

IX INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE
Phronesis – Italian Association for the Philosophical Counseling
CARLOFORTE – ITALY 2008

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“Philosophical Counselling and the Philosophical Life”

PROPOSAL:

Paper/Workshop (Section 1.)

TITLE:

**“The Six Levels of PROJECT@ -
a Methodological Approach to Philosophical Counseling”**

FIELD:

Philosophical Counseling

ABSTRACT:

The PROJECT@ method is a practical application of a philosophical theory concerning human being. More than a consideration between consultant and his personal life-projects, for us, man is a “*fundamental project*”, as Martin Heidegger said in his existentialist’s works.

In this paper, we will not explore the basic concepts of the practical work in philosophical consulting, because this paper will be directed to experimented people in the philosophical practice.

After some years of practice, we developed a theoretical definition of the method we’ve used and understood that our practice was done in six great levels of philosophical and technical work.

This method has been presented and discussed in a significant number of places. For example, in the investigation group of Applied Philosophy in the University of Seville (Spain), we made a link between “project” and “happiness”¹. The last one, considered the finality of philosophical wisdom, as said Epicurus in his letter about happiness² and more recently, André Comte Sponville in his lecture about happiness³.

Probably, it would be interesting to say that I’ve been working more with teenagers’ consultants, than with adults. Could we find a philosophical explication to this tendency? Or it is more a psychological question?

The importance of the life-projects is a significant reality to the world-vision of the teenagers. To construct a personal project, the teenager needs a whole of project competencies. Usually, it is the school which will work, in the teenagers mind, those competencies. In Portugal, we have in schools a non-disciplinary area, called «Project-

¹ DIAS, JORGE HUMBERTO, “La felicidad como objetivo de la Filosofía Aplicada a la persona”, in RASTROJO, JOSÉ BARRIENTOS, 2008, *Seminario Luso-Español de Filosofía Aplicada a Personas y a Grupos*, Sevilla, Ediciones DOSS.

² EPICURO, *Carta sobre a Felicidade (a Meneceu)*, São Paulo, UNESP, 2005.

³ SPONVILLE, ANDRÉ COMTE, *La Felicidad, desesperadamente*, Barcelona, Paidós, Contextos, 2007.

Area», 90 minutes per week. The work of that discipline does not include an application to the personal and real life of the teenagers. So, we need a space where the teenager could do a personal work about his life-projects and inclusively about himself as a fundamental project. That's the reason I opened in 2005/2006 (three years ago) the first consulting room in a public school.

With this paper, I want to promote, for the first time, an international debate about some benefits and limitations in the practical application of the PROJECT@ method.⁴

Developing each methodological level, in a theoretical way, and making some links between the philosophical competencies and between the deontological attitude of the counsellor, the presentation of the six levels of the PROJECT@ will permit a theoretical comprehension of the critical, phenomenological and rational work of the philosophical consultant, and to find some problems in its implementation.

In fact, in the literature of the practical philosophers, we did not find approaches to the philosophical techniques of the consultation work. Only Tim Lebon explores the "Counsellor's Philosophical Toolbox" in the chapter six of his *Wise Therapy. Philosophy for Counsellors*.⁵

After this explanation, we will constitute some practical working groups⁶ with the objective of testing the method in the real practice of one counsellor and one client.

The practical groups will have two participants. They will practice two consultation sessions, doing each other the function of counsellor and the function of client. The exercise is based on the application of the PROJECT@ method concerning a personal problem of the consultant.

In the end, we will conclude this paper with a debate about the benefits and the limitations of the PROJECT@ method in the individual philosophical consultation. Could we say that the personal application of this consulting method will perform a philosophical life?

Keywords: Project, Happiness, Method, Philosophical Consultation, Practical Application

Date: June 1, 2008

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⁴ We received some eulogies from clinical philosophers, in Brazil, who read our articles about this issues. Some of them were in Portugal to study in the APAEF courses. Our colleagues in Brazil, they are very interested in the development of this method. So, the question is: is it possible that clinical philosophy could use the PROJECT@ method? How? And what are the objectives?

⁵ LEBON, TIM, *Wise Therapy, Philosophy for Counsellors*, London, Continuum, 2002. pp. 138-164.

⁶ Only in the workshop.

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