

Six Traits Providing a *Family Resemblance* between Existential Psychotherapy and Philosophical Practice

MATTEO PASTORINO
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY, AUSTRALIA

Abstract

This paper analyses the disciplines of philosophical practice and existential psychotherapy focusing on their similarities. Both disciplines are characterized by the important role they ascribe to philosophical notions and methods. For example, some of the practitioners understand their work to be about a philosophical exploration of the topics raised by the client. These topics, depending on the different perspectives, may or may not be strictly related with the client's personal issues. Another trait shared by the two disciplines is the wide range of methodologies they employ. In fact, every philosophical practitioner or existential psychotherapist has developed a particular approach, even though there are a number of basic assumptions shared by the totality of the practitioners. The major differences between philosophical practice and existential psychotherapy stem from the demarcation of their respective fields. On one hand, there are a few philosophical practitioners considering their activity a form of counselling and open to label their discipline philosophical counselling. Others, instead, prefer to stress their link with academic philosophy, rejecting any view that takes philosophical practice to be a form of therapy. Among existential psychotherapists there is a similar division, with a group accepting the idea of discussing philosophical topics and assuming a philosophical perspective (one questioning the client's system of belief rather than applying the traditional framework following the scheme symptoms-identification, diagnosis, cure) as part of their discipline, while other therapists prefer to keep any intellectual discussion away from the therapeutic sessions. Some of them, however, endorse a philosophical preparation for therapists in order to improve their understanding of their discipline. This paper focuses on the traits of the disciplines that determine the resemblance between philosophical practice and existential psychotherapy. These traits are the anti-psychiatric tendencies, the notion of the practitioner's *authenticity*, the cooperative character of the relationship between practitioner and client, the priority given to a flexible approach over a structured one, a *tragic* understanding of the idea of life and a shared intellectual background, namely a humanistic conception of the practice.

Keywords: *Existential Psychotherapy, Philosophical Practice, Therapy*

Can People Be Labeled 'Evil'?

SARA ELLENBOGEN

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, CAMBRIDGE, MA

Abstract

In this paper, I employ the Wittgensteinian conception of meaning as agreement on which uses of language count as correct to argue that it does not make sense to label people “evil” in the sense in which we use the term “evil person” in our linguistic practice. I argue that we cannot give content to what we take ourselves to be asserting when we call an agent “evil.” On the one hand, we mean that she deserves moral condemnation. On the other hand, we mean to assert that she has some psychological trait that probabilizes her doing evil. But because we mean the latter and think that possessing such traits is not something that people can help, neither an agent’s actions nor the traits that probabilize those actions can provide grounds for saying that she deserves moral condemnation as evil. I argue that our attributions of evil to people are not informative statements but performative utterances. When we call an agent “evil,” we are condemning her or excluding her from the moral community.

Keywords: *evil, trait, meaning, criterion, label, linguistic practice*

**Philosophical Dualism, Parameters for Assessing Marriages and Relationships:
An Essay in Philosophical Counselling and Pedagogy**

BELLARMINE NNEJI
ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
OWERRI, IMO STATE, NIGERIA

Abstract

Marriages and relationships need to be built on a solid footing for the life of flourishing of both parties/partners. Currently, in many societies, many unions suffer and fail because of lack of such footings. One of the ways to ensure and arrive at such a strong footing is through employing the parameters of philosophical dualism to help partners to appreciate the essence of unions so as to assess their marriages and life-partnerships, and to ensure that both body and spirit are united purposefully and are focused on achieving a thriving and flourishing union. Philosophical counsellors have to explore philosophical dualism in marriage and relationship counselling in order to help ensure good unions that can guarantee flourishing relationships.

Keywords: *philosophical counselling, marriage, relationship, dualism*

A Study of the Sinicization of Philosophical Consultation

WEIGUO XIA

RESEARCH CENTER FOR PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
SHANDONG UNIVERSITY (WEIHAI), CHINA

Abstract

This paper studies the current situation of philosophical consultation in China, and evaluates and prospects it. The article is divided into five parts: The first part is the origin of the study. Compared with Western philosophy, the therapeutic dimension of Chinese philosophy embodies more characteristics. At present, the research on the Sinicization of philosophical consultation has accumulated some resources and methods, which are worth combing and full of expectations. The second part is the basic theory of Chinese philosophical consultation. The basic Chinese philosophical consulting theory includes Confucian and Mencian philosophy as treatment, Lao-Zhuang's philosophy and Buddhism and Zen as philosophical treatment. The third part is the comprehensive and innovative theory of Chinese philosophical consultation. Because of the different background and situation of the treatment, the comprehensive innovation of Chinese philosophy consultation theory has been achieved on the basis of the basic philosophical consultation theory. Therefore, its specific theories are named differently and complement each other. Comprehensive and innovative philosophical consultation theories mainly include the treatment wisdom of ancient Chinese philosophy of life happiness, the way of "harmony" treatment, the philosophical consultation of secular ethics, the philosophical theory of ideological consultation as ideological and political education, the theory of ideological analysis, and the philosophical consultation method of Taiwan. The fourth part is about the challenges facing the Sinicization of philosophical consultation. China's unique traditional national cultural psychology, traditional ways of thinking and methods, and the acceptance habits of traditional ideas are all challenges facing the localization of philosophical consultation in China. The commonness of human thought and thinking makes the system of philosophical consultation theory established by the West possible to apply to China in principle, but the unique traditional national cultural psychology of China, the unique traditional mode of thinking, methods and acceptance habits of the Chinese people affect people's ideas and attitudes, restrict the development of human thought, and also affect the concrete implementation of philosophical consultation. The fifth part is predicament and prospect. If Western philosophical consultation wants to get out of its own predicament and seek greater development space, it must go beyond the Western vision and attach importance to the use of Oriental wisdom. The localization of philosophical consultation in China can provide useful amendments and supplements for philosophical consultation to get out of its own predicament and Western vision.

Keywords: *Basic Chinese Philosophical Consultation Theory, Comprehensive and Innovative Chinese Philosophical Consultation Theory, Challenges for the Sinicization of Philosophical Consultation, Emphasizing the Use of Oriental Wisdom*

Philosophical Practice for Musicians: A Short Report on TOM-Tool¹

MANOS PERRAKIS

MUSIC AND ARTS UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Abstract

This paper is a short report on TOM (Thinking on Music). A Questionnaire for Musicians, a self-reflection tool for musicians. TOM is an example of philosophical practice for musicians and a means of knowledge transfer for the philosophy of music. The paper gives background information about TOM, enlists all its questions, and provides an overview of its concept and methodology.

Keywords: *life-philosophy, music, life, performance, repertoire, affirmation, wonder*