

**Rethinking the Psychopathology of Depression**  
*Existentialism, Buddhism, and the Aims of Philosophical Counseling*

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**Abstract**

The instrumental classification of depression made possible by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) and the widespread pharmacological approach to treatment in mainstream bio-psychiatry has generated a cottage industry of criticism. This paper explores the potential shortcomings of the DSM/bio-psychiatric model and introduces the value of philosophical counseling—specifically by means of integrating the insights of Existentialism and Buddhism—as a way to overcome a number of diagnostic and methodological problems. Philosophical counseling, in this regard, is not overly concerned with the objective question of “What we are?” as biophysical beings with overt behaviors but with a more fundamental question, namely, “How we are?” that is, how do we experience our existence as finite, impermanent beings, how does this experience shape and determine depressive episodes, and how can we come to accept our own finitude and impermanence?

**Keywords:** *depression, psychiatry, DSM, existentialism, Buddhism, philosophical counseling*

## **Evolutionary Therapy for the Views of Others**

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### **Abstract**

Our concern with what others think of us can ruin our day or put us in foul moods. Despite its long history of success, critical thinking cannot treat this problem adequately. I propose a therapeutic approach based on a version of Stoic epistemology updated with some quasi-evolutionary biology, articulated with help from Sartre, Rousseau, and Nietzsche.

**Keywords:** *critical thinking, evolution, being-for-others, Nietzsche, Rousseau, history of philosophy.*

**Levinas in Practice**  
*Face to Face and Side by Side*

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*How can a being enter into relation with the other  
without allowing its very self to be crushed by the other?*

– Emmanuel Levinas

**Abstract**

In a Levinasian philosophical counseling practice, the work of the counselor or therapist is two-fold, both face-to-face in proximity with the other and side-by-side, engaged together with the other in the work of dialogue. These roles, or phases, are interdependent; each in turn gives rise to and interrupts the other. The counselor or therapist primarily bears responsibility for maintaining the relationship face-to-face, while the guest (patient or client) leads the work side-by-side.

**Keywords:** *philosophical counseling, philosophical practice, psychotherapy, Levinas, face-to-face*

**Clinical Philosophy**  
*A Discourse for Practitioners*

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**Abstract**

Life is full of expressions: and the congruent expression of life is what we call sanity. All expressions are, at first, conceived in the mind with the help of logic and language. Every overt expression is contingent upon the ratiocination within oneself. Each and every mental state has its syntax, semantics and an unconscious ratiocination technique. The syntax will often contain a name or an object that has the potential to produce an array of feelings connected to it, which may function as its semantics. As the ratiocination involves some form of thought process, it goes without saying that once the syntax is known, the next step is to understand the process of thought involved in creating a particular mental state. The inner generalization, leading to the establishment of a cognitive-perspective, often begins with induction: an inductively ratiocinated leap from a known case to an unknown case. However, once a generalization is established, the mental apparatus switches to the deductive procedure to generate an individual conclusion pertaining to the particular instance or event. Thus, the quality of cognitive-perspective depends not only on the strength of the conclusion of inductive generalization but also the strength of the premises of the deductive procedure. This paper, thus, attempts to bring forth the hidden dimensions of our thought processes and show the relevance of Philosophy in treatment and business management alike.

**Keywords:** *cognitive-perspective, fundamental position, fundamental assumption, unconscious ratiocination, epistemic block, cognitive system, paradoxical disposition*

## **Employing Zen Methods to Teach New Natural Law Theory**

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### **Abstract**

Rinzai Zen Buddhism employs intellectual puzzles or exercises called “koans” to assist with the attainment of spiritual insight or enlightenment. This paper borrows a similar pedagogical strategy to help students grasp certain foundational moral insights. It showcases an “ethics koan”, i.e., an activity designed to help the person grasp in a practical manner the reality of normative first principles that identify basic goods and evils, called the principles of natural law in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. The koan requires that student complete a chain novel about a fictional character’s absurd life. The effect is that students acknowledge their own grasp of what is beneficial and what is pointlessly futile. Such pedagogical strategies are especially beneficial for professional students, who are less inclined to abstract philosophizing. It ends with suggestions on how to employ new electronic media to present these koans.

**Keywords:** *Rinzai Zen, Buddhism, koans, ethics, natural law theory, John Finnis, teaching morality, Asian pedagogy*