

ASPCP NEWSLETTER

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American Society for Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy

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Advisory Board of Referees

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Welcome to the third issue of the *ASPCP Newsletter*. I have received several positive comments regarding the first two issues and would like to thank those responsible for their feedback. If you have suggestions and/or criticisms, please submit them.

Submissions

The *ASPCP Newsletter* welcomes articles (in English) on any aspect of philosophical practice. Authors submitting articles should send three copies prepared for blind refereeing. It is preferred that final copies of accepted manuscripts be submitted on 3 1/2 inch floppy disks in Word Perfect 5.1 or 6.0, Word Perfect for Windows, Microsoft Word, or ASCII format, although this is not necessary.

In addition, the *ASPCP Newsletter* also welcomes news items, book reviews, critical notices, and discussion notes on issues of interest to philosophical practitioners.

Contributions may be as long as 5000 words. All contributions should be typewritten with one inch margins, and double spacing between lines. If footnotes are necessary in manuscripts, they are to be placed at the end of the paper, double spaced, and numbered consecutively. All items may be submitted by email.

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Advisory Board of Referees

In addition to seeking contributions to the *ASPCP Newsletter*, we are still seeking qualified people for the Advisory Board of Referees to evaluate articles submitted to the *ASPCP Newsletter*. By being a member of the Advisory Board of Referees, you will use your professional knowledge and experience to ensure that only articles of the highest quality are published by the *ASPCP Newsletter*. All articles submitted for publication in the *ASPCP Newsletter* are to be prepared for blind refereeing and will be reviewed by at least two members of the Advisory Board of Referees prior to being accepted for publication in the *ASPCP Newsletter*; that is, once we have acquired sufficient members for this board.

As a member of the Advisory Board of Referees, your name and institutional affiliation will be included in each issue of the *ASPCP Newsletter*. Your responsibilities as a member of the Advisory Board of Referees will be threefold: 1) to review articles submitted for publication, 2) to provide written comments about the articles (which will be returned to the author), and 3) to make a recommendation as to a) whether or not the article considered should be published in the *ASPCP Newsletter*, and b) under what conditions it should be published.

If you want to be considered as a member of the Advisory Board of Referees, please send a copy of your CV and a letter to the editor indicating this to the address above.

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Call for Nominations

The *ASPCP* is seeking nominations for 1) members of the Board of Directors (which are elected by the membership at large) and 2) President-elect (which is selected by the Board of Directors). All nominations should be sent to:

Dr. Paul W. Sharkey, Chair,
Board of Professional Examiners, *ASPCP*
c/o Center for Community Health
The University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5122

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Call for Papers

ASPCP, CENTRAL APA MEETING
Pittsburgh, PA, April 23 - 26, 1997

The American Society for Philosophy, Counseling, & Psychotherapy (*ASPCP*) will meet in conjunction with the APA Central Division Meeting. Papers are welcome on any topic concerning philosophical counseling. In addition, contributors can submit proposals for workshops. Finally, if you are interested in chairing a session, serving as a commentator, or participating in some other manner, please let me know ASAP. All contributions should be sent to the program chair at the address below. While there is no deadline specified as yet for receipt of submissions, one will be set in the near future.

Dr. Kenneth F.T. Cust
Department of English and Philosophy
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Warrensburg, MO 64093

Email: Kencust@2sprint.net

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ASPCP, PACIFIC APA MEETING
Berkeley, CA, April, 1997

CALL FOR PAPERS, PANELS, PROPOSALS for a session sponsored by the American Society for Philosophy, Counseling and Psychotherapy at the Pacific APA Meetings in Berkeley, April 1997.

If you are interesting in presenting work on any topic of interest to the Society or participating as a commentator or session chair for the Society's session at the Pacific APA next year, please send an abstract, proposal, or relevant information by August 1st to the program chair:

Professor Julien Murphy
Philosophy Department
University of Southern Maine
P.O. Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104-9300

Email: JMURPHY@MAINE.EDU

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CALL FOR PAPERS and/or WORKSHOP PROPOSALS

3rd International Conference on Philosophical Practice

New York City, July 1997

(If you already have questions, e.g. "What is philosophical practice?", or "Where is New York City?", then visit our web site, URL below.)

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Gerd Achenbach, Founder and President, (German) Society for Philosophical Practice and Counseling

Featured Speakers: leading philosophical practitioners from America, Britain, Canada, Germany, Israel, The Netherlands, South Africa

Papers and/or workshop proposals on any aspect of philosophical practice (e.g. individual counseling, group facilitation, corporate consultation) are invited. Papers should have a reading time of 30-45 minutes, to be followed by about 30 minutes of discussion. Workshops should run for about 60 minutes, to be followed by about 15 minutes of discussion.

Draft papers and or/workshop proposals, either hard or soft copy, must be postmarked by January 15, 1997. Please send submissions to the conference organizer:

Louis Marinoff
Department of Philosophy
The City College of New York
137th Street at Convent Avenue
New York, NY 10031
U.S.A.

Email: marinoff@cnct.com
Ph: 212-650-7647
Fax: 212-650-7649

For information on the two previous conferences and much else pertaining to Philosophical Practice -- including *ASPCP* Certification -- Do visit our web site:

<http://134.74.216.29/conference/>

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ASPCP Program Notes

ASPCP Program for the APA Eastern Division Meetings

Saturday Afternoon, December 28
Group Session V - 5:15 PM - 7:15 PM
ASPCP, Picard
Chair: Louis Marinoff

Maria Tillmanns: "Philosophical Counseling and Dealing with a Dualistic World"

Paul Sharkey: "Philosophy and Health"

Kenneth Cust: "Is There a Difference between Philosophical and Psychological Counseling?"

Sunday Evening, December 29
Group Session IX - 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM
ASPCP Business Meeting, Picard
Chair: Elliot Cohen

The agenda will include matters pertaining to certification, as well as the ASPCP's role in the Third International Conference on Philosophical Counseling (New York, July 1997), being organized by Louis Marinoff.

Report on the 2nd International Conference

**2nd International Congress on Philosophical Practice
Leusden, The Netherlands
August 25-28, 1996**

A Report to the ASPCP

The Second International Congress on Philosophical Practice was billed by its organizers -- Yvonne Verweij and the Dutch Association for Philosophical Practice -- as a sequel to the fondly-regarded Vancouver conference of 1994. The Leusden event more than lived up to its billing; it provided definitive senses of continuity, growth and direction for the movement. Many participants from the first conference were re-united at this second one, and many new acquaintances were made. Old links were renewed; fresh ones forged. The graciousness of the hosts, the professionalism of the organizers, and the collegiality of the participants made the Leusden conference memorable in its own right, and a decidedly tough act to follow.

None of this was apparent at the remote outset, when quite a different impression was inadvertently conveyed. I first received a call for papers in March 1996, with an April 15th deadline for submission of proposals: this for an international event that August. By North American standards, the notice was extremely short indeed, both in terms of travel arrangements and submissions. Many of our North American colleagues, who in different circumstances would gladly have attended, opted out at this late-early stage. I sent in my proposal by the April 15th deadline--both soft copy to the designated (British) e-mail address, and hard copy to Holland by fax. Weeks passed without word. By May 24, I had not received as much as an acknowledgement of my submission. So I fired off a sharp missive, complaining about the conspicuous lack of lead-time and organization. I should have heeded Mark Twain's advice about angry letters: namely, write one if you must, but don't mail it for three days. My missive crossed in the post with the Dutch acceptance of my proposal. And shortly thereafter, I received an explanatory and conciliatory note from Eite Veening, whose is at least as good a diplomat as he is a philosophical practitioner.

Following this brief squall, the sailing proved smooth indeed. Participants made their joint and several ways from Amsterdam to Amersfoort to Leusden, and found the International School voor Wijsbegeerte (International School for Philosophy) nestled in a secluded wood. The School com-

prises a main building housing a reception area, auditorium, dining room, seminar rooms, philosophy library, bar and billiard table. Close at hand lies a simple but functional four-winged dormitory (with single and double rooms), and another building with classroom and other facilities. After checking in on Sunday afternoon, however, participants had little leisure to explore either the prim premises or the beckoning countryside, owing to the intensity of the program and the cohesiveness of the cloistered group.

Sunday evening ran into Wednesday afternoon as though it were a single continuous day, interrupted only by meals and naps. With no diversions, no responsibilities, no commuting, no shopping, no sight-seeing, no stress, no television, no telephone solicitation, no e-mail, no junk-mail, no sports, no students, no children, and no pets to distract, diffuse and drain our attention, most of us were able to muster sufficient energies to imbibe the demanding and variegated program. Leading practitioners from America, Britain, France, Germany, Israel, South Africa and The Netherlands regaled us with theories, techniques and developments pertaining to all facets of philosophical practice. The program struck a judicious balance between plenary and concurrent sessions, papers and workshop presentations, counseling and consulting issues, traditional and novel approaches. The only pervasive complaint -- and the surest evidence of a superb event -- was that one could not simultaneously attend all the concurrent sessions. I formed the impression that no-one wanted to miss anything.

In retrospect, it is difficult to convey the state of mind that ensued from rising early, engaging immediately in philosophical discussions over breakfast, attending sessions, having coffee and more philosophical discussions between sessions, attending more sessions, having more philosophical discussions over lunch, attending afternoon sessions punctuated by coffee and philosophical discussions, followed by philosophical discussions over supper. To stave off after-dinner relaxation, the organizers prepared or improvised evening sessions, after which the group gravitated to the bar for philosophical discussions over drinks (or drinks over philosophical discussions), until the bar closed. And so to bed. I remember closing my eyes and falling immediately asleep, only to awaken at what seemed the next instant -- feeling fully refreshed -- except it was next morning . . . and the philosophical discussions resumed. This continued for three days, which passed as one.

I learned much at this event. I was introduced to Gerd Achenbach for the first time. He is a veritable patriarch of the movement, exuding thoughtfulness and commanding respect. (So much so that I actually spoke to him before our introduction, having picked him out of a crowd at the Amersfoort train station -- not knowing who he was -- to ask directions to the treintaxi. He is exactly the sort of person one asks; he radiates the air of one who has answers.) My lessons included exposure to new dimensions of philosophical counseling from the vigorous Israeli wing, as well as from the burgeoning British wing; and to new dimensions of philosophical consultation (e.g. integrity training and adaptations of Socratic dialogue) from Dutch initiatives in both private and public sectors.

I digress to observe that the Dutch initiatives in particular

could and should be transplanted to America. Dutch practicality and American pragmatism are, after all, close cousins. Moreover, the vast extent of American moral impoverishment begets a correspondingly huge market for philosophical consultation; while ironically, the vast extent of American moral impoverishment leaves potential clients unaware that they have any such demand at all. So the future of philosophical consultation in America appears to hinge on two conditions: first, acquiring and adapting available expertise; and second, not creating a demand, but rather activating a latent one. Toward that end, four leading Dutch exponents of Socratic dialogue (Dorine Bauduin, Driese Boele, Ida Jongsma, and Jos Kessels) have agreed to facilitate weekend dialogues in New York during the next year or so. (The first dialogue, facilitated by Driese Boele, will take place November 22-24. Anyone who wants to participate in a subsequent dialogue should contact me.) End of digression.

While bread and board figure thus far only in the interstices of this account, they were of course the material glue that bound the conference together. (The ethereal bonds were furnished by the participants.) And in this regard, the conference was also unusual by North American standards. As a speaker, not only did I not have to pay a registration fee: my accommodation and all meals at Leusden were on the house. This was a literal Dutch treat, not the usual figurative one confronting perennial conference-goers.

When the conference ended, most people vanished as suddenly as they had arrived. A few remnants lingered: Israelis continuing their travels, Americans flying back to work next day. (How do Israeli philosophical practitioners manage to travel so much, compared to their American counterparts? Perhaps we should receive foreign aid from them!) Ida Jongsma speedily rounded up us strays, and herded us to her splendid Hotel de Filosoof (Philosopher's Hotel), in a well-appointed Amsterdam quarter. She organized drinks and rooms and supper and yet more philosophical discussion.

I flew home immeasurably glad that I had come, and very sorry that I had to leave. My hat is off to coordinator Yvonne Verweij, to the members of the congress committee (Eite Veening, Ida Jongsma, Bauke Zijlstra, Dries Boele, Jos Delnoy), and to the International School for Philosophy, for a job exceedingly well done: hearty congratulations and many thanks!

Louis Marinoff
President-Elect, ASPCP

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Questioning (and) Philosophical Counseling¹

by Joel Marks²

There is certainly something absolutely right about the association of philosophy with people seeking help to deal with problems of life. But the notion of philosophical counseling is problematic because, apparently, it presumes "Yes" answers to two questions philosophy properly only asks ... or answers tentatively ..., namely: (1) Can philoso-

phy truly benefit a person? and, if so, (2) Can one person provide the benefits of philosophy to another?

Furthermore, in order to answer these questions, a still prior question needs to be addressed: What is philosophy? It is possible to imagine, for example, some Asian philosophers answering "No" to Question 2 on the basis of a conception of philosophy at odds with the primarily rational and cognitive approach that passed for philosophical counseling at the recent Eastern APA sessions in New York.

I note, in passing, there is no requirement of familiarity with Asian philosophical traditions in the proposed Certification Standards, but only "the analytic and existential / phenomenological traditions in recent philosophy". I note also the omission from the list of "moral qualities of character" given in the proposed Standards of Ethical Practice (Item #21) such traits as being loving, caring, and empathic, which would presumably be stressed by some feminist philosophers; once again the tone is strictly rational and cognitive.

Even considering the tradition of Socrates (the only philosopher invoked in the Standards), there would seem to be fallacies involved in deriving "Yes" answers to Questions 1 and 2, to wit:

Fallacious Argument 1 (for "Yes" answer to Question 1)
PREMISE: The unexamined life is not worth living.
CONCLUSION: The examined life is worth living.

Fallacious Argument 2 (for "Yes" answer to Question 2)
PREMISE: Philosophy can help people.
CONCLUSION: One person can impart the benefits of philosophy to another.

Socrates himself presumably accepted what I call the "conclusion" of the first argument, and may have uttered what I label the "premise" not really as the premise of an argument but simply as a rhetorical expression of the "conclusion". Nonetheless, there have been bona fide philosophers who have questioned, indeed, denied that "conclusion"; Aquinas (after his "mystical experience") and Wittgenstein may be cases in point.

Socrates himself could be taken to have denied the conclusion of the second argument. In some of the dialogues (probably the early ones, when Plato was less dogmatic), he notoriously denied that he was a teacher; he insisted his quest was a personal one. If others could benefit from overhearing his public inquiry, so be it. But he certainly wouldn't profess wisdom (not to mention, charge for it).

And when Socrates engaged others in dialogue, it certainly was not for their edification ... not to mention, to be supportive or make them feel good about themselves and other such goals of conventional psychotherapy. He was seeking wisdom for himself ... by checking out what supposed authorities had to say on various subjects. In the process, as we know, he discovered wisdom in a completely unexpected, indirect way, by demonstrating that the supposed authorities were not authorities after all but only thought they were. In other words, there are no authorities,

but only people who do and people who don't think there are (*a fortiori*, think they themselves are). The latter -- those who don't think there/they are authorities -- are the wise.

Please understand that I do not wish to throw cold water on the idea of philosophy's usefulness. I personally endorse this view; indeed, I have reached the point in my own philosophizing and teaching where philosophy as wonder has been almost wholly supplanted by philosophy as ethical guide. I am almost ready to chuck the notion of philosophy's intrinsic value in favor of a thoroughly pragmatic *raison-d'être*.

HOWEVER, even more basic to philosophy, as I understand it, is its questioning (hence critical) nature. Philosophy questions everything, including itself. Philosophy is certainly a peculiar profession in that it continually questions even its own legitimacy. At the APA we discussed the possibility of institutionalizing the role or function of gadfly in the profession of philosophical counseling. But even putting aside qualms about the paradoxicality of institutionalizing a gadfly (although isn't that exactly what the court fool was?), does this go far enough to internalize the gadfly in the very nature and practice of philosophical counseling?

Curiously enough, one place where Socrates does seem to endorse the idea that one person can deliver the benefits of philosophy to others is with the gadfly metaphor. For his point of invoking the image is to show how something purely personal in origin as well as annoying to others can turn out also to be very useful to others; in his case, his activities could spur on Athens to become better.

But this still leaves a problem for philosophical counseling in particular. Philosophy can perhaps be useful to society in virtue of its questioning and critical stance (although of course that too could be questioned). Philosophy can (again, perhaps) also be beneficial for the individual who practices it. What is problematic about philosophical counseling is that it seems to fall between these two stools: Can philosophy also be useful to and beneficial for a given individual who is not him- or herself a philosopher? For the presumption seems to be that the counselor is the philosopher and the client is not.

Think of the problem in this way. Socrates may have had two goals in his philosophizing: to help himself and to help society (Athens). Meanwhile, his interlocutors served in a largely instrumental capacity -- necessary tools for a process that is dialogic. If we apply this paradigm to the counseling situation, it seems that the client-interlocutor is being used, and not necessarily for his or her own purposes or good.

Let me suggest a solution that brings together the various themes I have discussed. Perhaps the method of philosophical counseling ... like that of good philosophical teaching ... is to help the other to become a philosopher, or at least more philosophical, maybe even just with regard to a particular problem. And for what purpose? The good of all: counselor, client, and society.

And it is precisely the questioning stance that sets apart philosophical counseling from psychological counseling, as

the latter often seems to be practiced, anyway. For the philosophical counselor does not presume to know the solutions to the client's problems; the questioning introduces a genuine humility to the counselor's role. The psychologist -- in the narrow, contemporary professional sense -- goes to school, learns a theory or two or three, and applies one or more in practice in an attempt to help the client; this psychologist believes him- or herself to be an authority. The philosopher or philosophical psychologist or, we might even want to say, genuine psychologist goes to school, learns the theories, and then tries to apply them but in a questioning, critical way and in dialogue and cooperation with the client. The philosopher may even be motivated as much by his or her own personal quest for help as by the pain of others.

There is the story that has Socrates out on one of his accustomed walks in the marketplace. At the same time a distinguished visitor to the city is being shown about by a guide. Seeing Socrates in the distance, the visitor spontaneously remarks, "Look at that man over there; he appears to be a nasty sort!" The guide, amused, turns to the visitor and gushes, "Oh, how wrong you are: That is Socrates, a most virtuous man!" At a later date the guide happens upon Socrates and relates the incident. Socrates is also amused, but for a different reason. He says to the guide, "But he was right, you know. I'm a veritable sewer. That is precisely why I spend my life seeking to understand virtue -- I wish to become virtuous!"

Thus, in my own case I feel motivated to seek training in marriage and family therapy. This is because (1) I want to learn how I myself can achieve marital and family success and (2) my own failure in this regard has also sensitized me to this form of suffering in others, which I therefore desire to alleviate. Now, if I were to become a strictly "professional psychological" therapist, my approach might be: I'm going to learn how people in this kind of situation can be helped, and they're going to pay me to help them. But as a philosophical counselor, I would not at all assume I have the answers, or even that there are any! I would be engaging my client-interlocutors as aids or partners in the search for answers, or for the validation of various answers that have been proposed, for example, the theories I had been taught in school. And if the clients or I benefit from the process, so be it!

Should a person be paid for an activity like this? I think this is a separate issue that is not especially problematic. So long as there is truth in advertising about what philosophical counselors are about, then it's up to potential clients whether they want to support the (would-be) counselors in their efforts to help the world (including the potential clients and, possibly as well, the counselors themselves). The clients must have a faith, like the counselor's, that perhaps there is something to the dialogic process that can be helpful to them. They are paying the counselor because the latter presumably has some background knowledge and skills relevant to the process which the client lacks (but will acquire in the process ... albeit not to the point of becoming a specialist like the counselor).

In sum, philosophy is a fundamentally questioning discipline; assumptions are the grist for its mill. Let us be unrepentant philosophers in the practice of philosophical

counseling. Philosophical counselors may be nothing more than intellectually honest psychotherapists -- where the therapeutic value of the process is itself always in question, and the questioning is in fact motivating the process.

Notes

¹ This essay was prompted by discussions at two meetings of the ASPCP held at the Annual Eastern Division Meeting of the APA in December of 1995.

² Joel Marks is Professor of Philosophy at the University of New Haven. His areas of special interest are ethics, emotion, and the nature of philosophy. He has edited two volumes on emotions -- (with Roger T. Ames) *Emotions in Asian Thought: A Dialogue in Comparative Philosophy* (State University of New York Press, 1995) and *The Ways of Desire: New Essays in Philosophical Psychology on the Concept of Wanting* (Chicago: Precedent, 1986).

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Notes of Interest

International Workshop on Philosophical Counseling

I am thinking of organizing a 3-8 day International residential workshop in Philosophical Counseling at my 15 bedroom Edwardian Manor house in the New Forest, south England sometime in late November or early December, say the first two weeks. I realize it is short notice but I have the opportunity of using this Manor House free at that time. Those attending would have to live as a community cooking and cleaning for themselves; we provide the food. A possibility is to have people with some connection to PC assemble together and generate their own activity around exploring what has been done so far, what are the prospects, where we stand, as well as experiencing each other's workshops. Besides your own travel, other costs would be minimal: =A310 - =A315 English Pounds or \$15 - \$20US dollars a day to cover food, *et cetera*. Is anyone interested? If so, let me know ASAP.

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