in all three of its major forms: client counselling, group facilitation and organisational consulting. Key concepts that will be used as tools to unlock the developmental potential in the philosophical practice consultation will be: Socratic elenchos (or elenchus), balance (metron), truth, love, integrity, fear of freedom, self-concept, incongruity. A discussion of some of the foundations and pre-suppositions (metaphysical, epistemological and ethical) of these theories will provide the outlines for solutions to important challenges facing the theory of Carl Rogers and contemporary approaches to philosophical practice. The paper provides at the end an analysis of key examples and scenarios of philosophical practice and how these can be benefited through the use of the tools presented and discussed in the paper.

Keywords: *Socratic Elenchos, Aristotelian balance, Augustine, Carl Rogers, truth, love, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, client counselling, group facilitation, organisational consulting.*

Community Approach to Philosophical Practice

NAOKI HOMMA
OSAKA UNIVERSITY, JAPAN

Abstract

The idea of *Community of Inquiry* was born in practicing philosophy with children, and it has potential to go beyond educational programs in school. *Intellectual safety* (Thomas Jackson) and the *care of the self* (Michel Foucault) are crucial keys to understand the community of inquiry as a significant practice of philosophy. It is a physically, emotionally and intellectually safe place where *parrhêsia*, frank speaking can take place. Such commitments to safe places can lead to self-transformation in the form of community. It is a task of philosophers to create and recreate a community of inquiry among various people. We call this transformational activity “Community Approach” to philosophical practice, in which philosophers visit groups and organizations, such as schools, hospitals and minority groups, and animate various sessions that lead to co-inquiry together with these people.

Keywords: *community of inquiry, intellectual safety, care of the self*

**Socio-Neurotic Pathology and Philosophical Practice in Korea
Concentrating on Depression, Anger, Violence, and Suicide**

SUNG-JIN KIM

HALLYM UNIVERSITY, CHUNCHEON, ROK

PRESIDENT, THE KOREAN SOCIETY OF PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE

Abstract

Though Korea would possibly deserve nowadays to be called one of the most developed post-industrial nations of the world, the history of its modernization and industrialization is rather very short, compared with that of the most European countries. But the negative side effects of this development are also undeniable. They are so prevalent and so widespread in the contemporary Korean society and they cause to so many people sufferings, especially in the form of depression, anger, anxiety, violence, and suicide, that the whole society should be diagnosed pathologically.

This is a situation that calls in not only politicians and economists or social workers. The situation is so fundamental that it demands not only psychologists' and psychiatrists' engagement. It calls out philosophers. Philosophy needs to be now practical, for so many people are in need of philosophical wisdom, or they even need to philosophize for themselves in the way that they could find the way out of the labyrinth of their personal neurotic and pathological life situations.

It is only 5 years ago that the first study group of philosophical counseling was organized in Korea. The Korean Society of Philosophical Practice (KSPP) was founded 3 years ago. Though it started late, it is growing fast in the membership and in the variety of its activities. It educates its members in philosophical counseling and trains them for encountering various kinds of problem cases and different population groups. Korean philosophical counselors will apply in their activities not only western philosophical heritages. They shall always be ready to use classic and modern Asian philosophical and religious teachings as well in their counseling and therapeutic activities.

All these practical factors will make the Korean concept of philosophical practice unique. This is also reason enough for the KSPP to maintain active networks and systematic co-operations with philosophical practitioners in all the other countries and continents of the world.¹

Keywords: *philosophical disease, philosophical therapy, achievement society, neurotic syndrome, socio-pathological diagnosis, philosophical practice*

Mindfulness Meditation as a Therapeutic Method for Philosophical Counseling

JA-YEON LEE

INSTITUTE OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES, HANKUK UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN STUDIES, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Abstract

Psychologists and psychotherapists have contributed to the popularization of mindfulness meditation in non-Buddhist circumstances. In the practice of psychology, mindfulness has been applied as a method, which is expected to yield a certain specific result. Mindfulness practice which is applied in psychotherapy is overwhelmingly focused on a stream of tactile sensations and the cognitive aspect. In such cases, mindfulness practice gets isolated from its original context which is related to intrinsic human capacities as well as ethics. In this workshop I will bring out mindfulness meditation practice in the Buddhist context with a view to understanding an authentic way of practicing mindfulness and bringing possible benefits of mindfulness practice to light.

Keywords: *Mindfulness of Breathing, Mindfulness of four foundations of mindfulness, Philosophical counseling, Vipassanâ, Buddhist, Jhâna, Mahâsatipatthâna Sutta, Ânâpânasati Sutta*

Being Ill as an Inevitable Life Topic
Possibilities of Philosophical Practice in Health Care and Psychotherapy

ANDERS LINDSETH
UNIVERSITY OF NORDLAND, NORWAY

Abstract

On the way of life we necessarily experience life crises. In order to find orientation in life, Philosophical Practice as dialogical counseling can be helpful or necessary. The method of such practice can be presented in three steps. First of all, a space of attention has to be opened up in the dialogue in which the guest is listened to and able to listen anew to him- or herself. In this space a place appears to which the dialogues return and which they can examine further. And at this place there is always a certain issue at stake. Such issues we may call inevitable life topics. Being ill is an experience in life to be regarded as such an issue or topic. Especially the experience of mental illness is a big challenge because the mentally ill person so easily is banished from the common life-world.

A doctor can sometimes treat and cure, often relieve, but always console. The legendary Greek physician Hippocrates (approx. 460-370 BC) is supposed to have said this. For modern man this may sound as if consolation would just be an emergency solution; something the doctor can always fall back to if the treatment is not effective. However, there is reason to believe that Hippocrates did not mean it like that but rather wanted to stress consolation as the most important thing. He probably wanted to emphasize that consolation comes first, that the doctor can always console, that he can quite often relieve the patients' pains and that he can sometimes contribute to healing. He wanted to remind us that consolation is a prerequisite for treatment and not just a poor substitute.

What importance can Philosophical Practice have in the fields of medicine and psychotherapy? To answer this question I want to refer to the Greek idea of life as a dangerous way. I would like to understand Philosophical Practice as a reflection on our journey on life's way and try to clarify how we can proceed with this reflection. Based on that, I would like to discuss the challenges a Philosophical Practitioner faces when meeting ill and suffering people. I would like to point out that it is philosophy here that is consoling and that it is important for the effect of this consolation that the experience of being ill is recognized as an important life experience.

Keywords: *bracketing (epoché), illness, life-world, life experience, life topic, mental health, method, space of attention*

Philosophical Practice and the Human Voice

MARIANNE VAHL

FREELANCE SINGER AND PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTITIONER, OSLO, NORWAY

Abstract

In this paper I wish to explore how philosophical practice may be of relevance for vocal studies and the development of the voice. I also argue that philosophical reflections, dialogue and conceptualizations can be a source of inspiration and clarification in vocal interpretations and performances. Further an awareness of a persons voice and how it is being used may give valuable information about that person and as such can be useful in philosophical consultations. The underlying idea here is that there is an intimate connection between a person's identity and his or her voice. Therefore, I believe philosophical consultations can be used when developing and using the voice in general, and, in particular, when it comes to singing, which is the focus in this paper. My starting point is in the Italian *Bel Canto* singing style, both in its original version as well as in its more modern interpretations by Cornelius L. Reid and Susanna Eken. With its focus on flexibility and clarity of the voice, this is a style of singing which harmonizes well with an aesthetic reflected in philosophical practice—through clear and flexible thinking.

Keywords: *Vocal studies, aesthetics, identity, vocal interpretation and performance, Bel Canto singing, therapy, philosophical diagnosis.*

Compassion in Action
Cultural Counseling as an Indigenized Application of the Clinical Humanities

AN-BANG YU

INSTITUTE OF ETHNOLOGY, ACADEMIA SINICA, TAIPEI, TAIWAN

DER-HEUY YEE

GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF RELIGION AND HUMANITIES, TZU CHI UNIVERSITY, HUALIAN, TAIWAN

Abstract

The helping professions in contemporary Chinese societies are becoming increasingly specialized and compartmentalized, such that the meaning of “professional” has come to refer to a person who has succeeded in learning more and more about less and less. In comparison with the traditional Chinese view of health and wellbeing, such an approach is seriously lacking in sensitivity and cultural depth. It is equally apparent that the humanities and social sciences are becoming increasingly isolated and superfluous due to their general lack of interest in facing the fundamental issues of human suffering.

This paper describes the clinical humanities—a discipline which lies at the junction of medicine, psychotherapy, and the humanities—with a particular emphasis on how it can serve to increase the depth and breadth of our understanding of suffering and healing. We use “clinical” in the sense of “arriving at the site of suffering.” As such, the clinical humanities is a way of applying the insights of both the humanities and social sciences—including such seemingly unrelated fields as the fine arts, philosophy, literature, history, anthropology, psychology, and religious studies—to the understanding and alleviation of suffering. In as much as the “site of suffering” is characterized by the flow and transformation of energy, the clinical humanities serves as a catalyst of healing energy. The main idea is to use the approaches of the humanities and social sciences to understand the abundant information which exists at the site of suffering to create a dynamic field of energy which has the capacity to bring about healing and transformation.

In this paper we also present the development and scope of cultural counseling, a concrete and practical application of the clinical humanities. We also investigate how the humanities and psychology can be restored to their roots and become more relevant to the human predicament. Taking the life-world as the proper site of counseling, we explore the forms of healing which take place there. Moreover, we present an approach to cultural counseling designed to help expand the field of vision and application of the humanities and social sciences. Our purpose is to establish an indigenous clinical psychology on a foundation quite different from that of positivist science. In doing so, we make a preliminary sketch of indigenous psychology and cultural healing, at the same time unfolding the diverse possibilities entailed by the indigenization of psychological counseling.

Keywords: *clinical humanities; cultural counseling; psychotherapy; indigenous clinical psychology.*