

Spirituality and Philosophical Practice: Counseling with Clients in Crisis

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Abstract

Spirituality is a concept with a long philosophical history. It has been variously treated as a way of achieving transcendent vision (Plato and Plotinus); as a method of attaining serenity (Stoicism and Epicureanism); as demonstrating hope and forgiveness (Christianity); as a way of experiencing the sacred (Paul Ricoeur and Hinduism); as connected to the Sublime (Kant and Lyotard); as moral community (Kantian respect, Buddhist compassion, Feminist caring and Tantric eroticism); and as involving our relationship with the world of nature (Transcendentalism, Native American philosophies). After briefly outlining these different perspectives I will discuss how they can be used in philosophical counseling with clients in crisis.

Keywords: *spirituality, crisis counseling, philosophical practice, substance abuse, cancer counseling, prison counseling*

Neo-Socratic Dialogue as a Paradigmatic Setting for Philosophizing

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Abstract

What is the activity called philosophizing, and what is the ground for the tension between philosophizing in the everyday sense and the way philosophy is conducted at universities? The article approaches these questions by starting from an examination of how genuine philosophizing is created in a Neo-Socratic Dialogue. It is argued that philosophizing is an inherently valuable activity characterized by freedom, creativity, self-expression and human interaction. Furthermore, it is shown how traditional university philosophy may be unfavorable to philosophizing precisely by preventing these values from being realized. Still, academic philosophy will have to involve philosophizing in order to remain fruitful.

Keywords: *philosophizing, Neo-Socratic Dialogue, academic philosophy, value of philosophy, philosophical results*

**Hegel's Logic of Conflict Resolution:
Personal, Interpersonal, and Sociopolitical Dynamics**

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Multiplication Table ("One Times One")

One is always wrong, but with two, truth begins. —

One cannot prove himself, but two are irrefutable.¹

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 260

Abstract

More than an academic comprehensive ontology inaugurating the modern age, Hegel's *Science of Logic* is a general conceptual framework of transformation. In this paper I identify the main logical principles of Hegel's pioneering and influential work and propose a basic conceptual framework for conflict resolution in politics and diplomacy. In this cross-disciplinary effort, I am aided by the work of two medical doctors and psychotherapists, Carl Gustav Jung and Michael Lukas Moeller, whose conflict resolution methods employ approaches that can be regarded as amplifications of Hegel's dialectic logic. The main result of applying Hegel's logic to politics and diplomacy can be summarized as follows: Do not avoid but embrace tensions and conflicts; identify, face, and tackle them early on; and shift the opposing points of view onto a higher, integrating level of resolution, which preserves their core truths.

A wide-ranging, inclusive, and open-ended social and political identity is more than the sum of its parts or partners. Building such identities on personal, interpersonal, and sociopolitical levels depends, however, on the free and organic integration of unique and adaptable associates. Such an integration of collaborative and complementary diversity creates meta-stable structures and processes within and among individuals, couples, groups, nations, and political alliances. Communities that develop such supple identities are learning how to constructively embrace conflict and thereby jointly progress to as yet uncharted possibilities. Peace, then, is not experienced merely as the absence of hostility but as a conscious, continuous, and mutually supporting process of diverse partners thriving in the pursuit of a shared vision: joint co-evolution.

Keywords: *Hegel, C. G. Jung, dialectic, transformation, conflict resolution, psychotherapy, diplomacy, philosophy in government, strategy for peace.*

Treading the Boundary of Public and Private: Perfectionist Philosophical Practice

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Abstract

Thoughtlessness is a condition of the bureaucratized social relations of late modernity, but how might it be a problem as an occasion for practical philosophy? Episodic alienation from one's decisions and actions constitutes what Stanley Cavell has called a "perfectionist moment" which suggests the opening for philosophical practice. The possibility of a perfectionist philosophical practice implies that thinking and social relations are in tension if not mutually exclusive. It is hopeless for philosophical practice to promote thoughtful or mindful living. Following Heidegger, Arendt has argued convincingly that thinking is "out of order" with respect to our workaday lives. Thinking must occur at a distance from the activities of "labor" and "production." Arendt, however, has also argued at least once that thinking enables judgment, that in fact judging "realizes" the critical results of thinking in the social world. I argue that the cultivation of moral taste is the appropriate expression of regret occasioned by thoughtlessness.

Keywords: *philosophical practice, moral perfectionism, moral taste, judgment*

The Flower of Evil: On the Phenomenon of Boredom*

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the concept of boredom, which is often described as the product of modern times. However, the writings of Lucretius and Seneca warn of *taedium vitae* and *horror loci*, early Christian monks suffered under the demon of *acedia*, while the malady of melancholy plagued 17th and 18th century Europe. The first part of the paper explores some of the characteristics of boredom, while the second part focuses on an analysis of existential disturbances that can be provoked by boredom. The conclusion deals with the question of whether boredom represents a threat that must be fought against using all means possible, or whether it can be seen as a motivating power to induce far-reaching change.

Keywords: *situational boredom, existential boredom, time, via negativa, disturbance, vulnerability*

Christian Philosophy for Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities

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Abstract

In this paper we consider the possibility of applying Christian philosophy to working with parents of children with developmental disabilities, through several practical examples. This approach utilizes basic ethical postulates from Christian philosophy, and is applicable to working with all persons, whether they are Christian believers or not.

The process starts as individual sessions with parents and develops through several distinct phases. What makes the approach 'Christian' in its general character is its emphasis on the concept of love as a value, rather than an emotion. The process seeks to create an inclusive and committing set of attitudes in parents that arise from love perceived not as a 'feeling' but as a mature attitude of acceptance, nurturing and care. This concept of love is one of 'life initiation' with capacity to encourage the personal growth and maturing of both parents and children. Once the individual consultations end the process continues as group work focusing on the consideration of values that might make up love and parents are encouraged to network and establish a lasting mutual support network.

Keywords: *Christian philosophy, developmental disability, work with parents*

Phenomenology of Dreams in Philosophical Practice

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Abstract

Most people hold that the time spent on sleeping is wasted and regard their dreams as either meaningless or inexplicable. Opposing these views the philosopher María Zambrano built a theory based on a phenomenology of dreams that focuses on the form of the dream—its relation with time perception—rather than the dream content.

My research has been going on since 2004, involving university students, researchers in the Laboratory of Sleep Studies, the Neurology Department of a hospital as well as private clients from my Philosophical Counseling. Applying this technique can produce significant changes in peoples' lives as has been shown in various articles and finally condensed in my book *Método RVP* where Phenomenology of Dreams is the most original aspect. This paper shows some examples of Phenomenological Dream Analysis used as part of the RVP Method (Poetical-Ratiovitalism).

Keywords: *phenomenology of dreams; María Zambrano; philosophical practice; RVP method*

Homo Risibilis

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“What are you laughing at? If you change the name, the story is told about yourself.”
— Horace 1929 I.I lines 69-70, pp. 8-10

Abstract

This article presents humor as enacting an intra-personal communication particularly apt for the philosophic (self-)education that lies at the heart of the practice of philosophy. It explains the epistemological and ethical outcomes of a systematic use of self-referential laughter. It argues for the benefits of a worldview predicated on acknowledging human ridicule, *Homo risibilis*, and compares it with other approaches to the human predicament.

Keywords: *communication, humor, self-education, Homo risibilis, ridicule, tragic, harmony*