

Guest Editorial

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I think of myself as a Practical Philosopher and yet still wonder what Practical Philosophy is and what it is to practice it? Is this still a live debate? If it is not, I believe it should be. As an introduction to this issue—and on the basis that it is sometimes useful to take a pause and consider afresh—I would like to share with you a few of my reflections on this quandary. I believe the reflective method has great value and does, of course, draw on well established philosophically meditative traditions which we generally consider Cartesian.

I define philosophy as ‘a system for asking questions to which it appears there are currently no known answers’. For me, this is convenient and makes sense—it gives philosophy a broad remit and testifies to its methodology. When I think of Practical Philosophy, I add, ‘...in our engagement with our self, with another, or with the world in which we live.’ This makes Practical Philosophy, as well as being questioning and systematic, a matter which is also individual, social and ethical. This may not entirely answer what Practical Philosophy is, but in an important sense it does distinguish it from merely ‘philosophy’. This is important if Practical Philosophy is to flourish in an environment outside that of the normal philosophical domain—in order for philosophers to be practical they need to know what this entails. There is, however, an inherent conflict between these additional features—individually they seem disparate, in combination puzzling; and, without some reinforcement, we might begin to wonder why ‘practical’ philosophy is any more meaningful than, for example, ‘practical’ history or ‘practical’ literature ...

Philosophy in the Business Arena

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Abstract

Here we explore a deep ambivalence concerning money and the world of business felt not only by philosophers but anyone who aspires to values other than the materialistic. Money is only a tool like the wheel. However, human beings have invested money with a power which transforms the very meaning of our lives. Business people are not especially greedy. They aspire to excellence and virtue, no less than the philosopher. Yet the arena in which they practice their profession is defined by the principle of maximization of profit—the principle of greed. In the business arena, the ethics of altruism is suspended in order to allow for competition and the possibility of winning or losing. There is no room for saints, only heroes. The desire to excel in a world defined by the profit motive, combined with the ever-present risk and fear of failure, presents a particular challenge to the philosophical consultant, all the more so because the quest for philosophical understanding is in its very nature opposed to materialist values and the profit motive. In responding to the challenge of the business arena, we do not have the option to repudiate money and take refuge in dreams of a socialist utopia. Nor can we accept the dominant capitalist ideology which identifies the business arena with the world. Nor indeed is it acceptable to split the ‘good’ world of ethics from the ‘bad’ world of business; grudgingly recognizing the necessity of the business arena while at the same time stigmatizing it as a necessary evil. Accepting that a degree of tension between the two worlds is unavoidable, an enlightened philosophy of business offers positive celebration of the business arena alongside recognition that we are not merely players in the business arena but ethical beings at one and the same time.

Keywords: *Business ethics, Metaphysics, Philosophy of business, Money, Capitalism, Karl Marx, Ayn Rand, John Macmurray, Melanie Klein*

Philosophical Counselling and the Philosopher-Entrepreneur
The Counsellee as a Partner in a Philosophical Process

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Abstract

Planning a social, educational, or business entrepreneurship can be a critical juncture in an entrepreneur's life. In such cases it is crucial to first formulate the compatibility between a major project and the worldview of the entrepreneur. It is in such cases that Philosophical Counselling can achieve important results. Professional philosophical skills can help dismantle and reconstruct the vision of an entrepreneurship, in harmony with the entrepreneur's rephrased worldview. At the same time, a philosophically oriented and trained counsellee makes the process much more effective. The philosopher-counsellee aiming to implement a project is better prepared to engage in a philosophical process than a counsellee lacking a philosophical background. In this paper I (a) present a special case of Philosophical Counselling assisting in life planning, that is, in the context of implementing a major project by an entrepreneur, and (b) stress the benefits and the cooperation to be gained when philosophical skills and training are not only on the side of the counsellor, but also on that of the entrepreneur-counsellee.

In many situations, Philosophical Counselling is a crucial primary stage in a comprehensive process. This is often the case when an entrepreneur is about to plan and execute a major project in his or her life. Though there is much to be discussed regarding these cases, in the present paper I would like to concentrate on a special sub-case: that in which the entrepreneur is also a philosopher by training or skills. I will therefore (a) present a special case of Philosophical Counselling assisting in life planning, that is, in the context of implementing a major project by an entrepreneur, and (b) stress the benefit and the cooperation to be gained when philosophical skills and training are not only on the side of the counsellor, but also on that of the entrepreneur-counsellee.

Keywords *Counseling, Education, Project, Philosopher, leadership*

Law and Well-Being
Applying the Philosophy of Occupational Therapy in Schools

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Abstract

How does law effect well-being? Can school rules influence the feel-good factor among children? If a self-perception of being 'good' improves well-being, people would prefer to be good—even children. But traditional school rules are often contrary to the principles of well-being, and create 'good criminals'. Starting from the seemingly absurd truth—'crime is caused by the law'— the paper proposes that children should learn to view law critically and creatively. Then, through a novel application of Occupational Therapy (OT), and using 'law' to focus social agency, a case study develops 'The law of school dress' as a public good. The result reflects Jeremy Bentham's Principle of Utility. Philosophy of OT reminds us that the ultimate purpose of education is not just to learn: it is to improve well-being through learning as meaningful 'occupation'. And 'law' has a part to play.

Keywords: *occupational therapy, rehabilitation, well-being, MOHO, law, school rules, school ethics, school uniform, utility.*

Community of Enquiry and Ethics of Responsibility

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Abstract

The article assumes that Lipman's paradigm of 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) as a 'Community of Inquiry' (CI) is very useful in extending the range of *philosophical practices* and the benefits of philosophical community reflection to collective life as such. In particular, it examines the possible contribution of philosophy to the practical and ethical dynamics which, nowadays, seem to characterise many deliberative public contexts. Lipman's idea of CI is an interesting interpretative key for such contexts. As a result, the article highlights the possibility of understanding a CI essentially in terms of an ethics of responsibility.

Keywords: *community, responsibility, philosophy for children, philosophical inquiry, education to democracy, public ethics, deliberation.*