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What is Philosophical in Philosophical Counselling?

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ABSTRACT *After a short description of the nature of philosophical counselling, this paper suggests that what makes philosophical counselling philosophical is that it helps the counsellee in philosophical self-investigations. These are critical non-empirical investigations of the fundamental principles underlying the counsellee's 'lived understanding' (i.e. conceptions which the counsellee lives by, though not necessarily articulates in words), aimed at the development of wisdom.*

In order to illustrate the nature of philosophical self-investigation, two case studies are presented. The nature and measurability of success in philosophical counselling is then discussed. A questionnaire filled out by a counsellee is quoted as an illustration of the possible effects and success of philosophical counselling.

In the past decade, the field of philosophical counselling has been expanding, particularly into English-speaking countries, thus opening new areas for the application of philosophical skills, knowledge, and experience. This naturally raises the question: what is the relevance of philosophy to counselling, and more generally to everyday life? How can counselling be philosophical? This issue will be the focus of the present discussion. I will start, however, with a general overview of the field.

Philosophical counselling: the general picture

Philosophical counselling is an approach for addressing the dilemmas, predicaments, and life-issues of the person in the street through philosophical self-examination. The philosophical counsellor is a person with a philosophical background, usually with an M.A. or Ph.D. in philosophy, who receives individual counsellees and discusses with them relevant aspects of their lives. These range from general quests for meaning and self-understanding to specific problems such as decision-making difficulties, family problems, or occupational dissatisfaction.

The role of the counsellor is to lead a philosophical self-examination and thus to help counsellees develop their philosophical understanding of themselves and their world, and empower them to deal with their problems and lives in their own way. These two goals — philosophical self-understanding or wisdom (philo-sophia = love of wisdom) as an end in itself, and overcoming personal problems — receive different emphases by different philosophical practitioners, some of whom aim mainly at the former while others focus on the latter.

The idea of dealing philosophically with everyday life is, of course, hardly new.

Throughout the 2,500 year history of Western philosophy, philosophers have discussed issues that have concrete applications, and have developed a wide spectrum of ideas regarding how life should be understood and lived. Examples are the Cynics, Stoics, Epicureans in ancient Greece and Rome; various religious philosophies; philosophies of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and Romanticism; and social philosophies such as Socialism, Communism, and Anarchism. These and many others were often used to orient and shape the lives of individuals and societies. To the extent that they were utilised for counselling individuals about their lives, they can be seen as earlier forms of philosophical counselling.

However, present-day philosophical counselling is different from most of these traditional approaches in that it does not seek to provide ready-made theories about how life should be lived. The philosophical counsellor offers thinking tools, but lets philosophical understanding grow from the individual, without imposing any pre-conceived solution. In this respect, the philosophical counsellor is like Socrates, who regarded himself as a midwife who helps others in giving birth to their own ideas. Philosophical counselling is a form of philosophising which, unlike much of academic philosophy, is interested in the process more than in its end-point. Instead of aiming at finished products, i.e., theories, it values the process of searching; and rather than constructing general and abstract theories, it encourages the unique expression of the individual's concrete way of being in the world. The philosophical counsellor is a skilled partner in a dialogue through which counsellees develop their individual worldview.

The modern form of philosophical counselling was first introduced by the German philosopher Gerd B. Achenbach, who, in 1981, opened his practice near Köln. In 1982, he founded the German Association for Philosophical Practice [1], and in 1987 the Association's journal *Agora* (now called *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Praxis*) started to appear. The Association now consists of well over 100 members.

Soon after the birth of the German organisation, the new idea spread to Holland, where students at the University of Amsterdam, who were dissatisfied with academic philosophy, started to explore the field. After investigating and training themselves in philosophical counselling for several years, they began practising counselling. The group then started to publish a journal, *Filosofische Praktijk*, and in 1989 founded the Dutch Association for Philosophical Practice, which also numbers more than 100 members.

In the past decade, the idea of philosophical counselling has continued to spread to other countries. In Paris, an organisation called 'Le Cabinet de Philosophie', which organises Sunday discussions of practical philosophy at a local café and publishes a newsletter, *Philos*, is involved in counselling. In Israel, where several philosophical counsellors are operating, academic courses on philosophical counselling have been taught by me regularly (since 1993) at Haifa University. Last year, two local workshops for graduate students in philosophy started to operate, as well as a monthly lecture for the general public. In the USA, The Society for Philosophy, Counselling, and Psychotherapy, accredited by the American Philosophical Association, is now focused on philosophical counselling. In other countries such as Norway, South Africa, and Canada, individual or group philosophical counselling is offered, in various contexts, by a number of philosophers, some of whom are also qualified in one or another of the various caring professions (social work, psychotherapy, etc).

As of now, there is no commonly accepted process of accreditation for becoming a philosophical counsellor. The various workshops and training courses offered by the

European associations, and the courses on philosophical counselling at Haifa University in Israel do not offer a certificate with a legal status.

A recent important development in the field was The First International Conference on Philosophical Counselling, hosted by the Centre for Applied Ethics of the University of British Columbia in Canada. The conference (organised by Louis Marinoff and myself) consisted of lectures and workshops by philosophical counsellors and other philosophers from six countries. The lectures and discussions demonstrated that there is no commonly accepted definition of the nature of philosophical counselling, and no consensus on the way it should be practised. Like many other disciplines, it is a cluster of related approaches rather than one unified thing. Nevertheless, the common denominator shared by this manifold of approaches is the belief in the value of philosophical self-examination.

The issue

The idea of philosophical counselling expresses a vision which is distinct from academic philosophy on the one hand, and from psychotherapy on the other. As opposed to mainstream academic philosophy, it does not limit philosophising to the construction of abstract theories about general issues, but views it as having important things to say about the living moment, the individual's concrete life, the most mundane everyday issues. After all, living inevitably involves fundamental philosophical questions, conceptual, existential, ethical, aesthetic, and even metaphysical: questions about the nature of the self and authenticity, our obligations to others, the value of productivity, the meaning of love, what life is all about, and so on.

It is more difficult to describe how philosophical counselling differs from psychotherapy, since the latter contains a diverse manifold of approaches which cannot be exhausted by a unified characterisation, other than vague and empty generalisations. At the very least it can be said that philosophical counselling and psychotherapy draw their inspirations from different sources, ideas, methodologies, and writings. But it is difficult to define clearly what exactly the differences are.

This difficulty can be illustrated by the attempt, made by a number of European philosophical counsellors, to draw the boundary between the two disciplines [2]. According to their view, psychotherapy, by its very nature as a domain of (alleged) knowledge, is based upon specific theories or assumptions about the workings of the mind (e.g., about emotional, cognitive, or behavioural processes and mechanisms), about methods of intervention, and about what is 'normal', 'healthy' or desirable in life. They therefore see the psychotherapist as taking for granted a substantial body of presuppositions about life, even when trying to be open and non-imposing.

The idea is, I take it, that psychologists (like everybody else) live within a network of presuppositions — cultural, personal, professional, etc. — which are commonly taken for granted. People untrained in philosophy are usually unaware of these hidden assumptions, which, once uncovered, turn out to be far from trivial and often highly questionable. The only way to free ourselves from their blind binding power is to explore the foundation of our world-view — the very basis of our conceptions of life, dignity, morality, happiness, etc., including the foundations of our psychological theories; which is to say, to philosophise. Thus, according to this view, philosophical counselling differs from psychotherapy in that it uses philosophy to help individuals to critically explore the most basic ideas underlying their

lives. Such an exploration into the conceptual basis of our world-view requires philosophical expertise.

I think that there is probably some truth in this view, in that it points out a general tendency among many (though not all) psychotherapists who, though proficient in their own work, are naturally not equipped for the philosophical task of exploring the fundamental ideas which underlie our world-views, and specifically the philosophical basis of the various psychotherapies. Nevertheless, it seems to me that this is a much too simplistic characterisation of the boundary between the two complex and diverse clusters of practices that commonly go under the titles of 'philosophy' and 'psychology'. There are philosophers who make more theoretical assumptions in their work than certain psychotherapists. Even Plato or Descartes relied on presuppositions, but that does not put them outside the philosophical camp. Furthermore, there must be much more to the difference between the two practices than reliance versus non-reliance on given theories or assumptions. The two involve different networks of methodologies, issues, conceptual resources, and traditions.

One might try to sharpen this (or some other) potential definition, but I believe that this is not a very fruitful task. Human disciplines often have peripheral provinces which blend into the peripheries of other disciplines but which are only marginally related to the discipline's main ideas. The exact mapping of the discipline's furthest outposts is therefore of limited interest. Indeed, the great emphasis often placed on the issue of the boundaries of philosophical counselling results in failure to highlight its essence, namely, the important role which philosophy can play in counselling or therapeutic settings. Let us therefore put aside the task of marking the exact boundaries of philosophical counselling and try instead to identify its core.

I suggest that the basic idea in philosophical counselling is, most generally speaking, to help the counsellee investigate his or her life or world through what I will call here *philosophical self-investigation*, and thus develop a philosophical self-understanding. This raises the question: In what sense is a philosophical self-investigation (or the resulting philosophical understanding) philosophical? This is, to my mind, the most fundamental theoretical issue in philosophical counselling, and crucial for the development of this field. The answer to this question would explain why the field is philosophical at all, and why its practice requires philosophical background and training. The following discussion will address this question.

The domain of philosophical self-investgations

As a first step towards formulating an answer, it would be helpful to start by roughly characterising the general domain within which it is to be found. To this end, I propose that, in the context of philosophical counselling, any conception of philosophical self-investigation should fall under the following three rather broad and loosely formulated characteristics:

1. *Focus on contents of the person's understanding*: First, in order to count as philosophical, an investigation must deal primarily with ideas in the public realm — that is, concepts, conceptions, assumptions, theories, etc. — rather than exposing concrete events or processes (cognitive, emotional, etc.) hidden inside the person's head (which is the task of psychology).

In the context of philosophical counselling, this means that a philosophical self-

investigation deals with the counsellee's understanding of life and the world. More accurately, it deals with the *contents* of the person's understanding of the world — as opposed to, e.g., the psychological *causes* of this understanding; with *what* the person's world is like — as opposed to those mental processes which give rise to this world. A philosophical self-investigation seeks to examine the person's understanding in terms of ideas and to investigate their logic, structure, and implications.

This immediately raises the question of whether philosophical counselling is not doomed to remain in the domain of abstract and general thought, away from concrete life. As I will soon suggest, the answer is negative. I will argue that it is possible to discuss ideas which are directly related to the everyday living moment, and thus philosophise about the concrete life of the ordinary person.

2. *Critical examination of basic principles*: Second, a philosophical form of investigation is one which examines in a critical way fundamental principles, such as basic assumptions and central concepts. This implies that in philosophical counselling, self-investigation is concerned not just with *describing* somebody's understandings, but mainly with critically uncovering their basic elements and structure, analysing them, and examining their consistency, implications, and acceptability.

3. *Non-empirical investigation*: Third, philosophical self-investigation, like philosophical investigation in general, is based primarily on non-empirical considerations, that is, on 'pure' thinking that is relatively independent of data collected empirically from the world [3]. It focuses on the 'logic', so to speak, of the ideas in question, rather than on contingent states of affairs. For example, a philosophical investigation of some given personal material may examine the logical connections between the person's different presuppositions and ask whether or not they contradict one another. But if this investigation is philosophical, it cannot focus on tracing the person's unconscious thoughts, which may or may not exist, and which can be discovered only through empirical observations such as psychological tests.

To sum up, a philosophical self-investigation, in the context of philosophical counselling, is a critical, non-empirical investigation of the fundamental principles underlying the person's world-view. It seeks to deepen one's understanding of the network of basic ideas which compose the landscape of the person's world, and to examine their structure, implications, and tenability.

The subject matter of philosophical self-investigation

If indeed philosophical self-investigation is characterised by its focus on exploring the person's ideas or understanding, the question arises what these ideas are. What exactly is a philosophical self-investigation about?

If one examines the current approaches to philosophical practice, one finds the following three main answers. The first two, I will suggest, are unsatisfactory. The third is my own proposal, but I believe that it closely approximates many current practical approaches to philosophical counselling.

1. *Philosophical self-investigations about conscious opinions and thoughts*: One answer, suggested for example by the Dutch counsellor Eite Veening [4], is that the subject matter of philosohical self-investigation is the opinions or thoughts which the counsellee expresses explicitly. Consequently, self-investigation in philosophical counselling is a rational analysis

(logical, conceptual, etc.) of the opinions or thoughts which the counsellee articulates in words.

The rationale behind this approach is the view that a philosophical investigation should not deal with unconscious and emotional material — this is the psychologist's business. Such material is driven by deep causes that do not mirror philosophical considerations, and are not (easily) affected by rational thought. They should therefore be treated by those who are experts in psychological mechanisms and processes, namely, psychologists.

The problem with his approach is that if this is all that is allotted to philosophical investigations, then it is disappointingly little. Most of everyday life, and especially of everyday predicaments and problems, extends beyond conscious rational thought. Much of life and of self-development involves emotions, hopes, desires, fantasies, patterns of behaviour, etc. This approach therefore makes philosophy only marginally relevant to life. Let us examine other potential topics of self-investigations before despairing and settling for so little.

2. *Philosophical self-investigations about unconscious beliefs*: Several philosophical practitioners have proposed to expand the subject matter of philosophical self-investigations to include the unconscious too [5]. Presumably, the role of philosophical self-investigations in philosophical counselling is to uncover and examine the counsellee's so-called 'belief system.' The idea is to use rational thinking tools in order to investigate the person's network of beliefs: what these beliefs are, how they are interconnected, whether or not they are rational, and so on.

Notice that if this approach is to be different from the previous one, then 'belief system' must include more than just *conscious* articulated beliefs, or else it is just another name for conscious opinions and thoughts. Thus, according to this second proposal, a philosophical investigation, in the context of philosophical counselling, attempts to examine the system of beliefs which reside in the counsellee's mind, including those unconscious beliefs of which he or she is, of course, unaware.

For example, suppose that a man has difficulties in associating with women. An examination of his attitude may discover that underlying his difficulties is a presupposition that women are unpredictable and powerful. This hidden belief presumably explains this man's avoidance of women. Once the roots of this belief are exposed, it is possible for the person to examine them in a rational way, realise that the belief is unfounded, reject it, and thus get rid of his difficulties.

I will not comment on the fruitfulness of this approach. But the fact that virtually the same technique appears in various cognitive psychotherapies (e.g., Rational Emotive Therapy) raises the question of whether it is really philosophical. And indeed, since 'belief system' is supposedly a real structure in the person's psychology, it follows that what this approach tries to do is to investigate the psychological reality inside the person's head. However, psychological structures and processes cannot be investigated through philosophical analyses of ideas. How somebody's beliefs interact with emotions and influence behaviour is an empirical question. It should be addressed on the basis of, e.g., psychological tests and knowledge about how minds work, and cannot be resolved through pure philosophical contemplation.

To be sure, philosophical considerations can uncover logical or conceptual connections within the person's 'belief system'; but there is no guarantee that these logical or conceptual connections would mirror the psychological connections inside the person's head. For example, even if an anxiety over women is *logically* connected to the assumption that women

are powerful, this does not imply that the two are *psychologically* connected. There is no reason to suppose that this assumption resides anywhere inside the person's head, much less that it is the actual cause of the anxiety in question. For all we philosophers know, the anxiety may be caused by the person's fear of his own tremendous sexual passion, or simply by a high level of some anxiety-related neurotransmitter, without any accompanying belief about the nature of women.

It follows that we cannot hope to expose causes of behaviour and emotions just by tracing rational connections, without the aid of a substantial psychological theory. Self-investigation directed at a person's belief-system is not a (purely) philosophical investigation.

3. *Philosophical self-investigations about lived understanding*: Fortunately, in my view, few philosophical practitioners adhere to the previous two approaches. As I see it, the majority attempt to apply philosophical investigations to subject matter that is less psychological and at the same time pervades the person's life. Since I am not aware of a sufficiently articulated characterisation of such an approach, let me try to delineate it in some detail.

The basic idea in my proposal is that in our everyday life we constantly interpret ourselves and the world, or in other words, we express a certain understanding of reality. Not only our thoughts, but also our emotions, plans, hopes, behaviour, fantasies, choices, are ways of relating to our world, that is, ways of understanding it. To give a few over-simplistic examples (real life is usually much more complex), if I indulge myself in fantasies about being a fashion model and being admired by crowds of people, I am thereby expressing the value of being admired. My pleasant fantasy is a statement, so to speak, about what is valuable in life, namely: 'It is good to be admired by people.' Similarly, if I suffer from feelings of worthlessness, these feelings are statements about what counts as being worthy. They express the idea that there are certain standards of personal worth, and that I fall short of them. More generally, to feel or behave or think one way rather than another is to express a certain understanding about issues such as the nature of the self, what is moral or beautiful, what is love or friendship or courage, etc. We constantly interpret our world, not just through beliefs and thoughts, but through our entire way of being.

In this sense, our way of being expresses a certain conception of reality, although not necessarily a coherent and unitary theory (our life is often inconsistent). In other words, a person's way of life expresses various ideas about the world, and as such is subject matter for philosophising. To examine a person's life philosophically is to examine the understanding which he or she lives (not just thinks): to examine how coherent it is, expose its hidden presuppositions, analyse its basic concepts and values, and so on. This suggests that the aim of philosophical self-investigation, in the context of philosophical counselling, is to explore the counsellee's 'lived understanding', namely, the world as 'understood' by the person's emotions, behaviour, thoughts, hopes, desires, and entire way of being.

Thus conceived, a lived understanding is something of which the person is not necessarily conscious. But neither is it *un*conscious, for it is not a psychological structure which resides in the person's mind. It is, rather, the meaning, implications, or 'logic' of the person's attitudes towards life. For example, my tormenting guilt-feeling may be said to express the statement that I have been doing what should not be done. However, to the extent that this is a *philosophical* analysis of my feelings, it is based on an analysis of the concept of guilt. It elaborates on what it means for somebody to be guilty, without

implying that this analysis has a psychological reality in my mind, either consciously or unconsciously.

An analogy might help to illustrate this idea. We may say that philosophical self-investigation is analogous to art criticism of a painting, or to an analysis of a game of chess. Just as the art critic analyses the various meanings in a painting without regard to the psychology of the painter, and just as a chess analyst analyses the meaning of a certain position on the board independently of what goes on in the player's mind, a philosophical counsellor helps to analyse the meanings of the counsellee's way of being regardless of the counsellee's depth psychology. Just as a brush-stroke on canvas may be said to express a joyful mood even if the artist was sad while painting it or unaware of its meaning, a counsellee's anxiety may be said to express the idea that her life leads nowhere, even if this idea is not an actual part of her psychology. Philosophical counsellors are like art-critics or chess-analysts, in the sense that they explore the canvas or chess board for meanings that need not have any psychological reality inside the person's head.

This is to say that philosophical self-investigations are detached from psychological mechanisms and theories. It thus makes it clear why philosophical counselling is a philosophical endeavour, and why the philosopher is the person to do it. Philosophers can be seen as experts in analysing conceptions of the world. They are skilled in uncovering implicit presuppositions and offering alternative ones, in detecting inconsistencies, in drawing implications, in analysing concepts, and in exposing hidden theoretical structures. Furthermore, a philosopher familiar with the literature about ideas related to human life — concerning freedom, the meaning of life, the right and the wrong, or the self — is acquainted with a variety of alternative lines of thought. As an expert in ideas, the philosophical counsellor helps counsellees uncover various meanings that are expressed in their way of life, and examine critically those aspects that express their predicaments.

The goal of such an analysis may be at least one of two. The first, pragmatic goal, is to help counsellees overcome personal predicaments. The second is to help them develop wisdom, that is, openness to the rich network of ideas which underlie life. As for the pragmatic goal, it seems reasonable, on the basis of empirical studies [6] as well as common sense, that counsellees can better deal with their predicament once they manage to cast it in terms of some coherent scheme. An overall picture that delineates structure, patterns, and interconnections in the person's life makes it easier to deal with problems and work towards self-change. Philosophical counselling can help counsellees to deal with their predicament by helping them to organise it in an understandable scheme.

I think however, that the more significant goal of philosophical self-investigations is the search for wisdom. For it makes philosophical understanding a valuable goal in itself, instead of a mere tool for other goals (namely, overcoming personal problems) on a par with many other therapeutic tools. To see this, it is necessary to examine the notion of a search for wisdom more carefully.

Philosophising as a search for wisdom

So far I have delineated the domain of philosophical self-investigation and its subject matter. I have suggested that it is the domain of critical and non-empirical examinations into the foundations of a person's lived understanding of life and reality. The question now arises whether there is any room for genuine philosophising within this domain, or whether we

have drawn boundaries within which nothing of a philosophical nature exists. What can philosophising do in the context of self-investigations?

Within traditional frameworks, the answer would have been straightforward: Philosophy can offer definite answers as to how life should be understood and lived. Indeed, traditionally, many schools of philosophy have presented themselves as offering the Truth about these matters. However, many of us in the modern world, and specifically within the framework of philosophical counselling, no longer believe in the capacity of philosophy (or any other discipline for that matter) to offer ultimate truths about how life should be understood and lived. There seems to be a variety of alternative ways of life that are equally legitimate.

These considerations have far-reaching implications. For they may seem to imply that the issue of how one should understand and shape one's life is reduced to a completely subjective choice: anything goes. Presumably, all that matters is how to feel happy or fulfilled or at peace with oneself, and the issue of a better kind of self-understanding is left meaningless. Any understanding is just as good as another, as long as the individual lives happily with it. This does not seem to leave room for philosophising, which is, after all, a critical search for a better understanding, and indeed for wisdom.

I suggest that this conclusion — that if there are no absolute truths then understanding is reduced to a personal taste that is just as good as any other — is misguided. The reason is that underlying our world-views are ideas (concepts, assumptions, values, theories, etc.) which have definite structure and logic, and are not just arbitrary conglomerations of subjective tastes.

For example, if I feel constrained by my circumstances and aspire to liberate myself, then underlying my feeling is the concept of freedom, and possibly the value of freedom and the assumption that freedom is possible. By hoping to be free I am thereby relying on a network of concepts — those of freedom, boundaries, autonomy, and a vast body of related ideas — which are part of the fundamental landscape of my world. This network of ideas (which I live, though do not necessarily articulate in words) interrelate in specific logical, conceptual, and other definite ideational connections (i.e., connection between ideas). These connections are neither trivial nor arbitrary, and for this reason can be traced only in a careful philosophical examination.

Thus, a philosophical analysis may show that to act freely implies, by definition, being responsible for one's act. The concept of freedom is therefore intimately connected to that of responsibility. However — and this is a crucial point — this conceptual connection between freedom and responsibility is not a subjective psychological connection. It need not be found in the person's conscious or unconscious psychology. After all, a person may crave freedom without having any feeling or thought about responsibility. This connection is *ideational* (or conceptual) in nature, that is, a connection between ideas, which is a subject matter for philosophical thinking. It is not a connection between psychological events (e.g., feelings, though processes), something which is a subject matter of empirical psychology.

To give another example, the concepts of obligation and ability are intimately connected (only someone who can do X may have the obligation to do so), as are the concepts of lying and of intention (you cannot lie unintentionally), or gossip and passing information about a third person. Again, these connections are conceptual, and can be discovered by philosophical contemplation.

This does not mean that ideational connections are always unequivocal. Many are

extremely complex, and can be understood in several alternative ways. For example, the connection between the concept of freedom and that of the self, or the inner structure of the idea of the meaning of life, have been debated by many thinkers. At the same time, however, not anything goes. The networks of ideas underlying our world comprise a complex landscape containing a variety of alternative paths and ways of thinking, but it nevertheless has a definite structure.

All this implies that such networks of ideas are not subject matters of empirical studies about human subjective tastes. To explore them is to inquire about the structure of the world of ideas, not to consult subjective opinions or psychological inclinations. For again, connections between ideas need not be (and indeed usually are not) reflected in people's minds. They are something to explore by philosophical thinking — e.g., by tracing logical and conceptual connections — not by looking into particular people's psyches. Just as the world of numbers is explored by mathematical thought, and just as the world of art is investigated by aesthetic modes of thinking — not by psychological studies of personal tastes! — it is the role of philosophising to explore the ideational landscape of our world. Although this ideational landscape is not clear-cut and unequivocal — often there are fuzzy areas and alternative paths to follow — it has a definite structure, and it is possible to explore it by a critical examination, with the aid of various thinking tools and knowledge of maps of already explored regions. This is precisely the expertise of the philosopher, who is a professional explorer of the world of ideas.

Some people are disappointed to find out that traditional philosophy has not produced definite answers to any substantial question. This disappointment is perhaps justified in the context of philosophy's traditional aspirations, namely, to discover ultimate truths about reality. It should now be clear that philosophical counselling is based on a different vision about the role of philosophy. It knows that truths are truths only within given contexts, and that absolute truths about the nature of ultimate reality are empty dreams. The role of philosophising is to explore the fundamental network of ideas, or meanings, or our world — a world which changes across eras and cultures, which is inexhaustible, and which cannot be captured by a final theory or solution. Philosophising thus conceived is a never-ending search, an endeavour of creative openness to new horizons rather than an attempt to produce solutions and ultimate theories. It deals with unfolding meanings, not with finished facts. This means wisdom, that is, openness and sensitivity to the vastness of meanings that underlie the very foundation of our world, and which shape it and make it what it is.

Cast study 1

The following case study will illustrate the nature of philosophical self-investigation discussed above. The counsellee, a university student in her mid-twenties, came to see me for three sessions for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of her situation (and also because of curiosity about philosophical counselling). She had been feeling like an outsider in the hustle and bustle of university life, which she felt was imposing and aggressive. Our three meetings were intended to give her the beginning of the philosophical perspective, which she could later continue to explore by herself.

We started by laying out the experiences and thoughts which seemed to be associated with her predicament. At first, only a jumble of experiences appeared, but little by little we

started to see their meanings and relate them to each other. Eventually, we came to see them as expressing two clashing conceptions of life.

One class of experiences was characterised by us as being about artificially organised structures imposed on life. These included intense feelings of alienation towards the race for grades and career which she felt was encroaching upon her (and everybody's) freedom; a dislike for art critiques in her art classes in which works of art were arbitrarily forced into clearly defined analyses; a feeling of being emotionally blackmailed in several romantic relationships in the past; and a fear of making commitments at work and at university. At the same time, alongside the negative facet of this artificially structured world, she felt that it also offered her physical comfort, security, and stability of social relationships. Despite her repulsion, she was not eager to abandon it.

The second class of experiences was about spontaneous, unbridled, free elements in her life. They included intense feelings of her personal power, which she experienced when travelling away from home, free to behave as she wished, as well as deep momentary experiences of being in touch with a raw layer of human reality in certain circumstances. Here too her attitude was ambiguous. Despite its attraction, she was suspicious of this world. She felt that it had a deceptive sheen, and also that her involvement in it might result in irrational choices and inappropriate behaviour towards others.

These various experiences (many details of which cannot be mentioned here) were by no means felt by her to be of the same type and level. It took us some time to bring them together, interpret them under the above characterisation, and see that they could be understood as constituting two opposing poles. Relative to this bipolar dimension, she felt torn between the security and pragmatic value of the artificially structured world on the one hand, and the purity and power of the other; and conversely — between the alienating imposition of the first and the potential deception, danger, and impracticality of the second. She was therefore living on the periphery, half involved and half alienated, half belonging and half longing to leave everything, and continuously unclear about where she was heading.

One may describe her situation in psychological terms, as her suffering from a certain type of mental processes or structures. Indeed, a psychologist whom I consulted after our three sessions ended suggested that she had a so-called schizoid personality. From the perspective of philosophical counselling, however, her stance expressed a clash between two incommensurable conceptions of life which deserved to be examined as legitimate conceptions.

According to one of the two conceptions, the important qualities of life are to be achieved within the context of an artificially structured reality, a world in which the general framework of meanings (what counts as successful, proper, beautiful, respectable, etc.) is clearly defined. One fulfils oneself by accepting a specific direction, order, and rules, and living within their framework. The major scale for self-evaluation is that of career, rank, grades, or in short personal achievement. Personal achievement is accomplished relative to specific measurable standards, such as societal norms, rules of art criticism, academic scales of success, etc. From this point of view, to be outside order and society is to hover outside any measuring scale, in a vacuum in which there is no up and down, good or bad, meaningful or meaningless. An unbridled life is an empty life.

According to the opposing conception, the important qualities in life are the raw and unbridled elements which lie underneath the surface of the superficial order. The major scales for evaluating a way of life are those of naturalness versus artificiality, spontaneity

versus contrivance and imposition, the primordial versus the elaborate, or in short (to use a concept which came up in our conversations): powerful 'purity' versus conformity to external rules.

What is philosophically rich in these two poles is their potential to serve as conceptual frameworks relative to which much of life and life's experiences can be understood. Indeed, they placed her life in the same camp as traditional dualistic philosophies of life, such as Nietzsche's duality of the Dionysian element of raw chaotic sensual power versus the Apollonian aesthetic balanced order, or Bergson's duality of the spontaneous and creative flow of interpenetrating qualities which he termed 'duration', and the 'geometric' order of well-defined elements organised in according with definite rules. I mentioned to the counsellee these two philosophers, but only briefly so as not to stifle the development of her individual way of understanding.

An examination of her two conceptions of life showed us that they are not commensurable. They have no common basis, since their fundamental values are different. This realisation implied that rational arguments cannot suffice to determine which of them is preferable.

Our investigation took us in two directions. First, we examined the inner landscape of each of the two perspectives: their central concepts, assumptions, and values. Second, we examined whether the two poles can be combined, or whether they are inevitably antagonistic to each other. Unlike Nietzsche, who advocated the merging of the raw Dionysian power with the balanced Apollonian organisation, the counsellee did not see the possibility of such a combination. In her world, the powerful flow was by its very nature a primordial rawness prior to any organised structure. Moreover, it expressed a protest against artificiality, a move away from imposed order. It could not be combined with the orderly element without being distorted.

But neither did she see any way of giving up one of the two conceptions in favour of the other. Unlike Bergson, who preferred duration over geometric order and construed the former as more basic and the latter as derivative, the counsellee saw each of the two as embodying both positive and negative values, equally fundamental. We concluded that (at least at present) she lived an irresolvable interplay between these two poles.

Needless to say, our conversations did not produce a definite solution or conclusion, not just because of the shortness of the counselling period, but because fundamental life-issues are never solved. One explores them, learns about their inner landscape, lives their various meanings, incorporates new perspectives on them into one's life, and possibly moves away and overcomes them. In this sense, a philosophical self-investigation is a search for wisdom, which means opening oneself up to the horizon of meanings or ideas that are at the foundation of one's world. One learns one's way around in such a world without reducing its vast landscape into a simple formula or solution. A deeper understanding of that landscape 'colours' one's life with new meanings. To be sure, new philosophical insights are likely to give a person a greater capacity to change and overcome the specific predicaments, but in my view, the main aim of philosophical counselling is wisdom for its own sake.

The above is only one example of philosophical self-investigation as a search for wisdom. Other examples include a counsellee who was burnt out at work, after reaching the peak of his career, with whom we explored meanings in life outside the career world; an imposing mother and a rebellious daughter who used to fight incessantly, who examined their respective 'theories' about personal autonomy, specifically in the context of

family life; a successful student who nevertheless felt worthless, with whom we investigated the nature of self-worth; and so on.

In these and other cases, my goal was to enable life to speak its own philosophical 'theory' (or lived understanding) by supplying philosophical raw materials for the counsellee to use — but while imposing as little as possible from my own interpretation on the counsellee. In the process of investigating the person's lived understanding, what counts most is what makes sense to the counsellees, how meaningful they find potential interpretations of their way of being. Counselling thus becomes a philosophical conversation with the life lived by the counsellee, a critical exchange between the counsellee and his or her lived understanding.

Case study 2

While the previous case study gave a general overview of several sessions, the following one will zoom in on one part of a single session, the first of a series of four, in order to illustrate better the nature of the counselling conversation. The counsellee, let us call her M., a woman in her late twenties, told me over the phone that she wanted to see me in connection with a personal problem with romantic relationships. The following conversation starts with M.'s description of the facts — after all, philosophical issues in counselling arise out of concrete situations — and then develops in a philosophical direction.

Upon arriving at my office, M. told me that she had difficulties in maintaining long-term relationships with men, and wondered if I, as a philosopher, could help her. I reminded her what I had already said over the phone, that philosophical counselling is aimed mainly at developing a deeper understanding of one's world, and not at solving specific problems. She replied that this was, indeed, what she wanted, and so I asked her to tell me about her predicament in greater detail.

She told me that she had broken up with her boyfriend N. several months earlier, after they had already decided to marry and after she had already informed her friends about it. She could not understand why she had felt compelled to leave him, especially since he was, so she told me, a good and successful person, smart, responsible, and considerate, and held a respectable job. This had been her longest relationship, but previous relationships had also been terminated by her in a similar manner. This made her worry that she was incapable of long-term relationships and marriage.

I asked her what led her to break up with N., and she replied that she was not confident in her love for him. I requested that she elaborate on this lack of confidence. 'I felt this way especially in social circumstances,' she replied, 'at parties, for example, I did not feel proud of him. He was pessimistic and lacked joy. He was not very much interested in the outside world — mainly in me and in his work, and did not care to go out and have fun. He was trying to please me, but I wanted him to enjoy himself and felt that he was becoming dependent on me. I, in contrast to him, am optimistic. I like to enjoy life.'

'How did you feel about his "pessimism"?'

'I felt choked. For example, I could not go out to evening courses or movies because he would not find me at home when he came back from work. Although he wouldn't say a word, I knew it would bother him very much. Had he been less pessimistic and more fun-loving, I could have done without these evening courses or movies.'

I said that it sounded as though she explained the failure of their relationship as resulting from the difference between her 'optimism' and his 'pessimism.' Since she agreed, I

suggested that we focus for a while on this difference between them, and asked her to elaborate on what she meant by her 'optimism' and his 'pessimism.'

'I am optimistic because I like to enjoy myself,' she said, 'I like to experience new things, to have fun. I always do only what I can enjoy and what interests me. I never do anything out of cold considerations, just because it might be helpful in the future. N. once told me that life with me is always surprising. I would suddenly decide that we go to the theatre, or I would buy him a little surprise and leave it on his desk. He, on the other hand, was always pre-meditative and calculating. It was as though he didn't have enough energy to be spontaneous and to do exciting things. He never initiated fun activities.'

Up until now, M. had been telling me of her predicament. It is here that the conversation took a philosophical turn. 'It is interesting,' I said to her, 'that in describing the differences between you two, you have been focusing on one specific dimension of life, namely, enjoyable qualities of the present moment: fun, joy, excitement, surprise, being interested. Presumably, you have the capacity for these qualities and he doesn't.'

'Much less than I do,' she said confidently, 'and these things are important to me.'

'Is it possible that these qualities, which you find important, are not as important to N.?'

She thought for a while. 'Perhaps,' she said somewhat hesitantly, and I could see that for the first time the universal value of her favourite qualities was not obvious to her. 'Perhaps N. doesn't find them as important.'

'Is it possible that his "pessimism" is not a lack of something — a lack of energy to pursue the good qualities of life — but rather an interest in other qualities, ones that are not necessarily exciting?'

'I have never thought of it in this way!' she exclaimed.

I was afraid that my proposal would turn into another 'exciting' or 'fun' idea. After all, she loved excitements. A counsellee's approach to life is not a remote subject to be discussed from a distance, but often expresses itself within the counselling room [7]. I therefore suggested that we slow down and look deeper into this difference between her and N. She agreed enthusiastically. I said that one could construe the difference as that between two attitudes to life; or more specifically, as two different answers to the issue of: What are the meaningful qualities in life?

My suggestion caught her interest, but she asked me to elaborate. I decided to use Kierkegaard's three 'stages' of life as illustrations. I told her about Kierkegaard's distinction between three different attitudes which a person may have to his life: the aesthetic (or sensual) attitude, in which the main dimension of meaning is that of the enjoyable versus the boring, and which for this reason focuses on the present moment and constantly searches for new stimuli; the ethical attitude, which finds meaning in following universal and necessary imperatives or 'shoulds'; and the religious attitude, which finds meaning in submission to the absolute. 'It seems,' I added, 'that there are people who, unlike you, do not find the enjoyable qualities of the present moment very meaningful and worth pursuing.'

It was obvious that M. was deeply touched. 'I fit precisely the description of the aesthetic person,' she said, 'I am an aesthete, while N. is the ethical person. I see it now so clearly! For N. the important thing is to do what is right. At work he always volunteers for special jobs, and is always surprised and dismayed that others do not behave like him. I remember that we once stopped by a fruit stand beside the road. For some reason there were difficulties in paying, so the vendor gave him some fruit for free, saying: "Pay me some other time." A few days later N. drove back to the same place with the money. I must admit that I wouldn't have bothered.'

I regarded with caution her enthusiasm over Kierkegaard's views. It is always dangerous, in counselling situations, to mention a philosopher's theory, for fear that it would be accepted uncritically. Admittedly, the advantage is that good philosophers present us with a rich network of ideas, thus illustrating how philosophical ideas can be developed. However, the danger is that the counsellee might take the mentioned philosophical theory as an authority and adopt it indiscriminately, while putting aside his or her own personal approach. One way to avoid this danger is to go beyond this theory and introduce alternative views.

'There is perhaps something of Kierkegaard's ethical man in N.,' I said, 'but let us not apply labels too quickly. Let us first try to get a better grasp of the three attitudes, and also think of others. After all, these three attitudes need not be the only ones.'

And so we started to explore the network of concepts underlying these and other attitudes to meaning. We talked about the possibility of finding meaning in the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom, as well as in love for others. Then M. mentioned a book she had recently read about a political leader who devoted himself to the good of his country, and upon examination we concluded that his dimension of meaning was found somewhere in between the ethical and the religious. Comparing the various attitudes which we discussed, we saw that some of them are directed, by their very essence, towards the future, while others find meaning in the present moment; that some of them place value on the individual's own well-being, while others place value on things that lie outside the individual; that some were concerned with other people's perspectives, while some regarded other people as mere objects, etc. Each attitude has its own internal logic.

At some point M. pointed out again that her own attitude to life was very similar to that of the aesthete, and again expressed her excitement at the new outlook. 'Only now do I realise,' she said, 'that my life chose a specific path that is only one among many others. It never occurred to me to regard N. as a person with a different perspective on life. I always regarded him as being like myself — only as incapable to reaching those qualities that are important.' She thought for a while and added: 'But, you know, I am not merely an aesthete. I have other sides too. There are other things that are also meaningful to me, other than fun and enjoyment.'

'Are you defending yourself for being, presumably, an aesthete?'

She laughed. 'Yes, I feel embarrassed. It now seems to me that I am not serious enough. I wouldn't like to be somebody superficial who is only interested in fun. One should also do more substantial things in life.'

'Let us turn your statement about better and worse attitudes into an issue: Which of the many possible attitudes to meaningful qualities are more worthwhile or valuable?'

'Right. The question is which qualities are really more meaningful in life. Or perhaps my attitude is just as good as N.'s.'

'These are important questions, but I suggest that we deal with them in some future sessions. Before asking which of the different attitudes is preferable, let us first understand more clearly what they are.'

M. agreed, and we continued to discuss related points that cannot be mentioned here, such as those aspects of her life which are not aesthetic in nature. Towards the end of the session she said: 'It suddenly strikes me why my relationships with N. did not work out. Each one of us found different things meaningful.'

I asked her whether she had ever had a romantic relationship with a person who was more similar to her. She replied that she once went out for several months with a man who knew

how to enjoy himself. 'But he was too annoying,' she said, 'he was so inconsiderate. He always thought of himself first: in bed, in taking for himself the best portions of food. He was too egocentric. In parties he loved being at the centre and being admired by everybody.'

'Do you see a connection between being focused on enjoying oneself and being egocentric?'

'Possibly. Perhaps if what is most important to you is to satisfy your own immediate desires, then you tend to ignore the wishes of those around you . . . I now remember that N. too accused me several times of being egocentric. For example, I once refused to join him in a meeting with his friends, saying that it would be boring. I knew it was very important to him, but I just couldn't stand the boredom.'

'So your fun was more important for you than his satisfaction.'

'Absolutely.'

'Was N. like that too?'

'No, N. was always the opposite. It was very important for him to see me satisfied. You know, whenever I did something to please him I felt that I was making concessions to him. But I now realise — and this is truly amazing — that when he was doing something for my sake, he was not making concessions at all. For him, pleasing me was not a concession but something he found meaningful in its own right. I, on the other hand, was focused on my own pleasure. It never occurred to me that my attitude was not everybody's. I took him to be a weakling, someone with no power to enjoy himself. In fact, he was finding meaning where I had never suspected it.'

As we concluded this first session and started to rise from our chairs, I said to M.: 'Kierkegaard's concepts seem to shed some interesting light on your relationships. But let us be careful. Perhaps we should give all this more thought. Life is often not just black or white, aesthetic or ethical. As we continue our conversations, we may discover that the picture is much more complex and multidimensional.'

What counts as a success in philosophical counselling?

How do we determine whether or not the above two case studies were successful?

When counselling or therapy is aimed at helping the counsellee overcome a specific problem, or at improving his or her subjective feeling of well-being, it is more or less clear what should count as a success; although there are still grave difficulties in conceptualising and measuring subjective feelings of well-being. However, when it comes to a goal characterised as vaguely as 'self-understanding' or 'wisdom,' the difficulties seem to be even greater.

There are those who shrink from things that are not easily measurable and therefore reject goals such as the acquisition of self-understanding or of wisdom. These are too vague for their taste, and they prefer yardsticks such as the counsellee's ranking on a 7-point scale, or the number of visits to the local health services over a given period of time. This is, to my mind, unfortunate. Very often, those qualities which are more important in people's life (love, happiness, wisdom, spirituality, etc.) tend to be much less measurable than many which are rather insignificant. It would be absurd to measure the depth of philosophers' thought by the number of their published articles, or the spirituality of people by the number of hours they meditate daily. For this reason, I feel no pressure to turn wisdom into a clearly-defined dimension.

Nevertheless, it is of course important to explicate the nature of one's goals as clearly as possible, and also to develop means of identifying the extent to which they are achieved in actual practice, as long as no distortion is involved. Much can be said about paintings, poems, or the music of Bach without crudely analysing them into simplistic formulas, and the same should go for wisdom.

For this reason, side by side with my theoretical work, I started last year to conduct a qualitative outcome study in which counsellees are asked to fill out a questionnaire about their counselling conversations, at the end of the third or fourth session. More than a dozen counsellees have participated so far, and M. was one of them. With M.'s permission, I will translate from the Hebrew her answers to relevant questions.

Question: How would you describe your four counselling meetings to somebody who has never undergone philosophical counselling?

Answer: These are sessions which broaden the worldview of the 'self' and raise to consciousness various behaviours or attitudes to life. By means of the conversations it is possible to examine and come to know various conceptions of life. This is very enriching, and enables me to be conscious and critical of the way I live.

Question: Would you see value in continuing the counselling conversations?

Answer: I feel that there are endless topics which can be discussed in this framework, and in any case they are likely to be helpful in continuing to raise to consciousness my conception of life, my various sorts of behaviour. Personally, I see much value in continuing these conversations.

Question: Did the conversations contain philosophical elements? Please specify.

Answer: There were philosophical elements in our conversations. We talked about various philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Rousseau, and a bit of Camus. The conversations on these philosophers were not dissociated from my personal material, but rather served to develop or focus my own conceptions and attitudes which I brought up in the conversations.

Question: How meaningful for you were the conversations, and what was their influence?

Answer: I felt that the counselling conversations were very meaningful. After each meeting I felt that I was coming out with more material for thought. The most meaningful thing for me was that I managed to look at, or characterise, the nature of my motives and my preferences, and to critically re-examine and re-evaluate them (or to choose new ones and try to apply them). The conversations made me want to try to investigate even more deeply various philosophical approaches and examine them in relation to myself. After each meeting I returned home 'loaded' and thoughtful, and I continued the conversation in my mind on the way home and at home.

Question: If you have undergone psychotherapy in the past, please describe its type and duration. How was it similar to, or different from, your philosophical counselling conversations?

Answer: . . . The psychological conversations helped me to understand my motives, while the philosophical helped me, beyond understanding myself, to understand my conception of life and my preferences.

The above questionnaire responses suggest that this particular counselling was successful, not only because M. liked it, but more importantly because it developed in her a deeper

philosophical self-understanding. Indeed, M. found our conversations meaningful mainly because of their enriching and edifying influence, and not so much because they helped her to overcome her predicaments. Although she did develop a clearer conception of how her problem in romantic relationships might be tackled, she regarded the counselling as specially fruitful in broadening and deepening her perspective and in giving her tools to continue this process by herself. She viewed the process of philosophical counselling — as indeed it should be — as focused not on exposing psychological forces inside her head nor on examining philosophical theories in the abstract, but rather on examining from a philosophical perspective her concrete life, thus exposing the network of philosophical meanings that underlies it. My own impression supports M.'s views of the effects of our meetings, and I therefore regard the conversations as a successful case of a development of philosophical self-understanding, and thus as a step towards wisdom.

Most of the other counsellees in my study responded similarly to the questionnaire, often with equal enthusiasm. A small number were less enthusiastic about the counselling. Interestingly, most of the latter recognised that they had gained philosophical self-understanding, but did not value it as highly as did the others. A detailed report is expected when the study is completed.

Obviously, the outcomes suggested by these questionnaires are not clearly measurable. It is an open question, to be investigated in future research, how much more accurately they can be characterised and measured. However, even if no progress is made in this respect, I would prefer, without any hesitation, to work towards ill-defined and profound goals rather than clearly-defined but insignificant ones.

Conclusions

To sum up, I suggest that philosophy has an important role to play in assisting in self-investigations that lead to wisdom. Against what some philosophical counsellors suggest, I believe that a philosophical self-investigation should seek to critically examine the counsellee's lived understanding, and to do so not just in order to solve personal problems but to enrich life.

One might wonder why people would seek philosophical counselling if not for the sake of solving specific problems. The answer, I think, is that people everywhere seek to improve themselves, to live a deeper, richer, better, more significant life. Many go to psychoanalysis, yoga and meditation classes, New Age and spiritual workshops, not to mention a broad range of religious practices. They do this not to solve some particular problem, but out of yearnings for new horizons of meaning and wisdom. To put it differently, people's 'problem' is often the feeling that something of a higher significance is missing in their lives.

This is where philosophical counselling comes in. Its goal is hinted by the Greek meaning of philo-sophia: love of wisdom. It expresses a vision which (though not unprecedented) is especially significant in our technological and problem-solving-oriented society. Unlike traditional philosophy, it does not think that the role of philosophising is to churn out theories, solutions to problems, or finished philosophical products. It regards philosophising as a process of growth, an individual quest in the landscape of meanings or ideas. What is unique to this process is that it avoids the false lure of ready-made solutions and theories offered by New Age gurus or 'How To' psychology books.

It is important to distinguish wisdom (sophia) from smartness (which is the ability to solve specific problems, as in much of academic philosophy) and knowledge (which is the acquisition of information). One embodies wisdom by being sensitive, through critical self-investigations, to the rich network of actual and possible meanings of our world. It is an entire way of life, a way of comporting oneself towards life. Thus it is impossible to carry out a genuine search for wisdom (i.e., philosophising) in a philosophy course or a casual conversation about abstract issues. Philosophy as wisdom must always arise from a concrete individual life, and be carried out through the examination of the person's life, predicaments, and world.

All this puts philosophical counselling in sharp contrast with problem-oriented psychotherapies. Unlike many of these therapies, it aims not at the satisfied life but at the deeper life; not at painlessness but at better self-understanding; not at solutions and self-gratification, but at the process which is wisdom. And of course, since wisdom means a personal way of comporting oneself towards the world, the philosophical counsellor cannot offer general formulas. He or she can only be a skilled partner to a concrete personal self-search. In this sense, philosophical counselling is close in spirit to those psychological approaches, such as certain present-day versions of psychoanalysis, which also seek self-understanding for its own sake, although in very different ways.

In order for a counsellor to aid in such a wisdom-oriented process, it is necessary to delve deeply into the domain of ideas and examine conceptions about the nature of freedom, of meaningfulness, of creativity, and the like. To facilitate such a search, it is not sufficient for a counsellor to have common sense. The counsellor needs much training in philosophical ways of thinking, knowledge of already existing approaches (even when going beyond them), and philosophical skills, in order to make the counsellee's journey in the domain of ideas deep and significant. This is why a philosophical counsellor needs to be — in addition to being a counsellor — a philosopher.

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NOTES

[1] The term 'philosophical practice' is used in Europe to denote mainly philosophical counselling, but also other applications of philosophy to everyday life, such as Socratic discourse groups.

[2] This is based upon personal communication with many European philosophical counsellors. See for example LINDSETH, A. (1990) Was ist Philosophische Praxis?, *Agora*, 8/9, pp. 12–15, an English version of which was presented at the First International Conference on Philosophical Counselling, University of British Columbia, Canada, July 9th, 1994.

[3] In this formulation I intend to leave open the controversial issue of whether the distinction between considerations based on 'pure' thought and those based on empirical evidence is clear-cut or is a matter of degree.

[4] 'Metalogue in philosophical counseling,' a lecture presented on July 9th, 1994 at the First International Conference on Philosophical Counselling, University of British Columbia, Canada.

[5] E.g., COHEN, E. (1995) Philosophical Counseling: Some Roles of Critical Thinking, in: R. Lahav and M. Tillmanns (eds.) *Essays on Philosophical Counseling* (Lanham, University Press of America), pp. 121–131.

[6] See, for example, PENNEBAKER, J. W. (1993) Putting stress into words: health, linguistic, and therapeutic implications, *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 31, pp. 539–548.

[7] I am indebted to Rachel Blass for this point and its utilisation in my counselling. As far as I know, she was the first to introduce into philosophical counselling the important realisation that the counsellee's world-view is often manifested in the counselling conversation (e.g., in the counsellee's attitude towards the counsellor), and

that this fact can provide a powerful access to the counsellee's lived philosophy. See her article in this issue, The 'person' in philosophical counselling vs. psychotherapy and the possibility of interchange between the fields.