





# **HASER**

**REVISTA INTERNACIONAL  
DE FILOSOFÍA APLICADA**



# HASER

## REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE FILOSOFÍA APLICADA

Número 14, 2023

“Haser” combina los verbos “hacer” y “ser”. Su acentuación es aguda. El término apunta a la siguiente prescripción: “haz lo que eres y sé lo que haces”, es decir, una suerte de imperativo existencial: “haz de ser eso que haces” o, como sentenciaba Píndaro, “¡Hazte el que eres!”. Se funda en la evidencia de que toda acción se encuentra impregnada por el modo de ser de aquel que la realiza.

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**ESTUDIOS**  
*ARTICLES*



## EDITORIAL

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‘The world needs philosophy more than ever before.’ This prophetic statement is heard often in the post-COVID-19 world, given the significance of self-care and self-reflection that were necessitated during the lockdowns and isolations of pandemic life. The concern here is not to debate on whether the world needs philosophy, but rather what form of philosophy is required for the people to have peaceful coexistence if at all required. Is it the form of philosophy presumed to be the sole prerogative of academia, or something much more profound and broader than that, that the world needs? Focus on the acute intellectual pursuit of metaphysical and epistemological paradigms has restricted the domain of philosophy to a few academically qualified philosophers. The privileged academia largely ignores contributions from and to the non-academia. The need of the post-covid world percolates into the domain beyond academia in the form of contributing to the actual life of the people by taking resources from the concrete living experiences of human beings.

Understanding this need prompted us to provide a platform for discussing philosophical counselling as a significant form of philosophical practice that effectively deals with the human predicament.

For the past fifty years, various forms of philosophical practice have spread around the globe. Philosophical knowledge can be applied in multiple ways, including, but not limited to, Counselling, Philosophy Cafés, Philo plays, and so on. An International Conference on Philosophical Counselling was held under the aegis of the Indian Council for Philosophical Research (ICPR) in collaboration with the Department of Education and Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi, to strengthen philosophical practice in India.

The central attempt of the conference was clarification and analysis of significant debates about the concepts and methods in Philosophical Counselling. Along with conceptual clarifications and methodological formulations, the speakers deliberated upon the possible foundations and forms that Philosophical Counselling may take in India, along with the potential use of Indian philosophies and literature in Philosophical Counselling. Some of these presentations are being published in this volume, hoping scholars and practitioners will find their deliberations helpful in their work.

The first paper, *Rethinking Prison Training in Colombia from a Philosophical Perspective* by Ingrid Victoria Sarmiento Aponte, studies the human rights crisis in Colombia. Because of COVID-19, overcrowding has become a significant concern in prisons and penitentiaries during the health crisis in Colombia. The paper deals with the issue of the violation of the human rights of inmates and the impact that it may have on persons and society. The exploration then is focused on moral character and moral education based on John Dewey's social and educational philosophy. Finally, the paper proposes that moral education be done in prisons to improve conditions and inmates' moral judgement.

The paper ‘Building a Bridge between the Worlds of Counselling and Philosophy – Lessons from the World of Karl Jaspers’ by Shanti Jones builds upon the case study of a thirteen-year-old girl cutting herself. The paper demonstrates the usefulness of Jaspers’ four ideas: limit situations, meaningful connections, symbols, and freedom. In addition, the paper successfully demonstrates the effectiveness of philosophical counselling and the interface between psychiatry and philosophy. Papers like this are significant in establishing philosophical counselling as a reliable, professional practice.

Similarly, Andre de Almedia’s ‘Core issues in the Philosophical Counselling of business executives’ explicates the need and relevance of Philosophical Counselling in business settings. Some philosophical ideas he finds relevant are responsibility, integrity, and autonomy. Engaging existentially with these ideas, Almedia attempts to illustrate that counsellors could understand the concerns of the counsellee best through existential philosophy and concludes with the notion that philosophical counselling is helpful to make sense of the challenges of our lives.

Taking philosophical counselling to the legal system, Nayha Acharya’s ‘Philosophical Counselling Applied to Conflict Resolution via Mediation: A Pathway to Justice’ shows its relevance to conflict resolution via mediation and civil justice. She argues that Philosophical counselling can provide mediators with an empathetic and dialogical method of helping parties think critically and rationally and to cultivate clarity, depth, and coherence in their worldview and value system. She demonstrates that several essential principles of philosophical counselling align precisely with the values, goals, and needs of just mediation. Her paper opens up a new avenue for Philosophical Practitioners to contribute to people’s lives by facilitating them through the conflict resolution process.

Lou Marinoff's paper 'Philosophical practice during the pandemic: Dancing in the noosphere' presents a broader framework of consciousness in which the various philosophical practices get aligned. Specifically discussing the pandemic, Marinoff presents explanatory frameworks for interpreting the pandemic from Indian philosophy, Greek mythology, Victorian literature, Kabbalistic lore, and cosmo-biological speculation. In addition, his paper highlights the cultural variations in interpreting phenomena and the possible role that Philosophical Counsellors may have in enriching our individual and collective lives.

In his 'Anekantavada and Syadvada as Tools for Philosophical Practice to Mitigate Cognitive Biases', Saathvik Devarakonda reflects on the usefulness of Anekantavada and Syadvada in Philosophical Counselling. He proposes the blend of Syadvada and Narrative Therapy – the "Syad-Narrative" method – to attenuate cognitive biases and thus yield productive outcomes in Philosophical Counselling. His paper is an excellent example of how methods from different traditions can be clubbed to evolve innovative counselling approaches and methods.

This issue finished with two book reviews of Félix García Moriyón's *La educación moral, una obra de arte* published in 2021 and Ana Isabel García Vázquez's *Aprendiz de Filosofía* published in 2022.

The editors hope this volume will further the discussion of the methodological and theoretical concerns in philosophical counselling. There is a lot of scope for developing philosophical practices, such as Philosophical Counselling, in countries like India, which has a rich philosophical and ideational heritage. Journal volumes such as this are intended to stimulate conversations to engage philosophically with the various facets of everyday life.



## REPENSAR LA FORMACIÓN CARCELARIA EN COLOMBIA DESDE UNA PERSPECTIVA FILOSÓFICA

### *RETHINKING PRISON TRAINING IN COLOMBIA FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE*

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**Resumen.** En Colombia el hacinamiento se ha constituido históricamente como uno de los principales problemas de los centros carcelarios y penitenciarios, hecho que durante la crisis sanitaria desencadenada por el COVID-19 se hizo más evidente; así como la manera en que este atenta contra los Derechos Humanos fundamentales de los individuos privados de la libertad. Por otra parte, y desde una perspectiva educativa, otro de los problemas que enfrenta el sistema penitenciario del país, es la reducida oferta de proyectos formativos que repercutan en el desarrollo de la dimensión moral de las personas condición de cárcel, falencia que, sumada a muchas otras, dificulta la resocialización y explican la alta reincidencia en los delitos.

En el presente artículo, apoyados en una lectura de algunas de las obras de Dewey dedicadas a pensar la naturaleza humana, su carácter moral y las características de una auténtica educación moral, se aboga por una formación ética para personas en condición de cárcel donde confluyan el interés por transformar las condiciones en las que se desenvuelven y la creación de escenarios que favorezcan el desarrollo de su capacidad para examinar reflexivamente la experiencia a través de la filosofía.

Ahora bien, las conceptualizaciones que aquí se presentan fueron precursoras de un proceso investigativo que inició en la Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia en el año 2021 bajo la orientación y acompañamiento del doctor José Barrientos-Rastrojo, profesor titular de la Universidad de Sevilla y director del

proyecto Internacional Boecio, y en el marco del cual se desarrollan talleres de estoicismo en cárceles orientados por estudiantes de distintos programas de la Escuela de Educación y la Escuela de Ciencias Sociales, Artes y Humanidades. Este proyecto investigativo condujo a la adaptación de los talleres a las modalidades virtual y a distancia para el trabajo con distintos grupos vulnerables y su impacto se encuentra actualmente siendo evaluado por distintos trabajos de grado asociados a esta investigación.

**Palabras clave:** Educación moral, naturaleza humana, sabiduría moral, hábitos morales, carácter moral, filosofía en cárceles.

**Abstract:** In Colombia, overcrowding has historically been one of the main problems in prisons and penitentiaries, a fact that became more evident during the health crisis unleashed by COVID-19, as well as the way in which it violates the fundamental human rights of individuals deprived of their liberty. On the other hand, and from an educational perspective, another of the problems faced by the penitentiary system of the country is the reduced offer of training projects that have an impact on the development of the moral dimension of people in prison conditions, a shortcoming that, added to many others, hinders resocialization and explains the high recidivism in crimes.

In this article, and supported by a reading of some of Dewey's works dedicated to thinking about human nature, its moral character and the characteristics of an authentic moral education, we advocate for an ethical education for people in prison conditions where the interest in transforming the conditions in which they develop and the creation of scenarios that favor the development of their capacity to reflexively examine experience through philosophy converge.

Now, the conceptualizations presented here were precursors of a research process that began at the Universidad Nacional Abierta y A Distancia in the year 2021 under the guidance and accompaniment of Ph.D. José Barrientos-Rastrojo, professor at the University of Seville and director of the International Boecio Project, and in the framework of which stoicism workshops are developed in prisons oriented by students from different programs of the School of Education and the School of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities. This research project led to the adaptation of the workshops to virtual and distance modalities for the work with different vulnerable groups and its impact is currently being evaluated by different degree works associated with this research.

**Keywords:** Moral education, human nature, moral wisdom, moral habits, moral character, philosophy in prisons.

## Introducción

En un artículo publicado en el año 2020 por la Fundación Friedrich Ebert Stiftung en colaboración con el grupo de prisiones de la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de los Andes, se señala que el hacinamiento es el principal problema del sistema carcelario y penitenciario colombiano, ubicando entre sus causas la insuficiencia en infraestructura física y de servicios de las cárceles, la falta de recursos y el aumento en la tasa de encarcelamiento en las últimas tres décadas<sup>1</sup>.

Este hecho es confirmado por las cifras que presentan Roza y Martínez en la revista *Pesquisa* de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana para el año en el que inicia la pandemia. De acuerdo con los autores a esa fecha las cárceles del país albergaban más de 120 mil personas con una capacidad aproximada de solo 80 mil<sup>2</sup>.

Además, ambas publicaciones coinciden en indicar que durante la pandemia de COVID-19 el hacinamiento fue la causa del rápido contagio, dejando en evidencia “la violación masiva y sistemática del derecho a la salud de la población privada de la libertad, particularmente con respecto a las enfermedades contagiosas”.<sup>3</sup> Y es que las precarias condiciones en las que se vive dentro de las prisiones no permitieron el cumplimiento de medidas de control

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<sup>1</sup>Iturralde, M., Santamaría, N., Uribe, J.: “*El coronavirus en las cárceles colombianas. Análisis y propuestas de solución más allá de la coyuntura*”, disponible on-line en <https://derecho.uniandes.edu.co/sites/default/files/coronavirus-en-carceles-colombianas.pdf> (último acceso, 5 de octubre de 2022).

<sup>2</sup>Montaño, M. y Martínez, N.: “Cárceles en Colombia, una “olla a presión” en tiempos de COVID-19” en *Revista Pesquisa*. Bogotá, 2020, disponible on-line en <https://www.javeriana.edu.co/pesquisa/carceles-en-colombia-una-olla-a-presion-en-tiempos-de-covid-19/>

<sup>3</sup>Iturralde, M., Santamaría, N., Uribe, J., *op. cit.*

como el distanciamiento social y el aislamiento de las personas contagiadas<sup>4</sup>.

Durante el periodo de aislamiento obligatorio, tal como ocurre frente a múltiples cuestiones, la realidad distó mucho de lo que determina la ley colombiana. Ya frente al hacinamiento se afirmaba en la Sentencia T-153-98 que:

Tanto el derecho a la dignidad como el de no recibir tratos o penas crueles, inhumanos o degradantes se ven quebrantados por el hacinamiento y las malas condiciones de la estructura física y de servicios públicos que se encuentra en los centros de reclusión; los derechos a la vida y la integridad física son vulnerados o amenazados de manera inminente por el mismo hacinamiento, por la mixtura de todas las categorías de reclusos y por la carencia de los efectivos guardias requeridos<sup>5</sup>

De acuerdo con la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos el hecho de encontrarse privado de la libertad “no es una justificación para que se vulneren derechos, puesto que los Estados están en la obligación de garantizarlos a todas las personas”<sup>6</sup>. Sin embargo, esta falta de garantía frente a Derechos Humanos fundamentales como la salud, no solo deja en evidencia la falta de inversión en bienestar carcelario para la reinserción, sino arraigadas concepciones culturales e ideológicas frente a las penas y el delito. La insuficiencia en infraestructura física y de servicios, la falta de recursos y el aumento de personas en reclusión no son las únicas causas del hacinamiento y violación de los Derechos Humanos de las personas en condición de cárcel. El descuido de los centros

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<sup>4</sup>Iturralde, M., Santamaría, N., Uribe, J., *Ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup>Iturralde, M., Santamaría, N., Uribe, J., *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> Molinares-Hassan, V., Tolosa-Morales, A., y Quintero-Ochoa, M.: “Las injusticias de la justicia: un análisis de precedentes judiciales sobre protección a la población carcelaria en Colombia a partir de la dignidad humana”, disponible online en <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=82546585008> (último acceso: 5 de octubre de 2022)

carcelarios y la falta de atención responde también a imaginarios sociales respecto a lo que significa recibir un castigo por el delito cometido. Y es que en nuestra cultura cohabitan distintas concepciones de la justicia, por un lado, la que promueve la política criminal, basada en un sistema penitenciario nacional que cuenta con programas de justicia transicional y justicia restaurativa, y por otra, aquella que resulta de las representaciones sociales compartidas y en donde no hay justicia sin venganza, ni castigo. Esta segunda concepción, afirma Rodríguez<sup>7</sup>, poco tiene en cuenta la rehabilitación, la resocialización o reeducación de pena del victimario.

Ahora bien, así como la resocialización de los individuos implica la adopción de una perspectiva de la justicia que lleve a la garantía de sus Derechos Humanos fundamentales, implica, a su vez, la búsqueda de rutas formativas que lleven a la adaptación de los sujetos a la vida comunitaria, sus valores, leyes y costumbres, por lo que una reeducación ética y moral es determinante.

En los procesos formativos en las cárceles ha primado el desarrollo de competencias para el trabajo, lo que encuentra su razón de ser en la necesidad de garantizar su supervivencia por medios distintos a los que condujeron inicialmente a las personas a la privación de su libertad. Sin embargo, la transformación de sus prácticas no siempre va acompañada de un cambio en la manera de pensar y la reorientación consciente de las opciones de vida en el marco de una comunidad. Siendo este el escenario ideal.

Es por ello que la educación moral, ética y en valores tiene un lugar en la resocialización de los individuos, lo que se ve plasmado en el *Código penitenciario y carcelario*, Título VIII: Educación y enseñanza, en su Artículo 94:

La educación al igual que el trabajo constituye la base fundamental de la resocialización. En las penitenciarías y cárceles de Distrito

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<sup>7</sup> Montaña, M. y Martínez, N., *op. cit.*

Judicial habrá centros educativos para el desarrollo de programas de educación permanente, como medio de instrucción o de tratamiento penitenciario, que podrán ir desde la alfabetización hasta programas de instrucción superior. La educación impartida deberá tener en cuenta los métodos pedagógicos propios del sistema penitenciario, el cual enseñará y afirmará en el interno, el conocimiento y respeto de los valores humanos, de las instituciones públicas y sociales, de las leyes y normas de convivencia ciudadana y el desarrollo de su sentido moral.<sup>8</sup>

No obstante, la distancia existente entre las disposiciones institucionales y la realidad de las cárceles, así como las altas tasas de reincidencia en los delitos, abren el debate frente a las causas del fracaso en la rehabilitación y resocialización de los individuos privados de la libertad. En una sociedad acostumbrada a los binarismos como la nuestra, la indagación sobre estas causas conduce a dos alternativas excluyentes entre sí. O es culpa del Estado, sus instituciones y del medio en el que se desenvuelven los individuos o de la naturaleza malévola e incorregible de aquellos que delinquen.

En este escrito se propone una tercera alternativa, en un intento por superar posturas binarias que puedan resultar simplistas para el análisis de la conducta humana, ello con el propósito de dar curso a nuevas perspectivas de acción en lo que respecta a la formación moral y ética en las cárceles. El punto de partida de esta comprensión que será desarrollada en el segundo apartado de este texto, son las concepciones deweynianas de la moralidad, la naturaleza humana, el hábito y la formación del carácter moral.

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<sup>8</sup> República de Colombia. Ley 65. "Código penitenciario y carcelario, Título VIII: Educación y enseñanza, Artículo 94. Educación y enseñanza", disponible online en <https://www.notinet.com.co/codigos/capitulos.php?id=972> (último acceso: 5 de octubre de 2022).

## **Preámbulo conceptual a propósito de la resocialización de los individuos privados de la libertad**

### *Ideas acerca de la moral e ideas morales*

En *Naturaleza humana y conducta*, Dewey vincula la moral a “todos los asuntos de carácter particularmente humano” y a todas las disciplinas sociales que guardan una conexión profunda con la vida del hombre<sup>9</sup>. A la vez que llama ética a la ciencia que versa sobre la “conducta moral”, también llamada “vida moral” y lo que respecta a los juicios con que se evalúa.

La conducta o vida moral comprende tanto aspectos propios de la acción humana como del medio natural y social en el que ésta se desarrolla. Es decir, incluye aspectos psicológicos, biológicos, naturales y también sociológicos. Por lo que considerar solo a uno de estos aspectos para explicar la conducta, en oposición a los otros aspectos, además de reduccionista es arbitrario a la realidad en toda su complejidad. Esta separación hombre y medio ambiente revisten un carácter ficcional. En este sentido, es que resulta igualmente artificioso “inculpan exclusivamente a una persona, como si su índole malévol fuera la única causa de la maldad”<sup>10</sup> o exonerar de toda responsabilidad aludiendo a sus condiciones sociales.

Por eso, ningún proceso de formación ética y moral es suficiente si no hay garantía y mejora en las condiciones en las que se desenvuelve el individuo. Ello implica una constante reestructuración del medio ambiente y garantía de los derechos fundamentales tales como la salud, la educación, la alimentación, lo que implica cambios objetivos en las instituciones y sociedades, acorde al tipo de individuo que se busca formar porque:

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<sup>9</sup> Dewey, J.: *Naturaleza humana y conducta*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Dewey, J., *Op. Cit.*, 2014, p. 34.

podemos desear la abolición de la guerra, la justicia industrial, una mayor igualdad de oportunidades para todos, etc., pero, por mucho que prediquemos la buena voluntad o la regla de oro del cultivo de los sentimientos de amor y de la equidad, no lograremos obtener resultados, pues para ello es indispensable efectuar cambios en los sistemas e instituciones objetivos. Debemos actuar sobre el medio, y no solo sobre el corazón de los hombres. Pensar de otra manera es tanto como suponer que pueden cultivarse flores en un desierto o correr automóviles en una selva; lo cual es posible sin necesidad de un milagro, siempre y cuando se modifiquen previamente la selva y el desierto<sup>11</sup>

En la cultura colombiana, con una historia de violencia y de enemigos (guerrillas, paramilitares, pandillas, etc.) se ha dado un peso importante a la voluntad del individuo dentro de los procesos de reinserción, como si ésta dependiera exclusivamente de su fuerza y se desarrollara independientemente de su medio ambiente y de las circunstancias. Pero en un contexto de violencia, marginalidad, exclusión y falta de garantía frente a los derechos fundamentales de las personas privadas de la libertad, el actuar conforme a la ley y la moral difícilmente se traducen en un hábito o un principio de actuación.

Esto no significa, sin embargo, que no se deba permanecer en el esfuerzo de fortalecer el carácter moral del individuo en situación de cárcel y el desarrollo de hábitos morales si el fin es su resocialización. Pero si problematiza el hecho de hacer recaer en la voluntad de los individuos, todos los recursos necesarios para operar un cambio en su realidad.

Ahora bien, todo esfuerzo por estructurar el medio ambiente y garantizar los derechos fundamentales de cara a la resocialización, conlleva de suyo la garantía de acceso a la educación. Porque estructurar el medio ambiente sin un cambio en la sensibilidad y razonabilidad de los individuos que han incurrido en delitos es igualmente infructuoso. Ahora bien, ¿qué tipo de educación moral

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<sup>11</sup> Dewey, J., *Op. Cit.*, 2014, p. 38.



y ética puede aportar en este propósito?

En este punto es pertinente volver sobre una distinción que ya proponía Dewey entre ideas acerca de la moral y las ideas morales. En *Los principios morales en la educación y la formación de la voluntad*, Dewey deja en evidencia cómo en la educación moral tradicional prima la enseñanza de ideas acerca de la moral, es decir, la enseñanza de principios morales abstractos, de valores y de reglas de conducta *a priori*. Más cercano a un adiestramiento, las ideas acerca de la moral suponen un esfuerzo por llevar al sujeto a regular y mecanizar hábitos para controlar sus impulsos, a través de ideales externos. Sin embargo, estas ideas acerca de la moral resultan en ocasiones “arbitrarias” porque poco tienen que ver con los asuntos de la vida cotidiana de los individuos y las sociedades. Esa aproximación a la moralidad con frecuencia es irreflexiva, por lo que está vaciada de significación para el individuo concreto y no lo conduce a una moción interna en el mismo y a un compromiso en la acción. Al respecto Dewey afirma que no hay nada en la naturaleza de las ideas acerca de la moral, ni de la información sobre la honestidad, o la amabilidad, que hagan que de forma automática que tales ideas se transformen en una buena conducta o un buen carácter<sup>12</sup>.

Y es que la instrucción moral directa, asociada con la enseñanza de ciertas virtudes particulares y la inculcación de ciertos sentimientos relacionados con ellas, no influencia necesariamente la conducta, distinto ocurre cuando la persona construye ideas morales a través del análisis social. Tal como afirma Dewey, las *ideas morales* tienen un efecto sobre la conducta para mejorarla<sup>13</sup>. Estas son el resultado de la exposición del individuo al proceso de la vida social, de su propia experiencia y de su esfuerzo de significación *a posteriori*.

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<sup>12</sup> Dewey, J.: “Moral Principles in Education”, en Boydston, J. A.: *The Middle Works of John Dewey* (MW 4), Southern Illinois University Press, Illinois, 1977.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, convendría considerar que la formación moral es una cuestión primordialmente práctica, por lo que las ideas sobre moral preestablecidas tendrían que dejarse de lado. Por lo que, la educación moral debería centrarse en el examen de las relaciones humanas en acción<sup>14</sup>, partiendo de la cuestión de qué se debería hacer en cada situación. En este sentido, si la instrucción en teoría de la moralidad tiene algún valor práctico, tal valor está en el modo como ayuda a formar en la mente de aquel a quien se enseña el hábito de comprender por sí mismo y en sí mismo la naturaleza de las situaciones prácticas en las cuales él mismo se encontrará implicado.

Entonces, ¿hacia dónde deberíamos dirigir una formación moral y ética que busque favorecer la resocialización de los individuos? Hacia el desarrollo de la inteligencia social, el poder e interés sociales para el desarrollo de las capacidades activas del sujeto, es decir, de “sus capacidades de construcción, producción y creación” a partir de la experiencia propia y compartida. Solo así se podrá pasar del ese recogimiento egoísta (o ensimismamiento) hacia el servicio de carácter social<sup>15</sup>.

### *De la moralidad negativa a la moralidad positiva*

Para algunos estudiosos de la moral, uno de los propósitos principales de la educación moral es controlar la naturaleza humana, que consideran originalmente malévolos debido a la resistencia y rebeldía con la que responde al control externo. “Los moralistas de oficio, cuando no los teólogos y hasta los políticos, nos la han presentado tan malignamente dispuesta, que la moralidad no ha podido ser concebida de otro modo que como un

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<sup>14</sup> Dewey, J.: “Interest in Relation to Training of the Will”, en Boydston, J. A.: *The Early Works of John Dewey*, Southern Illinois University Press, Illinois, 1975.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

intento de controlar su ímpetu destructor”<sup>16</sup>. Sin embargo, estas consideraciones llevan a Dewey a preguntarse por la siguiente cuestión: ¿por qué el hombre establecería preceptos morales tan ajenos y contrarios a la naturaleza humana? Para el autor, la cuestión no estriba tanto en la naturaleza humana y la malevolencia adjudicada, sino en el hecho de que sean unos cuantos hombres quienes establecen los preceptos que las mayorías deben obedecer. En este escenario y ante la posibilidad de la sanción social o la exclusión, es que la conducta recta se identifica con aquella que no acarrea ningún castigo<sup>17</sup>. En relación con esto, precisamente Dewey expone que cuando el individuo se encuentra habitualmente expuesto tanto a la alabanza como al reproche, esto le hace pensar en cómo exculparse de una acusación o hacerse merecedor de aprobación. De tal manera que, la moralidad que exagera la culpa crea una actitud defensiva y de culpa, pues el individuo crea excusas en lugar de pensar en aquello que es digno de perseguir<sup>18</sup>. Esta concepción negativa de la moralidad es patológica en la medida en que pone el énfasis en la corrección de las actitudes que se consideran incorrectas en vez de la formación de hábitos de servicio positivos. Y es formal en cuanto enfatiza en el cumplimiento de reglas permanentes y necesarias, cuyo objeto no es valioso en sí mismo o vitalmente necesario para quién se acoge. A la moral negativa basada en principios abstractos y el control de la naturaleza malévola, se contrapone una apreciación más positiva de ella y que, de acuerdo con Dewey, se basa en un conocimiento científico de la naturaleza humana. Pero como no se llega a este

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<sup>16</sup> Pineda, D.: “Moral y Educación: algunas reflexiones a partir del pensamiento de John Dewey”, en *Revista pedagogía y saberes*, número 2, Bogotá, 1991, p. 42, disponible online en <https://revistas.pedagogica.edu.co/index.php/PYS/article/view/5313>

<sup>17</sup> Dewey, J. : *Theory of the Moral Life*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1932.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

conocimiento a partir de ideales abstractos, no se parte de la suposición de la bondad del alma, o de una consciencia interior que preservar de la corrupción de las condiciones y el entorno; como tampoco de la exaltación de los impulsos naturales. Es una moral que al fundamentarse en el estudio de los hechos busca la orientación en las posibilidades de tales hechos, localizando también los puntos de importancia y procurando los recursos suficientes que nos impulsa a inventar formas novedosas y eficientes que nos capaciten para proponer nuevos problemas que procuren acciones inteligentes, tal como lo expone Dewey<sup>19</sup>.

La moralidad positiva es, por tanto, una moralidad reflexiva que lleva a el individuo esté en la capacidad de ver por sí mismo lo que está haciendo, por qué lo hace, para que sea sensible a los resultados que pueden ser males, también imprevistos para analizar las fuerzas que lo hacen actuar de determinado modo<sup>20</sup>. Precisamente, la moralidad reflexiva necesita hacerse, volver a hacerse —una y otra vez—, de acuerdo con los requerimientos de cada situación. En consecuencia, hay una necesidad de reflexión y discernimiento es permanente<sup>21</sup>.

Una moralidad así busca la sabiduría en el discernimiento, es decir, poder elegir qué hacer. En donde su punto de referencia no es algo acabado, sino un futuro que se configura a partir de los deseos que se traducen e las convicciones que configuran la existencia<sup>22</sup>.

Una persona en situación de cárcel por su historia personal y comunitaria, pese a haber sido apresada por su acción, puede pensar que ser ladrón, gánster o político corrupto es algo que puede llevarle a un crecimiento. Sin embargo, una adecuada educación moral y ética, debería conducirlo a pensar sí el crecimiento en tal dirección promueve o retarda su crecimiento en general. Tal como

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>22</sup> Dewey, Op. Cit., 1977.

expone Dewey el crecimiento, no solo de tipo físico, intelectual o moral, es la ejemplificación del *principio de continuidad*. Además, para dicho crecimiento se debe especificar el fin que este tiene<sup>23</sup>.

La acción es resultado, más que de leyes abstractas o un canon de conducta preestablecido, de una elección reflexiva entre lo mejor y lo peor, ante la cual se hace necesario habituarse a preguntarse cuál es el curso de acción que se sigue de esta, es decir, la dirección en la que nos impulsa. Es por ello que, para Dewey la moral no es algo fijo que pertenece a la naturaleza humana, sino que se refiere a un actuar que si bien se supone es racional, también es falible y tiende a la autocorrección<sup>24</sup>.

La educación moral carcelaria, que busca disminuir los niveles de reincidencia, no se debe limitar al “conocimiento y respeto de los valores humanos, de las instituciones públicas y sociales, de las leyes y normas de convivencia ciudadana y el desarrollo de su sentido moral”<sup>25</sup>, debe centrarse en el discernimiento y habituación al examen de la propia vida y de las relaciones humanas en acción<sup>26</sup>.

El desarrollo de distintas capacidades asociadas al discernimiento será por tanto uno de los propósitos de una educación moral y ética positiva. Pero, ¿qué se requiere para hacer del discernimiento un hábito que contribuya a la disminución de la reincidencia en los delitos?

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<sup>23</sup> Dewey, J.: “Experience and Education”, en Boydston, J. A.: *The Later Works of John Dewey* (LW 13), Southern Illinois University Press, Illinois, 1988.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>25</sup> República de Colombia. Ley 65. (1993). *Código penitenciario y carcelario*, Título VIII: Educación y enseñanza, Artículo 94. Educación y enseñanza. <https://www.notinet.com.co/codigos/capitulos.php?id=972> (último acceso: 5 de octubre de 2022).

<sup>26</sup> Dewey, J., *Op. Cit.*, 1932.

## Los hábitos como funciones

Cuando hablamos de hábitos, pensamos en conductas repetitivas dominadas con cierta destreza, sin embargo, cuando Dewey afirma que educarse consiste en formar hábitos, lo que quiere decir es que es necesario desarrollar hábitos como “funciones”. El autor establece una analogía entre los hábitos y funciones fisiológicas como respirar y digerir, sin perder de vista que los hábitos son voluntarios y las funciones son involuntarias. Dewey se centra en aquello que les asemeja, a saber, que requieren la cooperación del organismo y el medio ambiente: “para respirar hace falta tanto el aire como los pulmones; digerir es cuestión tanto del alimento como de los tejidos del estómago”<sup>27</sup>; a su vez, los hábitos morales se manifiestan tanto en el ambiente social como en las personas.

En lo que respecta a las disposiciones morales, se suele considerar que es algo pertenece al individuo con independencia del medio natural y social. Sin embargo, la honradez, la responsabilidad, la venganza, la avaricia son “adaptaciones activas de las capacidades personales a las fuerzas del ambiente (...) las virtudes y vicios son acciones recíprocas entre elementos aportados por la constitución de un individuo y otros suministrados por el medio exterior”<sup>28</sup>. La sociedad actúa como coadyuvante para que los hábitos puedan manifestarse.

La conducta, la manera de comportarse una persona, a diferencia de un proceso fisiológico es compartida, es cómplice, es social: “lavarse las manos ante las culpas de otros es una forma de compartir la culpabilidad, ya que estimula en los demás una manera viciosa de actuar”<sup>29</sup>.

La abstracta teoría jurídica que demanda la “venganza” de la ley, haciendo a un lado la educación y reforma del malhechor, es una

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<sup>27</sup> Dewey, J., *Op. Cit.*, 2014, p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 33.

negativa a aceptar la responsabilidad, lo mismo que el blandengue que convierte en una pobre víctima al criminal<sup>30</sup>. Ambos procedimientos, son formas en que la sociedad se excusa arrojando la culpa sobre el criminal. Este por su parte, la atribuirá al medio en que creció. Así se llega a una separación ficticia entre el hombre y su medio ambiente que se ha venido denunciando por medio de distintos argumentos en este texto.

Dado que la sociedad actúe como coadyuvante para que los hábitos puedan manifestarse, la modificación de las condiciones influirá en su transformación<sup>31</sup>:

Mientras no conozcamos las condiciones que han contribuido a la formación de los caracteres que aprobamos o desaprobamos, nuestro esfuerzo por crear los primeros y desterrar los segundos, serán ciego y titubeantes (...) El problema moral consiste en modificar los factores que influyan ahora en los resultados futuros. Para cambiar el carácter o la voluntad de otra persona, tenemos que alterar las condiciones objetivas que entran en sus hábitos<sup>32</sup>

Al inicio del presente ensayo afirmábamos que la instrucción en valores es insuficiente para la formación moral y ciudadana, mientras las personas en situación de cárcel sigan experimentando la violación de sus derechos humanos más fundamentales, la marginalidad y la exclusión; y ahora parece quedar más clara la razón de esta enunciación. Un cambio de hábito no es posible directamente y por acción única de la voluntad del individuo. Pues si bien el estímulo del deseo y el deseo es un paso necesario para la transformación de los hábitos es indispensable un cambio en el medio circundante<sup>33</sup>.

Es importante recordar que los hábitos son inclinaciones con una

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34.

<sup>31</sup> Dewey, J., *Op. Cit.*, 2014

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, pp.35-36.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 38.

fuerza impelente formada por cierto número de actos específicos donde es identificable cierta predisposición, o aptitud para actuar de una manera específica<sup>34</sup>. No solo elegimos acciones, elegimos cursos de acción y a través de ellos a nosotros mismos. Con nuestras elecciones formamos nuestra personalidad y otorgamos sentido a nuestra conducta.

Sin embargo, no hay que perder de vista las circunstancias, pues unos actos son más casuales que otros. De acuerdo con esta proposición, aunque podemos predicar de un hombre en estado de embriaguez que no es el mismo es necesario distinguir entre el caso de la persona abstemia que se deja dominar de la bebida y el caso de la persona en que la ebriedad es señal de hábito formado por sus elecciones y debilidad del carácter<sup>35</sup>. De otra parte, hay actos más, menos y nada pensados, con mayor o menor calidad moral:

Muchos actos se realizan no solamente sin pensar en su calidad moral sino prácticamente sin pensar en nada. Sin embargo, esos actos son condiciones previas de otros que sí tienen considerable valor. Un delincuente que se encamina a cometer un crimen y un hombre bondadoso que va a realizar una obra de caridad tienen ambos que andar, cabalgar o valerse de otro medio de transporte. Tales actos, no morales aisladamente, derivan su significación moral de los fines a que conducen<sup>36</sup>

De acuerdo con Dewey, la persona que pasa por alto la conexión entre los actos rutinarios y aquellos que tienen un valor moral es, además, de una persona irresponsable, indigna de confianza. De tal manera que, la mejor prueba del carácter moral bien formado es la que permite saber cuándo surge una cuestión moral o no. Es así como, Dewey distingue tres niveles de comportamiento y conducta: i) el que es motivado por las necesidades de orden

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<sup>34</sup> Dewey, J., *Op. Cit.*, 1932.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem.*



biológico, económico y de índole no-moral, que tiene, en todo caso, efectos sobre lo moral; ii) en el que el individuo acepta con poca reflexión las normas de su grupo; iii) el caso en el que el individuo piensa y juzgar por sí mismo, donde no acepta normas sin reflexión<sup>37</sup>.

Una conducta irreflexiva, errática o inestable es producto de los actos escogidos con anterioridad. A través de la educación moral positiva, se busca entre otras cosas, que el individuo aprehenda el sentido de lo que está haciendo y cambiar cuando es necesario, para el crecimiento en general, su curso de acción; por medio de la habituación a una conducta reflexiva para la acción. Uno de los fines de este tipo de educación es la formación de un carácter estable:

La continuidad, la coherencia a través de toda una serie de actos, es expresión de la perdurable unidad de actitudes y hábitos. Las obras forman un conjunto porque proceden de un ser mismo y estable. La moralidad habitual tiende a descuidar o empañar la conexión entre el carácter y la acción; la esencia de la moral reflexiva consiste en que es consciente de la existencia de un ser persistente y del papel que desempeña en lo que se hace externamente.

Todo hábito introduce continuidad en la actividad y proporciona una ilación. Pero no podemos olvidar que la naturaleza humana es cambiante y en continua construcción, la falla y el error es siempre una opción. Sin embargo, si el hábito fracasa, la única alternativa para no obrar al capricho o al azar, según Dewey, es la reflexión y la visualización de un propósito común existente entre los actos separados que les brinde unidad y continuidad. Por ello, la educación moral en las cárceles además de orientarse al hábito de la reflexión, el examen de la vida propia y comunitaria; y tener por fin la formación de un carácter estable debe conducir a la creación

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem.*

de nuevos fines que orienten la acción presente y futura<sup>38</sup>:

Dar interpretación y dirección a la experiencia, permite a las personas en situación de cárcel ir orientando su conducta a la adquisición de nuevos hábitos que los lleven a romper con las líneas de acción conocidas y que los han conducido al lugar en el que están. Una actitud reflexiva, dirá el filósofo español José Barrientos, contribuye a saber “quiénes somos, quiénes deseamos ser, cuál es la naturaleza de lo que nos rodea o cómo podemos aspirar a algo más allá de la materialidad de lo dado no nos edificamos (ni crecemos) como sujetos<sup>39</sup>

### **La educación filosófica para personas privadas de la libertad**

Para la adquisición de nuevos hábitos reflexivos y el desarrollo de actitudes dispuestas al discernimiento y el examen de la acción propia y comunitaria, está la filosofía. Sin esta

En *Filosofía y educación*, obra de Dewey publicada por primera vez en 1930, éste recuerda como en la Antigua Grecia, la cuestión de sí la virtud puede ser enseñada fue presentada como:

la cuestión de si es posible implantar en la naturaleza humana aún cruda, y por medios deliberados y planificados, aquellas características que hacen del individuo algo valioso; y si dichas cosas así implantadas inculcarían en él un amor activo del bien y lo dotarían de aquellas capacidades que requiere para servir a la sociedad en que vive.

La educación desde aquella época fue pensada como “el medio para la institución de la vida buena entre los hombres”. La filosofía, por su parte, se constituía en el estudio de la naturaleza de esta vida buena y de las condiciones para su realización. Filosofía y educación estaban orgánicamente conectadas, sin embargo, cada una siguió su propio camino con el pasar del tiempo. Dewey se pregunta si, tal vez, no ayudaría una reunificación a dar dirección e

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>39</sup> Barrientos, J., Packter, L., Carvalho, J., *Op. Cit.*, 2014.

integridad a la educación, así como solidez y vitalidad a la misma filosofía<sup>40</sup>.

Nuestra propuesta es que sí. Si bien todo conocimiento, aprendizaje técnico, disciplinar o artístico abre nuevas perspectivas de comprensión y acción a la persona que se educa, exista o no contenido moral en lo que se aprende, haya o no filosofía, este conocimiento es parcial e incompleto. La filosofía, en cuanto forma de conocimiento que se pregunta por la totalidad de lo real, ayuda a recoger los hilos de todas las tendencias del conocimiento en una corriente central que contribuye a la organización y significación de la experiencia; favoreciendo la identificación de las actitudes más fundamentales y generales que exigen de nosotros y cuáles son los nuevos campos de acción a que nos llaman.

La filosofía favorece el desarrollo de una actitud reflexiva, crítica y analítica desde cada uno de sus ámbitos. La formación ética aporta al discernimiento y la toma de decisiones, la lógica ejercita el pensar mejor y de manera ordenada, la hermenéutica ayuda a comprender a otras personas y concepciones de mundo, en su dimensión social y política ayuda a comprender quienes somos y la relación del sujeto con la comunidad y las instituciones<sup>41</sup>. Sin embargo, ello supone un concepto de filosofía más práctico que teórico y que puede ser accesible para cualquiera que no sea experto en la historia de la filosofía, pero que se comprometa en el uso de las herramientas del pensar lógico, crítico y ético.

Respecto al valor que puede comportar la filosofía para las personas en condición de cárcel puede leerse, en un artículo publicado el 17 de enero de 2019 bajo el título *Una clase de filosofía en ERÓN, el pabellón de máxima seguridad de La Picota,*

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<sup>40</sup> Dewey, J.: “Philosophy and Education”, en Boydston, J. A.: *The Later Works of John Dewey* (LW 5), Southern Illinois University Press, Illinois, 1930.

<sup>41</sup> Barrientos, J., Packter, L., Carvalho, J.: “Entrevista a José Barrientos”, en *Introducción a la filosofía aplicada y a la filosofía clínica: aplicaciones y fundamentaciones*, ACCI Madrid, 2014, p. 143.

el testimonio de Sofía (nombre dado para proteger la identidad de la estudiante de filosofía de la UNAD):

Voy a cumplir 8 años de estar aquí. Estoy estudiando hace cinco. Logré el subsidio del INPEC y la UNAD y me puse a estudiar pila todos los semestres. Me gustó la filosofía y despertó muchas cosas buenas en mi vida, me dio pensamiento crítico frente a lo que soy como persona, como mujer y frente a la sociedad que me rodea. En realidad, nosotras hemos ganado aquí muchos espacios, como por ejemplo ejercer la garantía de los derechos. Aquí las personas que nos cuidan, que son los guardías, la mayoría piensan que porque somos personas que estamos detenidas dejamos de ser sujetos de derechos y lo que no saben es que se nos limita la conmoción, pero que seguimos siendo ciudadanas y sujetos de derechos y garantías<sup>42</sup>

En Colombia, aún son pocas las instituciones educativas que han podido ingresar a los escenarios de reclusión con programas de profesionalización en filosofía para los reclusos, mucho menos con proyectos de práctica filosófica. Los proyectos de práctica filosófica en cárceles con más trayectoria han sido liderados por el grupo Marfil liderado por Víctor Rojas de la Universidad Minuto de Dios, y han estado dirigidos al desarrollo de comunidades de diálogo e indagación enmarcados en el programa de Filosofía para Niños y se proyecta en vinculación con el proyecto internacional BOECIO que lidera el profesor José Barrientos-Rastrojo de la Universidad de Sevilla.

El proyecto BOECIO se orienta al desarrollo de talleres de filosofía inspirados en la filosofía estoica que buscan el fortalecimiento del pensamiento crítico, reflexivo y el gobierno de las pasiones. Estos talleres se desarrollan actualmente en prisiones de Brasil (Prissao Serra Azul I), México (Centro femenino Santa Martha Acatitla,

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<sup>42</sup> Méndez, V. (2019). *Una clase de filosofía en ERÓN, el pabellón de máxima seguridad de La Picota*. En UNAD Noticias. <https://noticias.unad.edu.co/index.php/unad-noticias/todas/2641-una-clase-de-filosofia-en-eron-el-pabellon-de-maxima-seguridad-de-la-picota>

Reclusorio Sur, Centro de Reclusión CESVPO), Argentina (Penal NRO 5, Victoria, Entre Ríos) y España (Centro Penitenciario Las Palmas II). En Colombia se está desarrollando un diplomado en la Universidad Minuto de Dios y próximamente se espera su ingreso a cárceles de Bogotá. Por su parte, en la Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (UNAD)<sup>43</sup> se ha realizado una adaptación de los talleres para un curso en entornos virtuales de Aprendizaje (AVA), denominado *Filosofar como entrenamiento para la vida*, el cual espera integrarse dentro de la oferta de electivas para los estudiantes de la universidad que se encuentran privados de la libertad.

El curso *Filosofar como entrenamiento para la vida* está compuesto por dos unidades académicas que se corresponden con las herramientas que brinda la filosofía para el fortalecimiento del pensamiento en dos sentidos, a saber, *ethos* y *logos*. En la primera unidad denominada *Ethos* se abordará el gobierno de las propias pasiones y el adquirir fortaleza suficiente para no dejarse llevar por ellas, hacerse autónomos o dueños de las propias acciones y tomar decisiones basadas en la naturaleza racional. En la segunda unidad denominada *Logos* se buscará una visión más reflexiva, profunda de lo real y una capacitación para evitar la confusión y la manipulación de agentes externos o de uno mismo.

## Conclusión

Aquello que se ha expuesto acá a partir de la reflexión filosófica son dos aspectos concretos: i) la necesidad de volcar la filosofía a los problemas contemporáneos que adolecen las sociedades en sus diferentes contextos, en este caso concreto, la situación carcelaria en contexto colombiano; ii) realizar un análisis filosófico de la

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<sup>43</sup> Hace parte en concreto, del Proyecto de Investigación Especial –PIE– 071.

naturaleza humana desde algunas obras de Dewey. Esto permitió indagar de manera crítica por otras formas que puedan aportar a la resocialización de las personas en condición de cárcel, apostando por talleres de formación ética desde el estoicismo de acuerdo con el Proyecto BOECIO y, en este caso concreto, desde el Proyecto de Investigación Especial –PIE 071– de la UNAD. De tal manera que, se trata de trascender a aquellas posturas que desencadenan en un binarismo, si se quiere decir así, o en una falacia del falso dilema en el que el problema de la resocialización o es culpa del Estado o de la naturaleza malévolamente de los individuos. De manera que, la tercera vía expuesta en este escrito permite evidenciar formas más elaboradas e interdisciplinarias de análisis de la conducta humana, pero no solo del análisis, sino de propuestas que contribuyan finalmente en lo social, lo político y lo ético.

En la medida que los talleres filosóficos impulsan la actitud reflexiva, crítica y analítica, que en este caso es contextual. Es decir, los individuos en condición de cárcel no están suspendidos en el mero análisis de las ideas como el filósofo tradicional, sino que la filosofía es un recurso para confrontarse con su cotidianidad en sus relaciones con los otros y en su autorreconocimiento. De allí que, la filosofía no sea un estilo de vida, pues no es una moda ni es pasajera. Sino parafraseando a Aristóteles, la filosofía es un modo de ser, en este caso, un modo de vida.

Finalmente, quedan otros campos de vulnerabilidad social que pueden ser explorados como las instituciones escolares y la necesidad de hacer este trabajo desde la interdisciplinariedad con ayuda de otras ciencias humanísticas, sociales y de la salud.

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# **BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE WORLDS OF COUNSELING AND PHILOSOPHY. LESSONS FROM THE WORLD OF KARL JASPERS**

## *CONSTRUYENDO PUENTES ENTRE LOS MUNDOS DEL COUNSELING Y LA FILOSOFÍA. LECCIONES DESDE EL MUNDO DE KARL JASPERS*

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**Abstract:** Karl Jaspers, a psychiatrist turned philosopher, always maintained an interest in all facets of what it means to be human. Because of this, his writings contain many ideas which can be useful to counselors of all persuasions. This paper introduces four of Jaspers' ideas which, when considered all together, create a positive feedback loop that leads to greater efficacy in the counseling setting.

The first, limit situations, includes the kind of situations a client is commonly in when she decides to seek help, for example, encounters with death, suffering, guilt, or loss. The second, meaningful connections, involves finding and establishing significant relationships that lead to greater understanding of what the client herself finds important. The third, the use of symbols, facilitates the client's encounter with Being and gives her access to the Truth. The fourth, freedom, encourages the client to weigh all possibilities of a situation and to choose what is best for her.

The dynamic process that ensues by interacting with these four ideas throughout the counseling process can enable the client to have a stronger sense of herself and to be more resolute as the subject of her life. The case study of a thirteen-

year-old girl, whose presenting problem was cutting herself, is used to demonstrate how these four ideas can yield efficacious outcomes.

**Keywords:** freedom, limit situations, meaningful connections, philosophical counseling, symbols, transcendence

**Resumen:** Karl Jaspers, psiquiatra convertido en filósofo, siempre mantuvo el interés por todas las facetas del ser humano. Por ello, sus escritos contienen ideas que pueden ser útiles para los consejeros de todas las tendencias. Este artículo presenta cuatro de las ideas de Jaspers que, consideradas en conjunto, crean un bucle de reacción para mejorar la eficacia del *counseling*. La primera, las situaciones límite, abarca el tipo de situaciones en las que suele encontrarse un cliente cuando decide buscar ayuda, por ejemplo, encuentros con la muerte, el sufrimiento, la culpa o la pérdida. La segunda, el uso de vínculos importantes, implica la búsqueda y el establecimiento de relaciones importantes que den lugar a una mayor comprensión de lo que el propio cliente considera importante. La tercera, el uso de símbolos, facilita el encuentro de la clienta con el Ser y le da acceso a la verdad. La cuarta, la libertad, anima a la clienta a sopesar todas las posibilidades de una situación y a elegir lo que es mejor para ella. El proceso dinámico que se produce al interactuar con estas cuatro ideas a lo largo del proceso de asesoramiento puede permitir a la clienta tener un concepto más fuerte de sí misma y ser más decidida como sujeto de su vida. El estudio de caso de una niña de trece años, cuyo problema era que se autolesionaba, se utiliza para demostrar cómo estas cuatro ideas pueden dar resultados eficaces.

**Palabras clave:** libertad, situaciones límite, relaciones significativas, orientación filosófica, símbolos, transcendencia

## Introduction

Karl Jaspers, an eminent German philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, began his professional life as a psychiatrist. His first major work, *General Psychopathology*, generated a movement of thought about what it means to be human.<sup>1</sup> His interest in the psychology of man spread into his philosophical works, which makes many of them

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Jaspers, K.: *General Psychopathology*, vol 1&2, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore, 1963.

useful to counselors, regardless of their training and theoretical framework.

This paper presents a dynamic model designed to be used in the counseling setting and is derived from four important ideas of Jaspers: limit situations, the significance of symbols, meaningful connections, and freedom. When utilized in concert, the client is helped to understand and transcend the limit situation she is most likely in when she seeks counseling. By recognizing what is meaningful to her, and by being encouraged to make a choice based on that, the client will become stronger and freer to create a life of her own choosing. This enables her to transcend the limits of future situations in which she will find herself and to have a greater capacity to take on more complex challenges<sup>2</sup>

In order to demonstrate this model in action, the case presentation of a 13-year-old girl who was referred because she was cutting herself is offered. Because it involves her ‘coming of age,’ a working knowledge of the concepts of limit situations, meaningful connections, symbols, and freedom are shown in high relief. This case also demonstrates how, when the client gains an understanding of and internalizes this therapeutic process, the counselor ultimately can make herself unnecessary.

## **The Case**

At the point “Juliet’s” parents brought her for counseling, these upper middle class, college educated, Catholic parents were up against the limits of their understanding. No matter how hard they tried, they couldn’t figure out why their daughter, “out of the blue,” was now cutting herself. They were experiencing anxiety and guilt,

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<sup>2</sup> Cfr. Jaspers, Karl: *Truth and Symbol*, Colledge and University Press, New Haven, 1959.

wondering how this destructive behavior could be happening within the confines of their own home. They wanted this potentially life threatening behavior to stop, and brought her to me for counseling because they hoped I would be able to help.

### *Limit Situations*

Jaspers calls the kind of circumstance Juliet and her parents were in, 'limit' or 'boundary' situations.<sup>3</sup> They include suffering, struggle, death, chance and/or guilt. When these situations occur, a person experiences her lack of ability to comprehend fully what is happening. There is nothing firm or stable, no absolute to rely upon, and no support for her experience and thought. Her vision does not extend far enough to help her to know what to do. She is up against the limits of her own understanding.

Being in limit situations is very uncomfortable. The person often wants to ignore or escape from them. A healthier alternative would be to make use of what she is faced with to expand her level of awareness, while increasing her ability to deal with life's on-going complexities. This alternative makes limit situations fruitful domains for the establishment of what is meaningful, and to be free to make choices based on what the person values. In this way, he or she can more fully realize their authentic self. Since this is not a simple, straightforward process, the most productive place for a person to make full use of limit situations is generally with a counselor who understands their value.

Since none of us, Juliet, her parents, or myself, understood why cutting had become a meaningful activity for her, one of my starting points was to try to find this out. I hoped that she could become free to choose other, healthier alternatives. Though an obvious place to start would have been a traditional psychiatric or

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<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Jaspers, K.: *Philosophy*, vol. 2, Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970.

psychological approach, Juliet's parents chose me to be her counselor because they knew my thinking tended toward the philosophical rather than the psychological. Because Juliet did not look like someone who was trying to avoid a complete psychotic break, or about to commit suicide, I was better able to set aside what I had previously learned about people who self-injure and directly address the lovely, intelligent, yet shy girl who was now my client.

After I asked Juliet questions to help her become more aware of why she was cutting herself, such as, "What does it do for you?" "What kind of relief does it give you?" and "How does it make you feel when you cut yourself?" I found she could not answer those questions, and she did not want to talk about cutting herself. She felt she could stop cutting herself on her own, and she did not want any exercises that related to bringing greater awareness to that behavior.

Because my work with clients is participatory, I took her at her word and began to flesh out the things she was most interested in exploring, the things that were meaningful to her. I did this through dialogue and through the use of symbols. Over time, we came to understand that she wanted to learn what her feelings and needs were; how to express them, not only at home, but at school and with her friends; how to know what she was interested in; and what she liked and didn't like; how to think things through and make good decisions for herself. As it turned out, our intuitions about how to proceed were correct.

### *Meaningful connections*

Knowing what is important to the client is essential to a good outcome. A useful tool that comes from phenomenology is one that suggests the counselor understand the world of the client and her lived experience. Without putting any abstractions on top of the

client's experience, the counselor becomes capable of entering into her world with her particular and multifaceted intentions, as well as her beliefs and involvements. Gradually the counselor comes to understand what the client values, how one event emerges from another in her life, and the ways they are linked together. This process is called a phenomenological reduction. It enables the counselor to recognize the client's identity beyond its surface appearances.

Jaspers refers to this process as one of establishing meaningful connections.<sup>4</sup> It is important that these connections be identified because they are key to the client's and the counselor's understanding of the situation and enabling the client to address it in the best possible manner. In this case, I identified the connections meaningful to Juliet in four ways: by hearing the significant content she disclosed about herself, through my observations of her mannerisms and behaviors, through my self-reflection, and through the symbols she used when she engaged in a process called sand play. As you will see, these four elements converged into one coherent whole, and each illuminated it from its own point of view

### *Symbols*

Over my many years of counseling, I have often made use of a tool called "sand play" which utilizes symbols as its basis of communication. Jaspers' chapter on truth and the use of symbols was essential in helping me to justify its use within the confines of philosophical counseling.<sup>5</sup> His explanation of symbols as cyphers

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<sup>4</sup> Cfr. Schilpp, Paul A: *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, Tudor Publishing Co, New York, 1957 and Strong, Marilee: *A Bright Red Scream*, Penguin Group, New York, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. Jaspers, Karl: *Truth and Symbol*, College and University Press, New Haven, 1959.

which can disclose the transcendent ground of empirical existence and provide a path to authentic selfhood cinched my argument as to why philosophical counselors would want to consider using sand play in their work

Sand play, developed in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Margaret Lowenfeld, a British pediatrician, is a process in which the client makes a scene, or series of scenes, in a sandbox using miniature toys. <sup>6</sup>A complete sand play collection ideally contains everything in the world. People of all cultures, religious figures, wild and domestic animals, fantasy figures, houses, plants, and vehicles are among some of the things commonly represented. The client is instructed to pick figures from the shelves they particularly relate to and then to arrange them in the sand box in a way that makes sense. Whatever the client picks is meaningful. Through observing the scenes she creates, the client and counselor find the connections that make each figure relevant while having an opportunity to view her symbolic world.

For Jaspers, genuine philosophizing involves the hovering of thought at the frontier between itself and the Other, which thought makes present but which transcends thought at its border. Symbols, which he refers to as cypher-scripts of being (along with religion, philosophy, and art), are a bridge between the Self and the Other, providing the person engaging with them with a philosophical awareness of being.

Sandplay, with its use of symbols, can be considered a form of cypher-script. Not only do the worlds the clients create reveal their Being in a way that couldn't be seen otherwise, but they are also helpful in coming to understand what a client is meaningfully connected to, and in illuminating their world view. Sand play, like all other symbols, also helps the client to overcome subject-object

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<sup>6</sup> Cfr. Hutton, Deborah: "Test of Time: Margaret Lowenfeld's 'World Technique'", *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 9(4), 2004, pp. 605-612.

duality, to know the truth of their Existence, and to live from the place of that truth.

Though some philosophical counselors might object to their use on the grounds that symbols are not rational, Jaspers emphasized the importance of including the non-rational in the domain of human existence. Reason alone cannot overcome the subject-object dichotomy, nor can it exhaust the possibilities of understanding ones' Self and one's world. This is why human beings need symbols. They enable consciousness of being in the objective world through the grasping of the object, which simultaneously brings about the consummation of subjectivity. It is only by this holding of the subject and the object together that the individual finds the truth. Although, as far as I know, Jaspers did not know about the practice of sand play with its use of symbols, I can't help but think, given his understanding of the prime importance of symbols in encounters with Being and the truth, he would have been enthusiastic about its use.

### *Juliet's Being as Revealed through her Symbolic World*





This photo is of the second sand world Juliet created. To the untrained eye, it might appear to be a box of sand with some toy figures in it. However, for the eye trained to think in terms of truth as being found in the polar relationship of subject and object, of world views, and of symbols as cyphers of transcendence, this photo presents an opportunity to experience a representation of Juliet's Being at the historical point in time in which she constructed this sand tray.

Within her world, on the surface of things and objectively speaking, are two houses, a church, some trees, Disney figures, dogs, rabbits, snails, a sheep and lama, and a representation of a wave. But, if you stop to think that Juliet chose each object in the tray as well as chose where she placed them, then you can begin to conduct a phenomenological reduction<sup>7</sup> of the world she created. She is the subject, in a polar relationship to the figures she chose. Through a process of perception, imagination, and representation, and through experiencing the world she created, her inchoate Being will begin to become present, and more real.

Juliet's meaningful connections to this world she created were, first of all, established through what she had to say about it and the things contained within it. While hovering in a balance between Self and Other, Subject and Object, she could begin to know what was important to her. Through what she freely chose, as well as by what she said, she was making it possible to transcend both herself and her situation.

What were some of the understandings Juliet and I gained through observing and talking about her world? First, we noticed there were no people. Her world included only animals and fantasy figures. As we talked more about her situation, she revealed that people were frightening to her. She was afraid of their negative judgments. Because of her fear, she could not get close to them. As she came

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<sup>7</sup> Cfr. Husserl, Edmund: *Ideas*, Routledge, New York, 1931.

to understand her view of her world as being a frightening one, she and I set about constructing rational thought patterns that better served her and allowed her to come closer to others.

We also noticed there is nothing in the center of her world. In order to be the Subject of one's life, one must be located in the center of one's world. Coupled with the fact that it is a sheep who seems to be surveying the whole scene, and that, like in Handel's "Messiah" "All we like sheep have gone astray," helping Juliet to move to the center of her life, to become the Subject of it, readily appeared as a central task of our work.

In front of the house, she labeled as her grandmother's are a few friendly dogs and bunny rabbits. By contrast, she placed two snails in front of the house she said was the family home. This ultimately led us to talk about how safe she felt to be herself at her grandmother's home, while at her own home she often felt vulnerable – like a snail that can so easily be squished when stepped upon.

A group of familiar Disney cartoon characters, whom Juliet called her family, can be found in the lower right hand corner of her world. Her choice of humorous, yet satirical, figures to embody this caricature epitomized her experience of feeling like "a cartoon figure in a cartoon graveyard". Like Paul Simon on his album, "Graceland," we would look for her shot at redemption by giving her and her parents tools which would transform them from parodies to authentic human beings and which would allow her to feel more safe, especially within the confines of her immediate family.

Juliet picked the same church and put it in every world she made. At that time, her religious beliefs were adopted from Catholicism. Perhaps for that reason she placed her spiritual life, as represented by the church, on the periphery of her world, rather than in the center of it. However, because she was persistent in placing the church in her world, she was revealing her spiritual life as

something that she held sacred. This makes it likely that at some point in time she will engage in the task of making her spiritual life her own.

During the course of our work together, Juliet took time to make five worlds in the sand. Each one enabled us to further establish what was meaningful to her and gave us the means to talk about it, whatever “it” was. For example, the different kinds of domestic animals and plants gave her the opportunity to talk about her love of nature and of spending time alone, which she especially wanted to do more of. When I asked her what kinds of activities she enjoyed doing alone, she mentioned sketching. At that time, she shared a bedroom with her younger sister. In the course of that conversation, it came up that if she had a room of her own, she could enjoy sketching as much as 2½ hours a day within its confines.

When Juliet entered counseling, her parents had become so desperate to stop her cutting behavior that they were thinking of taking all the doors in their home off their hinges so that Juliet would never have an opportunity to be alone and therefore would be unable to cut herself. Intuitively I felt Juliet needed more time alone, not less, but I didn’t have any substantial ‘proof’ to support my intuition. When I was able to tell them of her expressed desire, revealed through the symbols she chose, her parents ended up furnishing Juliet with a room of her own. I believe her obtaining this space was another factor in her discontinuing her destructive behavior. She was given a safe place to allow her inside life to come out creatively.

Other symbols Juliet chose in later sessions that proved to be of importance included that of a girl runner, as well as of a cheerleader. These proved important in helping Juliet to know what she was meaningfully connected to and to more fully becoming the subject of her life. At the beginning of our work, Juliet could not admit what her interests were. As a result, her father thought it best

that she should put equal efforts into volleyball and basketball. He was getting ready to send her to volleyball camp because he thought it would be good for her. Once Juliet was able to voice her definite preferences for track and cheerleading, she was able to get her parents further on board to support her interests rather than theirs.

Her choices even affected the family vacation that year. Her parents had decided Las Vegas would be the perfect place to go, but when, through her choice of the Disney characters mentioned earlier, as well as of the palm tree and water wave, Juliet was able to talk about her love of California, Disneyland, and the beach, they decided a trip to Southern California would be a better idea.

Not only did she get to have the vacation of her choice, but she also gained the opportunity to become a real person in a family that responded to her requests. This is another example of how she learned to know what she wanted and to give voice to it. She also learned that when she succeeded in doing these two things, she was much more likely to get what she wanted and to feel satisfied. The trip to Disneyland never would have happened if she had not made her wishes known.

One additional symbol Juliet chose, which nicely illustrates how readily a symbol becomes a cypher of transcendence when the space is made for that to happen, was a camera. Her use of that figure led us to talk about her love of being creative. I asked her to name some of the ways her creative abilities express themselves. It took her no time to mention other things besides photography. Finding different ways to solve math problems, drawing and painting, weaving, working with clay, and being a coach for younger children were included in her list of creative activities she enjoyed and found meaningful. Through our dialogues, Juliet came to realize that her creativity is a strength, something she can always draw upon, not only for her benefit, but also for the benefit of others.

Each of the five worlds Juliet created can be understood as a cypher-script of her Being. They enabled her to transcend the situation she was in, both vertically and horizontally. Said another way, she achieved a greater understanding of herself and her world, which empowered her to make connections with, and to learn about, those things that were meaningful to her. Each world she created enabled her to discover and to learn about her authentic self as it presented itself to her in her historic present. Through each creation, she came to be more open towards herself and her future, in which the actualization and communication of new forms of her Being were, and will continue to be, realized.

As long as men and women have been living on this earth, they have found meaning in symbols. As can be seen in this case, the primary material to be communicated through them is not intellectual, but rather represents a quality of experience.<sup>8</sup> Their essence is a tone of feeling, something that an empirical description could not provide. The encounter with symbols can help a client to enter a very different atmosphere, one in which the relationship between her personal existence and the universe around her is transformed, enabling her to transcend her current situation through thought- and then, subsequently, by action.

### *Freedom*

As I began to understand Juliet through what she was meaningfully connected to, rather than focusing on emotional pain and confusion, I began to think of her in more existential terms. She was a young woman who had not been allowed to be free to become herself. As a result, she could not make decisions and be responsible for them. She could not become the subject of her life.

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<sup>8</sup> Cfr. Jacobi, Jolande: *Complex, Archetype, Symbol in the Psychology of C.G.Jung*, Princeton Univ. Press, New York, 1959.

Part of our work would be to help her to establish herself as a free agent in a world she would have a hand in creating.

A person becomes free by broadening her world orientations, by visualizing and enacting possibilities of action, and by allowing all motives to speak and work within herself. The origin of freedom arises when it is pitted against the superficiality of chance and against the arbitrary volition of the moment. As it is enacted, the process of 'I am, I must, I will, I chose,' becomes the person's source of freedom.<sup>9</sup>

Pragmatically speaking, how would Juliet and I find solutions to problems that arose from her authentic self<sup>10</sup>, rather than from the child she had been conditioned to be? In what situations would I help her learn to make choices that would show her more clearly to herself, choices freely made, arising from what was meaningful, rather than what was imposed upon her? If she could learn how to make independent, rational choices from her authentic self and also could learn how to make use of ultimate situations such as the one she was currently in, beyond helping her to stop injuring herself, these would be very good outcomes.

Fortunately, Juliet's parents understood that it was entirely possible they had played a part in their daughter's self-destructive behavior, and they were willing to change. The three of us started a dialogue regarding their philosophy of parenting. We found that, though in principle they believed the purpose of raising a child is to help her become an independent, rational human being, their actions did not support that goal.

Rather than helping her to achieve greater autonomy, responsibility, and awareness, Juliet's parents, by being overly controlling and allowing only super high achievements to count,

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<sup>9</sup> Cfr. Jaspers, Karl: *Philosophy*, vol. 2, Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970.

<sup>10</sup> Cfr. Jaspers, Karl: *Philosophy of Existence*, Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1971.

were unwittingly teaching her to be servile and timid. Juliet had to think and act as her parents wanted her to and always had to behave in the manner they expected. It seemed one of the reasons Juliet was cutting herself was that it was one of the only autonomous acts she could think of in which she could communicate her distress, and which also gave her some release and relief.

Over time, I helped the parents learn that a high degree of insularity and control doesn't promote motivation or increase a person's will. As a result, they decreased the amount of control they exerted, allowed Juliet to take more risks, increased the number of independent activities in which she could be involved, and encouraged her to take part in exploratory learning, rather than telling her what to do.

### **Case Summary**

When I reviewed the summaries of all eighteen sessions that took place over a period of nine months, I found in every one various ways in which I helped Juliet to become the subject of her life by establishing the connections that were meaningful to her, and then by helping her to rationally think her way through a process of creating a world that was more satisfying to her. I believe this was what helped her most.

She cut herself only once more while we were working together, and that was about two months into our work. I think as she learned to do other things that made her feel better and that she would like to do more of, as she learned how to step back from situations so she could make better decisions for herself, and as she gained more autonomy, the cutting issue took care of itself. Juliet now had better things to do and successful ways to go about doing them.

As we worked together, Juliet came to know herself better, which enabled her to become the subject of her life. By the end of our

work, she was able to think through such problems as how to assert herself against her music teacher, how to shave time off of her track events, how to decide whether or not to become a cheerleader, and how to manage her time and her grades. It also included becoming the agent of her sexuality, which enabled her growth from that of being a girl to becoming a young woman.<sup>11</sup> Although the agreed upon ‘highest good’ at the beginning of our work was perceived to be helping her to stop cutting herself, by the end, it included so much more that enabled her to flourish within a world that she was learning to create to suit herself.

## Conclusion

When approaching a problem such as self-injury, many people chose to pursue psychological or psychiatric methods. However, there are increasing numbers of people who don’t feel comfortable with these paradigms and who would prefer to try another approach. This is when philosophy, specifically the ideas of Karl Jaspers, can be very useful.

Beginning with an understanding of the limit situation the client is likely in, and then continuing on with the establishment of connections meaningful to both the client and counselor, established through dialogue and the use of symbols, all with the aim of enabling the client to become free to be the subject of her life, the counseling process becomes a dynamic process of transcendence. Along the way, the client internalizes the capacity to work with these four aspects of existence. This gives her the ability to utilize them on her own in any situation she will face in the future.

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<sup>11</sup> Cfr. Tolman, Deborah L.: *Dilemmas of Desire*, Harvard Univ. Press., Cambridge, 2002.



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# PHILOSOPHY AS A BEST PRACTICE: TOWARDS A POSSIBLE GUIDELINE FOR PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING

*LAS BUENAS PRÁCTICAS EN LA FILOSOFÍA: HACIA UNA POSIBLE  
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**Abstract:** This article aims to be a brief synthesis of my personal experience as a certified philosophical counsellor – as practised in the last 10 years – that I shared in the form of a presentation with the global audience of students and expert colleagues during the *1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Philosophical Counselling*, organized by Professor Balakanapathi Devarakonda, Department of Philosophy, at the University of Delhi, 14-16 January 2022. The conference was held under the aegis of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR), New Delhi, and the Department of Education, University of Delhi.

The philosophical horizon, “*the train of thought*” (Whitehead, 1978), within which I find most of the ‘travel friends’ for extending the dialogue with my clients, forms the first part of the article, together with some frequently asked questions, both on the client’s and the counsellor’s side.

The second part of the article includes a couple of real practical cases, a good and a bad one. As a presentation, it was aimed to stimulate discussion on the decisions made, and analyse eventual controversies together.

Thus, for the time being, the presentation was meant to be mainly a helpful handout, while as a work in progress, it has a more ambitious goal: to become a sort of ‘Guideline for Philosophical Counselling as a Best Practice’, that borrows some lexicon from the medical field, along with few methodological criteria.

I am well aware that this goal may appear as risky as hard to fulfil, since we all know there is not only ‘one philosophy’, neither only one vision of the world, nor a unique method for philosophical counselling. There are too many geographical, historical, anthropological, linguistic – in one word, cultural – implications that make the philosophical scenario always complex and multifaceted. Therefore, not a one-size-fits-all handbook on philosophical practice, but rather a guideline based on evidences that will end with some recommendations.

As a matter of fact, one frequent objection moved against the application of philosophy as an effective way to help ordinary people in managing everyday life problems is that philosophical counsellors generally refuse to adhere to standards that may prove the quality of their work, and ground its validity.

Recommendations will be classified from grade A to grade C, according to their validity in terms of practical efficacy and positive outcomes for the clients:

- Category A: strongly recommended for implementation, and supported by numerous successful cases, philosophical texts and studies;
- Category B: recommended and accepted as a practice, supported by limited evidence and philosophical literature;
- Category C: represents an issue for which limited consensus regarding its validity exists.

In the final text I would like to include a few pitfalls, as well as some open issues and a list of tips and tricks which may be beneficial to our younger colleagues and practitioners.

**Keywords:** philosophical counselling, meaningful questions, communication, time, happiness, recognition, art.

**Resumen:** Este artículo pretende ser una breve síntesis de mi experiencia personal como asesora filosófica certificada – ejercitada en los últimos 10 años – que compartí en forma de presentación con la audiencia global de estudiantes y colegas expertos durante el Primer Congreso Internacional Conferencia sobre Orientación Filosófica, organizada por el Profesor Balakanapathi Devarakonda, Departamento de Filosofía, Universidad de Delhi, del 14 al 16 de enero de 2022. La conferencia se llevó a cabo bajo los auspicios del Consejo Indio de Investigación Filosófica (ICPR), Nueva Delhi, y el Departamento de Educación, Universidad de Delhi.

El horizonte filosófico, “el tren de pensamiento” (Whitehead, 1978) dentro del cual encuentro a la mayoría de los ‘amigos de viaje’ para ampliar el diálogo con mis clientes, forma la primera parte del artículo, junto con algunas preguntas frecuentes, tanto del lado del cliente como del consejero.

La segunda parte del artículo incluye un par de casos prácticos reales, uno bueno y otro malo. Como mi presentación tuvo el objetivo de estimular la discusión sobre las decisiones tomadas y analizar en conjunto eventuales controversias.

Por lo tanto, así, la presentación pretendía ser principalmente un folleto útil, mientras que como trabajo en curso tiene un objetivo más ambicioso: convertirse en una especie de 'Guía de Buenas Prácticas para la Orientación Filosófica', que toma prestado algún léxico del campo médico, junto con pocos criterios metodológicos.

Soy muy consciente de que este objetivo puede parecer tan arriesgado como difícil de cumplir, ya que todos sabemos que no existe una sola filosofía, ni una sola visión del mundo, ni un único método de asesoramiento filosófico. Hay demasiadas implicaciones geográficas, históricas, antropológicas, lingüísticas, en una palabra, culturales, que hacen que el escenario filosófico sea siempre complejo y multifacético. Por lo tanto, no se trata de un manual de práctica filosófica de talla única, sino de una guía basada en evidencias, que terminará con algunas recomendaciones.

De hecho, una objeción frecuente en contra de la aplicación de la filosofía como una forma efectiva de ayudar a la gente común a manejar los problemas de la vida cotidiana es que los asesores filosóficos generalmente se niegan a adherirse a estándares que puedan probar la calidad de su trabajo, y fundamentan su validez.

Las recomendaciones se clasificarán del grado A al grado C, según su validez en términos de eficacia práctica y resultados positivos para los clientes:

- Categoría A: fuertemente recomendada para su implementación y respaldada por numerosos casos exitosos, textos filosóficos y estudios;
- Categoría B: recomendada y aceptada como práctica, respaldada por evidencia limitada y literatura filosófica;
- Categoría C: representa un tema para el cual existe un consenso limitado en cuanto a su validez.

En el texto final me gustaría incluir algunas 'trampas', así como algunas cuestiones abiertas y una lista de consejos y trucos que pueden ser beneficiosos para nuestros colegas y profesionales más jóvenes.

**Palabras clave:** Asesoramiento filosófico, preguntas significativas, comunicación, tiempo, felicidad, reconocimiento, arte.

## Introduction

Philosophy as a corpus of knowledge is probably as ancient as the human species: the moment when human beings started

questioning about the meaning of their condition can be recognized as the start of philosophy. Philosophy always begins with a question, and the question often begins with a why.

Many questions – all stemming from the human need to understand and know why things happen and how – may be the same, but answers may differ significantly, as they are strongly connected to the culture, history, geography, language and time we are living.

In the practice of philosophical counselling, they may also depend on the philosophical preferences of both the counsellor and, in some cases, the client.

Here are some of the fundamental and most recurrent questions which may accompany the philosophical conversation during a session of counselling, and that may arise directly from the client, or the counsellor.

*Why do we live? Why do we die?*

They are universal and timeless questions connected to the sphere of our existence and experience of Life and Death, and our perception of Time. They can drive the research of the individual along the pathways of supernatural and transcendental – metaphysics, spirituality, ontology, and religion are the philosophical horizons. I consider Lou Marinoff (born 1951) an anchoring author in particular with regard to what he calls “the big questions” (Marinoff, 2003). I think the Greek Aristotle (384 -322 BC), taught by Plato and tutor of Alexander the Great, and the contemporary British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) are some excellent sources for reading and discussing life and death with my clients. Intense discussions may arise from crucial decisions that today's individuals or families may face regarding – for instance – their becoming parents after a risky illness, often by means of frozen embryos through an in vitro fertilization procedure.

*Why do we need to act in a virtuous way? What is Good and what is Evil? Why do we need to live in a societal form? How do we choose to behave in one way or another? Where do our ideas come from? How do they become an ideology?*

They are all questions related to morality, ethics and politics. They may refer to the concept of free will, to our relationship with other people, and to the quality of human communication. Seneca (4 BC-65 AD) – the Roman philosopher of Stoicism – is one of my favourite references, together with Plato (428/7-348/7 BC), the Greek philosopher taught by Socrates (470-399 BC). In my practice, the German philosophers Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Karl Marx (1818-1883), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), and Jürgen Habermas (born 1929) are pivotal sources to enhance critical thinking skills, and reinforce the exercise of a constructive doubt, *de omnibus dubitandum*, when we are in search of truth. A current dilemma may refer to the global pandemic situation – if getting vaccinated can be considered a moral imperative, a health-policy-related choice or an economic decision.

*Why do we need to prove our beliefs with facts and observations?*

This also sounds like a very contemporary matter (just think of the growing power of data and data analysis as a source of truth!) but it is more or less the same question that Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), the Italian philosopher and scientist born in Pisa and formed at the University of Padua, asked himself when trying to prove that Ptolemy was incorrect. According to the Greek tradition, the Earth was in the centre of the universe, around which all celestial objects orbited. Galileo proved Ptolemy wrong by using a telescope for the first time to observe Venus, thus confirming the hypothesis of a heliocentric system put forth by Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543),

with the Moon travelling around the Earth. Galileo gave a start to the scientific cosmology, moving the designated centre of the known universe from the Earth to the Sun. Epistemology and the philosophy of science are the fields where to draw for sources, knowledge and inspiration for clients who prefer to debate in a rational and more scientific way, but at the same time, are looking for a meaningful change of perspective.

*Why do we create a work of art? Who establishes that an artifact is a work of art or it is not? Why do we enjoy listening to music, reading literature and poetry, admiring paintings and sculptures? Why do we like going to the theatre, opera house and cinema, or to visit an ancient church?*

These are all questions connected to the aesthetic dimension of life, to the concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*) and the experience of beauty, which is strictly (even if not always) connected to the experience of happiness at one of its highest grade. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the principal founder of phenomenology, may provide a deep foundation for our dialogue. French contemporary philosophers such as – among many others – Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), Francois Lyotard (1924-1998), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) and Jean-Luc Nancy (1940-2021) can be truly enlightening when examining ‘the body’ and ‘the flesh’ as key concepts in our experience of pleasure and love. And if we consider these two concepts on a different level of analysis, they may also be crucial for bringing out the aesthetic dimension of the dialogic process itself, which essentially connotes the philosophical encounter between the counsellor and the client.



*Why do we need to define objects? Why do we need to understand the meaning, the origin and the sense of the concepts we use?*

These are questions regarding semiotics, semantics, logic and philosophy of language. A reflection on these questions, in polyphony with the voices – again – of Russell, Rudolf Carnap (1871-1970) and Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917-1992) may help our clients to better understand the implications of the way they think and how they speak (or write) about their lives and others.

Philosophy in practice does not look for clear answers. It mainly aims for a deeper understanding, sometimes a different vision of the world – hopefully, one more respectful of nature! – and at other times to encourage the experience of the research itself, together with the satisfaction which derives from it.

Thus, why should we, as philosophical counsellors, be worried about not to have the right answers for our clients if we are able to share some meaningful questions with them?

## **Two cases**

### *The first case*

Anna R. is a 42 years old manager, living near Turin, Piedmont area, Northwest Italy. She is the R&D Director of an international chemical company. She and her husband adopted a girl (Federica) when she was 3 years old, and now she is 15. In the last two years, she has been feeling a strong desire to become a mother for the second time. She would like to resort to in vitro fertilization with embryo transfer and artificial insemination as they are an infertile couple. Her husband (Piero) is doubtful: he is a man of faith, and has a sort of moral and ethical resistance against it. He thinks that this kind of choice goes against nature, as becoming parents is

existentially and ontologically linked to the conjugal act. In the case of impossibility – as it is for them – he thinks that an ethical decision, socially more acceptable and significant, is the adoption of an already-born child. Piero's position has generated a conflict between them that – as she said during our first session – has spoiled their relationship in time, in many aspects: the daily dialogue between them tends to be monothematic, and often ends up with quarrels. Their physical relationship has been affected, and their adolescent girl seems to escape from both of them, isolating and refusing any involvement in this matter – apparently she never showed any wish to have a brother or a sister. Besides, lately, she has had some rare outbursts of rage, and Anna is worried about her misbehaviours. Anna has looked for advice from relatives, colleagues and friends, and has spent the last couple of months meeting a psychologist once a week; at present, she feels more confused and disoriented than ever.

We met eight times. Questions arising from her storytelling regarded at first the concept of Time: *was her desire connected to her age, her awareness of the time passing – being 42 years old, or the recent loss of her father? Moreover, did the loss of her beloved father make her think about what matters and what does not?* We spent an entire session trying to clarify the edge of her desire to have her own child, and we read some passages from Seneca's *De Brevitate Vitae* (Seneca, 49 AD). For the Roman philosopher, it is how we use our life and how we consider ourselves that is strictly connected to our well being, and consequently, to time and death:

It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it. Life is long enough, and a sufficiently generous amount has been given to us for the highest achievements if it were all well invested<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Seneca, Lucius Annaeus: *On the Shortness of life*, I 13.

Regarding her right to desire this new parental experience, we discussed a sentence by Friedrich Nietzsche taken from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody* (Nietzsche, 1883-1885):

Everything about a woman is a riddle, and everything about women has a single solution: that is, pregnancy<sup>2</sup>

Even if, for Nietzsche, the idea of pregnancy was linked to his project of a radical transformation of modern humanity, yet his words contain a positive hope in what a new life may present us. Then we examined her husband's position. I suggested that finding different sources on ethics could be used as a valid philosophical background for discussing the morality of in vitro fertilization with embryo transfer in a wider perspective. We commented Aristotle and his concept of Nature (as matter and form):

that embodies within itself an innate principle by which it has the ability to move itself or keep itself at rest<sup>3</sup>

The end towards which its development moves:

The form indeed is 'nature'... for a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it has attained fulfilment than when it exists potentially<sup>4</sup>

According to Aristotle, a rational account of a being (logos) is subject to the same principle that governs the physical motion and generation of a being. Piero's ratio and value system seem mainly to refer to the concepts of respect for human life and natural procreation as in the document written by the Catholic

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<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: a Book for Everyone and Nobody*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, p.57.

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle: *Physics* I, 192a 12-27.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle: *Physics* II, 193b 7-8.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF, 1987), which is partly rooted in Thomas Aquinas's (1225-1274) ethical theory based on natural law, which in turn comes from Aristotle. The CDF interpretation of the Scholastic philosopher would drive us to consider immoral the practice of artificial insemination just because of its being "unnatural", and only natural things are inclined to goodness. But for Thomas Aquinas, the natural tendency of human beings is toward good, as

every act of reason is responsive to natural inclination, and so every rational act is virtuous<sup>5</sup>

Reason is the light which guides our actions, and it has been placed by Nature and thus by God so that virtuous acts are the results of an examination under the aegis of reason. As Aristotle writes:

the work of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral virtue; for virtue makes us aim at the right mark, and practical wisdom makes us take the right means<sup>6</sup>

We discovered that Anna was probably moved by both a natural desire to bear her genetic child, and by a rational examination of the situation of her family – with her full-time role in the Company that she would like to change and reduce, and her daughter as an only child which reconnects to time and death. Above all, Anna accepted that nothing was wrong with her desire. She decided to share these philosophical reflections with her husband as proof of her understanding of his doubts. She tried to make him see both the good and moral aspects, and the rational ones behind all the scientific research that developed the new reproductive technologies for the successful treatment of infertility,

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<sup>5</sup> Aquinas: *Summa Theologica*, Ia-IIae, q.20 and 94, art. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144a 7-10.

and that they were not necessarily in contrast with his religious beliefs.

After that, Piero admitted that he also had some fears regarding the possibility of damage suffered by the embryo during the process of transferring into the mother's uterus, a fear that Anna could share. She said she trusted her physician, and reminded him that one couple of their best friends had had a child with artificial insemination – all had gone smoothly, and both parents were happy with their newborn.

We moved on to consider her daughter's position. Federica was in her adolescent period, which fundamentally is an ongoing research of herself and the gradual making of her own identity. She reasonably found the world outside (indeed quite unknown) more attractive than her family (indeed quite known). On one side, her parents – this brand new type of conflictual couple – were suddenly unwelcome to her and destabilizing. Was she afraid to lose certainties – in a period when she is justified to have none – and her familiar supportive walls? On the other side, because of this moment of disruption, she probably needed her parents' stability and their unquestionable love more than ever. Could a brother or a sister threaten parental love for her in some way?

With regard to her tendency to isolate and not to talk to her parents, we examined the value of communication as a fundamental, structural, primary need for all human beings, and maybe for all living creatures. We read some parts of the text written by Paul Watzlawick (1921-2007) focussed on his theory regarding human communication (Watzlawick, 1967). The fresh example of our open, argumentative and free-from-prejudice conversation – a Socratic dialogue which went gradually in-depth – could show how thoughtful words can be helpful for clarifying a confusing situation, trying to untangle knots and enlightening the dark corners of our thoughts and beliefs.

Anna said that they habitually exchange information through short written messages with Federica on the smartphone. We reflected on how Western philosophy originated in live conversations: the Athenian philosopher Socrates considered only face-to-face discussions as an effective means to communicate what is real and what is not, what is good and what is evil, what is our role in the world and how we should live. Socrates had not had great respect for the written word, as we learn from the platonic dialogue *Phaedrus* (Plato, 370 BC):

It will implant forgetfulness in their souls. They will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks<sup>7</sup>

Socrates, as well as his student Plato, thought that when a person talks directly to an individual when individuals discuss together, things may change and evolve. New perspectives and rational understanding may emerge; furthermore, the dialogic mode may testify to attention, care and affection to the other person. The mere existential fact to be ‘bodily’ together makes the quality of the relationship grow and transform in a more positive way. Anna and I shared some basic considerations on communication: it is not only what we say that counts, but also the way we say it: the tone, the closeness, the fondness, the glance, the demeanour, the kindness etc., they are all capital elements to express respect for the other, and – in her case – for what Federica thinks and how she feels. In this context, the communicative process, made of reciprocal listening (Barrientos, 2009) and understanding, does not have to be only verbal (idem, 2021), as pauses produce sense and may hold thoughtful meaning.

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<sup>7</sup> Plato: *The Phaedrus*, 274b-277a.

So then, why not look for a peaceful moment when mother and daughter may listen to each other and talk in an open, frank way? It can be a refreshing change in a time when young people prefer texting to talking. They are more used to noting things down, writing messages and comments, browsing and posting on social networks, than to facing and speaking directly; and generally, everything appears plainer when spoken than when unspoken. After a clarifying conversation, even Federica's need to be silent takes on more significant contours. Sitting in silence does not necessarily imply empty gaps to be filled or an uncomfortable vacuum between detached individuals, but can be read as a valuable moment of reflection, self-growth and freedom within a lively, sympathetic familiar frame.

We spent an entire session examining Federica's occasional outbursts of rage. As Peter Vernezze (born 1959) writes:

Most of us tend to be Aristotelians when it comes to anger. While admitting that uncontrolled anger is harmful and ought to be avoided, we reject as undesirable a state of being that does not allow us to express legitimate outrage<sup>8</sup>

In *De Ira* (45 AD), Seneca invites us to think about what is worth our getting angry, and suggests for our own good to zoom out of the situation, to “draw further back, and laugh”<sup>9</sup> because “anger is a kind of madness”. And let's think about Socrates – I reminded Anna – one of the greatest examples of wisdom of the ancient world, unjustly accused and executed in prison in 399 BC: he never showed any anger, nor any feeling of revenge, as we have learned from the platonic dialogues the *Phaedo* and the *Crito* (Plato, 360 BC).

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<sup>8</sup> Vernezze, Peter: “Moderation or the Middle Way: Two Approaches to Anger”, in *Philosophy East and West*, volume 58, number 1, Hawaii, 2008, pp. 2-16.

<sup>9</sup> Seneca, Lucius Annaeus: *De Ira*, 3.37.

Therefore, the consequent question was: what had caused those episodes of Federica's angriness? Could mother and daughter try to examine the succession of events in a peaceful way? Anna and I agreed on the fact that sometimes trying to juxtapose daily unpleasant events of Federica's quotidian with the immensity of the universe – its mystery, its beauty, its influence on us – could be a useful stratagem to downgrade her occasional rage.

Then came the following question to ask Federica: Considering what caused your outburst of rage, do you think it really mattered so much, was it really so important to make you lose your reason? Because if the cause is not so relevant, our reaction, on the contrary, is: losing control, with the desire to hurt, offend, and hit people and things, which may be destructive and dangerous. And if we do not succeed in dominating anger, the same anger will end up dominating us.

Finally, we examined Anna's lack of desire for intimacy with her husband, taking into account the concepts of pleasure and love. For Epicurus (341-270 BC), pleasure is the end of all actions, in a complex sense: if we think of a standing state of pleasure (*katastematic*) it is meant as freedom from pain in the body (*aponia*) and in the mind (*ataraxia*); if we consider a more transitory pleasure (*kinetic*) it is meant as the satisfaction of a natural desire which sometimes can be necessary as eating, drinking, resting, and sometimes is not, as having sex in the form of *Eros*. They are natural desires, but not at the same level of importance. For instance, many individuals may live a full, rich life without experiencing *Eros* and practising sex, but nobody can live without eating, drinking or sleeping. The Greek concept of *Eros* sometimes includes *Pathos*, a strong ardour that refers to a wide range of emotions – physical attachment, affection, and passion that may end in a sort of obsessive and ill desire. If the concept of *Eros* includes the physical pleasure, the Greek word *Philia* refers to a more spiritual and intellectual attachment, such as good



friendship. The Latin word *Amor* is in-between the two concepts: when we love someone, we desire that person totally: physically (which is not only related to sex), emotionally and mentally. In a more contemporary philosophical analysis, these three elements – the person’s physical body, the emotions and the mind are linked together *ab origine*: embodied, and embodied in flesh. It is so in Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). We feel wholly attached to our loved one; we suffer his or her absence; when we are not together, our well-being is compromised.

So then, how did Anna feel about her husband? She asked herself what kind of pleasure she was experiencing with Piero: could she live without him? Indeed she said she still loved him – even if her sentiment had changed and deeply transformed. They had known each other for so many years! She said they both had contributed to the economic well-being of the family in a balanced way, their roles were interchangeable, and she considered this aspect very important. They were ‘partners’, not only ‘husband and wife’, but she regretted their not being also ‘lovers’.

How could she recover this missing part of their long-lasting relationship? Why not share experiences they both like and enjoy? Why not carve out some joyful moments as a non-parental couple? This could restore a feeling of reciprocal friendship, desire and complicity that could help them in various aspects of their Eros. Moreover, this occasional escape could be beneficial for Federica as well: she needed to be trusted in her growing independence, and two parents who were getting along well again were much easier to manage.

“Do things together that we both like!” Dinner out more frequently, going to the gym together, going to the cinema and the Opera house with Piero – Anna made a list of things she would like to do again with her husband. They had been so absorbed in their

parental role to forget they were two individuals who had known and loved each other for many years before becoming parents.

### *The second case*

If Anna's recent case has been one of the longest of my philosophical practice (in terms of the number of sessions), the following one has been one of the shortest – just three sessions. The case dates back to 2016, and I think it can be educational to remember it briefly as I consider it a sort of 'bad case', not *per sé* but for the decisions that emerged. In medicine, in surgery, a bad case is when something goes wrong – in the diagnosis, in the therapy, in the operating room – and the outcome is not what is expected. This was the case, and I will try to explain to you why.

Sergio is a second-year student reading Law at the University of Padua, Venetian area, Northeast Italy. He is 21 (high school in Italy goes on until 19) and has two younger brothers and one older sister. Both his parents are lawyers, and run a good law firm with a solid reputation. Recently he feels always tired. He is missing lectures and tests, losing weight and energy. He has seen his family doctor, had clinical examinations, but no physical problem has emerged. Apparently, he is in good health, but he is always "not feeling well".

His parents wanted him to meet a psychiatrist, but he independently decided to see a philosophical counsellor instead. He found me by word of mouth, through a friend of his family who had been one of my clients.

"How do you think that philosophy could help me?" was Sergio's first question, and many, many others followed. In the beginning, Sergio was very curious about philosophy in general. We agreed on what the Stoic and Roman philosopher Seneca tells his younger friend Lucilius on philosophy (Seneca, 65 BC), which "is not a way

to amuse our mind, but an exercise to guide our actions and mould our souls”<sup>10</sup>. During our first session, he showed a strong interest and competence in the paintings and wood sculptures that I have in my studio.

He confided to me that his strongest interest was in Art, and that the choice of Law had been the only option considering the tradition of his family. He was a decent piano player, but his real passion was painting. “Follow your Muse”, I said to him. We examined the origin of the word Muse, which is Greek – and it relates to music (sharing the three initial letters) and art in general. Its Latin roots include the concepts of ardour, passion, and intense desire – again, a wide range of emotions and feelings referring to Eros, love. That sort of uncontrolled tension can be unusual and worrying in Sergio’s familiar context. Art is, according to Raymond Williams’s interpretation, a “structure of feeling”, not “a picture of reality”<sup>11</sup>. Yet, Art is not irrational, since – for the contemporary German philosopher Jürgen Habermas – it is coherent with a “communicative reason” that accomplishes an experimental and pragmatic expression of human needs. Artworks need an intersubjective dimension of ‘social’ recognition (of their being works of art), but at the same time, promote the growth of the person’s subjectivity and provide the motivational structures for moral autonomy and scientific reasoning<sup>12</sup>.

“What about following your Muse?” – I asked him again during our second session. Art transcends cultural and language

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<sup>10</sup> Seneca, Lucius Annaeus: *Moral Letters to Lucilius: On Philosophy the guide of life*, L.16.3.

<sup>11</sup> Boucher, Geoff: “The politics of Aesthetics Affect – A reconstruction of Habermas’ Art Theory”, in *PARRHESIA*, number 13, Melbourne and Dundee, 2011, pp. 62-78.

<sup>12</sup> Cfr. Habermas, Jürgen: *The Theory of Communicative Action I*, Peacon Press, Boston, 1984, pp. 86-95. Habermas, Jürgen: *The Theory of Communicative Action I*, Peacon Press, Boston, 1984, pp. 239-40.

boundaries, and helps people to feel more lively. Sergio quoted Joan Miró, the Catalan painter when interviewed in 1975 on the death of General Franco, and being asked what he had done to oppose the Spanish dictator: “A simple line painted with the brush can lead to freedom and happiness”.<sup>13</sup> We went on reading together Seneca. In the Letter n. 32 the Roman philosopher invites Lucilius to stick to his own project and mind:

I am indeed confident that you cannot be warped, that you stick to your purpose, even though the crowd may surround and seek to distract you. What, then, is on my mind? I am not afraid lest they work a change in you; but I am afraid lest they may hinder your progress. And much harm is done even by one who holds you back, especially since life is so short; and we make it still shorter by our unsteadiness, by making ever fresh beginnings now one and immediately another. We break up life into little bits, and fritter it away<sup>14</sup>

But Sergio did not stick to his passion, and that is why I consider this case ‘a bad one’. In a way, he could not: he did not feel free to cultivate his interest in Art. During the third and last session, he told me that his parents considered his desire of studying art as a foolish project. Art was seen by his family as the “professional choice of a loser”. However, he had succeeded in talking to them openly, and considered this fact an upgrade in their relationship. He was feeling better, and that was our last encounter.

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<sup>13</sup> Adams, Tim: “Joan Miró: A life in paintings”, in *The Observer*, London, 2011, available in <https://theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/mar720/joan-miro-life-ladder-escape-tate> (last access February the 8<sup>th</sup> 2022).

<sup>14</sup> Seneca, Lucius Annaeus: *Moral Letters to Lucilius: On progress*, L32.2.

## Conclusions

Both cases may contribute to our better understanding of the complexity of the decision processes. If the first example highlights the value of each individual position, trying to facilitate the reaching of a wise agreement within a family whose members still love each other and share a common project, the last case reminds us that parents can be deluded in what they wish for their children, and their projects may differ from each other.

Even Lucilius' parents would have wanted worldly success for him, the continuation of the family property and fortune, and his contribution to the fatherland. Seneca does not condemn them, who are probably moved by parental love, but tells us that life is short and only truly goods are eternal. He encourages Lucilius to believe in himself, indulge his vocation for poetry and use his own reason.

That is just our hope as philosophical counsellors: helping human beings to see more clearly what really matters to them, an exploration which – most of the time – leads to a better quality of life.

## Acknowledgement

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## PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING: COMMON PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS IN BUSINESS

### *CONSEJERÍA FILOSÓFICA: PROBLEMAS FILOSÓFICOS COMUNES EM LOS NEGOCIOS*

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**Abstract:** In this article, I introduce problems which, while being philosophically relevant, are also common in business settings. I present the problems of responsibility, integrity, and autonomy and explain some of the specificities of their application in business settings. I explain that the relevance of the problems discussed in philosophical counseling comes from their significance at an existential level. I illustrate some of these problems by showing how they play out in particular philosophical counseling cases that I have conducted.

**Keywords:** Philosophical Counseling, Business, Responsibility, Integrity, Ethics, Existential Concerns.

**Resumen:** En este artículo, presento problemas que, si bien son filosóficamente relevantes, también son comunes en entornos comerciales. Presento los temas de responsabilidad, integridad y autonomía y explico algunas de las especificidades de su aplicación en el ámbito empresarial. Explico que la relevancia de los problemas discutidos para la consejería filosófica proviene de su significado a nivel existencial. Ilustro algunos de estos problemas mostrando cómo se desarrollan en casos particulares de asesoramiento filosófico que he llevado a cabo.

**Palabras clave:** consejería filosófica, negocios, responsabilidad, integridad, ética, preocupaciones existenciales.

## **Introduction**

This paper is aimed at philosophical counselors and philosophical practitioners in general. The scope of its discussion, though involving issues which are relevant to any person, is in particular relevant to philosophical counseling clients who are, in terms of their careers, business executives.

A motivation of mine in writing an article with this scope comes from the peculiar position which I occupy in my own career. I am currently a Professor of Philosophy at a Brazilian business school. That position gives me, to a certain (perhaps small and yet useful) degree, a sort of insider's view in terms of the sorts of issues which are relevant to executives. For instance, I occasionally can see in class how some of the issues discussed in this article play out in the lives of particular people. I also have the opportunity to see how these issues play out in the lives of philosophical counseling clients. I mention in this article some of those cases as a way of illustrating specific points.

I start by making explicit certain assumptions from which I will work. One is that existential issues fall within the scope of what can be appropriately addressed in the context of a philosophical counseling process. To that assumption, another is connected: developing one's sense of integrity, responsibility and autonomy (which are the problem I focus on in this article) are necessary parts of a healthy life at an existential level. A third assumption is that there is such a thing as existential needs – a notion to which I refer in certain parts of the article. I ask the reader to keep in mind that many of the points made in this article have those assumptions in the background.

## **Philosophical Counseling and its Usefulness in Business Settings**

Why does it make sense to talk about using Philosophical Counseling (PC) to support business executives? PC can, in general, be useful in a person's process of self-development. That is so because some of the core issues in the lives of human beings (e.g. existential and ethical ones) are philosophical in nature. Addressing those issues from a philosophical perspective, in the context of a PC process, allows for their development at a practical level.

This means that PC could be potentially useful to any person with existential or ethical issues. As will become evident, the issues I point out here are indeed relevant to any person and, if not properly attained, will cause problems at some level. But I focus here on issues which apply in a peculiar way in business settings. Issues which are commonly made problematic by the very way in which companies are structured. The discussion of this article reflects needs which are relevant to the lives of any person and that are under a peculiar kind of pressure in business settings<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> It is relevant to mention a sense of contribution to society involved in PC work with executives. That comes from the fact that the influence of large companies on our society is increasingly evident. Figures compiled by Global Justice Now in 2017 shows that 69 of the top 100 economic entities are and only 31 are governments. Analyzing 200 entities, the difference is even bigger, 157 are corporations and 43 are governments. The weight of business in society makes plain the impact of some of the executive's decisions. Given the ethical implications of those decisions, Philosophical Counseling for executives becomes a relevant contribution. Global Justice Now: "69 of the richest 100 entities on the planet are corporations, not governments, figures show", available at <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/news/69-richest-100-entities-planet-are-corporations-not-governments-figures-show/> (last access September 1st, 2022).

Lou Marinoff's comments on the ideal role of a philosophical counselor point to an issue which illustrates clearly both the usefulness of PC and its peculiarities within business settings:

While a philosophical counselor does not normally tell a client what he ought to do, or make moral decisions for him, a philosophical counselor can indeed help a client ascertain whether a proposed action is consistent or inconsistent with respect to the client's own belief system or worldview<sup>2</sup>

The kind of contribution described by Marinoff in the above quote is more central than it might seem at first look. Executives are not valued by how well they are able to “ascertain whether a proposed action is consistent or inconsistent with respect to the client's own belief system or worldview”. Quite the contrary, they are valued in as much they pursue relentlessly corporate goals – whether or not those goals are consistent with their belief and value systems. Such a pattern is so encrusted in business settings that out of habit some executives won't even take into account their own genuine beliefs while making work-related decisions<sup>3</sup>.

Ran Lahav also points to a potential contribution of philosophical counseling, which appears to be particularly relevant in business settings:

Since much of a person's worldview is normally expressed only implicitly, in an unarticulated manner, the role of the philosophical counsellor is to examine it critically<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Marinoff, Lou: *Philosophical Practice*, Academic Press, San Diego, 2002, p.13.

<sup>3</sup> From their perspective, that is not part of their job. The issue with that is that eventually the executive's neglected existential needs present themselves forcefully, at which point ignoring them is no longer an option. That's when a philosophical counselor can be of support in the way described by Marinoff.

<sup>4</sup> Lahav, Ran. “Using Analytic Philosophy in Philosophical Counselling.”, in *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, number 2, volume 10, Cambridge, 1993, P.243.

With the above point, Lahav further unveils how certain features of a philosophical counseling process can be particularly useful in business settings. Even though there are other kinds of settings in which the point has much relevance (the military may even be a stronger kind of example), having one's worldview only implicitly and inarticulately presented appears to be a distinguishing feature of business settings when compared to other sorts of professional settings (there is a difference of degree here).

But pointing to common issues that affect many executives, as I will do in this article, comes with a caveat. This is not meant to disregard the fact that each person is unique and is always experiencing particular circumstances. PC requires considering the particularities of both the person that seeks counseling and their current circumstances. At the same time, there are generalizations which can be made about the situation of business executives, which can provide helpful background and context for many specific issues which an executive may bring to his philosophical counselor.

## **Introducing the Problems**

As already said, in this article, I focus on issues which constitute philosophical problems for any human being. At the same time, these are issues which are pressed in a peculiar way in business settings, given the way these settings tend to be structured. I focus on the issues of 'responsibility', 'autonomy', and 'integrity'. I will provide just enough detail at a conceptual level to allow the reader to have a clear sense of what I mean by each of these problems.

## The Problem of Responsibility

I use ‘responsibility’ as an ethical notion here. Agents perform actions and are accountable for those actions and their respective consequences. There are some nuances in terms of the features that make someone responsible or not for a certain action, which I will briefly mention below, but for our purposes this is the essence of responsibility. As Jean-Paul Sartre proposes in his *Being and Nothingness*:

man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being. (...) this absolute responsibility is not resignation; it is simply the logical requirement of the consequences of our freedom<sup>5</sup>

In business settings, the key thing about the problem of responsibility is that there are responsibilities which are clearly attributable to executives and yet, in many situations, they fail to recognize that. The problem involves, therefore, a kind of failure in terms of properly acknowledging one’s own responsibilities. This problem emerges because there is a predominance in business settings of a lack of understanding about how responsibility can legitimately be attributed (this point will be clearer once I present in detail, later, a view of the legitimate attribution of responsibility).

The executive’s failure to acknowledgement can be illustrated in terms of how they tend to interact with figures of authority within the company. There is an association between the instructions given by the authority and responsibility for the decision and their consequences. Once the agent is instructed to act in a certain way, their interpretation tends to be that their responsibility is mainly to

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<sup>5</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul: *Being and Nothingness : An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1985, p. 669



fulfil the instruction. The responsibility for the action itself (and its consequences) is, in those instances, located by the agent at the source of the instruction <sup>6</sup>. But responsibility isn't transferable like this. As Sartre hints at above, if the agent has a choice at all, they are responsible for the choice they make. One surely can fail to recognise or avoid that responsibility, but that doesn't change the fact that it is their responsibility.

Since the key thing in this discussion is a lack of clarity about the *attribution* of responsibility, I will briefly offer a characterization of responsibility and its proper attribution. I will do so only enough to give readers who are not familiar with this issue a sense of what I mean by the problem of responsibility.

Sartre summarizes it nicely when he presents responsibility as “consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or of an object.” <sup>7</sup> The proposition isn't in itself controversial, and yet what can be understood by “incontestable author” is open for debate. What Sartre means by it is controversial, nonetheless, as his view is marked by a sort of extreme self-responsibilization. His sort of view is profound, interesting, and useful in a philosophical counseling setting, but it is indeed extreme and perhaps wouldn't necessarily resonate with some of the executives that seek the support of philosophical counseling. But even if we don't go down that sort of extreme route and look at the issue from the perspective of a more moderate account of responsibility, some executive's

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<sup>6</sup> This point applies both when the instruction comes from an actual person (such as one's boss), and when it comes in some sense from the mechanisms that guarantee the instrumentalization of the organization's goals<sup>6</sup>. In either case the dynamics is the same. From their perspective, the executive's core commitment is with the company's welfare (understood in terms of the attainment of its goals). This commitment is seen as having preference over other demands.

<sup>7</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul: *Being and Nothingness : An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1985, p. 669.

failure to acknowledgement of responsibility can be clearly noted and described.

There is a reasonable enough consensus in terms of certain features which are key to the attribution of responsibility. Rudy-Hiller summarizes the two key conditions for its proper attribution:

Philosophers usually acknowledge two individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for a person to be morally responsible for an action. (...) While the first condition prompts us to ask “was this person acting freely when she did A?”, the second condition prompts us to ask “was this person aware of what she was doing (of its consequences, moral significance, etc.)”<sup>8</sup>

I will introduce here the aspect of the attribution of responsibility that is most relevant to business settings. Harry Frankfurt articulates it in terms of what he calls the Principle of Alternate Possibilities (PAP). “... ‘the principle of alternate possibilities’ ... states that a person is morally responsible for what he has done only if he could have done otherwise.”<sup>9</sup>

The key thing about PAP is whether the agent has a choice, an alternative route which she could have taken but didn't. According to PAP if the agent does have a choice in the situation, they are responsible for the choice they make. David Robb illustrates the point with the following example:

One day at the cafeteria, Kurt steals John's lunch. Under normal circumstances, we hold Kurt responsible for his act<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Rudy-Hiller, Fernando, "The Epistemic Condition for Moral Responsibility", in Edward N. Zalta (ed.): *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2018, , available in <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/moral-responsibility-epistemic/>. (last access August 09, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Frankfurt, Harry; “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 66 (23), 1969, p.829.

<sup>10</sup> Robb, David: "Moral Responsibility and the Principle of Alternative Possibilities", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* , 2020, available in

What exactly is meant by ‘having a choice’ is open for debate though:

Suppose, for example, that Kurt was coerced by a bully to steal John’s lunch; or he is suffering from a neurological disorder compelling him to act; or he was brainwashed. These are some of the many ways in which his alternatives can be closed off. But however this happens, once the alternatives are gone—once Kurt must act as he does—blaming him no longer seems appropriate <sup>11</sup>

As this point suggests, I acknowledge the fact that when it comes to the problem of responsibility in business settings, there will be situations in which executives have no choice. In this article, I am concerned with situations in which executives do have a choice but fail to recognize their responsibility.

A PC process conducted by me in 2020 illustrates how failure in the attribution of responsibility causes the impoverishment of one’s life at an existential level. I will call this client “M”. M worked for many years at a large multinational corporation. Being a woman, she felt that she had to work much harder than her peers to get at her position of director at the organization. In order to be successful at climbing the ladder in the hierarchy of the organization she had to make many choices over the years with which she wasn’t comfortable (even if she didn’t see that at the time).

M was shocked at the realization, during one of our sessions, that she had a choice in many of the occasions in which she saw herself forced to act in ways with which she disagreed. In fact, it seems that the very fact that she didn’t acknowledge having a choice in

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<<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/alternative-possibilities/>>. (last access August 09, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> Robb, David: "Moral Responsibility and the Principle of Alternative Possibilities", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020, available in <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/alternative-possibilities/>>. (last access August 09, 2022).

those occasions prevented her from clearly seeing that she disagreed with some of the things that she was doing. An intense and growing anxiety did alert her over time that something was out of place. She became so dissatisfied with her circumstances that she had to quit the job that she had worked so hard to get. Interestingly, she made a career transition and became the head of a large NGO focused on supporting children in situations of extreme vulnerability.

M's case shows the existential implications of the problem of responsibility. Ideally, the person would see the problem not only after it became unbearable, causing, in this case, the need to quit one's job. But even when that is the case, PC can still help the person in making sense of what the problem was, in such a way that she positions herself in a different way in future occasions.

### **The Problem of Integrity**

The problem of integrity, like responsibility, is relevant from the perspective of PC, given its existential significance. Such significance stems not only from the intrinsic significance of properly developing one's sense of integrity but also from the fact that this problem involves specific needs of human beings, which are in themselves existential in character.

In the sense adopted in this article, the word *integrity* refers to the quality of being whole, and undivided. So, integrity gives the agent a sense of lack of fragmentation. This sense brings us back to the relevance of the potential contribution of PC to executives, as mentioned earlier. Ascertaining "whether a proposed action is consistent or inconsistent with respect to the client's own belief system", as suggested earlier by Marinoff, is indispensable for avoiding unhealthy fragmentations and deepening one's sense of integrity. With that in mind, I will illustrate below how the issue of

integrity can become problematic in business settings. I call attention to the fact that I start by presenting the problem in an exaggerated way, a sort of caricature of the issue. Yet such caricature makes the issue plain.

It is common in business settings to have a sense of dissociation between the “personal” and the “professional” dimensions of one’s life. This sense of dissociation can be illustrated through the issue of decision-making <sup>12</sup>. If we assume that executives operate from within a certain model while making work-related decisions (as empirical observation suggests), it looks as if the sense of dissociation mentioned here has a direct influence on such adopted model of decision-making. The result of such influence is the virtual exclusion from the model of concerns which are relevant to the individual at the “personal” level. This means that there is a sort of segregation that is artificially introduced.

What I mean by the sense of dissociation having a direct impact on the adopted decision-making model is the following. Executives have certain aims, which they already recognize consciously. Yet, in making work-related decisions, they tend not to take these aims into account in their calculations of how to act. Since those aims reflect deep existential needs, these needs remain neglected. So, executives tend to incur a lack of consistency in their decision-making model, stemming from having certain aims while making choices that contradict those very aims.

The problem isn’t one of recognizing that those aims are present. It is rather in clarifying and developing the mechanism of integrating those already recognized and central needs into the decision-making process. Executives already are aspiring to properly accommodate those concerns into their lives but are unclear about

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<sup>12</sup> While this is a properly philosophical terrain, executives tend to see that sort of issue (i.e., to do with decision-making) as immediately relevant to them. Such a sense of relevance facilitates the process of integrating the insights related to integrity that emerge during the PC work into their practical lives.

how to do that effectively. Supporting the development of the decision-making capacity of executives in such a way as to integrate into the process sets of considerations which reflect the profound needs that those executives have is, therefore, an important contribution to be given by PC.

The view articulated in this article is that there are at least four sets of concerns which are not only common to most executives, but also are already acknowledged by them as relevant. Executives seem to be not so clear about their motivations for those concerns, but they tend to be clear about the facts that such concerns exist and that they are struggling to accommodate them properly. I articulate those concerns in terms of concerns related to excellence in corporate performance, ethical concerns, existential concerns; and concerns related to one's contribution to society. I will introduce them, one by one, in what follows.

### **Excellence in Corporate Performance**

From the different sets of considerations which are relevant to executives in the scope of their professional decisions, only one takes the central stage in their calculations of how to act. The other relevant sets of considerations - which I will introduce below - are occasionally acknowledged and only to some degree. I refer to this set of concerns as excellency in one's contribution to corporate performance.

This is not only a genuine but also a legitimate kind of consideration. Executives live their professional lives in a specific organizational setting, which in its turn is part of an economic system which operates according to certain rules. Companies don't need to pursue profits at all costs (in detriment of any other potentially worthwhile corporate goals), but they do need to maintain their financial health in a robust condition otherwise they

simply won't be able to play the game at all. It is part of the job to orient oneself, in part, by a view of how one's actions contribute to corporate performance. It is not, nonetheless, the only relevant set of concerns in those calculations.

The way in which the demand for contribution to corporate performance is interpreted by some executives is interesting. Many executives operate out of the assumption that there is an ethical demand on them to promote such corporate (i.e. financial) excellence. I won't get into the issue of whether this is correct. What is relevant is that these executives believe that the decisions they make are being made out of a sense of duty. Not only that. The demand to do so is taken to have predominance over other kinds of demands, sometimes even ethical ones.

### **Ethical Concerns**

When faced with specific situations, there is a moral requirement for executives to consider whichever features of the situation are morally relevant in that specific situation. That not being the case is, in my view, the core failure in the decision-making process of executives. It is not that executives don't acknowledge that ethical concerns are relevant. It is rather that there is confusion about which are the ethically relevant features of each situation, a confusion coming out of a lack of clarity about how to discern them. One of the potential contributions of PC is therefore supporting the development of the capacity to properly discern the ethically relevant features of each situation.

### **Existential Concerns**

Not only developing one's sense of integrity is in itself relevant from an existential point of view, but also all the neglected sets of

concerns mentioned in this article have an existential significance. That is even more obvious with the set of concerns which I call existential. Different things could be mentioned in terms of existential concerns that executives already have. I mention here the most relevant ones for the purposes of this article: the value and meaning of work, cultivating a sense of purpose in one's professional life, and one's contribution to social progress. Since the problem of autonomy will have its own section, I won't mention it at this stage, but I take autonomy as a central existential need of human beings.

The case of 'M', presented above, illustrates the existential significance of the concerns mentioned above. I mentioned that in her case, there was a problem with the level of responsibility. In her PC process, I could work the connection between responsibility and her existential needs through the clarification of how the legitimate attribution of responsibility works. That helped her to recognize instances in which she does have a choice even if she thought she didn't. There was also a problem at the level of the three existential concerns which I mentioned above. She clearly lacked a sense of meaning in her corporate work, and the fact that she transitioned into an NGO suggests that she was seeking more purpose in her professional life and that giving some sort of contribution to the community is important to her.

Other PC cases of mine also indicate that neglecting one's existential needs have important consequences. In less dramatic tones, a client, which I will refer to as "J", had a problem which is not too dissimilar from M's. After working for many years in the Brazilian operation of a large multinational, J also went up the ladder in the hierarchy, becoming a director. Though enthusiastic about his achievements J felt the need for a transition in search of a more meaningful line of work. Moving to a smaller organization (in which he had worked before) already provided him with a deeper sense of meaning.



## Contribution to Society

I have mentioned the issue of one's contribution to social progress as one aspect of the existential set of concerns. Given the peculiar way in which this issue plays out in business settings, it is worth mentioning briefly that it is focused on the following dilemma: how to reconcile the apparent contrasting goals of the needs of the company to ensure its financial health and the needs that those that compose it have of giving a meaningful contribution to society through their work?

There are two different angles from which this point can be seen: as a positive contribution and as a negative one. Ideally, executives would have a positive approach to this issue, seeking ways in which they could use the most of their potential in order to pursue a genuine contribution. But perhaps their most immediate concern is at least mitigating the 'negative footprints' of the businesses in which they work, since those can have devastating consequences for the communities in which they are present. As Valentin Vandyshv points out:

The modern manager is acutely aware of the problem of survival in its broadest representation. He feels a social responsibility for the correctness of his actions to himself, his family, the company and finally to the society<sup>13</sup>

## The Problem of Autonomy

In essence, autonomy means that one is the source of one's own actions. It contrasts with heteronomy which means that an external force is the source of one's actions. Depending on how 'external

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<sup>13</sup> Vandyshv, Valentin N : "The existential problems of management", in *Jagiellonian Journal of Management*, number 2, volume 1, Poland, 2015, pp, 131-140.

force' is understood, we can refer to different things. If we understand it in a non-philosophical way, autonomy just means that other people don't determine your conduct, you do. A philosophical understanding adds to that a complementary sense in which 'external' refers to external to one's true self. Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant are examples of this sort of conception of autonomy. I won't discuss here the deeper sense of autonomy, which refers to the notion of the true self.

One way to illustrate how a problem with autonomy emerges is through its connection with the problem of responsibility. The issue of lack of clarity about how the proper attribution of responsibility works causes a failure to acknowledgement of one's responsibilities. Such failure reinforces the executive's idea that they don't have a choice in situations in which they do. That immediately brings a problem at the level of autonomy.

I was confronted with the problem of autonomy in the case of my client "G". When G arrived at my practice for the first time, she was very anxious. She could barely speak without having bursts of tears out of her feeling of being oppressed and abused at work. After a few sessions, it became clear that she held the belief that it would be morally wrong to do anything other than obey her boss. Even though she was feeling abused, this mistaken understanding of situations involving her boss led her to the belief that she had no choice in those instances. Without acknowledging it, she was putting herself in a position of refraining from exercising her autonomy, which in turn caused her to feel intense anxiety.

After clarifying a few basic points about her conception of ethics and the importance of self-respect, G was able to gradually position herself on different terms with her boss.

## Note to the Philosophical Counsellor

Each person is unique, and each situation is particular. Yet, when it comes to business settings, common patterns can be observed. Given that human beings have certain existential needs, it is possible to see how companies tend to be structured and interferes with some of those needs in peculiar ways. My suggestion is not that every executive will face challenges with all the problems discussed above. The reasoning which motivated me to write this article is rather that for executives who seek the support of PC, there is a considerable chance that the difficulty they are having, if it is work-related, is somehow connected with these problems. Even if it is not, there is a high probability that the above issues will still be relevantly present in the background of the work that is being conducted.

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# PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING AND MEDIATION. THEORY AND PRACTICE: EXPLORING A PATHWAY TO JUSTICE

## *ORIENTACIÓN FILOSÓFICA Y MEDITACIÓN. TEORÍA Y PRÁCTICA: EXPLORANDO UN CAMINO HACIA LA JUSTICIA*

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**Abstract:** This paper will demonstrate how philosophical counselling would invaluably contribute to the arena of conflict resolution via mediation and civil justice generally. Mediation is a conflict resolution process that involves a third party who facilitates disputants in arriving at a self-determined resolution. This process is being incorporated into civil justice systems globally, but how mediation should be conducted to achieve truly just outcomes needs immediate and thoughtful attention. At its best, mediation empowers parties to co-create a just and fair resolution to their conflict through a dialogical exploration of their interests, needs, and relevant norms and values.<sup>1</sup> This is dramatically different from the adjudicative process, where parties rely on legal frameworks and authoritative judicial decision-making to resolve conflict. In mediation, parties need to recognize and think critically about their worldviews and values. Philosophical counseling can provide mediators with an empathetic and dialogical method of helping parties think critically and rationally and to

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Acharya, Nayha: “Mediation, the rule of law, and dialogue” in *Queen's Law Journal*, volume 46:1, 2020, pp. 69-96.

cultivate clarity, depth, and coherence in their worldview and value system.<sup>2</sup> Enabling such deepened self-understanding would best empower participants to engage in authentic and critical dialogue, which, I argue, is essential to legitimate mediation that leads to just outcomes. This paper will demonstrate how several essential principles of philosophical counselling align precisely with the values, goals, and needs of just mediation (including deep self-understanding, critical awareness of worldviews/values, and propensity for rational dialogue). This paper lays an introductory foundation, ultimately calling for an interdisciplinary/interprofessional approach that would use the insights of philosophical counseling to bring significant benefits to the development of mediation programs and civil justice systems world-wide.

**Keywords:** Mediation, philosophical counseling, conflict resolution, dialogue

**Resumen:** Este artículo demostrará cómo la orientación filosófica contribuiría valiosamente al campo de la resolución de conflictos a través de la mediación y la justicia civil en general. La mediación es un proceso de resolución de conflictos que involucra a un tercero que facilita a las partes en disputa llegar a una resolución autónoma. Este proceso se está incorporando a los sistemas de justicia civil a nivel mundial, pero la forma en que se debe llevar a cabo la mediación para lograr resultados verdaderamente justos requiere una atención inmediata y reflexiva. En el mejor de los casos, la mediación empodera a las partes para crear conjuntamente una resolución justa de su conflicto a través de una exploración dialógica de los intereses, necesidades y normas y valores

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chamberlain, Harriet S: “Philosophical Counselling: A Dialogue in Critical Thinking” in *Fifth International Conference on Philosophy in Practice*, Oxford, 1999, pp. 47-55; Facione, Peter A: “Critical Thinking: What It is and Why It Counts” in *Insight Assessment*, 2011, pp.1-23; Lebon, Tim: *Wise therapy: Philosophy for counsellors*, Sage Publications, London, 2007; Lahav, Ran: “Philosophical counseling as a quest for wisdom”, in *Practical Philosophy*, volume 4:1, 2001, pp. 7-19; Ruschmann Eckart: “World-view-coherence” in Barrientos Rastrojo, J, *Philosophical practice. From theory to practice*, Humanistic Studies and Philosophical Practice Association, Seville, 2006; Amir, Lydia B: “More philosophy, less counseling: A method for philosophical counseling”, in Barrientos-Rastrojo, J. – Ordóñez García, J. - Macera Garfia, F.: *Philosophy and practice: From theory to practice*, Ediciones, Sevilla, 2006, pp. 33-39; Tukiainen, Arto: “Philosophical counselling as a process of fostering wisdom in the form of virtues”, in *Humanistic Studies and Philosophical Practice*, volume 10:1, 2010, pp. 48-57.

relevantes.<sup>3</sup> Esto es radicalmente diferente al proceso judicial en el que las partes se basan en marcos legales y decisiones judiciales autorizadas para resolver conflictos. En la mediación, las partes deben reconocer y pensar críticamente sobre sus visiones del mundo y sus valores. La orientación filosófica puede proporcionar a los mediadores un método empático y dialógico para ayudar a las partes a pensar crítica y racionalmente y a cultivar la claridad, profundidad y coherencia en su visión del mundo y en su sistema de valores.<sup>4</sup> Permitir una autocomprensión tan profunda permitiría a los participantes integrarse en un diálogo auténtico y crítico que, en mi opinión, es esencial para una mediación legítima que conduzca a resultados justos. Este documento demostrará cómo varios principios esenciales de la orientación filosófica se alinean precisamente con los valores, objetivos y necesidades de la mediación justa (incluyendo una profunda autocomprensión, conciencia crítica de las cosmovisiones/valores y propensión al diálogo racional). Este documento establece una base introductoria, que, en última instancia, exige un enfoque interdisciplinario/interprofesional que utilizaría los conocimientos de la orientación filosófica para brindar beneficios significativos al desarrollo de programas de mediación y a los sistemas de justicia civil en todo el mundo.

**Palabras clave:** meditación, orientación filosófica, resolución de conflictos, diálogo.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Acharya, Nayha: “Mediation, the rule of law, and dialogue” in *Queen's Law Journal*, volume 46:1, 2020, pp. 69-96.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Chamberlain, Harriet S: “Philosophical Counselling: A Dialogue in Critical Thinking” in *Fifth International Conference on Philosophy in Practice*, Oxford, 1999, pp. 47-55; Facione, Peter A: “Critical Thinking: What It is and Why It Counts” in *Insight Assessment*, 2011, pp.1-23; Lebon, Tim: *Wise therapy: Philosophy for counsellors*, Sage Publications, London, 2007; Lahav, Ran: “Philosophical counseling as a quest for wisdom”, in *Practical Philosophy*, volume 4:1, 2001, pp. 7-19; Ruschmann Eckart: “World-view-coherence” in Barrientos Rastrojo, J, *Philosophical practice. From theory to practice*, Humanistic Studies and Philosophical Practice Association, Seville, 2006; Amir, Lydia B: “More philosophy, less counseling: A method for philosophical counseling”, in Barrientos-Rastrojo, J. – Ordóñez García, J. - Macera Garfia, F.: *Philosophy and practice: From theory to practice*, Ediciones, Sevilla, 2006, pp. 33-39; Tukiainen, Arto: “Philosophical counselling as a process of fostering wisdom in the form of virtues”, in *Humanistic Studies and Philosophical Practice*, volume 10:1, 2010, pp.48-57.

## Introduction

This paper explores the invaluable role that philosophical counseling can play in dispute resolution. There is a wide variety of ways that disputes can be approached and resolved in human society. Here, I focus on dispute resolution that is or can be connected to law and legal processes. In the legal context, the primary method of dispute resolution is through adjudication, where parties present arguments based on legal frameworks, and a judge issues an authoritative decree which declares a ‘winner’ and sets out the appropriate legal response. Another method of dispute resolution that began gaining prominence in the 1970s is mediation. Mediation involves a neutral third party who (ideally) facilitates parties in engaging in cooperative dialogue and reaching a mutually acceptable resolution on their own. This method is flexible in that parties can agree to any resolution that suits them and are not dependent on legal norms and a judicial decree, as in adjudication. Early in the alternative dispute resolution movement, which included robust advocacy for mediation, the legal community was skeptical and resistant. The idea of non-legal actors taking foundational roles in dispute resolution that traditionally would be controlled by lawyers and judges was considered ill-advised and even dangerous from the perspective of ensuring the protection of legal rights. In the 1980s and 90s, however, a surge of interest in mediation occurred, and the legal community began to recognize the value of mediation as a dispute resolution system – it seemed better for relationships, being less adversarial, and could promote harmony in a way that traditional adjudication could not. And perhaps most importantly, in the eyes of many, it was a more cost-effective way of resolving a dispute compared to the cumbersome, confusing, and costly judicial process. With costs of adjudication rising, mediation began to be seen as a way to respond to the



growing crisis caused by cost barring access to the justice system.<sup>5</sup> The early resistance gave way, and some form of mediation is now incorporated into most civil justice systems world-wide.<sup>6</sup> In a sense, this is a positive trend because the availability of mediation in the justice system provides a choice of process to litigants that prioritize self-determination and autonomous, cooperative dispute resolution. However, the mediation programs that are connected to courts most often slip back into a legalistic approach and fail to truly make space for open, free, dialogue that is not restricted by legal framing. As explained further below, this is in part because mediation programs are embedded into the legal system, so legal norms have seeped into the process.<sup>7</sup> Philosophical counseling can help to develop an approach to mediation that is truer to itself: an authentic dialogic process rooted in self-awareness, understanding of the other, and fulsome communication.

At its best, mediation empowers parties to co-create a just and fair resolution through a dialogical exploration of their interests, needs, and values.<sup>8</sup> As Lon Fuller, one of the first contemporary theorists

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Folberg, Jay: "A mediation overview: History and dimensions of practice" 1983:1, pp. 3-14; Wall, James A., Stark, J. B., & Standifer, Rhett L: "Mediation: current review and theory development", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, volume 45:3, 2001, pp. 370-391; Feinberg, Kenneth R: "Mediation - A Preferred Method of Dispute Resolution", in *Alternative Dispute Resolution*, volume 15:5, 1989, pp. 5-41.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Hopt, Klaus J., & Steffek, Felix: *Mediation: Principles and Regulation in Comparative Perspective*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Rundle, Olivia, "Barking Dogs: Lawyer Attitudes towards Direct Disputant Participation in Court Connected Mediation of General Civil Cases", in *QUTLJJ*, volume 8:1, pp. 77-92; Douglas, Kathy & Batagol, Becky: "The Role of Lawyers in Mediation: Insights from Mediators at Victoria's Civil and Administrative Tribunal" in *Monash University Law Review*, volume 40:3, 2014, pp.758-765; Relis, Tamara: *Perceptions in Litigation and Mediation: Lawyers, Defendants, Plaintiffs, and Gendered Parties*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Acharya, Nayha: "Mediation, the rule of law, and dialogue" in *Queen's Law Journal*, volume 46:1, 2020, pp. 69-96.

of mediation, has noted, “mediation is commonly directed, not toward achieving conformity to norms, but toward the creation of the relevant norms themselves”<sup>9</sup>.

This is dramatically different from the adjudicative process, where parties rely exclusively on legal frameworks and authoritative judicial decisions to resolve conflict. In mediation, parties need to recognize and think critically about their worldviews and values. Philosophical counseling can provide mediators with an empathetic, dialogical method of helping parties think critically and rationally and to cultivate clarity, depth, and coherence in their worldview and value system.<sup>10</sup> Enabling such deepened self-understanding would best empower participants to engage in authentic, critical dialogue, which, I argue, is essential to legitimate mediation that leads to just outcomes.

In Part One, I provide a deeper look at adjudication and mediation and the legitimacy of legal dispute resolution processes. My key point is that any legitimate legal system will prioritize human

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Fuller, Lon: “Mediation – Its Forms and Function”, in Fuller, Lon: *The Principles of Social Order – Selected Essays of Lon L. Fuller*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1981.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Cf. Chamberlain, Harriet S: “Philosophical Counselling: A Dialogue in Critical Thinking” in *Fifth International Conference on Philosophy in Practice, Oxford*, 1999, pp. 47-55; Facione, Peter A: “Critical Thinking: What It is and Why It Counts” in *Insight Assessment*, 2011, pp.1-23; Lebon, Tim: *Wise therapy: Philosophy for counsellors*, Sage Publications, London, 2007; Lahav, Ran: “Philosophical counseling as a quest for wisdom”, in *Practical Philosophy, volume 4:1*, 2001, pp. 7-19; Ruschmann Eckart: “World-view-coherence” in Barrientos Rastrojo, J, *Philosophical practice. From theory to practice*, Humanistic Studies and Philosophical Practice Association, Seville, 2006; Amir, Lydia B: “More philosophy, less counseling: A method for philosophical counseling”, in Barrientos-Rastrojo, J. – Ordóñez García, J. - Macera Garfia, F.: *Philosophy and practice: From theory to practice*, Ediciones, Sevilla, 2006, pp. 33-39; Tukiainen, Arto: “Philosophical counselling as a process of fostering wisdom in the form of virtues”, in *Humanistic Studies and Philosophical Practice, volume 10:1*, 2010, pp. 48-57.

dignity and that mediation has the potential to enhance this norm, but many current court-connected mediation programs are likely not actualizing that potential. I outline how and why protection and prioritizing of human dignity is best accomplished when legal disputes can be resolved either via a robust adjudicative system or, at the parties' choice, a well-designed, authentic mediation program, which knowledge of philosophical counseling can help to bring about. In Part Two, I offer specific reflections on how learning the theories and practices of philosophical counseling may assist legal players in bringing about effective, transformative, and powerful mediation.

My purpose in this paper is to provide a starting point for thinking about the utility of philosophical counseling (both theory and practice) in the field of mediation. Given this modest goal, I do not engage in internal debates that permeate the philosophical counseling field and make it rich and rigorous. I have tried to focus on those aspects that are likely uncontroversial, though tremendously insightful and valuable to the goal of determining how mediators can give effect to true and authentic self-directed dialogue in a conflict resolution context. For me (and I hope others), this has served as a preliminary starting point to encourage further dialogue between the two fields so that the insights of philosophical counseling can be used to move towards deeper, self-empowered, dignified conflict resolution and civil justice.

## **Part 1: Conflict resolution through adjudication versus mediation**

### *Understanding adjudication and mediation*

Law is a permeating social construct. It regulates our conduct, and it can deeply influence how we think, act, and relate with one

another. When disputes arise, parties often turn to law and legal processes to determine what the outcome of the conflict should be. But turning to legal frameworks and processes is not the only (nor necessarily the best) way to approach conflict. In recognition of this, the 1970s and onwards have seen a rise in the popularity of alternative dispute resolution, particularly mediation.<sup>11</sup> Mediation is a method of conflict resolution that involves a neutral facilitator who helps parties reach a resolution to their own conflict without depending on an authoritative judicial decree. This allows parties to approach their conflict and tailor their outcome in a flexible and uniquely responsive way beyond what is possible through court-based resolution. When a mediation process works at its best, parties are empowered to express their positions, underlying interests, needs, perceptions, and emotions and to hear those of the other party.<sup>12</sup> Through such expression and listening, the parties are positioned to arrive at a self-determined resolution to their conflict. It is foundational to any legitimate justice system, that it protects and validates human dignity.<sup>13</sup> This requires a vigorous and

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Pirie, Andrew: *Alternative dispute resolution: skills, science, and the law*, Irwin Law, Toronto, 2000; Folberg, Jay: "A mediation overview: History and dimensions of practice" 1983:1, pp. 3-14; Wall, James A., Stark, J. B., & Standifer, Rhett L: "Mediation: current review and theory development", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, volume 45:3, 2001, pp. 370-391; Feinberg, Kenneth R: "Mediation - A Preferred Method of Dispute Resolution", in *Alternative Dispute Resolution*, volume 15:5, 1989, pp. 5-41.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Menkel-Meadow, Carrie: "Whose dispute is it anyway: A philosophical and democratic defense of settlement (In Some Cases)", in *The Georgetown Law Journal*, volume 83:7, 1995, pp. 2663; Bush, Robert A. Baruch, & Folger Joseph P., *The Promise of Mediation: The Transformative Approach to Conflict*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2005; Bush, Robert A. Baruch, & Folger Joseph P: "Mediation and social justice: risks and opportunities", in *Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution*, volume 27:1, 2012, pp. 1-51.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Joseph, Raz: "The Rule of Law and its Virtue in Joseph Raz" in *The Authority of Law: Essays on Law and Morality*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979; Waldron, Jeremy: "The Concept and the Rule of Law", in *Georgia Law Review*

accessible adjudicative system so that laws can be applied in situations where it is appropriate and necessary, and equally requires a process where parties can be free from the confines of the law and can autonomously resolve their dispute. A well-structured and holistic civil justice system would have mediation as an essential complement to the adjudicative dispute resolution system, which is designed to administer laws. Together, this would result in an approach to dispute resolution that truly prioritizes and celebrates human dignity and autonomy.

### *A Problem with Legalistic Approaches to Mediation*

A significant barrier in approaching this ideal (which I believe philosophical counseling can help with) is that court-connected mediation has, in many cases, been reduced to a form of conflict resolution that still depends on law as the primary normative framework rather than being a space where parties can self-create the norms that will guide their resolution.<sup>14</sup> This erases the transformative potential that exists within mediation.

There are several reasons why this happens. One reason is that due to the law's pervasive and authoritative quality, people see themselves primarily as legal entities in the context of a dispute, and as such, they believe that the right outcome will be the one that

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*Association Inc*, volume 43:1, 2008, pp. 3-61; Acharya, Nayha: "Mediation, the rule of law, and dialogue" in *Queen's Law Journal*, volume 46:1, 2020, pp. 69-96.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Rundle, Olivia, "Barking Dogs: Lawyer Attitudes towards Direct Disputant Participation in Court Connected Mediation of General Civil Cases", in *QUTLJJ*, volume 8:1, pp. 77-92; Douglas, Kathy & Batagol, Becky: "The Role of Lawyers in Mediation: Insights from Mediators at Victoria's Civil and Administrative Tribunal" in *Monash University Law Review*, volume 40:3, 2014, pp.758-765; Relis, Tamara: *Perceptions in Litigation and Mediation: Lawyers, Defendants, Plaintiffs, and Gendered Parties*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009.

accords with the law. This view is then reinforced by lawyers, who are often present with clients when they undertake mediation. Lawyers are trained in determining what legal framework applies in a given set of facts and arguing for an application of that framework that works best for their client, so they are most comfortable with approaching conflict through that lens.<sup>15</sup> The mediation process then becomes fundamentally a game of guessing how a court is most likely to resolve the conflict and then wrestling with numbers that account for uncertainty and the costs of litigating a case. This approach often does result in settlements that are better for parties than litigation because they are achieved faster and, therefore, more inexpensively. In the context of legal systems that are overburdened, slow, and expensive, this efficacy is understandably seen as valuable.

Still, approaching mediation in this way is a problem because it disavows people of the tremendous transformative opportunity that exists in mediation. This is the opportunity to come together with another person to communally solve their mutual problem through the articulation of one's perspectives and listening to another's perspective. It is the chance to engage in authentic dialogue, become more self-aware and empathetic, and undertake the responsibility of choosing a course of action that aligns well with what one believes is truly right, fair, and just. It is not that that every mediation will always accomplish these ideals, but this is its highest potential. This potential is curtailed if mediation is reduced to law-based adversarial bargaining.

Mediation has the capacity to offer a much deeper and personally engaging approach to conflict and just conflict resolution than the legal system can provide. Resolving a dispute through the legal system does not require parties to think through any justification for the normative framework that is applied to their dispute because

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<sup>15</sup> Douglas & Batagol, *ibid.*

that justificatory work is done in the process of something becoming the law. When something becomes the law, its justification is presumed, which legitimizes our application of that law.<sup>16</sup> Consider how legislators make a law. They debate a bill by exchanging views on various reasons or justifications for why a given rule should become law or not, and ultimately, one side will win the day. The justification that the winning side advocated for becomes the normative grounding for the law. Individuals in society do not necessarily need to agree with the law and its justification, but they know it is justifiably law because it has gone through the democratic process of becoming law, and as such, they know it will be applied to them. Accordingly, when a conflict arises, as legal subjects, we only have to argue that a given law applies to us, we do not have to re-invent the normative justification for the law in the first place – that justificatory exercise happened at the stage of a rule becoming law. By contrast, in a mediation context, parties can arrive at a resolution that may or may not accord with the law, and the parties must do the work of determining what course of action they wish to take *and why*.<sup>17</sup> It follows, then, that a ‘just’ outcome in a legal context is achieved when the law is appropriately applied; in mediation, a just outcome is one that the parties truly and authentically arrived at.

To understand this difference between traditional legal conflict resolution and mediated conflict resolution more clearly, take the example of the doctor and a patient again. Suppose the patient goes to see the doctor because of stomach pain. The doctor says, “Well, it’s probably just acid reflux, try these medications.” The patient tries the medications for a month, which do not work. The patient

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Habermas, Jürgen: *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* MIT Press Cambridge, 1998; Acharya, Nayha: “Adjudication uncertain facts – the case for procedural legitimacy” in *Advocates’ Quarterly*, volume 49:1, 2018, pp. 105-140.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Fuller, Lon: *Morality of Law*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1964.

goes back to the doctor. The doctor says, “Try these other medications, maybe you will respond better to those.” This experimentation goes on for some time. Finally, several months later, the doctor says, “Let’s do some additional diagnostic testing.” The doctor sends the patient for bloodwork, and it turns out they have a more serious problem, and in fact, they need surgery. This then gives rise to a conflict between the patient and the doctor because the patient feels that the doctor’s earlier misdiagnoses were unfair. If this conflict were to be approached through a legal framework, then the analysis would take the following form. The law is that if Person A treats Person B negligently and causes them injury or damage, then Person B is entitled to be fully compensated by Person A. This is justified based on the general principle that if we cause negligent damage to another person, we are blameworthy and must be held responsible for returning that person to the position they would have been in had the damage not occurred. The same framework applies in the doctor-patient context. As such, if the doctor acted negligently and caused damage to the patient, it is justifiable to hold the doctor to account. Both parties will structure their approach to this conflict around this framework. The patient will try to prove that the doctor’s misdiagnoses were negligent and that they resulted in the patient suffering some damage. The doctor will try to show that their diagnoses were not actually negligent and that even if they were, the patient would have needed surgery in any event, so the doctor’s actions did not cause any damage to the patient. Both parties have therefore accepted that the legal framework is justified, and they will try to make the best use of it for themselves.

If we take out the legal framework altogether, though, then a different conversation could emerge. The doctor’s worldview and value system may make her feel that she owes an apology to the patient. Outside of a legal framework, she has space to offer that, even if she feels that any good doctor could have made the same



misdiagnoses. She may even feel that it is justified for her to find a way to compensate the patient in some way. Similarly, the patient's worldview may lead her to realize that in her attempt to alleviate the pain of her physical ailment, she needed to blame someone, and it was easiest for her to blame the doctor, but deep down, she knows that the doctor had her best interests at heart, and the early misdiagnoses were reasonable, and honestly made mistakes. The patient may arrive at a conclusion that it is not, in fact, justified for her to seek compensation from the doctor. Both parties may decide that they wish to retain the doctor and patient relationship. This may be a best-case scenario, but it demonstrates the limitations of resorting only to legal frameworks to determine resolutions to conflicts.

Problematically, what often happens in a mediation context is that parties fall back into a legalistic mindset. Instead of asking, 'how should we approach this and what should we do?' we ask, 'what is the law'? The first questions are much harder because they call on us to come to an actual understanding of what actions and approaches are justified and why they are justified when it comes to the issue that has arisen between the two people instead of just relying on a pre-determined legal framework. Sorting out what one finds justified means digging into oneself and determining first what you think and second why you think that. A key aspect of mediation is, then, helping parties to do this work.

This can be accomplished, I believe, by taking the help of a 'philosophical counselling' approach to mediation, wherein parties are encouraged to realize that underneath their actions, there exists a worldview and a value system that gives rise to a person's thoughts and actions. Tapping into this foundational fabric of one's self can free parties from the confines and comforts of reliance on legal norms and can empower them to make autonomous, free, self-justified choices. This would be, in my view, the highest form of mediation, and an essential complement to the adjudicative legal

system, resulting in a holistic enterprise of social ordering that includes law but is not limited by it. The combination of a robust adjudication system and a mediation program, as described, leads to the best possibility of enabling individual dignity and freedom.

It could be difficult to convince the legal world that we must see mediation in this light rather than seeing it as a quick way of resolving a dispute and getting a case off the court dockets. Efficient dispute resolution is seen as very desirable, considering the access to justice crises that exist around the world.<sup>18</sup> Mediation programs are seen as effective when they quickly resolve disputes, but what goes on in the process of resolving those disputes is not often scrutinized very deeply. The importance and value of creating a mediation space in which people are given the opportunity to move out of legal frameworks and to go through the work of self-creating norms that may guide their dispute resolution may not be seen as self-evident.

With this backdrop, I suggest that there are two avenues in which discourses within the field of philosophical counselling can be of tremendous value to the project I outline above. First, it can demonstrate, with precision, the value of providing space to unearth, articulate, and critique one's worldview and value system generally, and this can be translated into justifications for a mediation program that is best designed to help parties engage in such a process. Second, philosophical counselling can provide pragmatic guidance on determining how mediators may help parties engage in a deeply reflective approach to conflict and conflict resolution. In the section that follows, I offer some preliminary ideas with respect to both avenues.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. World Justice Project, "Global Insights on Access to Justice: Findings from the World Justice Project-General Population Poll in 101 Countries" available in <https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/research-and-data/global-insights-access-justice-2019> (last access September 4th, 2022).

## Part 2: Some Helpful Lessons from Philosophical Counseling

*Why is philosophical counseling valuable to mediation?*

Unsurprisingly, there are as many approaches to philosophical counseling as there are practitioners, but there are some shared underpinnings. Counseling, in general, is fundamentally aimed at improving wellbeing.<sup>19</sup> The unique fundamental assumption of philosophical counseling is that as a person becomes more aware of their thought processes and underlying worldviews and value structures, they become better equipped to notice and correct fallacies in thinking, problematic assumptions, and conflicting values. The goal of a philosophical dialogue, then, is helping the individual conduct an examination of themselves – including exploring what their values and beliefs are and why they may be held.<sup>20</sup> Such examination leads to better integration and strength of character, which aligns with a better sense of wellbeing. The actions that emerge from a well-integrated person are also more likely to be just actions in a broad sense. Put simply, “understanding our own philosophy can help prevent, resolve, or manage many problems”.<sup>21</sup>

In this way, the most fundamental goal of philosophical counseling aligns precisely with the broad goal of mediation – to equip people

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. De Botton, Alain: *The consolations of philosophy*, Pantheon Books, New York, 2000; Nussbaum, Martha C: *The therapy of desire: Theory and practice in Hellenistic ethics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton: NJ, 1994.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Lahav, Ran: “Philosophical Practice – Quo Vadis?”, in Costello, Stephen J: *The Philosophy Clinic*, Cambridge Scholars Press, Newcastle, 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Marinoff, Lou: *Plato, Not Prozac!: Applying Philosophy to Everyday Problems*, Harper, 1999.

to determine and perceive their own worldviews with a willingness to evaluate them, to perceive how those worldviews can influence their approach to a conflict, to come to an integrated understanding of what is just, and to determine what course of action to take. This relates closely to the approach to philosophical counselling offered by L. B. Amir, who holds that autonomy, in the sense of determining and relying on oneself in formulating and acting on particular viewpoints, is a central purpose or aim of philosophical counseling.<sup>22</sup> In this approach, the aim of a philosophical counselor would be to enable clients to come to autonomous conclusions supported by their own well-formed value system. Centralizing autonomy in this sense parallels the fundamental value of mediation – self-determination. As Jacqueline M Nolan-Haley remarks:

The trend toward court mediation is remarkable because our civil justice system has traditionally promised justice through law. The promise of mediation is different: Justice is derived, not through the operation of law, but through autonomy and self-determination.<sup>23</sup>

As noted above, encouraging individuals to clarify their values and worldviews with the ultimate goal of enabling truly self-determined conflict resolution is a manifestation of prioritizing human dignity, which is a key value in legitimate social ordering: when a person is empowered to make well-reasoned decisions that are rooted in their own philosophy, the inherent dignity of the individual is maximized. Given this alignment in fundamental values between

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Amir, Lydia B: “More philosophy, less counseling: A method for philosophical counseling”, in Barrientos-Rastrojo, J. – Ordóñez García, J. - Macera Garfia, F.: *Philosophy and practice: From theory to practice*, Ediciones, Sevilla, 2006, pp. 33-39.

<sup>23</sup> Nolan-Haley, Jacqueline M: “Court Mediation and the Search for Justice through Law”, in *Washington University, volume 74:1*, pp. 47.

the two fields, the skills that philosophical counsellors may have or aspire to have could also be skills that mediators aspire to embody and employ in the course of a mediated dialogue. I turn to a discussion of some basic competencies of philosophical counselling below, focusing on using questioning as a means of helping clients articulate and interrogate their approaches and also to enable empathetic understanding of others.

*How can philosophical counseling apply in mediation?*

Though there is variance in techniques and approaches adopted by philosophical counselors, any practitioner would see it as their role to help a client bring self-awareness and clarity with respect to their concepts, values, and perceptions. They may do so by engaging a client in the process of verbalizing their concepts, values, and perceptions.<sup>24</sup> Once expressed, one can perceive instances of lack of clarity in concepts or values and possible misperceptions, and these can then be explored at greater depth with the help of the philosophical counsellor.<sup>25</sup> Fundamentally, philosophical counselors enable clients to “inspect the range of choices available to them” and “understand the different points of view on the choices they face”.<sup>26</sup>

In the context of a conflict, concepts, values, and perceptions are likely all relevant to varying degrees. For instance, a party could be

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Lahav, Ran: “Philosophical Practice – Quo Vadis?”, in Costello, Stephen J: *The Philosophy Clinic*, Cambridge Scholars Press, Newcastle, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> I witnessed this take place in a workshop conducted by Professor Oscar Brenifer. Readers may find it useful to watch this session. It is available online in three parts: Part 1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnLfJ4W\\_5e8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnLfJ4W_5e8) ; Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yiDsX36a2s> ; Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BGpLyfEOPk>

<sup>26</sup> Perring, Christian “*The limits of philosophical knowledge: Implications for philosophical counseling*”, in *Journal for Philosophical Practice*, 2003.

encouraged to dig into their concept of what constitutes ‘fairness’ or ‘justice’ or ‘success’ and to determine how these concepts may be impacting their approach to the dispute. A conflict may have ethical or values-based components. Upon philosophical introspection, a person may find that his or her sense of what is right or wrong could be hazy or internally inconsistent, which can lead to a sense of uneasiness or indecision. Being able to perceive and critically analyze one’s ethical underpinnings can result in an improved or better-formulated value set, which can assist in well-reasoned conflict resolution. Faulty or one-sided perceptions may also be at the heart of a conflict, though this may not be apparent to parties at the outset. An assisted examination of what perceptions are influencing the parties can lead to re-evaluation or recalibration of those perceptions, which can help move parties towards resolution. Ascertaining the underpinning concepts, values, and perceptions can help a party determine why they take the positions they do in a conflict, affecting a movement away from positionality (which usually involves a feeling of “I am right and you are wrong”) to a place of exploration of the interests and deeper rooted value commitments that lie beneath a person’s adherence to any particular position.<sup>27</sup> This opens the possibility of shifting from adversarial position-based conflict resolution to curiosity about why the parties hold those positions.

Several philosophical counselors use methods like Socratic questioning and critically analyzing or problematizing basic presumptions, which can have significant applicability in mediation contexts. Questioning allows a counselor to avoid imparting any wisdom or knowledge, or principles onto the client and instead opens space for the client to come to their own self-understanding. Questions can serve to nudge a person towards critical thinking,

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Fisher, Roger & Ury, William L: *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*. Penguin Publishing, New York 2011.

openness to the thinking of others, and even humility.<sup>28</sup> This can bring about a sense of tolerance and genuine appreciation of true pluralism. Socratic questioning typically involves asking several types of questions that create ‘productive discomfort.’ Discomfort arises naturally when key positions and assumptions are questioned. It urges a person to articulate justifications for the positions they hold or else re-evaluate them.

Such questioning must be undertaken gently and without judgment in order to avoid feelings of embarrassment or mockery and to encourage a trusting and open dialogue. A mediator adopting this approach may ask clarifying questions, like “what do you mean when you say that?” or “Why is that important to you?” or even “In your opinion, is your answer clear to the listeners?” They may ask questions that probe assumptions like, “is it possible that there is another cause?” They may seek articulation of reasons and evidence by posing questions like, “Could you give an example to aid our understanding?” They may ask questions that open the possibility of examining different perspectives, like, “What do you think someone else would think about that?” Or they may ask questions that assist a person in understanding the implications of their viewpoints by asking, “What would that mean in the future?” Another category of questions is “why” questions, which can help the parties explain their justifications, their rationalizations, and ultimately, the perceived legitimacy of their assertions. Professor Oscar Brenifier has helpfully articulated the value of asking, “why do you say that”:

The why implies genesis, causality, motive, motivation, and to work this dimension we accustom ourselves to justify automatically our arguments, to argue them, in order to grasp their deeper content. It makes us aware of our thought and of our being, for which every particular idea is only the pale

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Rawson, Glenn: “Socratic Humility” in *Philosophy Now: A Magazine of Ideas*, volume 53, 2005.

reflection or roughness from which we can practice the escalation of mind and being.<sup>29</sup>

Asking “why” corresponds to Fisher and Ury’s insistence that negotiators should be prepared to provide objective criteria that justify or legitimize their assertions and offers.<sup>30</sup> Taking a simple example, parties in dispute over a will should be able to answer why they believe that they are entitled to what they claim – is it based on a conversation with the deceased person? An emotional connection with them? Their understanding of testamentary law? Etc. When a mediator is experienced in asking ‘why’ at the right moments, the objective criteria that a party is resting their assertion on can be articulated and assessed.

Mildly asking questions like those noted above may assist a mediator to engage the parties in a thoughtful and deeper understanding of their conflict, which would enable both parties to gain a fulsome understanding of their own and the other’s perspectives and thoughts. This would enliven a more genuine dialogue about the conflict and its eventual resolution compared to a simple back and forth wrangle over who is right or how much money should transfer hands.

Along with enabling an intellectual understanding of oneself and others, some in the philosophical counseling field have also emphasized the idea of empathetic understanding as a central tenet of philosophical counseling. Chamberlain, for instance, suggests that a philosophical dialogue should also enable clients to acknowledge the holistic experiences of others, including

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Brenifier, Oscar: “The Art of philosophical practice”, Independently published, available in <http://www.pratiques-philosophiques.fr/en/welcome/> (last access September 3rd, 2022).

<sup>30</sup> Perring, Christian “*The limits of philosophical knowledge: Implications for philosophical counseling*”, in *Journal for Philosophical Practice*, 2003.



perceiving their emotions and ideals.<sup>31</sup> Affecting such empathetic understanding does not mean that parties must agree with each other, but understanding the other in the way that Chamberlain suggests could result in less hostility in the relationships between parties to a dispute, and a sense that although we may not all experience the same emotions in any given situations, we are all susceptible to feeling the same emotions in various circumstances.<sup>32</sup> For instance, we may not be able to justify another person's jealousy in a given instance, but we know that we have felt unjustified jealousy at times too, and that recognition results in the sense of commonality. Similarly, while one situation may not invoke fear for one party, recognizing that another party experiences fear is possible because we have experienced fear ourselves in other instances. This can assist parties in recognizing our basic similarities, and the relationship between parties may begin to feel less antagonistic. This ability to maintain and strengthen relationships is a prime benefit of pursuing conflict resolution through mediation rather than adjudication.<sup>33</sup>

The possibility of seeing what is driving our actions and engaging empathetically with what is driving the words and actions of others has relevance also when it comes to power dynamics, which is a significant issue in mediation. Power imbalances are concerning in mediation contexts because parties can be coerced into accepting outcomes rather than autonomously accepting an outcome that is

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Chamberlain, Harriet S: "Philosophical Counselling: A Dialogue in Critical Thinking" in *Fifth International Conference on Philosophy in Practice, Oxford, 1999*, pp. 47-55.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Chamberlain, Harriet S: "Philosophical Counselling: A Dialogue in Critical Thinking" in *Fifth International Conference on Philosophy in Practice, Oxford, 1999*, pp. 47-55.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Chamberlain, Harriet S: "Philosophical Counselling: A Dialogue in Critical Thinking" in *Fifth International Conference on Philosophy in Practice, Oxford, 1999*, pp. 47-55; Delnoij, J: "Short Socratic Dialogue Workshop" in *Fifth International Conference on Philosophy in Practice, Oxford, 1999*, pp. 52-53.

good for them. This coercion can occur between parties or even between the mediator and one or more of the parties. Many tools exist that are designed to help mediators alleviate power imbalances between parties, and to check their own conscious or unconscious exercise of power.<sup>34</sup> But almost every relationship has incidents of power imbalance and sanitizing that completely seems unlikely. The best approach may be to help parties recognize power and its influence. A philosophical counseling approach could help here because it can enable participants to dig into the root of their actions and words and determine how actual or perceived power may be influencing them. This very perception and expression may assist in loosening any grip that power differential has on a mediation.

In short, philosophical counseling shows us that underneath our outward words or actions, there exists a worldview that lies deeper within us. If a mediator can help parties become adept at examining, clarifying, and articulating their deeper commitments, then parties become better at communicating with more depth. They may also be better able to recognize that other people's words and actions are also underpinned by their own sometimes hazy worldviews, leading to a sense of empathy and understanding between parties. Further and more deeply exploring the theory and practice of philosophical counseling and its utility as an approach to mediation can allow both parties to feel more deeply understood and enable empowered dialogical conflict resolution.

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Davis, Albie M., & Salem, Richard A: "Dealing with power imbalances in the mediation of interpersonal disputes" in *Mediation Quarterly*, volume 1984:6, 1984, pp. 17-26.

## **Concluding remarks and future directions**

Maintaining mediation programs that are empowering to parties is, I believe, a key feature of a legitimate justice system. Such a system would promote self-directed, dialogical problem solving and decision-making, thereby enhancing the fullest expression of human dignity, which is central to legal legitimacy. Philosophical counseling aligns well with ideal mediation because it also aims to enable autonomous, informed, and self-directed thinking by clients. Both mediation and philosophical counseling have the aim of helping clients understand themselves and come to reasoned decisions that they feel they can internally justify. Considering this alignment between the two fields, the theory and methodology of philosophical counseling can be tremendously beneficial in creating and promoting well-functioning mediation that can serve as a viable complement to traditional adjudicative dispute resolution.

The preliminary thoughts that I have presented in this paper have alerted me to the tremendous potential that the field of philosophical counseling has to contribute to the theory and practice of mediation. There is much to explore further and in greater depth. Some topics for future exploration that are at the forefront for me include using the insights of philosophical counseling to determine how best to respond to power imbalances between parties in a conflict resolution context, and determining how to minimize mediator interference, including either conscious or unconscious straying from the neutrality that is essential to maintaining mediation that is as true as possible to its foundational value of self-determined decision-making. It would also be valuable to consider how existing mediation theory may provide insightful benefits to the field of philosophical counseling.

Finally, I would like to offer my thanks for being allowed to participate in the 2022 International Conference on Philosophical

Counseling: Concepts, Methods, and Debates, hosted virtually at the University of Delhi. It was through my participation in that event that I formulated the ideas expressed here and listening to the other speakers broadened my mind significantly. While attending the conference, I was especially struck by learning that philosophical counseling is rooted in an integration of ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ ideas, forming a truly holistic, inclusive approach. As Dr. Louis Marinoff noted in his comments after his keynote address, philosophical counseling has deep roots in India’s rich traditions, philosophies, and spiritual exploration. The thinkers that were invoked by speakers at the conference ranged from Plato to Epicurus to Heidegger to Carl Jaspers to Buddha to Kabir to Aurobindo to Achenbach to J Krishnamurti, and the unauthored ancient Vedic texts of India. The result was an enlivening exchange of ideas of a quality that I had never experienced before, rich and diverse, with intellectual rigor, emotional intelligence, and spiritual insight. I hope that the paper I have offered here will serve as a starting point for an inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural dialogue and exploration among those who see value in authentic and meaningful dialogical conflict resolution as a pathway to enhanced civil justice.

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# PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE DURING THE PANDEMIC: DANCING IN THE NOOSPHERE<sup>1</sup>

FILOSOFÍA APLICADA DURANTE LA PANDEMIA: BAILANDO  
EN LA NOOSFERA

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**Abstract:** This essay reflects on widespread non-medical problems posed by the pandemic, especially its intensification of the transplanting of human consciousness into virtual domains. Resuscitating Teilhard de Chardin's 1922 conception of the noosphere—"the thinking envelope of earth"—we illustrate how the digital tradition that Chardin anticipated emerged from the oral, written and visual traditions preceding it. We identify some perceptual defects of the noosphere, in terms of their deleterious effects on cognition and socialization. We also assess some epistemic and political difficulties that ensue from attempts to control the "power source" of the noosphere, namely consciousness itself. Finally, we cite brief examples from Indian philosophy, Greek mythology, Victorian literature, Kabbalistic lore, and cosmo-biological speculation, all of which offer explanatory frameworks for interpreting the pandemic. Implicitly and explicitly, this address calls philosophical practitioners to action, as both COVID-19 and its accelerated population of the noosphere raise a plethora of non-medical yet vital human concerns. Philosophical counselors are positioned

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<sup>1</sup> This essay was originally read on January 16, 2022, as the Valedictory Address at the International Conference on Philosophical Counseling, hosted by the University of Delhi and the Indian Council of Philosophical Research.

to help humanity re-conceive and therefore reinvent itself, in constructive pathways, during these trying times. And to that end, we need to adapt our philosophical practices to the noosphere as well; for it, like philosophy herself, is a product of rational consciousness.

**Key words:** COVID-19 pandemic, noosphere, consciousness, digital tradition, epistemic tyranny

**Resumen:** Este ensayo reflexiona sobre los problemas no médicos generalizados que plantea la pandemia, especialmente su intensificación del trasplante de la conciencia humana a dominios virtuales. Resucitando la concepción de la noosfera de Teilhard de Chardin de 1922, “la envoltura pensante de la tierra”, ilustramos cómo la tradición digital que Chardin anticipó surgió de las tradiciones orales, escritas y visuales que la precedieron. Identificamos algunos defectos de percepción de la noosfera, en términos de sus efectos nocivos sobre la cognición y la socialización. También evaluamos algunas dificultades epistémicas y políticas que surgen de los intentos de controlar la “fuente de poder” de la noosfera, a saber, la conciencia misma. Finalmente, citamos breves ejemplos de la filosofía india, la mitología griega, la literatura victoriana, la tradición cabalística y la especulación cosmobiológica, todos los cuales ofrecen marcos explicativos para interpretar la pandemia. Implícita y explícitamente, este discurso llama a los practicantes de la filosofía a la acción, ya que tanto el COVID-19 como su población acelerada de la noosfera plantean una plétora de preocupaciones humanas no médicas pero vitales. Los consejeros filosóficos están posicionados para ayudar a la humanidad a reconcebirse y, por lo tanto, reinventarse a sí misma, en caminos constructivos, durante estos tiempos difíciles. Y con ese fin, también necesitamos adaptar nuestras prácticas filosóficas a la noosfera; porque, como la filosofía misma, es un producto de la conciencia racional.

**Palabras clave:** pandemia del COVID-19, noosfera, conciencia, tradición digital, tiranía epistémica

## Introduction

As we enter January 2022, our third year of the COVID-19 global pandemic, we are able to reflect on its emergent transformations of the global village—for better and worse—and to inquire as to how

these transformations are effecting the growth and evolution of philosophical practice.

No matter which dimension of the pandemic's effects we explore, be it medical, psychological, educational, socio-economic, or political, we immediately perceive that applied philosophy has enhanced relevance, whether in descriptive, interpretative, or indeed prescriptive roles.

This essay will focus on an overarching technological feature of the pandemic's effects, which has operated and continues to operate significantly in all the foregoing dimensions. That feature is the virtualization of all possible formerly real human transactions and interactions, in tandem with the intensification of virtual transactions and interactions previously in place.

Even prior to the pandemic, the digital revolution had been transforming human self-conception and human interaction in unprecedented ways, not all of them salutary or conducive to well-being. For example, the malign effects of social media on young people particularly, and the brazen censorship of non-conformist or dissident views by tech oligarchs, were already being noted and protested by free-thinkers, public intellectuals, consumer advocates, and assorted pundits (including yours truly).<sup>2</sup>

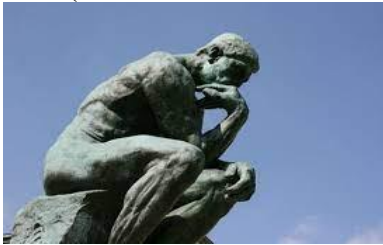
These and kindred issues have taken a temporary “back-seat” to the exigencies of the pandemic, which at the same time has fostered their ongoing exacerbation. Operationally, it amounts to this: the pandemic has displaced a significant proportion of formerly “real” human interactions and transactions—“real” meaning embodied

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<sup>2</sup> For deleterious effects of social media on youth, see e.g. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/tween-and-teen-health/in-depth/teens-and-social-media-use/art-20474437> <https://turbofuture.com/internet/effects-of-social-media-on-our-youth>. For big tech censorship, see e.g. <https://www.heritage.org/technology/commentary/big-techs-conservative-censorship-inescapable-and-irrefutable>; Josh Hawley, *The Tyranny of Big Tech* (Chicago: Regnery Publishing, 2021).

beings inhabiting physical spaces in synchronous times—to “virtual” human interactions and transactions—“virtual” meaning disembodied beings inhabiting digital spaces at de-synchronized or asynchronous times.

Said a different way, the vital forces that formerly animated and infused real human interactions and transactions—forces such as physical presence, personal gravitas, emotional palpability, sensory impression, pheromonic reception, body language, social engagement—have all been sublimated into virtual versions that pale beside the real. Descartes' cogito, itself an irreconcilable divorce of mind from body, has been further impoverished to “Pipo ergo sum” (“I tweet, therefore I am”).<sup>3</sup>



**Cogito ergo sum.  
I think therefore I  
am.**

**Pipo ergo sum.  
I tweet therefore I  
am.**



**Figure 1.** Cogito versus Pipo

<sup>3</sup> In Latin, *pipare* (to tweet) connotes the twittering of small birds in the trees.

There is a name for this region into which humanity has been summarily displaced, and it was coined exactly one century ago (in 1922) by the prescient French Jesuit and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. He called it “the noosphere”, and defined it as “the thinking envelope of earth,” or “the sphere of consciousness”.<sup>4</sup> For Chardin, the noosphere has theological and teleological implications. His Russian friend, scientist Vladimir Vernadsky, developed his own interpretation of the noosphere, which he reconceived in a less mystical and more scientific light.<sup>5</sup>

The noosphere supervenes on the earth's biosphere, which itself supervenes on the geosphere. Simply stated, the geosphere is a bedrock whose constitutive elements and fortuitous solar orbit (the so-called “Goldilocks Zone”) were conducive to the emergence of the biosphere. The biosphere is a region overlapping habitable parcels of the geosphere's land, sea and air, in which myriads of life-forms have evolved, amidst alternating proliferations and mass-extinctions. The noosphere is a medium of shared consciousness that emerged from the rational consciousness of the most conspicuous of these terrestrial life-forms, namely ourselves.

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<sup>4</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre\\_Teilhard\\_de\\_Chardin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Teilhard_de_Chardin); <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noosphere>; de Chardin, P.T. *The Phenomenon of Man*, William Collins & Sons Co. Ltd., Glasgow, 1952.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Wikipedia: “Vladimir Vernadsky” available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir\\_Vernadsky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Vernadsky), last access November, 20, 2022.



**Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**  
1881 - 1955

French Jesuit paleontologist,  
theologian, philosopher and teacher

First mentioned the “noosphere” in  
his 1922 essay *Cosmogogenesis*.

The noosphere is a “conscious  
membrane” or “thinking envelope”  
of the earth.

For Chardin, the noosphere has  
theological and teleological  
implications.



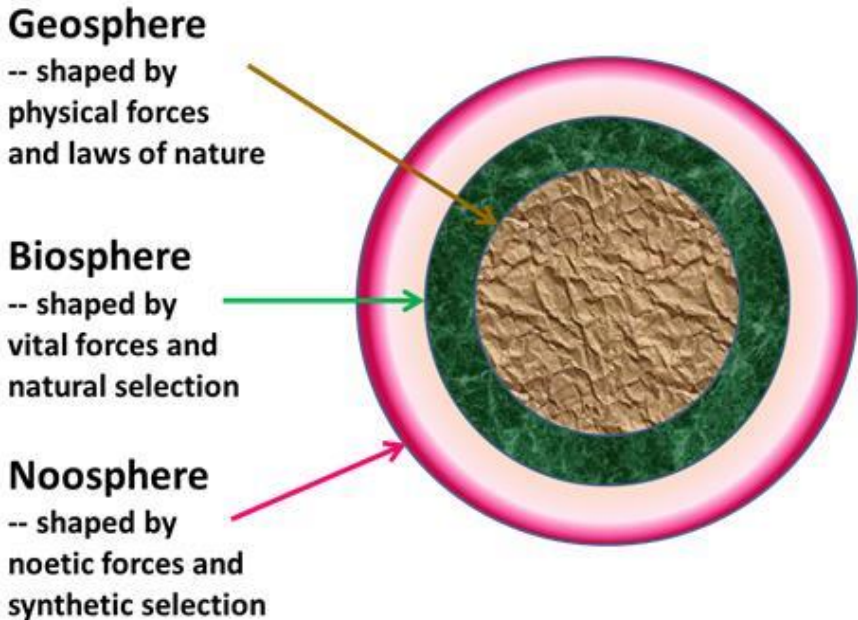
**Vladimir Vernadsky**  
1863 - 1945

Russian scientist and philosopher.

Fields of study included geology,  
crystallography, mineralogy,  
geochemistry, radiogeology, biology,  
biogeochemistry, philosophy.

He met de Chardin in Paris, and  
developed a scientific interpretation  
of the noosphere.

**Figure 2.** Chardin & Vernadsky



**Figure 3.** The three spheres

Before pursuing our analysis of the noosphere and the emerging role of philosophical practice within it, we would do well to ponder the vastly different time-scales on which these three spheres are configured. The geosphere and its solar systemic neighborhood required billions of years to evolve to the point where they could support a viable biosphere. While the oldest sentient beings and their descendents (e.g. sharks and rays) have endured for a few hundred million years, the primates are only tens of millions of years old; *Homo sapiens* only two hundred thousand or so years. The noosphere itself was christened (or defined) only a century ago, and it required the digital revolution some decades later to begin to populate it. Since then, its expansion and population have

grown exponentially, and have yet to attain their limiting potentials.

Consider that the first email was sent by Roy Tomlinson in 1971<sup>6</sup>, and by 2020 more than 300 billion emails per day were being sent: amounting to more than one trillion emails that year.<sup>7</sup> Consider that the first website was launched in 1991<sup>8</sup>, and that by 2021 there were 1.88 billion websites in existence.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the size, scope and scale of operations of the so-called “FANG”—tech tyrannosaurs Facebook, Amazon, Netflix, Google—are all increasing exponentially. In December 2019 there were 10 million participants per day, world-wide, in Zoom meetings.<sup>10</sup> In December 2021, there were 300 million Zoom participants per day, an astronomical increase of 2900% in two years.<sup>11</sup> The average American is now spending 5-6 hours per day on a mobile device<sup>12</sup>, running apps that interface with all the foregoing platforms among countless others.

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Wikipedia: “Ray Tomlinson” available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray\\_Tomlinson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Tomlinson), last access November, 20, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. <https://earthweb.com/how-many-emails-are-sent-per-day/>, last access November, 20, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. <https://www.history.com/news/the-worlds-first-web-site>, last access November, 20, 2022.

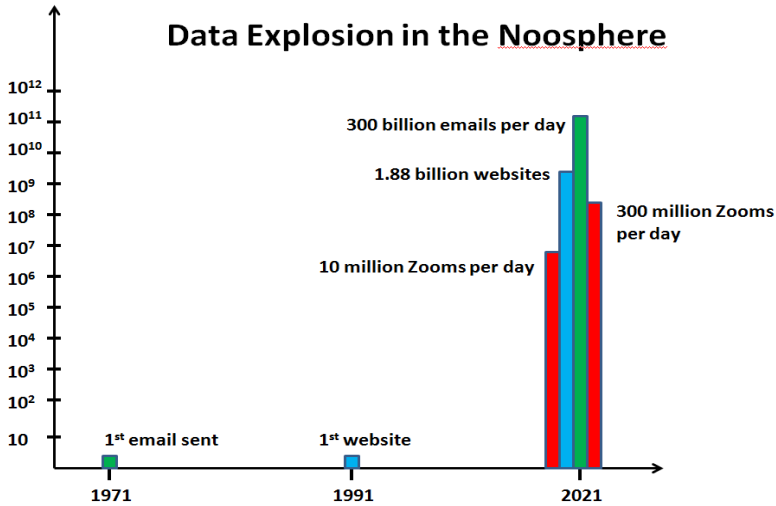
<sup>9</sup> Cf. <https://www.statista.com/chart/19058/number-of-websites-online/>, last access November, 20, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1253972/zoom-daily-meeting-participants-global/>, last access November, 20, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. <https://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/work/zoom-user-statistics/>, last access November, 20, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1224510/time-spent-per-day-on-smartphone-us/>, last access November, 20, 2022.





**Figure 4.** Data explosion in the noosphere

NB: The vertical scale is logarithmic; each increment is 10x greater than the previous one.

So one net effect of the pandemic has been to further exponentiate the growth of all these digital technologies, which have in very short order fundamentally and in some cases irreversibly altered the ways in which humans interact, both with themselves and with others. In a most fundamental sense, the virtualization of a slate of formerly real-life and real-time human interactions amounts to the teleportation of human consciousness and its shared expression out of the geosphere (i.e. beyond the body), out of the biosphere (i.e. beyond the embodied social matrix), and lock, stock and barrel into the noosphere. This “thinking envelope of earth” is a medium that transmits, receives, reflects, filters, curates, mines, tracks, exploits and algorithmizes digitized emanations of disembodied and de-socialized consciousnesses themselves.

The rapidity of the noosphere's evolution, and the transformations of consciousness it is occasioning and also driving, are altogether

unprecedented in our species. If *Homo sapiens* is of the order of 200,000 years of age, then all but the last 5,500 years or so of human cultural evolution were based on oral traditions.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 5.** The Oral Tradition, the first mode of cultural evolution, established *circa* 200,000 BCE

These were remarkably stable if technologically non-innovative traditions, but they were suddenly superseded, and in fairly short order, by the prodigious written tradition and its incessant innovations, eventually including the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution.

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<sup>13</sup> The earliest written traditions are thought to have emerged between 4000 and 3000 B.C.E. See <https://www.britannica.com/art/folk-literature>, last access November, 20, 2022.



**Figure 6.** The Written Tradition: second mode of cultural evolution, established circa 3500 BCE

The written tradition in turn was largely superseded by the visual tradition, compassed by the invention of movies initially and then television preeminently. Prior to television, families used to gather around the radio, listening together to their favorite broadcasts, in a continuation of the oral tradition. But following the mass-production of televisions in the 1950s, and the proliferation of channels and programs, TV supplanted radio as the technological focal point of family gatherings. Note that television did not render radio extinct; the oral tradition still survives in the shadow of the visual, but in diminished capacity. Lately it is making a comeback via audio books. Neither did the visual tradition render the written tradition extinct; book and magazine publishing industries continued to flourish, for a while, alongside television and radio.

Listeners to radio or viewers of TV could find themselves interrupted by an encyclopedia salesman knocking at their doors. Nonetheless, average time spent watching television swiftly eclipsed average time spent listening to radio and reading books. Thus the visual tradition born in the 1950s superseded both of its predecessors: the 200,000 year-old oral tradition, and the 5,500 year-old written one.



**Figure 7.** The Visual Tradition: third mode of cultural evolution, primarily television, established circa 1950

But the latest innovation of the written tradition—one might date its inception to the introduction of the IBM personal computer 1981—spawned the digital revolution.<sup>14</sup> And the evolution of the

<sup>14</sup> See [https://www.ibm.com/ibm/history/exhibits/pc25/pc25\\_birth.html](https://www.ibm.com/ibm/history/exhibits/pc25/pc25_birth.html), last access November, 20, 2022.

digital revolution shapes the noosphere's structures and functions as the container of the shared consciousness of humanity.

In an oral tradition, people spent hours each day listening to or telling stories. In a written tradition, people spent hours each day reading and writing. In a visual tradition, people spent hours each day watching television or movies. In a digital tradition, people spend hours each day doing all the above online, in addition to emailing, tweeting, gaming, shopping, scamming, gambling, investing, teaching, learning, Zooming, live-streaming, and whatever else they are virtualizing today that will go virtually viral tomorrow.



ENIAC, 1946



IBM PC, 1981



**Figure 8.** The Digital Tradition: fourth mode of cultural evolution, established circa 1981

Indeed, if you were you an alien anthropologist from another planet, studying the Earth from orbital space, intercepting and measuring its many and varied electromagnetic emanations across the broadest possible spectrum, you could not fail to notice the ever-increasing volume of satellite-mediated broadband transmissions, which constitute the very fabric of the noosphere.

Yet you would also notice that the patterns within these transmissions are the antithesis of randomness; they carry meaningful strings of ones and zeros that represent the variegated messages within the medium.





The attractive if not hypnotic and addictive power of the digital tradition stems from its seamless incorporation of oral, written, and visual traditions combined. Thus the noosphere untethers both producers and consumers of culture from spatial and temporal constraints.

If you are interested in a deeper analysis of these four modes of human cultural evolution, and how they affect our cognition as a species, then I would suggest that you read *The Middle Way*, second edition, 2020.<sup>15</sup> It contains, among many other things, a “report card” that compares and contrasts these four traditions in terms of their effects on four pillars of human cognition: attention span, linguistic ability, imaginative capacity, and cultural memory. The digital tradition in particular can cut both ways, either enhancing or impoverishing cognition, depending on how it is utilized. In any case it exacts some peculiar and not altogether salutary transaction costs on those who engage with it. Since the pandemic has compelled so many to spend so much time in the noosphere, it has also magnified and amplified these costs. To understand them better, consider this: Data transmitted and received in the noosphere are thus far constrained to be represented either as images, sounds, or texts; or as animations embodying images, sounds or texts. Thus they impinge on only three of our six human senses: images stimulate the visual cortex; sounds, the auditory cortex; texts, the noetic cortex (or if you prefer, mentation or our sense of thought itself). But at the same time, our other three senses—gustation (sense of taste), olfaction (sense of smell), and

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Lou Marinoff, *The Middle Way*, Waterside Productions Inc., San Diego, 2020), 382.

taction (sense of touch)—are de-activated in the noosphere, as are pheromonic transmitters and receptors as well.

Cognitive Pillar → Cultural Tradition ↓	Attention span	Linguistic ability	Imaginative capacity	Cultural memory
 10.1a Oral	Very good	Very good	Good	Fair
 10.1b Written	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
 10.1c Visual	Very poor	Poor	Very poor	Very poor
 10.1d Digital	Any of the above	Any of the above	Any of the above	Superlative

**Figure 9.** “Report card” on human cognition (from chapter 10, *The Middle Way*)

Thus perceptual consciousness in the noosphere is necessarily attenuated: robbed of three senses plus pheromones that are continuously deployed in the geosphere and biosphere for purposes including socialization, acculturation and humanization. This impoverishment of human sensory experience in the noosphere may have lasting effects on consciousness itself, and ultimately on what it means to *be* human.

Imagine sitting around a table or a hearth with family or friends or colleagues, sharing a meal. This has been a definitive human

activity since the earliest days of our species' existence. All six senses plus pheromones are fully engaged. Now imagine a Zoom meeting with family or friends or colleagues, sharing a virtual meal. There is no possibility of any shared experience of taste, touch or smell, nor of pheromones, nor of the second-order effects on consciousness itself of a shared experience of taste, touch, smell, or pheromones.

If we inquire as to why online education for K-12 schoolchildren is proving to be such a disaster, we find a significant thread of explanation in this foregoing example. For children and adolescents to develop and flourish in wholesome social and cognitive pathways, they require a full range of real spatial and real temporal interactions that engage all six senses, and not an attenuated range of virtual interactions that engage only three senses. Online education of children, and indeed online activities of adults as well, necessarily entails what amounts to sensory deprivation. Such deprivation in turn impedes socialization and impairs cognition.

But this is only the tip of the virtual iceberg. For the noosphere is not simply a passive medium in which perceptual consciousness and its fruits are shared; the noosphere is an active (and sometimes hyperactive) medium that is both utilized visibly and manipulated invisibly to engage and reshape conceptual consciousness itself: not only for social, educational, and entertainment purposes, but also if not overarchingly for commercial, ideological, and political ones—whether benign or malign. In all cases, the noosphere represents a vast new arena of contending competitive forces that seek to lure and captivate minds for as many minutes and hours as possible, and in the worst cases to habituate, indoctrinate, and ultimately enslave them. The noosphere has fomented a cybernetic gold rush, and a virtual Wild West: its prospectors and pioneers, carpetbaggers and robber-barons, are all competing for time-shares in everyone's consciousness.



There is nothing that human beings are capable of thinking, saying or doing in reality that has not by now been cloned in virtuality. This was an aspiration during the formative years of the noosphere: to virtualize material things. But having successfully virtualized real things, the *dei ex machina* behind the smoke and mirrors of cyberspace has unfortunately discovered that this process is fully reversible: they are now successfully materializing virtual things.

At a personal level, data mining and targeted marketing are tracking individual consumers in regards to their browsing and online shopping habits., tailoring and personalizing the incessant advertisements that plague web-pages unless one pays—with time or money—to bypass or remove them. But these are merely minor annoyances or distractions, akin to too many billboards cluttering an otherwise scenic highway.

At a cognitive level, manipulations and distortions of data, and therefore also of consciousness, are rampant. Empirically, it is well-established that consumers willingly visit and revisit virtual domains that reinforce their entrenched prejudices. This is a wholly different matter than listening repeatedly to one's favorite music, or regularly eating one's favorite foodstuffs. Why? Because diversity of aesthetic preference is expected if not celebrated in any open society. But the curating, filtering, shadow-banning, and downright deplatforming of non-conformist or dissident views is the very antithesis of diversity in an open society; rather, it is a brazen epistemic tyranny that herds consumers into the depths of a virtualized Plato's Cave. The epistemic tyrants who attempt to control truth in the noosphere are therefore unwittingly creating opportunity for philosophical practitioners to emulate the Socratic tradition, re-enter the virtual Cave, and help liberate its captives. We do not claim to be possessors of truths, but rather to be comparatively dispassionate inquirers who, via the time-honored elenctic method, strive at least to expose transparent absurdities

and dispel patent falsehoods. In this role philosophers have more work to do than ever.

Recall Bertrand Russell's amusing yet chilling pamphlet on the power of propaganda, written in 1943, when radio and newspapers were still the leading technologies in the fabrication of news and the manipulation of public opinion:

Give me an adequate army, with power to provide it with more pay and better food than falls to the lot of the average man, and I will undertake, within thirty years, to make the majority of the population believe that two and two are three, that water freezes when it gets hot and boils when it gets cold, or any other nonsense that might seem to serve the interest of the State ... No person who did not enthusiastically accept the official doctrine would be allowed to teach or to have any position of power. Only the very highest officials, in their cups, would whisper to each other what rubbish it all is; then they would laugh and drink again. This is hardly a caricature of what happens under some modern governments<sup>16</sup>

I submit to you that, exacerbated by the pandemic and abetted by the relentless conversion of the noosphere into a virtualized Plato's Cave, Russell's warning is hardly a caricature at all, for this is happening under most if not all current governments—except that some of the “very highest officials” appear to believe their own rubbish as fervently as the indoctrinated prisoners in their virtual cave.

I am sure you can see how epistemic tyranny is itself a lever of political tyranny. Many of you surely realize that the pandemic has, within two short years, become a pretext for governments of the formerly freest nations on earth to strip their citizens of supposedly inalienable civil rights, to rule by perpetual decree in defiance of their own constitutions, to politicize medical science to justify such

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<sup>16</sup> Bertrand Russell, *An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish: a Hilarious Catalogue of Organized and Individual Stupidity*, Haldeman-Julius Publications, (Girard, Kansas, 1943, p. 17.

rule, and to utilize the noosphere for tracking, tracing, enabling or disabling human transactions and interactions—not because it conduces to arresting the pandemic, but because it centralizes political power and cows if not terrorizes citizens into compliance. After 9/11 and the subsequent spate of Islamic terrorist attacks across Europe, as well as in Mumbai and Bali, a widely-repeated mantra declared “We are all Israelis now.”<sup>17</sup> After only two years of COVID-19, it is equivalently clear that “We are all mainland Chinese now”. When it comes to mandating control of their own citizens, governments of the Anglophone nations—America, Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, formerly the freest among the free countries—are behaving like cadet branches of the Chinese Central Party Committee.

Please do not misunderstand the tenor of this foregoing remark, as it is not at all intended as a criticism of China. On the contrary, I am persuaded that if there were anything resembling an objectively reliable “happiness index”, then the current Chinese population would score more highly than the current American one. I am merely asserting that until recently most citizens of Western democracies were more accustomed to exercising individual liberties than kowtowing to authoritarian dictates, whereas most citizens of Confucian cultures appear to prefer regulated social harmony (if benevolently motivated) over the anarchic discord, embittered divisiveness, and frequently violent transactions of Western-style civil strife.

Bertrand Russell realized this in 1922 (the same year in which Chardin coined the term “noosphere”), and wrote:

The Chinese have discovered, and have practiced for many centuries, a way of life which, if it could be adopted by all the world, would make all

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<sup>17</sup> E.g. <https://www.capitalismmagazine.com/2001/09/we-are-all-israelis-now/>; <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/we-are-all-israelis-now/>, last access November, 20, 2022.

the world happy. We Europeans have not. Our way of life demands strife, exploitation, restless change, discontent and destruction<sup>18</sup>

So while Chinese citizens have not lost much liberty and autonomy during the pandemic, even if because they had little enough to lose before it, citizens of Western democracies have lost significant liberty and autonomy, because their governments have ruled by emergency decrees that approximate martial law and undoubtedly violate supposedly inalienable rights.

Police statehood aside, the unwholesome effects of the pandemic do not confine themselves to untimely deaths of loved ones and unexplained cases of “long-COVID.” Non-medical side effects include psychological and socio-economic debilitations of lockdowns, marked increases in alcohol abuse, drug abuse, domestic violence, and teen-age suicide. There are widespread feelings of powerlessness, despair or anger among the general populace. There are fears engendered by calculated media hysteria. While many Western citizens are becoming fed up with authoritarian demands of unquestioned obedience to whichever dictate *du jour* best serves the interests of the ruling elites, yet many remain fearful of speaking out in increasingly politicized and punitive cultures. The elites in turn exempt themselves from the very decrees they promulgate.

All these problems that the pandemic has spawned, spanning every sector of society, cry out for the voices of philosophical practitioners to be heard. We must amplify the extent of our presence in the noosphere, offering counsel and facilitating discussion on all these issues, in ways and from perspectives that we have been uniquely trained to provide. How each of you rises to this challenge is entirely up to you, but the movement of philosophical practice itself must move into and throughout the

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<sup>18</sup> See Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of China* George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1922.

noosphere to keep pace with the twin developments of the digital tradition itself, and its intensification by the pandemic.

It is necessary and also enriching for communities of philosophical practitioners to meet in the noosphere, as we are doing here, but it is not sufficient for the continued growth of the movement. We must make our philosophical services as available in the noosphere as they were in the biosphere and geosphere, for that is where human consciousness is spending ever more of its time, and expending ever more of its resources. Beyond this, some of you may choose to deploy yourselves as virtual public intellectuals, and indeed as virtual Socratic gadflies, stinging the noospherical horses of state by posing potentially upsetting questions that challenge mendacious or nonsensical narratives intended to fetter consciousness itself.

And please do not commit the error of believing that well-educated cosmopolitan populations in the developed world no longer require such gadflies. It is far more prudent to take William Shirer's lesson to heart. A German-speaking American journalist stationed in Berlin during Hitler's 1930s transformation of the Weimar Republic into the Third Reich, Shirer himself unwittingly fell prey to the interminable propaganda that spewed from Nazi-controlled media. Only when he travelled to a still-free Paris on furlough did the proverbial scales fall from Shirer's eyes. As he later wrote in his definitive history:

I myself was to experience how easily one is taken in by a lying and censored press and radio in a totalitarian state ... a steady diet over the years of falsifications and distortions made a certain impression on one's mind and often mis-led it. No one who has not lived for years in a

totalitarian land can possibly conceive how difficult it is to escape the dread consequences of a regime's calculated and incessant propaganda<sup>19</sup>

One can only lament that propaganda has lately been diversified, intensified and amplified, not merely in rogue dictatorships as usual, but pervasively in formerly free democracies that now ruthlessly suppress freedom of thought, opinion and expression. This unwholesome state of affairs was accelerated by COVID-19 and its forced migration of consumer consciousness into the noosphere, and is driven by the transformation of mainstream news media into platforms for radical ideology that spew brazen baloney, curated by technocratic oligarchs in partnership with the political parties they support and help finance.<sup>20</sup> Critics are censored, silenced, shouted down, shadow-banned, de-platformed, demonized or “cancelled.”<sup>21</sup>

Bertrand Russell would surely spin in his grave if he could witness the full extent of his prophecy as it plays out in contemporary mainstream American media. Owing to calculated and incessant propaganda emanating from the radical Left, dozens of millions of credulous Americans daily and mindlessly parrot back regnant nonsense across a spectrum of issues: e.g. that inflation is a sign of a healthy economy; that eliminating police reduces crime; that America is an “institutionally racist” country; that climate change poses an “existential threat” to humanity; that sexual dimorphism (biological maleness and femaleness) is a “social construct”; that more than five hundred urban riots during 2020 (killing dozens of people and costing billions in property damage) were “peaceful protests”; that the January 6, 2021 riot in the Capitol (killing five

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<sup>19</sup> Shirer, W.: *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, Book Club Associates, London, 1959, pp. 247–48.

<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2017/10/19/the-future-of-truth-and-misinformation-online/>, last access November, 20th, 2022.

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. Hawley, J. *The Tyranny of Big Tech*, Regnery Publishing, Chicago, 2021.

people and resulting in superficial vandalism) was an act of “domestic terrorism” comparable to Pearl Harbor and 9/11; that President Donald Trump was “a dictator comparable to Hitler or Stalin”. The “dread consequences” of enforced mass-indoctrination and uncritical belief in these and kindred idiocies—repeated hourly and daily as gospel truths—include the extinction of America's former beacon of liberty, the collapse of her civil society, and the sacking of her Republic by a congeries of “home-grown” barbarians.

We know that the noosphere is a product of rational consciousness, for we know its history from credible independent accounts in the oral, written and visual traditions, now folded digitally into the noosphere itself. But if the noosphere were to become a full-blown epistemic tyranny, then this thinking envelope of earth, a second-order product of rational consciousness meant to house a virtual record of the entire first-order output of rational consciousness, would be commandeered by a cartel of ruling elites who predetermine its contents, thus exercising censorship over rational consciousness itself. That would constitute an ironic injustice, beside which mere book-burnings would pale. In the Anglophone precincts of the noosphere, and undoubtedly among those of other language groups as well, mindless apparatchiks trumpet Orwellian slogans like “diversity,” by which they mean unquestioned acceptance of their monolithic political narrative as the sole permissible and incontrovertibly true account of the world's problems.

This will not stand unopposed by free-thinking philosophers, for we possess one meta-truth that cannot be censored by fiat: namely, that nobody governs truth itself. This happens to be the motto of the APPA, founded in 1999: *Nemo veritatem regit*. Nobody governs truth. Not Wikipedia. Not CNN. Not *The New York Times*. Not the FANG. And most assuredly not woke mobs and their zealous propagandists.

The pandemic and its accompanying intensification of authoritarian control of the noosphere can be interpreted in a variety of ways. We have already had recourse to the allegory of Plato's Cave. Perhaps one day, if and when the truth about the origins of COVID-19 come to light, we will be able to narrow the field of contending hypotheses. Meanwhile the spectrum of our oral and written traditions provide ample food for interpretative thought about the current state of the world.

Our Indian friends can remind us that we are inhabiting nothing more or less than Kali Yuga.<sup>22</sup> Our Greek friends can remind us of the myth of Prometheus.<sup>23</sup> Our British friends can remind us of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, the tale of a laboratory monster who turns on his mad scientist creator.<sup>24</sup> Shelley's tale seems particularly apt, for COVID-19 makes potential Frankensteins of us all.

Yet the origins of Frankenstein pre-date Mary Shelley. They lie in the Kabbalistic lore of the Golem, a man-made creature formed from clay.<sup>25</sup> In some accounts, a Golem is brought to life by inscribing on its forehead the Hebrew word "EMET", meaning

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<sup>22</sup> "During this age all things will decline, and the deterioration of mankind will be general . . . The minds of men will be wholly occupied in acquiring wealth; and wealth will be spent solely on selfish gratifications. Women will follow their inclinations and be fond of pleasure . . . The least moral merit obtains in this age, the greatest reward . . . Princes, instead of protecting, will plunder their subjects . . . Endowed with little sense, men, subject to all the infirmities of mind, speech, and body, will daily commit sins; and everything that is calculated to afflict beings, vicious, impure, and wretched, will be generated in the Kali age" *Vishnu Purana*, John Murray, London, 1840, pp. 623-625.

<sup>23</sup> Hesiod, *Theogony*, Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York City, 1988, lines 509-615.

<sup>24</sup> Shelley, M. *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mayor & Jones, London, 1818.

<sup>25</sup> AAVV: "Golem". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, available online at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/golem-Jewish-folklore>, last access November, 20th, 2022.



truth. The Golem then becomes responsive to its master's commands, until it becomes sufficiently self-aware to disobey them. This is the Kabbalistic prototype of Frankenstein. But the Golem can be deactivated by the expedient of erasing the first letter of “EMET” (the letter aleph) from its brow. The remaining word is “MET”, meaning dead, whereupon the creature reverts to its inanimate state. Thus the Golem allegorizes those who quest after the “one true vaccine” that will decisively deactivate the virus.

But the origins of Golem itself are much older than the Kabbalah. For the first Golem is none other than Adam in the Garden of Eden: the very first man, whom God fashioned in His image, out of geospheric earth,<sup>26</sup> into which He breathed biospheric life, and imbued with noospheric consciousness. Adam and Eve likewise disobeyed their Master's commands, and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree: not the tree of knowledge *per se*, but rather knowledge of Good and Evil.<sup>27</sup> Our subsequent expulsion from Eden is a tale retold in every generation, and no more poignantly than during this time of COVID, when so many have been expelled from the geosphere and biosphere themselves, and into the noosphere.

Since a man-made biological plague has herded us—whether accidentally or by design—into the noosphere, I will conclude by quoting J.B.S. Haldane, a British-Indian biologist, geneticist, and philosopher. He portrayed the appearance of *Nova Aquilae* in 1918, as witnessed by

three Europeans in India looking at a great new star in the milky way. These were apparently all of the guests at a large dance who were interested in such matters. Amongst those who were at all competent to

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<sup>26</sup> E.g. see <https://www.hebrewversity.com/hebrew-origins-adams-name-connection-ground/>, last access November, 20th, 2022.

<sup>27</sup> *The Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic Text*, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1960, *Genesis*, parts 1-3.

form views as to the origin of this cosmoclastic explosion, the most popular theory attributed it to a collision between two stars, or a star and a nebula. There seem, however, to be at least two possible alternatives to this hypothesis. Perhaps it was the last judgment of some inhabited world, perhaps a too successful experiment in induced radioactivity on the part of some of the dwellers there. And perhaps these two hypotheses are identical, and what we were watching that evening was the detonation of a world on which too many men came out to look at the stars when they should have been dancing<sup>28</sup>

While our species has indeed become capable of wreaking nuclear havoc on our own geosphere, as well as toxic havoc on our biosphere, gain-of-function viruses like COVID-19 confine their damage to the very species that created them, claiming its victims with a whimper instead of a bang. Perhaps Haldane would change his tune today, since what we are watching is the implosion of a socio-economic world order in which too many scientists stay indoors tampering with genetic codes, while too many technocrats likewise remain indoors manipulating algorithms, when they too should be dancing.

But now that dancing has been displaced into the noosphere, it is no longer a physical and social activity. Rather, the noosphere is a dance-hall of ideas, whether in- or out-of-step with the divine music of even-tempered consciousness. Philosophical practice seems particularly well-suited to this kind of dancing, so I hope that you are eager to strut your stuff while the band plays on. The hall is thronged with displaced and de-synched people, whose philosophical dance-cards are more empty than full.

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## **SYAD-NARRATIVE AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE METHOD TO MINIMIZE COGNITIVE BIASES**

LA NARRATIVE *SYAD* COMO UN MÉTODO DE FILOSOFÍA  
APLICADA PARA MINIMIZAR LOS SESGOS COGNITIVOS

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**Abstract:** The term ‘health’ doesn’t merely apply to physical, social, and psychological spheres, but also extends to the philosophical sphere. Philosophical Counseling has recently emerged as a productive method to resolve issues concerning one’s philosophical health, by employing Socratic dialogue and related techniques to cross-examine the relevant thoughts, values, intentions, and actions, to spur realizations that alleviate the issues. In this paper, I introduce two interdependent ancient Jain philosophical doctrines that may be applied fruitfully in Philosophical Counseling practice, namely, Anekāntavāda, which is ontological, and Syadvada, which is epistemological. Anekāntavāda is the doctrine of non-one-sidedness, that is, that reality is multi-faceted, and Syadvada is the corollary doctrine that knowledge is therefore necessarily relative and perspectival. I expat some ways in which these twin doctrines may be fruitfully applied to resolve various issues connected with the sorts of cognitive biases and bounded rationality that often present themselves in Philosophical Counseling sessions. Research has proven bounded rationality and heuristics to be the principal causes of cognitive biases. This paper discusses the causes and impacts of cognitive biases on the processes of judgment forming and decision making and focuses primarily on two applications of the two Jain doctrines: (1) to understand the multiple dimensions of reality through Anekāntavāda in order to minimize reliance on heuristics and bounded

rationality, and (2) to identify and minimize specific cognitive biases. The objective is to propose Anekāntavāda and Syadvada as methodological tools of Philosophical Counseling that may be used to reduce bounded rationality, and to propose the blend of Syadvada and Narrative Therapy – the “Syad-Narrative” method – to attenuate cognitive biases and thus to yield productive outcomes in Philosophical Counseling.

**Keywords:** Philosophical Practice, Philosophical Health, Philosophical Counseling, Indian Philosophy, Jainism, Anekāntavāda, Syadvada

**Resumen:** El término “salud” no solo se aplica a las esferas física, social y psicológica, sino que también a la esfera filosófica. La orientación filosófica ha surgido recientemente como un método útil para afrontar problemas personales relacionados con la salud filosófica mediante el empleo del diálogo socrático y técnicas relacionadas para examinar los pensamientos, valores, intenciones y acciones relevantes y para estimular las acciones que alivian los problemas. En este artículo, presento dos doctrinas filosóficas jainistas antiguas interdependientes que aplicables a la práctica de la orientación filosófica, a saber, la *Anekāntavāda*, de naturaleza ontológica, y la *Syadvada*, de naturaleza epistemológica. *Anekāntavāda* es la doctrina de la no unilateralidad, es decir, plantea que la realidad es multifacética, y *Syadvada* es la doctrina que establece que el conocimiento es relativo y en perspectiva. El artículo explica algunas formas en las que estas doctrinas alineadas pueden aplicarse fructíferamente para resolver varios problemas relacionados con los tipos de sesgos cognitivos y la racionalidad limitada, que a menudo se presentan en las sesiones de orientación filosófica. La investigación ha demostrado que la limitada racionalidad y la heurística son las principales causas de los sesgos cognitivos. Este documento analiza las causas y los impactos de los sesgos cognitivos en los procesos de formación de juicios y toma de decisiones y se centra principalmente en dos aplicaciones de las dos doctrinas jainistas: (1) comprender las múltiples dimensiones de la realidad a través de *Anekāntavāda* para minimizar la dependencia de la heurística y de una racionalidad limitada, y (2) identificar y minimizar sesgos cognitivos específicos. El objetivo es proponer la *Anekāntavāda* y la *Syadvada* como herramientas metodológicas de orientación filosófica para ser utilizadas y proponer la combinación de *Syadvada* y Terapia Narrativa – el método “Syad-Narrative” – para atenuar los sesgos cognitivos y así producir resultados en la orientación filosófica.

**Palabras clave:** Filosofía Aplicada, salud filosófica, orientación filosófica, filosofía india, jainismo, *anekāntavāda*, *syadvada*.



## Rationale

A bias is a natural proclivity to lean in favor of or against an individual, group, idea, or thing, usually in an unfair way. Biases are of two types: conscious or explicit biases and unconscious or cognitive biases. While conscious biases are intentional and subjects are aware of their attitudes and the results of their behaviors, they are not harmful unless they result in conscious stereotyping. Cognitive biases are subconscious errors in thinking that lead to misinterpretation of information from the world around us, and which affect our rationality and the accuracy of our decisions and judgments.

These errors in thinking arise from problems related to memory, attention, and other mental mistakes that sometimes result from our brain's efforts to simplify the immensely complex world around us. Unlike explicit biases, we are unaware of the cognitive biases we might have.<sup>1</sup> As research conducted on cognitive biases suggests, bounded rationality emerges as the primary cause for such biases.

Philosophical health, according to Luis de Miranda, a pioneer of philosophical practice, is a state of constructive coherence between a person's or group's methods of thinking, speaking, and acting, in which the opportunities for a good life and healing growth are expanded, and the needs for self-, intersubjective, and biodiverse flourishing are met. Dr. Miranda adds that philosophical health is about epistemic justice. A person who lacks the epistemic resources, such as conceptual frameworks, to make sense of events and perceptions, to name their experiences and their deep meaning aptly and well, and to account for them to others, also lacks a

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<sup>1</sup> Lang, R., "What Is the Difference between Conscious And Unconscious Bias? FAQs", available at <https://engageinlearning.com/faq/compliance/unconscious-bias/what-is-the-difference-between-conscious-and-unconscious-bias/>. Last accessed on November, 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

framework into which they can fit their choices and purposes without distortion, or which they can use to make judgments and name something as ‘just’ or ‘unjust’, such as how they are treated.<sup>2</sup> But in cases where the very epistemic framework of individuals could be guised with bounded rationality, there come cognitive biases resulting in unjust judgments and distorted choices. Consequently, these cognitive biases result in the disruption of the coherence between the methods of thinking, speaking, and acting of individuals, further impacting their philosophical health. There is a dire need for the issues related to cognitive biases to be addressed in Philosophical Counseling with a substantial amount of care, as the subjects might not be aware of the existence of cognitive biases in them at all.

Studies have so far demonstrated that bounded rationality and cognitive biases share a cause-effect relationship causing issues in the philosophical well-being of individuals. In line with the Buddha’s prescription (in his four noble truths) about the removal of the cause to mitigate the effect, this paper aims to provide a productive solution to cognitive biases that arise in Philosophical Counseling, using the Jain doctrines of Anekāntavāda and Syadvada alongside Narrative therapy, the ‘*Syad-Narrative*’ method, to attenuate the bounded rationality and also minimize the cognitive biases of individuals. The methodology used in the development of the arguments in the paper is analytical in nature. It should be noted that this paper analytically explains and defines its purpose to attenuate the problem of cognitive biases from its very fundamental roots at an individual level to avoid *durniti* or bad judgment, which could further pave paths towards and orient dialogue and philosophizing and does not deal with solving any further stages of effects during dialogues directly (as all such issues

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<sup>2</sup> de Miranda, Luis. “The Vision: Meaning is Healing”, Available at <https://philosophical.health/> Last accessed on January, 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

shall also be minimized when the correction happens on the individual level and the cause gets removed to mitigate the effect).

## **Bounded Rationality and Cognitive Biases**

Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, in the 1970s, gave the term ‘cognitive biases’ to describe purportedly flawed systematic patterns of responses to judgment and decision problems. Their research program – the heuristics and biases program – was based on the principle of bounded rationality as proposed by Herbert Simon in opposition to classical rationality. Classical rationality is mostly concerned with the formalization of normative solutions to judgment and decision-making problems via a statistics and probability approach, with the notion of bounded rationality, which addresses the specific constraints encountered by agents in their environments.

According to the bounded rationality view, humans have limited time, resources, and cognitive capacity to make decisions ranging from choosing friends to food and classes to shoes, and hence may have to rely on heuristics and simple strategies to make decisions. Because of cognitive and temporal constraints, humans are less likely to find all of the essential knowledge to make a reasonable decision, according to the bounded rationality decision-making process. As a result, humans tend to make satisfactory decisions rather than optimal ones.<sup>3</sup> This process of simplifying the immensely complex world and making decisions using heuristics makes cognitive biases a product of bounded rationality, which

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<sup>3</sup> Wilke, A., and Mata, R., “Cognitive Bias”, *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, 1, 2022, pp. 531-535. Available at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/arena-attachments/557491/b16d97da35ed37a0a022e806cc931a0d.pdf> . Last accessed on November, 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

further leads to what is called *durniti* in Jain logic: mistaking the partial truth to be the whole and absolute truth.

## **Philosophical Counseling and issues in Philosophical Health**

In the field of philosophy, philosophical practice gained importance in the 1980s when Gerd Achenbach pioneered the movement and gave it a new course in the modern world. Many philosophers throughout history have applied philosophy to everyday problems, thus he was not the first to do so; nonetheless, he was the first to form an association committed to this work and to recognise philosophical practice as a separate field. Philosophical practise now encompasses a variety of formats, including philosophical retreats, long-term self-reflection groups, the philosophical café, and, of course, philosophical counselling, which is probably the most well-known type of philosophical practice according to Ran Lahav.

Any type of therapy session between a philosopher-practitioner acting as a philosophical counsellor and an individual counselee is generally referred to as "philosophical counselling." For several weeks or months, the two often meet once (or more times), during which time they discuss the counselee's problems and personal life in a philosophical manner.<sup>4</sup>

Luis de Miranda gives this novel concept of philosophical health in the field of philosophical counseling by not restricting the term health to mere physical, social, mental and biological spheres but also extending it to the philosophical level. From his empirical experience as a philosophical practitioner and counselor he bases the cultivation of philosophical health on five principles during a crisis. Crisis is derived from the Greek *krisis*, which means to

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<sup>4</sup> Lahav, Ran, "Philosophical Counseling and Self-Transformation", Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy Cambridge Scholarly Press, 2013, pp. 2-3

choose, and to perform a discriminatory act between wanted and unwanted elements. The principles that Miranda suggests are mental heroism, deep orientation, critical creativity, deep listening, and what he calls the “Creal” or the creative Real as the ultimate possibility (the paper only deals with the first four as they are highly related to the problem of cognitive biases than the last principle). These principles of philosophical health are very intimately related to the process of judgment and get highly influenced by cognitive biases. Hence, we shall understand how cognitive biases impact our philosophical health in terms of these principles.

Mental heroism talks about gaining independence of thought and using one’s wisdom. One cannot get even the tiniest amount of wisdom from others; one must instead produce it within.<sup>5</sup> Three key maxims make up the precept for getting independence of thought as propounded by Kant: (1) Think for oneself, (2) Think in the place of the other (in communication with human beings), and (3) Always think consistently with oneself.<sup>6</sup> Most importantly, mental heroism is about our system of values and our actions being in coherence which makes it no more of a world of ideals but a world of orientation. This brings us to the second principle, deep orientation. It talks about the orientation of one’s own ideas and acts, where ideas are social forces that impact the society and are embedded in human forces by which one tries to mitigate uncontrollable beliefs, and automatic fears that, in turn, create impossible dogmas. When ideas are social forces embedded in human flourishing, philosophical progression demands an orient

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<sup>5</sup> de Miranda, Luis: “Five Principles of Philosophical Health for Critical Times: From Hadot to Crealectic”, *Eidos Journal for Philosophy of Culture*, 5, 2021, pp. 70-72

<sup>6</sup> Kant, Immanuel: *Anthropology, History, and Education*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007.

dialogue. And having an orient dialogue requires a sense of firm judgment between wanted elements and unwanted elements. The third principle, i.e. critical creativity, deals with a durably resilient and regular capacity for recreative transformations of critical situations to create equilibriums. And the fourth principle, which is articulated with others, is called deep listening. This principle, being self-evident, plays a pivotal role in a dialogue to maintain consonance with the other, with nature and with truth.

To sum Miranda's principles up, in terms of judgment, one's philosophical health is sound when there is an independence of thought, orientation of thought and action, critical but consonant reciprocation of ideas, and listening to the other's perspective with intellectual empathy. When having cognitive biases, it is very obvious that one is influenced by external factors and biases that drive them away from independence of thought. Such a situation could be more troublesome when an individual's words and actions are in coherence with their biased thought. In such circumstances, placing oneself in the place of the other or thinking around the situation isn't possible due to bounded rationality. When there is no openness to listen to the other's thoughts due to pre-concieved notions and biased judgment, there cannot be room for an orient dialogue. This is where the problem of epistemic injustice starts with regard to philosophical health.

Luis de Miranda describes a philosophical dialogue as friendship in interrogating the world than affirming one dogma over the other. Such a thought according to him brings an openness in individuals to understand the other positions while looking around the situations from different vantages while engaging in dialogues and brings coherence of words and actions and consonance of ideas. The coherence and consonance further pave the path towards philosophical soundness. Whereas cognitive biases act as barriers to philosophical soundness. As we have discussed how cognitive biases could be barriers to the independence of thought, orientation

of thought and action, critical but consonant reciprocation of ideas, and listening to the other's perspective with intellectual empathy, we shall analytically explore in the coming sections about the doctrines of Anekantavada and Syadvada as philosophical tools to minimize such biases when used alongside narrative therapy for the betterment of philosophical health.

### **Anekāntavāda and Syadvada**

Indian Philosophy majorly revolves around the Vedas, the earliest known philosophical works known to humankind. Jainism is one of the heterodox schools of Indian Philosophy, which plays a very important role in contesting the authority of the Vedic thought. The Jaina thought majorly revolves around the doctrine of autonomy or *aparigraha*. Usually, *aparigraha* is interpreted as non-possession or non-attachment by scholars, but such a definition would restrict the doctrine to just the ethical realm, and hence, the paper interprets it to be the autonomy of subject and object, and thought, word and action. And whenever this autonomy of any aspect is interfered with, it is considered to be *himsa* or violence. Respecting this autonomy and following non-interference is termed to be *ahimsa* or non-violence. Anekāntavāda is the doctrine of the many-sidedness of reality it is complimented by syadvada, the theory of relativity of knowledge.<sup>7</sup> The realities of matter (*pudgala*) and spirit (*jiva*) are considered different and distinct. There are an infinite number of material atoms and individual souls, each of which is real in its own right. And each atom and soul has a plethora of unique characteristics. An object has an endless number of unique properties. Everything has a plethora number of positive and

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<sup>7</sup> J. Shah, Nagin: *Aptamimamsa Critique of Authority*, Sanskrit-Sanskriti Granthamala, 1999, pp.5

negative attributes. It is impossible for us, common people, to know all of a thing's characteristics. We can know only some qualities of some things. To know all the aspects of a thing is to become omniscient, which human beings are not.<sup>8</sup> We only see the surface of any object, from one side, and when we see that we only see something analogous to its skin (its outer membrane, so to speak) from a certain angle (like someone's face, not the back of their head), and that is aspectual in that we really only experience electromagnetic energy (light) waves not absorbed through its porous outer atoms but which bounce off of them and stimulate our eyes, which stimulates our optic nerves, which triggers our brain to project a visual image onto the source of those electromagnetic signals, but we do not see the other sides even of the object's surface from other angles, nor its density, temperature, energy state, electromagnetic field, internal molecular and other structures, the internal relationships between its parts, its indefinitely many atoms, their states, their quantum properties, the object's functionality, its gravitational relationship with all other objects in its vicinity and the galaxy, its historical being in and across other time slices, its indefinitely many perceptual aspects that it affords to other species with different perceptual organs and neural configurations, including those of species that no longer exist or that may yet to exist, or that exist in other parts of the cosmos, and so on – all of which is true of each object and exponentially true of all of them as they relate to each other and to other cognitive agents. The aspects of anything in relation to everything else may be said to be combinatorially explosive. Pragmatics and evolutionary constraints determine the heuristics that our brains deliver to our conscious attention as salient, and from among those, we can consciously select which ones we deem relevant, but much

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<sup>8</sup> Sharma, C.D., *Indian Philosophy: A Critical Survey*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1997, pp. 50-51



of the salience and relevance realization our brains deliver is pre-conscious.

In conditions where the very nature of objects could be metaphysically multifaceted, the subject could be made to understand the relativity involved in knowing things. All of our judgments, or human knowledge, are unavoidably aspectual, relative, and restricted. And hence, other standpoints hold their own autonomous and partial validity of both truth and falsity. By holding one's own standpoint to be uncontestedly true would mean to invite unwarranted absolutism. And as per Jaina ethics, affirming one's dogma over the other perspectives and sides to look around a situation is *himsa* or violence of thought.

The Jain epistemological and logical system is known as 'Syadvada'. The word "Syat" refers to "perhaps" or "could be", and can be aptly translated as "relatively [speaking]". In Jainism, there are three ways of knowing things – '*durniti*', '*naya*', and '*pramana*'. Mistaking the partial truth to be the whole and absolute truth is *durniti* or bad judgment. For instance, it occurs with the claim that an object is absolutely real (*sadeva*). The doctrine of *naya* is a prominent part of Jain logic (aspects or standpoints: aspects of a thing, as perceived from standpoints). *Nayas* provide knowledge of a thing from specific perspectives, and these perspectives are aspectual abstractions through which reality is viewed. *Pramana* or valid judgment (*Syat sat*) is a statement of a partial truth, knowing that it is only partial, relative, and conditional, and has the possibility of being differently interpreted from different points of view. Every *naya*, in order to become a *pramana*, must be qualified by adding *syat*. To reject *syat* is to embrace absolutism, which is unwarranted and further gets contradicted by experience.<sup>9</sup> Syadvada emphasizes the acceptance of apparent opposite attributes without the attributes being literally

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<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, pp. 51-53.

self-contradictory, as one reconciles the other from different standpoints. Different standpoints presenting seemingly contradictory attributes are synthesized in a coherent whole by Syadvada, making it a method of synthesis.<sup>10</sup> In short, Anekāntavāda and Syadvada are two sides of the same teaching, which is realistic and relativistic pluralism. Anekāntavāda is the metaphysical side of multifaceted reality that contains numerous characters, whereas Syadvada is the epistemological and logical side which suggests that we can only know some aspectual parts of reality and that all our judgments are, therefore, necessarily relative. And together, these magnificent doctrines safeguard the autonomy and non-interference of thought by upholding *ahimsa* and *aparigraha*.

## **Syad-Narrative**

### *Method*

Subjects often approach counselors with regard to concerns in their well-being that could be due to the disruption of coherence between divergent elements of their philosophical health (thoughts, words, values, intentions, and actions). And there is a good probability that the subjects might be unknowingly suffering from cognitive biases. In situations where the counselor is able to sense boundedness in the subject in terms of rationality, this could act as an indicator of the presence of cognitive biases in the subject. In such cases, the bounded rationality and cognitive biases may fruitfully be handled using the Jain doctrines of Anekāntavāda and Syadvada.

The suggested method for the application of Anekāntavāda and Syadvada is Narrative therapy, which seeks to distance the person

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<sup>10</sup> Shah, J. Nagin, *Jaina Philosophy and Religion [English Translation of Jaina Darsana by Munisri Nyayavijayaji]*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1999, pp.328-329.

from the situation, allowing them to externalize rather than internalize their issues. Narrative therapy focuses on a person's abilities and a sense of purpose to help them get through challenging situations. Narrative therapy is based on an individual's experience of reality and is predicated on the idea that reality is not objective in nature.<sup>11</sup>

This enables clients to gain some perspective on the challenge they are facing and enables them to recognize how it might be more likely to be protecting or assisting them than harming them. People who adopt this viewpoint feel more empowered to alter their thought and behavior patterns and "rewrite" their life stories in order to live lives that reflect who they truly are, what they are capable of, and what their purpose is, independent of their circumstances. This method enables the subject to maintain a consistent thought of themselves irrespective of the circumstantial and external influences while respecting the other's perspective and its relative validity, as Kant's second and third maxims suggest.

This is where Anekāntavāda and Syadvada mesh with Narrative therapy. The subject is guided to understand that reality is multifaceted. The old story of the elephant and the visually impaired men can be utilized to this end. It tells the narrative of a group of blind men who have never seen an elephant before and try to describe what it's like by touching it. Each blind man can only feel one aspect of the elephant's body, such as the side or the tusk. They then characterize the elephant based on their limited experience, with their descriptions differing from one another: snake (tail), spear (tusk), tree trunk (leg), etc. In some versions, they develop suspicions that the others are lying and come to

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<sup>11</sup> Ackerman, Courtney E.: *19 Narrative Therapy Techniques, Interventions + Worksheets. Positive Psychology*, available online at <https://positivepsychology.com/narrative-therapy/>, last access November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.

blows. The moral of the parable is that humans have a tendency to claim absolute truth based on their limited, subjective experience, and they neglect other people's limited, subjective experiences, which may be equally true. It can be noted from the story that the objective reality of the elephant is not dependent on the perceptions that are relative to any perceptual vantage point and its perceived aspect, in which case of Anekāntavāda allows for both objective reality and relativism without contradicting itself.<sup>12</sup>

Philosophical Counselors may also use their creativity to mold or build a story on similar lines according to the subject's context, to personalize the situation and spur reflection. After explaining the doctrine of Anekāntavāda to the subject, for example, by using the parable, the subject may be given a prompt to build their own narrative. On the basis of the narrative the subject develops, the cognitive biases they might have can be identified, and a 'Syad-Narrative', or a narrative with the inclusion of 'syat', can be constructed to explain the epistemological relativity involved in their own knowledge and perceiving things.

The *Syad-Narrative* can be a useful tool to bring subjects out of their bounded rationality, minimize heuristics, to go for optimal judgments rather than satisfactory ones, and to reduce cognitive biases. Once the *Syad-Narrative* is built and disclosed to the subject, the counselor can add comments or ask questions for the sake of spurring further realizations for positive outcomes.

### *Building a Syad-Narrative*

*Syad-Narrative* is the *Syat* (could be, possibly, or relatively) version of the narrative built by the subject during Narrative therapy. The main motive behind building a *Syad-Narrative* is to eliminate the space for unwarranted absolutism while making judgments and

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<sup>12</sup> Goldstein, E. Bruce: *Encyclopedia of Perception*, Sage, 2021, pp. 492

decisions. The subject is asked to build a narrative, and the counselor makes a note of the narrative and marks the absolute statements or statements of *durniti* made by the subject. Once the subject builds a narrative, the *Syad-Narrative* method requires the subject to be made to understand that the very nature of reality is multifaceted – either through the story of the elephant and six blind men or an example among similar lines – as a prerequisite to breaking the shell of bounded rationality.

After the example is comprehended by the subject, it is recommended to guide the subject to review their previously built narrative to find the absolute statements made by them. As every *naya* (aspect, standpoint) in Jain logic, in order to become a *pramana* (valid judgment), must qualify it with *syat* (perhaps, relatively speaking), every judgment made by the subject needs to be qualified with *syat* to avoid biased outcomes. The Philosophical Counselor can help the subject in rephrasing the narrative with the addition of *syat* to the absolute statements to avoid *durniti* (absolutizing) by building a *Syad-Narrative*.

### *Example*

Let's understand the construction of the *Syad-Narrative* with the example of a case of confirmation bias, a very common cognitive bias. The tendency to view new information as confirmation of preexisting thoughts and attitudes is known as confirmation bias. Confirmation bias is also very common on the internet, especially on social media. We are prone to reading online news stories that reinforce our opinions while ignoring those that contradict them. Various social media platforms promote our confirmation bias by feeding us stories that we are more likely to agree with, further polarising humans. Confirmation bias can be particularly damaging in certain situations, such as the legal system. A detective may, for

example, identify a suspect too early on in an inquiry and then look for corroborating evidence, while downplaying contrary evidence.<sup>13</sup> Although confirmation bias has obvious consequences, one can still work towards overcoming it by being open-minded and willing to look at situations from a different perspective than one might be used to, which can be cultivated by using Anekāntavāda and Syadvada. Let's consider an example from Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, where Sherlock Holmes tries to coach Mr. Watson as he accompanies Holmes to a crime scene.<sup>14</sup> Let's assume Mr. Watson isn't happy with Holmes's approach. Taking Watson as our subject, let's also assume that he constructs the following imaginary narrative immediately after a conversation with Holmes:

But when he got a case to deal with, I was astonished as well as impressed.

I accompanied Holmes to the crime scene, an abandoned house on Brixton Road.

"You don't seem to give much thought to the matter in hand," I said, at last, interrupting Holmes's musical disquisition when we were on our way.

"No data yet," he answered. "It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment."

Inspectors Gregson and Lestrade were already on the scene. The victim was identified as Enoch Drebbler, and documents found on his person revealed that he has a secretary, Joseph Stangerson.

On one wall, written in red, is "RACHE" (German for "revenge"), which Holmes dismissed as a ploy to fool the police.

As I gave it a thought, I felt that Enoch Drebbler was murdered by his secretary. Holmes is acting plain even when things seem to be clear about the murder. Anyone who knows about the 'Barnes Mystery' of 1879 can clearly sense that it's the secretary. All we need to do is to delve deeper for proof to establish this factually.

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<sup>13</sup> Ruhl, C.: *What Is Cognitive Bias?, Confirmation Bias* Simply Psychology. available at [www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive-bias.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive-bias.html), last Access May, 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Doyle, Arthur Conan: *A Study in Scarlet*, Penguin Books. Harlow, 2021.

Based on the narrative Mr. Watson has drawn, it can be noted that Watson is using heuristics to draw conclusions about the murder, he is clearly bounded in terms of rationality, and he has a confirmation bias as he refers to a previous murder that happened in the Victorian era to draw conclusions about the present one, without exploring other possibilities. He made absolute statements in his narrative where he expresses unwarranted certainty that it is the secretary who killed the victim. These types of statements can be reconstructed with *syat* by the addition of a possibility modifier:

*Syat* (it is possible) that the Secretary has killed the victim.

The addition of *syat* leaves some room for the exploration of other possibilities.

For those for whom Doyle's crime mysteries are not intuitive, here is another example of an imaginary narrative built by a subject who carries a self-serving bias. The self-serving bias is the propensity to ascribe favorable outcomes to internal, personal factors, while poor outcomes are attributed to external, situational reasons.<sup>15</sup> Let's imagine the case of a student who did not take their grade 12 examinations in 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but who was passed on the basis of an assessment of their past three-year academic record (as happened in India's CBSE board exams). The student was awarded good grades in Physics and Chemistry but got a less satisfying yet good score in Mathematics due to a disturbed academic record in the past. Due to the lower marks in Math, the student couldn't secure a seat in the University of his/her choice for the Physics program they yearned to be a part of. Now let's go through the following imaginary narrative built in response

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<sup>15</sup> Ruhl, C.: "What Is Cognitive Bias?, Self-Serving Bias Simply Psychology", op.cit.

to the prompt, “Were teachers generous to give good grades to students?” and try to construct a *Syad*-Narrative of the same.

I worked hard. I put in extra effort to submit assignments timely.

And I got good grades in Physics and Chemistry. I wouldn't call it teachers' generosity.

Rather, it is an impression I sustained being a good student that fetched me good grades.

As far as we are concerned with generosity in giving marks, the math teachers make it sound the opposite way.

My academic record in the past was deficient not because I couldn't perform well, but surely because the teacher didn't teach us well. It is the teacher's mistake to cut my marks despite the fact that their own teaching and performance in the class were poor.

Based on the above-framed narrative, it can be noted that the subject carries a self-serving bias, as they are clearly blaming an external factor, i.e., the teachers for their failure to maintain a good teaching record in Math while they take credit for the good grades in Physics and Chemistry. An absolute statement from the narrative, “My academic record in the past was deficient not because I couldn't perform well, but surely because the teacher didn't teach us well”, can be rephrased as,

*Syat* my academic record in the past was deficient not because I couldn't perform well, but ~~surely~~ because the teacher didn't teach us well.

In conditions where the subjects use words of unwarranted certainty, like “surely”, the counselor may examine the reason behind surety to let the subject reflect on their claims. If a rational answer is found in their response, the words of certainty can remain in the narrative, but otherwise ought to be struck through.



## Conclusion

From the above discourse about cognitive biases, it can be concluded that cognitive biases that individuals involuntarily carry could impact an individual's judgments, decisions, and epistemic framework, and disturb one's philosophical health by disrupting the coherence between the philosophical organs, so to speak: thoughts, words, values, intentions, and actions. A disturbance in philosophical health has an adverse consequence on one's well-being and poses a philosophical problem that not only causes epistemic injustice but also disrupts the consonance of ideas and results in the lack of an orient dialogue. The root of these issues can be again traced to the issues of judgment or *crisis*. Such problems with regard to judgments can be understood to be *durniti* as per Jain logic. For such philosophical problems, an adequate solution is to be found in philosophical practice, such as the particular practice on the recommendation here, namely, the *Syad-Narrative* method. The effect of cognitive biases can't be stopped or minimized without the removal of the cause, as the Buddha prescribes in his four noble truths.

This paper identifies bounded rationality to be the cause of cognitive biases, by taking Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman's heuristics and biases program into account and proposes the *Syad-Narrative* method to minimize cognitive biases and Anekāntavāda and Syadvada as methodological tools to attenuate the bounded rationality. The reduction of boundedness in terms of rationality minimizes cognitive biases by leaving more room for exploration and further diminishes the extent to which the subject is prone to *durniti* and ultimately upholds the independence of thought, orientation of thought and action, critical but consonant reciprocation of ideas, orient dialogue and listening to the other's

perspective with intellectual empathy to ensure philosophical soundness.

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**RESEÑAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS**  
*REVIEWS*



**GARCÍA MORIYÓN, FÉLIX:** *La educación moral, una obra de arte*, PPC, Madrid, 2021, 152 pp.

La educación formal es una tarea eminentemente moral y, en la medida en que se pretende para toda la población infantil y juvenil, constituye también una empresa política. Esta es la idea central defendida por Félix García Moriyón en su última obra *La educación moral, una obra de arte*. Su dilatada experiencia docente en los niveles de enseñanza obligatorias y postobligatorias, unida a una ingente producción investigadora en el ámbito de la educación y formación del profesorado, capacitan al autor para realizar una sólida reflexión sobre la situación actual de la educación formal de nuestro país, poniendo especial énfasis en la figura del profesorado. En las siguientes líneas se destacan las principales temáticas desarrolladas en torno a este eje central.

(1) Un difícil equilibrio en el proceso de subjetivación.

Para desarrollar esta tesis, su autor dedica los dos primeros capítulos a reflexionar sobre la razón de ser de la educación formal. Desde que el Estado asumió la tarea educativa en nuestro país mediante la configuración de un sistema educativo, el papel de la familia y de la Iglesia católica en la labor pedagógica ha quedado relegado a un segundo plano. Si bien este cambio tiene su razón de ser en razones históricas más o menos conocidas y aceptadas, como el éxodo rural o el crecimiento del sector servicios, no deja de generar evidentes tensiones. Dichos conflictos vienen marcados por el cometido decididamente moral de la educación, que debe capacitar a los individuos a definirse como personas, lo que es tanto como responder a la cuestión moral sobre qué clase de persona queremos ser y a la pregunta política acerca de la clase de mundo en el que queremos vivir (p. 15). Se trata

esta de una pregunta que tienen que hacerse todos los agentes implicados en una comunidad educativa y, por ello, la respuesta se antoja radicalmente dilemática. De un lado, el proceso de elegirse como sujetos, solo adquiere sentido en una sociedad determinada con unas normas establecidas que hay que conocer. En este sentido, la autodeterminación crítica propia del proceso de subjetivación requiere, indefectiblemente, del conocimiento de normas y usos sociales, es decir, de ciertos procesos de disciplina biopolítica normalizadora, en términos foucaultianos. La sombra del adoctrinamiento planea así sobre la idea de una educación que se garantiza como un derecho, pero que, al mismo tiempo, constituye un deber para la ciudadanía.

Además, el proceso de subjetivación adolece de cierta contradicción en el seno de nuestro sistema educativo: el mismo derecho a elegirnos como personas es, al tiempo,

alentado cuando se promueve la igualdad de oportunidades y traicionado en la consolidación de un sistema meritocrático que legitima la desigualdad. Cuando esto último ocurre, se desecha el valor intrínseco del proceso educativo en detrimento del resultado final (llámese calificación, titulación, certificado, etc.), sin duda, dotado de un gran valor extrínseco pero vaciado de dignidad.

De otra parte, el pluralismo resultante de esta libertad en la autodeterminación nos expone a los riesgos del relativismo epistemológico y moral, así como a un individualismo radical. En nuestro caso, este pluralismo cristaliza en una sociedad altamente secularizada y globalizada, cuestión que ocupa un lugar destacado en esta obra.

Tales son las tensiones inherentes en el proceso educativo de la autodeterminación como personas, que conviene tener siempre presentes para no caer en cualquiera de los extremos y ser capaces de si-



tuarnos en un prudente equilibrio.

(2) Valores morales fundamentales en sociedades pluralistas y secularizadas.

Una posible salida al individualismo radical y al relativismo moral surgido ante la aceptación de múltiples formas de ver el mundo y vivir la vida pasa por la aceptación de una serie de valores compartidos y la convicción de que pueden ser priorizados por su importancia sobre el resto. En este sentido, es de común aceptación que la libertad es el primero de los valores universales, condición necesaria, si bien no suficiente, para el desarrollo de sociedades democráticas y abiertas. Con este punto de partida, la aproximación más completa al conjunto de valores universales hasta la fecha la encontramos en la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos, proclamada por la organización de las Naciones Unidas. Su ratificación por la casi totalidad de los países del mundo reduce

el riesgo de parcialidad o de incurrir en propuestas localistas. Lamentablemente, no elimina los problemas de manera definitiva: muchos son los comportamientos morales que quedan fuera de esta declaración u otras y que afectan a la construcción de nuestras identidades. Además, lo que a un nivel teórico no genera fricciones, sí lo hace cuando hablamos de políticas educativas concretas.

(3) Una formación moral del profesorado deficitaria: retos y alternativas.

Llegados a este punto, García Moriyón pone de manifiesto un problema no menor en el corazón de la educación formal: si esta constituye un acontecimiento moral, el profesorado, que es uno de los actores principales que la dispensa, debe tener una formación moral adecuada. Desgraciadamente, no existe una propuesta al respecto, ni en la formación inicial del profesorado, ni en el ámbito de la formación continua. Esto supone una evidente falta de

valoración por parte de las políticas educativas de la importancia de la formación moral del profesorado.

Aun así, no está todo perdido. A falta de un itinerario formativo adecuado, el autor apela a dos aproximaciones fundamentales para la capacitación moral del alumnado. La primera es la ejemplaridad del profesorado, quien con su práctica cotidiana debería convertirse en una referencia moral para su alumnado. El profesorado debe, así, hacer de cada clase que comparte con su alumnado “un acontecimiento dotado de sentido” (p.92).

Relacionado con esto, la educación moral pasa por la construcción del aula como comunidad de investigación ética y la escuela convertida en proyecto global de educación moral. Escapar del manido estilo docente basado en una concepción bancarizada del saber para convertir creativamente el espacio y tiempo de clase. A máximos, convertir la vida de todo el centro

educativo en un lugar donde el alumnado recupere su curiosidad interrogadora, donde se promuevan dinámicas colaborativas en la construcción del conocimiento, donde el profesorado colabore con el alumnado en procesos de investigación encaminados en la búsqueda del sentido y de la verdad.

(4) La educación moral: una obra de arte.

Todo este entramado de cuestiones imbricadas en un difícil equilibrio en el ámbito de la educación, asuntos nunca resueltos pero tampoco amortizados, llevan a García Moriyón a concluir que la educación moral es una obra de arte. Y lo es porque la práctica docente implica grandes dotes de creatividad. Cada clase debe convertirse en un acto único e irrepetible, lo que supone mucho más que el dominio técnico en el ámbito didáctico. Es el acto en el que confluyen la unidad, la verdad, la bondad y la belleza y que justifica que, aún hoy, en un mundo fuertemente tecni-

ficado y mercantilizado, estar en clase sea algo que siga mereciendo la pena.

Cabe destacar, como una constante presente toda la obra, el esfuerzo de García Moriyón por ofrecer una visión esperanzadora y realista de la educación, que no rehuye de los aspectos aporéticos inherentes a la educación moral de las personas, pero no cae por ello en la desesperanza. La educación moral de las personas es un hecho, si bien los avances en esta materia son modestos. En la obra se recogen algunas de las muchas limitaciones de la agencia educativa, sin renunciar a un compromiso moral, que se mantiene intacto. Frente a un proceso de secularización progresivo en el que acechan formas de individualismo en lo sociopolítico y relativismo en lo moral, la defensa de unos valores morales universales y priorizados. Frente a la idea de una enseñanza excesivamente burocratizada donde el profesorado queda como mero “dispensador de

currículo” (R. Pring) y facilitador de contextos de aprendizaje, la defensa de su participación activa en el proceso de construcción de la subjetividad de su alumnado. Frente a un modelo meritocrático y credencialista de sociedad, la defensa de políticas educativas legítimas que consigan adaptarse a las necesidades y capacidades de cada persona para garantizar la igualdad de oportunidades para la creación de proyectos personales de vida plena.

El reconocimiento de la impronta moral de la educación formal supone, en definitiva, una apuesta por un modelo de enseñanza que, con sus luces y sombras, promueve una ciudadanía libre y democrática. De este modo, sitúa García Moriyón su propuesta en el entorno de una concepción humanista e ilustrada de la educación en la que los niños y niñas nunca dejen de preguntar en el proceso de construcción de su identidad.

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**GARCÍA VÁZQUEZ, ANA ISABEL:** *Aprendiz de Filosofía*, Alfaguara- Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial, Barcelona, 2022, 60 pp.

*Aprendiz de Filosofía*, con el subtítulo *Las grandes preguntas de la filosofía para mentes curiosas*, lleva en su bella portada una declaración de intenciones. Si “Filosofía” significa “amor a la sabiduría”, ser aprendiz de filosofía nos coloca en situación de que se puede aprender a amarla, y este aprendizaje se va a hacer a través de las preguntas. Si hay mentes con curiosidad garantizada para preguntarse, estas son las de los niños y las niñas.

La autora de esta atractiva obra, Ana Isabel García Vázquez, profesora de Filosofía y presidenta del Centro estatal de Filosofía para Niños, sabe muy bien cómo fomentar la curiosidad infantil para cultivar la actitud filosófica. Desde el buen maridaje de la filosofía y la infancia nos hace una propuesta cuidada, suge-

rente y didáctica para personas a partir de ocho años.

El libro sigue la línea cronológica de la historia de la filosofía presentándonos a diez mujeres y diez hombres que nos ayudan a pensar y a pensarnos. Desde Tales de Mileto, Sócrates o Hipatia de Alejandría, pasando por Voltaire o Kant, hasta Hannah Arendt, Adela Cortina o Martha Nussbaum; entre otros. Filósofos y filósofas que fueron aprendices y que invitan a la infancia a cuestionarse.

Pero lejos de que tales figuras resulten imponentes, les da voz en primera persona para que les hablen de tú a tú a los niños y a las niñas, les cuentan lo que “se les pasó por la cabeza” y se lo compartan desde la cercanía de las palabras, con el convencimiento de que en las infancias lectoras y preguntonas revolotean inquietudes similares: cómo ser felices, qué pasa si otros opinan diferente a ti; qué está bien y qué está mal; cómo ser más justos; por qué cuidar el planeta, etc.

Ana Isabel García Vázquez articula la estructura del libro con la maestría de quien construye puentes. Cada capítulo pivota en torno a un filósofo o filósofa de quien destilla una pregunta de cabecera.

Tras ese interrogante inicial, nos encontramos una viñeta con menores y adultos, muestra de diversidad, que interactúan entre ellos en una situación con la que cualquier niño o niña puede identificarse y que ilustra la pregunta de encabezamiento.

De esa viñeta, se siguen directamente otras preguntas que interpelan a la infancia, buscando su complicidad en las experiencias vividas y abriendo así la puerta a la indagación a través de reconocerse en los mismos cuestionamientos. Además, ahí la autora añade flexión al puente con un desafío a atreverse. A atreverse a conocer a un filósofo o a una filósofa, a un amante de la sabiduría, con quien los menores comparten curiosidades.

Es entonces cuando la autora, siempre bajo la forma de la lechuza de Minerva, nos hace las presentaciones sin recrearse en alturas biográficas, sino en un ejercicio de refinada selección, resaltando aquello que empata especialmente con la pregunta de encabezamiento; para pasar a que el filósofo o a la filósofa que cimienta el capítulo le hable directamente a la infancia.

Pero aún queda el paso fundamental: ahora le toca a los niños y a las niñas atreverse a pensar por sí mismos a través de cuatro preguntas finales que representan el despliegue de la pregunta de cabecera y que chispearán en sus mentes curiosas.

Todo este trazado lo hace Ana Isabel García Vázquez con amable fluidez, encarnando narrativamente las ideas de la paritaria selección de relevantes filósofos y filósofas y vinculándolas con las preguntas que darán lugar a diálogos críticos, creativos y éticos. Con el acierto de atreverse ella misma a promover

que las infancias dialoguen con la provocación de aquellas personas que también fueron en su momento menores y aprendices de filosofía, antes de ser dedicados amantes de la sabiduría.

El libro presenta una edición exquisita, recreada con delicadas y sugerentes ilustraciones de Celeste Mür, que invitan a imaginar y a explorar.

Es un libro para tejer redes entre las infancias, entre los menores y los adultos, para generar diálogos en familia, para filosofar en contextos escolares o en otros posibles escenarios donde se encuentren las mentes curiosas. Es un precioso libro para hacer florecer la curiosidad. Un libro para aprendices, para aprender a mirar y para pensar dando forma a los mundos que compartimos. Para dejarnos seducir desde la infancia por el amor a la sabiduría, ensayando en el taller de sus páginas, las mejores formas de vidas posibles.

FÁTIMA ÁLVAREZ

Escuela de Pensamiento Libre

# **DECLARACIÓN ÉTICA SOBRE PUBLICACIÓN Y BUENAS PRÁCTICAS DE LA REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE FILOSOFÍA APLICADA HASER**

## **1. INTRODUCCIÓN.**

La *Revista Internacional de Filosofía Aplicada HASER* se articula de acuerdo a una serie de principios éticos y deberes fundamentales que conciernen al autor, el comité editorial, los autores y los referees. Asimismo, posee un procedimiento público para recibir y gestionar quejas.

Por último, los principios que determinan la evaluación de los artículos son difundidos tanto en su página web como en el contenido de la revista con el fin de promocionar la transparencia de la publicación.

Los principios éticos generales son los siguientes: transparencia, libertad de expresión, confidencialidad, respeto a la diversidad, obligación de declaración de conflictos de intereses y lucha contra el plagio y el autoplagio.

## **2. PRINCIPIOS ÉTICOS GENERALES Y BÁSICOS.**

### TRANSPARENCIA

Se editará en la edición en papel y la digital de la revista de todos los procesos inherentes a la misma y que respeten el principio de confidencialidad. Concretamente, implicará la publicación de la guía de evaluación de artículos facilitada a los referees, el procedimiento para la recepción y gestión de quejas y la declaración ética y de buenas prácticas.

### LIBERTAD DE EXPRESIÓN

Los autores son libres de expresar su propia opinión siempre y cuando no lesiones el resto de principios de esta declaración, se

encuentren fundamentadas en los criterios académicos y posean el rigor científico oportuno.

Este principio se convierte en libertad de decisión para los referees y comités de la revista siempre y cuando cumplan los mismos requisitos de rigor académico y fundamentación argumental.

#### CONFIDENCIALIDAD

La revista se compromete a mantener la confidencialidad de los autores para asegurar un proceso de evaluación a doble ciego. Asimismo, este principio será básico en el caso de interposición de quejas o de desvelamiento de plagio o autoplagio hasta que no se haya obtenido un dictamen oficial del caso.

Este principio habrá de respetarse por los autores en los artículos que impliquen estudios experimentales con humanos u otra circunstancia que obligue la aparición de este principio ético.

#### LUCHA CONTRA EL PLAGIO Y AUTOPLAGIO

La revista mantendrá mecanismos para la lucha contra el plagio y autoplagio en todas sus instancias de acuerdo a lo señalados más abajo en los deberes de cada miembro de la misma.

#### ATENCIÓN Y RESPETO A LA DIVERSIDAD Y AL GÉNERO

Con el fin de evitar cualquier tipo de discriminación, se han creado mecanismos que promocionen en respeto a la diversidad. En este sentido, el editor, el comité editorial, los autores y los referees deberán evitar en sus juicios y escritos cualquier tipo de discriminación por razón de género, raza, ideología política o religiosa o condición sexual.

Los autores deberán informar del género en los datos de origen de las investigaciones publicadas con el fin de identificar las diferencias debidas a este aspecto.



## GUÍA PARA LENGUAJE INCLUSIVO DE GÉNERO

El consejo editorial de la revista anima a la utilización de lenguaje inclusivo en los artículos remitidos. Algunas indicaciones para dar formato inclusivo se derivan de documentos internacionales como los aprobados por las Naciones Unidas y pueden resumirse en tres puntos<sup>1</sup>:

- (1) Evitar expresiones discriminatorias: (a) utilizar formas de tratamiento adecuadas, (b) incluir los nombres y apellidos completos en ambos géneros y (c) evitar expresiones que perpetúan estereotipos de género.
- (2) Visibilizar el género cuando lo requiera la situación comunicativa: (a) explicitar los grupos de género referenciados; (b) usar los pares de femenino y masculino (desdoblados cuando sea preciso y (v) incentivar las estrategias tipográficas: o/a, o(a).
- (3) No visibilizar el género cuando no lo exija la situación comunicativa: (a) Omitir el artículo ante sustantivos comunes al género (periodista, participante, representante), (b) emplear sustantivos colectivos y otras estructuras genéricas cuando sea posible, (c) elegir adjetivos sin marca de género en lugar de sustantivos.

## DECLARACIÓN DE CONFLICTO DE INTERESES

Se entiende por conflicto de intereses aquellas circunstancias en que los intereses primarios de una persona se encuentran determinados por otros secundarios ajenos a este.

Este principio implica, concretamente, las situaciones en que un referee tenga conocimiento de que está evaluando un artículo de una persona conocida o con la que mantiene una relación de cualquier tipo o viceversa, cuando el autor es consciente de que su

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<sup>1</sup> Este punto es una adaptación de las recomendaciones de las Naciones Unidas que puede consultarse en <https://www.un.org/es/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>, último acceso 15 de febrero de 2020.

evaluación depende de estas circunstancias. Esta circunstancia se traslada a cada uno de los miembros de la revista. En todos estos casos, será preceptiva la declaración del conflicto de intereses de modo que la edición de la revista tome las oportunas medidas.

### 3. DEBERES ÉTICOS.

#### DEBERES DEL EDITOR Y DEL COMITÉ EDITOR

Actuar de modo justo evitando cualquier tipo de discriminación por razón de género, raza, ideología política o religiosa o condición sexual tanto en relación a los autores como al equipo de la revista.

Gestionar todas las contribuciones basándose únicamente en su valor académico (consúltese la *Guía para la evaluación de artículos académicos* de HASER) y no en los recursos financieros aportados para su publicación<sup>2</sup> o en intereses empresariales.

Incentivar la libertad de expresión, la calidad argumentativa de los autores y la promoción de los modos diferentes de racionalidad en los trabajos remitidos.

Mantener la independencia editorial de la revista.

Publicar disculpas, correcciones, clarificaciones o retracciones cuando sea necesario.

Generar y monitorizar un procedimiento justo para gestionar las quejas que incluya la posibilidad a los querellantes de queja y de recibir una respuesta de acuerdo a los principios éticos de la Revista.

Incentivar la corrección de errores si estos aparecen en los artículos.

Mantener la confidencialidad de los autores y de los *referees* o árbitros en el proceso de revisión por pares ciegos de los trabajos remitidos.

Publicar los criterios y procedimientos de evaluación de la revista.

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<sup>2</sup> Esta revista no cobra gastos de gestión o de otra índole a sus autores.

El editor es el último responsable de la aceptación y rechazo de los artículos, con cuyos autores no debe tener conflictos de intereses. Mantener la integridad de los registros académicos a lo largo de la existencia de la publicación

#### DEBERES DE LOS REFEREES

Aceptar exclusivamente los artículos para los que se dispongan competencias y conocimientos académicos suficientes.

Informar al editor/comité editorial en el caso de que se pueda deducir la autoría y rechazarlo para evitar violar el deber de realizar revisión a doble ciego.

En caso de detección de plagio o autoplagio parcial o total, uso del texto en conferencias o ponencias de diversa índole, informar al editor/comité editorial.

Realizar una revisión ciega imparcial de los trabajos recibidos aportando comentarios constructivos a los autores.

Evaluar los artículos exclusivamente de acuerdo a criterios académicos, generando un informe articulado por la guía de evaluación de la revista. Asimismo, se evitará en el arbitraje cualquier tipo de discriminación por razón de género, raza, ideología política o religiosa o condición sexual.

Ser consciente de la posibilidad de conflicto de intereses de naturaleza institucional, financiera, colaborativa entre el referee y el trabajo. En caso de que sea detectada, avisar al editor para que el trabajo recibido sea remitido a otro autor

Responder en un tiempo razonable a la evaluación de los artículos

#### DEBERES DE LOS AUTORES

Confirmar que el artículo no está siendo evaluado por otra publicación, no ha sido publicado o expuesto en cualquier evento académico.

En el caso de que el artículo sea una reelaboración de una conferencia, ponencia, comunicación, charla o semejante o se

corresponda con una reelaboración posterior, el autor habrá de informar al editor e indicarlo en nota a pie de la primera o última página del trabajo.

Evitar en el cuerpo del trabajo cualquier tipo de discriminación por razón de género, raza, ideología política o religiosa o condición sexual

Obtener permiso para la publicación de los textos, gráficos o tablas que no pertenezcan al autor y así lo requiera e indicar su fuente.

Citar la fuente de todas las ideas o contenidos sobre los que se desarrolla la argumentación del trabajo.

Informar sobre cualquier posible conflicto de interés en relación al arbitraje.

En el caso de estudios empíricos con humanos o animales, se deberán respetar los principios éticos exigidos por las normativas éticas nacionales e internacionales. Si el estudio lo requiere, se deberá obtener el preceptivo permiso del comité de ética indicado para tal investigación. Estos permisos incluyen obtener el consentimiento informado explícito de los sujetos implicados en el estudio.

Facilitar la corrección de errores y enmiendas si el propio artículo ha sido aceptado y de acuerdo a los plazos marcados.

Remitir artículos de acuerdo a la línea editorial de la revista y aceptar su rechazo en el caso de que no sea congruente con la misma, su área de conocimiento o la bibliografía y discusiones propias de su campo de desarrollo. No obstante, hay una línea de quejas en caso de que quiera utilizarse en relación a este punto.

Informar en el artículo de quién ha financiado la investigación, si ese fuera el caso.

Se prohíbe publicar el artículo en cualquier otra revista.

En el caso de artículos editados por varios autores, todos ellos deberán haber participado de forma igualitaria en el proceso.

Ceder los derechos de edición de artículos a la revista y solicitar permiso para su publicación o edición en otro medio si han sido aprobados.

## PROCEDIMIENTOS PARA GESTIONAR CONFLICTOS ÉTICOS Y QUEJAS

1. El editor y el consejo editor recibirán cualquier demanda ética o queja relacionada con la *Revista Internacional de Filosofía Aplicada HASER* en cualquier momento del año en el email [hacer@us.es](mailto:hacer@us.es). La acusación deberá estar motivada y anexar todas las pruebas y documentos necesarios para su evaluación por parte el editor y el comité editor.
2. El editor recabará todos los datos ayudado, en caso necesario, por los miembros del comité editor.
3. El editor pedirá testimonios y argumentos a favor y en contra de las posiciones. Si es posible, el editor deberá recabar estas informaciones por escrito para transmitir las al comité editor.
4. El editor convocará al comité editor con el fin de exponer los pormenores y les facilitará toda la información, gestionará el desarrollo de un dictamen y la creación de línea de acción conjunta.
5. De modo ordinario, el comité editor presidido por el editor, o el editor, resolverá el problema en un plazo máximo de seis meses desde la recepción de toda la documentación. Asimismo, dictaminará resolución que se trasladará a las personas implicadas.
6. Los dictámenes incluirán:
  - a. Información al autor sobre la decisión tomada.
  - b. Información a las instituciones implicadas en el trabajo remitido sobre la decisión del comité de ética.
  - c. En caso necesario, por ejemplo en el caso de detección de plagio o autoplagio después de publicar un artículo, se retirará de inmediato el trabajo y se

- informará de la circunstancia públicamente. Asimismo, se informará de este asunto a todos los índices y catálogos donde se encuentra indexada la *Revista Internacional de Filosofía Aplicada HASER*.
- d. Prohibición al autor de volver a publicar en la revista por un tiempo a determinar en el dictamen y que decidirá el Comité Editor dirigido por el Editor.
  - e. Otras acciones legales que decida emprender el Comité Editor si fuera necesario.
7. En el caso de que el problema esté relacionado con el editor, se elegirá al miembro del comité de ética con más antigüedad efectiva para dirigir todo el proceso.

## INDICACIÓN BIBLIOGRÁFICA

Tanto la *Declaración ética sobre publicación y buenas prácticas de la revista Internacional de Filosofía Aplicada HASER* como el *Procedimientos para gestionar conflictos éticos y quejas* ha sido realizado después de analizar diversos códigos éticos de editoriales y revistas académicas. El resultado es la síntesis arriba indicada. De forma concreta, se encuentran entre las fuentes consultadas las siguientes:

BMJ Publishing Group, *Resources for authors*, <http://resources.bmj.com/bmj/authors/editorial-policies/transparencypolicy> (último acceso 15 de septiembre de 2016).

Cambridge University Press, *Publication ethics*, disponible online en <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/authors/publication-ethics> (último acceso 15 de septiembre de 2016).

Cambridge University Press, *Ethical standards ethics*, disponible online en <https://www.cambridge.org/core/about/ethical-standards> (último acceso 15 de septiembre de 2016).

Committee on publication ethics, *Code of conduct*, disponible online en [http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/New\\_Code.pdf](http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/New_Code.pdf) (último acceso 15 de septiembre de 2016)

Committee on publication ethics, *Code of conduct and best practice. Guideline for journals editors*, disponible online en <http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines> (último acceso 15 de septiembre de 2016)

Committee on publication ethics, *Code of conduct*, disponible online en <http://publicationethics.org/files/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf> (último acceso 15 de septiembre de 2016)

Elsevier, *Publishing ethics resource kit (PERK) for editors*, disponible online en <https://www.elsevier.com/editors/perk> (último acceso 15 de septiembre de 2016)

Elsevier, *Publishing ethics resource kit (PERK) for editors*, disponible online en <https://www.elsevier.com/editors/perk> (último acceso 15 de septiembre de 2016)



## **DECLARATION ON ETHICS AND GOOD PRACTICES OF THE *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE HASER***

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The *International Journal on Philosophical Practice HASER* establishes a series of ethical principles and fundamental duties concerning the editor, the editorial board, authors and reviewers. Likewise, it has an open procedure for receiving and handling complaints.

The principles governing the peer review of papers are available both on the journal's website and in its print version, with a view to promoting transparency.

The general ethical principles are as follows: transparency, freedom of expression, confidentiality, respect for diversity, the obligation to declare conflicts of interest and combating plagiarism and self-plagiarism.

### **2. GENERAL AND FUNDAMENTAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

#### **TRANSPARENCY**

The journal's print and digital editions shall implement processes that promote transparency. Specifically, this will entail publishing its paper review guidelines, thus making them readily available to the reviewers, its procedure for receiving and handling complaints and its declaration on ethics and good practices.

#### **FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

Authors are free to express their own opinions, provided that these do not violate the principles set out in this declaration, that they are based on academic criteria and that they possess a solid scientific base.

This principle becomes one of freedom of decision for reviewers and the journal's different boards, provided that they meet the same requirements as regards academic rigour and the substantiation of claims.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

The journal undertakes to maintain the confidentiality of authors in order to guarantee an adequate double-blind peer review process. Likewise, this shall be a fundamental guiding principle in the event of complaints or the disclosure of plagiarism or self-plagiarism, until an official decision has been reached.

This ethical principle shall be observed by authors whose papers involve experimental studies with human subjects or any other circumstance involving it.

#### COMBATING PLAGIARISM AND AUTO-PLAGIARISM

The journal shall implement mechanisms for combating plagiarism and self-plagiarism at all levels, in accordance with those pertaining to the ethical duties of all the parties concerned.

#### ATTENTION TO AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AND FOR GENDER

For the purpose of avoiding any type of discrimination, a number of mechanisms have been implemented to promote respect for diversity. In this regard, the editor, the editorial board, authors and reviewers should avoid any type of discrimination on grounds of gender, race, political ideology, religious beliefs or sexual condition in their judgements and submissions.

Authors must indicate gender in the source data of published research in order to identify differences due to this aspect.

#### GUIDELINES FOR GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The editorial board encourages the use of inclusive language in submitted articles. Some indications for inclusive formatting are

derived from international documents such as those approved by the United Nations<sup>3</sup>. Those ones can be summarized in three points:

- (1) Avoid discriminatory expressions: (a) use appropriate forms of treatment, (b) include full names and surnames in both genders and (c) avoid expressions that perpetuate gender stereotypes.
- (2) Make gender visible when the communicative situation requires it: (a) make explicit the referenced gender groups; (b) use the pairs of feminine and masculine (unfolded when necessary and (c) encourage typographic strategies: o/a, o(a).
- (3) Do not make gender visible when the communicative situation does not require it: (a) Omit the article before nouns common to the gender (journalist, participant, representative), (b) use collective nouns and other generic structures when possible, (c) choose adjectives without gender marking instead of nouns.

#### DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest is understood here as those circumstances in which the primary interests of a person are subordinated to other secondary ones far-removed from them.

Specifically, this principle refers to situations in which a reviewer is aware that he/she is reviewing the paper of someone who he/she knows or with whom he/she has a relationship of any type, or, vice versa, when the author is aware that the review of his/her paper depends on this circumstance. Conflicts of interest also affect each one of the journal's staff members. The declaration of conflict of interest shall be binding in all cases, with the journal reserving the right to take all those measures that it deems necessary, should this principle be violated.

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<sup>3</sup> These points have been adapted from recommendations given by the United Nations. They can be consulted at <https://www.un.org/es/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>, last accessed February 15, 2020.

### 3. ETHICAL DUTIES

#### DUTIES OF THE EDITOR AND THE EDITORIAL BOARD

To be impartial at all times, avoiding any type of discrimination on grounds of gender, race, political ideology, religious beliefs or sexual condition, in relation to authors and the editorial staff, alike.

To assess all contributions on the sole basis of their academic value (see the *Guidelines for Reviewers HASER*), rather than the monies disbursed for their publication<sup>4</sup> or business interests.

To foster freedom of expression and academic excellence among authors and to promote different modes of rationality in the works submitted.

To maintain the journal's editorial independence.

To publish apologies, corrections, clarifications or retractions, should the need arise.

To implement and monitor an impartial procedure for handling complaints that allows claimants to lodge them and to receive replies, in accordance with the journal's ethical principles.

To encourage the correction of errors in papers, should the need arise.

To maintain the confidentiality of authors and reviewers during the double-blind peer review process.

To publish the journal's review criteria and procedures.

To accept or reject papers (the editor being ultimately responsible for this), whose authors must not have any conflicts of interest.

To maintain the integrity of academic records throughout the journal's lifecycle.

#### DUTIES OF THE REVIEWS

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<sup>4</sup> This journal does not charge authors administrative costs or any other type of fee.

To accept for review only those papers for which they have sufficient subject expertise and knowledge to carry out a proper assessment.

To notify the editor/editorial board if they can deduce who the author is, and to decline to review the paper to avoid neglecting their duty to perform a blind review.

To notify the editor/editorial board should they detect partial or full plagiarism or the use of the paper's content in conferences or keynotes of a different nature.

To perform an impartial blind review of the papers submitted, offering authors constructive comments.

To assess papers solely in accordance with academic criteria, drafting a report following the journal's guidelines in this respect. Likewise, reviewer reports must avoid any type of discrimination on grounds of gender, race, political ideology, religious beliefs or sexual condition.

To be aware of possible conflicts of interest of an institutional, financial or collaborative nature with the authors of papers that they are asked to review. And, in such an event, to notify the editor in order that the paper in question should be sent to another reviewer.

To review papers in a timely fashion.

#### DUTIES OF THE AUTHORS

To confirm that their papers are not being reviewed by another publication and that they have not been previously published or presented at any academic event.

To notify the editor should their papers be reworkings of conferences, keynotes, communications, talks or suchlike or subsequent reworkings, and to indicate this in a footnote on the first or final page of their papers.

To avoid any type of discrimination on grounds of gender, race, political ideology, religious beliefs or sexual condition in the body copy.

To obtain permission to publish texts, graphics or tables that do not belong to them and, if so required, to cite the source.

To cite the sources of all the ideas and content on which their papers' subject matter is based.

To notify the editor about any conflict of interest in relation to the review of their papers.

To abide by the ethical principles set out in national and international ethical regulations in the case of empirical studies performed on human or animal subjects. To obtain, if so required, the mandatory authorisation of the relevant ethical committee, including the explicitly informed consent of all the subjects involved in the study.

To expedite the correction of errors and modifications, should their papers be accepted for publication, in compliance with established deadlines.

To submit papers in compliance with the journal's editorial line and to accept their rejection should they be inconsistent with this, their area of knowledge or the literature and discussions pertaining to their field of development. However, there is a procedure for lodging complaints, should they deem this necessary.

To mention all funding sources in their papers, should this be the case.

To abstain from publishing submitted or accepted papers in any other journal.

To ensure that all the co-authors have been equally involved in the process, should the need arise.

To transfer copyrights to the journal and, if they have been accepted, to request permission to publish or edit their papers in any other medium.

## **PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING ETHICS-RELATED CLAIMS AND COMPLAINTS**

1. Any ethics-related claim or complaint relating to the *International Journal on Philosophical Practice HASER* can be lodged at any moment by sending an email to the editor and the editorial board at: [hacer@us.es](mailto:hacer@us.es). Claims or complaints should be substantiated and include all the documentary evidence necessary in order to allow the editor and editorial board to assess them adequately.
2. The editor shall gather all the information with the assistance, should the need arise, of the members of the editorial board.
3. The editor shall request statements and arguments in favour and against all the stances. If possible, the editor shall gather this information in writing before submitting it to the editorial board.
4. The editor shall convene a meeting of the editorial board for the purpose of presenting all the information to its members, as well as making decisions and proposing a joint line of action.
5. Normally, the editorial board, chaired by the editor, shall resolve claims or complaints within six days of receiving all the information. Likewise, he/she shall adopt a resolution and notify those involved of his/her decision.
6. The resolution shall involve:
  - a. Notifying the author about the decision.
  - b. Notifying the institutions involved in the submitted paper about the decision of the ethical committee.
  - c. Should the need arise, for example in the event of detecting plagiarism or self-plagiarism after publication, the paper in question shall be immediately withdrawn and a public statement

- issued. Likewise, all the indexes and catalogues in which the *International Journal on Philosophical Practice HASER* appears shall be duly notified.
- d. Authors shall be strictly prohibited from publishing another paper in the journal during the period established by the editorial board chaired by the editor.
  - e. Any other legal action that the editorial boards deems necessary, should the need arise.
7. In the event that the claim or complaint involves the editor, the most senior member of the ethical committee will be appointed to oversee the process.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Both the *Declaration on Ethics and Good Practices of the International Journal on Philosophical Practice HASER* and the *Procedures for Handling Ethics-Related Claims and Complaints* have been drafted after analysing the codes of conduct and good practices of different publishing houses and academic journals, resulting in the aforementioned synthesis. Specifically, the sources that have been consulted are as follows:

BMJ Publishing Group, *Resources for authors*, available online at: <http://resources.bmj.com/bmj/authors/editorial-policies/transparencypolicy> (accessed 15 September 2016).

Cambridge University Press, *Publication ethics*, available online at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/authors/publication-ethics> (accessed 15 September 2016).

Cambridge University Press, *Ethical standards ethics*, available online at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/about/ethical-standards> (accessed 15 September 2016).



Committee on publication ethics, *Code of conduct*, available online at: [http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/New\\_Code.pdf](http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/New_Code.pdf) (accessed 15 September 2016).

Committee on publication ethics, *Code of conduct and best practice. Guideline for journals editors*, available online at: <http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines> (accessed 15 September 2016).

Committee on publication ethics, *Code of conduct*, available online at: <http://publicationethics.org/files/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf> (accessed 15 September 2016).

Elsevier, *Publishing ethics resource kit (PERK) for editors*, available online at: <https://www.elsevier.com/editors/perk> (accessed 15 September 2016).

Elsevier, *Publishing ethics resource kit (PERK) for editors*, available online at: <https://www.elsevier.com/editors/perk> (accessed 15 September 2016).



## **Normas para la publicación en *HASER*** ***Revista internacional de Filosofía Aplicada***

*HASER. Revista Internacional de Filosofía Aplicada* es una publicación académica que edita artículos, reseñas y comentarios de eventos de calidad vinculados con el mundo de la Orientación Filosófica y la Filosofía Aplicada. Para su aceptación, el envío de trabajos responderá a los siguientes ítems, devolviéndose a los autores que no los cumplan:

1. Los trabajos han de ser inéditos, desarrollar un tema acorde a la línea editorial y no estar incursos en evaluación por otra revista hasta conseguir el dictamen final de *HASER*.
2. Una vez aceptados, no pueden ser publicados, parcial o totalmente, salvo que dispongan del permiso de los editores de la revista, y siempre habrán de citar la fuente original.
3. Se enviarán en formato digital a la dirección electrónica de la revista [haser@us.es](mailto:haser@us.es) en formato Word 2003 o anterior. Si, en diez días, los autores no recibieran acuse de recibo, deberán volver a remitir el email. Téngase presente que la segunda quincena de Julio y el mes de Agosto será inhábil para la remisión de acuses de recibo.
4. Los artículos y los comentarios se someterán a una revisión por pares externos, que incluye la evaluación de, al menos, dos *referees*. Éstos determinarán su aprobación, rechazo o aprobación con sugerencias a subsanar por el autor. Los artículos se evaluarán de acuerdo a los siguientes criterios: claridad, coherencia de las ideas, metodología adecuada a los contenidos, evaluación de la bibliografía utilizada actualizada y congruente con el tema, fundamentos y justificación suficiente y relevancia del trabajo para la disciplina. Más tarde, el comité editor decidirá el número de la revista en que se incluirá el trabajo.

4. EXTENSIÓN: Los artículos tendrán una extensión de entre 6000 y 10000 palabras, las notas de eventos (cursos, congresos, seminarios, conferencias) deberán contener una extensión de entre 3000 y 5000 palabras y las reseñas entre 1000 y 1500 palabras.
5. Todo artículo o nota deberá incluir bajo el título (tamaño máximo 15 palabras), la traducción del título al inglés, el nombre, filiación y ORCID del autor, su email, un resumen en castellano e otro en inglés de no más de ciento cincuenta palabras y entre cuatro y seis palabras clave (inglés y español).
6. En el caso de que existan varios autores en un artículo, se deberá indicar el orden y justificar esa decisión. Asimismo, habrá de indicarse la fuente de financiación de los proyectos en los que se enmarcan los trabajos, si así sucediese.
7. Se aceptan originales en inglés y castellano, publicándose en la lengua en que haya sido remitido. Los envíos en otras lenguas serán estudiados por el comité editor.
8. FORMATO:  
Es requisito para su evaluación que las citas (siempre a pie de página) se rijan por los siguientes formatos:
  - a. Libros: Apellido, Autor: *Nombre de la obra*, editorial, lugar, año.  
Ejemplo: Séneca, Lucio Anneo: *Cartas a Lucilio*, Editorial Juventud, Madrid, 2001.
  - b. Artículos de revistas: Apellidos, Autor: “Nombre del artículo”, en *Revista, número o volumen*, lugar, año, pp. xx-xx.  
Ejemplo: Ruiz Pérez, Miguel Ángel: “La filosofía aplicada en el mundo”, en *Revista de Filosofía Aplicada, número 23*, Sevilla, 2003, pp. 23-45.
  - c. Capítulos de libro: Apellidos, Autor: “Nombre del capítulo”, en Apellidos, Autor: *Nombre de la obra*, editorial, lugar, año, pp. xx-xx.  
Ejemplo: Márquez Ruibarbo, Antonio: “La filosofía aplicada y su futuro ontológico” en González Mercader, Marcos: *La filosofía*

*aplicada a través del tiempo*, Editorial Miriati, Sevilla, 2006, pp. 23-56.

c. Artículos procedentes de Internet: Apellidos, Autor: “Nombre del título de la entidad referida”, disponible on-line en [www.referenciaonline.net](http://www.referenciaonline.net) (último acceso 11 de enero de 2009).

Ejemplo: Santes Martín, Antonio: “Philosophical Practice”, disponible on-line en [www.santes.net/philconuns.htm](http://www.santes.net/philconuns.htm) (último acceso 23 de agosto de 2016).

9. El tipo de letra de los artículos, notas y reseñas será:

- Times new roman 12 tpi para el contenido del artículo.
- Times New Roman 10 tpi para las citas dentro del texto, las notas a pie de página, los resúmenes, abstracts y palabras claves.
- No se aceptarán los subrayados ni las negritas dentro del artículo, a excepción del título de los epígrafes que irán en negrita.
- No se incluirán líneas entre párrafos.
- No se usarán mayúsculas.

10. Todos los autores han de disponer de un identificador ORCID, que incluirán en el artículo.

11. No existen costes por procesamiento y publicación de artículos.

12. Una vez publicado el trabajo, se remitirá al autor una copia de la revista en versión online vía correo electrónico.

## **GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS TO PUBLISH IN *HASER*. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE**

Academic and peer-reviewed *International Journal on Philosophical Practice HASER* encourages authors to submit articles, reviews and reports of events linked to Philosophical Practice. Contributions must be sent according to these policies.

1. Articles must be original. They have to develop a topic linked to the editorial line. They must not be published previously or sent to other journals before author receives the decision of *HASER* about its acceptance or rejection.
2. Contributions published in *HASER* can't be published (partly or totally) in other journal, websites or similar without permission of Editor of *Haser*. If *HASER* allows its re-publication, author must indicate its original source.
3. Contributions must be sent in an electronic version to [haser@us.es](mailto:haser@us.es) in *Word 2003/97* format. *HASER* will send a return receipt to authors in ten days. If they don't receive it, article must be sent again.
4. Articles will be sent to two referees, in order to double-blind review. Articles will be evaluated according to the following criteria: clarity, coherence of ideas, methodology appropriate to the contents, evaluation of the bibliography used updated and congruent with the topic, foundations and sufficient justification and relevance of the work for the discipline. Referees will propose one of these decisions: 'suitable for publication', 'rejected', 'suitable with minor corrections'. If an article is 'suitable for publication', editorial committee will decide the issue where it will be included.
4. LENGTH: Articles must contain between 6000 and 10000 words (12-18 pages), event reports must contain between 3000 and 5000 words

(5-8 pages) and books reviews must contain between 1000 and 1500 words (2 pages).

5. Contributions must include author name, affiliation, ORCID, email, an abstract in Spanish and English (70-150 word) and 4-6 keywords. Articles will incorporate a “Reference section” with 8-15 books at least.

6. If there are several authors in an article, the order must be indicated and that decision justified. In addition, the source of financing of the projects in which the work is framed must be indicated.

7. LANGUAGE: Contributions could be written in English and Spanish. Translation services will not be provided.

#### 8. TEXT FORMAT:

Contributors who want to publish in *Haser* must follow these formats:

a. Books: Family name, Name: *Title*, publisher, place, year, p.xx.

Example: Seneca, Lucio Anneo: *Letters to Lucilius*, Granta Books, New York, 2001, p. 23.

b. Articles: Family Name, Name: “Article title”, in *Journal title, number, volume*, place, year, pp. xx-xx.

Example: Hume, David: “Philosophy and its links to Politics”, in *Political Philosophy, number 23*, Baltimore, 2003, pp. 23-45.

c. Chapters: Family name, Name: “Name of chapter”, in Family name, Name: *Book title*, publisher, place, year, p. xx-xx.

Example: Smith, Peter: “Philosophy and life” in Murphy, John (ed.): *Life*, Pearson Publishers, Washington (USA), 2006, pp. 34-56.

d. Articles from Internet: Family name, Name: “Title of article”, available in [www.online.net](http://www.online.net) (last access February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Example: SMITH, Michael: “To make Philosophical Practice”, available in [www.filoze.org/vera.htm](http://www.filoze.org/vera.htm) (last access March 26<sup>st</sup>, 2009).

9. Type of letters must be:

- Times new roman 12 tpi: Main text of articles.

- Times New Roman 10 tpi: quotations inside article, footnotes, abstracts and keywords.

- Texts must avoid stress, underlined or bold words. Sections titles will be written in bold words.

- Do not use capitals.

- Do not include lines between paragraphs.

10. There aren't any fees for publishing articles.

11. Authors need to have an ORCID number. It will be indicated at the beginning of the article.

12. After publishing articles, authors will receive a whole issue of HASER by email to authors.