

**Distinguishing Philosophical Counseling from Psychotherapy**

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**Abstract**

The relationship between philosophical counseling and psychological therapy has been much debated in the short history of the philosophical counseling movement. This paper intends to distinguish philosophical counseling from psychotherapy in terms of several indispensable elements, namely their entailed problems, goals, methods and approaches, safety, and the relationship between counselor and client.

**Keywords:** *Philosophical counseling, psychotherapy, comparison*

### Epicureanism as a Foundation for Philosophical Counseling

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**Abstract:** The paper discusses the manner and extent to which Epicurean ethics can serve as a general philosophy of life, capable of supporting philosophical practice in the form of philosophical counseling. Unlike the modern age academic philosophy, the philosophical practice movement portrays the philosopher as a personal or corporate advisor, one who helps people make sense of their experiences and find optimum solutions within the context of their values and general preferences. Philosophical counseling may rest on almost any school of philosophy, ranging—in the Western tradition—from Platonism to the philosophy of language or logic. While any specialist school of philosophy may serve valuable purposes by elucidating specific aspects of one's experiences and directing future action, the more 'generalist' the philosophy used as the basis for counseling is, the broader and more far-reaching its potential impact on the counselee. Epicurean ethics is a prime example of a philosophy of life that is suitable for philosophical counseling today. Its closer examination reveals that, contrary to superficial opinion, it is not opposed to Stoicism and may in fact incorporate Stoicism and its antecedent virtues (including many Christian virtues) in a simple yet comprehensive practical system of directions for modern counseling.

**Keywords:** *Epicurean ethics, Stoicism, philosophical practice, counseling, life-plan, pleasure, moderation, virtues, wisdom, conscience.*

**Against the Diagnosis of Evil: A Response to M. Scott Peck**

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**Abstract**

M. Scott Peck (1983) claims that the term “evil” applies to human beings and not merely to human behavior. He argues that evil is a sickness and should be considered a psychiatric diagnosis. Yet he insists that it is also a condition for which those afflicted with it are blameworthy and accountable. I take issue with the notion that the term “evil” applies to human beings by arguing that when “evil” is understood as a term that connotes blameworthiness, it does not apply to those who meet Peck’s criteria for using it, i.e., to those whose behavior is conditioned or determined by their narcissism. I further argue that it is incumbent on us, both on ethical and pragmatic grounds, to refrain from judging as evil those who engage in evil behavior; we should instead adopt a methodology of charity and limit ourselves to judging their actions.

**Keywords:** *evil, diagnosis, narcissism, charity, compassion, morality, moral luck*

**Camus' *Askesis*: Reading Camus, in Light of the *Carnets*  
(and his *L'Inromptu des Philosophes*)**

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"But first of all, we must achieve mastery over ourselves ..." *C II, 77'*

**Abstract**

Albert Camus kept detailed notebooks (his 'Camets') from 1936 to his untimely death in 1960. These notebooks have attracted little critical attention. In the critical literature they have generated, Camus' Camets have largely been read as draft material for Camus' published works, or else as a partial, personal diary. Following Pierre Hadot's groundbreaking work on ancient hypomnemata (principally in his studies of Marcus Aurelius) as a key component of the Stoic practice of philosophy as a way of life, this essay argues that Camus' Camets are better read as—in large measure—a document to the philosopher-author's ongoing work of philosophical self-formation. They attest to Camus' lasting effort to cultivate what he himself calls a style of living: one characterised by a continuous attention or wakefulness to all the different facets of human experience, including an elusive sense of transcendence Camus took from his youthful experiences of sensuous and contemplative enjoyment. If we read Camus, beginning from the sense of his philosophical persona that emerges from the Camets, this paper argues that a very different image of the man and the thinker (than popular clichés of his being a 'prophet of the absurd') emerges: of Camus as a philosopher aiming at conceiving, and practicing, a kind of virtue ethics.

**Keywords:** *Camus, Hadot, askesis, hypomnemata (notebooks), philosophy as a way of life*