

# The Philosophy Clinic



# The Philosophy Clinic:

*Practical Wisdom at Work*

By

Stephen J. Costello

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I dedicate this book to my brother Simon, a recent convert to the  
consolations of practical philosophy.

‘The philosopher’s school is a clinic’  
—Epictetus, Stoic philosopher-therapist

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Dr. Stephen J. Costello is a prominent Irish philosopher, logotherapist and existential analyst, author and founder-director of the Viktor Frankl Institute of Ireland ([www.viktorfranklireland.com](http://www.viktorfranklireland.com)). He received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in philosophy from University College Dublin. Formerly a lecturer in philosophy, Dr. Costello now trains logotherapists and works as a consultant for the corporate sector. His books include the bestseller, *The Irish Soul: In Dialogue*, as well as *18 Reasons Why Mothers Hate Their Babies: A Philosophy of Childhood*, *The Pale Criminal: Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, *Philosophy and the Flow of Presence*, *The Truth about Lying*, *What is Friendship?: Conversations with the Great Philosophers*, *Hermeneutics and the Psychoanalysis of Religion*, and *The Ethics of Happiness: An Existential Analysis*. He has also written on the interface between Stoicism and logotherapy and has edited a number of books in the area of philosophy and spirituality. He conducts workshops and seminars internationally and has addressed two parliaments on the subject of meaning and mental health. Dr. Costello is a member of the Irish Philosophical Society, and the International Association of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis (Vienna), from which he holds a practitioner's Diploma.

### **Ran Lahav**

Ran Lahav is a theoretician and practitioner in the international field of philosophical practice and philosophical counselling. He holds a doctorate in philosophy and a Master's degree in psychology from the University of Michigan, USA. In 1994 he initiated and co-organized the First International Conference of Philosophical Practice, and taught the first university course in the world on the field. For the past 24 years he has published articles and books on philosophical practice, and has given numerous lectures and workshops around the world. In 2014 he launched *Agora*, the international website of philosophical practice ([www.PhiloPractice.org](http://www.PhiloPractice.org)), and in 2015 the project of online philosophical-contemplative companionships. He currently lives a quiet life in rural Vermont in the USA, gives online university courses, and facilitates online philosophical groups.

**Lou Marinoff**

Lou Marinoff is a Commonwealth Scholar originally from Canada. He studied theoretical physics at Concordia and McGill universities, and earned a Ph.D. in the Philosophy of Science at University College, London. He is Professor of Philosophy, and Asian Studies, at The City College of New York. Lou is founding president of the American Philosophical Practitioners' Association, and editor of its journal *Philosophical Practice*. He has authored several internationally bestselling books, applying philosophy to everyday life, including *Plato Not Prozac*, translated into twenty-seven languages. He travels and speaks world-wide. Lou is faculty to leading organizations including Biovision (Lyon), Ducere (Canberra), Festival of Thinkers (Abu Dhabi), Horasis (Zurich), Institute for Local Government (University of Arizona), Soka Gakkai International (Tokyo), Strategic Foresight Group (Mumbai), and the World Economic Forum (Davos). Lou is a nature photographer, classical guitarist, and table hockey champion. He has appeared in three documentary films to date. His website is [www.loumarinoff.com](http://www.loumarinoff.com)

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Gerald has a B.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy as well as an M.Phil. in theology. He has written a number of philosophical texts on time, general philosophy, and philosophical biography as well as essays, and book reviews. He has published fifteen novels (under a pseudonym), and has taught practical philosophy in many different environments. Gerald is past editor of the journal *Practical Philosophy* and was for some time chair of the Society for Philosophy in Practice, as well as being a trained and registered philosophical counsellor.

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Péter Sárkány, Ph.D. is College Professor at Eszterházy Károly University of Applied Sciences, Department of Social Pedagogy in Hungary. His area of research is: philosophical and ethical foundations of the helping professions; 20th-century and Contemporary German philosophy; philosophical practice; the work of Viktor E. Frankl. He is the author of *Meaning-Centred Existential Analysis: Philosophy as Psychotherapy in the Work of Viktor E. Frankl*. He sits on the advisory panel of the Viktor Frankl Institute in Vienna and is chairman of the Hungarian Foundation of Logotherapy.

**Shlomit Schuster**

Dr. Shlomit C. Schuster was one of the pioneers of philosophical counselling. She recently passed away at the age of 64. Originally from the Netherlands, she was educated at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where she received her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. She set up a practice in philosophical counselling in Jerusalem in 1990, where she also operated a philosophical telephone ‘hotline’ for those experiencing existential and ethical problems. She is the author of *Philosophy Practice: An Alternative to Counselling and Psychotherapy*. She believed in the power of philosophy to inform as well as form and transform people. *Requiescat in pace.*

**Adam Wallenberg**

Adam is a philosophical practitioner, art educator, and artist currently based in Stockholm, Sweden. His latest project is titled ‘The Art Museum as a Cathedral’ and is a one-year philosophical exploration for young adults at the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm. His main interest in Philosophical Practise (PP) lies in phenomenology, existential philosophy, and ‘philosophizing with art’ (PwA). He has written about existential authenticity, worked with a philosophical pre-school and also speaks fluent Japanese. He currently works at the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm developing ‘PwA’ for children and teenagers. He is vice-president of the Swedish Society for Philosophical Practice and a board member of the Swedish Society for Existential Psychotherapy.

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Leon de Haas holds a Master’s degree in philosophy (University of Amsterdam, 1977), and is currently working on his dissertation on philosophical counseling from the perspective of the linguistic and phenomenological turn of Western philosophy (Stellenbosch University). Since 1976 he has been practicing philosophy in the context of community, organizational, and personal development in the Netherlands. Currently he is the owner of the philosophical practice ‘PlatoPraktijk’. He is a founding board member of the German ‘Berufsverband für Philosophische Praxis’, and President of the ‘Internationale Gesellschaft für Philosophische Praxis’. He has authored several articles on philosophical practice in international journals.

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Lydia Amir is a French-Israeli Associate Professor of Philosophy, a Visiting Professor at the Department of Philosophy at Tufts University, Boston, USA, and at Schiller International University, Paris and Heidelberg Campuses, and is Adjunct Researcher at the Institute of Advanced Humanistic Studies, Hubei University, China. She has been practicing philosophy for the last 25 years and is honorarily certified by the American Philosophical Practitioners Association. Apart from many articles and essays on ethics and the practice of philosophy in everyday life, she is the author of *Humor and the Good Life in Modern Philosophy: Shaftesbury, Hamann, Kierkegaard* and the co-editor of *Practicing Philosophy*. She is presently working on a book entitled *Laughter in the Good Life: Montaigne, Nietzsche, Santayana, Bergson*, and on *Philosophical Practice – Taking Philosophy Seriously: Rethinking Philosophers’ Responsibility*, as well as an anthology, *Philosophical Practice: New Frontiers*. She is editor, associate editor, and board editor of various international journals in philosophy and humour research. She is President of ‘Joyology’ – the association for the Promotion of Happiness through Humour, and Founding-President of the International Association for the Philosophy of Humour. She airs a weekly radio program on philosophy in everyday life, and can be reached at [lydamir@mail.com](mailto:lydamir@mail.com)



## PREFACE

Philosophical practice may refer to many ethical and existential endeavours ranging from philosophical counselling to organizational consulting, from dilemma training to Socratic dialogue. Different practitioners and proponents of this praxis interpret it differently, as we shall see.

It is a contemporary movement in practical and, mainly Western, philosophy, which has been developing since the 1980's. Practitioners ordinarily hold doctoral degrees in the subject and offer their philosophical counselling or consulting services to clients who are seeking meaning and purpose in, or a philosophical understanding of, their lives. It may operate in lieu of or in conjunction with traditional psychotherapy. It is rooted in the Socratic tradition (maieutic method), which sees philosophy as a love of wisdom (*Sophia*) and a quest for the Good (*Agathon*).

Plato counselled Dionysius of Syracuse, just as Aristotle advised Alexander the Great. The Stoics, in particular, viewed philosophy as a way of life and the great triumvirate of Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Seneca conceived philosophy as a therapy of the soul, and the site of spiritual exercises. Philosophical practice in the form of counselling returns to this ancient understanding while also extending beyond this remit to include the corporate dimension as well as philosophy walks and group facilitation, to name but a few. It may be applied in crèches as well as on cruises, in retirement homes or in rehabilitation centres.

I put a number of questions to the philosophers you will encounter in the following pages; their answers inspire and uplift as they show that there is a contemporary form of philosophical practice that can help to guide us through the perils and problems of human living. Their work demonstrates that the yearning for ultimate meaning is an exigency of the human spirit as we continue to marvel at the mystery of being.

In the split second between stimulus and response lies a small space of freedom, which is our power to choose and act. That is why the philosopher goes out onto the streets, like Socrates, to pose pertinent questions and deconstruct the dominant paradigm. That is why Diogenes went looking in the city, carrying a lamp in broad daylight, saying 'I am looking for a human being'. We must get off the mindless and materialist merry-go-round and think constructively, critically, and creatively for ourselves. We hunger for what will give us stability and security, for sense

and significance. We stockpile wealth and weapons of war. We feed on mood-altering substances like alcohol, drugs, and celebrity or dose up on psychotropic medications. But there is another path we can follow, accruing from an ancient pedigree: *philosophical practice*, as a way of life. So instead of floundering we might flourish: as it draws us from the existential vacuum into the domain of ethical values.

*The Philosophy Clinic* was written to address and provide answers to the current crisis of meaning and to draw attention to the contemporary movement known as ‘philosophical practice’ which includes philosophical counselling (‘philotherapy’), as well as Socratic dialogues, philosophy walks, corporate consulting, Philo cafés etc. Drawing on the wealth of worldly wisdom, in the mainly Western Socratic tradition, it aims to bring profound and practical philosophy to bear on issues and aspects of everyday life. Modern living has placed a great strain and stress on many people who are experiencing fragmentation and frustration, emptiness, existential distress and ethical confusion, the symptoms of which include boredom, burnout, and bewilderment. There is a longing for guidance and growth, wholeness and healing. The aim of this book is to cater for such a context. As Cicero exclaimed: ‘Truly philosophy is the medicine of the soul’.

The Greeks conceived of philosophy as a therapy of the soul and the site of spiritual exercises. Courses, classes, therapy and training in philosophical practice are offered in many countries to all those who hear the call and summons of Socrates to ‘Know Thyself’ by philosophical practitioners around the globe. Epictetus opined: ‘Empty is the argument of the philosopher which does not relieve any human suffering’. The aim is to form more than to inform – to transform. Philosophy is understood here to be the ancient consolation. And it is ultimately this dimension – philosophy’s semi-secret underside – which the reader can relish in the chapters to come.

**Stephen J. Costello, Dublin, July 2016.**

## CHAPTER ONE

### STEPHEN J. COSTELLO: LOGOTHERAPY AS PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE

#### **Why Psychiatry Has Let Us Down**

Permit me to begin with a critique. James Davies' 2013 publication, *Cracked: Why Psychiatry is Doing More Harm than Good*<sup>1</sup>, gives an indication of the critical stance that philosophical practice adopts towards the ubiquitous biologization of personal predicaments as well as providing a suggestion of how philosophical counselling differs from the predominant medical model of mind that still prevails.

Davis' book begins with three big questions: why is psychiatry big business?, why are so many psychiatric drugs prescribed? – 47 million antidepressant prescriptions in the UK alone last year— and why, without scientific justification, has the number of mental disorders risen from 106 in 1952 to 374 today?

The author of *Cracked* argues that sadness, sufferings, and setbacks have been medicalized into mental disorders – illnesses – that require pharmacological treatment; that negative drug trials are routinely buried; that antidepressants work no better than placebos; that research is regularly manipulated to produce positive results favouring the psychiatrists and pharmacological companies with huge monetary rewards for both parties; that more pills are being prescribed for more dreamt up disorders; that there are serious ethical questions the profession of psychiatry needs to answer. In short, psychiatry, as the subtitle says, is doing more harm than good.

The blurb on the back reads: 'One in four people in the UK and US will develop a mental disorder in any given year. That's what psychiatry tells us. But many - even most – will not actually be mentally ill. Thanks to pseudo-science and corporate greed, psychiatry is letting us down'.

The author in question is well-qualified to write such a book. He holds

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<sup>1</sup> James Davies, *Cracked: Why Psychiatry is Doing More Harm than Good*.

a doctorate in medical and social anthropology from the University of Oxford; he is also a psychotherapist, having worked in the NHS and as a Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology and Psychology in London's University of Roehampton. He is also the author of *The Importance of Suffering: The Value and Meaning of Emotive Discontent*. But more than that, his research is precise; he painstakingly seeks out primary sources all the time. The book deserves to be a bestseller and should be read by every mental health professional.

It is an extremely well-researched, empirically-grounded book, meticulously so; its tone is sober, accessible but academically solid. Chapter titles include labelling the DSM a 'work of fiction', 'psychiatric imperialism' and 'money and power ruling head and heart'. It is reminiscent of the anti-psychiatry movement and the work of Thomas Szasz who labelled the imperialism of psychiatry 'pharmocracy'. So there have been precedents and precursors in the tradition of critique. We may briefly mention two of them.

Szasz was a social critic of the moral and scientific foundations of psychiatry, of its scientism, and of what he saw as the social control of medicine in modern society. His main work was the 1961 publication, *The Myth of Mental Illness*. Szasz's main point was that mental illnesses are not real in the sense that cancers or Alzheimer's is real. Thus, we cannot verify or falsify (Karl Popper's criterion) DSM diagnoses. His politics was rooted in libertarianism. The character of mental disorders is, therefore, metaphoric. Psychiatry is injurious, authoritarian, and can commit iatrogenic damage through its literalism and reductionism. Furthermore, its language is one of power and control. Diseases are malfunctions of the body; 'mental disorder' is a weasel term with no scientific foundation whatsoever but passing itself off as a scientific category. 'Mental illnesses' are really problems in living, ways of being-in-the-world.

Michel Foucault, the French post-Structuralist, similarly argued against the presuppositions of different categories such as the 'insane' in *Madness and Civilisation*, the 'sick' in *The Birth of the Clinic*, the 'criminal' in *Discipline and Punish*, and the 'pervert' in *History of Sexuality*. He explains and ascertains the covert classifications and categorisations, the epistemological codes by which society attempts to legitimise certain formal practises of knowledge by outlawing and criminalising others, thus revealing a hidden history of power at work. Foucault demonstrates how 'deviancy' and 'abnormality' are relative concepts whose purpose is to control and manage (manipulate) contradictions and inconsistencies which proliferate in society so as to cultivate the dangerous illusion of a homogenised and integrated social totality. This will-to-knowledge

prevalent in the above definitions serves the interests of pseudo-science and is nothing short of a concealed and congealed will-to-power. To give one example, the institutionalisation (confinement) of the ‘insane’ criminalises those who transgress the limits of what is regarded by the moral majority (police) as acceptable norms (mores) of behaviour. Psychiatry, especially, is merely bourgeois Puritanism.

I would situate Davies in this philosophical tradition of archaeological and genealogical unmasking. There are mental health alternatives to biological psychiatry, ones that do justice to the four dimensions of the human being – biological, psychological, social and spiritual, and which likewise go beyond both behaviourism and psychoanalysis. Mention must be made of existential analysis and of the works of Viktor Frankl, Ludwig Binswanger, Medard Boss, Rollo May, Igor Caruso, and Irvin Yalom, who draw on the insights and ideas of existential and phenomenological philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Buber, Marcel, Schiller, Jaspers etc. for their inspiration. The Philadelphia Association in the UK is one such organization that integrates philosophical and psychological approaches to the human person, which is practised in most existential-analytic and logotherapeutic trainings.

The main problem for Davies is this: orthodox psychiatry pathologizes grief, over prescribes (a pill for every ill), and sees the human being less as a person and more of a pathological case of symptoms. It biologizes the human subject, scotomizes meaning and in so doing commits gross reductionism. To cite one example (all examples are backed up): about 85% to 90% of patients being prescribed antidepressants are getting no meaningful benefits from the drugs themselves. Moderate exercise and the talking cure of therapy fare far better. Pills don’t cure us, they simply contain the problem and change us by crudely altering the biochemistry of the brain, usually accompanied by nightmarish side-effects (Ritalin for ‘ADHD’ can be worse than cocaine).

At the heart of this lucrative (ludicrous?) enterprise for biological psychiatrists and pharmacological companies is the following fallacy and fantasy: that mental disorders are brain-based diseases. This disease-centred view has dominated psychiatry for decades. It is pure ‘bio-babble’, as the author felicitously phrases it.

Nature and nurture both play a part. We need to distinguish between disposition (our biological fate), situation (sociological fate) and our position (freedom to choose – our spiritual destiny), as Viktor Frankl, himself a psychiatrist, does. Frankl’s nuanced nosology of mental disorders distinguishes between somatogenic neuroses, where the cause is biological; psychogenic where it is reactive; and noögenic, where the

reason is existential and spiritual. What is lacking in psychiatry is a coherent model of the human person, such as one finds in Frankl, in all his/her dimensions—body (*soma*), mind (*psyche*) and spirit (*noös*—the specifically human dimension). Frankl humanizes psychiatry without rejecting it and I feel Davies could incorporate the work of logotherapy together with Frankl's subtler and more sophisticated morphology within his critique if only to bolster and backup his thesis.

Any psychiatry worthy of its name, if it doesn't want to cause iatrogenic damage, must start from this holistic premise of the unity and wholeness at the heart of the human person (what Frankl calls his noetic core, arguing that the spirit can never be sick – what he calls his 'psychiatric credo' and that behind every disorder is uninjured humanity – a human person who is utterly intact behind every illness). There is no known gene for around 97% of mental disorders contained in the current DSM or ICD. There will always be a multiplicity of factors: sociological, psychological, existential, biological – complex interactions between genes and environment. The human person is best viewed, I would want to argue, as a biopsychospiritual being and all these dimensions must be addressed in any efficacious and efficient treatment modality.

I couldn't put the book down. It is totally engaging, as controversial as it is compelling, and as erudite as it is enjoyable. After I finished it I drove up to a well-known psychiatrist, with a lifetime of clinical work behind him, who lives up the road from me whom I know and have huge respect for, who had likewise read this book, and asked him at his gate what he made of it, to which he replied: 'I have been saying it for years; psychiatry is a scam'.

People are miserable and searching for meaning. Psychiatry is crude and non-causal, content merely to contain. That said, pharmacology will always be important for those who have a somatogenic or 'endogenous' psychosis such as a bipolar disorder or a schizophrenia but there are credible and convincing alternatives for those who are questioning the meaning of being: philosophical counselling, the practical philosophy of Stoicism, or logotherapy and existential analysis. The meaning of soul, society, and self must be looked at in a new light or, rather, in an old light, one that Plato, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and Frankl, unique among contemporaries, shine on the sometimes sad human scene. They stand out like stars of the first nova. The solution lies less in crude chemical solutions and more in multidimensional contextual ones. Sometimes, meditation is better than medication and Plato preferable to Prozac. Illness, as the physician-philosopher Paracelsus astutely remarked, comes from nature; their cure, however, comes only from the spirit.

Let us now explore in much more detail the meaning of Viktor Frankl's logotherapy as I consider it to be a form of philosophical practice *par excellence*.

## Frankl with Plato

Viktor Frankl's 'logotherapy' has been labelled a 'healing through meaning'. *Therapeia* is 'curing' or 'healing' and Frankl translates *logos* as 'meaning' as well as 'spirit'. Therapy has traditionally been regarded as a 'treatment' (the medical model) or a talking-cure (the psychoanalytic-psychotherapeutic model), as remediation and remedy for maladies and mental illness, but it was Plato who first propounded the notion of philosophy itself as a therapy for disorders of the soul in dialogues from the *Charmides* to the *Timaeus*. Indeed, in the *Republic* he explicitly mentions 'mental health' likening it to a musical note and making the point that the ultimate aim is integration of the three parts of the personality (Freud, a self-styled student of Plato, centuries later, would similarly argue for a tripartite structure of the mind: conscious, preconscious, unconscious in his first topography, and id, ego, superego in his second topography). For Plato, philosophy is a way of life and offers itself as a therapy, beginning with a diagnosis of derailment and disorder (in the soul and society) together with its distinctive methods of release and transformation (cathartic cure).

In our own time psychology (unfortunately far removed from a *logos* of the *psyche*) prioritizes *techné* over (*philos*) *sophia*, thus threatening the very meaning of being. Philosophy, or the love of wisdom, leads to *arête* (virtue) and thence to *eudaimonia* ('flourishing' or spiritual 'joy' which has been translated as 'happiness' too). In this Platonic perspective, sanity is conformity of the mind with Being, insanity the rejection of reality. Nothing less is offered than 'conversion' (*metanoia*) as the soul pilgrimages from shadows in the cave of the unconscious to the sunlight of the Good (*Agathon*) itself, achieving in the ascent more consciousness and mental clarity: the turning (*periagoge*) to meaning and to the incomprehensible presence of the mystery of Being Itself.

This desire for the divine draws us, just as the instincts drive us. This is the Platonic field of tension, which Frankl labels *noödynamic*s (spiritual striving and struggling), consisting of pull and counter-pull in the *metaxy*. It is not science but the Divine Good alone which satisfies the *psyche*'s inexpugnable need for what Frankl calls 'ultimate meaning'. So for Plato, and Frankl, it is not power or profits or prestige or pleasure which are the source of our motivation but purpose and meaning and virtue, in other

words, the true (*verum*), the good (*bonum*) and the beautiful (*pulchrum*) – the three transcendental concepts.

Inner harmony, for Plato as for Frankl, produces well-being; order is integration and unity – the work of synthesis. Disorder is conflict and strife, Heraclitean flux without anchorage in the divine reality. Plato thus aligns harmony with health and happiness. The aim is to become one instead of many and attain unity and wholeness. To put that in a Franklian framework: unity is the integration of somatic and psychic aspects of the person; wholeness is that plus the integration of the noetic or spiritual dimension from its unconscious depths. This, so we can act in concord and unison. Disorder, by contrast, is discordance, disagreement, and dis-ease – disintegration. For Plato and for Frankl, Socrates was the man of integrity *par excellence* – he was an integral man (*integritas* is ultimate unity): a just man in thrall to the divine *Eros* and participating in the depths of the divine *Nous* Itself as trans-empirical reality (Plato's metaphysics is essentially a theomorphic ontology). Socrates' conscience (*daimon*) was his guide as he elicited from his interlocutors the truth (*aletheia*) about their own being – their deepest desires and noblest aspirations through the maieutic art of Socratic dialogue which, for Frankl, is the essence of logotherapy, as existential encounter, itself. We can therefore surely say that Socrates was the first logotherapist in the West and Plato its preeminent philosophical practitioner just as Frankl was a pioneer and precursor of contemporary philosophical counselling.

## **Existential Analysis as Philosophical Therapy**

Existential analysis is a philosophical form of therapy that concerns itself with the givens of the human condition such as suffering, guilt and death (what Frankl calls the 'tragic triad') as well as emptiness and the feeling of meaninglessness (what Frankl calls 'the existential vacuum') as well as healing, meaning and forgiveness (what Frankl calls 'the triumphant triad') in relation to the four dimensions of human existence: the physiological/biological, psychological/emotional, personal/spiritual, and social/historical. The aim is to make sense of human existence and experience.

## **Listening to the Logos: Love, Reason and Reality**

Heraclitus, the Pre-Socratic philosopher, tells us that it is wise to listen to the Logos and listening to it we say that all things are one (Frankl's 'monanthropism'/ Eric Voegelin's 'universal humanity'). This is the



desired end and aim of existential analysis and philosophy: wholeness. Before Plato, Heraclitus established the term Logos as the source of order in the cosmos. ‘The Logos holds sway always’, as he writes in one of his *Cosmic Fragments*. Aristotle, for his part, applied the term to rational discourse. Later, the Stoics defined and identified it as the divine principle animating and permeating the universe. The Gospel of John identifies Christ as the incarnation of the Logos, that was in the beginning and without Him was not anything made that was made. Logos so, as *theos*, as Word of God. Centuries later, C. G. Jung would describe the Logos as the masculine principle of rationality and consciousness and as counterpart to female Eros. Voegelin (1901-1985), in philosophy, would return to the Greeks and make this principle assume a central place in his work while Viktor Frankl, in existential psychology, would term his philosophico-spiritual therapy as ‘logotherapy’. For Pope Benedict XVI, Christianity is *the* religion of the Logos. Meanwhile, Jacques Derrida and the postmodernists would have cause to critique this notion and deconstruct the entire foundationalist ‘logocentrism’ (as they see it) of Western philosophy.

Jung is erroneous to set Logos up against Eros because Logos includes both reason and love as the twin pillars of reality. Derrida, for his part, deprives us of our foundations in the truth. What, so, is the truth? It was asked before by a jeering Pilate who having asked it, didn’t wait for a response. Before him was Truth Itself, the Logos of the Word incarnate in history: Truth as a Person, not a proposition. In classical thought, truth is the adequation of mind with being; conformity with the Logos/reality. Further, the term Aristotle employs to designate and describe flourishing or spiritual fulfilment or fullness (of life) – *eudaimonia* – is attained by attunement to the Logos as the source of order in man’s personal, social and historical existence. This is the real meaning of existential (and not just ‘mental’) health.

If it is true (and I think it is) that we move, as Frankl has persuasively argued in modern times, in three dimensions – man as *soma* (body), *psyche* (mind) and *noös* (spirit) – then all three dimensions or modalities or modes of being need to be accessed. However, ultimately, we are one (an anthropological unity), a unity in diversity (*unitas multiplex*, as Aquinas states), despite our ontological differences. This is the heart of Frankl’s philosophical anthropology. Unity of course does not designate wholeness which involves the integration of somatic, psychic and the spiritual aspects of the human person, as has already been mentioned.

‘Without the spiritual as its essential ground, this wholeness cannot exist’<sup>2</sup>. The spiritual self emerges from unconscious depths. Here we may note further parallels between Plato and Frankl, points of equivalence and convergence as Plato’s doctrine of *anamnesis* (remembrance) can be interpreted as a precursor to modern conceptions of ‘the unconscious’, the aim here being recollection of what was once forgotten (*amnesia*) – making the unconscious conscious.

I mentioned *eudaimonia* above. The problem with translating it as ‘happiness’ is that this modern word tends to connote a merely psychological feeling of pleasure or subjective satisfaction. But by *eudaimonia* the Greeks meant a spiritual happiness (as indicated by the etymology of the word) which we might render as ‘joy’, about which Christianity speaks. I would suggest that *eudaimonia* occurs (if I can phrase it like this) by listening to the Logos, to the ‘flow of (divine) presence’<sup>3</sup>, as Voegelin labels it, as divine source of order in the soul (*psyche*) and in society (*polis*) and that, therapeutically, it is the Logos or spirit in the human person (and its defiant power) that can never be sick (an insight derived from Viktor Frankl, which he calls his ‘psychiatric credo’, meaning that there is intactness behind every illness, a person entire and whole beyond every pathology).

Accepting and understanding the Divine Ground, which Plato calls the Good, and attuning ourselves to the flow of presence, to the Logos which is itself both love and reality, brings ‘the accompanying joy, the *eudaimonia* – while if we reject it we fall into the state of anxiety’, as Voegelin puts it<sup>4</sup>. Frankl, for his part, similarly observes: ‘Like iron filings in a magnetic field, man’s life is put in order through his orientation toward meaning’<sup>5</sup>. Disorder is meaninglessness; it is distance from the divine reality.

We can say that for Christianity, Logos and love are identical. Cardinal Ratzinger sums all this up succinctly when he says that the content of Christianity consists, in the final analysis, ‘in love and reason coming together as the two pillars of reality [rather than Freudian *Eros* and *Thanatos*]: the true reason is love, and love is the true reason. They are in their unity the true basis and the goal of all reality’<sup>6</sup>.

Let us examine in more detail this emphasis in logotherapy on the

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<sup>2</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Ultimate Meaning*, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen J. Costello, *Philosophy and the Flow of Presence*.

<sup>4</sup> Eric Voegelin, *The Drama of Humanity and Other Miscellaneous Papers 1939-1985*, pp. 318-9.

<sup>5</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*, p. 183.

spiritual order of being, as it points to what is distinctively human in the person and therefore constitutes the core of Frankl's religious philosophy.

### **From Psychopathology to Pneumopathology**

Pathology is the study and diagnosis of disease. Psychopathology is the study, generally from within psychiatry and psychoanalysis, of mental disorder. Psychiatrists are particularly interested in descriptive psychopathology, that is to say, with denoting symptoms and syndromes of mental illness. This is evidenced in the diagnostic system of both the *DSM* and *ICD*.

Here I would like to outline a noetic nosology of 'pneumopathology' in relation to Frankl's philosophical anthropology; to clarify and detail the distinctions between 'soul' and 'spirit' which are often confused in relation to this discussion; and to urge the retention of classical logotherapy which resists any subtle or seductive attempts, however well-intentioned, to become a hagiotherapy (healing through that which is holy; from the Greek *hagios* meaning 'holy').

'Pneumopathology' was a term coined by Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), the German philosopher, who introduced it into the philosophical lexicon, though it has to be said it is neither widely known nor used. A notable exception to this neglect is Eric Voegelin who borrows and employs the term to designate the spiritual disease of Gnosticism. Schelling influenced Coleridge who introduced into English Schelling's concept of the unconscious, a term the former coined.

*Psyche* is 'soul'. *Pneuma* is the ancient Greek word for 'breath' (*ruach* in Hebrew) and, in a religious context, for 'spirit', which is how it is commonly employed in Judaic and Christian usage, in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament. 'Spirit' (or *animus* in Latin) operates and realises itself through the body. The spirit is, in essence, freedom (a point avowed by Frankl). So man is responsible at every moment (a key tenet of logotherapy and existentialism). That is why Frankl can correctly and with conviction state that freedom and responsibility constitute man as spiritual being.

Pneumopathology refers, then, to the realm of phenomena which has been described, by Voegelin, as 'a disease of the spirit', though this is not Frankl's understanding – a point to which I shall return shortly.

In an essay dating from 1966 entitled, 'The German University and the Order of German Society: A Reconsideration of the Nazi Era', published in *Published Essays 1966-1985*, Voegelin cites the example of Lady Macbeth in the context of his brief citation of Schelling's neologism. A man has summoned the doctor to observe Lady Macbeth's strange

nocturnal behaviour (she tries to scrub away the spots and sins of the past) in the last act of Shakespeare's tragedy:

**Doctor:** What is it she does now? Look how she rubs her hands.

**Gentleman:** It is an accustomed action with her to seem thus washing her hands.

[*Diagnosis of the*] **Doctor:** Foul whisperings are abroad; unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds to their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets. More need she the divine [the priest] than the physician. Good God, forgive us all!

Spirit, in this Voegelinian philosophical, Platonic perspective, designates the openness of man to the divine Ground of his existence; estrangement from the spirit, the closure and revolt against the Ground. It is man's spirit that partakes of the divine. He thus rises to his divine destiny as the *imago Dei*. Nazi Germany produced a society whose spirit was sick, according to Voegelin, in its proliferation of evil – 'evil is a pneumopathological condition of consciousness', in Voegelin's words<sup>7</sup>. It was an example of pneumopathological closure to the divine Ground of reality, which signifies more of a derailment and disease, a spiritual disorder and dissociation, than a mere disorientation.

It may be the disorder of an age or an individual. Voegelin gives the example of Hegel and his great sons in sorcery – Marx and Nietzsche – who refused to perceive reality; they closed their existence to the Ground and constructed imaginary secondary realities<sup>8</sup>. Man, rather, is consubstantial (in other words, of one substance) though non-identified with divine reality, according to Voegelin, in contradistinction to the theorising of a Marx or Nietzsche. It is noetic consciousness that discerns this and participates in the Flow of divine Presence. Pneumopathology refers to the creation of 'second realities', to reductionist fallacies, to illusions of immortality; the refusal to recognise reality as it is and is the major symptom of existential alienation, of what Frankl labels the existential vacuum. Chrysippus, the Stoic, speaks of the '*agnoia ptoiodes*' ('scary ignorance') of the moderns that leads them away from the light (as in Plato's Allegory of the Cave) and Cicero characterises as a disease of the mind, the rejection of reason, while Voegelin, in his Platonic philosophizing, conceptualizes it as the disorder in soul (*psyche*) and society (*polis*).

I contend that philosophical *therapeia* needs to be cognisant of such a

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<sup>7</sup> Eric Voegelin, *Published Essays 1966-1985*, p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> See Eric Voegelin, *ibid.*, p. 278.

condition. It has clinical consequences for practising logotherapists and existential analysts in Frankl's tradition, as well as for philosophical counsellors (and these two are not opposed. Indeed, I am here arguing for logotherapy to be understood as essentially a philosophical praxis. Furthermore, many philosophical counsellors are actually applying logotherapy in the clinic). Logotherapy is a cure through 'reason' (understood in the classical philosophical sense as openness to receive reality, rather than in its reductionistic, Enlightenment sense of instrumental reason).

So where does this fit in relation to Frankl's existential emphasis on the noetic in terms of his tri-dimensional ontology and philosophical anthropology? *Nous* is Greek for 'thought' or 'understanding'; it is that which differentiates humans from (other) animals, who also have *psyche* or 'soul' meaning 'life'. Soul animates body (for Aristotle, it is the substantial form of the body). For Frankl, it refers to what is uniquely human. *Nous*, thus, is (immaterial) 'intellect' (also intellectual 'intuition'); it is 'mind' or 'reason'. It is thus akin to *logos*. The human person, in a Classical Greek and Christian trichotomy, may be viewed in three dimensions: somatic, psychic, and noetic, but while all humans have *nous*, believers assert we are *pneuma* or 'spirit' too. And as the noetic has also been translated as 'spiritual' in English there has been some semantic and conceptual confusion, at least for English-speaking readers of Frankl. *Pneuma* refers to 'spirit' (*Geist*) or 'spiritual soul' (*Seele*) from within a religious register. Soul is the principle of life just as spirit is the source of life. Man is in his entirety body, psyche and spirit.

Pneumatology is the study of spiritual beings and spiritual phenomena, especially the interactions between humans and God. We may speak, therefore, of the human trinity: somatic, psychic, noetic, which is created in the image of the divine Trinity. But this is *not* a fourth dimension, as some 'Christian logotherapists' have asserted, for instance, Donald Tweedie in his book, *The Christian and the Couch: An Introduction to Christian Logotherapy*<sup>9</sup>. *Pneuma*, or the pneumatic dimension, which is the presence of the Holy Spirit (*Heiliger Geist*) in every human being created in the image of God Himself (i.e., the indwelling of the Three Persons in the soul), *binds and holds the three dimensions together, grounds them*. It is not another dimension.

Now, classical logotherapy correctly avoids confusion with this overtly religious connotation and context and avoids committing a category mistake in conflating distinct terms. Frankl was at pains to separate them; indeed he doesn't address this pneumatic aspect, which grounds man's

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<sup>9</sup> Donald Tweedie, *The Christian and the Couch*, p. 55.

existence in God. ‘Spiritual’ is employed by Frankl without religious reference. It would not just be ‘Christotherapy’, which would explicitly deal with the truly spiritual core of the human person as its specific area of focus but theism generally so we must object to this term – the one Donald Tweedie employs in the book just cited. Moreover, there is no such thing as *Christian logotherapy*. There is simply logotherapy and its practitioners will be Christian or Jew, Moslem or atheist, etc. So, logotherapy must avoid the pitfall of becoming hagiotherapy, the relatively new discipline, spearheaded by Tomislav Ivančić, a Croatian priest, who drew heavily on logotherapy in his 2010 book, *Diagnosing the Soul and Hagiotherapy*. Hagiotherapy not only draws on a person’s spiritual strength (as in logotherapy) but also on God’s Spirit and prayer is brought into the consulting room.

Frankl differentiates them thus: (logo)therapy involves helping souls while religion is about saving souls. There is an unconscious religious sense – a spiritual/rational unconscious, but there is also a difference we need to keep demarcated between religion and logotherapy. Logotherapy starts and stems from the spiritual, as Frankl repeats in a number of his works, but he holds the dynamic tension between them in balance; he doesn’t collapse or confuse these two dimensions. In *Man’s Search for Ultimate Meaning*, Frankl writes:

‘Religion provides man with more than psychotherapy ever could ... There are some authors who propose that psychotherapy relinquish its autonomy as a science and its independence from religion in favour of seeing its function as that of an *ancilla theologiae*. As is well known, for centuries philosophy was allotted the role of such an *ancilla theologiae*, i.e., a handmaid in the service of theology. However, just as the dignity of man is based on his freedom ... so the dignity of a science is based on that unconditional freedom that guarantees its independent search for truth ... whoever tries to make psychotherapy into an *ancilla theologiae* ... not only robs it of the dignity of an autonomous science but also takes away the potential value it might have for religion .... psychotherapy has to refrain from setting any preconceived goals along religious lines’<sup>10</sup>.

The human psyche is religious by nature but that evidence can only come from a therapy that by its nature is not religiously oriented. Logotherapy is such a secular science; that is its strength. Religion, or the spiritual sphere, is the proper concern of man in his search for *ultimate meaning*. Therein, the difference.

To make an additional point, alluded to earlier: It is true that the noetic

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<sup>10</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Ultimate Meaning*, pp. 80-1.