

**The Will of Meaning and Theory
Additions to the Motivation Theory of Philosophical Praxis**

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Abstract

In my article I demonstrate the motivation theoretical connections of philosophical praxis / counseling. I argue that this approach is capable of clarifying the peculiarity of this new discipline of applied philosophy as philosophy, and the range of its competence and relation to other assistance professions, accordingly (psychotherapy, pedagogy, social work, etc). According to the article's approach, philosophical praxis is not merely the application of philosophy to independently appearing life problems, but is itself a kind of practice, or in the language of tradition the praxis of theory (Aristotle), which at the same time always means life practice/philosophy. In the words of Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, it is "such a universal enlightening, which does not derive from the light of meaning, but is inflamed by life, when stumbling upon the hard cornerstones of its boundaries".

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As a particular branch of applied philosophy, philosophical praxis has become a widespread trend ever since the 1980s. Its basic pursuit is to regain philosophy's existential references as opposed to academic abstractions and psychological interpretations. Naturally, this new philosophical trend has had to face several initial problems, mostly manifested in difficulties of self-definition, the indetermination in assigning its range of competence, and in its ambivalent relationship to various assistance professions. In my article, I call attention to the motivation theoretical connections of philosophical praxis, by taking into account these problems. In my opinion this approach is capable of

clarifying the particularity of philosophical praxis as philosophy, and as a result also its range of competence and relation to other assistance professions. The line of thought develops as follows: (1) first, I outline the pursuits and inner contradictions of philosophical praxis. (2) Then, I categorize, on the basis of varying motivations, the various dimensions of the care of the soul. (3) Next, by inquiring into the possibilities of a concrete philosophical praxis, I emphasize the approach of phenomenological philosophy, as one that is able to maintain a dialogue, while itself being an independent philosophy, with other assistance professions, such as psychotherapy, even if seemingly their original pursuit is completely opposed. (4) Finally, as a demonstration, I analyze the unity and difference of the methodological issues of phenomenological praxis and the third Viennese school of psychotherapy, logotherapy and existential analysis. The line of thought can be grouped according to the following questions: may philosophical praxis give up its theoretical and therapeutic ambitions? Is it possible to come up with a comprehensive concept of the care of the soul, from which various therapeutic praxes can be deduced? What is different and what is similar between the methodology of philosophical praxis and psychotherapy?

1. Problems of the concept and pursuits of philosophical praxis

In order to present the problems of philosophical praxis, I will follow a well-developed path of research, namely the ideas of Gerd B. Achenbach, the philosopher who started one of the first official philosophical praxes. I reconstruct Achenbach's concept on the role and necessity of philosophical praxis on the basis of an interview made by A. K. D. Lorenzen in 1982, which clearly outlines the objectives of this discipline, as well as all those problems which such a pursuit must face because of its pioneering role.¹

On the question of what made him as a philosopher to start his own praxis, Achenbach gives a threefold answer. The first factor is that philosophy is almost exclusively cultivated in an "academic ghetto", and as a result it has turned away from the problems of life. Philosophical praxis strives to dissolve both the sterility of academic philosophy and

¹ A reworked version of the interview entitled *Der Philosoph als Freiberufler* (In *Zeitschrift für Didaktik der Philosophie*, 1982) was included into Achenbach's volume of articles on philosophical praxis: "Der Philosoph als Praktiker. Ein Gespräch mit Arnold K. D. Lorenzen", In Achenbach, Gerd, B., , *Philosophische Praxis*, Köln: Dinter, 1987.

the unawareness of everyday life. The second factor is the spreading of the science and applied forms of psychology. In the 20th century, psychology has almost had an exclusive role in solving human problems, although there are serious contradictions in its methodology despite its initial objectives. Psychology, in Achenbach's opinion, has fallen into the mistake that it had originally stood up against: the commitment and normative character of theological psychotherapy. Psychology has also created a gap between theory and the concrete person. According to the third factor, connected to the previous two, philosophy must use its instruments to stand up against excessively theoretical sciences. Therefore philosophical praxis is not some kind of applied philosophical knowledge, like most psychotherapeutic trends, but it occurs in the form of a free, reasonable dialogue.¹ In this respect Adorno's concept must be followed: he claims that one should not philosophize about the concrete as opposed to the general, but starting from something concrete.²

Although Achenbach does not refer to it as a fourth factor, it must also be emphasized on account of its importance that, according to the author, the philosophical praxis achieved by free dialogue has no therapeutic ambitions. Philosophy has always failed its purpose when yearning for therapeutic ambitions (e.g. Marxism).³ Elsewhere, Achenbach directly claims that for philosophical praxis the various, philosophically committed therapeutic trends such as humanistic psychology and Viktor E. Frankl's logotherapy are in fact pseudo-philosophical therapeutic conceptions.⁴

These aspects mentioned by Achenbach are not unfamiliar for philosophical tradition. The differentiation between academic ambitions and those concentrating on a wise life conduct, especially at the formulation of new standpoints, has always played an important role in philosophy. It suffices to say that several outstanding figures of Western

¹ Achenbach, "Der Philosoph als Praktiker", p. 5-6.

² Ibid., p. 8.

³ "Der Philosoph als Therapeut hat überfordert, der Therapeut als Psychologe wird überfordert. Jetzt komme es darauf an, als Philosoph *bescheiden* und als Psychologe *anspruchsvoll* zu werden." Ibid., p. 9. (Emphasis in the original – P. S.)

⁴ "Trend-Representantin dürfte hier die 'Humanistische Psychologie' sein, die als Sammelbewegung gemäßiger Behandlungs-Strategien gegenwärtig auf sich aufmerksam macht, aber auch die – eher missionarisch ambitionierte – 'Logotherapie' von Frankl ist ein Beispiel solcher pseudo-philosophischen Verpackung therapeutischer Konzepte." Ibid., p. 52.

philosophy formulated their ideas in opposition to academic philosophy (like, for example, Kierkegaard or Nietzsche). However, the enormous influence of these philosophers was later assisted precisely by the academic sphere. Skepticism towards traditional approaches and thinking without presuppositions has always been an impulsive force for philosophy. The argument about psychology has also been prevalent in the history of philosophy. The issue is a concrete manifestation of the tensions between the various disciplines which gradually gain their independence from philosophy, and philosophy's role of "maternal care". What is more, this process is also enhanced by the fact that psychology has gained its independence relatively late and in a considerably painful way, as this new, objective science concerned with the soul has robbed philosophy of exactly that field of competence (subjectivity) which has served, since Descartes, as the basis of philosophy's field of research and self-definition.

The third argument raised by Achenbach is also familiar. The procedure of modern sciences of making all research methodologically abstract and thematically reduced is in opposition with the comprehensiveness of philosophy. Achenbach guards against the creation of any kind of initial theory for fear that it will sooner or later take on a dogmatic shape and claim its concrete and therapeutic ambitions. It is obvious that the definition of philosophical praxis is ultimately determined by the question of "what is philosophy?", a question vividly debated by the representatives of applied philosophy and ethics. However interesting and important this problem may be, there is no space to discuss it within the confines of this article. Instead, I only wish to concentrate on those aspects which best represent the definition of the competence of this philosophical attempt, as well as the sources of its legitimization.

Problems

It is completely clear that philosophical praxis or philosophically based life conduct counseling tries to impose itself on a considerably flooded market. The sciences dealing with the human being and human soul have already divided the tasks among themselves. It takes indeed a serious preparation for anyone to be able to find his way in the jungle of various schools of psychotherapy or pedagogical, sociological, or mental hygienic methods. Apart from scholarly disciplines, various religious and esoteric teachings also lay claim to "saving the soul". Their "spiritual" services are surrounded by an

effective science criticism, which serves their attempt to lay the basis of, and sell their activity. The question is thus self-evident: is there any more need of philosophical counseling in this merchant-spirited field? One thing is for certain: it is not easy to outline its field of competence, and it is to be feared that some of the elements finding their way into the argumentation may even discredit the concept of philosophy (the love of wisdom!) used as an adjective. This fear is certainly not enough reason however not to take seriously and think over the possibilities of philosophical praxis. The subject is diversified; ignoring now the pro and counter arguments of the bibliography, here is a simple line of thought: let us start from the fact that philosophical counseling or praxis is a meaningful task, worthy of being taken seriously, and the adjective “philosophical” is not merely some new advertising trick intended for gaining more profit. Philosophy is first and foremost the love of wisdom and thinking. Not simply a purely theoretical kind of thinking, but a kind of thinking which thematizes the practical (ethical) side of important or “great” questions of everybody’s concern. It is therefore a particular kind of thinking, with a quite well definable standpoint which equally differs from everyday, natural science, or mythical-religious approaches. As a result of a continuous critical reflection directed to itself and its field, philosophy does not have a strictly defined field of research. Much rather, it is about the acquiring and maintenance of a particular standpoint, articulated by different kinds of terminologies in accordance with various trends. Therefore philosophy must be understood as thinking, or more precisely *the care of thinking*, which begins with a question linked to wondering, doubt, or even crisis situations, and unfolds in a conceptuality becoming more and more perfect. The care of thinking is also characterized by the ambition of not having presuppositions, as well as of a disciplined, systematic thinking. Furthermore, all this is pervaded by the conviction that these considerations have a “therapeutic” effect on our previous everyday convictions, or those accepted from false authorities. On the basis of this our everyday life conduct may also be shaped. This concise and necessarily short definition of philosophy may reveal that the thinking cared for in a philosophical sense is not a normative kind of thinking. This latter kind could be called a thinking deduced from the live experience of thinking, which fixes the operating principles of a concrete praxis, controlling its applications.

Achenbach’s three arguments all emphasize the aforementioned non-normative character of philosophy. The argumentation revealed that

philosophical praxis may not be committed to anything. It must leave the “academic ghetto”, it must free itself from the erring of psychology, it must avoid theories, and what is more, it should also give up any kind of therapeutic ambitions. However, this negative and historical definition is in danger of standing against its very objectives. If the self-definition of philosophical counseling and praxis only relies on the criticism of various scientific and esoteric methods, then it will directly result in the fact that this “new” trend will only have a task until the insufficiency of the criticized field is sustained. However, in my opinion there is more to it, as it is also apparent from the previous discussions in which I have briefly referred to the place of Achenbach’s arguments in the history of philosophy, that is, the history of the concentrated and conceptually serious care of thinking. The differentiation of academic and non-academic is quite superficial and over-dramatized. The distancing from academic philosophy cannot guarantee in itself an exigent philosophical counseling; what is more, it can rightfully be expected that in the lack of a positive philosophical definition of praxis and clear task determination philosophical counseling will follow the praxis of other kinds of forms of counseling, alien from its nature, and thus will eventually cancel itself.

The praxis of philosophical counseling should not follow indeed normative psychologies and psychotherapies, but this is not to say that the philosophical practitioner could spare himself the reflection on the possibilities of a *philosophical psychology*, that is, a philosophically founded psychology.

The third argument also needs some explanations, or else it would end up as seriously contradictory. It is indeed necessary to avoid the stereotypical application of various theories in order not to force the participant of the counseling into the Procrustean bed of various therapeutic preconceptions. Indeed, philosophical praxis needs no excessive theories, but this does not mean that it should be deprived of all theory. This requirement would first of all question the competence of philosophical praxis, and raise the suspicion of arbitrariness. It is important to emphasize thus that philosophical praxis is in need of theory; a kind of theory developed in the course of the care of thinking, the perspective of which is that of the questioner, while it regards the “suffering” (*patients*) person. The high theoretical standard of philosophical praxis would also account for its favourable reception in the field of academic philosophy, which would again assist the acceptance of this “new” philosophical profession.

In order to interiorize these considerations, we must “take one step backwards” (Heidegger), and clarify the concept of praxis contained in the expression “philosophical praxis”. The preceding line of thought was less concerned with the philosopher’s praxis similar to that of a doctor’s or psychologist’s, with concrete counseling taking place in the form of a Socratic dialogue within an interpersonal framework; instead, it was rather concerned with a kind of praxis taking place, prior to all work of education and counseling, in the philosopher and – *nota bene* – among (!) the philosophers. A kind of praxis, therefore, which precedes any praxis as an enterprise marked by a practitioner’s sign, concentrating on the care of the other’s thinking. The stressing of this kind of concept of praxis is in my opinion a primary condition of a high standard philosophical praxis. In the absence of this, one may easily commit the mistake to consider philosophical praxis, albeit useful, as alien to philosophical thinking. This is also the case with Achenbach’s condition that philosophical praxis must avoid therapeutic ambitions. Plausibility is not a sufficient argument in this case either. Philosophy also cannot give up this requirement completely, just because in the course of history it has been abused – like so much else. It would also be a limitation of thinking to understand therapy exclusively as a legally protected concept elaborated by doctors and psychologists, or to expel any kind of concept of therapy from the field of philosophy just because of the superficial consideration that the word is already occupied by a certain kind of scientific praxis. If we did that, then we would be restricting, against our own will, exactly philosophy’s field of competence. Indeed, the mutually productive effect of philosophical and medical terminology is well-known, as is the fact that philosophers usually employ the terminology of medical praxis in a metaphorical sense.¹

To summarize, one may say that Achenbach’s arguments about philosophical praxis are important, but not sufficient. Certainly, I am aware that the literature of philosophical praxis, as well as Achenbach’s other articles also contain more comprehensive and nuanced analyses. At the same time, this literature is also characterized by off-hand argumentations, guided by sometimes contradictory perspectives and objectives. A unitary or comprehensive conception has not yet been formed in this field. Therefore I must emphasize again that the problems

¹ E.g. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Filozófiai vizsgálódások* (Philosophical Investigations), Budapest: Atlantisz, 1998.

I hereby discuss concern the general perception of philosophical praxis and counseling.

Philosophical praxis and the care of the soul

In the light of those said above, I will stress some points which seem indispensable for outlining the competence of philosophical praxis and counseling in general. Evidently, these are general remarks, just as the considerations discussed above, but they refer to the basic problems of a possible serious philosophical praxis aiming at the care of thinking.

1.) *Designation of a particular field of competence.* The debates about the competence of philosophical praxis and the training of the “philosopher” partaking in counseling are only meaningful if connected to the question “what is philosophy?”, and if we also thematize the concept of praxis as the *sine qua non* of philosophical counseling. What I have in mind, is the simple requirement that a philosophical counselor must first of all philosophize and express it in an academic form. A clearly outlined philosophical standpoint and the clarification of the horizon of an individual standpoint are just as much the preconditions of philosophical praxis as psychological or pedagogical skills.

2.) *Thematization of the borderlines of philosophy and psychology.* An interdisciplinary perspective is very much desirable, but it must not mean the entangling of the tasks of each. A therapeutic effect in the sense of psychotherapy can only emerge in philosophical praxis as a “side-product” and not as an objective. Naturally, this is also desirable in a reverse direction. In this respect, Viktor E. Frankl for instance expects doctors to be well versed in “epistemological criticism”, that is, in matters of worldview.¹

The optimal case stressed in the literature as well is a double professional training, but it must be emphasized that one must clarify the direction of one’s thinking, namely, whether focusing on the *questioning man (homo quaerens)* or the *suffering man (homo patiens)*. Therefore, the awareness of the differences and overlaps between *philosophical psychology* and *psychological philosophy* appears to be a condition of philosophical counseling.

3.) The clarification of the peculiarities and relations of everyday, psychological, religious, and philosophical self-awareness, and the creation of the possibility of philosophical consciousness within

¹ Viktor E. Frankl, *Orvosi lélekgondozás. A logoterápia és egzisztenciaanalízis alapjai* (Medical care of the soul. The foundations of logotherapy and existential analysis), Budapest: Kötet, 1997, p. 30.

philosophical praxis. This condition corresponds to a concept of philosophy understood as an independent standpoint.

4.) *The elaboration of the relationship of theory and praxis, and the philosophical concept of therapy.* We have seen already that the relationship of theory and praxis has a particular situation in the case of philosophy, since an eminently cultivated philosophy is theory, and this is nothing else than eminent praxis: *the praxis of theory*. Philosophy is thus a particular kind of praxis, the praxis of the care of thinking, and accordingly, a therapy which is “only” analogous with medical terminology, having a range of meanings different from the terminology of other scientific approaches.

These principal criteria are indispensable thus for the formulation of the role and field of competence of philosophical praxis and counseling. This presupposes a philosophical standpoint which possesses a conceptuality indispensable for intersubjectivity and interdisciplinarity, and secures at the same time the autonomy of philosophy. In my opinion, of all various other disciplines, phenomenological philosophy is especially adequate. From its very beginnings, phenomenology has mostly accepted, and by its methodology also ensured, the independence of philosophy as an autonomous standpoint and field of research. Apart from this, psychology and its philosophical criticism has always played a central part in the self-definition of phenomenology.¹ Last but not least, phenomenology’s history of reception has not only had its effect felt in the reinterpretations of theoretical psychology, but in its practical side as well, for instance in rethinking the methodology of psychotherapy. Certain schools of psychotherapy, under the influence of, among others, phenomenological research, depart from Freudian metapsychology, and orientate themselves on the basis of new anthropological and methodological considerations.² One of the most significant issues about understanding philosophical praxis is: what is philosophical about it? This is so because, on account of its premises, it cannot take a stand on the particularities of philosophy. The statement may seem well founded on the grounds of those previously said: the philosophical concept of

¹ Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Gesammelte Werke (Husserliana)*, Vol. IX. *Phänomenologische Psychologie. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925*, Den Haag/Dordrecht: 1950-; Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. I. *Frühe Schriften*, Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1976-.

² One may speak about a phenomenological or hermeneutical turn in psychotherapy on this basis.

praxis which hastily calls the more or less open trends of psychotherapy as therapeutic conceptions in a pseudo-philosophical guise, as we have seen in Achenbach's case, is just as superficial as those who call philosophical praxis a pseudo-psychotherapy.¹

In opposition – as hopefully also apparent from the previous analyses – the anthropological and psychological reading of phenomenological philosophy is able to differentiate between the objective validity, subjective character, and historical-cultural aspects of philosophy. As a result, one may say that philosophy, wishing to match academic requirements, and serve life at the same time, is in need of the philosophical idea of the care of the soul and the rational outlining of its methodology.

2. Dimensions of the care of the soul

Twentieth century philosophy has touched upon the subject of the care of the soul in several respects; let me only refer to the works of Jaeger, Hadot, Wittgenstein, Foucault, and Patočka.² Distinctly from the approach of the authors enlisted, in my paper I do not treat the problem of the care of the soul from the perspective of a philological history of philosophy, neither from that of analytical philosophy or the philosophy of history. Instead, I thematize it by the concept of phenomenological praxis through phenomenological methodology and its organically connected existential philosophical implications.

In present terminology the word “care of the soul” possesses a clear range of meaning: first and foremost, it is understood as a pastoral activity; that is, the word is used to denote the particular mission and practice of Christian churches. In protestant theology, it is an organic part of practical theology, which, mostly since the expansion of the science of psychology, considers the primary aspiration for the salvation of the soul

¹ On the relation of psychotherapy and philosophical praxis, see Dagmar Fenner, *Philosophie contra psychologie. Zur Verhältnisbestimmung von philosophischer Praxis und Psychotherapie*, Tübingen, Francke, 2005.

² Cf. Werner Jaeger, *Paidea. Die Formung des griechischen Menschen*. Vol. 2. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1954); Pierre Hadot, *Philosophie als Lebensform. Antike Exerzitien der Weisheit*, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1991; Michel Foucault, *A szexualitás története III. Törődés ömagunkkal* (The History of Sexuality. III. The Care of the Self), Budapest: Atlantisz, 2001; Jan Patočka, *Európa és az Európa utáni kor* (Europe and the Age after Europe), Bratislava (Pozsony): Kalligram, 2001.

together with the treatment of existential problems. “The care of the soul” is thus a technical term in theology.¹

The term itself appeared for the first time much earlier, in Plato’s *Laches* dialogue, where two fathers debate the education of the young:

So what we have to consider is whether one of us is skilled in treatment of the soul, and is able to treat it rightly, and which of us has had good teachers.²

The two parties, with Socrates’ assistance of course, settle that education is nothing else than *psyches therapeia*.³ Evidently, the expression used here is not a term, and thus the care of the soul does not become systematically elaborated at Plato; nevertheless, it marks an essential element of his philosophy.⁴ I shall not review all the historical occurrences of the word, but I do wish to emphasize an essential point: the care of the soul, the *psyches therapeia* is already a transfer of meaning as compared to the previous “the care of gods” (*therapeia tôn theón*). Prior to the occurrence of philosophy, it was God, or rather the gods, who had to be cared for. The appearance and importance of psychotherapy is a consequence of philosophy, as Jan Patočka, among others, has pointed out.⁵ The pastoral care of the soul in a modern theological sense already connects the two meanings. However, as long as I embark upon the outlining of the possibility of philosophical

¹ For the term of “the care of the soul”, see: Thomas Bonhoeffer, *Ursprung und Wesen der christlichen Seelsorge*, München: Christian Kaiser, 1985.; and Dávid Németh, *Isten munkája és az ember lehetőségei a lelkigondozásban* (The work of God and the possibilities of man in the care of the soul), Budapest: Kálvin János Kiadó, 1993.

² Plato Lach. 185e. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0176&layout=&loc=Lach.+186a>

³ Plato Lach. 186a. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0176;query=section%3D%23506;layout=:loc=Lach.%20186a>

⁴ On the psychotherapeutic aspects of Plato’s philosophy, see Johannes Ulrich Vinzenz Thome, *Psychotherapeutische Aspekte in der Philosophie Platons* (Dissertation), Saarbrücken, 1994.

⁵ Jan Patočka, *Ketzerische Essays über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988; Patočka, *Európa*; Balázs Mezei, *A lélek és a másik. Jan Patočka és a fenomenológia* (The soul and the other. Jan Patočka and phenomenology), Budapest: Atlantisz, 1998.

psychotherapy, that is, I use “the care of the soul” as a philosophical term, it seems desirable to consistently differentiate between the two meanings, also in writing. Therefore, in the followings I distinguish between a “pastoral care of the soul” and “the care of the soul” in a philosophical sense.¹

The concept of the care of the soul

This short introduction already shows that the expression “the care of the soul” offers the possibility of diverse associations. In order to elaborate the subject and avoid misunderstandings, it is necessary to separate various dimensions. In order to accomplish this, I call for the help of an Aristotelian fragment, which carries certain preconceptions about “philosophical life”, effective even today:

...Such a life as this however will be higher than the human level: not in virtue of his humanity will a man achieve it, but in virtue of something within him that is divine; (...) If then the intellect is something divine in comparison with man, so is the life of the intellect divine in comparison with human life. Nor ought we to obey those who enjoin that a man should have man's thoughts and a mortal the thoughts of mortality, but we ought so far as possible to achieve immortality, and do all that man may to live in accordance with the highest thing in him;
...²

In harmony with Plato's psychology, the quotation also emphasizes the outstanding place of the soul, whose most important (divine!) manifestation is meaning, or in other words: thinking. For a philosopher, a life conduct guided by meaning is the measure of any activity. The unity and diversity of the dimensions of the care of the soul on which rest the approaches of modern theology, philosophy, and psychotherapy, can be well differentiated also by an Aristotelian approach. The common ground of the various types of psychotherapies, often having very distinct objectives and methodologies, is an ambition which requests humans to be more than “mere” humans. The pastoral

¹ The term of “the care of the soul” as I use it is closest to Patočka's expression of *Sorge für die Seele*, except that I do not use it as a category of philosophy of history.

² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177b. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0054&layout=&loc=1177b#anch4>

care of the soul in a theological sense treats this viewpoint as self-evident; the philosophical care of the soul regards it as its own condition of existence; while in psychotherapy it appears as a desirable maximum. I quote Heidegger, and Frankl paraphrasing Goethe in connection with the latter two:

The essence of man lies in the fact that he is more than a mere man, inasmuch as this is perceived of as a rational being.¹

... he [the practicing psychotherapist – P. S.] in fact wants to make the most of the patient. Not the most of his secrets, but the most of his human values. Let us remember Goethe's words which may be the most important maxima of all psychotherapy: "If we take humans as they are, we only make them worse. But if we treat them as if they were exactly the way they are supposed to be, then we take them closer to where they should arrive."²

The three dimensions of the care of the soul build upon a common phenomenal field, which may be called, in the language of transcendental Thomism and Franklian logotherapy, the self-transcendence of man.³ The first unfolds in its complexity in the will to assimilate with God, the second in the will of theory or a life guided by meaning, and the third in the will of meaning.⁴ In the following, in

¹ Martin Heidegger, "...*Költőien lakozik az ember...*". *Válogatott írások* ("... Poetically dwells the man". Selected writings), Budapest – Szeged: T-Twins, 1994, p. 146.

² Frankl, *Orvosi léleg Gondozás*, 24. "Will er doch letzten Endes irgendwie aus dem Kranken das Möglichste herausholen. Das Möglichste wohl nicht an Geheimnis, sondern an menschlichem Wert; eingedenkt jenes Wortes von Goethe, das man vielleicht als die oberste Maxime jedweder Psychotherapie hinstellen könnte: >Wenn wir die Menschen nehmen, wie sie sind, so machen wir sie schlechter. Wenn wir sie behandeln, als wären sie, was sie sein sollte, so bringen wir sie dahin, wohin sie zu bringen sind.<“ Viktor E. Frankl *Ärztliche Seelsorge. Grundlagen der Logotherapie und Existenzanalyse*, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1997, 27.

³ Cf. Karl Rahner, *A hit fogalma. Bevezetés a kereszténység fogalmába* (The concept of faith. Introduction to the concept of Christianity), Szeged: Agapé, 1998; Frankl, *Orvosi léleg Gondozás*.

⁴ The anthropological idea of the care of the soul, precisely in the name of humanism, criticizes every concrete, elaborated humanist image of man as a

accordance with the primary intention of this paper, I will compare the principles of the will of theory and the will of meaning, within the framework of that twentieth-century philosophical trend which celebrates the will of theory and meaning at the same time.

3. Phenomenological praxis

I understand the term phenomenological praxis primarily as the application of the methodology of phenomenological philosophy.¹ The focus of the methodology is naturally the Husserlian concept of *epoché*, articulated along a particular motivational basis: the defeat of naturalism and historicism in order to create a scientific philosophy. In my opinion, both aspects of the above point of view, that is, the *epoché* and the pertaining motivational basis, are closely linked in phenomenological praxis. Accordingly, my paper's train of thought, while outlining the phenomenological praxis of the care of the soul, and especially when examining the philosophical basis of psychotherapeutic connections, also analyzes the activities made "in the service of life".

In order to achieve this, one must reveal the original concern of the care of the soul, about which the philosophical care of the soul is originally concerned. In order to formulate the question, I call attention to Heidegger's analysis on concern and the possibilities of caretaking. Heidegger summarizes the phenomenological analysis of concern in five points: 1. A particular concern is characterized by *opening up* (*erschließen*) that what it is about, and taking it into the *Dasein*. 2. It explicates (*explizieren*) the opened-up as it is; 3. It keeps that what is explicitly elaborated. 4. It is committed to that what it keeps, that is, it turns some of its basic theses (*Grundsätze*) into the norm of the caretaking of other concerns; 5. It is implicated; whatever is given in concern, it grasps so that any kind of concern may be motivated by it.²

result of the phenomenon of self-transcendence. See Heidegger, "...Költöien lakozik az ember..."; Viktor E. Frankl, *Der leidende Mensch. Anthropologische Grundlagen der Psychotherapie*, Bern: Hans Huber, 1996.

¹ That is, I delimit it from the political connotations of "phenomenological praxis".

² "Möglichkeiten der Sorge lassen sich so charakterisieren. 1.) Eine bestimmte Sorge hat die Eigentümlichkeit, das, um welches sie geht, zu *erschließen* und in das *Dasein* zu bringen; 2. das Erschlossene dergestalt, wie es da ist, konkret zu *explizieren*; 3. das explizit Ausgebildete in einer bestimmten Weise zu *behalten*; 4. dem Behaltene sich zu verschreiben, d. h. bestimmte Grundsätze daraus für die Besorgte anderer Sorgen normativ zu machen; 5. das *Sichverlieren*: das, was

According to Heidegger's analysis, the previously discussed issue of self-transcendence is actually an intentional relation the ontological structure of which is care. On this basis, one may state that the theological, philosophical, and psychotherapeutic care of the soul are formally identical, but have a differing content structure: the concrete concern taken into care differs.

Taking into account Heidegger's phenomenological analysis, the concrete question may be formulated: what is the basic concern of the care of the soul based on phenomenological praxis, which is permanently opened, interpreted, kept, and thus committed to the care of the soul, prescribed for the caretaking and concern of other philosophical psychotherapies, deducing them from this motivation?

It is evident that the care of the soul searches for a kind of concern which takes care of the will of theory and meaning by a particular action. The will of theory and meaning is the twofold aspect of the motivational basis of the care of the soul. Both refer to the objective world opposing the subject.

In the will of meaning (*Wille zum Sinn*), meaning is the manifestation on different levels of the practical world of man, for which the individual strives. Basically, it is about the target-orientation of human life, occurring as a kind of rational *a priori*. This means that man cannot act in any other way than rational consideration. That is, every action of an individual is suited into a horizon of meaning outlined by the rational *a priori*, in which the subjectivity always strives for a determined achievement of meaning.¹

Theory as the most outstanding activity in an Aristotelian sense is contemplation; the theory accomplished means a kind of contemplation in which the contemplator sees the same thing which sees him. Yielding space for the will of theory, the philosopher's personal world of meaning is interpreted as a part of a more comprehensive reality, in such a way that theory proves to be the meaning and source of a personal horizon of meaning. The will of theory (*Wille zur Theorie*) is

in der Sorge steht, so unbedingt anzusetzen, daß von ihm aus jegliche Sorge grundsätzlich motiviert ist. Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 17. *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1994, p. 61.

¹ That is, reaching a goal, or solving a task. Hereafter, I shall use the concept of meaning (*Sinn*) on the basis of Viktor Frankl's term. See the pertaining parts of chapter 4.

ultimately an active participation in the self-referential process of the contemplated reality, the will of self-thinking (*noésis noéseós*).¹

However, the will of theory and meaning is cared for with different standpoints. The aspect of self-transcendence is present in both, but to the first, by a radical and universal epoché, we arrive by a so-called phenomenological standpoint. The other is the event of a personal and daily standpoint, which we are usually only aware of if we are ascetic about some aspect of its everyday relation of meaning, or if all relations of meaning valid on an everyday level fall apart.

As a result of those said above, all further analyses can be divided into two parts: the universal (theoretical) and the personal (meaning-centred) phenomenological praxis. The relationship of the two will be approached by the means of logotherapy and existential analysis, founded by Viktor Frankl. My endeavour, therefore, outlines the linking surfaces of the will of meaning and theory, approached from a personal phenomenological praxis (a meaning-centred psychotherapy).

4. Logotherapy as phenomenological praxis

Phenomenological philosophy is a basically methodological philosophy. Such a philosophy, that is, which reaches “to the things themselves” in a well defined way (phenomenological reduction, essential analysis, etc.).² Well, one may hardly find such a thing in Frankl’s works. Herbert Spiegelberg claims that Frankl does not cultivate phenomenology for its own sake, but tries to apply it.³ This means that the Austrian neurologist and philosopher simply takes over certain results of phenomenological research and applies it in a concrete professional case. But the situation is not that simple. Logotherapy and existential analysis, facing the inadequacy of the description of personal standpoint, in my opinion at least, embarks upon individual “phenomenological investigations”, which are only partly linked to the results of classical

¹ According to Aristotle, it is theory “which primarily makes a man. Therefore such a life is the happiest.” That is, theory is the greatest happiness attainable to man. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1177. For a terminological and systematic analysis of theory see Mezei Balázs, *Vallásbölcselet. A vallás valósága* (I-II) (Religious philosophy. The reality of religion), Máriabesenyő-Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2004, I. § 25.

² Cf. Edmund Husserl, *A filozófia mint szigorú tudomány*, (Philosophy as Rigorous Science), Budapest: Kossuth, 1993.

³ Herbert Spiegelberg, *Phenomenology in Psychology and Psychiatry*, Evanston: Northwestern University, 1972, p. 352.

phenomenology. Spiegelberg however is right when saying that Frankl does not share his detailed (phenomenological) analyses with the reader, mostly only presents his results instead.¹ This is true in all cases when Frankl intimates a phenomenological description or “essential analysis”.² However, the methodological elements applied in psychotherapeutic analyses are partly exceptions, even if Frankl never uses the word phenomenology in connection with them. To my mind, the relation of phenomenology with therapeutic methods as means of logotherapy, such as *paradox intention*, *dereflection*, and *standpoint modulation*,³ is evident, with the restriction, of course, that the methodology of logotherapy may be relevant not for Husserlian phenomenology, but for a particular kind of “phenomenological psychology and psychotherapy”. I also consider it important to note that Frankl does not create a “pure” kind of psychology which exclusively concentrates on the peculiar essence of the soul, being connected thus to transcendental phenomenology.⁴ Logotherapy and existential analysis *ex definitione* concentrates not on the “soul”, but, in Frankl’s expression, on “spiritual existence”, and it always approaches physical reality through this. Consequently, it does not start from a Husserlian transcendental I, but from a spiritual existence, which, similarly to Heidegger’s conception, is not rational, but previous to rational.⁵ This situation clearly opposes logotherapy with the basic reflexive character of Husserlian phenomenology.

¹ Ibid.

² For instance, in the case of consciousness and meaning. Spiegelberg also quotes Frankl’s observation on the phenomenological analysis of the experience of meaning: “Because if we subjected the direct, unmistakable experience recognised by the “simple and common man of the street”, and translated it into the language of scientific terminology, then it would appear that the man not only searches for meaning – by his will striving for meaning – but also finds it, in three different ways.” Viktor E. Frankl, *A tudattalan Isten. Pszichoterápia és vallás*. (The unconscious God. Psychotherapy and religion.), Budapest: EuroAdvice, 2002, p. 81.

³ Cf. Viktor E. Frankl, *Theorie und Therapie der Neurosen. Einführung in die Logotherapie und Existenzanalyse*, München: E. Reinhardt, 1993.

⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Az európai tudományok válsága és a transzcendentális fenomenológia*, (The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy), Budapest: Atlantisz, 1998, § 17-18.

⁵ The unconscious does not appear here in a Freudian sense. Unconscious, therefore not thematic. But this does not mean that it would be suppressed too.

It is an obvious fact that from the point of view of phenomenological philosophy, logotherapy and existential analysis can be ranked with “secularized philosophies”, since it regards the world-constituting life in its “secularized” form.¹ However, this secularization never happens in an entirely indeliberate way, that is, the transcendental dimension never hides itself in “closed anonymity”,² because in logotherapy, as a man, I am not exclusively the object of psychophysics and psychology. What is more, I may even become a “transcendental subject” in a Husserlian sense. *Nota bene*: in a “spiritually intended psychotherapy”.³ Therefore, in my opinion, the phenomenological and psychotherapeutic (logotherapeutic) standpoints refer to each other even if their intentions are basically different. Husserl’s third, or psychological, way to transcendental phenomenology is evidently not accidental, and it can be even better thematized by a concrete psychotherapeutic praxis.⁴

¹ Bernhard Waldenfels, *A normalizálás határai. Tanulmányok az idegen fenomenológiájáról*. (The limits of normalization. Studies on the phenomenology of the alien), Budapest: Gond-Cura, 2005, p. 44.

² Husserl, *Az európai tudományok válsága*, 255.

³ It is clear, that Frankl’s reference to phenomenology is mainly limited to the criticism of psychologism, emphasizing how psychoanalysis and the psychology of the individual restrict “phenomenal reality”. Besides this, there are parallels and overlaps regarding the viewpoint and the methodology. It is clear that logotherapy and existential analysis intends to appear as an independent line of research, and its in-depth analysis raises not only the significant question of how and to what extent Frankl had applied phenomenology, but also of how relevant the considerations and results of logotherapy are for (contemporary) phenomenological philosophy. For such an analysis, which treats logotherapy and existential analysis as an independent (phenomenological) field of research, Scheler’s words that “there is no kind of phenomenological *school* from which we might expect mutually represented theses, only the circle of researches (...) who attest a common *attitude*, may yield orientation and encouragement.” (Max Scheler, *Az ember helye a kozmoszban* (Man’s place in the cosmos), Budapest: Osiris-Gond, 1995, p. 118.) In Scheler’s conception, phenomenology is not philosophy, nor science, it is not religion, nor a worldview, but an attitude, a perspective which assists the treatment of philosophical matters. Starting from here, grasping Frankl’s viewpoint in one single sentence: the phenomenologically based logotherapy and existential analysis is an attitude which assists not only the treatment of philosophical anthropological problems of assistance professions, but also the existential problems connected to worldviews and existential philosophy.

⁴ Husserl, *Az európai tudományok válsága*, § 56-73.

The two ways of asceticism of life: Epoché and standpoint-modulation

In the following I will not use the word praxis as a concrete form of enterprise employed by doctors and psychotherapists, but as the original, ethical action or deed equally applied by a person practicing phenomenology or psychotherapy, or a “suffering man” actively taking part in a psychotherapeutic situation. The centre of phenomenological and psychotherapeutic praxis is *standpoint change* as well as the phenomenon of *self-transcendence*. The two are closely interconnected: by standpoint change the person practicing phenomenology or taking part in a psychotherapeutic process may transcend or “switch” his original standpoint.

Naturally, phenomenological and psychotherapeutic praxis displays different ways of this standpoint change. The two should also be distinguished in terminology: when describing the particularity of psychotherapeutic praxis I will use the term standpoint modulation,¹ while in the case of phenomenological praxis, in accordance with Husserl’s terminology, the concept of *epoché*. On comparing these two “professional” standpoints, I presuppose the existence of a comprehensive horizon of an everyday or personal standpoint, which mediates between the two. Before I go on to the specific meaning and connections of these concepts of praxis, I will settle the general similarities of the two concepts:

1. Standpoint modulation and *epoché* are both connected to a basic human particularity. Expressed in the terms of Max Scheler’s anthropology, this is nothing else than the man’s (spiritual) possibility to say no to his instinctual ambitions and desires.² This ability is perfected in connection with the openness to the world and consciousness. In the course of standpoint modulation a new kind of relation and self-interpretation is formed. It is clear that phenomenology renders it radical as a cognitive method out of a philosophical consideration, and by this it distinguishes it from a mere anthropological ability.

2. Both variations of the standpoint change can be recognized and reproduced. In personal life, it happens in a spontaneous way, whenever one needs to fulfill various tasks. In psychotherapy, the therapist uses it, while the therapeutic steps induce it in the patient. Similarly, the *epoché*

¹ Frankl, *Theorie und Therapie...*; See point IV. 2c of the paper.

² Scheler, *Az ember helye...*, 66.

can also be repeated and reproduced, as Husserl stresses it in several places.

3. Both have their own time; it is about a so-called “professional” standpoint and its consistent support, which can be habitualized by frequent repetition. As a result, it can be learned as a method, and taught as a curricular subject. Naturally, the most important question for phenomenology as well as psychotherapy is whether or not the new standpoint which replaces the old one is habitualized, since it is only in this case that one can speak about a personal standpoint in harmony with the professional one: that is, about a vocation.¹

4. Phenomenological and psychotherapeutic praxis alike influences the level of personal life. This means that they are able to induce fundamental changes even if the original motivation of standpoint change and the concrete application of its steps cannot be traced back to the rationality of personal life. From this point of view, the work of both Husserl and Frankl possesses a strong sense of mission.²

Naturally, the aforementioned similarities all remain on an exceedingly general level. They do not take into account the uniqueness of the concrete forms of phenomenological and psychotherapeutic praxis. However, this is exactly necessary for emphasizing the differences. In order to achieve this, I will relate to the therapeutic objectives of the late Husserl and of Frankl.³

The will of theory and meaning

The difference and tension of the standpoint modulation applied in the praxis of *epoché* and logotherapy derives from the fact that the latter considers the particularities of personal standpoint as normative and desirable, as the standpoint modulation ultimately aims at the return or re-placement of an original, natural rationality, lost or thought to be lost. This happens even if it changes it somewhat. Thus logotherapy and existential analysis exhibit an oppositional movement as compared to

¹ “... by the epoché we are not ourselves interested, collaborative, etc. We have actually created a particularly new, habitual line of interest in ourselves, in a determined vocational attitude, to which a particular *official time* pertains” (Husserl, *Az európai tudományok válsága*, p. 174.)

² Ibid., I. 3.

³ Cf. Edmund Husserl *Válogatott tanulmányai*, Budapest: Gondolat, 1972, pp. 323-367. Frankl’s therapeutic concern in a medical sense is obvious, what he implies is a kind of philosophically based “medical care of the soul”. Cf. Frankl, *Orvosi lélekgondozás; Der leidende Mensch*.

phenomenology. The professional standpoint of psychotherapy is also distinguished from a personal standpoint, in such a way that the latter is superposed to the former. In opposition, in the course of the phenomenological *epoché*, in Husserl's words: "the phenomenologist understands the naivety of the natural standpoint, and it is he who has to decide whether or not to re-place himself into it."¹ Phenomenology conceives personal standpoint thus as a possibility the structure of which (its world of value and meaning) appears to be arbitrary in the application of the *epoché*.

Taking these into account, it may seem that the relation between the praxis of *epoché* and standpoint modulation is only manifested in a superficial similarity, that is, basically we are speaking about two utterly different things. However, the situation is not that simple. The in-depth connections are revealed exactly by the emphasis of the differences:

1. The anthropological basis of the *epoché* and standpoint modulation: logotherapy appeals indeed to our spiritual ability to say no to our instinctual ambitions, or even a concrete task or meaning. In the course of a standpoint change the subject taking part in therapy turns towards a concrete, individual rationality. This rationality as a task is always embedded into an existing historical daily rationality, even if that takes on an artistic, religious, or philosophical aspect.² However, it is precisely this sphere that the *epoché* disregards. It is not an everyday meaning, but the entire rationality that it overrules "at one blow".³ Such a standpoint change does not *want* to return to an everyday rationality, but it questions its meaning and source. The *epoché* is simply a manifestation of free will, which hails not the personal meaning of a concrete life, but the will of the meaning of the *whole*. Its responsibility is the responsibility towards the "will of theory".⁴ If we wished to question the anthropological foundations of all this, then we should speak about the man not as an ascetic of life, but "of the spirit", since it is exactly that bracketed field of evidence, which carries the meaning of the "asceticism of life"!⁵ In Frankl's terminology, phenomenology is a rationality

¹ Husserl, *Az európai tudományok válsága*, p. 260.

² Frankl, *Orvosi lélekgondozás*, p. 52.

³ Husserl, *Az európai tudományok válsága*, p. 190.

⁴ See Mezei's detailed analysis: Balázs Mezei, *Zárójelbe tett Isten* (God in paranthesis), Budapest: Osiris-Gond, 1997, p. 119.

⁵ "Compared to the animal, which always says »yes« to reality, even when it despises it and flees from it, *man is he who »can say no«, the »ascetic of life«, the eternal protestor against any kind of mere reality*". Scheler, *Az ember*

intended for a concrete situation and person – the phenomenologist – which points beyond the given situation and person. In Husserl's words: in the direction of an absolute situation and a transcendental I.

2. The differences of the aspects of reproducibility and learning are easily recognizable. These derive from distinct objectives and previously fixed competences.

3. A "personal time" professional standpoint displays a more serious difference: the *epoché* appears timeless from the point of view of the praxis of psychotherapy.

4. The differences behind the similarity mentioned in the last point are much more interesting from the point of view of this paper. In the best case the result of logotherapy and existential analysis is a successful therapy, the "recovery". In the terminology of logotherapy and existential analysis: a meaningful life, which means that the meaning- and value connections present in a personal standpoint may freely flow, and the concrete person is spontaneously driven into them, that is, accomplishes a task or a meaning, and finally accepts all responsibility for this, as long as all accomplishment of meaning is the result of a decision made in a certain free field. The psychotherapeutic standpoint is thus a modulation; if the therapy does not last for a lifetime, but is only temporary, it modulates the fractured experience of a natural rationality, that is, the result of psychotherapeutic praxis is nothing else than the regaining of the naturalness of a personal standpoint. The therapeutic effect of phenomenological praxis is not this obvious. Although Husserl had frequently mentioned this consideration, he had never detailed it. One thing is for certain: the final result of the *epoché* cannot be the same kind of natural rationality and the pertaining personal standpoint. Even more so, because the *epoché* has not been motivated by the refractedness of natural rationality. So it seems to me that there are only two possibilities left after the application of the phenomenological *epoché*:

a.) The personal and phenomenological standpoints form distinct spheres, they have no influence over each other.

b.) The *epoché* makes it possible for a radically new personal standpoint to be achieved besides the phenomenological one.

The first possibility is clear, but it is questionable how to achieve the second one, to which Husserl also often refers. The secondary literature usually offers two routes for the interpretation of this

helye..., p. 66. In this context the expression "the ascetic of the spirit" is man's possibility to say no to all interpretations of reality, that is, to be able to protest against the reality of spiritual origin and its materialized aspect.

problem. The first is connected to Husserl's statement that the phenomenological standpoint is analogous to religious conversion, while the second one, in order to answer the question, dissects extreme personal experiences, such as distress or trauma, etc.¹ In what follows, I have taken the second route. However, I do not wish to grasp the experience of distress in the phenomenal state in which it is created and perhaps endures, maybe even inducing pathological changes; instead, I focus on the "cases" when the distress brings about a kind of relating which, although not ceasing the cause of the distress, opens up the possibility of a radically new standpoint which is obviously related to the phenomenological *epoché*.

In the description of a tragically emphasized distress, I quote Balázs Mezei: "The all-encompassing sense of purpose is absent, which half intentionally, half spontaneously marks the daily horizons of purposes, and thus the lively verve is also absent which renders automatic the concrete physical movements serving individual objectives. That is, the purpose structure of the world, which characterizes everyday life under particular conditions, is turned upside down or falls apart."²

Mezei rightly continues by saying that this experience is not identical with that what happens in the *epoché*. It is not, since the distress contemplates natural rationality in its fracturedness, while in the *epoché* it is not fractured, but bracketed. However, many people *relate* to this fracturedness caused by extreme or inhuman conditions; they are transformed according to the new situation. This does not only mean that they adjust their vegetative needs according to the new conditions, but that they may even start new intentional activities which are not specific for the situation, that is, their meaning does not lie in the situation. If the person in question maintains and cares for this transformation, we may rightfully speak of a standpoint. This subject is mainly treated in literary works. Let us only think of the literature treating the subject of war or the

¹ A much quoted place in connection to phenomenology's religious – existential character: "It may even be revealed that the entire phenomenological standpoint and the *epoché* pertaining to it is meant first of all to induce such a complete personal transformation which is best likened to religious conversion, but which, apart from this, also conceals within itself the greatest existential transformation which awaits mankind as mankind." Husserl, *Az európai tudományok válsága*, p. 176.

² Mezei, *Zárójelbe tett Isten*, p. 114.

tragic experiences of concentration camps.¹ It is in this sense that Viktor Frankl, whose personal involvement with this subject is widely known, speaks about standpoint rationality. Standpoint rationality is such a possibility to attain rationality which is shown in extreme situations, when it is impossible to access experience and creative meaning. Life is capable to shape itself even despite extreme suffering, precisely by a standpoint value and meaning.² The standpoint values, writes Frankl, are not dependent of the situation, but are rather defined by the person.³ This is about a standpoint (*Einstellung*) which stands in opposition with an unchangeable situation (*Stellung*), and which is a result of a well perceivable transformation (*Umstellung*). The same thing can be said about this standpoint as about the *epoché*:

- It forms a sphere separate from the previous everyday personal standpoint;
- It may bring about a radically new *personal* standpoint.⁴

At a first glance the basic difference compared to the *epoché* is manifested on the level of the will. However, we must be careful here! The standpoint change reconstructed on the basis of the analysis of Frankl's works was motivated by a situation, yet not caused by it, therefore it is not a sociological or psychological necessity. This also lies upon the free decision of transformation, just like "the will of theory". In both cases the situation may be motivating, but the absolute situation gained this way cannot be traced back to previous evidences. Frankl naturally employs the standpoint value in psychotherapy, especially in extreme situations, such as incurable diseases, in order to assist the transformation and the formation of the new standpoint.

Finally, I will pin down the essential elements of the relationship of phenomenological and psychotherapeutic praxis:

¹ See, for example, the writings of Emmanuel Levinas, Ernst Jünger, Jan Patočka, Béla Hamvas, or Hans Jonas.

² Therefore, just like the spontaneous "space of will" (in Frankl's term) manifested by distress (but not triggered by it), I consider the "will of meaning" (Wille zum Sinn) more important from a philosophical point of view than the "will of theory" (Wille zur Theorie) and the "will for good" (Wille zum Guten) emphasized by Mezei. Especially if we parallel the "space of will" to possible psychological disorders, as Mezei does. Cf. Mezei, *Zárójelbe tett Isten*, p. 119.

³ "Die Einstellungswerte sind nicht von der Situation her bedingt, vielmehr nur noch von der Person bestimmt" Frankl, *Der leidende Mensch*, p. 223.

⁴ The new standpoint presupposes free will, and not some kind of psychological necessity.

1. Anthropological point: psychotherapy and phenomenology alike perceive the human being as “the ascetic of life”.
2. Ontological point: the ontological basis of the phenomenological *epoché* and standpoint-modulation is identical. In the language of Heidegger’s philosophy, this means that the application of the two standpoints reveals the same kind of care structure, but the concrete concern changes the praxis dependent on will and commitment.
3. Ethical point: the concrete concerns – suffering at Frankl, cognition and science at Husserl – may be differentiated, but it may also be articulated into a single personal standpoint, or it may be habitualized.¹
4. Such a radically new personal standpoint which simultaneously employs the *epoché* and the possibility of standpoint modulation, may be effective from psychotherapy in the direction of phenomenological *epoché*, as Husserl emphasized it; or the phenomenological *epoché* may assist in finding the phenomenological basis of assistance professions and in helping in concrete situations.

It derives from all this that the *epoché* and the praxis of standpoint modulation may refer to each other on the level of personal standpoint. As we have seen, the intention of the two fields connected to standpoint changes are different, but they may have an identical effect in a certain case: the standpoint modulation of psychotherapeutic praxis may reveal the “ascetic of the spirit”, who may even be regarded as an anonymous phenomenologist. And conversely: the “re-placement” to a personal standpoint of the phenomenologist who practices the *epoché*, that is, the asceticism of the spirit, evidently raises the question: is the praxis of the asceticism of life, which precedes the *epoché*, so evident indeed?

Finally, this problem is worth being presented on the basic instances of phenomenological methodology. From a phenomenological viewpoint Frankl’s ambition may best be paralleled to three instances of Heidegger’s phenomenological method (reduction – destruction –

¹ For the phenomenology of the personal standpoint, see *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Philosophie*. Zweites Buch: *Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, and for the ethical objectives of phenomenology, see the *Kaizo* studies, Edmund Husserl, *Gesammelte Werke* (Husserlianna) XXVII. *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, Den Haag/Dordrecht, 1950-.

construction).¹ In Heidegger's case the thematization of the question referring to the essence of being reclines on pre-ontological self-understanding, but from the point of view of logotherapy and existential analysis, in its ultimate philosophical expression, it still forms an emphatically reflexive kind of construction, in accordance with its task. Frankl's methodology with therapeutic ambitions, the key motif of which is "de-reflexion", follows quite an opposite direction. This draws attention, first of all, to the fact that the application of phenomenology in the field of assistance professions "switches" the original, self-evident phenomenological perspective. If we compare Frankl's therapeutic methodology to that of Heidegger's, then we may create the following three instances of a "phenomenological method" taken in the sense of existential analysis: *reduction – de-reflexion – a-reflexion*. Reduction, however, is not "the redirecting of a phenomenological glimpse from a definitive concept of the being to the understanding of the being's existence",² but the redirecting of the glimpse to the task-nature of the being's concrete individual existence. De-reflexion is not the "destruction of the inherited and necessarily applicable concepts to the sources from which these concepts derived",³ but the de-struction of those reflexive schemes, which, as "hyper-reflexions", hindered the recognition of, in Frankl's term, life's task-nature.⁴ Thus, in the case of logotherapy and existential analysis, the issue is not the conceptual analysis of the structures of being, but the analysis of a responsible existence, which is basically an analysis of the responsible nature of concrete existence. Therefore the Heideggerian instance of construction appears at Frankl in the achievement of the task and rationality. It is obvious that Husserl's "transcendental I" and Heidegger's "existing being" are abstractions for Frankl, which are given in a philosophical standpoint, but the meaning of which is carried exactly by the task-nature of life/existence, which is manifested on a phenomenological level in

¹ Heidegger, *A fenomenológia alapproblémái* (The Basic Problems of Phenomenology), Budapest: Osiris, 2001, pp. 32-36.

² Heidegger, *A fenomenológia alapproblémái*, p. 34.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Mihály Szívós parallels de-reflexion to the theory of destruction, depersonalization, and implicit knowledge, presupposing at the same time that Frankl knew Mihály Polányis's theory on personal and implicit knowledge. Mihály Szívós, *A személyes és a hallgatóságos tudás elmélete* (The theory of personal and implicit knowledge), Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 2005, p. 164.

man's responsible existence. In Frankl's case, therefore, the threefold unity of *situation – transformation – standpoint* (*Stellung – Umstellung – Einstellung*) is directed to exactly the opposite way than the analyses referring to the rational activity of intentional consciousness (Husserl), or the *Dasein* being of the questioner (Heidegger).

To conclude, it can be stated that several problems of the theory and practice of philosophical praxis outstandingly lend themselves for analysis and further contemplation within the tradition of phenomenology. The unavoidable issues of philosophical praxis are in fact the old and new problems of philosophical thinking itself. I think therefore, hoping that my paper has repeatedly signaled it, that philosophical praxis cannot renounce the will of theory or meaning either. It must unify these two aspirations in a theory and practice which is equally worthy of the academic, ethical and existential philosophical ambitions of philosophical tradition, and also stays in dialogue with various assistance professions. I trust that contemporary philosophy is not only mobilized by the "nostalgia of competence" (Marquard), but also by responsible thinking. And this does not only challenge the individual searching for meaning to be responsible for the all-time society, as most assistance professions do, but also challenges him to a kind of thinking cultivated for the sake of thinking, which is the meaning of theory and contemplation.

Translated by Emese G. Czintos