

An Outline of a Pragmatic Method for Deciding What To Do

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Abstract

If philosophy, especially ethics, is to have any value in our lives, it should be in the development of our ability to think rationally and critically and to develop sound, pragmatic, and normatively defensible methods that can be utilized for analyzing, evaluating, predicting, and justifying our actions in the concrete situations that we find ourselves in. I argue that to do what is rationally defensible takes the form of a commitment to act as ethically required based on how we answer three pertinent questions. These are not original questions, but ones that have been asked, implicitly or explicitly, by many important thinkers, as well as by ordinary persons simply confronting the issues that define their lives. What I intend to accomplish is to construct the questions into a workable normative methodology that we can use to help us determine what we should do.

Philosophical Appreciative Counselling

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Abstract

In this article we will focus on philosophical counselling technique as an area of excellence of social practice: a fundamental methodological dimension. Philosophical counselling proposes to transform life by rediscovering the interrogative and interpretive dimension of human consciousness and applying it to everyday experience. It is an experience of freedom transposed from the metaphysical into the social dimension. Philosophical thinking out of transcendent space reconfigures immediacy by connecting it to the world of ideas and engendering the individual's authenticity. The Appreciative approach to philosophy is based on the works of David Cooperrider on "Appreciative Inquiry": a discursive pragmatic form that replaces the focus on the problem with focusing on the successful elements of previous experience of individuals, groups, organizations or communities. Principles of appreciative philosophical counseling aim at partnership between all participants in philosophical counseling. This experience can be integrated with the philosophical methodical return to the maieutic model and the Platonic dialogue.

**Dostoevsky and Modern Rage:
On the Possibility of Counseling the Underground Man**

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Abstract

It is said today that we live in the “Age of Rage.” This paper explores the phenomenon of modern rage through an analysis of the psychic conflicts of Dostoevsky’s underground man as he tries to reconcile the newly imported values of modernity with his own irrational needs and desires. By interpreting rage through the Greek notion of the *daimonic*, I examine how the modern attempt to rationally control and suppress rage and violence actually exacerbates the underground man’s cruel and self-destructive behavior and cuts him off from the possibility of emotional connectivity and wholeness. I conclude by pointing to some therapeutic possibilities within the tradition of existential and phenomenological psychotherapy that might allow the underground man to understand himself by recognizing the sources of his own rage.

On Grief: an Aesthetic Defense

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Abstract

In Burke's *Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, the passion of grief yields a fascinating case of pleasurable pain: it is a state of pain resulting from the absolute cessation of pleasure, yet somehow still ensuring a peculiar form of pleasure, which justifies one's lingering on grief. Different from any positive pleasure, grief is also unlike any other positive pain, for its pain is the outcome of a "lost pleasure." It is my contention that Burke's intuition is a viable hypothesis on the nature of grief. On the path opened up by Burke, what follows is a defense of grief as an aesthetic emotion and emotional process. My claim is that grief belongs to the sphere of the sublime and its "delightful terror." My aim is to suggest an aesthetic reading of grief able to transcend the normal/pathological distinctions of the therapeutic school.