

The Quest for Character: Five Insights

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Abstract

Character is a central concept in virtue ethics, and therefore in a number of approaches to philosophical counseling. In this paper I summarize five practical insights from the research that went into writing a book on character and leadership, *The Quest for Character: What the Story of Socrates and Alcibiades Teaches Us about Our Search for Good Leaders*. The insights are derived from a study of Greco-Roman practical philosophical traditions, updated by the findings of modern research in cognitive and behavioral science.

Keywords: *character, virtue ethics, Socrates*

Hume's Psychology and Artificial Virtues as Applied to Philosophical Practice

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Abstract

In organizational consulting, the individual is part of the collective whole which fits David Hume's description of a naturally self-interested person in an artificial world. The description of the emotional reaction a person has to experience ties directly to the artificial virtues of property as resources and the rules, or formal procedures and policies governing resources in an organization. Further, language regarding 'allegiance' and political change are meaningful in organizational change. The philosophical move towards considering the disinterested spectator allows for individuals to review policies, procedures, and processes in organizational change initiatives.

Keywords: *David Hume, moral psychology, artificial virtues, organizational consulting*

Obsessed with Truth? Deconstructing Oscar Brenifier's "Phenomenology of Lying"

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Abstract

Oscar Brenifier's approach to Philosophical Practice is contested. In this text I analyze his "Phenomenology of Lying" in a deconstructionist manner. I try to strengthen its strengths and make suggestions as to how to mend some important shortcomings that I find. First, I summarize and structure the 13 reasons for lying that Brenifier lists, and second the 21 patterns of lying that he identifies. Third, I discuss his notions of reality and truth, which are too much "correspondence-minded", hence the belligerence. Fourth, I explore coherence and consistency as valuable alternatives. Fifth, I follow the trace of the "dead philosopher", which is a very interesting concept of Brenifier's. It leads to confirming the coherence approach from within. Finally, I draw conclusions for the philosophical dialogue. I claim that Brenifiers' enlightening intentions can be implemented better with a peaceful and patient attitude towards the people coming for advice.

Key words: *Brenifier, truth, lying, coherence, consistency, reason, deconstruction*

Approaching Elsewhere: On Fear of ‘The After-life’

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Dying takes little effort, but writing about death is hard.

Abstract

Research data shows fear to be the predominant emotion accompanying thoughts of one's own death. This is because there's no convincing evidence of exactly what to expect thereafter. There's also considerable confusion about which of the three main traditional hypotheses¹ of the 'after-life' is correct. The problem is that none of them can be empirically proven to be true. The upside is that this allows for equally plausible alternatives. In this essay I present a fourth, more reassuring, hypothesis that's much more useful in reducing the fear of death and the 'there-after.'