PERFORMANCE ORIENTED PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING AND ITS APPLICATION IN IT COMPANIES

LA ORIENTACIÓN FILOSÓFICA ACTIVA Y SU APLICACIÓN EN LAS EMPRESAS TIC

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Abstract: Since it's emergance in 1980's philosophical counselling developed according to several different notions, following different influences, but so far did not make any greater impact in academic circles and did not start more important discussion, which it probably deserves. There are still those who believe it can make a difference and contribute to philosophical discourse both inside and outside academic circles. In this paper such attempt will be made, with description how philosophical dialogue can have an important purpose outside of academia and in everyday life of contemporary society.
Similar to philosophical counseling, IT industry is still young and in development, with no concrete predictions of it's near or far future. Here we will describe how a new approach to philosophical dialogue and philosophical counseling can be implemented in IT environment and help their employees in order to question their reality. This new method aims to promote philosophizing as a practice which has an important role in self-development and builds on the notion of taking care of the self through investigation and concrete actions.
Key words: philosophical counselling, dialogue, care of the self, action

Resumen: Desde su aparición en la década de 1980, la orientación filosófica se desarrolló de acuerdo con nociones diversas, siguiendo influencias diferentes, pero, hasta el momento, no tuvo ningún impacto de relevancia en los círculos académicos y no inició debates relevantes, los cuales, probablemente, merece. Sin embargo, todavía hay quienes creen que puede marcar una diferencia y contribuir al discurso filosófico tanto dentro como fuera de los círculos

académicos. En este artículo, se realizará tal intento, con una descripción de cómo el diálogo filosófico puede tener un propósito importante fuera de la academia y en la vida cotidiana de la sociedad contemporánea.

Al igualque in en la orientación filosófica, la industria de las TIC todavía es joven y se está en un desarrollo sin predicciones concretas de su futuro cercano o lejano. Nuestro trabajo describirá cómo se puede implementar un nuevo enfoque del diálogo filosófico y la orientacion filosófica en el entorno de las TICs para ayudar a sus empleados a cuestionar su realidad. Este nuevo método apunta a promover el filosofar como una práctica que tiene un papel importante para el autodesarrollo y se basa en la noción de cuidarse a sí mismo a través de la investigación y de acciones concretas.

Palabras clave: orientación filosófica, diálogo, cuidado de sí, acción.

Introduction

After many religious practices failed to answer some of the fundamental questions, as well as psychology and psychiatry started "creating more damage than use", some people have turned to philosophy, or to be more precise, to Philosophical Counselling, claims Lou Marinoff in his best-selling book, *Plato not Prozac* (Marinoff 2017, 10), which was the first major attempt to popularize this practice among the general public in the US. Years before that, some German and Dutch philosophers were tired of dry academic approach to philosophy and took it outisde of the academia, back to the street, to offer it as a profession to everyone who was interested in philosophy and philosophizing. With analytical philosophy, claims Marinoff, we have come to a position where philosophy has given it's priority to the theory, rather than having balance of theory and practice in it's academic and real life setting (Marinoff 2017, 14). Hence, in the early 1980's German and Dutch philosophers offered different activities to the general public, which today we call Philosophical Practice, among which one of the most important is Philosophical Counselling (PC). One of the pioneers in the field, Ran Lahav, defines it as follows:

"Philosophical counselling is an approach for addressing dilemmas, predicaments and life-issues of the person in the street through philosophical self-examination" (Lahav 1996, 259), where we can understand Philosophical Counselling as an investigative dialogue which one has with a philosopher in order to examine an idea, an issue or some other question which bothers them in some way, and which sometimes does not necessary need to be philosophical in it's nature. Since the 1980's and it's emergence many such practices have developed around the world, in Central and Western Europe, Scandinavia, US, Canada, South Africa, Russia, and lately also in the Balkans region. Still there aren't any precise data of how many philosophical counsellors are there in the world, nor how many different approaches to this practice could be found, so philosophers usually practice the method, or lack of a method, according to their mentors or more experienced philosophers, while there weren't any new approaches recorded in found references, nor do practitioners often try out new methods with their clients. Usually, many philosophers follow so called Socratic Method, dialogues based on Socratic style of questions and answers as seen in Plato's dialogues, and especially in the early ones. In this paper, we will also use the said principle, going in line with claims of Robert Walsh, who said: "From a Socratic perspective, Philosophical Counselling can be viewed as a conversational process guided by dialectical reasoning aimed at reflecting upon concerns and issues that normally arise in the course of living your life" (Walsh 2005, 501).

In a recovering economy of post 2008 global crisis, Croatia is still struggling with the consequences of such market devastation, in many areas. However, in the last 10 years, one industry has thrived, and that is the IT industry. With young and ambitious employees who work hard to bring solutions to their clients, we see a specific social trend of this now almost elite citizens, who are better payed in times when many have lost almost everything. With new ideas in

applying philosophical theories to everyday life, which emerged from Philosophical Practice movement, this paper will investigate what could philosophy do in such a world and in such setting, and whether it's theory may find application in a practical environment, following a different method of examination, aiming at a two-fold goal: to foster action oriented dialogue, and to promote leading a wise life, no matter of previous education or current position in life.

Philosophy behind philosophical counseling

Quite recently, several articles were published in popular magazines which promote doing philosophy outside of academic setting, especially in business environment. In March 2018 *The Guardian* published an article by Louise Tickle and Claire Burke, in which the need for philosophers in companies is explained, while *Forbes Magazine* published an interview by Sally Percy, with professor Christian Voegtlin, about the need for so called in-house philosophers in tech companies and other business environments. Even though these are popular articles, we can see from these examples how philosophizing can be implemented outside of academic circles and develop it's ideas to be both useful and meaningful not only to philosophers, but to the general public as well.

In order to deepen this conversation, namely of how philosophizing could be used outside of academia, here we will present just several examples of philosophers and their ideas, which bring us back perhaps to philosophy's original task – to search for wisdom by questioning the reality we live in and investigate our inner being. Of course, in order to do that we need to return to Socrates, sometimes called the first urban philosopers, and his views on the need for investigation. Surely the story of his life is quite known in philosophical circles, so we should get straight to the point of his

method of philosophizing, which is needed to explain our aims of bringing philosophy in other spheres of life. William Guthrie claims that Socrates "brought philosophy down from heaven" (Guthrie 2006, 402), which is an important metaphore to pose today in relation to Philosophical Counselling, which also aims to bring philosophy back to the ordinary people. Thanks to Plato's testimony of Socrates and his image from the dialogues, many contemporary philosophers have started practicing such methods and developed their own Philosophical Counselling practices in such a way. Oscar Brenifier, one of the world's renowned philosophical counsellors, will claim: "Our methodology is mainly inspired by the Socratic maieutic" (Brenifier 2017, 129). What exactly Socrates did which is so important to today's Philosophical Counselling?

What we have left in written form untill today are Plato's dialogues in most of which Socrates is the main character. This means that while we are talking about Socrates, we are mainly reffering to Plato's Socrates, while we only assume that Plato himself, as once Socrates' student, took over the same method which Socrates used in his teaching. Socrates used to question his interlocutors on various notions which troubled him or them at a given point. This is why each Plato's dialogue has a subtitled general topic of investigation, which was mainly questioned, next to some other issues which occured in the conversation. These dialogues usually followed same principles – Socrates was the one to ask the questions, while his interlocutor would answer them in a short form, following the logic of conclusions and new notions which would arise. Socrates used to ask for definitions (what is courage, what is good upbringing, what is piety, what is love, what is the soul, etc.), he used deduction and induction in order to come to certain conclusions; he also used irony in various forms in order to emphasize or criticize, claiming that such approach was close to his mother's profession of midwifery. While she would deliver babies,

out of labor pains, Socrates would deliver ideas out of discomfort of thinking. The aim of Socrates' method was to "test the soul to it's depth in order to free it from mistakes and open it for knowledge" (Reale 2003, 159). Delphic imperative *Know thyself* was the maxim which lead Socrates into investigation of the Self and the Other, where one can't happen without another. Socrates starts with interlocutor's thoughts and brings them to criticism in order to free them from contradiction, so they could find the truth together (Reale 2003, 187). Socrates' "questions like what is this, why do you say that, explain this better" made people think, made them provide new answers and new ideas, their own thoughts (Reale 2003, 164). As we see, Socrates did not provide formed theories about the world, nor did he impose his own views or strategies to his interlocutors, but he was the one who asked the questions in order to search for the truth, for definitions, for resolutions.

By engaging in such investigation, a two-fold process happens for each participant. Both Socrates and his interlocutor learn something along the way: by asking questions Socrates learns about himself and about the Other, while the Other does the same by answering the questions. In one of Plato's early dialogues, *Alcibiades*[1], Socrates and Alcibiades come to the conclusion that in order to better know oneself, one should converse with the Other, comparing it with a reflection in a mirror (133 b-c). At the beginning of the dialogue young Alcibiades expresses his wish to rule the great city of Athens, of which Socrates is suspicious. They investigate the notions of responsibility, ruling, justice, education, finally to come to the point in which Socrates reveals what really

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[1] We will here not go deeper into the discussion of the authorship or dating of the dialogue. We may agree with Foucault, who cosiders *Alcibiades* to be authentic (Foucault 2017, 72), even though there are still some controversies about this issue in expert opinions, especially regarding the dating which Foucault also addressed in the same source. Our focus will emphasize only the use of Socrates' method and the content of the discussion.

bothers him regarding Alcibiades' ambition – Alcibiades is still too young to take care of the city, since he still does not know how to take care of the Self. The dialogue then turns in a direction of questioning what this notion means, taking care of the Self. This being an important, but unfairly neglected issue, recently several scholars have reexamined it in their influential works. Giovanni Reale considers that such a notion represents the search for who we really are as human beings, while this brings us in both personal and political sphere of life (Reale 2003, 61-65). More famous Michel Foucault has dedicated several years of study to this issue, and has left us with many lectures dedicated both to *Alcibiades* and the notion of taking care for the Self, on which we will base our Philosophical Counselling method.

In the second part of Plato's *Alcibiades*, Socrates constantly emphasizes the need for such care of the Self, in order for one to be able to govern the Self, as well (122 a). In order to do so, one needs to have a good education (121 d), and needs to trully understand and even define the notion of self care (127 e – 128 a). To take care of the Self means to take care of the Soul (130 a), and in order for Soul to know itself, it needs to "look into the Soul, and especially in the place where the virtue of the Soul is placed, in wisdom" (133 b). If we care about our Soul, we would take care of it's progress (131 d). In order to translate this to contemporary terms, one should engage in the dialogue with the Other, so that they would both better understand themselves and progress in their lives, as was already said: we both benefit from such relation and we learn from each other, by asking questions and investigating.

Thanks to Foucault, we already have an extent analysis of this dialogue and it's meaning. In his late lectures in the early 1980's, Foucault focused on investigation of Ancient Greek philosophical practices, mainly in Platonic (Socratic) and Stoic tradition in order to compare them and draw some conclusions on the nature of the subject, both as individual and political participant of the world

events and relations. In these lectures he often speaks about different Greek practices and techniques of investigation, reflection and self-understanding, which provide us with an interesting path toward the reconciliation between theoretical and practical philosophizing. For Foucault, the "culture of the self" developed in the Hellenistic world (Foucault 2005, 180), and it was used precisely for such progression of the individual, in which the care of the self played crucial role for personal development and education. There are many exercises which could provide such results, which mainly ask us to turn to ourselves and observe what lies inside. This isn't an easy task, claims also Plato's Socrates in *Alcibiades* (129 a), it's not easy to know the Self or to observe it, while Alcibiades himself, as an interlocutor, claims the same thing, when he admits that it's hard just to follow Socrates who asks the questions (116 a, 127 d). These techniques had a straight-forward task, of engaging the individual into a reflective questioning, which would result in finding solutions to various problems or speaking the truth about the issues at hand. Surely, Plato's dialogues do not commit to finding conclusion, but rather leave an open space both for the readers and characters to prove that there are no final answers and that always more investigation is possible and also needed, if we wish to maintain our status of persons who lead an examined life. This did not mean that such dialogues are useless, but precisely that they offer a more deep and meaningful method toward self-understanding. One can always be in doubt or show interest for some notion, just as well as one is always in state of development and formation. Concluding further with these notions, we may add that such practices, which we may often apply during our troubled times, could become practices for development of life wisdom, or at least one way of striving for it. If one would be willing enough to dedicate their time toward such self-examination and better self-understanding then we would be able to talk about Philosophical Counselling as a practice of the Self, which would

bring self-examination to the general public, in various forms, not merely as a paying profession, but also as a long-lasting tradition of personal and social improvement. This is what Plato's Socrates and Foucault provide us with, an understanding of philosophical practice as a practice of the Self, in which taking care of the Self means taking care of the Soul – here considered in terms of what constitutes Me as Me, what I am – by engaging in a meaningful investigative dialogue with the Other (philosopher) who helps me reflect upon personal or general issues, dilemmas and predicaments in a coherent and clear way, by which I achieve personal growth and progress and I maintain life-long learning process about the Self and the Other, my inner world and the outer world.

Performance oriented method

Now we have a philosophical background which provides the foundation to build a new approach in Philosophical Counselling as a profession and as a method with coherent and clear stance, and which could be offered to individuals or companies in order to improve their image of the Self, to help them search for meaning and truth and to provide them with a means to progress with deeper understanding of their own selves and their place in the world.

In Plato's *Alcibiades*, Socrates offers three important imperatives: *take care of your self, know thyself* and *respond to me*. These three imperatives will also serve contemporary philosophers in setting Philosophical Counselling (PC) practice. While there are many methods by which PC can be implemented, Socratic maieutic still plays crucial role in the approach to clients, since it provides a position for a philosopher not to influence what their interlocutors need to investigate. Socrates himself often did not provide answers for his interlocutors, but merely has asked them questions, and by doing so helped them reach the right conclusion, or at least

recognize the false ideas and thoughts. In this paper we wish to present the so called Performance Oriented Method (POM) in Philosophical Counselling, which will aim to combine ideas from Socrates, or rather Plato, Foucault and some of the Ancient Greek understandings of the art of rhetorics.

So far, doing Philosophical Counselling with a Socratic approach shows that there are some common elements to investigating client's issues, which could be compared to the elements of ancient theory of rhetorics, provided by Aristotle and Cicero, as well as the other theorists in the Renaissance. There are five main elements, or canons of rhetorics, which should be used in order to present an effective speech. These five elements are: *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, actio*. Quoting from Aristotle (I, 1355 b 25 – 33), the authors of *The History of Rhetorics from Greeks to Our Days*, show how Aristotle also considered rhetorics as a sort of inventing of what could be persuasive (Meyer et al. 2008, 35). This represents the element of *inventio*, the part of discovering what the speech is going to be about, or which arguments should be used in that speech. *Dispositio* is "the way in which one should arrange different parts of the speech" (Meyer et al. 2008, 41), while *elocutio* was the element which defined the expression and style or the configuration of the speech. Also, the last two elements, *memoria* and *actio* were connected to speech performance – while the element of *actio* represented the performance itself, the element of *memoria* was all present before the perfomance and during the performance, since orators needed to memorize their speeches, for which they used different techniques. The authors show us how these elements are connected with Philosophy in several ways. Firstly, it was Cicero who claimed that rhetorical and philosophical *inventio* were the same (Meyer et al. 2008, 49), while also they present the second case of theorist Petrus Ramus, who – according to cited Chaim Perelman – could be considered to cause these elements to become the basis for scientific method (Meyer et al.

2008, 107). In order to further prove this, the authors compare Descartes' four *rules of the method* to the basic elements of the Rhetorics, as follows: *inventio* goes in line with the first rule, since it "determines the problem"; *dispositio* is equal to the second rule of arrangement, or division in Descartes; *elocutio* is compared to the third rule of the method which aims to shape and order issues from the most simple ones to more complex ones; while the last rule is compared to *memoria* and *actio* in which Descartes proposes that we should make general overviews of our predicaments, so that we feel certain we did not make any mistakes – and the authors will here also claim that this was the moment which lay foundation for modern science and it's method (Meyer et al. 2008, 11-12).

Just as each speech has these elements, we may compare it to Philosophical Counselling dialogue process. So far, practitioners were mostly engaged into the four out of five elements: *inventio*, which represents the presentation of a problem; *dispositio* and *elocutio*, which are the elements present all the time during the dialogue in which clients and philosopher exchange questions, answers, definitions, arguments, different modes of inclusion and different logical methods; and also *memoria* which often serves us to go back to previously asked questions and given answers in order to remind clients of their thoughts. However, one element was neglected and this is the final one, the one which brings Performance into Performance Oriented Method, the element of *actio*. During Philosophical Counselling dialogue philosophers and clients are concerned with different notions which they investigate or search solutions for them, but what actually happens to clients once they finish the session? Philosophical Counselling often does not require several meetings, nor is it a long lasting process, so philosophers often do not follow whether their clients managed to work on their issues once the session is over. But, what would happen if we were to propose to our clients that, as a part of the session, the element of future events could be discussed, an element

of *what could I do in reality in order to deal with this issue*? This is what POM aims to provide during the session. We will use all these elements in different parts of the Philosophical Counselling session in order to provide it with structure and coherence.

Inventio part of the POM session serves us to get acquainted with our client and with their issue. In order to do so, we should provide them with a little space. Here, we need to go back to Plato for a moment. We know of what importance *logos* is to Plato. Gadamer writes that Plato made a clear cut after many before him used *mythos* in order to provide the truth (Gadamer 2000, 97), while it was Plato's notion to turn to *logos* in the dialogues, not in order to provide finished theories, but in order to question even his own views. Reale also supports this and claims that Socrates also used *logos* in order to provoke people to come to truth in a different way than claiming myths were true (Reale 2003, 164). Thomas Tuozzo sees Socratic approach as a rational investigation of what *logos* provides (Tuozzo 2011, 12), and there are many more examples which could prove the same. Still, we do find the other element still present in Plato's dialogues, the element of *mythos*, or stories. Plato uses them often in order to illustrate a point, some of the most famous being his myth of Atlantis, alegory of the cave, illustration of the soul as horses pulling a carriage, and many more. From the beginning of literature, oral tradition stories were used to transfer knowledge to another generation, and Zoran Arsović claims that telling stories is interesting and it always has some kind of action (Arsović 2012, 235), with which we may agree. Even though we will in POM use *logos*, or logical dialogue method of questions and answers, we will use *mythos* in the beginning. As it was previously stated, even in Plato we see how Socratic style could be confusing[2], since people aren't used to being questioned in such manner, so we

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[2] Remembering here Socrates and Alcibiades dialogue where Alcibiades claimed he found it difficult to follow Socrates' questions (*Alcibiades* 116 a, 127 d).

should make sure that we as counsellors firstly understand what our client's issue is. By letting them shortly tell their story, their own personal *mythos*, we get an overview of who our clients are: whether they are articulate and clear or confused about their issue, whether this issue has or has not philosophical elements, whether they are or aren't able to deal with it in different ways, whether they have a dillema or a problem of other nature. From this, from their *mythos*, we can also draw conclusions and pressupositions which could later be used, or returned to during the dialogue, etc.

The second phaze is the dialogue itself. Usually the POM session lasts for about and hour, out of which the introductory phaze lasts for 5 to 10 minutes, as well as the concluding phaze, so we are left with about 40 – 45 minutes to engage into investigation of the issue. This investigation uses some of key philosophical methods, and also three elements of POM are present in the second phaze: *dispositio, elocutio* and *memoria*. During the dialogue, philosopher asks the questions, and does not provide any answers to the clients, except for clarifications of a term or an idea or the question itself. Philosophers do not present any theories, attitudes or ideas of their own, in order not to influence the clients and their way of thinking. This is an extremely important issue and one of crucial parts of Philosophical Counselling in general[3], and which also goes in line with Socratic tradition – philosopher is not the one who possesses wisdom, nor is he wise, but he seeks wisdom or truth together with his/her interlocutor. In order to search for the truth, philosophers help their clients investigate their own ideas and views connected with the issue, and they do so by using several useful techniques. First and most important is questioning. Usually the questions asked aim at getting definitions, clarifying the key concepts, using arguments to support those claims, criticize own thoughts and

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[3] This notion is already supported by many philosophical counsellors across the world. See: Paden, 1998; Schuster, 1995; Lahav, 1992; Marinoff, 2017.

ideas, interpretations of what was said, deducing from general views or inducing toward them, as well as problematizing those issues which are newly discovered, and projecting future events and possibilities. *Dispositio* and *elocutio* are here used as the elements of how we arrange and express all those philosophical principles incorporated into the dialogue, even though such principles could not be prearranged, taking into cosideration that philosophers are not announced what will be the topic of the dialogue nor which issue they will deal with. The dialogue in POM session presents a continous flow of questions and answers and other than general philosophical knowledge and on spot practice there isn't much preparation for it between the introductory and main phazes. This surely makes it difficult to conduct, but being an attentive listener and both focused and engaged once in the presence of the Other, the client, philosopher responds quickly, but with care and consideration, taking into account the concepts which the client provides when giving answers.

Also, the element of *memoria* is important during the dialogue, as could be seen also in Plato's works. In *Alcibiades*, Socrates refreshes Alcibiades' memory by repeating some of the previously said part of the dialogue, to remind him of his logic (113 a-b). Since, as we said, it could be hard to follow such logically structured dialogue, our clients may have the same issue – the task of the philosopher here is to remind them of what was said[4], in order to progress with the dialogue. By using further questions each time the client provides us with an answer, we are ensuring that the dialogue progresses and that we do not find ourselves in loops. However, if this happens, we use *memoria* to return to some other issue, and exit the loop which does not provide us with any firm notion, or which may confuse the client. Philosophical tradition is

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[4] Of course, taking written notes during the session helps here in a great deal, since by using them we can easily find the previous logic or answers which our clients provided.

rich with exercises, methods and elements which could be used in order to question some issue or notion. Socrates also used irony, contradiction, deduction and induction, as well as many others in order to investigate what is wisdom, courage, the soul or love. In order to bring the dialogue to the final phaze, philosophical counsellor could use *memoria* element to go through the entire dialogue with the client, so that the client could have the clear image of what was previously said. This helps transition to the third phaze, where we will emphasize the notion of *actio*.

Actio was considered, in ancient Rhetorics, as the mere performance of the speech, the final action which needs to be taken, which would complete it, it's deliverance to the audience. In POM, we will consider it as a final, concluding phaze of the session, and we will regard it precisely as it's meaning in English language: action. This part aims to investigate what could be concretely done regarding the examined issue once the client leaves the session and goes back into uncontrolled reality of everyday life. Surely, in Philosophical Counselling, we could examine general terms, like Plato did in his works, but nowadays clients are mostly concerned with their own issues and predicaments: at work, within family, or their relationships with others and relation toward the Self. True, during the dialogue, we may ask a question on definition of love or freedom or justice, but clients do often come with different types of issues. With practice it becomes evident that some clients leave Philosophical Counselling session – where they could come to really deep and meaningful conclusion about their lives – but once they go back to their daily life, they do not continue to work on themselves or deal with the issues they examined together with counsellors. We can then ask the question of what is the point of that, where is the progress? We may presume that, since clients have already came to the meeting with philosopher and are ready to examine the problem, it would be logical that they do want to engage in concrete actions, after the

dialogue is finished, which would help them overcome the issue. This is why the *actio*, or the concluding part serves us to finish the dialogue and to further examine what could be done in future in order to solve the issue or just to deal with it in terms of personal progress and development. This is also why we consider that Philosophical Counselling is not just a simple activity, which lasts for one hour and solves the problems we have. It should be a continuation of different methods and techniques (as Foucault will often call them in his late lectures) which aim at self-improvement, self-care and personal progress through life. In this sense, Philosophy isn't seen as a dry academic discipline of interpretation of what other philosophers have said, nor it has to do anything with providing general theories about the world, but it presents search for the wisdom, within the personal development of both the client and the philosopher who engage into such investigation. As such, Philosophy may open it's doors to more than just academic experts in the field, and those trained and educated in Philosophy and its tools could also provide to general public a practice which offers constant care of the Self in leading what we could call *bios sohops*, a wise life.

Case studies

In order to provide the image of what would such POM look like in reality, or in a non-academic environment, we could follow the path of many previous philosophical counsellors and offer the practice to those who did not have the chance to participate in philosophical dialogue, while at the same time investigating whether there even are elements of Philosophy, or rather philosophizing, in such setting. The main idea here was to offer POM sessions to some of the local IT companies in Osijek, Croatia, and then use this paper as an example and description of how could

such philosophical practice be used in company setting. After turning to Osijek Software City Association, they offered the participation in the company *Inchoo*, where three of their employees volunteered to participate and that their sessions are described in detail for the purposes of publication. After initial preparations were made and participants for this study were informed about Philosophical Counselling in general, we held all three sessions in one day, with the exception of third session, which we interrupted at half the session and continued the next working day at their office. At first, participants were eager to start and they all claimed that PC was new to them and they haven't participated earlier in a similar setting.

For the purpose of their annonimity, we have arranged for them to use aliases, so from now on we will refer to them as Painstik, Leon and Kristina. All three of them have agreed that the main notion of their session can be published in this form, since we did not record the sessions, but just took general notes on the process of the dialogue and main issues which emerged during the session. We will here desribe how the sessions went on and what were the main procedures and methods we used in POM in order to try and implement PC so it can provide a better understanding for the future.

Client Painstik was the first for PC session. We have started with the *inventio* part of the session in an open way, with inviting the client to express his *mythos* around one issue which bothers him. He seemed prepared for this and was really aware of the gravity of the situation, so his imediate story revolved around general situation in the country (corruption, lack of interest, young people moving out, hopelesness, etc) and how unsatisfied he was with that, while he also expressed how he sees the lack of will to work together (directed to the general public) in solving the main issues society faces. In this introductory setting we give the client a chance to bring the philosopher into his world and to explain what

is their main problem. Painstik was really precise with his issue, while this part can be difficult with some people.

After we have heard the issue, in POM we can go on with further steps of the dialogue. As seen in Plato, in order to start the questioning, we invite our client to transform his *mythos* into a question he wants to investigate. Painstik choose the question: Should one still try and solve the problems or move to another community?[5] From there, our dialogue focuses on *dispositio* and *elocutio* and it moves from *mythos* to *logos*. There are no more stories we want to hear, we want to tackle the problem and investigate it from each side, untill we have found the solution or untill we have drained all our options for the dialogue.

What we discussed in our session was mainly revolved around politics and engagement in a setting which does not really have strong political movement and general interest in population. Painstik's main issue was engagement in a community which is quite passive and conservative, while his views are active and progressive. We have examined his previous egagement in local politics, where he reffered to this as a *battlefield* in metaphoric sense. The main problem, accoriding to him, was that the general public is uninformed and indifferent toward change, so his issue soon turned in *Us – Them* conflict.

Since our client here is facing a dilemma, what we can do is to investigate the pros and cons of either decision and question his reasoning for one or the other. He was really aware of the issue, so he already had the answers to any possible scenario and he stated that he has previously already moved from one (larger city) community to a smaller one. Painstick claimed that he makes

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[5] Here I am presenting client's question as he put it in the dialogue, but in order to be clear, and in the sense of the dialogue we had, his question has the following meaning: Should I stay here, in Croatia, and continue to fight for what I believe is right, or should I move to another country where the system functions better and in more ordered way?

decisions when this is needed, but in the meanwhile, while he isn't yet *forced* to make a decision, he remains indecisive and does not know what to do.

In order to try and resolve the issue, POM offers to question a plan of action which can be implemented after the dialogue in order to act upon the solution we have examined. However, Painstik was reluctant to make such a plan, giving reasons he stated, that he will make the decision when the right time comes, but not before. He stated that he will probably have this dilemma for a long time, so here we failed to make some concrete steps which could be done in the future. We can emphasize here that each client is unique in their relation toward the problem, so sometimes it may happen that they are not able to even tell the story at the beginning (it might be that they are really confused and don't know from where to even start), or like Painstik, that they do not need a concrete action plan for the future.

Second PC session was with Leon. In *inventio* phaze of our dialogue, he started with stating how he has trouble with sleeping and feeling tired, but has quickly switched to talking about his impatience and not being tactful in addressing others, both at work and in his private life. From the beginning he was also physically giving away such impression, but for a counsellor to trully understand the client we have to remain open minded and put aside such notions, unless clients themselves want to discuss it, which the two of us later in the dialogue did. However, after his *mythos*, Leon choose to investigate the following question: How to be tactful, how to allow others to finish their sentences (before he interrupts them because of his impatience)?

Switching to the main phaze of the dialgue, we have started examining his behavior. Since the client is aware of his problem, in PC we can go on investigating which could be the possible reasons for such behavior, using our usual philosophical methods. At one point in the dialogue Leon revealed that he thinks most of our

behavior happens because of our DNA and other chemical processes within our body, which would be the *force* which drives him, making his character always the same, and really hard or even impossible to change. The other issue which he was aware of is that he likes to learn new things and repetition makes him nervous, so when he needs to explain something he already knows, he doesn't have patience to wait for the others to get to know it too, especially at work. Here we have really touched the issue with the relation to others, since he likes the others who are superior in knowledge to him, but does not have understanding for the ones who still need to learn and can learn from him. What we then tried to investigate is the matter of perspective. Trying to put himself in other's shoes was the solution he was satisfied with, stating that he would like to change his character. However, he also was reluctant in the final step of POM, the *actio* moment, stating that he was already aware of some techniques of how to be more calm, but that it did not work for him, since by using these techniques he would have to pretend to be someone else and he did not feel comfortable doing that. So, he left our session with a new notion in experiencing all people as the ones he can learn something new from, and not the ones which are taking away his time. For the future steps, in some concrete action in the outside world, he was satisfied with approaching all the others as equals.

Final client for this study was Kristina. Due to her obligations, we had to do our session in two different days, but this did not influence the dialogue in any way, so I will refer here to our meeting as a single one. She started her *mythos* with talk of her addiction to cigarettes, reffering to it as something which controls her, while she dislikes being controlled. When we moved to the main phaze, she started setting her question with: *Why are there substances in cigarettes…*where I stopped her immediately and explained that Philosophical Counselling does not address questions which aren't philosophical in nature. Her question about

substances in cigarettes chould be addressed to a chemist or some other scientist, they are not the subject of philosophical investigation. In PC we need to be careful with questions we want to pose and which we can address, or investigate. One thing which we can address is, for example, client's relation to cigarettes, if cigarettes are the issue she wants to deal with. So, in a second attempt, Kristina asked: *Why have I allowed myself to let it (cigarettes) enter my life*? To us, philosophers who are outside of our clients mind, certain words or emphasis ring a bell right at the beginning – why have *I* allowed *myself* to let it enter *my* life? This repetition of the relation to the self can be a good starting point in the dialogue, so in order to see if she was also aware of it, I asked her to tell me which was the key word in her question, to which she replied *allowed*. So, since she did not see the importance in the *I*, we moved the dialogue toward what was important to her, in order to investigate it, and leave this notion of the *I* for later. She quickly realized that the real issue is related to the self, so we went on to investigate this relation and logic behind it.

Since at one point she stated that almost every smoker around her is giving up smoking, we can move on to investigate her relation to others, and this is how every dialogue progresses – when a client gives us a new concept in their answers, we can question them about it, untill we have seen the reasoning behind it. Kristina admitted that she has never before addressed this issue and has never before talked about it with anyone else, so investigating all the reasons for and against smoking was really new to her. She was hoping to find a formula, as she stated, for giving up smoking, but after reminding her again that we aren't into chemistry and formulas in this dialogue, she was aware that such a thing isn't even possible. At that point I asked her, what do we call people who are searching for impossible, to which she replied – *lunatics*. After she became aware of this logical problem, she concluded that she has issues with her self awareness and that she did not need any steps

in the progress of quitting smoking – as was again suggested in *actio*, concluding part of the dialogue – but that she needed courage, energy and the strenght to just quit it all at once, since that would be probably the harder way, but perhaps the less painful way than the step by step quitting. This also represents a possible solution for the future actions which she could take, after the session.

Aftermath

In his article from 1996 Ran Lahav asks the question of *what is philosophical in philosophical counselling* – or to translate it for the use of our paper, where precisely is philosophy in our dialogues with Painstik, Leon and Kristina. All three of them did not have formal education in Philosophy other than some classes in high school, but they have shown that they are capable of thinking clearly, logically, rationally and in accordance with the asked questions. We are not claiming that philosophy is merely an activity of asking and answering questions in a logical and rational way, but we are here proposing for Philosophical Counselling, and within it a coherent and structured method, to be a practice which engages interlocutors in a procedure which offers them a path of self investigation, resulting ultimately with leading a more engaged life and a method of better knowing themselves so that they could progress on a personal (intellectual, spiritual, mental, etc) level. Not only reading and writing on past philosophers' works, but also engaging the Self to employ those ideas and build upon them in a concrete life situation, turns the goal of philosophy into leading a wise life and seeing philosophizing as a best way to know and improve the Self.

This paper proposes a new relation toward Philosophical Counselling, which we may regard as vital to further development

of philosophy within our society. Relying on some old traditions and their implementation of philosophical tools outside of expert circles, since Socrates and Stoics, we may also start a discussion on whether such practices have any impact toward general public as their users, as well as to philosophers who also venture into examination of their own ideas and attitudes toward the Self and the world. Here, we will propose three major ideas in regards to Performance Oriented Method as a specific path toward making philosophical work more relevant, and also in regards to Philosophical Counselling and it's more general application in society.

Firstly, we have imagined Performance Oriented Method as a practice in which participants engage in investigation of the Self in a dialogical way – following Socratic/Platonic tradition – after which the emphasis is put on concrete action which could be made in order to deal with the predicament or an idea in question. This method is based on several historical traditions: elements of the ancient art of the Rhetorics (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, actio*), Socratic dialogue method (and all the tools it uses, like irony, midwifery, induction, conceptualization, questioning, etc.), and finally the notion of Self care, mostly as interpreted by Foucault drawing from Ancient Greek sources. The need for the final step, the *actio* phaze in POM, combines one of the elements of the Rhetoric with the demands of contemporary world, which we should not ignore. The need for constant and renewed production in combination with the demands of urban life, asks different sacrifices and lifestyles – if it wants to remain fresh and keep the pace with the world, Philosophy should also embrace the world as it is and offer it's subjects what they usually need. This is why *actio*, the performative aspect of dealing with the issue, no matter what the issue is, plays such an important role – to provide clients with meaning and sense that something could be done about their predicament and that they often do have the tools to do it and also

capabilities to make it happen in reality. Still, some critics may say that there are some clients who do not seek such relations, which we also saw in the example of Painstik, but to those critics we may reply that performance has various forms and means of manifestation. In broader sense, we could also understand client's presence at the session as a performance of sorts, as well as their confrontation with another person – with whom they have an issue – after the session. These actions do not represent physical activities, but are actions non the less, and it this lies their importance, especially if clients are aware of it during the session, at it's conclusion, that they need to act in order to deal with the issue – *If I really wish to quit smoking, I need to do concrete actions, not to wait for general formulas from others*, referring to Kristina's problem.

Secondly, we can conclude that Philosophical Counselling in general presents a practice which helps us in taking care of the Self. This brings a lot of meanings, and certainly a separate research paper should be dedicated to this idea, but in short, and by following the ideas of Plato in *Alcibiades*, one has to take care of the self in such manner as to strive for self-development in order to lead an *examined* life. Socrates proposes to Alcibiades to firstly take care of his Self – meaning to firstly get to know who he is, in order to take over the care for entire city of Athens, as a future ruler, where we could transfer such a notion to each leader or each director or manager in today's business world – if you wish to manage an entire division or an entire firm, stop and ask yourself whether you can manage your own Self; or, once you are responsible for your own Self, you are ready to be responsible for everyone else under you.

Finally, it is an aim of this approach to engage everyone into leading *bios sophos*, a wise life – which is composed of all previous segments: taking care of the self through self-examination in dialogue with others. As most general notion out of these three,

this is also what constitutes Performance Oriented Method as philosophical in it's very nature. This method aims to provide everyone with means of engaging into philosophizing as search for wisdom. Philosophy still does not have it's universally accepted definition, other than it's literal translation of love for wisdom. This love, or search for wisdom has provided us with variety of possibilities and different methods, resulting in some of the most stunning questions and ideas, many of which remain unsolved to this day. It would be pretentious to claim that some of those methods are *trully philosophical*, while others are *frivolous* – as often we can find accusations and judgements in public or academic discourse – since many of them gave us important insights about ourselves and the world. What constitutes Philosophical Counselling as philosophical is found in it's continuation of such approach toward the search for wisdom, where we remain careful about what wisdom is, but we continue to search for any possible trace which could help us understand it. The art of leading *bios sophos*, a wise life, manifests itself in various forms. Those who engage in self-investigation by questioning their own thoughts, ideas, opinions or positions and looking for reasons behind them or possibilities to change them could already be considered as *philosophical* or *biosophical* in that sense. Those who do it continously through life show the sense of maturity and responsibility toward the Self and the others and out of their willingness for examination or change the whole society can benefit if such attitude is oriented toward positive relations. So this proposition of a method which revolves around questioning, investigation, understanding, and action, represents continuation of traditional approaches which merges into a practice available to all contemporary subjects willing to work on their self-development. Henry Bergson wrote that "to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly" (Bergson, 1922, 8), which is precisely what PC aims at – provision of

techniques which help us grow, mature, change and develop ourselves.

Conclusion

Even though doing Philosophy outside of academia has seen a small rise in popularity in recent years – with different practices, such as public talks or interviews in England, philosophy in prison in US or Norway, Philosophy for Children, Philosophical Cafe, etc. – these practices are often done without following with relevant publications which would tie them closer to academic research or some other more serious considerations. Philosophical Practice also emerged from this conflict and today many philosophical practitioners, even though they publish papers and case studies, rarely contribute to reconciliation between the theory and the practice, especially since they use both. This paper aims to bridge that gap and offer a coherent view of a short research[6] done in order to show in which ways Philosophy still plays an important role in daily lives of everyone who is opened enough to engage with it. By reaching out to the IT community in Eastern Croatia, who accepted it and had positive feedback about the method, it shows how philosophers still could produce relevant ideas and approaches in settings different than just academic ivory towers. Surely, academic education in Philosophy is of utmost importance for equipping philosophers with entire range of traditions and thoughts crucial for analysis, critique, problem-solving and other skills, which then help them to see the clear picture of the needs of those around them. This paper has shown what is the importance of philosophical field work – in which philosophers engage in a

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[6] Broader research in line with this topic is done in author's PhD thesis at Sofia University, titled *Performance Oriented Method in Philosophical Counselling*.

dialogue with clients in a new and still undefined industry, but with clients who are – just as the factory workers some 100 years ago – still human and have almost the same problems and predicaments they need to address or examine. By offering them Philosophical Counselling, we provide them with a possibility to examine their own selves in logical, structured, coherent and insightful way and then procede with actions in their realities so that they could solve them or deal with them. By entering into this dialogical pursuit, they are showing initiative to work on themselves, to take care of themselves, which ultimatively leads to leading *bios sophos*, a wise life. Wisdom, yet still – just as Philosophy – undefined, could be found in insights which others may help us discover in dialogue with them. We could expect that such practices become more present in future society, where job market will continue to rapidly change and humans, next to AI or robots, begin a new search for meaning, purpose, for the Self, or the Other.

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COMENTARIOS, INFORMES Y ENTREVISTAS

STUDIES, REPORTS AND INTERVIEWS