

Reasonable Hope: A Philosophical Counsellor's Approach to Counselling and Post-Traumatic Stress

by

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Abstract

This thesis is a philosophical perspective on contemporary Philosophical Counselling (PC), especially with respect to recovery from traumatic stress. It is argued that “reasonable hope” is an outcome of this kind of therapeutic process. In other words, “reasonable hope” characterizes philosophy’s tangible contributions to well-being and freedom for those who wish to pursue it.

Contemporary PC affirms, and in some instances advocates for, the value of reasoning and the existence of criteria for valid claims of “psychological truth”. Psychological truths are achieved through processes of philosophical distinction making as well as validity and coherence evaluations. In these epistemological contexts (i.e., those that pursue psychological truths with individual therapeutic subjects) the necessity for empathy becomes apparent.

Phenomenologically speaking, empathy is revealed as a tool, and cultivated skill, of therapeutic listening. Thus this brand of reasonable hope argues that contemporary PC affirms the possibility of enhanced personal agency by supporting subjects’ understandings of the social forces that shape them, as well as their experiences, emotions, motivations - and, importantly, their chosen values.

The distinct philosophical investigations of the first four chapters are brought together in the conclusion to inform this specific account of “reasonable hope”. It is reasonable, therefore, to hope to be freed (or at least significantly more freed) from limited meanings often associated with the instantiating forces of psychic and emotional injuries. It is reasonable to hope to understand some aspects of one’s self. It is reasonable to hope to be understood by others. And it

is reasonable to hope that discursive investigations in empathetic contexts can render less powerful the effects of psychic pains, worries, burdens, realities and traumas. Finally, it is reasonable to hope that reflexive turns extend, and enable, agency in subjects (i.e., individuals and, sometimes, groups or communities). Reason and evidence affirm that we can influence our own happiness by identifying and working with our emotions, motivations and values. In this way reason reveals both strong and weak reasonable hope. We learn too, that some hope lies at the limits of reason. Nonetheless, by reasoning we learn, and enact, not empty hopefulness but hopefulness grounded in sound investigations.

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Chapter One:

Philosophical Counselling's Retrieval of Ancient Therapeutic Practice

Examining both myself and others is really the very best thing that a man can do...life without this sort of examination is not worth living.

Socrates in Plato's *Apology* (Plato 1993)

Empty is that philosopher's arguments by which no human suffering is therapeutically treated. For just as there is no use in a medical art that does not cast out sicknesses of bodies, so too there is no use in philosophy, if it does not throw out suffering from the soul.

Epicurus (H. Usener Leipzig 1887)

1.0 Introduction: Philosophical Counsellors as Doctors of Soulful Self-Becoming

This chapter discusses how contemporary Philosophical Counselling (PC) *retrieves* ancient philosophical practices. In discussing what specifically is retrieved it will become evident that Ancient Philosophical methodologies pertaining to self-reflection and oriented towards personal agency do historically precede and are foundational to, contemporary psychological and psychotherapeutic healing modalities.

At the heart of this retrieval are Hellenistic philosophers' outlines of the relationships between self-reflection - specifically as it applies to the identification of external forces and internal motivations - and personal agency. After all, the strength of the Ancient insights were such that “[t]he Hellenistic philosophical schools in Greece and Rome — Epicureans, Skeptics, and Stoics — all conceived of philosophy as a way of addressing the most painful problems of human life” (Nussbaum 3). Grounded in this historical perspective – capturing a period of Greek and Roman history that extended from “late in the fourth century B.C.E. at Athens, [with] a continuous history of dissemination and elaboration until (at least) the early centuries C.E. at Rome” - we can more readily and specifically comprehend Philosophical thinking to be of significant relevance for contemporary psychotherapeutic practices and pursuits of human flourishing (Nussbaum 6).

This chapter's discussion is intended to situate - historically and practically - the therapeutic relevance of the practise of Philosophical Counselling. Throughout this thesis case studies will be referenced to support the claim that philosophical approaches are relevant to psychotherapy in general, and trauma therapy in particular. The philosophical approaches shaped here are insightful into particular features of subjective experiences and are, importantly, characteristically a non-normative investigation and learning about human emotions and experiences. In addition to advocating non-normative listening and subjective agency, five unique features of ancient retrieval are listed on page six (p. 6) of this chapter and these features are developed in the remainder of this chapter.

We will see that Philosophy provides essential theoretical support and expansive means for understanding and engaging the self-reflecting client. It does so in ways that support mutual (i.e., the client's and therapist's) understanding of the client's ideas and experiences of well-being. As points of practical emphasis and as a connector to contemporary psychotherapy, in this project I organize the primary therapeutic points around ideas that substantiate the claim that contemporary PC grounded in Ancient practices specifically supports robust approaches to therapeutic listening and empathy.¹

Listening is an often under-valued feature of the practise of self-reflective therapy. I bring attention to the theoretical aspects of therapeutic listening here, so as to better support practitioners in their practices. It is also the case that in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis I explain how listening and empathy are epistemological tools. In other words, they can offer useful means for the philosopher and the patient, and potentially mental health fields, to gain new knowledge and insights.

¹ The many reasons why I choose to describe these approaches as “robust” relate to the etymology of the word, as well as explanations and re-framings of Philosophy's relevance in everyday life; i.e., being “robust” is relevant to the theme of our retrieval of ancient philosophy's therapeutic practice. The contemporary word, “robust,” is derived from the Latin *robustus*.” Both *robus* (noun) and *robur* (verb) pertain to oak trees and strength. (Those recalling Aristotle's acorn will appreciate the continuity of the oak theme.) Four of the five derived contemporary definitions remain entirely relevant to this research project. According to the International Thomson Publishing Canadian Dictionary, to feel robust is 1) to feel “full of health and strength, vigorous.” (We will see that Philosophical practice, in its purity, is aiming for quality, reasoned investigative thinking that is sustainable and evolving with respect to one's own experience of the good life.); 2) to be “powerfully built, sturdy,” synonymous with health (On this point I would note that philosophical argumentation aims to be sturdy. Philosophical ideals aim for sturdy healing arguments in terms that reflect ideal standards that are “irrefutable” and “indubitable.”); 3) as “requiring or suited to strength or endurance” (In this project I frame Philosophical practice as a practice that aims to understand what we can know about human experience. Arguably, Philosophical practice has endured because its principal features are sound; i.e., the importance and art of investigative questioning, listening, useful and reasonable distinction-making are important so that non-normative standards for evaluating knowledge claims can provide access to broader, and perhaps “better,” domains of knowledge to explore the difficult aspects of human living — including traumas and emotions—without bias because these aspects are, in a way, equal to the good things and ideals of life as parts of life.); 4) “marked by richness, fullness, and being full-bodied (There is much room for investigation and development when we look at the roots of philosophical practice through the gaze of the Hellenistic soul doctors” but not as 5) “crude or boisterous.”

Another way to explain this research approach is to indicate that I have chosen to instigate future debates with other philosophical counsellors about what constitutes *phronimos*² in philosophical practice. As an introduction to what PC does, I have chosen to focus on the history and importance of therapeutic listening, empathy, and supporting the agencies³ of the client as being essential features of philosophy's ancient therapeutic practice.⁴

Prior to looking at some summations of the ancient approach, I need to make a few additional points about language choices. In the philosophical counselling process, the individual who co-engages with the philosopher is variously referred to as a "client," "patient," "analysand," or "student." Some aspects of these terms can be problematic; however, each term is useful and there are reasons why the terms remain relevant to this discussion. Let us very briefly look at the relevant issues pertaining to these terms.

Referring to the co-creator of a philosophical session as a "client" acknowledges that the co-creator's relationship with the philosopher is one mediated by an (often financial) exchange for services. The philosopher offers and supports philosophical thinking and applies this to a particular individual and circumstances. The client is then encouraged to determine whether these philosophical contributions are useful and, as per an agreement, there is compensation for the philosopher's contributions. In this way, "client" is simply an accurate characterization of an aspect of the practical relationship. Certainly there are instances in which this characterization is

² In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues that the person of practical wisdom — the *phronimos* — has become an expert at sound ethical deliberation and action. The *phronimos* is particularly skilled at addressing the particulars of a case, and their cognitive assessing capacities are not distorted by untrained emotion or biases. "The development of such practical intelligence (*phronesis*) and moral virtue (*arête ethiké*) comes about through a continuing interaction with actual life situations and the shape of our emotion and intellectual responses to them" (Fitterer 4).

³ Individual humans are agents of their action in the world. And, we are more agents the more we choose our behaviour. Here I refer to human agencies in the sense that there are many opportunities to be agents. I am referring to the various circumstances in which an agent might extend their agencies.

⁴ I need to make a small technical point that I feel can be made, given that I openly advocate investigating, striving to understand, and applying skills that are inherent in the academic discipline of Philosophy, and given that I advocate for an expanded application of its practices and ideas as relevant to contemporary concerns. The small technical point is that throughout this writing I will henceforth refer to the philosophical discipline with a lower case "p" (except at the beginning of a chapter) not to diminish its status as an academic discipline, but rather, to acknowledge that, as such, it is pervasive throughout this thesis.

laden with, or open to, various perspectives on capitalism, as well as monetary and market theories. The philosophers can entertain those perspectives as useful discussion points and can accommodate the recognition that the term “client” can be limiting, not always preferred or not entirely relevant; therefore, it is only sometimes, and in a limited way, a useful term.

The term “patient,” on the other hand, situates the co-creator of self-knowledge in relation to the philosopher as a kind of ill, not optimally healthy, or health-seeking individual who desires to create a health-supporting and/or health-enhancing relationship with a physician. For our purposes, “patient” reflects the fact that ancient philosophers were considered to be doctors of the soul (Nussbaum 1994). There is ample evidence of doctor-patient relationships in Hellenistic philosophical practice. In this context it is a term that characterizes mutual respect and a particularly effective learning relationship. However, contemporary issues allow us to engage the terms “physician,” “doctor,” and “patient” with greater explicit awareness of hierarchical power structures. Nowadays, given the influences of feminist and social theory, practitioners are increasingly sensitive to social power imbalances and acknowledge that the physician-patient relationship can be construed as problematically imbued. Similar to the term “client,” “patient” is a reference that is best used with awarenesses about the theoretical assumptions that stand behind the uses of the terms.

“Analysand” is a psychoanalytic term that, like the term “patient,” can also imply an overly diagnostic or prescriptive approach, reflecting a relationship laden with power imbalances and culturally normative impositions of health. An “analysand” is one who undergoes specific psychological treatment under the auspices or influence of a practitioner trained in psychoanalysis. However, here it is not used diagnostically, or in this restricted sense, so much as it is utilized to characterize intense, rigorous, mutual engagement in discussing a patient’s psychotherapeutic issues and concerns.

Ancient philosophers, cognizant of their role as teacher, also referred to those who benefited from their efforts as their “students.” In this sense, the ancient philosophers function as coaches and teachers of the psyche who guide their students in self-reflection. Without sufficient acknowledgement of the role of the student and the specific necessity of the student’s engagement in learning exchanges, the “teacher” term can also, at first glance, be limited by hierarchical thinking. Consequently, in this discussion of the philosopher’s relationship with the

people to whom they offer services, the terms identified here will be used in ways that are context appropriate and power sensitive.

In keeping with some of the ancient practices and contemporary themes, I wish to bring attention to the idea that these subject-designating terms are intended to be indicative of co-creative dynamics. This approach stands in contrast to therapeutic relationships that are from the outset limited by power imbalances. Traditionally and ideally, the philosopher brings those skills the client is able to find relevant to discussions about their experiences, thus supporting the clients engagement in understanding, and perhaps, finding meaning in their experiences.

Having acknowledged that none of the terms is unproblematic, it is not useful to defend the terms. Rather, I wish to promote a shift in focus, a kind of reframing; the following pages emphasize the characteristics of philosophical and therapeutic relationships such that principles of therapeutic efficacy are emphasized. I will use the terms in ways that reflect the specific and multi-dimensional nature of the philosopher's relationship with their intended benefactors; clients, patients, analysands and students. Let us return now to the central points of this chapter.

Contemporary PC, even though it is nothing new, requires some introduction. Thus far we know that it is intended to be therapeutically oriented investigations of subjective experiences. Perhaps our best entrée to the practicalities of the practice is to look at how *contemporary manifestations of philosophical counselling retrieve ancient philosophical practices*. This retrieval is here characterized by the following five points: 1) an understanding-oriented listener, i.e., an empathetic listener, 2) the use of self-reflection to evaluate values and desires in relation to a personal account of happiness, 3) the use of discussion as particularly suited to psyche investigative processes, 4) valuing emotions as a means to understanding human experiences and 5) the relationship between self-reflection and personal agency. I will elaborate each of these points in this chapter. However, I will not be dealing with each point in sequential detail in the remainder of this chapter. Rather, the evidence for these points is, I think, best presented amidst other key points of philo-therapeutic practise that are non-normatively agency enhancing.

Nonetheless, it remains useful to being our discussion noting that the first point of retrieval pertains to **an understanding-oriented listener**. In the second and third chapters of this thesis we provide the opportunity to appreciate how the understanding-oriented listener is, in fact, an **empathetic listener**. This entails that the philosopher cultivates and creates with the client a safe

enough environment in which there is a genuine valuing of self-reflection and the exploration of emotions. Since the exploration of emotions is often a point of human vulnerability, the emotional safety of the client is relevant – and, arguably, crucial in an active listening context. One reason for providing a safe place in which the student can share their reflections on their motivations, desires and cognitive habits, is that safe places facilitate self-reflective insight and critical yet kind evaluations. The student is therefore less likely to miss insights and truths that would not be available in another context. Counselling is a particular approach to aiming to see one's self with clarity and truth because to reflect on one's self with another is to be open to having one's habits of self-deception exposed for consideration. Insightful and effective self-reflection, as we will see is, in practice, an art and a science.

Even though self-reflection is a fairly accessible concept, what is entailed and revealed in this knowledge acquisition process is not simplistic, nor is it knowledge that is simply acquired. Rather, because self-reflection *cultivates* knowledge about one's self, the student has to engage honestly, with at least some relative vulnerability and humility, and with an orientation – shared by both participants - towards discerning the best possible truths of the matter at hand. Certainly, discerning the best possible truths about one's self can be an unsettling and potentially rewarding process. An effective empathetic listener is sensitive and aware of the relevance of these factors in the self-exploration processes. This point is amply evident in the Hellenistic passages we will discuss here.

The second point of retrieval is a reasonable counter-balance to the first point on many levels. It pertains to **the valuing of subject specific desires and values, which taken together orient the student towards their ideals of happiness and the good life**. In other words, a good portion of PC practise is self-reflection that is oriented towards the discernment and identification of the values and desires that relate to a particular subject's version of better living.

The third point pertains to **the use of language and discussion as tools suited to psyche investigative processes**. We will see significant evidence of this in Hellenistic philosophy. Moreover, the use of precise and context-relevant language (as well as other subject-relevant modes of creating self-expression, meaning or understanding) importantly reflects the patient's understanding of their "illnesses" and possible remedies. The ancients also recognized that effective communication influences the tonic's effectiveness. Consequently, it can be indicated

that the insightful use of communication skills is crucial to philosophical practice. As such, these communication skills aim to be accurate, investigative, as well as epistemologically and psychologically challenging and supportive. It is also worth noting that philosophy's cures are affected by how well the practitioner communicates (philosophically and psychologically), as well as *what* they choose to communicate about or focus on, with the patient.

The fourth point pertains to Martha Nussbaum's argument reminding contemporary philosophers of their debt to the Ancients: in effective communication processes there evolves a need and a requirement to **value the investigation of human emotions as a means to understanding human experience**. A good use of philosophy's tools in the psychotherapeutic context supports various understandings of emotions. As will be seen with specificity in the third chapter of this thesis, this is not a point unrelated to discerning values, motivations, and desires. The ancient perspective affirms a relationship between deep, evolving communications about one's experiences and feelings, and the discernments and valuing of emotions as (kinds of) knowledge⁵. The more there is a valuing of emotions — an aim to be investigative and not judge or regulate emotions — the more can be learned. In Chapter Three it will become more evident how empathetic listening, which involves the aiming to understand the motivations of values and desires, creates unique and valuable knowledge claims about human experiences.

The fifth point, also significant in terms of my larger project, pertains to **endorsing, asserting, and increasing one's experience of personal agency as a valued result of the self-reflective process**. Pragmatically speaking, this point is worth attending to as a focal point of practice because the clinical evidence appears to support the idea that **there is a relationship between personal agency and eudaimonia**. For me the philosophical discoveries of the relationships between agency and self-reflection are truly provocative. Chapters Four and Five specifically look at this relationship in contemporary philosophical contexts.

Our working definition of the term eudaimonia refers to the personal happiness that evolves out of self-reflection. In this context *eudaimonia* is evident when there is coherence between

⁵ To reference *kinds* of knowledge is a more contemporary evolution in philosophy. Wittgenstein, Foucault and Ian Hacking are examples of theorists who distinguish between kinds of knowledge. Discussing kinds of knowledge makes up much of our theoretical foundations in Chapter Two.

knowing one's values, and living those values. (On a clinical note, I have observed that when the psychological maturity of this kind of self-evaluation is achieved, it can be sustained by the individual often independent of whether material circumstances are supportive or not.) We cannot evaluate the relationship between personal agency and *eudaimonia* without a good foundational understanding of some key components of Hellenist philosophy.

Eudaimonia is a central theme of Hellenist and Aristotelian philosophy. It is also a philosophical theme that remains of utmost relevance to us today (Kingwell, 1998). *Eudaimonia* roughly translates as human happiness. There are, however, many facets to its definition and meaning, even for Aristotle scholars. Martha Nussbaum (1986) translates it in a precise way that is in keeping with its Greek use, namely as “the art of human flourishing” (15). Michele Foucault references *eudaimonia* in much the same way, as well as the historical term, *techné biou*, which refers to the art of the good life (Foucault 1978; Baynes.1989). Certainly the claim that humans aim to live good lives is given due consideration here and various perspectives of the claim are incorporated into this approach to PC; however, there is neither the time nor space to develop the particulars of relevant debates. Yet, we can proceed with the summation that inherent to self investigative processes described here is that philosophers encourage their patients to consider for themselves whether the good life is also to be a virtuous one.⁶ Grounded in, and responsive to Aristotle, the Hellenists would consider the good life to also be one of balance and wisdom (Cooper 2009). There are numerous perspectives one could take on these points. Regardless, whether aiming to live better lives - this includes more contented, even happy lives - or aiming to find resolution to heartache and suffering through (greater) understanding, these were typically the concerns and realities that engaged the ancient philosophers, and they remain the concerns that fill the waiting rooms of contemporary philosophical practitioners and psychotherapists today.

Prior to discussing the specifics of the retrieval and to better contextualize our discussion, let us take a moment to characterize, in a different but again preliminary way, how we might think about contemporary PC: it is, in short, the discipline of philosophy applied to the contents of a psychotherapy session. In this context, psychotherapy is defined as the practice of therapeutic

⁶ This is especially true of virtue ethicists and Aristotelians.

listening.⁷ We can reference Edith Stein to support a definition of therapeutic listening such that in instances of therapeutic listening philosophers and psychotherapists are listening both for the causal explanations of the individual's identities, as well as the individual's motivations and values. Most psychotherapists know to listen for emotions as keys to personal motivations. In addition to this, in a PC session, subsequent to the emotion-based psychotherapeutic work being shared and investigated, the practitioner and client can then appropriately apply philosophical thinking to the contents to what is unearthed in the psychotherapeutic process. The client and the practitioner can evaluate the client's beliefs about themselves and their worlds, and can discuss how to variously influence the patient's behaviour by challenging their beliefs and thinking processes. In these ways a therapy session is enhanced, supported, and indeed, edified⁸ by philosophy.

In Thomas Szasz's 1998 well-known article "The Healing Word: Its Past, Present and Future" we find additional support for this chapter's argument that contemporary P.C. *retrieves* Ancient philosophical practice. Szasz traces the history of non-coercive talk therapy from Socrates to contemporary psychoanalysis as being soul curative. His aim is to make distinctions between, and dispel confusion about psychiatric and contemporary medical treatments versus talk therapy. In short, the kind of talk therapy and soul cures that Szasz, as well as other historical practical philosophers, have been interested in are non-coercive and client empowering kinds. This is because practitioners of talk therapy aim to empower the patient and provide tools for ongoing self-curing and introspection. In this paradigm the individual and their self-expression is what is

⁷ To adequately define psychotherapy would be significantly beyond the scope of this discussion. However, a functional working definition of psychotherapy is: a practice of attentively and empathetically relating to a client's emotions and perspectives and investigating with the client how they want to change or influence their emotions and/or behaviours.

⁸ This is a carefully chosen descriptive term because "edifices" are both foundational and supportive. In the domain of building, an edifice provides a frame or a construct that will be the structural shell for the building yet to come. In the 16th century, the term edification came to mean achieving success. The term came to have particular religious connotations in that those who were edified were considered to be spiritually supported, but contemporary applications extend beyond religion. Nowadays, "to edify" is to inspire enlightenment through information and instruction. (<http://etext.virginia.edu> June 2, 2009.) I will show how ancient philosophical practices of soul doctoring can be seen to edify those who practice contemporary PC and, more generally, those who engage psychotherapeutic practices.

valued. The point of contrast to contemporary medication therapy is that in medicine based therapy the cures are often seen to lie with the doctor and/or the prescriptive aspect of medications and treatments, and not necessarily with the patient. Whereas in the philosophical paradigm the curative power is taught and guided by the practitioner, but the healing lies significantly with the client's various engagements with his or her own life and living.

Szasz legitimizes the historical connection and continuity between philosophy and psychoanalysis. The tool that provides continuity to that connection is the emphasis placed on language. Szasz cites Steiner on this point:

Psychoanalysis is, *in toto*, a language art, a language praxis. There can be neither mute patients nor deaf analysts. Psychoanalysis is as immediate to word and syntax as mining is to the earth (Steiner in Szasz, 107).

This citation adds credence to point three of our above claims about retrieval. Of equal importance in the Szasz article is the emphasis placed on the non-coercive, agency-oriented aspects of the tradition of talk therapy that originates in philosophical practice, all of which pertains to points 2–5 noted above (p. 6).

An additional point, to further elucidate what happens in a PC session, is one that notes that on occasion philosophical thinking is applied to a focal idea in a therapeutic session. For example, when a situation gives rise to the need to analyze particular emotional experiences (e.g., jealousy or love), the work of Seneca, Lucretius, Plato, or Aristotle might be cited to provide conversation points for the client as well as additional schemas and vocabulary for thinking about their feelings.⁹ It is my hope that at this point in the discussion the reader is garnering a general sense of what a PC session might be like.

⁹ At other times the practitioner's thinking and listening might be informed by philosophical thinking but those considerations may not be relevant to, or needed by, the client in that session, so accordingly not shared with the client. Explanations of specific philosophical engagements that inform listening and mutual understanding are typically available to the client and are always patient-specific. However, it is not necessary to spend time in a session on such discussions.

While it is true that much of this larger project looks at facets of the relationship between philosophy and psychotherapy (indeed claims about this relationship can be inferred here, including the claim that philosophy is a historical and intellectual precursor to psychotherapy and psychoanalysis), I do not debate the features of this relationship. Debates on the similarities, specializations, and theoretical differences between these disciplines will have to be put aside for now. However, those in the therapeutic fields will note that I am offering consistent and strong arguments for much of philosophy's therapeutic distinction lying in its inherently non-normative, emotionally investigative, reasoned and agency enhancing approach to understanding human experiences.

As Szasz notes, philosophical practice is much more foundational to psychotherapeutic process than is generally and historically acknowledged. It wasn't until the late 1880s that a definite split developed between the fields of psychology and philosophy; Breuer, Freud, and James were among the definitive historical and ideological markers of this split. They began applying philosophical theory to in the field investigative work on the human psyche. As can be seen in the research of each of these practitioners, the "split" between the disciplines was not fixed. That a split in the disciplines developed is an evolution and a healthy and right functioning of specialization, and an appropriate development in field-specific knowledge.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the point is that philosophy and human psychology have never been too far apart. It is interesting that nowadays when convergences in the disciplines occur it is considered a multidisciplinary approach. Appropriately, in a contemporary context, it can be said that this investigation is also a kind of multidisciplinary approach. In this historical trajectory we can say that specializations in fields of knowledge (philosophy, psychoanalysis, psychology and psychotherapy) converge to generate additional insights, debates, and potential results in the shared field of human happiness and development rooted in ancient philosophy.

Discussion about knowledge generation is another way in which contemporary PC honours, resuscitates and retrieves ancient philosophical practices and theories. Accordingly, a

¹⁰ Field-specific knowledge is defined and discussed in Chapter Two. Field-specific knowledge pertains to distinct domains of knowledge; for example, psychology and psychoanalysis are distinct domains with each characterized by its own investigation of and approach to knowledge acquisition.

contemporary investigative pursuit inspired by love of wisdom and a desire to understand the human condition is not a stale process of regurgitation. Rather, in keeping with its roots, PC is a practical, thoughtful, *living engagement with living*.¹¹ Philosophy's tools, while in some ways fixed, also evolve and develop as knowledge evolves and develops. Recognizing this particular point also goes a long way to further substantiate contemporary PC as a retrieval of ancient practices.

Thus, this *living* nature of philosophical practice is why discussing its methods and practices are opportunities for refinement.¹² Clinical engagements provide the opportunity to affirm that philosophy itself has particular relevance to living, and is not only an abstract endeavour. The philosophical practices studied here happen in life and are responsive to life. That philosophical counsellors often find themselves facing and striving to understand the traumas and tragedies that are inherent to living is simply and factually a result of philosophy's engagement with living. It is not because philosophical counsellors are particularly dark, nihilistic or colicky in disposition that particular challenging issues emerge in philosophical investigations. Rather, it is the aim to understand what can be considered inherent to human living that informs why this philosophical practice is able to address life's traumas in relatively non-normative, investigative, and empathetic ways.

Traumas and tragedies are not things that philosophical investigators give more or less attention to, nor do we give them only positive or curative attention. However, these challenges are part of life and deserve equal and relatively unbiased¹³ investigation. It is in pursuing eudaimonia that we have to confront the effects of traumas, tragedies and injustices that can enhance, as well as block such pursuits.

These orienting statements do not in any way mitigate the importance of a practitioner's commitment to minimizing human pain and suffering wherever possible, and to do no harm. The traditional philosophical doctor's alignment with Hippocratic claims affirms the practices'

¹¹ A living engagement with living indicates that interpretations of living are not stale or stagnant, but vital and dynamic engagements.

¹² Surely, it is a normative and/or ethical position to indicate that what lives well refines itself as it ages. It is, nonetheless, a pragmatic truism.

¹³ "Relative un-bias," a theme here in Chapter One, is a technical concept discussed throughout this thesis as "non-normative understanding."

engagement with human life. Desires, pleasantries, and tragedies all mandate philosophical consideration because they are all part of human living. Thus, it can be said that one way in which philosophical practice is non-normative is that it does not start off by judging some parts of life more worthy of attention or investigation than others; murderous desires, traumas, agonies, sex, disappointment, hatred, and recoveries are as important to these kinds of philosophical inquiries as are love, spiritual experiences, desires, and ideas of greater goods. The distinct and contrasting facets of living all equally merit philosophical investigation. In other words, to identify and assess what we can know about the human condition and human experiences — and to do so philosophically — requires that we name, discuss, and investigate all aspects of life, and from the outset we need to acknowledge and aim to minimize knowledge-mitigating biases.

“Relative un-bias,” a theme in this chapter, is also a theme of the larger work. To this end, the philosophically informed bias throughout this project aims for non-normative understanding, or at least not overly normative, understanding. Suffice it to say for now, the terms “relative un-bias” and aiming for “non-normative understandings” are technical concepts that will be developed throughout this chapter, as well as throughout the thesis project. Granted too, the aim of non-bias is a kind of bias but not the kind that will stifle knowledge quests.

I think philosophy’s potential to be relevant and attentive to the human condition can be seen in its support of the healthy integration of human realities and horrors that, not having been adequately integrated, manifest as PTS symptoms.¹⁴ In the final chapter I discuss PTS symptoms and philosophy’s usefulness in more detail. The phrase “not yet adequately integrated,” references both the activities of individual and society at large. In facilitating conversations

¹⁴ Certainly this phrasing is not intended to indicate that trauma survivors are responsible for their PTS symptoms due to a lack of integration. Rather, the trauma survivor is typically dealing with something excessively horrific and beyond the norm for them. Recovery supports the healthier integration of past horrific experiences. But more to the point, this phrase indicates that it is difficult to integrate horrors especially when one’s social group or even individual friends and family members are not willing to talk, or do not know how to talk, about such experiences. In our society because of social bias, emotions and trauma experiences are not discussed in proportion to the reality of their occurrence. In some ways the perpetuating of this silencing causes traumas to be exacerbated. Superficial engagements with traumas, including therapeutic ones, can make recovery challenging or impossible.

pertaining to human tragedies and traumas, philosophy helps human consciousness integrate its own realities. This affirms the importance of philosophically relevant existential claims.¹⁵ It also affirms a foundational feature of contemporary psychotherapeutic practice known as “narrative therapy,” where the client tells their story to make sense of their world. In these ways, for example, contemporary philosophical practice has the potential to help humans cope with life challenges and troubling realities, and to thrive.

1.1 The Non-Normative Approach

It is no small point to claim that, as philosophers and inquirers, we aim to understand the human condition with as little insight-limiting bias as possible. This is because in the philosophical quest for understanding - practically understood as striving for “best” understanding - philosophers use logic, reason, and experiences to orient themselves to useful insights. As I will elaborate, attentiveness to philosophy’s aim to mitigate the knowledge-limiting effects of bias is an important tool for the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. Prior to the postmodern era this was known as aiming to be “objective.” Objectivity and subjectivity, as we will see throughout this thesis, are no longer straightforward and uncomplicated concepts. We have to account for the dialectics of these concepts with respect to contemporary knowledge claims. Nonetheless, for now we can note that more and less biased positions are respectively and technically called either “normative” or “non-normative” distinctions. Thus, positions that are culturally biased are called “normative.” These are contrasted with “non-normative” claims that are less oriented towards conditioning individuals to be a part of social regulations, standards and biases. With respect to the individual, a non-normative approach tends to be less normalizing, or less oriented towards supporting and endorsing community conformity.

While it is true that societal norms can reflect what is good, this is not always the case. By definition, societal norms reflect what is average, or the mean, of what a society determines ought to be common and/or standard for evaluation. Much of philosophy’s intellectual history is

¹⁵ With due respect to the fields of existential philosophy and psychology, for now I mean to refer to claims about existence and those claims that pertain to coming to terms with what are the essential features of living.

reflected in these statements.¹⁶ Also already evident are some of the dualisms (dialectical tensions) and/or paradoxes that philosophers love swimming in — namely, the aim to minimize the negative effects of some norms and biases, and to advocate for other biases.

One can obviously argue for good biases. If one wants empirical truth, for example, it is useful to be biased in favour of objectivity. If one wants a virtuous society, it is useful to bias one's self towards, or to be motivated by, a social virtue like compassion. Nussbaum (1994) points out, when making a separate but related argument about a Platonic versus a Hellenistic perspective on health, that we come to know in the Hellenistic paradigm what's good for us *by investigating life*. An ideal of health is not applied to life without considerations about life experiences because our understandings about health come from living. “Good isn't a Platonic ideal that exists independent of us. Goodness and progress and development *are human experiences and concepts*” (Nussbaum xvi). If ideals pertaining to goodness are not inherent in us but evolve out of our experiences of life, then we have to admit that it is likely that ethical theories also reflect human wishes and desires. As such, they are not mind-independently real; rather, ideas of goodness and ethics reflect inherent human biases. Consequently, we have to ask how we can mitigate and determine the effects of negative biases and promote the effects of good biases while aiming for best insights.

The Hellenist philosophers, as well as the other philosophers we discuss — Isaiah Berlin, Judith Butler, Edith Stein, Donna Orange, and Edwin Hersch — all acknowledge the biases in their work and perspectives; all identify the context-dependent and subjectively-useful biases with which they work. This is similar to the therapeutic PC context in which the philosophical practitioner and student work together to mitigate oppressive and perspective-limiting effects of standardizing biases. It will also be demonstrated that empathetic listening can mitigate the negative epistemological effects of biases. As we will see particularly in the third chapter, this means that there has to be a willingness to identify and understand the desires and motivations behind emotions. It will be evident how aiming to understand emotions and desires supports the participants to be aware of identifying their own, as well as others', biases. The ideal of

¹⁶ For now I will limit the discussion by noting that we will discuss in more detail how societies, cultures, and institutions normalize when discussing Berlin, Butler, and feminist epistemological approaches in Chapter Four.

identifying and naming biases — especially ethical biases — can enable us to more honestly (i.e., consciously, from a place of self-reflection) name their influence in our work, perceptions, experiences and day-to-day living.

This approach stands in opposition to individuals calling particular values “their own,” regardless of whether such beliefs are grounded in a lack of self-reflection. Without self-reflection many everyday behaviours can be shown to mimic habit or convention, which is contrary to philosophy’s history of fighting against various consciousness-reducing, mind-numbing, and dissociative living conventions.

It is worth noting that disassociation, which can be defined as an individual not being present to their own experiences, and/or what motivates their own perceptions and experiences, is a diagnostic concern for psychotherapists. This is in part because dissociative living (i.e., non-reflective living) runs counter to authentic engagements and relationships. Philosophical history demonstrates its own convention of bringing individuals into awarenesses of what they are thinking, as well as potential awareness of why an individual subject is thinking a particular thought or is endorsing particular values.

The importance of this non-normative approach lies not in a simple rebuking of convention. Its importance, rather, lies in enabling the analysand to evaluate their core beliefs and motivations. The importance of this approach is that it supports the analysand in their determination of which beliefs are habits of convention (and, therefore, at least some of the times normalizing), and which beliefs are chosen because they reflect the analysand’s self-selected core values. Here it is worth introducing a clinical reference as an example of a philosophical counsellor’s approach to post traumatic stress (PTS).

Evaluating one’s beliefs can be particularly important for individuals who have suffered and survived childhood abuse (including sexual abuse or age-inappropriate sexual exposure) because the characteristic beliefs they may have about themselves, others, and the world are often not healthy — by virtually any definition of health. How these survivors see themselves, for example, often reflects the real ways in which their experiences have set them apart. Their emotional engagements with the world may be grounded in shame, a sense of being bad, and feeling unworthy of happiness or a good life. Their beliefs about themselves are all too often grounded in beliefs that are harmful, self-sabotaging, and sometimes self-injurious. A generally

investigative, non-normative, philosophical approach can assist these clients to look empathetically at their beliefs, emotions, and behaviour. Noting that a non-normative approach would be not so much for purposes of regulating complicity with a particular definition of goodness or health, but rather, to assist patients in having enough personal data that they can discern the origins of their self-limiting beliefs. In these self-reflective processes they could also determine which values and beliefs they wish to retain and which they wish to work towards eliminating as kinds of primary point of reference.¹⁷ During philosophical discussions patients are provided the opportunity to assess which of their beliefs are configured in ways that reflect their self-endorsed unique personalities and experiences. This way of thinking comes to reveal to the patient that at some point it matters which beliefs they wish to support and maintain, and which beliefs they want to eliminate from their points of (sometimes primary) interpretive reference.¹⁸

At this point let us acknowledge the tool of distinction making is a means to engage philosophical thinking and analysis. To this point we have differentiated between biased and non-biased knowledge, normative and non-normative claims, as well as beliefs based on self-reflection and those not based on self-reflection. Such distinctions allow us to make subjective and reasonable refinements that modify yet support what is key in a particular interpretive position. Thus influencing how a subject sees their world. This crucial point for understanding philosophical practice — i.e., the philosophical distinctions that are psychotherapeutically relevant — will be elaborated upon in half of Chapter Two where I discuss and evaluate Edwin Hersch's (2003) idea of levels of theoretical distinction making.

Those who practice philosophy are likely to concur that distinction making and refinements in thinking are the bases of philosophical discussions. Throughout this thesis the kinds of philosophical discussions that I pursue are epistemological and therefore pertain to matters relating to knowledge generation and knowledge acquisition.

¹⁷ There is a difference between wishing to have certain beliefs and choosing certain beliefs. Generally choosing indicates a more thoughtful process, whereas wishing is a less complex act. Wishing is a good enough verb in this context, in the absence of psychological theory.

¹⁸ This point has been with thanks from remarks generated in conversation with L. Lange (06/28/2010).

It could be argued that a feature of philosophy is that with the arguments and refinements that come from distinction making, it allows itself to grow and expand, so its knowledge claims are inherently not dogmatic. Rather, as previously indicated, philosophy is dynamic and living. As such, philosophy aims to make theories based on the particulars of human experiences. To authentically revive and retrieve these ancient philosophical practices of thoughtful engagement with living is both to practice its techniques and arguments, and also to be willing to add our own data and insights. For contemporary philosophical practitioners, enacting ancient methodologies *and* adding new perspectives or data are acts consistent with the tradition. Consider, in reflecting on Aristotle's words below, that this is how philosophy saw its relevance into the future. This is some of what inspires me to affirm a foundation for the application of philosophy, in a clinical way, to the persistent tragedies of life.

In *Nicomachean Ethics* (EN), Aristotle writes that philosophy is a science and, as such, it is open to anyone to supply what is lacking.

- So much of our outline sketch for the good life. It would seem to be open to anyone to take things further and to articulate the good parts of the sketch; and time is a good discoverer and ally in these things. That is how progress takes place in the sciences [technai] too: it is open to anyone to supply what is lacking. (EN 1098a22-26)

Philosophers, as seekers of wisdom, are historically and foundationally inspired to allow that colleagues, associates, students, and clients will assist the practice of philosophy to grow and develop further in its relevance to the good life. Indeed, working with trauma survivors has inspired me to give voice again — while endorsing refrains from the Hellenists — philosophy is undoubtedly relevant to living. Often its thinking tools and techniques can be edifying in terms of supporting individuals through trauma recovery and in terms of laying foundations for future personal growth. Thus, philosophy continues to contribute to what is lacking. What is lacking, in my clinical opinion, is the social legitimacy given to the insights and testimonies of trauma survivors.

Ancient philosophers intended for philosophical practice to be, and to be seen as, a healing medical practice that met the criteria of science and reason because its pragmatic benefits were

verifiable. Their vision of philosophy was more a holistic and personal sense of philosophy's potential for social contributions than an abstract and austere practice limited only to a class of relative elites.¹⁹ While it is true that those who practice philosophy in the academy progress and refine "science" and the disciplines with their teachings, lectures, writing and research, I join the refrain of Martha Nussbaum (1994) who offers that when we conceive of philosophy as a medicine, its practical empathic relevance and engagement with the human condition and the vicissitudes of daily living are undeniable.

As a practitioner, I fantasize that everyone who practices and loves philosophy knows of its relevance to everyday life. However, it could easily be argued that its accessibility and personal relevance to every person has been significantly missing and lacking for centuries — until recently. Until the accepted, re-emergent, and formalized (or institutionalized), dawn of philosophical counselling in 1982,²⁰ contemporary philosophy was deficient as a living practice, and not accessible to every person. It was lacking, and perhaps even failed to demonstrate its ongoing relevance to everyday living.

Certainly it is worth debating philosophy's history of relevance to everyday life and the various ways it can effectively influence contemporary living. However, these points will now have to be turned aside so as to substantiate my claims about ancient philosophy's vision of its own practice.

¹⁹ A significant reason why Nussbaum feels compelled to bring her reader back to the Hellenists is because theirs was a philosophy concerned with everyday life that aimed to be accessible to everyone. While obviously influenced and grounded in Plato and Aristotle, the Hellenists exceeded their predecessors in inclusive ways. The Hellenists wanted philosophy to be relevant to how their students improved their own quality of life. Aristotle in particular, however, limited the accessibility of philosophy to the educated elite.

²⁰ The contemporary and international PC movement is often traced back to Gerd Achenbach who founded the German Society for Philosophical Practice and Counselling in 1982, and published his first books on the subject in 1984 and 1985. PC soon spread over the European continent, establishing deep roots in the Netherlands.

In Israel, PC began in 1989 with the establishment of Center Sophon, directed by Shlomit Schuster. The activities of this include a non-profit first-aid philosophy telephone line for existential problems and ethical dilemmas. In the United States, Lou Marinoff established an international certifying organization, the American Philosopher Practitioners Association (APPA) in 1999.

1.2 Ancient Practices

Nussbaum (1994) says that in the ancient Hellenistic philosophical schools “from Homer on we encounter, frequently and prominently, the idea that *logos* is to illnesses of the soul as medical treatment is to illness of the body” (49). Throughout the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE, Greek thinkers and writers found themselves thinking more frequently and with greater ease about the idea that ethical and political arguments were similar to medicine. They looked to these arguments for “healing when confronted with seemingly intractable psychological afflictions” (52).

These ancients saw philosophy as engaging socially relevant healing and edifying psychosocial practices that achieved results by a method that was, at least in part, grounded in people talking things out. When patients talked things out they were assisted in discerning and evaluating their own core beliefs, their actions in the world, and their values; students, by talking things out, would come to eventually experience and characterize themselves as becoming psychologically better; i.e. experiencing (some, or more) *eudaimonia*. Along with the ideal and idea of authentic human happiness, there also exists the idea of practical happiness coming from a personal process of self-investigation.

Like the other Hellenists, the Stoics saw philosophy as akin to doctoring. Cicero, for example, in his *Tusculan Disputations*, writes:

There is I assure you, a medical art for the soul. It is philosophy, whose aid need not be sought, as in bodily diseases, from outside our selves. We must endeavour with all our resources and all our strength to become capable of doctoring ourselves (Cicero in Nussbaum 316).

In this passage Cicero affirms philosophy’s unique capacity as a medical-like aid for the soul, or psyche. Notably, we see that philosophy’s medicine can be a cure that is cultivated “in” the patient. This lays the basis for the aim of philosophy’s cure to be, ideally, not one of dependence on the practitioner, but instead to be dependent on the eventual autonomy and self-doctoring of the patient.

Another Stoic philosopher, Chrysippus, notes that the study of philosophy as medicine affirms the practical and daily life relevance of philosophy:

It is not true that there exists an art [techné] that we call medicine, concerned with diseased body, but no corresponding art concerned with the diseased soul. Nor is it true that the latter is inferior to the former, in its theoretical grasp and therapeutic treatment of individual cases (316).

In summarizing the ninth chapter of her book, Nussbaum writes that it is clear that the Stoics, like the other two Hellenistic schools (the Epicureans and the Skeptics) wish to claim “that a philosophical art of soul-healing, correctly developed and duly applied, is both necessary and sufficient for attaining the highest ends of human life” (327). Here too we obtain affirmation that attending to both human suffering and flourishing are the focuses of philosophical medicine.

Philosophy, clearly rooted in healing and medical paradigms, significantly affects how we think about philosophical practice. Acknowledging this medical component again affirms its value to life and its living engagement with living. In this tradition, philosophy is not meant to be without vital relevance to achieving *eudaimonia*. Having already noted Chrysippus’ strong convictions about philosophy’s role in soul doctoring, this particular passage establishes the ancient conventional merits of philosophy’s engagements:

Be convinced at least of this, unless the soul is cured, which cannot be done without philosophy, there will be no end to our afflictions (Chrysippus in Nussbaum 317).

Here we can see that the tonic of philosophical practice is so valued by this Stoic that he goes so far as to say that it is *necessary* for soul/psyche curing. Knowing the full logical implications of his aims, he puts forth the above proposition as uncontestable. In other words, philosophical practice is *necessary* for the healing of psychological afflictions, and to make such a bold statement philosophy is likely widely acknowledged as a healing practice. The context of Chrysippus’ proposition is akin to a possible modern day newspaper headline, or a “tweet”: ‘Philosophy heals soul afflictions. It is so good, that it is the only true cure for psychic discontent and unhappiness in life.’ Perhaps this was a reasonable historical claim, but can this proposition

also be true in contemporary times? Can philosophy really remain in the realm of being necessary for soul curing? Is psyche curing what is needed? And can philosophy help?

Obviously I think a contemporary argument ought to be made in favour of the claim that philosophy remains essential for supporting individuals in their engagements with their lives, and enables them to find *eudaimonia*. This is why I argue this kind of soul doctoring has contemporary relevance. And this is why it is so important to explain in the chapters following how philosophical thinking can be applied to understanding human lives.

To return then, to the history of philosophy's medical-like practice, such a science could not proceed with only scant engagements in the vicissitudes of human living. To summarize the influence of these philosophical doctors, we can say that there is evidence in favour of the idea that to be effective and withstand the test of time, philosophical practice has to be entirely attentive to and engaged with everyday living. Aiming to inspire and advocate for the highest ends of human life, and addressing human suffering are not only consistent themes for Nussbaum in affirming philosophy's relevance to and potential edification of human life, but they are also values that are best understood in the context of authentic, focused, investigative, and respectful engagements with living. Here is where she finds explicit kinship with the ancients. Like them, Nussbaum encourages an approach to philosophy that supports thoughtful reflection on one's actions, and the values that motivate actions. Notably, motivation is often discerned by investigating the emotions that are behind the values expressed. Investigating the relationships between emotion, motivation, and activity is a key contribution of philosophy's therapeutic practice. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

Nussbaum, like philosophical counsellors, encourages reflection on the biases and emotions that affect one's attitude and approach to life experiences. Choosing to modify one's approach to life affects how one experiences happiness, contentment, and self-fulfillment. The following description is an Aristotelian and Nussbaum-like approach based on the kind of self-reflection that philosophy encourages:

There is, then, a kind of sober self-appropriation wherein the subject, aware of the fact that she is in a deliberative process, takes hold to some degree of the states of that process precisely to promote a sound and responsible outcome. This is the subject

operating well as a self-conscious subject [as a self-reflective individual] to overcome limitations and head towards objectivity and moral truth. At least one of the most vital stages of such a self-appropriation is awareness of and compensation for personal bias, the prejudices that would deceive the very discernment she is trying to bring to excellent development.” (Fitterer 6)

This passage demonstrates how one’s core beliefs, (in this case also philosophical beliefs about human goodness) can bias a therapeutic outcome in a particular direction. I choose the above passage to demonstrate the Aristotelian context of *eudaimonia* and good living that inspired the Hellenistic philosophers to respond — i.e., the Hellenists really were developing Aristotle’s idea of doctoring of the soul as being one of philosophy’s contributions to humankind. What we learn from Nussbaum’s in-depth investigations is that they were also particularly willing to endorse and explore the correlation between self-reflection and living a good life.

Consistent with the claims of these ancient philosophical schools is one of the claims of contemporary philosophical counselling that, as a service or a contribution, it offers a breadth of specific practices and engagements (the particulars of which I sketch throughout this thesis) that *appeal to reason*. Thus, philosophers are often known to use argumentation as a means of edifying human experiences and addressing human suffering (Achenback, 1999; Marinoff, 2002). Philosophers also know — especially those versed in the field of feminist and post-colonial epistemology — that reason is not an unproblematic concept. Political philosophers in particular note the social forces at play in various applications and definitions of reason. The practice used to think of reason as being grounded essentially in *a priori* truths and the notion of absolute truth as being, ideally, only ultimately about one kind of thing. The idea and concern was that reason was such a perfect concept that it was, in ways, monolithic. Following deconstructive trends of the 1980s (significantly influenced by Michele Foucault), assumptions about reason and absolute ideals were rigorously critiqued. During this time, theories of relativism gained substantial support and some of these theories were shown to be consistent with versions of objectivity and reason. From Chapter Two and onwards I will be acknowledging the theoretical changes in reasoning and absolute truth as influenced by social philosophy and feminist thought.

Discussions about absolute truth, relative truth, and reason are useful — as has been particularly evident in feminist philosophy — *to identify biases in knowledge acquisition*. These, along with other contemporary epistemological critiques of philosophical tradition, move us into deeper understandings of the biases that shape human knowledge. Important distinctions are discussed in Chapter Two, so as to familiarize us with the philosophical practice of orienting our analysis in terms of the reasoning and truth biases. This provides the opportunity to identify those biases that we are attempting to move away from, as well as those we choose to move towards. For our purposes, such discussion supports the eventual claim that more committed engagements with non-normative listening supports a good ethics of care.

In the next sections of this discussion it will be evident that the Hellenists advocated that what counts as knowledge ought to be minimally biased, and that the philosopher ought to aim to understand the human condition with a spirit of open investigation minimally affected by (or at least acknowledging the potential effects of) the social conventions on our discernments about truth, goodness, and health. This opens us to useful discussions about objectivity, reason, and truth, with distinctions about types of experiences and thinking patterns. In this way the philosophical approach to understanding the human condition has always included the investigation of human thinking and thinking about thinking, both in practice and theoretically. The study of human thinking and experiences - and in this way to investigate the psyche, which can also be considered a method of investigating the psyche by way of the psyche²¹ - are key elements of philosophy's historical engagements. These practices are exposed and elaborated upon henceforth because such approaches support this arguably unique and useful approach to human suffering.

Given that discussions about what counts as reason and bias are ongoing throughout this project, for now I only wish to explain how philosophers acquire the fodder for self-reflection:

Discussing human experience is necessary for investigating and addressing human suffering.

Additionally, to be effective one has to talk about suffering not in a detached way, but in soulful

²¹ The etymology of “psyche” is the Greek term *psukhé*, which means mind, souls, spirit, or breath. Aristotle took breath to refer to life force. (Reference Aristotle's *On Sophistical Refutations on Coming-to-Be and Passing Away* ed. E.S. Foster Cambridge U P 1955) In this usage I mean to refer to the mind and spirit part of the individual; i.e., the conscious thinking part of the self, the unconscious self, as well as the best ideals and values of the individual.

and engaged ways. In Chapter Three these kinds of soulful engagements are discussed as empathetic. Interestingly, soulful engagement does not come easily. I propose that specialists of the human condition are so because they have a natural or cultivated tolerance, a focus, and intellectual and emotional capacities that enable engagement with human experiences that is without bias against life's most challenging aspects. There exists the recognition that living typically materialistic and utilitarian engagements can obscure self-reflection; some, like the Epicureans, would say this makes getting in touch with personal values more difficult. There is tangible value in aiming to deeply understand. Thus, practising philosophers have always cultivated a capacity for these investigative talents. This is why Nussbaum argues in favour of a set of beliefs inspired by ancient ethics; notably and particularly, that psychological interactions are necessary for personal and social change. The Hellenistic practitioners believed philosophical skills could be learned and cultivated, specifically the skills of acquiring self-knowledge and cultivating general understanding oriented towards self and social improvement. Consequently, they created domains with language and the practice of listening to honour each other's thinking. This tradition creates spaces — literal or linguistic — for thinking about living.

On this account, Nussbaum writes, “the Hellenistic schools move well beyond Aristotle, and even beyond Socrates and Plato, in their fine-tuned attention to the interlocutor's concrete needs and motives for philosophizing” (486). In other words, these philosophers aimed to be particularly attentive to the needs of their students so as to garner useful results for the students' seeking happiness. A pedagogical affirmation is that in order to philosophize — to think about their thinking, perceiving, and experiencing — the student needs to feel free to do so. Characteristically, these philosophers recognized that students require various and specialized kinds of empathetic and analytic support that enables them to pay attention to their life experiences. This was achieved by affirming that life experiences are worth investigating because these investigations result in real and useful knowledge.

In psychotherapeutic contexts we learn that honest self-reflection (i.e., including potential motivations and darker, or shadow character traits) can only happen in supportive, non-judgmental environments. Conversation can affirm and extend domains on thinking and convention. Conversations can also challenge limitations in thinking and perception. Recall, for example, Freud's historical breaking of sexual taboos by allowing his patients to talk about their sexual feelings and experiences; the effect of his reported findings moved European and North

American consciousness out of the Victorian era. This demonstrated that social conventions can limit self-exploration and knowledge. By contrast, healthy psycho-therapeutic contexts encourage evaluation of social and personal norms and biases, (and particularly emotions and desires) for the sake of aiming for better, more truthful understandings about our selves. To understand one's self at a depth wherein one looks at motivation and emotions, one has to feel that they can explore emotions, in the first place, without judgment or retribution. This is, of course, some of what a contemporary psychotherapist intends in creating safe places for their client's self-exploration.²² Safe places are created at least in part by investigative attitudes rather than conventional, judging (i.e., normative) engagements. This points to one practical manifestation of the theme of non-normativity: these kinds of investigative and safe places provide the opportunities to put more experiential fodder on the table for exploration. The shared, cultivated understanding is that the speaker knows that the listener is trying to engage understanding as best they can, without judgment, which allows for a blossoming of exploration for the purposes of enhanced self-understanding.

Teachers in the Hellenistic schools aimed to support the student's self-investigations by distinct means. The Epicureans, for example, provided support for self-investigation, at least in part through their rigorous dogmas. Their rigors pertained to daily habits and rituals that could be used as foils, points of challenging resistance that could be utilized to provoke deeper self-understanding. Daily structure was also thought to provide practical buffers from more typical day-to-day concerns that might interfere with self-reflection.

By comparison, a student of Seneca's might experience less lifestyle rigour and more freedom in creative forms of self-expression. Seneca also used more generally curative methods (i.e., less patient-specific methods) such as literature and storytelling to provoke considerations of patient's feelings, values, and motivations. Even though these creative means are particularly

²² In a contemporary context, legislated ethical guidelines exist whereby psychotherapists have to seek intervention or a restriction of the client's freedoms only if the client gives the practitioner reason to believe that the client, or someone else, is likely to harm him/herself or others. However, in clinical practice when exploring aggressive, hateful, vengeful, or self-destructive feelings the client, of course, should not be left in an emotionally unresolved state and so potentially vulnerable to the point of harm.

useful for teaching groups of students, they were also intended to be personal enough that most could relate to a fictional character's challenges. On this point, Fitterer, Campbell & Brown (2008) agree with Nussbaum that ancient philosophical tonics had to provoke self-reflection in order to assist patients to access what is deeply personal to them. While there are differences in these ancient schools with respect to their methodologies, what they share is the objective to support their student's self-exploration.

As noted, it can be helpful if a practitioner tells a story the student can relate to. Doing so supports the student in their reflection of particular, and sometimes universal, emotions and motivations. Lucretius and Seneca, in particular, can be looked to for examples of this methodology.

[Their] complex dialogical structures engage the interlocutor's (and the reader's) entire soul in a way that an abstract and impersonal prose treatise probably could not. In attending closely to the pupil's needs, these writers are the heirs of Socrates' oral practice. (The Skeptics can be debatably put into the category.) (Nussbaum 486)

The Hellenistic schools can be differentiated by their distinct means yet are a unified group not just because of historical designation but because, as we have seen, they shared the objective of bringing the patient into deeper self-understanding. In his third century treatise noted above, Chrysippus writes that the doctor must be "inside" the pupil's passions and beliefs "in the best possible way" (Chrysippus in Nussbaum 34). Let us investigate what this concept of getting "inside" the pupil's passions and beliefs in the "the best possible way" might mean by combining a contemporary therapeutic perspective with the points we have from the Hellenists. Let us start, then, with some general points about what getting "inside" *is not*.

Getting inside, in and of itself, is not necessarily a "technique." It is more an attitude. Granted, psychoanalysis instantiated a tradition where "getting inside" could be considered a "technique." And in Chapter Three of this thesis I argue that E. Stein's phenomenological approach (1913) offers specific, emphatic "techniques" that could be of use for the practitioner to walk with the student as if in the student's shoes. Nonetheless, in discussing what getting "inside" is not, we see it not so much a technique but more an approach to investigations.

It is generally thought that due to the colloquial use of the word “stoic” the Hellenistic school of Stoicism encouraged outright repression and/or minimizing of passions like anger and jealousy. If true, this ancient practice would be primarily prescriptive.²³ Yet this is not the case because regulation and coercion are forces the philosophers encouraged their students not to succumb to. Consequently, a prescriptive approach would be logically inconsistent. Being trained not to unwittingly succumb to external forces, the student develops attentiveness to forces exerted by social conventions.

Consequently we can note that the Stoic schools advocated for the achievement of inner tranquility by way of engagement with individual psyches. For instance, this idea of “getting inside” was of great significance for the Stoic Chrysippus. In his work, it is evident that an accurate understanding of Stoicism is such that it does not impose regulations with respect to the exploration of feelings; rather, it encourages such reflective pursuits. In instances in which a Stoic student does appear to regulate their expressions of their lived external emotions, such behaviour would be the outcome of self-reflective practices, not the result of methodological regulation.

Evidence indicates that there were lifestyle regulations in ancient Stoic practice, but those consciously selected regulations existed to provide structure for introspections, as per an aesthetic and introspective lifestyle. In this way, Stoic students naturally evolve in their emotional self-regulation. This outcome is consistent with a contemporary measure of psychological health. Namely, an individual is considered more emotionally mature when less reactive, more intentional and more self-aware than individuals who by comparison are reactive, less focused and less aware of their own motivations and how their behaviours might affect others. In this context, Stoic attitudes are an achievement, not an imposition. They are the consequences of practices in self-understanding.

The idea was that self-reflective emotional engagement could mitigate the harmful effects of both excessive emotion and emotional suppression. On this point, Nussbaum claims that the

²³ Nussbaum (1994) particularly accuses the Epicurean schools of being overly prescriptive (Chapter Ten). However, they share with the Stoics and the Cynics the value of the student’s reasoning and reflective capacities.

Hellenists exceed Aristotle and their predecessors in their valuing, and so inquiring into, the realm and variability of human emotions.

I am reminded of Nussbaum's discussion of Seneca on anger in the second to last chapter of her book. Here Seneca is interpreted to be aiming to remind his audience that uncontrolled, perhaps overly dependent (what we would now call co-dependent) emotional engagement can lead to excesses resulting in dangerous or harmful eruptions, i.e., emotions going askew. In contemporary anger management an alternative approach to excessive and erupting emotions would be to "process" and "check-in" with emotions as the patient experiences the feelings. In such spaces there would be an allowing of space in which the emotion could be acknowledged as it presents itself; the emotions could perhaps be better understood, possibly moved through, and not just suppressed or regulated. The seasoned practitioner knows that in these moments of self-exploration there might be unpredictable and intense emotional eruptions. In practice, these eruptions would not be avoided but contained in ways that would prevent participants from being injured. In attending to emotions in this way, the practitioner develops the skill of being non-judgmental, so as to not evaluate emotions as good or bad, right or wrong, but rather to investigate emotions as experiences that are potentially understandable and variously knowable parts of life. This acknowledging and investigating approach is one way in which a philosophical engagement with emotions can be non-normative.

At the end of Seneca's play, *Medea* ascends into the realm of the gods and Nussbaum suggests that this action symbolically engages an imagined realm in which humans exist, but without emotions. Such a realm would be akin to being in the realm of the gods because there, one would not have the tensions of human engagements (including especially, emotions). Not only would it be a domain without emotions, it would also be without various human and sometimes superficial reactions that affect or create additional problems and stresses in our human engagements; it might be heaven, but it would not be human life as we know it.

Nussbaum's reading of Seneca's play supports the non-imposing of emotional regulation and demonstrates Seneca's encouragement of emotional reflection. The point of the reflective exercise is to help the student get in touch with himself or herself, to get inside, as it were, by noting points of identification with a literary character. Nussbaum indicates that Seneca had hoped that in reflection on the play, the student would find for themselves additional self-

penetrating questions, for example: Given that emotions are a part of human life, what kinds of emotions, (e.g. what kind of love) do I want to experience? To what extent does the patient believe they have a choice on such matters (i.e., matters of the heart and matters of desire)? How does the student plan to explore and engage his or her own emotional life? How does the student plan to investigate and regulate their emotions and emotional experiences? Can we have honourable love without risking the loss of our self? How can we negotiate and bring ourselves more into being? It is hoped that these are the kinds of investigative considerations that arise for the student of Stoicism.

To further elaborate Chrysippus's position on getting to know the student, Nussbaum says of the previous passage that "[t]his evidently entails being keenly aware of the pupil's particular history, experiences and immediate situation" (Nussbaum, 33). This is similar to the orientation of a contemporary psychotherapist who healthily empathizes with a client about the circumstances of their life and living.²⁴ Practically speaking, being "inside" the client is not achieved simply by way of gathering the facts. Rather, gathering the deeper facts (an importantly the "psychological truths" as the term is defined in Chapter Three) comes in getting through, and into, and so past, the details of how the client lives, how they experience their living, and how they are variously aware of history affecting their living. In other words, clinicians want to try and be able to identify the experiences that affect the client's attitudes to life, and which are reflected in their outlook and their responses to the world.

For practitioners to "get inside" the patient, the evaluation must happen "where the patient is at" (Nussbaum 26). The process of "getting inside" recognizes that often the student's beliefs are closely linked to the beliefs of her or his community, and that it can be difficult to differentiate personal from communal or familial belief systems. Thus, the ancient schools recognize that individuals are a conglomeration of personal and unique traits, as well as the social forces and

²⁴ Empathy is a particular technical concept. It is the entire focus of the third chapter. Here we practically, and roughly, mean it as in the phrase to empathize with someone else is to feel as if you are "walking in their shoes." This means that the listener recognizes that they are not the other person; that they are themselves, and the listener can nonetheless aim to relate to the other as if they were experiencing what the other/speaker is sharing of their experiences. "Healthily" means with an appropriate sense of relational and ethical boundaries. These ethical boundaries generally include such basics as not sexually or financially exploiting clients. Obviously there is room for discussion and debate on the nuances of this point, which will not be pursued here.

institutions that have shaped them. Nussbaum writes, for example, that the Stoics and Epicureans believed that “existing desires, intuitions and preferences are socially formed...an analysis of particular and personal emotion reveals this”(488). Subsequent to introspection practices, the student can discern which social beliefs and desires they wish to keep as theirs and which they are able or wanting to let go of. They might also consider which beliefs to add to their approach to life. To engage these kinds of questions it is crucial that the student can create a personal inventory of beliefs and analyses.

The working definition of an “authentic” self is the inner self that the patient knows as a result of self-reflection. The student’s sense of acting in ways consistent with their inner selves often stands in direct relationship to the student’s experience of *eudaimonia*. We will see in Chapter Four that as a result of this kind of personal investigation and analysis, the student is better able to differentiate the influences of various social forces and identify more personal and authentic aspects of themselves, and so understand where her identity and agency lie. For the Stoic practitioner, getting inside the student’s mind not only has the potential effect of increasing the student’s agency; once there is a differentiation of personal beliefs from those beliefs that are primarily of social convention, there is also an intrinsic value and benefit of the practice of self-reflection. In practising self-reflection the Stoics knew that the mind becomes increasingly awake and alive and “learns to repossess its own experiences “from the fog of habit” (486). A tangible benefit when the authentic self experiences itself “from the fog of habit” is that, like a fit athlete, the self-reflective mind can appreciate its own excellent health.

Certainly, Hellenistic philosophers of any of the three primary schools would say of themselves that ideally a philosopher is not easily affected by social convention and habitual beliefs. These philosophers claim a healthy and critical distance from social convention, unlike those not trained in a philosophical approach. This is also likely the sense that many contemporary philosophical counsellors have because non-normative and investigative approaches assists them in suspending judgment with respect to certain facts of social living. Such an approach is helpful for “getting inside” the client because, beyond or through the realm of judgment in the realm of investigation there comes to be a way in which one can observe particular social forces or conventions influencing the individual. A key idea in the philosophical tradition is that of mentally situating oneself so that there is a healthy critical distance from social convention, which makes discerning convention easier.

Millennia later Marx and Freud noted that the fog of social conventions and personal habits that reflect existing institutions could be seen as causing many individual to live more unconsciously. In this context, the sense of not being aware of the desires and beliefs that motivate one's actions, and/or being unwittingly influenced by a collective consciousness is what is meant by unconscious living (Whyte 1979). Nussbaum (1994) claims that the Hellenistic schools are the first to recognize the unconscious. She argues that these schools worked particularly hard to bring the unconscious beliefs of their student's forward; they commonly held that "[t]he soul's job is to explore its own depths and it must ultimately do this itself via its own practices of self-scrutiny" (487). The Stoic schools, in particular, are committed to the pupil's active exercise of introspection, argument, and reasoning. Understanding social forces and aiming not to be largely influenced by the unconscious are consistent with Hellenistic advocacy of the practice of thinking for oneself as opposed to only reacting to external events and reacting out of conditioning. Add to this that thinking and argumentation skills had to be strong for the sake of the credibility of their introspective processes, so as to merit being a means of knowledge acquisition. One method of knowledge acquisition in these ancient schools is the differentiation of social forces from authentically personal²⁵ motivations. The credibility of these distinctions was dependent on introspection, but importantly also on sound reasoning and argumentation. The Hellenistic philosopher teaches and affirms these practices of self scrutiny and introspection but the guiding principle that comes to set philosophy apart "from popular religion, dream interpretation and astrology is its commitment to rational argument" (29).

To effectively encourage self-reflection in another individual means that the philosopher has undergone similar, and perhaps more rigorous, self-reflective processes themselves. This is why the philosopher is able to proceed effectively in their investigations into the human condition: To proceed empathetically is to acknowledge the likelihood of *shared features of humanity*. One such shared feature is that we are all, to varying extents, shaped by the social forces that instantiate and inform us, the forces that characterize the time and place of our existence.

²⁵ It can be difficult to differentiate authentic personal motivations from social ones because it can be a challenge to know ourselves independent of social convention. These concerns are addressed in Chapter Four where I discuss how both Berlin (1958) and Butler (1997) take positions on the idea of social forces ontologically instantiating the subject. Thus, while the distinctions between personal and social conventions can be thought of as commonsensical and intuitive, the distinctions can also point to domains of ambiguity.

Similarly, we are all subject to emotions. Here we can see indications that empathetic knowledge of another is grounded on self-knowledge.

Discussion in the third chapter about E. Stein's (1913) investigation into empathy demonstrates that "getting inside," (i.e., *empathizing*) is a skill with distinct facets, each of which entails relating aspects of oneself to another self. Then, given an acknowledgement of shared features, differences can be appreciated. The skill is a practised one. Empathizing with another is like walking in their shoes. To do so effectively, the practitioner must know which beliefs, approaches, and experiences are characteristic of the student. Practically speaking, this means doing a considerable amount of listening without judgment.

Importantly, this notion of empathy as universal respect for *the other as human*²⁶ appears to as a particular Hellenistic historical shift with respect to how philosophers "do" philosophy of the human condition. Here's why: First, this shift is evident in the fact of many Hellenists turning away from Plato's and Aristotle's respective elitisms pertaining to which class of citizen had access to philosophical practice. The second indication of this shift is evident in philosophy's living engagement with living; this erupting and evolving use of empathy does not mean that healing is brought down as an ideal from reason's heaven, but that it evolves out of thoughtful engagements with living. The philosopher, therefore, has to be oriented towards having empathy for both the universal traits of the human as well as particular nuanced differences in humans living their lives.

Based on the research to date, I am not in a position to argue for whether attention to emotions or valuing of empathy takes theoretical or practical precedence in the development of philosophy's therapeutic practice. However, based on Nussbaum, the practice of empathy came after there was a valuing of emotions because there are ways in which emotions enable and precede empathy.

The valuing of emotions marks a third important feature of the philosophical shift in Hellenistic Ethics (Nussbaum 1994; Fitterer 2008). Fitterer, for example, writes that what was so remarkable about the Hellenists is "that emotions are paid attention to!" (xvii). In particular, unlike Aristotle,

²⁶ What it means to be human is a matter of immense philosophical discussion. Obviously I will not go into such a discussion here. But we can say that a working definition of being human has the necessary components of awareness of experiencing one's life, and with Berlin (1958) I would indicate that self-reflection extends one's humanity.

the Stoics' theory of emotions gives beliefs a role in emotion (xvii). Thus, there is potential epistemological benefit in identifying and critiquing "culturally learned emotions." Moreover, what is generally learned about culturally learned beliefs is that the reasonableness of the resulting emotions is only as reliable as the cultural material, i.e., beliefs, from which they are generated. Consequently, if the cultural reasoning is not sound, then the emotions will not be as reliable, steadfast, or wholesome. By extension then, a good philosophical critique of cultural norms can have potential consequences for culturally learned emotions and so eventually the health of a community. It is interesting that these healthy consequences for the individual, and potentially their community, come out of an orientation of practice grounded in shared humanity (i.e., empathy) by way of emotional exploration. In other words, these ancient investigations into emotions, enhanced by empathetic understandings, directly affected how these soul doctors envisioned their healing work. The Stoics' basic teachings about emotions tell us that: (i) emotions motivate behaviour, (ii) emotions are shared features of our human experience, (iii) we can influence our own emotions by investigating them and thinking about them, including the identification of the beliefs, desires and values that influence emotions, and (iv) improved psychological health – the pursuit of happy and flourishing living – proceeds from investigations of emotions (and so a student's desires, values and beliefs.)

Again, in these kinds of self-healing and learning contexts, emotions are worthy of exploration and do not need, simply, to be regulated. As we noted earlier, Nussbaum (1994) reads Seneca's *Medea* as a call to investigate and understand emotions, as well as a call to recognize that extremes of emotions are part of the human condition. Aiming to regulate emotions in favour of balance, for example, makes sense; but if balance is too imposed and not achieved by self-investigative processes then it will be marred by regulations, so not authentic to the individual.

In a later work, Nussbaum (2001) notes that in her studies of the Hellenistic schools:

[The] Stoics have had the greatest importance for the development of my views about emotion. I believe that they provide us with the nucleus of the account we need, if we are to make plausible the idea that emotions reveal ethical reality. (7)

In other words, investigating emotions tells us about what that individual values as good or bad. The passage also exposes a point useful for therapeutic consideration that is easily verifiable in

practice; namely, that exploration of emotions extends and opens up new approaches for the client epistemologically, psychologically, and morally (and perhaps spiritually, depending on how one defines “spirit”). Emotional explorations add dimension(s) to one’s interpretations and experiences of life. Clinical evidence easily supports Nussbaum’s claim that “emotions have rich intentionality and cognitive content” (Nussbaum 1994; 481). They are not only reactions. When investigated, emotions can tell us about the social norms and regulations that precede and are formed into (or not formed into) a particular emotional expression. Consequently, in therapeutic processes the patients may find themselves revealing what they really want, as opposed to what they previously wanted without introspection.

There are other results for patients who investigate their emotions and motivations. When questioned, reflective individuals can often explain their emotions in a way that gives us insight into their own reasoning. This, too, is a very key recognition in contemporary psychotherapeutic work; self-reflective individuals characteristically have insights into their own motivations. Understanding one’s own motivations can help a patient more clearly evaluate whether they are truly acting in a manner consistent with their values.

Fitterer (2008) comments that Nussbaum’s work on the Hellenists brings to the surface that “what is contentious [for this period in philosophy] is that emotions can be and should be investigated” (Fitterer 33). The fact and manner of such investigations reveal that emotions can be investigated and determined to be good (or valid) for each investigating individual. Such investigations revealed, and reveal today, that understanding a patient’s emotions can provide significant insight into a particular individual’s ideations of *eudaimonia*, thus revealing and affirming that the seeking of *eudaimonia* is known to be, and necessarily has to be, subjective. In many ways, therefore, a self-reflective quest will likely involve some undoing of the patient’s social conditioning or a separating out of one’s own values from the values of their society, community, and family. This is why the Hellenists can be seen to be highly critical of “many ordinary beliefs as impediments to human flourishing.” (Nussbaum 52) This approach to coming to understand a patient by deconstructing her beliefs can facilitate the patient’s understanding of the particulars of her subjectivity and individual identity which in turn can go a long way to identifying and cultivating a sense of self, i.e., one’s own identity. When we study Antigone later via Judith Butler (1997) we will see that this process of differentiating personal from social values can be at times relatively intuitive, while at other times relatively rational. In Antigone’s

case we will see that whether it is an intuitive task or not, differentiating and acting on one's own values — which when reflected upon can be seen as sometimes distinct from those of one's society — can have significant consequences for the subject. Yet regardless of the outcome, a key point remains; true, authentic self-expression (i.e., self-expression that the self *knows* to be of the self and representative of the chosen self) is part of aligning with a flourishing life process for the ancient philosophers.

An additional point about what these schools (and some of what the contemporary philosophical practitioners) carry forward from Aristotle in terms of the wise and flourishing life, is the requirement that morally praiseworthy acts must be done in *full awareness* of what we do and why we do it. They must be an act freely chosen and not done from coercion. To think and deliberate well is something we can choose to do, or desire to do; hence, in ancient soul doctoring, sound cognitive functioning, insofar as we can self-consciously take hold of it, becomes an ethically-charged concern. As such, we are morally obliged not only to act well but also to think well. Nussbaum's discovery, supported by Fitterer's interpretation, is that good thinking recognizes that emotions affect our thinking (Nussbaum 1994; Fitterer 2008). Thus, it follows that when we investigate ourselves we can choose those emotional orientations that help us think better, as well as *be* better. In reading Nussbaum's study of the Hellenists, one can discern the affirmation that there is the potential to become wiser by reasonably investigating emotions. There is no necessary split between reason and emotion for the ancients. Of course, this is also a good rule of thumb and rich fodder for contemporary therapeutic engagement.

This brings us back to one of the core claims of my larger contemporary project, namely that PC is therapeutically useful to particularly to individuals with PTS. A quick contemporary clinical application of this type of thinking is that in a healthy and appropriate context, the practitioner can ask the sexual abuse survivor why they might feel badly about being variously and healthily sexual in their adult life. For abuse survivors, this can be a common issue. At this point in therapy — given their level of engagement and sense of safety at not being judged, but rather at being encouraged to explore and investigate their emotions to really understand their personal motivations — the client can give their reasons and then evaluate with the counsellor whether those reasons for feeling a particular way are sound. In this context, the client can then appropriately evaluate whether the beliefs that support those negative feelings (about healthy sexual expression, for example) are still relevant, useful, or correct. Do these beliefs support the

individual and their wellbeing? How can negative or disempowering beliefs be replaced if the client wants a different attitude to life? We can ask in this context what beliefs need to be investigated, changed, and evaluated to influence emotional inclinations. Again, these are not intended to be imposing or prescriptive questions, but rather investigative ones. As such, they can be used as benchmark questions to assist both parties in determining where the client is in their recovery process.

This example reminds me of Seneca's point about a doctor's empathetic relations with their patients. Seneca uses the metaphor of the good doctor. "[A] good doctor," he writes, "will not send a prescription through the mail ... without personally examining the patient: he must feel the pulse"(Seneca in Nussbaum 335). In this context, one's pulse is likened to one's beliefs. One way to "feel the pulse" is to make our first aim *to listen to and for the details of a life as keenly and thoughtfully* as possible.

Of the Hellenistic philosophers, it is evident that Nussbaum most favourably advocates on behalf of the Stoic Seneca's position. Nussbaum writes this because "the education I recommend looks with mercy at the ambivalent excellence and passion of a human life" (Nussbaum 505). The ancients did not seek standardized answers, but looked at life as they experienced it. Seneca in particular believed there to be definite wisdom in emotions. Some of the wisdom was extracted by paying attention to patients' needs and motivations — i.e., these are among the ambivalent excellences and passions of life. When this attentiveness is cultivated we open ourselves to finding wisdom in emotions.

For example, in his *Epistulae Morales*, Seneca creates an intimate, personal dialogue between teacher and pupil that "shows the teacher's intimate responsiveness to the pupil's thought and feelings" (Nussbaum 329). One way in which the Stoics created intimate responsiveness to their students was to leave nothing to chance with respect to their teaching modalities. Recall, for example, the recognized importance placed on conversation in relation to formal learning styles, and the aim that logical syllogisms and arguments should not "prick the ear" of the student if they are to be effective (19). The Stoics' teachings were student specific, meeting their pupils where they were at, so as to keep them engaged in the rewarding but sometimes challenging practice of self-reflection. It is also evident throughout the dialogue that Seneca's responses are

personal and non-authoritarian, thus reflecting his intentions to both respect and understand the particularities of each student.

In Stoic teaching, the importance of listening to narrative has to do with the fact that “we cannot really change a particular soul without engaging it in a highly personal vivid and concrete way” (340). Accordingly, the psyche of an individual is not something that is honoured simply by manipulating it into a particular form. It is honoured by recognizing that it grows with appropriate, personal attention and acclimatizing to support as the student discovers, discerns, and determines what constitutes their personal sense of flourishing, and how to manifest such flourishing in their life.

This particular psychological truth - affirmed for us by investigating the work of these ancient thinkers – is that our beliefs about life and our “attitudes to life” affect how we experience life. We can see this is affirmed in Berlin’s philosophy as discussed in Chapter Four. This is another example of the notable claim that “emotions matter.” Again, the Hellenistic philosophers attempt to directly influence the *eudamoinia* of their fellow citizens in personal and relevant ways. The idea here, too, is that by presenting arguments that are personal and relatable (like Seneca’s *Medea*), the student is meant to reflect on the idea that changing one’s attitudes to life can affect one’s quality of life. This is another way that the ancients made the connection between agency and self-reflection.

As we noted briefly in our discussion on the “authentic self” (and as can be seen in feminist contributions to debates around relational autonomy) it can be difficult and sometimes impossible to separate out oneself from social values. Obviously, choosing to endorse some communal or social values does not necessarily negate one’s individual autonomy. This is largely because time and more reflection can reveal that the distinction between social and personal values is not an absolute distinction. Nonetheless, making the distinctions which one can is a means of investing in self-reflection. The degree or amount of self-reflection required to discern clear distinctions between the inner and outer self will have to be an analytic debate for another discussion. We can simply note that what can be substantiated by way of the Stoics is that the historical role of the soul doctor is to support subjective, agency oriented self-reflection.

Prior to elaborating on the relationships between agency and self-reflection, I want to emphasize again the importance of non-normative listening to emotions in the philosopher’s relating to their

client. The following example applies to non-normative listening: When the cocaine or sex addict tells the counsellor about the extent of their addiction and injurious behaviours, the role of the counsellor is not to react to sensational experiences and stories but to try and understand with the client why such behaviour has been a part of their life. Psychoanalysts, for example, acknowledge that personal evolution and healing really starts when the analyst is able to support the analysand in revealing their secrets not just to the analyst, but also to themselves. Being patient, attentive, and relevantly inquisitive helps us get to relevant secrets, including both the “what” and the “why” of thoughts, fantasies, and behaviours that the client feels guilty about and tries to regulate and keep (variously) hidden from self and others, and the truths about the world and their experiences that they do not want to admit to themselves. Clinically speaking, many ego disorders develop when trying to defend or repress painful memories and experiences, and the meanings attributed to those experiences. Listening, when done well, can help the client identify those ego defenses, consider how they have been constructed, and then seek to modify the defenses’ meanings. Oftentimes individuals do not understand their own self-regulating mechanisms because they are not inclined to investigate how, or why, they are the way they are, or why they experience the world the way they do. At the level of asking these general kinds of questions, philosophical practice enables and encourages self-reflection, which has the potential to increase one’s personal agency by opening oneself up to choices that previously were not evident.

Typically, those who seek philosophical counselling are fairly motivated to experience a better life and want to determine what they can take responsibility for in their lives. Philosophical counselling cannot effectively engage and treat individuals who do not want to be self-reflective. By extension, an individual who does not want to investigate the limits and extent of their potential personal responsibility would likely not be in a position to reap the full benefits of philosophical engagement. Although I would not exclude or discourage someone if they were weak in this area, I would note their resistances (and perhaps limitations) in their engagements with concepts related to critical, evaluative self-reflection. As an individual’s capacities for psychological, emotional, or epistemological growth are cultivated with the support of the practitioner, it is likely that some of their limitations would not persist and some may diminish all together.

Extending one's domains of self-reflection can, and does, have destabilizing results. It can make one more sensitive to changes in their environment, more emotional, more needy of (or more willing to accept) support. Whatever manifests as symptoms of struggle is often a result of the core beliefs around which an individual has organized their approaches to life. The symptoms often indicate that particular core beliefs can no longer remain as such. Clinicians often see that changes in core beliefs can cause changes in character or affect. In some cases the patient comes to be more present in their life, and they can see themselves undoing defensive, self-protecting dissociative strategies. For example, a contemporary theorist of the psychoanalytic school, Kohut (1978), writes about dissociative adaptations as psychological coping. Yet, adaptive strategies based on understanding the world that spring from hurt or trauma make up so much of ego character and often have so many adaptive layers that Carl Jung (1933) indicates that the role of any psychotherapy is to help the analysand get to "secrets" about their core beliefs that they are trying to hide even from themselves. As clinicians we have to learn to be patient so as to support the eventual disclosure of a patient's secrets. Jung's idea of the secret is based on ego development in response to superego adaptations and responses — i.e., guilt is a core feature of a psychological adaptation based on a core belief because core beliefs influence how individuals experience the world. Even though the patient may think they wish to lead themselves to enlightenment, there can be various ways in which individuals fall short or deceive themselves unintentionally. This is often done out of habit and the familiarity of convention, as much as out of fear of personal change and growth.

Many psychotherapy clients discover that early on in their lives they learned to be vigilant self-regulators, curtailing emotions and behaviours to gain approval, avoid punishment, or in some cases to fulfill the role of parent to their parent(s) and/ or to themselves and their siblings. They aim to contain their shadow or negative responses so as not to be thought of as unreasonable or out of control. Here we slide into well-known psychological territory, as noted earlier, wherein it is recognized that social convention can obscure or cause one to regulate or over regulate oneself expression and authentic feelings. All too often it is discovered in psychotherapy that individuals are not really their authentic selves due to how they have internalized society's rules and conventions; i.e., by authentic I mean that some individuals feel they are not acting in ways that are congruent with how they wish to act or how they feel they are inclined to be. So the psychotherapist's role is to support the client in being self-reflective.

I want to acknowledge that, on the other hand, there can be some success with a client-patient engaging in self talk and evaluation,²⁷ by which I literally mean talking one's thoughts out loud to oneself and/or writing them down for the purpose of evaluation. Pragmatically speaking, this kind of investigation and introspection requires a great deal of focus; this is why, at least in part, it can be beneficial to have a self-reflection coach (philosophical counsellor) to keep the student on track. Humans are notoriously creatures of poor focus and easy distraction, especially nowadays when a generally acknowledged feature of capitalism that the working premise for a sales pitch or new idea is about 20 seconds, i.e., the length of an average attention span.²⁸ Furthermore, clinical and general empirical evidence would seem to suggest that insights are more thoroughly developed, and cultivated understanding of these insights is more thorough when the client can talk out and have witness(es) for their experiences and perspectives (Felman 1991; Yalom 2000). Witnessing can be a key factor in trauma recovery - one that unfortunately we will not have enough time to investigate here. For now let us acknowledge that focused engagement aimed at really understanding oneself and being understood are, sadly, a rarity. Individuals in day-to-day activities typically are not attentive and mindful with respect to what a fellow human being really means when they are expressing themselves. Thus, it makes sense to make a specialized space (at least some of the time) with someone who affirms the values of introspection and who wants to assist you in avoiding self-deception.

Sharing one's experiences and hearing others' meaningful interpretations — things that are taken to be fundamental features of human relating — are engagements that are often not sufficiently or practically experienced. For the reasons noted above, such practices are specifically experienced and cultivated in psychotherapeutic relationships, whereas typical (i.e., non-reflective) human practices of engagement tend to be instances where individuals fail to be sufficiently present, attentive, and mindful with respect to what a fellow human being *means*

²⁷ Freud is famously known to have engaged in regularly scheduled self-analysis and I know of some colleagues who have scheduled talking sessions with themselves. It is a very personal process and requires a great deal of focus and discipline not to get bored, overly obsessed, disproportionately fixated, or neurotic with one's self or aspects of one's self. The self-analysis technique has only been proven partially successful relative to witnessed talk therapy. Freud, for example, never overcame his oral fixations and eventually died of cheek and throat cancer. (Maddox, 2006).

²⁸ Current research indicates the length of the average adult attention span to be 20 minutes for a professional presentation and less than 20 seconds for Internet surfing (BBC, 2009).

when they are expressing themselves. A good listener is a rarity. We can get caught up in more superficial things than meaning making and self-reflection. Consequently, Epicurus not only had his own community, but also had his own school for his students because effective, deep, self-reflection needs domains for investigation and exploration that support those purposes.

The ancient Hellenists introduced many investigative approaches to viewing emotions without judgment — i.e., what I am calling here non-normative. We have noted that emotions do affect how we approach and understand the world because emotions and the beliefs that relate to them influence and shape our biases. We have noted that recognizing all kind of emotions²⁹ can provide insight into how we live our lives. This is an additional recognition that the facts about emotions are highly subjective. To balance this, the ancients teach and affirm the ongoing need for, and valuing of reason. Reason is what legitimizes specifically philosophical investigations. Accordingly, the philosophical practitioner needs to retain and strive for some standards of objectivity in their practice. The practitioner’s credibility is strengthened if they can explain their approach to objectivity and objective criteria. In a contemporary context we can note that sometimes it is enough (as will be argued in the second chapter) for the relevant objective standard to be one that is shared between the client and practitioner. We will see that standards of objectivity in a clinical context can be characterized as instances of perspectival realism.

1.3 Evidence of Ancient Practices in Contemporary Therapy

Philosophical counsellors seek meaning with a client by investigating a client’s own sense of meaning. In this way, we aim to create a domain that recognizes the client’s emotions as meaningful (i.e., worthy of acknowledgment) and those emotions can be listened to or investigated for insight into how a particular individual interprets the world (Yalom, 1999). In such instances the listener seeks subjective coherence. For example, jealousy might not be an obvious response to finding out about a friend’s impending marriage, but if the client investigates their feelings, then they might come to discover why they are jealous. So while

²⁹ “All kinds of emotions” is meant to include even “negative” emotions, which in this context are emotions that distance us from ourselves; for example, fear, jealousy, competitiveness, and sometimes anger feel unpleasant to the individual experiencing them.

happiness and support might be more reasonable or ideal responses, in the relative context of this individual we can understand how other emotions also make sense.

Note that a particular ethical account of happiness and/or the desire to contribute to another's happiness are not in any way imposed by the counsellor. Rather, the client is encouraged to investigate what forces are acting on them and why. In determining this, the contemporary philosophical counsellor, like the Stoic philosopher, is "taking the student's pulse."

Being aware of social power dynamics and being sensitive to how individuals are shaped by their life experiences enables investigators who are culturally and socially sensitive to contribute to the creation of safe contexts for respectful learning and investigation. Feminist philosophers such as Lorraine Code (1995), for example, who utilize sensitivities and attunements to social forces, create a kind of extension of ethical and epistemological domains by acknowledging the relevance of the subject's context to the kinds of knowledge claims they make.³⁰ A practitioner influenced by these traditions might say, when it's relevant to a client's progress, "Here's an idea of virtue, or goodness.... How might that work for you, and why?". Thus, contemporary power-sensitive engagements in PC entail that we are not necessarily aiming our clients towards living *a particular kind* of good life. Rather, clients are encouraged to consider these historical approaches in the context of their current life circumstances because historical accounts evaluated in a subject-specific context can provide either support or a point of departure for the conscious choosing of their own values.

We have noted that philosophers who acknowledge the ancient traditions recognize the specialized talent of "getting inside" with a client. Now, however, I am also suggesting that in order to develop theories of emotion, the shared therapeutic domain needs to be one in which the vulnerabilities related to emotional sharing are acknowledged. Certainly, this shared domain requires an environment that is supportive and safe for the analysand. This is notably distinct from most people's experience of the everyday world in which social mores are more typically conveyed, than is the encouragement of exposing self-reflection.

³⁰ Here I am thinking specifically of Code's (1995) book, *Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on Gendered Locations*.

Knowing that someone else seeks meaning in your words and feelings and is willing to assist or support you to acknowledge the potential value and meaning of your expressions can have a profoundly supportive effect. Being able to determine how particular experiences and social forces shape an individual can affirm the uniqueness and importance of experiences of living. Not surprising, therefore, is the connection of healing effects with philosophical practices because philosophers traditionally are seekers of understanding who seek to understand what is meaningful in human experiences. Such an approach validates individual experiences. As we have suggested, seeking meaning has its own edifying effects because individuals can come to see how their experiences have influenced their identity.

Also relevant to note is that the telling of one's story enables the reciprocal relationship of witnessing (Felman, 1991). Witnessing and mirroring are particular foundations of philosophical and psychotherapeutic practice that I will explain. "Witnessing" means hearing and relating to the humanity of another person's story. "Mirroring" refers to reflecting the contents of the speaker-student's story and reasoning back to them for the purpose of encouraging additional self-reflection. Witnessing and mirroring are important features of a therapeutic process insofar as they are used as tools that support the student-seeker in obtaining more objective understandings of one's self. We will see that the Hellenistic philosophers agree with the contemporary psychotherapeutic convention of being present to how a client feels and thinks when telling parts of their story in order to glean general and specific insights into emotions. Talking, too, can affirm the benefit of simply acknowledging certain emotions. Letting someone into a story means that, to some extent, the story becomes more coherent to the speaker (White, 1990; Parry, 1994). Moreover, the patient experiences herself in existence, and so affirms her own ways of *being* in speaking her story (Code, 1995; Nussbaum, 2001).

For trauma survivors, these basic points of being heard, encouraged, and validated in the telling of their own story are significant for recovery processes, and have the potential to increase personal agency. These are points to which we will return in Chapters Four and Five. For now let us note that working with emotions and the individual's sense of the facts of a story as "things" allows these component features to be evaluated with someone. This very act makes features of the self more objective and therefore more easily taken, analyzed and evaluated by the patient. Similarly, by putting their perspectives "out there" (i.e., outside of themselves), experiences can be more readily available for interpretive influence by the client; and hence the client comes to

see the power of evaluating their own experiences. These points are fundamental features of therapeutic process.

Later I will demonstrate in greater detail how these features of therapeutic listening assist the self-reflective process. For now the aim is to present this information as a means of noting what is distinct about philosophical practice, as well as making explicit the obvious alliance between traditional philosophical practice and contemporary psychotherapeutic practice.³¹ As we know, philosophy and psychology did not become distinct academic disciplines or scientific practices until just before the time of Freud (Whyte 1979). My contention that philosophy can contribute to the extension, development, and application of psychotherapy is part of the orientation of the four remaining chapters.

A major feature of the process of therapeutic listening, specific to philosophical healing methods I elaborate here, is the emphasis and priority given to what a client sees and understands *for themselves and of themselves*. Speaking therapeutically, in other words, the client's self-understanding and knowledge matters. From the client's perspective, the practitioner's understanding and knowledge matter, but this is only in so far as it can be used to guide, to facilitate and support the student's process. This is why Socrates' metaphor in Plato's *Theatetus* of the philosopher as a midwife who helps individuals give birth to their own true ideas or false beliefs remains such an apt metaphor for the philo-therapeutic and psychotherapeutic processes of self-discovery (Grimes 1998). Thus to extend the metaphor and reinforce an earlier point, therapy - an engagement that can be compared to birthing - requires that the counsellor create a safe and potentially expansive environment for the client's self-reflective processes.

Let us assert that the practical, shared philosophical and psychotherapeutic aim of deep listening is to avoid judging or preemptively moralizing the client's story. This acknowledges the fundamental value of therapeutic empathy that I discuss in greater detail in Chapter Three. It is also to situate oneself smack in the centre of ancient Hellenistic practice; this generalized

³¹ For example, one similarity is that the psyche is something to be investigated. Philosophy is particularly non-normative and emotions in particular can be viewed as not necessarily normative. Psychology, by contrast, has more of a tradition of regulating emotional responses and diagnosing patients' responses as healthy or not healthy. Thus, as a discipline, psychology is a tradition that has a greater tendency to reinforce normative conventions of health.

therapeutic listening method bypasses certain (perhaps familiar or conventional) levels of judgment and strives instead for evaluation of the meaning, aims, and motivations of the client. For example, a client may arrive at a session with some angst about telling stories of personal debauchery. The aim for the counsellor is not to judge the content of the story (at least initially), but to aim to identify and understand why the client acted the way they did, how this behaviour fits in with their personal narrative, and what this behaviour means in the context of the client's psychological development or maturation. The counsellor might ask, for example, why the client is in angst and what the client's internal conflicts are. The client, of course, in raising these issues wants to talk about how potentially harmful they are, and to what extent the client intends to be harmful to themselves. What I mean by "what this behaviour means in the context of the client's psychological development or maturation as relatively defined by the client" is because the client may not initially be evaluating their behaviour in terms of their own values, it may be the job of the counsellor to make this possibility explicit to the client; similarly, initially the therapist may need to ask if better or higher values can be seen to be of use for the client (in terms of, say, how the client ideally desires to conduct themselves in their lives).

The client grows in self-honesty and self-evaluation by building trust with the practitioner, hearing themselves talk, and learning about their own core beliefs. The gentle sensitivity required to get "inside" the patient is captured in part by Nussbaum when she writes that:

[L]ike, Epicureanism, Stoicism views the soul as a spacious and deep place, a place with many lofty aspirations but also many secrets, a place of both effort and evasion. Much that goes on in it escapes the notice not only of the world at large, not only, even, of the teacher, but also of the person his or herself. (Nussbaum 340)

Thus, therapeutic listening is a unique experience because it recognizes that "part of the sluggishness and carelessness of everyday life" as it is normally lived "is its failure completely to grasp its own experiences and deeds, its failure to recognize and take stock of itself" (340). Therapeutic listening also creates space for severe misery and torment that are often suppressed when there is no self-reflection. By paying attention to and creating a context for getting inside the client, an ancient philosopher and a modern psychotherapist try not to let too much escape

their attention. Thus, there is less chance of failure with respect to taking stock of one's life because that very issue is given priority in self-reflection.

If the aim to get past certain superficial judgments to what's happening and possible causes in a trustworthy, safe (non-oppressive and non-judgmental) environment is achieved, then the analysand can get to core beliefs and beyond the stuffiness, or misery, of their own surface conditions. In the above example, this is achieved not by saying this or that debauchery is wrong in the first place, but by trying to understand the motivations and reflections of the client by supporting the patient to see for herself or himself where her or his perspective is lacking or where she perceives her psyche to be unwell. This level of self-analysis cannot be undertaken if one's "bad" activities are judged wrong right off the bat in such a way that prevents introspection. We are not moralizing for its own sake but to cultivate introspection for the sake of the evolution of the individual and, potentially, the social psyche.

One might say that a lot of attention is paid to this getting "inside" citation, but my aim is to give a solid theoretical introduction to therapeutically oriented PC. Importantly, I want to be sure to appropriately emphasize the importance of *therapeutic listening* with respect to getting inside the core beliefs and attitudes of the life of a patient. I will note in Chapters Four and Five that feminist epistemologists in particular have been able to affirm and contribute to the analysis of the importance of safe places for psychological and social growth, and evolution. In particular, for therapeutic purposes, I want to continually emphasize how attentive the listener must be with respect to keeping normalizing judgments "reasonably" at bay, and supporting the self-discovery of the client.

To return for a moment to our discussion of non-normative therapeutic listening; we can see now in a preliminary way that non-normative does not mean trying to normalize or engage in evaluating 'x' relative to what is considered normal. Thus, non-normative evaluations do not necessarily perpetuate the status quo, whether the status quo is a moral approach, a life style choice, or a hegemonic social value; rather, non-normative evaluations aim at discerning what is true about a given experience, which sometimes entails that the experience must be assessed as if independent of prevalent social conditioning. Recognizing a bias and factoring it into or out of our considerations enables us to see the effect of that bias more clearly. Non-normative listening aims to see things for what they are, and not primarily in terms of whether certain actions are

objectively considered to be good, bad, or socially acceptable. So with respect to human behaviour, what is relevant in non-normative investigations is not that ‘x’ engaged in a particular behaviour, but that a particular behaviour is discernable. Providing a discernable description of experience and behaviour then allows us to more objectively ask why ‘x’ engaged in such behaviour. In a few paragraphs hence I will elaborate this point by explaining how a kind of Socratic questioning can be seen as therapeutic non-normative listening.

A significant way in which the practices of the ancients were different from contemporary psyche-engaging practices is that they were up front about the ideas and beliefs they envisioned to be instrumental in living a good life. Oftentimes in contemporary practice there can be implicit assumptions about what constitutes good health. Contemporary psychotherapists do not, for example, make explicit that one of the curative aims of psychotherapy is to make patients less superficial and materialistic. The Epicureans, by contrast, were up front about their views pertaining to how these values relate to living a good life and experiencing *eudaimonia*. In this way, when biases are acknowledged the implicitly, and potentially obscuring, effect of their non-identification is minimized. Therapeutically speaking then, we can aim to account for potential influences in the collecting information and understanding the human condition.

The ancients honestly proclaimed definite ideas about *eudaimonia* and the good life, and they recognized and worked with the fact that these proclamations biased their therapeutic approach. For Aristotle, the good life had to do with aiming to live virtuously, and in a balanced way. In talking about *eudaimonia* as personal and subjective in this way, Nussbaum indicates that the Hellenists move beyond Aristotle and Plato in envisioning the role of philosophy in every day life. (Nussbaum 21)

In PC contexts when practitioners elaborate their biases for good health, a foil is created in relation to which the client can consider their own beliefs and assumptions about health. For instance, a contemporary psychiatrist may not say directly to their patients that they wish to deal with the symptoms and not the cause when treating certain ailments — or contemporary medical patients may not ask their practitioners about their biases towards a good life when engaging with said practitioner in the mutual aim of making one’s life better — whereas ancient philosophers identified how they viewed the good life. These ancients also discussed how the particular patient’s view factored into the practices encouraged for the patient’s recovery. In this

way, views about happiness and human flourishing were not assumed and normalized. Rather, the aim is a non-normalizing approach to a good life.

To identify a patient's core beliefs pertaining to their ideas about good health is simply a logically consistent act; just as the client has to go through processes of figuring out what happiness might mean for them, so the curative process benefits from identifying the values that shape it. This is also philosophy's legacy: The recognition that how we view happiness and ethics affects how we shape meaning, as well as how, and whether, we enjoy our lives. If we view happiness, for example, as only reasonably accessible to those who are legalistically good, then we might not allow ourselves to unabashedly enjoy wonderful, ambiguous, and complex experiences or moments.

In elaborating specific claims about the methodology of soul doctoring I have particularly emphasized the valuing of self-reflection. We have seen that the ancient philosophers cultivated self-reflection in their patient by both getting "inside" the patient, and by making it safe for the patient to self-reflect. Like the ancient practitioners who valued investigating emotions, contemporary PC retrieves the practices of making safe places by engaging the patient's process of self reflection non-normatively and *then* supporting the application of reason for the purposes of better understanding.

1.4 Agency and Midwifery

Prior to philosophical training and practice, solitary self-reflection can have its own challenges, including those that pertain to focus, self-deception, cognitive habits, and the aim of objectivity with respect to one's own biases. The philosophical counsellor's job is to assist the client in discerning what motivates a given habit or interpretation. At reflective junctures the philosopher asks questions about behaviour and emotions, as well as what beliefs lie behind or in emotions. This kind of self-reflection is the basis of the concept of agency being developed in this thesis; it is part of the process of identifying and differentiating emotions to see which aspects of one's being in the world (including one's emotions) are fixed and which are variously, and sometimes, consciously chosen.

As I have indicated, the client's willingness to engage in placing various aspects of her or his identity on a continuum of chosen or not chosen, can help the client identify which choices to

make, as well as to identify what choices there actually are. Reflecting on one's emotions, so that a student can identify and understand what emotions are motivating them can assist us in discerning the client's values. (This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.) Moreover, thoughtful answers to these kinds of questions can assist analysts to evaluate whether they feel good enough about the values that they are actually living. Learning to pay attention to the relationship between their values and their emotions enhances the analyst's ability to make effective choices about how they want to be in the world.

For instance, Seneca's *Medea* is a reference point for encouraging emotional reflection such that, if we choose to see them as such, our emotions can be our own natural or internal guidance system. According to this way of thinking, emotions are like a compass that tells us what we value and what we do not value. Moreover, when we reflect on emotions we can distinguish features and aspects of an emotion. Some anger, for example, is what I call "first order anger." This anger works for us; it is a response to a sense of injustice. This anger informs the patient, for example, when personal boundaries or values have been violated. It can be compared to a mother bear being angry when there is perceived harm to her cubs. First order anger can be seen as justified and useful for understanding what one's inner values are, and which values or aspects of self one is willing to protect. Whereas, what I call "second order anger" is a murkier anger that happens when first-order anger is over extended, not acknowledged, or allowed to fester. This anger is often experienced as a desire for revenge, jealousy, or competitiveness. This anger is telling you something, but something more than information about your values or that your sense of justice has been violated (as that would be what first order anger would do). Oftentimes it is telling us something deeper about that individual's psyche. As in the case of the jealous bridesmaid, if the patient is not defending or protecting something that is precious to them, we might ask why is this person prone to jealousy or competitive anger? I offer these cursory reflections and distinctions about emotions so we might see an example of how emotions can be investigated, and to provide some unique points of investigation in particular patients. This approach to understanding and defusing negative emotions does evidently appeal to some Aristotelian ideals of the middle way, and balance. This approach is also grounded in Stoic ideals like those seen in Seneca's play, namely that balanced emotions do not result in violent or destructive eruptions. This is in keeping with the Stoics, who understood that emotions result in a balanced engagement with the outside world. Without going into a theory of emotion, I also want

to point briefly to the reasoned coherence between actions and emotions that we will have the opportunity to further discuss in Chapter Three. For now it is enough to acknowledge that emotions are informative and can work with reasoning to enhance our engagements with the world. Additional points about emotions and our working understanding and reflections on agency will be further developed in Chapters Three, Four, and Five.

In this last section of the first chapter we will see that the Socratic practice of being a “midwife to the soul” and asking good questions facilitates a kind of gentle, honest self-evaluation. Midwifing the soul can be similar to reasoning some of the points in the paragraph above and can enable individuals to make psychological and practical changes in their lives. Oftentimes we can make a direct correlation between life changes and the choices someone identifies with respect to how he or she is living. Many of the Hellenistic philosophers see the cultivation of self-reflection and reasoning skills as being akin to the toning of muscles, which is why the notion of *practice* is so central to practical philosophical engagement. In philosophical practice agency can be enhanced by:

- 1.0 - differentiating social forces from internal motivations,
- 2.0 - determining an individual’s values and potential virtues, and
- 3.0 - encouraging patients to live in the world by reflecting their subject-specific *eudaimonia*.

These are themes that will be discussed with historically grounded and relevant specificity in the next three chapters. It is worth noting that this pertains to the five points of retrieval we aimed to establish at the outset, and have robustly discussed (see p. 6).

For our purposes, a working definition of agency refers to an individual’s ability to express their freedom by making choices that reflect who they are, including what they desire, given relevant facts and circumstances about their lives.³² The individual determines the “facts” and potential choices of a situation by way of reflecting on their circumstances. We can certainly say that, at

³² This choice of words is intended to reflect the idea that who we desire to be often exceeds who we are in the material world. Who we desire to be can inspire us to be more than who we are. It is also conceivable that who we desire to be can facilitate our comfort with our self i.e., who we are.

least in part, these ancient practitioners believed that self-reflection was the basis for the individual discerning which forces cause them to act in a particular manner, and then potentially deciding which forces they truly want to motivate their behaviour. Discerned, chosen, or intended acts add to our working notion of agency. We will see that these philosophers encourage the seeker to determine whether the forces or desires that motivated particular actions are the student's own, or the result of habit and social conditioning.

Interestingly, Hellenistic philosophers recognized that philosophy had to take many forms in order to reach its particular audience; in other words, it had to include oral discussion, not just written works and formal debates in the lyceum. Nowadays the value of talk therapy is, practically speaking, the bread and butter of the contemporary counsellor. Clients can, and I argue should, supplement their fifty-minute sessions of self-investigation with relevant readings and introspective reflection. But of PC, Seneca says it best and clearly: "Conversation is most useful because it creeps bit by bit into the soul" (Seneca in Nussbaum 489). This is a good opportunity to recall Szasz's discussion of talk therapy's philosophical history. And importantly, Aristotelians would agree, philosophical discussions are more accessible to everyone than learning only by reading and rigorous debate.

We have access to at least four sources that tell of the ancient philosopher Socrates' practice of walking the streets of Athens with students and inquirers of every kind in tow so that "the wisest man of all" might guide them to introspections and insights of relevance to their own lives.³³ Christopher Mace (1999) in his article, "Therapeutic Questioning and Socratic Dialogue," notes that one feature of Socrates' method (although Socrates himself never committed his philosophy to writing) is generally referred to as the "Socratic *elenchus*." Mace and other early Greek

³³ The four sources noted in Mace's essay are Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle. In discussing the history of Socrates' questioning engagements with his fellow man, Mace (1999) writes:

Also a reference is made in this sentence to the report by both Plato and Xenophon that to Socrates "took heed of the Delphic oracle's pronouncement that 'no one was wiser than Socrates.'" Inspired by this to enquire what the nature of wisdom could be, he maintained that his attempts to understand this prompted all his interrogations, and that they universally failed to teach him anything further about the nature of wisdom because wherever he looked he found none.

scholars (see, for example, Vlastos and Walsh) note that the early dialogues show Socrates questioning with the apparent aim of engendering “perplexity, confusion and sometimes irritation.” Mace’s insights into Socratic questioning are relevant to this discussion largely because an argument could be made that Socratic questioning is a practical enactment of the kind of therapeutic listening the ancient schools use to engender genuine self-reflection on behalf of the patient.

It is interesting to note that Mace indicates that he is offering insight into particular features of Socratic questioning as motivation for contemporary philosophical practitioners who may be experiencing a fear of questioning — a fear of asking the hard questions of their clients — due to perceived legalities and conventions. Mace writes early in his article that:

[I]n psychotherapy, questioning of patients by therapists has become suspect. It is the prerogative of the teacher or the lawyer but not someone who, instead of trying to convince or convict, is trying to help another person find themselves...there is little doubt that many practitioners find themselves in dilemmas over whether, when and how to question. (16)

As the article progresses, Mace notes that Plato in his later dialogues allows Socrates to show a belief or advocate a position; in such instances Socrates’ style of questioning is characterized by philosophers as *dialectical* as opposed to *elenctic*. Those who have read Plato’s dialogues know the *elenctic* ones are the earlier dialogues where Socrates does not apparently take a position on matters of emotions, personal virtue, or social psychology. Rather, he engages the inquisitors in ongoing debates that provoke students to articulate their core beliefs and then to question the validity of such positions. In our earlier discussion of philosophical practice, I set out the idea of getting past the facts and into identifying the client’s desires and motivations. This is usually the aim of Socratic questioning prior to evaluating the coherence and consistency of a client’s values (Achenback 1999; Mace 1999). Mace writes that the Socratic elenchus is a “representation and examination of, and challenge to, essentially personal beliefs.” The curious effect of this kind of Socratic questioning is that “despite the destabilizing effects it could yield results” (21). Similar to the intended effects of psychotherapeutic discussion, the students would go away and consider whether their approach was logically inconsistent or not, and consider whether their actions were

apparently incompatible with their values. Those who have undergone serious self-reflective processes know that this can have quite a disconcerting effect. Oftentimes the doctor will take a position such that considerations for the student's development supersede the student's natural comfort levels. Mace contends that Socrates' principle aim was that of a teacher "concerned exclusively with the development of any individual who was consulting him" (22) and so Socrates was, like Seneca and the Stoics, hailed as an effective and engaged soul doctor.

As noted earlier, Socrates referred to his own process of supporting individuals in uncovering their own beliefs as "midwifery." Socrates is attributed with the idea that the midwife particularly facilitates the birth of something that is already formed, but unique to the individual (Mace 1999). This is, in part, why Socrates is not seen to simply give answers; *together* teacher and student need to discern what pathology in the individual's psyche needs to be healed. It should be noted here that in the past twenty-five years there has been an ethical shift in the psychotherapeutic canon towards "empowering the client" and away from cultivating what some have criticized as the god-complexes of therapists (White 1990). From the textual evidence cited here, it seems obvious that a good argument can be made in favour of the claim that empowering the client has always been the aim of the philosophically oriented psyche-investigative practices.

In psychological midwifery, what is birthed is necessarily unique to the individual. Yet uniqueness, contrast, and difference can be challenging to integrate, especially when the predominant social value tends to be one of normalization or assimilation. This is why, for a period of time in the investigative process, there is often the experience of confusion and destabilizing feelings. In addition to revealing inconsistent beliefs and beliefs built on unfounded premises, this investigative process also assists the student in the recovery of dissociated beliefs and emotions. These beliefs and emotions could include, for example, the unconscious and common belief that "unless I am perfect then I am not lovable." Or, for example, there may be negative emotions of confusion, hurt, and anger that seem too painful for the client to attend to. Oftentimes in such cases clients fear that dealing with "heavy" issues and emotions will leave them emotionally devastated and therefore render them less functional in their day-to-day lives. Such statements inform the practitioner, and enable the practitioner to gauge the amount of fear and anxiety inside a patient. In such instances it is also likely that the individual's avoidance in engaging with their real self has supported the avoidance of their truer and deeper feelings. The client needs to be aware that there will likely be periods of uncomfortable adjustment as they

make their way towards healthier thinking and perceiving. As with Socrates, in contemporary PC the particulars that need to be remedied reveal themselves in the student's engagement with the counsellor, whose primary aim is to support the student in "knowing thyself," which significantly means removing "false certainties" (Mace 1999).

Socrates' midwife metaphor can be thought of as a starting point for the removal of false certainties, which is a disconcerting, destabilizing, and scary process for the patient. It is useful to know that in a reflective life these destabilizing episodes are typical and to be expected. Teachers and counsellors recognize that mistakes and challenges are, in the long run, beneficial aspects of any profound learning process. Again, then, the therapeutic environment has to be such that it is very spacious, creating a wide breadth for the clients' non-normative investigations grounded in the acknowledgement of social forces affecting individual psyches and the application of reasoning. In Chapter Two and onwards we see that reasoning is a process, and that there are many good standards and distinctions that contribute to precision in reasoning. The philosophical counsellor provides the questions that assist the individual in exploring and separating social forces from those self-proclaimed healthy desires. Thus, the therapeutic process can be envisioned as a birthing during which the individual's own inner wisdom emerges, the oppressions and limitations of society are left behind, while the useful and valuable parts of self and reasoning persist, thrive, live, and redefine themselves.

As a point of interest, it was not relevant to question whether this process was excessively narcissistic because, like Plato and Aristotle,³⁴ the Hellenists believed that self-understanding serves society. When we edify ourselves we variously (and by extension, sometimes unwittingly) edify the societies and communities in which we live.

Like the Socratic method, the process of guiding students to their own inner wisdom is specific to that student and situation (Grimes 1998); practitioners know that clients need to be addressed, supported, and engaged "where they are at" — i.e., their subjectivities matter. Because the aim is for self-actualization or self-transformation and knowledge acquisition, many commentators

³⁴ It is not really arguable as to whether Aristotle was a Hellenistic philosopher; indeed, he was. However I separate him out because there are a number of contestable and scholarly ways in which Aristotle is distinct from the Hellenistic philosophers.

acknowledge Socratic questioning as a “psycho-spiritual” exercise.³⁵ This is entirely in keeping with the work of doctors of the soul.

Earlier I used the term “mirroring,” which is a contemporary psychotherapeutic term. Mirrors reflect the individual back to themselves. Similarly, the practice of psycho-investigative dialogue includes mirroring back to a speaker, with as much accuracy as possible, the claims they have made while sharing their perspective (Horney 1999) so that the speaker can more clearly hear what they are claiming. With the additional critical distance of hearing the listener mirror (or repeat) their own thoughts and reasoning back to them, the patient can decide if those claims are claims that reflect their authentic self. In the Fitterer passage I cited earlier, an Aristotelian-inspired self-reflective process results for the client in a kind of “sober self-appropriation” (Nussbaum 1994; Fitterer 2008). With the concept of investigative, non-judgmental (at least in terms of the facts) mirroring indentified as a tool, we can imagine a kind of Socratic dialogue with the earlier noted debaucherous client. After some discussion and sharing, it might go something like this:

Notes from a Case Study: These notes begin after making various points about the details the client has been talking about for twenty-five minutes pertaining to what’s been happening in his life during the past number of weeks. He begins by chuckling to himself that the women at work seem to find him attractive and how he feels like one of the boys when he goes out for a drink with the gang after work. As I listen, I notice that it feels like he’s defending something. This seems like justificatory behaviour. I ask him if he notices that he is seeming to revel in “going out to play.” Then I ask him about whether he feels defensive? After some discussion about not feeling defensive he finally says

“... because my wife is no fun and I feel like an old man when I am home with her. I hate how she worries about money.” And then

³⁵ See, for example, Marinoff, Mace, Grimes and/or Herd.

after some silence, “And I screwed a few of the girls ... at work ... it was a party.... I kind’a felt like my old self... I hate my wife....”

PC: So what you are saying is that you are engaging in activities that you might not really be comfortable with, as evidenced by your defensiveness, because, in fact, you are angry at your wife, and maybe angry at yourself for the way you feel when you are at home?

In response to this summation the client first chooses to consider and debate with me whether he actually feels bad about “screwing around” (his choice of words). He resolves that at this point he doesn’t feel bad about “screwing around.” “I’m a guy...” (I make a note about the implications of this statement as resource for a later conversation.)

I keep the conversation focused on how “Joe” seems to be reporting that he is engaging in behaviour that he doesn’t feel good about afterwards so as to avoid dealing with other feelings, i.e., his disappointment at how much work is required in his marriage and his own existential issues evident in his boredom with his life. The client leaves having arrived at the knowledge that he is upset with himself because he’s not addressing the real issues in his life but maybe extending the circle of pain because of his discontent. We write down the question for him to ponder as homework, “how he might better deal with his feelings of discontent?”

Clinical reflections: I could have jumped right into discussing the morality of “Joe’s” behaviour but the information he was presenting more reflected a pattern where, in acknowledging his feelings, he could also notice some defensiveness which, upon exploration, led to feelings of discontent in his primary relationship. When the focus is on non-normative listening (i.e., mirroring what the client is saying, and how or whether they are justifying themselves) it is enough to effectively summarize the client’s position so that he can go on to consider it according to his own values. In the following weeks we might discuss those values in more

explicit and direct ways. For now it is enough for “Joe” to feel safe to reflect on how he is in the world. We can already see that mirroring Joe back to himself takes him, with fair ease, to the heart of the personal issues with which Joe is struggling. Note that the client’s behaviour isn’t being judged from the outset. Rather the practitioner is attempting to facilitate reflection on motivations and feelings, and the values the individual is enacting in their life. The practitioner does this by getting the client to hear their own justifications for their behaviour.

This is a very simple example. However here, as in Socratic questioning, the philosopher feeds the client’s own experiences and reasoning back to them (a mirroring) in such a way that the client might find their own dissociations, false beliefs, and contradictions. Doing this with consistency and focus in a supportive manner helps the client focus on self-evaluation. It takes practice to mirror without judgment or, when needed, with appropriate levels of judgment. Any practitioner will tell you it is a very effective technique.³⁶ One of the very practical benefits of mirroring is that it also allows the client to know that the practitioner really hears what she or he is saying. The practitioner reflects the client’s own circumstances back to them. Mirroring is a kind of midwifery. As described, it not only can clear the fog of habit and convention, but can also create an opening for the client to see their own desires for the first time, or afresh. Additionally, the client may need to go through the process of talking it out so they can seek practical resolutions, or then might need to talk about general truths so that the deeper issues might come to the surface. Using mirroring and Socratic questioning the contemporary practitioner, like the Stoics, demonstrates a high respect for each patient’s ability to be reflective and thoughtfully mindful of each individual’s ability to cultivate their active own practical reasoning skills.³⁷

³⁶ It could be reasonably and pedantically, and to some degree correctly, criticized that there is some level of judgment in what, for example, the practitioner chooses to mirror back to the client and how they choose to mirror certain disclosures back to the client. This client obviously wants to talk about the conflicts his behaviour provokes. I am going to try to reflect those conflicts back to him after I’ve asked enough questions and gathered enough data about him, e.g., to understand where he’s coming from, how he justifies things, and why he feels he has to justify his behaviour.

³⁷ This is not a trait that could be attributed to students of Aristotle or Plato. Both schools are differently elitist with respect to reason and which classes have the potential for the best kinds of reason. Yet, reason remains a valuable investigative tool; to keep it sharp and contemporary, it is

What Nussbaum teaches us about the Stoics is that for them, as for the ideal contemporary practitioner, the authority for subverting social beliefs does not ultimately reside with the teacher but *ultimately self-criticism and self-recognition lie with the client*. This is an aim consistent with valuing autonomy. The effective teacher encourages the student to investigate which values motivate their daily customs and why. Obviously, the focus on values-based reasoning and behaviour is very much evident in Aristotle's work too. Certainly, adhering to a custom or convention because it is such is not necessarily reason or value enough to continue to act in such a way or to be motivated by said values. Ideally, if or when a student chooses to act in accordance with custom or convention, it is because he or she has reflectively chosen to support either the particular values of custom and convention or, by extension, the values which particular customs and convention support. In other words, when based in self-reflection, conventionality can be healthily chosen.

In this way philosophy "shapes and constructs the soul, orders life, guides conduct, shows what is to be done and omitted" (Chrysippus TD16.3). Much like contemporary therapy, Hellenistic philosophers affirm the practical function of philosophy is to use therapeutic listening to develop an awareness of the powers of choice one has. Thus philosophical counsellors can affirm that the soul, the psyche, the self-reflective self's job is to explore its own depths.

Supportive philosophers want for the patient to ultimately desire to explore and discern their own psychic depths via their own learnt and supported practices of self-scrutiny. Throughout Nussbaum's *Therapy of Desire* there is a fictional character that travels to and studies in the different Hellenistic philosophical schools. Nikidion engages her journey with the belief that even the most painful and confusing aspects of life would be made more tolerable by understanding and by extending one's domain of choice. Nussbaum writes of Nikidion's discerned motivations for her philosophical journey that "by the sense that she herself had drawn the boundary of herself here and not here, had formed her desires and evaluations in this way and not in this. To examine then, and to take charge of herself" (482).

beneficial to look at and integrate what contemporary feminist epistemologists have to say about reason and rationality.

This character seeks philosophy because she wants to become more of her distinct self, akin to the idea of the authentic self we referenced earlier in this discussion. Thus, she embodies the ideals of a patient of Hellenistic philosophy. She is willing to use the advocacy of introspection to become a freer, more self-actualizing human being. In other words, she has the sense of being able to be who she values herself to be. She has a sense of somehow being able to make herself — the self who engages in the material world — more a reflection of her inner self. She has a sense of being able to be her authentic self.

1.5 Conclusion

This brings us back to the therapeutic aim of contemporary PC: to support the client in self-reflection. This self-reflection, in and of itself, supports an overcoming of a kind of ennui, misery, or angst; and this kind of investigation is known and claimed herein to invigorate clients' awareness of their own purposes in living, and their various engagements with their purposes in living. In other words, the philosophical student or analysand by engaging philosophically also brings life back to himself or herself. The Hellenistic philosophers have taught us that the self-analysis involved in philosophical self-reflection shapes the soul, or consciousness, of the student (340). This is why it is crucial that the teacher be very conscientious about their general and particular motivations when engaging a client at these variously vulnerable and moldable stages of psychic toning or development: The aim is to help clients shape their own souls. Nussbaum's (1994) summary of Seneca's guide to his fellow philosophers also teaches philosophical practitioners to "try to respond to what has taken place without strict punishment, asking the watchful eyes of wisdom to look with narrative understanding into the complexities of another's motivation and one's own" (340).

I am reminded of a client with whom I had a recent conversation pertaining to a bout of anger towards her husband. When we began the conversation, her primary feeling was being nervous about the potential for "another confrontation." We realized in our conversation that in her family of origin there was not much conversation in general. They did not talk around the dinner table, for example. So there certainly was not much conversation about feelings. This was in part because she felt anxious around her mother. Until "Sue's" early twenties, her mother, when really angry with her, would slap first and ask questions later. Consequently, creating a safe place in therapy for the client to express her feelings was a new experience. In short, our hour-

long conversation revealed many intricacies of her thinking, but the piece that seemed to relieve and address the client's feelings of dread about her own anger and apprehension for another confrontation was the acknowledgement that she was afraid she would be slapped. She did not think of the slap as necessarily coming from her husband, but "it felt as though it might come out of nowhere." The frustration in the moment with her husband was that she legitimately felt anger but also felt fearful of expressing any emotion. Coming to realize that she actually wanted to express herself but that she was unwittingly holding herself back was a relief to "Sue." She resolved that she could move forward, affirming for herself that she was safe, that she appreciated her own need to express some of her frustrations to her husband, and confident that particular resolutions could be achieved. The conversation ended with the client saying, "It's so interesting how there's all this stuff in my head. I look forward to figuring out what else is there."

The awakening mind comes to know itself through introspection, healthy questioning, and self-reflection. The philosopher teaches self-reflection through teaching thinking and self-reflective questioning. These are skills and techniques that are enhanced with practice. I would suggest that, like the ancient philosophers, the effective contemporary philosophical counsellor is very good at asking questions and supporting their clients in self-reflection and gaining rational thinking skills. For a while the effects are disorienting, but overall there is a sense that disorientation will be overcome. In addition to this effect, and of great importance for this thesis is that via philosophical practices of self-reflection and education there is a contribution to, and enhancement of, the individual's own sense of agency. The philosophical claim is that individuals who are philosophically self-reflective gain agency in their lives and in their worlds.

This is a very specific kind of claim and deserves detailed analysis. The very process by which self-reflection extends agency is the topic for detailed discussion and analysis in much of the remainder of this thesis, especially in chapter four where the particulars of social forces and personal agency are further discussed. Yet we have already indicated much of what can reasonably be claimed about some of the relationships between self-reflection and agency.

The Hellenists established that self-reflection activates and enables agency because, in the first place, the philosopher advocates that a self-reflective individual is able to distinguish their personally-chosen values from those that reflect conventions; this allows for recognition that

some beliefs are developed and brought into clarity during the unique experiences of the individual. Again, in terms of the history of ideas, it is notable that they valued reason as being able influence beliefs. Beliefs were the malleable transitional junctures between emotions and reason. As such they could be expressed by emotions and influenced by reason.

From the start, the philosophical approach does not mandate individual identity. Rather, inherent philosophy's recognition of what it means to be human is the idea that each of us negotiates ourselves in relation to the social forces that instantiate, form, and influence us. Discussing the differences between positive and negative liberty is a way of addressing and differentiating these forces. This is exactly what I see Isaiah Berlin to be doing in his "Two Concepts of Liberty" essay, which will be discussed in Chapter Four.

There is a second extension of freedom or agency that ancient philosophers indicated took place in a self-reflective process and that is in alignment with the values one wishes to live by. This is a kind of psychological and epistemological claim; at the self-reflective level one can choose which values to live by. At this level we can also, in a balanced way, evaluate how well we live our values. Agency here is increased because once you know your values, you have greater freedom to live your values. This kind of knowledge extends choice to what you want to embody. And the Stoics would say that there is another kind of freedom that comes from this self-knowledge; namely, that freedom pertains not so much to the events in our lives, but how we respond to them. We learn this from investigating our feelings and questioning not only what feelings tell us in terms of ethical inclinations, but also in terms of where and how we might influence our own emotions. These are general points about the relationship between self-reflection and agency. They are such rich points that they, too, are substantial points of discussion in Chapter Four.

Berlin and Butler have something to say about how self-reflection enables individuals to understand social forces or social power. In turn, they all have some understanding of social power and its potential effect on the individual. If looked at in terms of contemporary concerns, we will see that this understanding of, and empathy for, the effects of social power is a step towards re-empowering the voices of the disempowered or psychologically damaged persons.

There is much more that could be said that pertains to how today's psychological and psychotherapeutic reflections have their roots in ancient philosophy. For example, there is much

excellent analysis regarding historical concepts of the unconscious before Freud.³⁸ However, my point in these pages has been to point to some of the methodologies of ethics and aims of the ancient schools, and to recognize their compatibility with contemporary non-coercive, non-prescriptive, non-monolithic, talk therapy.

Thus, we now have a fuller picture that the practice of the philosopher is like that of “a compassionate doctor administering to urgent human needs” (Nussbaum 1994) and because of the belief in individual practical reason, each patient must eventually become his or her own doctor. Accordingly, Stoic philosophy’s medical function is akin to that of an osteopath, kinesiologist, or chiropractor in that it is a toning up the soul — developing its muscles, enabling it to use its own capabilities more effectively (Nussbaum 1994) (see also Seneca. *Moral Epistles* 15). In this way, with good foundations and some guidance, students of philosophy shape, construct, and develop themselves.

We have brought into our discussion this key philosophical idea that self-reflection 1) engenders and extends agency by encouraging patients to be more themselves by exercising choice that affirms their own sense of self; 2) encourages them not to let their minds and activities succumb to the ennui, and sometimes angst, of habit and custom; and 3) introduces patients and students to the notion of separating social forces from personal forces that might motivate behaviour so that they are acting out of a strong self-affirmed sense of self. As we saw with Seneca and as we will see in more detail when discussing the work of Judith Butler, the philosophical counsellor can introduce ideas about how and why individuals are susceptible to social forces and conditioned by them. By these means the philosophical practitioner opens up a whole new way for the client to understand themselves and their identities, including how they want to be in the world.

Worth emphasizing is that there are specific methodological achievements of the ancient school, both in terms of their own historical context and to our own concerns about how moral philosophy should work. In other words, moral philosophy should attend to real life experiences and acknowledge that emotions matter and that emotions, when attended to, can reveal beliefs. As Nussbaum (1994) writes in her final chapter:

³⁸ *The Unconscious Before Freud*. L.L. Whyte. Palgrave MacMillan. 1979.

First and centrally, one must, I think, point to the new attention to the questions of need and motivation that we see in the school's attempts to grapple medically with concrete human lives. (486).

In order to grapple with human lives and to understand suffering so as to engage healing, human needs and motivations must be attended to. We need to aim to understand what shapes this person and how their experiences have affected them. Notice here that the emphasis is not on facts but on how the facts are interpreted by, or indeed affect, the individual. In other words, in this tradition we are investigating human emotions, rationally.

The philosophical tradition has always taken seriously its focus on engaging knowledge about oneself or others. Even though it is true that in most of therapeutic work the client's experience matters more than, say, traditional "objective" truth, there are refined and careful ways for philosophers to investigate and aim to understand human experience. In other words, knowledge about human experiences can be acquired. In these knowledge acquisitions, we find that objectivity, subjectivity, relativism, non-normativity and attitudes to life are relevant and useful distinctions that support our investigations.

We have noted that in the Hellenist therapeutic context, the issue of relativism is not entirely cast aside because it can be tied to valuing a particular individual's experiences. In fact, a significant thesis of Nussbaum's *Therapy of Desire* is her plea to contemporary philosophers to learn from our ancient predecessors that individual *and* universal human needs must be addressed by philosophy especially if it is to be at all practically curative. Philosophical insights that are curative are not only universal in terms of the nature of the claims, but many such claims are also relative and personal to the patient. This debate is one instance of how the Hellenists grapple medically with the concrete reality of human lives. In this vein, Nussbaum criticizes classical literary scholars for taking arguments out of context to overemphasize a particular interpretive point. She rebukes them by saying they

should recognize that form is not separable from the philosophy
[C]ontemporary moral philosophy, whose formal choices are now frequently distorted by academic convention (by the policies of particular journals, for example) rather than by human need, has a great deal to learn [from Hellenistic Ethics] (487).

She says that we need to be reminded that engaging with particular human lives ought never to be separable from philosophy. These philosophical and epistemological goals are evident in the applied engagement of philosophy in one of its contemporary manifestation as PC. In the coming chapters I will continue to show how this contemporary form of philosophical practice is a worthy living engagement with philosophy's rich and ancient tradition of soul doctoring.

We now have a clear sense of how many of the philosopher's soul-doctoring practices are carried forward, indeed retrieved by contemporary PC. Such practices have carried forward with clarity of values, evolving strength of reasoning and learning, and can thereby add technical and effective refinements and contributions to psyche-investigative and healing practices. I have suggested that, as practitioners, it is beneficial to the development of the student to be particularly cognizant of the ancients' approach to listening and getting inside so as to assist students in creating broad containers for their own meaning making and understanding of values, which ultimately supports the development of personal agencies.

In Chapter Two I demonstrate how philosophy's theoretical levels of distinction making further benefit the listener-practitioner in providing larger interpretive and non-normative containers in which to theoretically situate various understandings relevant to patients. These theoretical distinctions enable the reasonable introduction, definition, and evaluation of the concept of "psychological truth." I argue that a sufficient understanding of the term supports a robust, multi-layered understanding of what constitutes truth and healing in the psychotherapeutic domain. We will see that the term "psychological truth" represents a particular contribution to contemporary philosophical practice that can therapeutically enhance our living engagement with trauma and trauma recovery. I explore this specifically in the realm of PTS as it relates to childhood sexual abuse and memory recovery. Application of these insights into other kinds of trauma recovery should also become apparent.

In the third chapter, while explaining a phenomenological approach to listening, we learn how to empathize on two different levels with an individual. Edith Stein's careful analysis provides insights about how practitioners can get further "inside" their patients, beyond the psychophysical individual to the spiritual individual and thereby support integration and recovery from injuries of the material and human world. Thus, in both Chapters Two and Three, the concept of *therapeutic listening* is further developed and enhanced by additional, specific, and more

contemporary philosophical thinking techniques that evolved from contemporary epistemological and phenomenology considerations.

This historically based discussion of PC was intended to orient the reader to practices and principles relevant to contemporary in-the-field philosophical counselling work. In addition to bringing forward ancient wisdom practices, as a practice engaged with *living philosophy*, contemporary PC must also bring forward new or contributory practices and insights, as I hope to do in the following chapters. This chapter's emphasis on *therapeutic listening* affirms philosophy's place as a psyche-engaged healing modality. The following pages also affirm that, like ancient practitioners, contemporary philosophical counsellors aim to bring forth practical wisdom by way of sought accuracy in distinction making, and by way of non-normative investigations into human experiences, emotions, and beliefs. In this way Philosophical Counsellors contribute to their students' journey to discern unique senses of meaning in their lives.

Chapter Two: Psychological Truth and Philosophical Thinking

2.0 Introduction: On Why Theory Choices Matters

Few would dispute, not even the man himself, that there was something wrong with him. In his *Memoirs*, Daniel Paul Schreber (1903) documents his mental collapse, his nervous illness and his spiritual struggles. His is one of the most documented case studies in psychoanalytic literature. Because it is well documented and discussed, and because we have the historic reference of Schreber's own writing, contemporary efforts at empathetically understand Schreber can provide unique insights into how theory choice can limit or enhance one's understanding of, and with, a patient. Theoretical limitations can, in turn, affect the patient's own self-understanding, which can causally delay therapeutic healing. We will see how this case also gives evidence, in hindsight, as to how better theory choices could have supported more mutually useful understandings and, potentially, psychic healing.

In this chapter I develop the concept of psychological truth and explain how this concept evolves from the theoretical distinctions that support a coherent and reasonable account of the term. These distinctions (represented in Diagram One p.15) also can be used to make good theory choices that support effective therapeutic listening, including empathy. However, let us first attend to Schreber's story to better appreciate the specifics of why theory choice matters.

Donna Orange (1995) discusses Schreber's case and makes the point that "theory choice matters;" in particular she argues that useful psychological insights come from "entry into the whole emotional predicament with a person" (180-181). This entry into "the whole emotional predicament with a person" is, in fact, as we will see, *empathetic relating*. Effective empathetic relating requires understanding that is supported and enhanced by good theory choices. In this chapter, and the next, I argue for the theoretical distinctions that edify theory choices relevant to empathetic listening, and so support engagement with the "whole emotional predicament" of another person.

The entire third chapter of this project engages the concept of empathy, so I will not give the concept too much attention at this point except to note that a significant amount of this chapter pertains to the theoretical distinctions that are useful in legitimizing empathy as a unique domain of knowledge acquisition. For now, however, it is enough to connect empathy to therapeutic listening. This is why it is relevant to note that Orange cites the Schreber case study as a cautionary tale of what goes wrong when listeners make poor theory choices. The argument here favours being supported by theory so as to optimize non-normative, investigative, and empathetically engaged approaches that allow for the acquisition of additional true and useful understandings for the patient.

Schreber's personal story demonstrates this: He was a jurist in Germany in the early part of the 20th century who wrote a memoir of his mental illness experience, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (Schreber 1903). In addition to his published memoir, Schreber's relative social prominence — his was an elected political position — brought attention to his story and his book. His case was studied and referenced by Freud (1911) and numerous subsequent psychoanalytic practitioners, including Niederland (1984), Lothane (1989), and Kohut (1971, 1977, 1984). In Orange's summary of Freud's account of Schreber she notes that Freud did, to his insightful merit, "consistently regard the psychoanalytic task as understanding the content and structure of the patient's subjective world" (185). However, Freud also *limited* his insights in using "Schreber as a case to illustrate and support his theory, thus preventing Schreber from being seen as a person with a history of relationships reflected in self-states described in the *Memoirs*"(187). We will discuss Schreber's self-described states in due time; for now, let us note that Freud directs us to seeing Schreber's symptoms as psychosis, but then obscures the meanings behind these symptoms with his theory (186). In other words, in being diagnostically oriented with respect to Schreber, Freud obscures the meaning of Schreber's illness and, in ways, dehumanizes Schreber. Freud, for example, does not ask what might be the coherent "motivations" of these psychotic symptoms? Rather, he focuses on the facts of these symptoms and how they can be observed and then exacerbated. By contrast a contemporary non-normative P.C. approach would inquire as to whether there is a way in which such symptoms can be seen not simply as ill but also as evidence of unresolved psychic trauma or issues? And/or are there ways in which the symptoms can be seen as coherent for the subject? Could these symptoms be seen as legitimate, meaningful, or even reasonable? What meanings are the symptoms trying to

convey? In contrast to Freud's approach, this kind of empathetic understanding would aim to engage such questions not only about the analysand, but also with the analysand.

Unfortunately, empathetic understanding does not come for Schreber until some fifty years after his death. The empathetic understanding began with Niederland (1984) who indicates that he "believe(s) that the 'miracles' Schreber felt perpetrated on him – and these miracle claims were one factor upon which Freud based his assertion of psychosis - were thinly veiled references to his father's childrearing methods." The passage following provides a fair summary of Niederland's findings.

Niederland searched the books of Moritz Schreber (Schreber's father) and found pictures and descriptions of various pieces of apparatus – intended to correct improper posture or prevent its emergence.... He quoted extensive passages from Moritz Schreber's works that suggested an effort to control every part of a child's physical and mental life.... Schreber's father's concern was to prevent children from masturbating. Niederland assembled a horrifying picture of the probable world of Schreber's childhood. This portrait not only makes his later fragmentation under stress understandable, and much detail of his report interpretable, but is also leaves the reader wondering how Schreber managed to function as long as he did. Niederland's book makes the older brother's suicide completely unsurprising (189-90).³⁹

What is interesting for Orange is that despite Niederland's gathering of evidence and seeking of historical meaning in Schreber's *Memoirs*, he agrees with Freud's diagnosis of "paranoia" and indicates that it can be "explained in terms of intra-psychic conflict between love and hate for the father" (189).

³⁹ A partial list of the titles of Moritz Schreber's books includes: *The Cold-Water Healing Method, the Systematically Planned Sharpening of the Senses*, and the *Harmful Body Positions and Habits of Children, Including a Statement of Counteracting Measures*.

We now know that particular configurations of conflicted responses of loving and hating one's father can be characteristic of a survivor of captivity and psychological domination (Herman 1992). Yet Niederland does not make explicit that this is an understandable, perhaps even healthy, post-trauma response towards one's captor(s). Depending on the severity and kind of mental abuse, victims tend to have truly dialectical relationships with their captors. This is especially evident in instances when captors are parents. In characterizing this effect for the victim, Judith Herman (1992) describes the perpetrators' objective in dominating their captors, particularly in instances of prolonged and repeated trauma.

The perpetrator's first goal appears to be the enslavement of his victim.....Thus he relentlessly demands from his victim professions of respect, gratitude, or even love. His ultimate goal appears to be the creation of a willing victim.... George Orwell gives voice to the totalitarian mind in the novel 1984; "We are not content with negative obedience, not even with the most abject submission. When finally you surrender to us, it must be of your own free will... We convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him. We burn all evil and all illusion out of him; we bring him over to our side not in appearance, but genuinely heart and soul." (76)

These are likely the very real forces to which we can now understand Schreber to have been subjected to when he was being experimented on and dominated by his father. Thus, Schreber's description of his own playing with his "voluptuous giving over" heart and soul, to "soul murder," makes sense in the context of understanding consequences of trauma - including captivity - and trauma recovery (190). However, until Orange, no analyst thought to engage the meaning of these experiences as described by Schreber in his *Memoirs*.

Orange notes that researcher's discussions subsequent to Freud gradually enabled additional information about Schreber to be brought forward such that we now have extended understanding and empathy for Schreber's, in fact, tragic story and not only a characterization of psychotic symptoms.

Lothane, for example, eventually goes so far in his empathy with the patient as to interpret Schreber's doctor, Flechsig, as having committed "soul murder on Schreber by assisting

Schreber's wife in having him declared incompetent" (Orange 190). This can be seen to be all the more tragic as Orange's reading of Schreber is that he was suffering from post-traumatic stress (PTS), and the nature of the therapeutic/medical environment in which Schreber found himself when he had his psychic break exacerbated his symptoms of psychic fragility because they mimicked the circumstances of his initial traumas. The institutional environment and his being physically confined, sometimes with restraints, extended the legitimacy of Schreber's perception that "miracles" and experiments were still being performed on him. In other words, the medical environment triggered memories and experiences of earlier childhood traumas at the hand of his father. He came to feel that he could not escape being medicalized and restricted.⁴⁰

Today psychotherapists recognize that traumatic memories can be triggered by contemporary stresses, which is often characterized as a kind of convergence disorder. When this happens I have found that, in reasonably evaluated circumstances, offering the explanation that earlier traumatic memories and feelings can be triggered by present-day stresses can be of comfort and sometimes support to the suffering patient. In some instances, it is relevant to acknowledge that the oddity and severity of their present emotional experiences can be explained by traumatic experiences being brought into the present by an injured psyche (that in the present can re-access initial or earlier traumas). It can be reasonable to share this information with patients because it is now well documented that triggered historical trauma responses can seem confusingly real to the patient in the present (Herman 12-14, 52-56). In contemporary trauma therapy it is taken as a given that it can help the patient to know that the present symptoms confirm the reality of past traumatic experiences. In some instances, post-trauma convergence symptoms can also provide insight into the specific nature of earlier traumas. An unexpected experience of confinement, for example, might trigger memories and feelings of being confined and abused in the past. Similarly, where there is a fire or burning trauma, the sight of a flame might cause a patient who lived through a fire to recall that early terrifying experience.

We have already seen that documented historical characterizations demonstrate, theoretical biases can prevent an adequately full understanding of a patient and their experiences. Freud's

⁴⁰ I have created this term to denote the individual becoming a reified commodity of a medical paradigm or system. This is to say that Schreber experienced that he could not escape being interpreted through medical tests and paradigms.

notably diagnostic orientation, for example, took the interpretation of Schreber's experiences only so far. Moreover, Freud's interpretation might have itself exacerbated Schreber's psychotic experiences because Freud did not move beyond, or into, interpreting the apparent irrational behaviour, paranoia and fear of Schreber's incarcerated behaviour. He did not, in this case, fully examine the fear behind Schreber's behaviour. Thus, the historical reality is that once diagnosed as having psychosis, Schreber was restricted in his movements, sometimes with restraints, and these impositions on his personal freedom were reminiscent of his childhood traumatic experiences. We can speculate now that these experiences were at the root of the flashbacks to which Schreber earnestly attempted to give voice. In other words, the institution was not helpful as much as re-traumatizing. We can ascertain from his *Memoirs* that what triggered deeper psychosis and frustration for Schreber was not only the feelings of being experimented on — again — he also found himself in spaces reminiscent of his earlier experiences of not feeling understood or respected by his tormentors. He felt that the people around him were not respecting him as a person, and he felt as though he were being treated like an object.

We can speculate that Schreber was not encouraged to make these associations, and generate his own (other than God justified) insights into his reactions. He was not encouraged to understand why such memories might be particularly disempowering in his incarcerated circumstances. Instead, his experiences and emotions were interpreted as illegitimate and named as psychotic. Thus, Schreber was stuck in the only interpretative realm that made sense to him, the realm of trying to understand why "God" was doing this to him.

When we look at a patient's behaviour with them and seek to find meanings to their stories, we are looking for an interpretive coherence, which can also be referred to as subjective coherence. In such instances we look at how these experiences and behaviours might make sense to the patient (in so far as the patient is able to integrate sufficient relevant information about their behaviour). In the philosophical approach being described in this chapter, we can acknowledge theoretical biases when relevant (with the client or ourselves). We can also aim to reflect back to and investigate with the client the experiences the client presents for investigation. In describing, aiming to understand, and be with patient's experiences, we can then look into the patient's emotions and support them, where possible, in figuring out the deeper and true motivations behind their particular behaviours and attitudes to life.

If we make the theory choice to read Schreber's *Memoirs* from an emotionally relating perspective — i.e., a perspective that looks at Schreber's own description of how he relates to his world and people — and if we look at his self-proclaimed feelings about himself and the mere fact of his memoir, then we can also put a story together about Schreber from his perspective. It is a slightly different story than that constructed by Flechsig and Freud.

In this empathetic interpretation we would note that Schreber's relational experiences included seeing his mental health attendants as persecutors and Dr. Flechsig as “unmanning” and murdering him. Early in his treatment he writes repeatedly of being misunderstood. Then, as readers we can see Schreber's frustration at both not being understood and at being in this particular predicament. Eventually he gives into psychosis as he begins to try and make sense of why he experiences people, including his father and psychiatrist, as not being able to understand him. Thus, typical of a psychotic adaptation, he attempts to explain his pain in terms of “God” and “Order of the World.”

Misunderstood and classified a “hopeless” case by his wife and doctor, Schreber gives in his memoirs strong indications that he felt abandoned, and at times, a sense of a complete loss of control. Orange writes that as “Both as a child and a patient he felt abandoned, supported, and invalidated (in his terms, misunderstood) in his extreme distress. In descriptions that pertained to his mental health incarceration and his childhood Schreber talks of feeling like a guinea pig and being “a subject in endless experiments” ”(198). There is evidence that he felt there was maliciousness in people not understanding him such that their not understanding him reflected their effort to destroy his reasoning.

During his last months in Flechsig's clinic Schreber began to experience the expectation of sexual abuse. He found himself trying to give his experience of his “bad nerves” over to a wiser God. Orange speculates that this ideation about having to “give over” — as represented in “his fantasy about how lovely being a woman passively succumbing to intercourse might be” (199) — are about the consequences of not being understood, and historical experiences of confinement and invasive physical experimentations. For Orange, Schreber's fantasies are more about traumatic adaptation than they are, as Freud's theories suggest, about Schreber's conflicted homosexuality.

Orange's perspective facilitates a kind of self-psychology in which what is considered worthy of evaluation are the patient's relational experiences, i.e., how the patient sees himself in relation to others. We see so many instances in which Schreber sees himself as "helpless and un-free, not protected" and vulnerable (33-34). He also sees himself as fragmented. There is evidence that he thinks he is "stupid" and variously engages in disassociations. Notably too, Schreber seems unable to express sadness for himself, which in and of itself, can be seen as an indication of disassociation and/or adaptation to deprivation of emotional support. When taken in historical context, it emerges as likely that these habitual experiences and emotional adaptations are traceable to the environment and documented experiences of his early childhood.

Yet, notably in terms of his self-restoration and resilience, Schreber's *Memoirs* are significant evidence of his efforts to restore himself as a person. Writing about his "nervous" experiences is Schreber's attempt to rescue himself from the torment of what we would now call flashbacks to memories of his father's sleep deprivation and physical and sexual torture. We can speculate now that the abuse was of such severity that Schreber adapted by giving over to the pain and aimed to experience a kind of "soul voluptuousness."

Through the trajectory of the history of interpreting Schreber, we can see how uncritically held scientific empiricism, and specifically Freud's dogmatic instinct theory, could limit the quest for best possible understanding. A limited theory could easily only identify what is wrong from a diagnostic perspective, but fail to work with the patient's own self understandings to make sense of the confusions with and for the patient.

The theory choices advocated here are not limiting but rather expansive. Orange also affirms that we ought to learn from the Schreber case to "hold our theories lightly" in our effort to understand. (Later we will see how this relates to the principle of fallibilism). In so doing, we come to see in a robust sense that the healing process is a "process of making sense together" (Orange 205). When the listener's aim is not necessarily to pathologize or diagnose, but rather to take the time to understand, (i.e., to listen so as to understand, to listen in the emotional realm, to listen empathetically then to explore those claims) so that *psychological truth* can be established together, we can argue that there are better results for the patient. As the Schreber case demonstrates, as humans we can be so resistant to seeing the truth of our own shadow natures and emotions that there can be a tendency to only pathologize or diagnose dysfunction, which

relates to an unwillingness to engage in the deeper uncomfortable truths that lie behind some common symptoms of psychic illnesses.

As we have seen, when Orange applies principles of psychoanalytic understanding and an intersubjective, empathy-based perspective to Schreber's story, what emerges is much less the demented paranoid patient described by Freud and Flechsig, and more a man suffering from PTSD symptoms as a result of being tortured and confined by his father's medical experiments when he was a child. Orange's empathetic interpretation of Schreber's experiences presents a story in which a psychiatric patient is attempting to share what is coherent to him in the face of his trauma resurfacing. Granted, understanding Schreber might not come easily given predominant social conventions around communicating one's innermost conflicts and feelings. Moreover, the challenges in understanding Schreber are exacerbated because some of his memories are almost too painful, horrific, or emotional to discuss or represent explicitly or with ease; thus, he describes his own condition symbolically and metaphorically. In this painful context of coping, when looked at through Orange's interpretive eyes, Flechsig and Freud are more tormentors to their patient than healers.

As indicated, Orange ends her book on epistemology with this story because she intends it as a cautionary tale. Schreber's case is an example of what happens when we do not listen well, when practitioners are more fearful or dogmatic than they are seekers of knowledge. The partial, projected, fear-based misunderstanding of another's psychology by some practitioners has been detrimental to many suffering psyches. For example, arguably Freud was so biased against, and alert to, homosexual tendencies as pathological that he failed to see Schreber's expressions of "giving over" as a traumatic consequence instead of conflicted sexual desires. These examples of attempting to regulate or punish another human being's emotion-based personal discomfort or uncritically held normative standards demonstrates that there can often be a deepening of injuries, especially when the misunderstandings do not, in a timely manner, resolve into deeper understandings.

Granted, Schreber did not tell his story in a conventionally coherent way. Nonetheless, we have good evidence that there was some psychological health as he was trying to come to terms with the "story" as he was telling it. We can look to this case of not listening, and of misunderstanding — certainly insufficient understanding — as a further unfortunate (and sometimes unwitting)

example of man's inhumanity to man. Perhaps, in looking at them we can be motivated by our human empathy not to get stuck at similar impasses and resistance, thus limiting our intellectual and emotional resources. By means of interpreting, finding meaning together, and trying to understand in a psychotherapeutic context, the philosophical approach provides theoretical distinctions that facilitate going deep into understanding emotions and motivations, and specifically aims not to be limited by normative biases.

For now we should note that the particular themes of being stuck at impasses of resistance and imposing rules or norms instead of understanding, are picked up again in Chapter Four. There we will have the opportunity to see that Butler's interpretation of Antigone's exile to living death is a story that metaphorically stands in contrast to the (broader) therapeutic effects of being able to tell your story and make mutually coherent meaning⁴¹ for understanding the realities encountered in living. In the Antigone story, the king's aim was, notably, to regulate, as opposed to understand his subject. Unfortunately, this is not unlike some psychotherapeutic practitioners in relation to their patients. This paper works against those inclinations.

Like Schreber and Antigone (see Chapter Four), survivors of chronic childhood sexual abuse often have the experience of being sentenced to a living death. Oftentimes their traumatically based coping behaviours are, practically speaking, out of sync with various levels of social convention. Due to being misunderstood, survivors often experience further isolation and so they can come to justify their own paranoia about standing out, being different, and not being understood. Thankfully for some survivors, experiences of being understood can afford breaks in experiences of isolation and ongoing dying because therapeutic understanding can lessen the pain of these experiences. Some of the tragedy of Antigone's story is the social and personal consequences of not being listened to, not being validated (in at least some ways being seen as reasonable), and not being witnessed. (Except, perhaps, by Sophocles' telling of her story). Like Antigone, we can speculate that Schreber's story only really comes to be understood long after his death.

⁴¹ In therapeutic context, coherence can be context determined as a feature of the discussion. And it is "mutual" because the stories and understandings evolve intersubjectively in the therapeutic context. "Intersubjective" and "co-created" are technical terms discussed later in this chapter.

The preceding paragraphs would constitute a number of claims that could be named as *psychological truths* if Schreber were here to evaluate the claims with us. As we will see, a feature of psychological truths as defined here is that they emerge from perspectival realism and are co-created by the student and teacher. In fact, to appreciate the significance of psychological truths, we need to examine a number of additional technical concepts. These concepts are the focus of much of the remainder of this chapter — developing technical distinctions so that we can make contributory and reasonable claims about psychological truths.

In the next two chapters I show how it is that if empathetic listening is not honoured, then neither the analysand nor the analyst can engage in the possibility of good enough understandings of the analysand's experiences to enable healthy psychological changes. In instances of limited empathetic engagement, psyche-based therapeutic effects are limited, diminished, or made impossible. Where there are not narrative breakthroughs based on emotional understanding, then psyches are left in their own states of living deaths. In other words, psychological understanding requires emotionally based empathetic understanding.

We will see that emotional understanding stands uniquely in its own domain. It is not like other empirical sciences where the involvement of the observer is less the issue than a claim's correspondence with perceived, or standardized, reality. In the realm of emotional understanding - the realm in which psychological truths evolve – what is required is subjective, and even *emotional*, investment from both parties (doctor and patient) to identify, describe, and learn about the inner emotional and psychological space that both student and practitioner are seeking to understand.

In developing the concept of psychological truths, this chapter extends the claim that philosophy, as a practice of reasoning and investigation, is particularly capable of offering a non-normative approach to understanding some of life's most challenging tragedies and problems. This claim is based on the theoretical distinctions elaborated here that are cornerstones of traditional philosophical practice.

Or otherwise stated, philosophy, as a practice of reasoning and distinction making, has the theoretical rigour and the specialization of epistemology to support non-normative insights into emotional understanding. Therefore, this chapter provides insight into predominant technical distinctions that support and edify philosophical practitioners in their therapeutic practices. It is,

in other words, an opportunity to look at the levels of theoretical distinctions that philosophers utilize in listening empathetically to a patient.

2.1 Hersch's Levels of Theoretical Distinction and Psychological Truth

In the therapeutic context, the philosopher's task is to assist the student in discerning truths that both enhance and support their life-specific learning. This is done by co-creating insights in domains of self-reflection or self-understanding that the analysand finds useful. Useful insights have an effect of improving the analysand's quality of life or their experiencing of *eudaimonia*. These insights, when they meet the criteria discussed in this chapter, will be called *psychological truths*.

To understand the specificity of psychological truths, the philosophical distinctions of ontology, epistemology, and validity will be shown to be useful. These distinctions, represented in Diagram One (p.81), are the theoretical cornerstones of this chapter and will be referred to simply as "theoretical distinctions." The distinctions are distinguishable in their addressing different categories of philosophical questions.

The significant differences between historically grounded philosophical counselling (PC) and other therapeutic modalities are both (i) the theoretical rigour that is foundational to effective listening, and (ii) the non-normative, investigative, approach to understanding human life, specifically emotions. To appreciate the sophistication and rigour of what is being called here the "non-normative approach," we need to orient ourselves to some of the key technical distinctions.

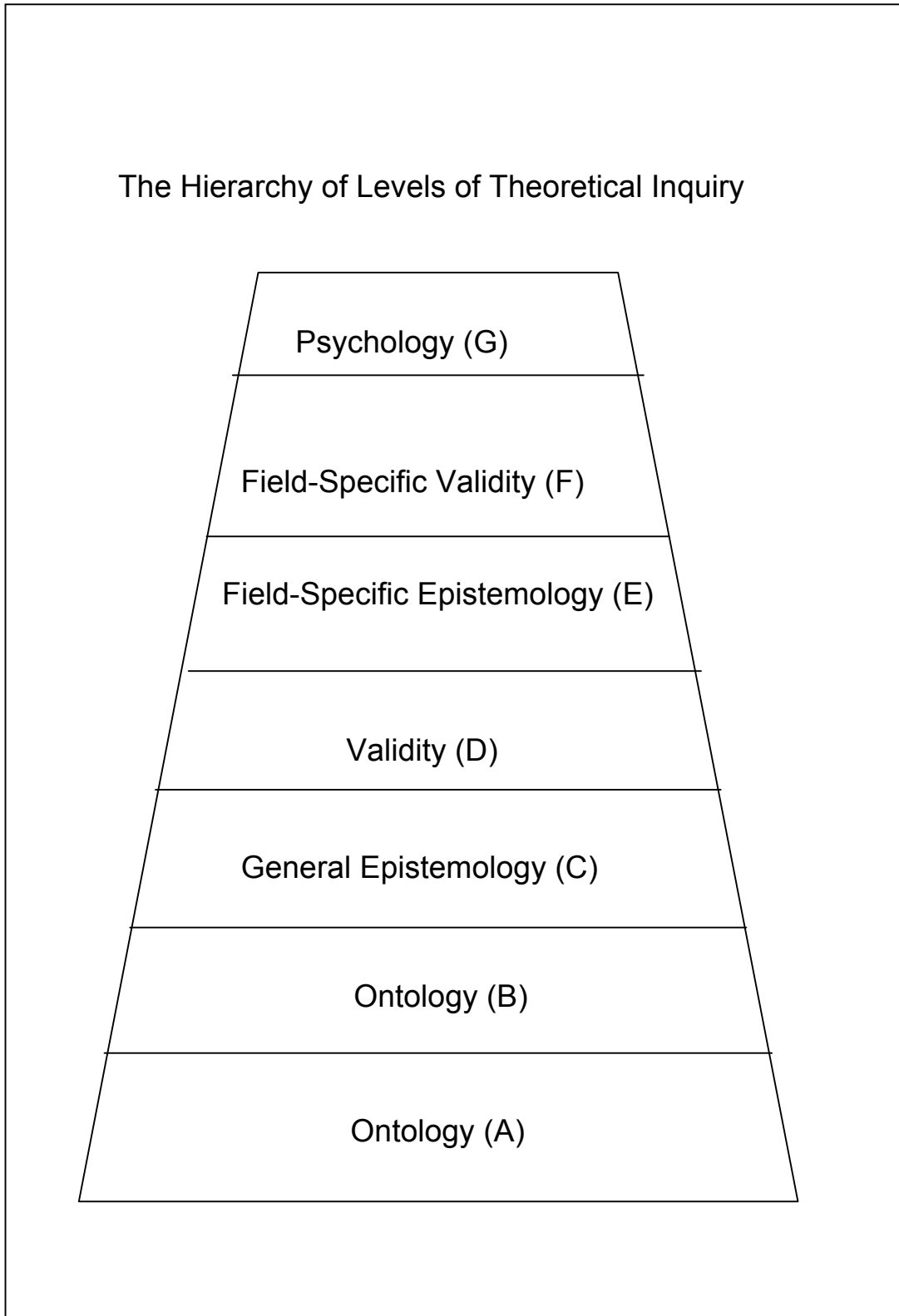
These are some of the most fundamental distinctions used by philosophers in their quests for truth and knowledge acquisition. Along the way we will see that normativity does come into play at many levels in seeking knowledge. Yet we know some biases are more knowledge limiting than others; and so, as (non-normative) knowledge seekers, what we want to do is seek as much

non-normatively biased knowledge as is reasonable.⁴² One way to do this is to be aware of our biases, and make theoretical choices that minimize the negative effects of our biases. Another way to work with inquiry biases is to acknowledge our biases where we can and then embrace the knowledge that comes about, given certain orientations.

We have chosen to be biased in favour of knowledge expansion. One way this can play out in the field of philosophical therapy is to attempt to discern the essences and facts of various human experiences and *then* consciously and, where possible and evidently relevant, intentionally apply or discern normative evaluations. Some might not want to apply normative assessments at all; they might just want to be with what *is*. But this, of course, begs the question as to whether we can ever get outside of our biases? In terms of talk therapy and the knowledge gained therein, the theory choices advocated in this chapter indicate that it is better for the patient's therapeutic results if, where possible, normativity can be brought into the conversation subsequent to the acquisition of information about the patient's experiences. We can speculate with the Schreber case that a better outcome might have been achieved had the practices of non-normative, or empathetic, listening been better understood and applied.

Having pointed to the Schreber case study as an example of why theory choice matters and why it matters that, as therapeutic listeners, we aim to create safe places in which we can share deep non-normative emotion-based information, let us now discuss Hersch's Levels of Theoretical Distinction (2003) so that there is a shared familiarity of terms and concepts, as well as an understanding of how knowledge can be acquired by non-normative means.

⁴² Normativity and biases are not synonymous terms. Norms can be biases. Biases are not necessarily norms. I use the terms in an introductory way here. Throughout the thesis, however, I use the term normativity with more precision.

DIAGRAM ONE: Theoretical Distinctions⁴³

⁴³ (Hersch 19)

Diagram One is Hersch's hierarchy of theoretical distinctions, which is ultimately for the purpose of substantiating his own psychological theory. While I do not intend to support Hersch's Beam-of-Light-Through-Time (B.O.L.T.T.) theory (discussed in section 2.9 of this chapter), I appreciate the thoughtfulness and usefulness of his levels of theoretical distinctions. In creating the hierarchy he recognizes in other than phenomenological instances, that (1) epistemological claims need to be coherent with the foundation of ontological claims, and that (2) validity adds credence to epistemological claims once those claims are identified. The hierarchy also recognizes that (3) field-specific epistemology and validity are dependent on concepts at the levels of general epistemology and validity, but are also their own levels and so have level-specific knowledge domains and validity criteria, and (4) psychological claims (Level G) make sense when coherent with, and not contradictory to, claims at earlier levels of ontology and epistemology. To orient ourselves to this kind of philosophical thinking we will attend to the distinctions and considerations at each level.

Each level is relevant to the philosophical practitioner, but the levels also support the idea that psychological truths represent very specific kinds of claims; we will see that such claims are not necessarily ontological, although they are epistemological, field-specific, psychological, and meet specific criteria of validity. They are phenomenological (which is to take a theory choice stance on Levels A-D) as well as subjective and relative, psychological truths that reflect perspectival realities and yet are true and powerful - i.e., have effects for the subject. Understanding these distinctions will assist us in appreciating the epistemological claims — or better, the field-specific and epistemological claims — at stake in philosophically oriented therapeutic work.

At this point it is relevant to explain why it is worthwhile, and indeed of pragmatic necessity, to develop the technical term of psychological truth. My reasoning is thus: If we are going to approach investigating human emotional experience with an explicit value of non-normatively and still want to be able to make valid truth claims, then we have to say what kinds of truth claims we are making and how such claims withstand the philosophical scrutiny of validity and so are possibly true.⁴⁴ I will demonstrate by the end of this chapter how, in the emotional

⁴⁴ See section 2.5 on Validity.

domains, the factors that influence psychological truths meet the criteria of coherence, fallibility, pragmatic effect, and perspectival realism. I will explain these terms and field-specific claims in the latter half of this chapter. At this point, we can engage one result of Hersch's research, namely, that this chapter sets us up to look in detail at the epistemological content of empathy and empathetic claims in Chapter Three.

By the end of this chapter, in addition developing and clarifying the concept of psychological truth, we will have developed some understanding of why it is the case that psychological truths best happen in domains of emotional understanding. This relationship between emotional understanding and psychological truth is represented in Diagram Two on Page 86.

In Chapter One we discussed the domains of emotional understanding as unique containers offered by the psychotherapeutic process. Here we understand that these containers are instantiated by taking as worthy of investigation human experiences and specifically, human emotional experiences. Through the remainder of this project we will continue to develop the idea of philosophical orientations with respect to emotional understanding. In domains of emotional understanding, a philosophically coherent account of psychological truth becomes both evident and useful.

This discussion also provides some cursory insights into how the philosopher has specialized abilities to evaluate claims and to focus on particular claims, or topics, so as to discern many relevant and useful distinctions and perspectives. In our contemporary society of specialized service this is exactly the kind of practical offering the philosopher has to contribute; i.e., applied distinction making so as to discern the "best" possible truths.

While other investigations might, and do, look at how philosophical ideals can be seen to manifest in living (including ascetic and moral ideals, for example.) Analytic philosophical discussions are more specific in that they work from perspectives that endorse logical analysis and distinction making. Thus practising philosophers can discern truths and create and substantiate insights into matters relevant to human living. It can be said then, that those who juxtapose philosophy to everyday living are perhaps intimidated by, or choose not to see, the potential focus, depth, and vigour for living that philosophical analysis provides. Regardless, throughout I show how a philosophical approach to therapeutic listening allows for unique and substantial kinds of *knowledge claims* about human life and experiences.

Let us return to the matter of justifications and criteria for truth claims that happen in a psychotherapeutic context; for many the idea of truth claims in a psychotherapeutic context can seem spurious. After all, and admittedly, all that we have to go on in a therapeutic context is what the analysand chooses to share with the practitioner, and the practitioner's interpretations based on listening and theoretical understandings. Unto themselves these can seem flimsy criteria for truth.

However, for serious practitioners, concerns about truth and reasonableness are ongoing considerations that have real consequences in terms of therapeutic outcomes. Towards the end of his chapter on field-specific validity, Hersch, having gone to considerable effort to describe the psychotherapeutic domain, writes,

[T]he truths of the psychotherapy situation are seen as emergent within and relative to this particular situation. This means the experiences, feelings, so observations, and interpretations made within psychotherapy (as a field specific or as a particular, defined frame of reference) can only properly be understood as within or relative to this specific context.... This is again analogous to the physicist's position described earlier; physicists too much acknowledge the contextualized limitation of the data of their specific field of study. (149)

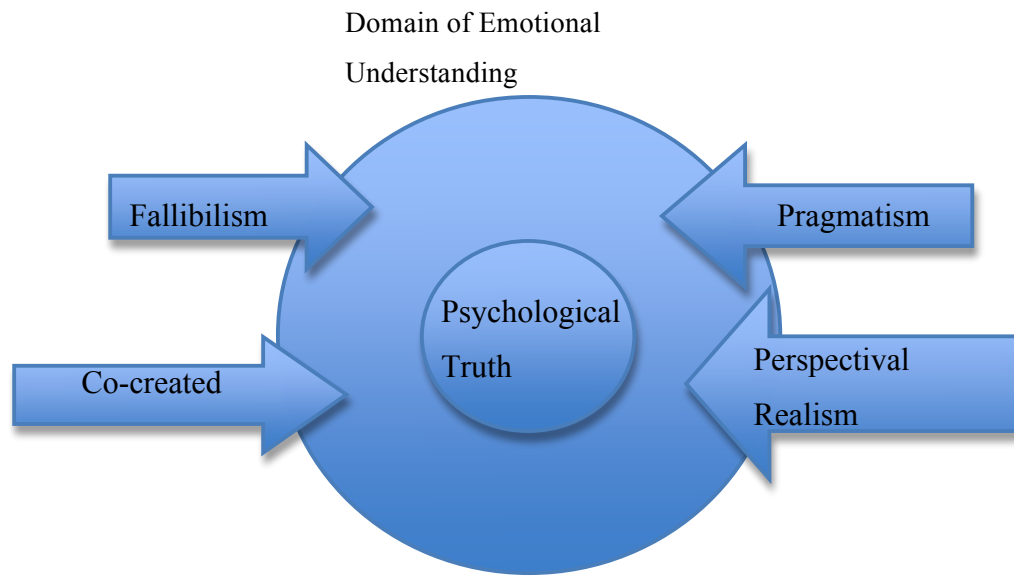
Thus, although context-specific, the truths of the psychotherapeutic realm are no less true than those truths in other fields of science. They are, however, true by different means. So it is reasonable to claim that psychotherapy is a kind of science insofar as it aims to discern truths within a particular field of study. Moreover, I am claiming that in the PC context the truths discerned can be named psychological truths. I give an accounting of how this kind of truth is given and how such truths meet criteria of validity. In so doing, we will also have to note the limits and the extent of psychological truth claims. Yet we will also see that tangible results in terms of quality of life can be argued to come from these kinds of claims that, at the very least, orient towards truth.

Accordingly, Diagram Two, which follows (p.86), represents a summation of the theoretical claims that will be substantiated in this chapter. We will consider that psychological truths are generated in domains that aim for emotional understanding (which can be seen to pertain to

Levels E and F of the Levels of Theoretical Inquiry in Diagram One, p.15). In this chapter and the next, we will see that emotional understanding pertains to a particular kind of reasoned coherence, which applies to Field Specific Validity F and Psychology G. I identify these truth claims and present them as influenced by perspectival realism (that can be discussed with respect to levels A-G), as subjectively co-created (Psychology G), and also as valid because they are subject to fallibilism (Field-Specific Validity F); and they need to be seen as useful by the co-creators, which occurs at Level G (Psychology) and Level E as field specific epistemology- i.e., phenomenological knowledge. This also pertains to a kind of pragmatism that can be argued to be relevant at Levels E - G. By elaborating and applying these levels of theoretical distinctions, we will see, psychological truths meet criteria that allow us to determine the validity of claims in the psychological domain. Once familiarized with the basic philosophical terminology, a practising philosopher might differentiate psychological truths from other kinds of truth claims. A difference in the use of philosophical distinctions is elaborated in two approaches discussed in section 2.6; one approach references psychological truth and the other, truth in a court of law.

As noted, Diagram Two (p. 86) represents the particular forces that will be argued and presented as relevant to discerning psychological truths. What is not represented well in this diagram is that there are other forces that influence the domain of emotional understanding, including (and significantly) the patient's sense of safety in the therapeutic environment and the emotional relationship between patient and practitioner. However, the point of emphasis in this diagram and this chapter is that these four forces are of particular relevance to *psychological truth*.

Diagram Two: Domain of Emotional Understanding and Psychological Truths



Another way of considering what happens in the psycho-therapeutic domain is to see the arrows in the diagram as forces that constitute domains of emotional understanding in which psychological truths are co created. When the four criteria are met then psychological truth is achieved. And, the philosophical distinctions enable us to discuss and differentiate *kinds* of truth.

Hersch's (2003) "Levels of Theoretical Distinction" are differentiated with intentional relevance to the psychotherapeutic practitioner who is not necessarily versed in the breadth and

applications of philosophy.⁴⁵ But Hersch's work is also relevant to this project because his discussion about the distinctions would be generally accepted and used almost universally by practising philosophers, for example, as tools of distinction making to refine and develop their various arguments and inquiries. Fluidity and ease at applying these distinctions are therapeutically effectual and are crucial to philosophical thinking.

Let us return to the aim of arguing that “psychological truth” is one of those concepts that can enhance our understanding of human experiences. Such position can be strengthened by appreciating that the concept has a great deal to do with the *unique context* in which psychological truths are experienced and in which they evolve. Clinical evidence show that psychological truths evolve out of a process of emotional understanding that is analytic, investigative, and empathetic; so there is much that *is unique* to this domain. (For example in contrast to the everyday world, this domain is not focused on conformity or appropriateness but only on emotional experiences and understandings.) Philosophy's distinctions, or theoretical containers, both reasonably substantiate and benefit from these kinds of investigative processes.

Thus, in what follows I show how the particulars of a phenomenological approach include a willingness to understand another's emotions. Such an approach is characterized by an engagement with the psycho-physical individual, and more, the “spiritual” aspects — or what we can call, for now, motivational aspects — of the person.⁴⁶ These particulars make reasonable the argument that psychoanalytic understanding happens in a consciously intersubjective and co-created context.

It is true that some aspects of philosophers' practices were made dogmatic because the practices were effective. Indeed, many of the sciences have grown out of the more rigid and specialized aspects of philosophy's theoretical orientations; e.g., logic, epistemology, metaphysics, physics, mathematics, biology, astronomy. Each of these disciplines can be argued to have their origins in the mother of all sciences and disciplines — philosophy. It is notable that philosophy as a

⁴⁵ Philosophy proper, in the Western canonical sense, does entail being versed in the history of ideas from the pre-Socratics to contemporary philosophy as applied to various inter-disciplinary fields and with an understanding of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, and logic, as well as some analytic, pragmatic, and moral theory versatility.

⁴⁶ “Psychophysical Individual” (PPI) and “spiritual person” are very specific terms defined and used by Edith Stein, as we will see in Chapter Three in detail.

discipline has all of this contributory power and it yet advocates a call to reason, grounded in self-reflection and introspection, which as I will show here is not rigidly logical or dogmatic in its living application. At this time of relative adolescence of the disciplines of phenomenology and psychoanalysis, philosophy has the opportunity to use her tools to persist in generating a deeper understanding of what kinds of knowledges we can have in self-reflection.

As indicated in Chapter One, the practices of introspection encouraged here engage emotions as experiences and things to be investigated. Safe compassionate spaces for such introspection are mandatory if we are really going to understand ours, and another's, inner motivations. But if safety, exploration, and introspection are given priority, then what counts as trustworthy? What exactly in this new realm can we trust? What can we know from human experiences? Are human experiences trustworthy?

The psychotherapist and phenomenologist think they can be. To answer this in a manner that does justice to millennia of philosophical thinking, let us make a couple more points about the significance of these claims prior to turning to a discussion of Hersch's theoretical distinctions.

The first point is that when working towards psychological wholeness, such an aim cannot be achieved if there is not some coherent and reasonable standard of truth, as well as a commitment to avoid self-deception and various false consciousnesses, wherever possible. This is why I spend a fair portion of this chapter reviewing and discussing philosophy's technical distinctions pertaining to kinds of truth and kinds of validity related to truth claims.

As the case study evidence reveals, and as will be discussed in more detail later, a large percentage of survivors' aim to "make sense" and recover from trauma typically includes a rather scientific-like and rigorous assessment of truths or facts as best they know them, and a seeking of general coherence. A willingness to aim to identify and understand personal truths is a significant feature of effective psychotherapeutic process. In the end, we will be able to reasonably claim that psychological truth (which meets a more rigorous validity criteria than simply personal truths) does take a stand on ontology when relevant, and definitely does take various stances on epistemological points and perspectives, especially with respect to the technical, but watered-down, concept of validity. It will also be seen to be the case that while psychological truths do pertain to the field of psychology, they also enable certain "field-specific" claims.

The second point is that as we proceed to discuss the philosophical levels of ontology and epistemology, we will see that philosophical understanding is not at all devoid of evaluations of truthfulness. On the contrary, the distinctions pertaining to truth are philosophical fixations. In short, philosophers frequent the question, “What is true in this circumstance?” Consequently, for the philosophical practitioner, discussions of truthfulness do not ever really become a non-issue; however, at this point a traditional account of truth is not a fixation so much as it is a tool that supports this practically oriented examination of the human honouring aspects of empathy and a phenomenological understanding of another human being (which, as has been noted, is a significant feature of the healing effect of psychoanalytic understanding). In this paradigm our criteria for evaluating truthfulness, as well as the kind or level of truthfulness relevant to the experiences we aim to evaluate, are variable. Obviously we need to elucidate these interpretative variances as well as discuss the theoretical motivations behind them, which is aim in summarily presenting Hersch’s levels.

Briefly, the details and particulars of “honouring and understanding,” although initially a simple and accessible concept, have many potential levels of elaboration. These elaborations can be thought of as precise and elegant tools for carving “meaning” out of, and with, “being.” In this context we can better understand an eminent clinician’s reference to the therapeutic practitioner as an “observing instrument” (Kohut 1971, 62). Throughout this chapter I elaborate on this notion of the clinician as (human) instrument as well as extend the metaphor into the more subjective realm of trying to describe what an understanding instrument might do and experience. So, a PC approach can also be seen as an extension of thinking about, and honouring, others.

The kinds of claims and arguments I elucidate here aim to be both factual and effectual in that I not only explain methodology, but there is also a level of aiming to understand that has salutary effects for the student with respect to their quality of life. This approach is why I think it is justifiable to claim that the practices of philosophical distinction making contribute to understanding of meaning, and meaning making.

Edwin Hersch’s “Levels of Theoretical Distinctions” are differentiated with intentional relevance to the psychotherapeutic practitioner who is not necessarily versed in the breadth and applications of philosophy. But his work is also relevant to this project because his distinctions

would be generally accepted and used almost universally by practising philosophers as tools of distinction making so as to refine and develop their various arguments and inquiries. Thus, fluidity and ease at applying these distinctions are therapeutically effectual and they are another set of tools crucial to this kind of applied philosophical thinking.

Obviously, while I cannot and do not have the desire to speak for all philosophers, I think the following summations about the philosophical approach are legitimate. It is reasonable, for example, to note that the philosopher goes about thinking about a case study on many different levels and from different paradigms for the sake of evaluation, understanding, and gaining knowledge. We will see through this chapter, as well as the third chapter, that most contemporary philosophers are well versed in discussions about different paradigms and different levels of evaluation.

Clinically speaking, talking about and using these distinctions with clients at the appropriate times can have the good effect of building shared paradigms, or even moments, of understanding by acknowledging points that we agree on and points upon which we can debate so that we can aim to discern “better” truths for the patient. In other words, working with these theoretical levels of distinction is a helpful tool in identifying assumptions of shared therapeutic interactions. At different levels of therapeutic work, defining and identifying the kinds of truths one is working with, for, and towards, can be affirming and satiating for the student who is aiming to make meaningful sense of experiences that are not necessarily commonly or easily understood.⁴⁷ Once the distinctions become accessible, individuals (client and practitioner) can, if they choose, develop their own thinking and evaluations in particular directions. For example, in the third chapter I evaluate a phenomenological approach to empathy as grounds for the particular kinds of epistemological claims one makes in a therapeutic context. With this in mind, orienting ourselves by using Hersch’s distinctions will give us shared points of reference useful for better understanding how many practitioners see theory as not only influential, but as entirely relevant to understanding what happens in therapeutic contexts. In other words, theory choice matters. Practitioner’s perspectives at the different levels influence theory choices and so, evidently, therapeutic outcomes.

⁴⁷ See Section 4.0 (p. 90) for my discussion of the relevance of discerning truths for various trauma survivors.

Another reason for choosing Hersch's "Levels of Theoretical Inquiry" is that they are useful in exposing assumptions and presuppositions that are rampant in human interactions. Such distinctions move us towards making assumed knowledge claims explicit. While I do not wish to delve into a detailed discussion of the unconscious, we will see that applying such distinctions seems to allow the unconscious to become increasingly conscious, i.e., brought into conscious awareness. By this I mean that often when there is an application of these levels of distinctions to one's thoughts, then assumptions of thought and interaction are brought into the open and are thus available for additional discussion and distinction making.

It is important to acknowledge that, to a large extent, I can only briefly sketch out and point to the relevant philosophical issues and questions; thus, this discussion is intended only to be an introduction that characterizes the domains of questioning that mark distinctions between the levels. After all, ontology, metaphysics, and epistemology are such rich fields of philosophical research and inquiry that, due to time and space constraints, we can only point to core issues in each domain. Keep in mind the point that ease and familiarity with these distinctions will assist us in facilitating useful discussions about empathetic listening and understanding. Eventually we will have the opportunity to note that such distinctions will be additionally relevant to thoughtful investigations of personal agency (fourth chapter) and claims that PC can offer reasonable hope (fifth chapter).

2.2 Level One: Ontology A

Hersch begins his hierarchy of theoretical levels by attempting to address the most basic assumptions inherent in much of human interaction and understanding, namely assumptions about "being" in the world. The questions investigated at this level include whether there is a real world that exists as real and true independent of humans thinking about it.

Generally, in response to the fundamental question of mind-independent reality, one can categorize their belief system as being either a (i) realist, (ii) idealist, or (iii) relativist. For the realist, there are things that can be potentially known. As such, there are things that *can be* known independent of whether or not they *are* known. Their beginning point is simply that there are, in fact, real things out there to be known. For the idealist, there is no mind-independent reality; what we perceive as real is dependent on our perceiving it. The relativist, by contrast,

holds that there may or may not be mind-independent reality. Reality is not necessarily mind-independent but, rather, our experience of reality *is* dependent on how an individual experiences it. Extreme relativism does not allow that any one person's position holds weight over another's because there is no objective or more objective reality that holds weight or value over another's position.

I propose that everyday reasoning, as used by most practitioners and applied to these considerations, reveals that if there is mind-independent reality, then that creates the possibility that there is something knowable. This is not to say definitively that there is mind-independent reality but, rather, to acknowledge that when one proceeds in aiming to have a meaningful conversation wherein we make claims about things in the world, then one is often tacitly taking a position on the claim that there is a reality unaltered by human perception, and that it is knowable.

We will see that phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches sidestep these kinds of claims about reality. These approaches do not make any claims about mind-independent reality and yet they are quite therapeutically relevant. However, it is important for the purposes of our progressive proceeding and understanding to continue step-by-step through these levels of theoretical distinction making so that we can note that ontological assumptions and the conscious application of such assumptions can have therapeutic and practical relevance. So we will have to return to the phenomenological perspective later.

The preceding paragraph contains a claim that is grounded in ontological realism, and it characterizes a point upon which I concur with Hersch, namely that the practitioner and philosopher have to proceed in order to make coherent truth claims (at least some of the time) with the assumption that there is a mind-independent world that can be evaluated. This position entails that not all relationships to mind-independent reality are equally valid. Moreover, my reasoned actions in the world are evidence that there has to be reality in truth beyond my truth because I engage in learning and teaching, which are acts of seeking out *better* and more accurate truths. I do these things because I believe that my thinking about things is not the only and ultimately valid perspective. Acts of communication and evaluation assume that some representations of reality are better and clearer representations than others. Given these approaches to learning and communication, it could be argued that I expose my assumption and

bias towards ontological realism. It is also likely that this is a position shared by most investigators when they are not being phenomenological or hermeneutic in their orientation.

These claims about how we function as if there is mind-independent reality are reasoned from everyday practice. Practical human action reveals that we act as if we *can* obtain truer relationships with, or representations of, mind-independent reality. So, while we cannot know for certain whether there is mind-independent reality because our experiences of reality are mind-dependent, we can function as if there is mind-independent reality. We act, at least in part, as if there is mind-independent reality because we cannot experience reality independent of our mind, and we experientially deal with the pervasiveness of reality and the unexpected surprises in our experiences of reality. In other words, experience reveals that humans proceed and function in the world as if there is mind-independent reality.

Consequently, it is reasonable to claim there has to be reality or truth beyond *my* truth. This is evidenced by, for example, my engagement in learning and teaching; I engage in these practices because I believe that there are standards of evaluation and learning that make it reasonable to note that some claims are more valid and useful for human edification than others, and that additional understandings can be obtained. When dealing with extreme cases, Hersch points out that the therapist has reasonable grounds for claiming that the psychotic, for example, is not correct in their assessment that a “special radio receiver is implanted in their brain” (30). The reasonable grounds are that the therapist believes there is a verifiable mind-independent-reality. This belief allows the practitioner to discern, test, and variously scrutinize the kinds of claims being made by a patient. If extreme relativism were to reflect our basic ontological assumptions, then we would have no grounds for debating different positions and extending a standard of care, or even an aspiration for enhanced well being, to a patient. Precisely because we are able to evaluate beliefs with evidence in what we take to be the real world, we have some grounds upon which to encourage less well patients not to go their own way and cease treatment. Because we hold a position of ontological realism we can reasonably proceed to debate and discuss the validity of claims that pertain to any of the other theoretical levels.

While having only enumerated the first level of Hersch’s distinctions, it should already be evident that these distinctions are the very kinds of distinctions that, when applied in a therapeutic listening context, allow the practitioner to extend the directions and dimensions of

our listening. In other words, knowing where you stand on an ontological level affects your theory choices and so your listening capacities. Additionally, in listening the therapist does not just make sense of the patient's claims, she also seeks to identify what ontological assumptions make particular claims coherent for the client.

For instance, in such listening practices the listener can discern the level of the client's claim, and from these claims we can construct key aspects of their world view using these philosophical tools as points for reflection and for further clarification. For example, it might be relevant to say to a client, "From what you've shared, it appears to be that you are a realist. And because you consider there to be a mind-independent reality, we can mutually engage in a process of verifying certain facts about the world and likely relatively objective facts about *you in the world*." (By this means the therapist develops a shared point of reference for therapeutic work.)

This level of reasoning and truth evaluation can be seen applied in the case of a man in his mid-40s who was having consistent challenges in relating to women. His challenges were such that the women he spent time with would often walk away offended. In this case, I was able to gain some leverage with him and thereby challenge his thinking processes or assumptions by appealing to his strong sense of realism. In our conversation it was evident that his thinking kept looping around to what were apparent to him as his intentions; he would not/could not accept responsibility for how his words and behaviours affected others, independent of his intentions. In other words, in this situation his references to reality were entirely mind-dependent (i.e., his intentions). Thus, using a distinction that was based in ontology, I was able to posit a point of leverage to challenge his thinking habit by saying something like; "I propose to you that it is objectively the case that you offend the women around you by some of your remarks and gestures; even though, granted, on a subjective level you don't understand yourself to be offensive, nor do you have any intention to offend. So let's see if we could observe how you are in the world, as if we were gaining factual evidence about you." Within a short period of time the client was able to see that his behaviour did have an offensive effect and it did *appear*, from a potential outside perspective, that he lacked empathetic engagement with the women with whom he was spending his time. It was relevant that his issues were with "women" because he didn't recognize a difference between the sexes in most social or communicative situations, yet clearly sexually and physically he did notice a difference. For example, he would say to these women

the same off-colour things he would say to “the boys at the pub.” His gestures and comments were not generally respectful of women, and tended to reduce women to sexual objects.

Therapeutically speaking, this case study could have been approached from many other perspectives; we could have, for example, also looked at why this man’s intentions did not match up with his real behaviour. Or, we could have looked at why his intentions held to a different standard of reality than verifiable real-world observations. We also could have pursued the evident solipsism of his approach. I should note that as far as my practice goes, I would rather pursue investigating the client’s implicit issues with women based on aiming to understand his emotional and experiential self, which would amount to evaluating truth on the Psychological Level (Level G). However, this particular client, at this point in his supported self-reflective practice, had very strong ego–defense mechanisms (i.e., he appeared to think quite highly of himself but actually was defensive and insecure at deeper levels) and considered himself to be a thinker; thus, I decided to go with the initially “easier” (i.e., less affronting, confronting, and more “objective”) approach of appealing to his scientific-like mind to create shared understanding and experience of how I might gently and periodically guide him to look at things differently. In this case I felt that I was easing him into being open to getting results; we could make intellectual or thinking corrections without, yet, having to challenge his fragile ego. Subsequent to our pursuing a more intellectual approach, I made it clear to him that my larger aim for our work together was not only for me to understand his thinking and perhaps challenge some of his blind spots, but that I also wanted to aim to understand his experiences in the world as well as his emotional self. So, in this particular case, by this “more objective” means we built a basis for deeper therapeutic work.

Thus, on occasion it is worth recognizing that practitioners may take stronger stances with respect to ontological realism. I only mean to give the reader a taste of how ontology is relevant. Such positions depend on the context and the larger therapeutic aims. The issue of ontology, i.e., of evaluating reality and truth in therapeutic situations, is a rich domain for investigation. Yet the ontological issues are sidestepped by a phenomenological approach to listening. This is because a phenomenological approach is not about reality, so much as it is about experiences of reality. Such an approach would allow us to avoid having to make ontological claims, and does not, to my mind, mean that the more traditional considerations and standpoints need to be done away with. We will see that each of the theoretical levels of distinction have their place in aiming to

understand human conditions and experiences, as well as potential roles in building solid and shared bases for therapeutic understanding of the human condition.

Not all truths need to be evaluated in terms of their ontological assumptions. For example, hermeneutic discussions of truth do not take ontology as fundamental. They might, for example, say that there is a real mind-independent world *and* our truth claims are best arrived at by pragmatic investigation of a paradigm characterized best by relative truth that progresses along a continuum rooted in human experience, understanding, and meaning-making. In a hermeneutic approach there is no hierarchy or priority given to ontology, but rather priority is given to a shared practical understanding of the world — which is not necessarily an ontological claim. Or, yet again, another version of hermeneutics might determine that a truth is evaluated in terms of what it is practical to live by in a particular world — i.e., a truth that is pragmatically grounded and true enough, or true for us. This does not mean that this truth stands in necessary relationship to absolute truth. Yet, even if a theoretically hermeneutic approach makes sense and can be seen to be, to some extent, practical at this point in human evolution, we nonetheless can admit that scientists and investigators have used this idea of there being a real verifiable world out there as a tool for investigating being in the world. Whether a given practitioner supports the notion of ontology's place in a theoretical hierarchy or not, we can nonetheless note that this level of theoretical distinction making reveals ways of differentiating and understanding how distinct kinds of philosophical questions can be useful in differentiating the theoretical assumptions of an individual way of understanding the world.

There is another reason why Ontology A is relevant for psychological recovery: it matters to the client that neither the practitioner nor the client is just “making up” what counts as real. As we will see in our forthcoming discussions of trauma, the client benefits from knowing there can be stages and sound means of characterizing their experiences as real and grounded in truth. Such characterizations may or may not be ontologically grounded, but knowing the specifics or parameters of a truth claim also acknowledges that there can be objective standards for evaluation. For example, a flashback can be really happening but the specifics of the flashback are not happening in real time, although it may feel that way to the patient. Clients often benefit from knowing they can trust themselves and others, and having objective standards for evaluation assists in this process. Often practices of trust and honouring are based on some notion of realism and criteria of verification. The client can benefit from agreement on the

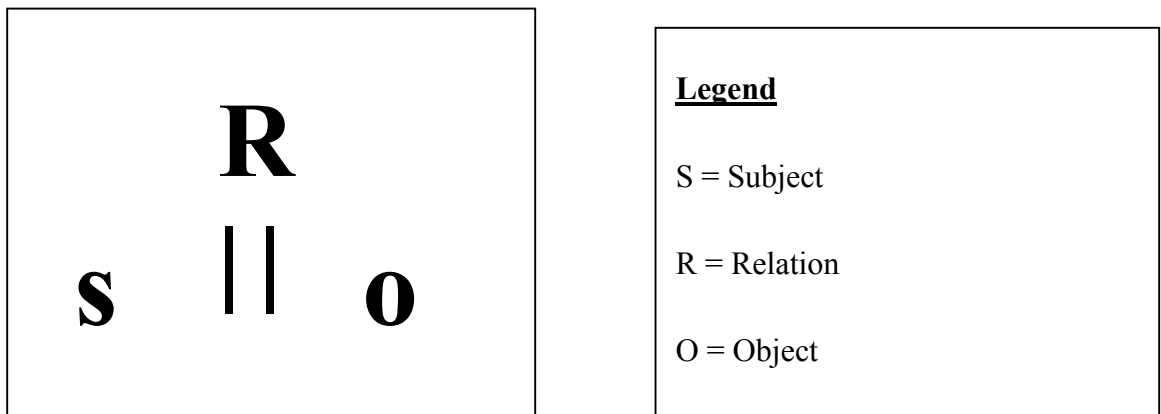
proposition that at least some of their experiences can be evaluated in the real world. For example, medical and academic records can often provide substantiating, or corroborating, evidence relevant to the childhood abuse. Substantiating evidence can reasonably moderate typical queries into whether clients can trust their memories. Conversely, in trauma recovery cases if the therapist were to take an investigative position of extreme relativism, the therapist may undermine the notion or level of credibility the client seeks. Because practitioners must to some degree be pragmatists, they generally can't afford to be extreme relativists. When one is trying to make sense of fragments (of a memory, or a self), there have to be verifiable points of reference upon which to build a coherent narrative. Yet again, it is also reasonable to note that in a phenomenological or hermeneutic paradigm we do not need to correspond experiences with evidence in the world; what matters is the validity and coherence of the experiences shared between the practitioner and client. But then a point in favour of ontological realism is that there can be shared features of our humanity as evidenced, at least in part, because “we” *relate* to “the world out there” and we can therefore *relate to each other about the perceived real world*.

Often in therapeutic work many of us have a shared assumption at theoretical level Ontology A that there is a real world out there that “we” relate to, acknowledge, or debate. The non-clinical philosopher, of course, notes that whereas in more theoretical contexts — i.e., not dealing with the quality and facts of human lives — debating and questioning basic ontological positions is certainly worth more discussion than can be offered summarily here. Nonetheless, we can see that even at this most fundamental level, the variable that is introduced in addition to “being” *is the recognition of a community, or at least a relationship between two people, who engage together to better discern reality and their thinking about their reality*. Practical convention has it that the more individuals who relate to, and can verify, a proposition about the “real” world out there, then the more reliable or “true” the proposition can be taken to be. And here we have already quickly slid into distinctions that relate to Hersch’s other theoretical levels of distinction; namely, Ontology B and Epistemology Levels A and B. It would now be useful to elaborate the distinctions that identify these levels.

2.3 Ontology B

The second theoretical level, Ontology B, moves from Ontology A by extending questioning beyond whether there is a world out there, to what is our relationship to reality? At this level, the “we” begins to be a variable that differentiates and matters more (than at level Ontology A). At this level of Ontology there is a shift in focus to the subject or subjects who relate to the world (i.e., the knowers). In Diagram Three, following, the traditional philosophical representation of how a subject relates to the external world is summarized (taken from Hersch, 40)

Diagram Three: Traditional Formulation of Subject Relating to Object



In the “S Relates to O Diagram” the acknowledgment of the ontological barrier is a symbolic representation of the possibility that each of us may relate to the world differently. In philosophical parlance it is noted that a given subject can characterize their relating to the world or an object feature of the world (object = O) as a dualist, monist, or pluralist. Or, as Hersch ultimately suggests with respect to therapeutic work, one can characterize their relationship to the world phenomenologically (i.e., how I experience the world). Nonetheless, what is distinctive of this level is the subject relating to the world and an identification of the variables of relating.

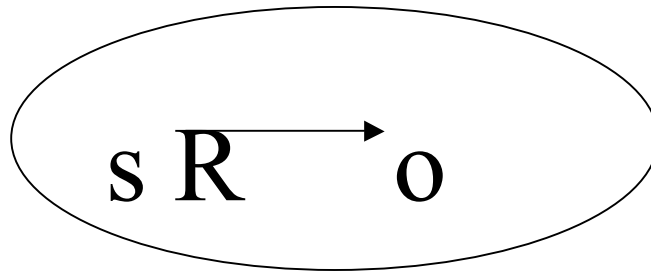
Let us take a moment to remind ourselves of some of the category distinctions at Level Ontology B. Dualists hold that the kind of thing thinking is such that it is a *different kind of thing* from things in the (material) world. For dualists, there are two kinds of reality — the thing itself, and thinking about the thing; i.e., they distinguish between the mental (sometimes call the “ideal”) world and the real (mind-independent) world. In this belief system it is common to talk about (i) the world independent of our thinking about it, and (ii) our thinking about it. By contrast, monists believe that our thinking of things is made up of the same kind of stuff, being (or nature), as the things being thought of — i.e., the thing in itself. Idealists can be monists insofar as they think that everything in the world is essentially our idea of the world. Finally, pluralists represent the third broad category of theoretical approaches to reality and our relationship to it. Pluralists hold that there are many kinds of reality including the world out there and the world inside; the ideal, the real, and at least one other kind of something else (perhaps the relating to the thing being thought of) that makes up kinds of realities in the world.

Hersch notes that many traditional and contemporary psychological models still rely on the essential dualism of the “Subject Relates to Object” model represented in Diagram Three (p.99) above. According to this traditional approach, what matters when collecting knowledge about a patient in clinical practice is the clinician’s relationship to the patient. In other words, the trajectory of inquiry pertains to how the psychologist (S) perceives and interprets (i.e., ||R) the patient (O).

By contrast, the phenomenological model could, in a cursory way, be thought of as assuming a kind of monism such that it matters not whether S and O are the same, or different, kinds of things (in the world). Rather, what matters is the “one” thing, the whole of the equation, i.e., *the experience of S Relating to O*. Thus, what becomes important in the phenomenological approach is not only a subject’s relationship to the object being studied, but the entire experience of subjects relating to an object in the domain of inquiry. Thus, for example, the therapist can ask the patient how they are experiencing what is happening in the therapeutic relationship, and the practitioner can offer their experiences of what is happening in the relationship as well, which creates a kind of inter-subjective space for evaluation. Given this approach the essential nature of being that may differentiate subject from object is not at issue. Rather, what is at issue is the subject’s relating to the object and the factors that affect that relating. In contradistinction to the traditional model, this can mean, for example, that (1) the clinician does not stand in objective

relationship to the patient, *but the therapeutic process* happens in this domain of inquiry and so involves the practitioner and not only the patient, and (2) there can be a recognition that the therapist and the patient participate in co-creating the (therapeutic) domain under investigation. In other words, in this therapeutic relationship the participants are not aiming to understand objective reality, but rather they aim to create claims that they can understand together. By contrast, in the traditional model what matters (solely) is the therapist's observations of the patient and their relating to the world.

Diagram Four: The Phenomenological Paradigm



(Hersch 57)

One criticism often levied against the traditional level of Ontology B approaches (i.e., monism, pluralism, dualism) is that those approaches fail to acknowledge that individual representations of the world are conveyed via language. Thus, we have to consider the possibility that language shapes how we experience and interpret the world. So it is very difficult to conceive of the essential thing, or the subject, as relating to the world outside of the paradigm of language. One argument to consider against the traditional dualistic approach is that the nature of language can make it very difficult to get to the essences of the object because language always gets in our way. We always see an object subjectively. It can therefore be difficult to know how well, purely, or objectively a subject relates to a given object.

To this concern as to many other ontological concerns, the phenomenological approach sidesteps many of the problems brought about by these distinctions, including the problem of seeing reality through the glasses of our language. In the phenomenological paradigm of understanding

ourselves, language is part of the whole experience of how a subject experiences their relating to an object, or more likely, their world.

Wanting to know how a patient relates to their experiences in the world is a theory choice. A phenomenological approach reflects particular theory choices on behalf of the practitioner. Yet what the two ontological levels also teach us is that having general ontological perspectives (like dualist, monist, pluralist) allows the philosopher to listen for the assumptions the client is making in “knowing” her world. At this level, theory choice does not pertain so much to what theory or theories the practitioner abides by; however, in being able to reference numerous theory choices the practitioner can discern what the patient’s (sometimes unconscious) assumptions are for how they organize, interpret, and come to know their experiences.

2.4 General Epistemology C

At Level C, the level of general epistemology, the theorist addresses the questions: What is our access to truth or knowledge in general, where can truth be found, and how is truth constituted? Given that knowledge is defined as true justified beliefs, then at this level the theoretical consideration can be cast in terms of whether truth or knowledge claims are accessible and verifiable by subjective, objective, or relative criteria. For example, it can be the case that truth claims can reflect objective claims that are discerned based on an individual’s subjective experience. In another context the same or a similar truth proposition can be validated relative to an individual or group. In yet other contexts, truth claims can be classified as objectively verifiable knowledge⁴⁸ depending on what criteria are met.

In these ways it makes sense that, generally speaking, epistemologists would say what counts as true depends on one’s approach to knowledge. Different kinds of knowledge can be differentiated by their means of acquisition and criteria for validity. There are different knowledge domains and there are distinct criteria for distinct kinds of claims in our discussions

⁴⁸ It could be said this way: In an Absolute truth paradigm: “S” is true or it is not. This is represented logically as “A or not A”. But hermeneutic or subjectivist paradigms might say that “A or not A” depends on how S is defined. Or in relativism, the criteria for truth can vary and so it’s not just a matter of “A or not A”; coherence and logical consistency may not be tools relevant to the relativist for evaluation.

about field-specific epistemology and validity (Section 2.5 in this chapter). For example, in obtaining knowledge about how you feel, knowledge is gained by subjective means; yet the content can, debatably, be made to become more objective the more you discuss it as an objective truth (within, say, a philo-therapeutic context). So the use of terms such as “subjective,” “objective,” and “relative” are descriptive of means and can also be used to make characterizations and suggestions about validity.

It is also worth noting that many epistemologists tend to recognize, or at least use as a pivotal point, the idea that the highest criterion of truth always has to be maintained as objective, universal, absolute, and logical. So, other “so called” truths — i.e, relative or subjective truths — are only (even conceptually) possible because we have the idea(l) and standard of objective and absolute truth, regardless of where one stands in the debates about Truth. This is a reasonable position for the epistemologist, especially if she is going to be able to evaluate truth; to take the idea, or the Ideal, as the standard in relation to which one can compare all other truths.

There are a great many points that could be raised here about general epistemology, especially those points pertaining to the concepts of subjectivity, objectivity, and relativism. However, we will have to be content with knowing that these terms are evaluative tools for the epistemologist and they will receive additional elaborations — which duly point their significance as philosophical tools. For example, Chapter Four looks at how evaluating one’s experiences pertain to human agency. For now, let us note this broad domain of theoretical distinction, namely that Epistemology C, which could also be named evaluating truth claims in terms of its potential relationship to the ideal concepts and experiences of Truth, allows us to develop general theories about knowledge claims and to therein categorize kinds of knowledge claims, for example, as subjective, objective, relative, absolute, or universal.

Epistemology is the study of what we know and how we know it. For epistemologists, traditionally knowledge has been defined as true justified belief(s). If a claim is only a belief, then it does not count as knowledge. Said claim also has to meet the criteria of truth to count as knowledge. As we will discuss, there are many ways to go about establishing truth. Empirical science makes use of a correspondence theory of truth and realist ontological assumptions, as well as objective epistemological ideals. A phenomenological account would be based more on a

coherence account of truth (to be discussed following) and would acknowledge the importance of subjectivities.

2.5 Validity (D)

The reason for going through Hersch's levels of theoretical distinction has to do with contributing the concept of psychological truth to contemporary discussions in PC. I have been explaining that to establish something as a true claim, that claim has to meet criteria that merit it being named as "true." Psychological truths are true because they meet some minimal standards of validity at both the levels of general validity (D) and field-specific validity (F). Thus, understanding and appropriately contextualizing the kind of validity claims one is making when claiming psychological truth adds merit to the work.

Like Hersch, I appreciate a theory that values logical consistency, coherence, and the avoidance of self-contradictions as signs of validity. These are some of the criteria to be considered when evaluating the validity of a psychological truth. As we proceed in developing the term "psychological truth" it is relevant to make a few points with respect to the term "validity."

In philosophy, "validity" typically refers to deductive arguments, and therefore validity carries particular logical weight. In the analytic paradigm of philosophy, validity refers only to arguments, never to propositions. Propositions can be true or false but arguments are valid or not. There are relationships between propositions or claims that are true and valid arguments, but any elaboration at this point would lead to a more complicated discussion. Suffice it to say that Hersch's use of the term "validity" refers to general criteria that would make an argument or position a reasonable one. He does not use the term "valid" in a strict analytic sense such that the validity of an argument is reflected in that argument's structure. Hersch's approach is more colloquial. At the level of validity, he addresses what makes a given claim about a person or psychology a reasonable one.

Thus, Hersch's identification of Level D is intended to address questions of how general knowledge is validated. Keeping in mind that "validation" in this context means reasonable (i.e., well grounded and correctly inferred from the circumstances), then from an epistemological perspective supported by valid arguments, proof of truth is the variable that differentiates *beliefs* from *knowledge claims*. Again, given that knowledge is defined as true justified beliefs then, in

this context, validity pertains to a claim being reasonably true given, good justification (i.e., the good justifications make the claims reasonably true). At Level D, the criteria for the truth of a given claim are discussed. Accordingly, theorists are likely to indicate their position about the validity criteria for assessing truth claims as being one where (i) coherence, (ii) correspondence, or (iii) pragmatism are the criteria sufficient for assessing the validity of a truth claim.

The coherence position holds that a given claim or proposition is required to possess both internal logical consistency (i.e., that the claim isn't self-contradictory or self-refuting) and that the claim is logically coherent with other truth claims or propositions associated with the perspective or world view that supports the claim in question. This perspective can allow for subjectivism and relativism. In other words, subjective truths can be coherent for a given subject, yet the same claim might not be true for another subject (whether on account of the claim not fitting with the other claims of that different subject, or whether due to what the other subject experiences). Relativism holds that what is true is true for a particular (relative) person or experience. Nonetheless, within a relative perspective, if coherence were to be evaluated, a still reasonable set of truths would have to cohere with each other to have a valid relative perspective. So this approach to truth would allow that subjective or relativist perspectives (just as objective perspectives) could measure coherence, and so determine validity.

The criteria of validity for a correspondence theory of truth pertain to more objective factors and ideal types of claims that can be made about a given object. The correspondence criteria usually hold that there is a direct one-to-one correspondence between a knowledge proposition and the evidence for that proposition in the world. In these assessments of validity, objective factors are at issue and the truth pertains to criteria that are objective in such a way that the correspondence of the claims with reality can be easily verified by all "reasonable" knowers.⁴⁹

Another domain of validity for knowledge or truth claims is the pragmatic realm. For the pragmatist, truth claims are the claims that really "work" for a given set of circumstances. Pragmatic claims are applicable to the "real" world and can be tested in the world. So these claims meet the criteria of being useful in the real world, yet they are relative to the time and

⁴⁹ The potentially exclusive or elitist domain of "reasonable" knowers is certainly open to critique.

culture in which they are made. Some theorists are critical of the pragmatic approach because there is ample evidence to prove that intersubjective agreements are no guarantee of truth. Yet this approach to truth and knowledge has been useful for human technical advancements.

Pragmatic validations are also relevant to being able to define therapeutic effects in terms of benefits to a student's quality of life. In this way there has to be real results for the student. It is also the case that these kinds of pragmatic validation are best discussed under the rubric of Field-Specific Validity (Level F) or Psychological (Level G), because psychological truths have healing/therapeutic effects for a patient, but the specifics and goodness of those healing effects are field-specific, and dependent on psychological theory.

I have presented three general ways in which validity, loosely defined, can be evaluated. According to one's theoretical positions, one means of validating a truth might be valued over another. For our purposes, we can categorize psychological truths largely as kinds of field-specific truth claims. They exist not so much at the psychological level because they do not represent a psychological theory, but an approach to characterizing the knowledge claims we can make in empathetic therapeutic spaces. In the co-created therapeutic dimension, given some of what I have noted about trauma recovery, such truths also meet the criteria of coherence, correspondence, and pragmatism (i.e., are useful to the patient). As we will see in the case study in 2.7, psychological truths do meet these broader criteria of validity identified in this section — i.e., coherence, some minimal correspondence, and pragmatic criteria. Psychological truths, being also field-specific, meet some additional criteria of validity, as we will discuss. These include perspectival realism, being open to fallibilism, and being co-created.

Not to get ahead of ourselves, but given that some philosophers might see the potential pitfall of Hersch's loose use of the term, "valid," and given that I am asserting that psychological truths be considered to meet criteria of general validity, I have to wonder whether it remains worthwhile to advocate for use of the term "psychological truth." The research that stands behind this discussion indicates to me an answer in the affirmative.

At this point, my summary reasoning for referencing psychological truth is that I am bringing together specific concepts that have persisted in the domain of the philosophical counsellor. These include:

- (1) Consistent efforts to seek best understandings. Note that the term “psychological truth” is imbedded within this criterion. (In other words, it is a condition of the definition of the term largely because one of the field-specific validity criteria we will discuss is fallibilism.)
- (2) The term psychological truth indicates that there are valid criteria for truth claims (whether the criteria is a correspondence, coherence, or pragmatic account of truth),
- (3) The term recognizes that there are different kinds of truths.
- (4) Psychological truths support claims about human experiences as subjective, real, and capable of being validated.
- (5) With respect to psychological truths, improved quality of life can be seen as a pragmatic measurement of a methodology’s effectiveness.

For these reasons I want psychological truths to be seen as generally valid as well as valid in field-specific ways.

2.6 Field-Specific Epistemology (Level E) and Field-Specific Validity (Level F)

The fifth level (field-specific epistemology E) pertains to issues of field-specific knowledge. We all know that what qualifies as knowledge is often dependant on the specific domain of investigation. And again, what counts as true is dependent on particular fields of investigation.

Truth has distinct features in distinct academic fields. Compare physics, biology, and psychotherapy, for example. In the field of psychotherapy, there is willingness and wanting to pay attention to potential instances, or experiences, of transference and counter-transference. These terms simply refer to the patient’s feelings towards the doctor and, likely related, the doctor’s feelings toward the patient. This kind of knowledge domain can be characterized as hermeneutic, phenomenological, subjective, and relative with respect to the origin of the knowledge claims.

In the field of psychotherapy we can characterize the criteria of validity as phenomenological (based in experience), coherent, and variably held to the criteria of correspondence. A

psychotherapeutic approach to knowledge is pragmatic in evaluating truth claims. In the field of psychotherapy we take into consideration, in inquiring into knowledge and truthfulness, what is useful for the client and what criteria of truth are best suited to that circumstance. Evaluating truth claims in terms of their therapeutic usefulness for the client is, as we will see, balanced by a commitment to fallibilism. We will look at the fallibilism in more detail in section 4.0. For now, it is adequate, for our purposes, to appreciate that it refers to the practitioner's willingness and openness to being proven wrong. When practitioners hold their theories lightly, then it becomes very evident that their commitment is to discerning the best truths for their clients. In contrast to when a doctor's focus is on being right for their own notoriety or ego, fallibilism encourages us to focus on what truths are important for the patient. For the philosopher who works with fallibilism, not just any claim will suffice as true. Instead, the merit of "truthful" is built on continuous tests of time and scrutiny.

In contrast, the biology paradigm typically approaches truth from a realist and more objectivist origin for inquiry. Biology's criteria for valid truth claims are likely to be held to the standards of coherence, correspondence, objectivity, and pragmatics depending on the experiment or use of the observations being gathered. Unlike psychotherapy, the knowledge claims in biology are not recognized as subject dependent. The intended universal usefulness of biological data requires that they be objectively verifiable.

I point to these distinctions in field-specific epistemologies not to solicit debates about the specifics of the contrasts, but to provide an overview pertaining to the ways in which those versed in philosophical distinctions might go about making useful distinctions to evaluate different knowledge claims in various contexts.

In my opinion, we now have a sufficient understanding of the levels of theoretical distinction and many of the relevant technical terms to make reasonable and clearer distinctions that pertain to truth in a court of law versus truth in a therapeutic context. Granted, we still have to make some points about the final theoretical level — namely the Psychological Level (G). However, that discussion is a kind of field-specific discussion as well, and so it is worth elaborating summarily and as an entree to the issues of epistemology, specifically phenomenology, and psychology in Chapter Three. I will discuss Level G Psychology in short order. First, I want to attend to a case

study to demonstrate and affirm the practical application of the distinctions we have identified thus far.

2.7 Truth In A Court of Law Versus Philosophical Counselling (PC)

When we focus on human experiences, what are the theoretical domains and criteria of validity?

In psychotherapy the theoretical domain would be the particular intersubjective space shared by client and therapist in which the client and therapist can evaluate their experiences of the client's "story," or relevant "stories."⁵⁰ We acknowledge upfront that numerous claims are biased by the client's perspective, and as psychic investigators this is exactly what we are interested in, the client's perspective. We are interested in how the client constructs his or her perspectives and cares. We care about how the client's being in the world fits with their self-reflective understanding of themselves and *eudaimonia* in their lives.

By contrast, the claims being evaluated in a court of law, if proven true, aim to carry the merit and weight of ontological realism. In this context (i.e., perspective of epistemology and validity), the best truth claims aim to meet criteria that are objectively verifiable in terms of a correspondence account of truth. For example, Witness A saw the accused take the purse and this is objectively verified by a security camera. Empirical evidence carries a great deal of weight in a courtroom. By contrast, outside objective verification is more difficult in a context of emotional understanding and some claims may be difficult to verify empirically. If asked to comment on objective truth in a court of law, the philosophical practitioner would be able to contribute, but likely in quite a qualified way, with full awareness of the limits and extents of such claims. The philosophical counsellor likely would not comment on the direct validity of accusations made by the 27-year-old female client identified in our case study that follows. However, as we will see, the philosopher could make quite useful, albeit qualified, comments of relevance to the court.

⁵⁰ I use "story" not to degrade the quality of the client's sharing, but to acknowledge that the point of sharing at this level is just that, sharing. In the psychotherapeutic domain we are not so much aiming for ontological objective truths. We are aiming to have the patient express their subjective experiences.

While the philosopher would be able to stand behind the strength of their truth claims, what the philosophical counsellor shares in court is not going to reflect the full extent of psychological truths discovered in the therapeutic context. This is because different kinds of questions motivate each realm of investigation. The truths of relevance for the court are not the same kinds of truths sought in a psychotherapeutic context. Again, this is in part because the truth claims in each field-specific realm do not aim to address questions at the same theoretical levels. For instance, psychotherapeutic claims are of the field-specific epistemological and validity levels (Levels E & F) as well as the psychological level (Level G). The levels of truth in court are field-specific and so different than philosophical claims, which can also be thought of as field-specific and so true by different criteria than judicial truths. Whereas discussions in a court of law they are fairly normative, in that they reflect social norms and conventions. They also follow conventional practices with respect to evaluating truth, so empirical evidence and specialist testimony, for example, can be put towards circumstantial evidence which aims to carry the weight of factual truth so as to be able to attribute social responsibility. Thus truths in a court of law aim to be of the status of Ontology (Levels A & B), General Epistemology (Level C), and Validity (Level D). Where psychotherapy values relativism and subjectivity, a court of law values objectivity.

I will now introduce a case study (Hersch 2003) so that we can evolve towards applying the distinctions and claims made thus far. Subsequent to the case study, I will give a very general indication of how a philosophical counsellor might testify in a court of law with respect to this matter or in a similar case. I also give an indication of the kinds of considerations the philosophical counsellor would entertain in agreeing to work with and treat this client.

2.8 Case Study:

The patient, a 27-seven-year-old single woman, presented with a lengthy history of anxiety, depression, anger, self-defeating or self-destructive behaviours, low self-esteem, and marked difficulties with relationships (especially sexual ones). She is bright, articulate, and seems quite committed to pursuing her psychotherapy. She has been employed full-time since leaving school. She has a university education and is capable of a high caliber of work in her field, but

she had not risen as far in her company as she might have, and has left several jobs after heated arguments with supervisors.

While in university she had one especially bad bout of depression, accompanied by anxiety attacks and some substance abuse. This followed a break up with her boyfriend, which she attributed to her extreme discomfort around sexuality, including strong feelings of anger and anxiety. The failure of this relationship and her subsequent symptoms prompted her to seek psychological help, and she entered into her first psychotherapy. After three years of therapy once or twice a week (the frequency varied over time), she concluded that she had been sexually abused by her father in her early childhood. Her memories of this have always been vague, yet she has no doubt that this abuse took place and that it happened on a number of occasions. She also believes that she repressed these memories, which later resurfaced or were de-repressed during her first psychotherapy session. Unfortunately, her original therapist left town to work in another city a while back. This is why she has been referred to the current practitioner.

The patient is now considering pressing legal charges against her father for the past abuse. At one point she confronted him with her claims. These were met with horrified indignation and denial on the part of both her parents. The patient now feels even more desperate and is pinning her hopes on the courts to 'establish the truth' and thereby vindicate her. These hopes are often accompanied by sometimes vague and sometimes not so vague hints that she will kill herself if this approach doesn't work out as planned. (Hersch 157-58)

The point now is to consider how the trained philosopher would analyze the case based on the different levels and paradigms of (theoretical) evaluation. Early on in their analysis the philosophical practitioner would likely identify the ways in which the case study, as described,

shows biases in investigative aims. For example, in the above instance the investigative and therapeutic aims or biases of the philosophical practitioner would not be primarily, or exclusively, to determine whether the client's memories are absolutely true or true in an exclusively factual sense. As a matter of practice, the practitioner would, as we have said, first aim to understand the individual. The philosopher would want to consider why the client might be presenting with the particular configuration of symptoms and concerns now, and why she has presented with symptoms and concerns in the past. We might want to know how these experiences with her father have shaped her sense of self and her identity (obviously not a simple point of inquiry). We would want to understand how she recovered these memories and we would look at how coherent such recollections are in relation to the rest of the patient's character and life.

Subsequent to our investigations into Stein's work in Chapter Three, of course, we could also take the opportunity to look at this case study by way of the emotions that motivate certain symptoms; like, for example, "the vague and sometimes not so vague hints that she will kill herself if this approach doesn't work out as planned" (157). And why does the client feel such a desperate need for outside verification? Why doesn't she trust herself? Are there good reasons why her trust in herself has been eroded? What motivates the desire to press legal charges? Can something else achieve her presumable desire for justice and, perhaps, need for retribution? Is the legal route the best option, given her desire to establish the truth? Also the client needs to identify what she can trust in her memories. It would be helpful if she were open to the difficult process of specifically identifying some the details that she finds herself doubting about her memories. Obviously, there are many psychotherapeutic points for consideration.

Although these are likely some of the kinds of questions that would occur immediately to the practitioner, the practitioner would have to respectfully guide the patient to examine these challenging and emotional questions based on the patient's current self-understanding. However, to return to the issue of theory choice, I advocate that to achieve a good enough understanding of our client, it would be useful to have more information about how to engage empathetic understanding. This understanding will reveal the psychological truths we would be looking for as practitioners.

Aiming to understand an “other” means not just taking them at face value, but putting some effort into looking into their personal motivations. Honouring and aiming to understand someone might at some points take the form of a line of questioning, for example, that investigates why these symptoms, thoughts, or memories have manifested for this individual. It might also take the approach of aiming to understand why various levels of motivations are behind certain symptoms.

We will see that, as we move deeper into dissecting the process of understanding another’s human experiences, it is reasonable to characterize the philosophical approach as recognizing both subjective and objective claims that mutually reflect the situatedness of the client-student and, variably, the analyst.

Already the details of a potential philosopher-client discussion reveal that such understandings are not simple. Rather, they reflect the complexities of human living and meaning making. The willingness to apply distinction making in aiming to understand someone else’s experiences requires a level of focus and effort that, by the very fact of the effort required, reveals an orientation that cannot be dismissive of the pervasive humanity of the other. This kind of understanding of the human experience *requires* human engagement, so this is not engagement that aims to be only, or pervasively, scientifically detached and overtly objective. In other words, the philosopher communicates to the patient, “I want to put effort into understanding you.”

As we have discussed in reference to the theoretical levels (ontology, epistemology, and validity), philosophical understanding is not devoid of evaluations of truthfulness. In fact, we could say that the various theoretical levels and distinctions pertaining to truth are philosophical fixations. Developing and negotiating truthfulness are the bones of the practice; philosophers frequently ask the question “what is true in this circumstance?” Consequently, for this discussion truthfulness does not become a non-issue; however, at this point a traditional account of truth does take a back seat to a deeper practically oriented examination of the human-honouring aspects of empathy and a phenomenological understanding of another human being.

The psychological truths the client and counsellor discover together might be entirely relevant to the client’s recovery, but not relevant in court. For example, it would be irrelevant for the court to know that in sessions prior to the court proceedings the client struggled with whether court validation in terms of a guilty verdict for her father would make her feel different, e.g., more

supported or less afraid. While these instances of psychological truths are relevant to the patient's psychological well being, they are not the kinds of claims the court would be willing to entertain as relevant to the matter of the father's guilt.

Truth claims in a court of law aim to carry the status of being either epistemological (Level C) or ontological (Level A and B). Rulings in a court of law are claims that aim to be about reality and what the objective knower can substantiate. This is why when final rulings are made, they aim to hold the status of what is the case, what is real, what is indisputably so. Allowing for errors, ideally, judicial rulings can be appropriately appealed. Nonetheless, legal rulings are taken to be true enough as to merit real consequences in the world. In some instances, truth claims that are from other theoretical levels (for instance, psychological or field-specific) may be used to achieve the court's objective. In such instances, for example, the psychological data suggests "x" and forensic evidence says "y" therefore "z" is the truth the court chooses to stand behind. Here different domains of field-specific claims are relied on to come to a reasonable — sometimes beyond any reasonable doubt — claim of truthfulness. The aim in a court of law is to hold individuals accountable based on empirical, circumstantial, and expert evidence and, in the end, to make a ruling on what most likely appears to have been the case. The end result is to be able to rule on truth claims that variously aim to be presented at the level of empirical facts about the world, e.g., "Joe did steal the loaf of bread from the store." As a result of our convictions that courts aim to discern the best truths relevant for justice, we communally endorse the social and legal responses in terms of personal accountability, whether the consequences are incarceration, liberty limitation, or financial penalty. The ideal in the legal system is that having reasonably substantiated epistemological, and sometimes ontological, claims the courts can make decisions about what the real-world consequences of such claims should be when making their rulings.

By contrast, the primary theoretical level at which a philosophical counsellor aims to make and evaluate claims are the epistemological levels (Levels C & D), certainly, but also at the field-specific levels (Levels E & F) and at the psychological level (Level G). In other words, PC is concerned with the levels of what we can know versus the level of trying to claim what is true independent of who knows, and independent of how they know (Levels A & B).

In the unlikely event of a philosopher making ontological claims in a court of law, such claims would have to be explained and justified by the philosopher's standards that the claims are

verifiable in particular ways. Being rigorously versed in the theoretical components of truth claims, the philosopher would not primarily aim to make ontological claims. Rather, the philosopher would make field-specific truth claims, and the best, most precise claims/statements as merited at particular levels.

To elaborate, our “evidence” in the psychotherapeutic realm is based on the S→R→O formulas we discussed in our section on epistemology. Such a perspective goes a long way to indicate the relevant subject’s worldview. At this level, for the philosophical counsellor or the psychology-based epistemologist, it is not about the nature of things in the world or only about what may have, in fact, happened; it is about understanding the subject and the subject’s relating to particular claims that they are experiencing and expressing.

If, by some chance, the patient’s claims turn out not to correspond with reality (i.e., are not true), are excessively contradictory, or incoherent, then these less-coherent points would have to be investigated with the patient. There would certainly be a willingness on the part of the practitioner to ask why the client is deceiving us or themselves about these substantive matters. Are they ill? Delusional? Such questions can only really be answered with consistent emotional engagement and exploration. Being investigative, the philosopher would not avoid such explorations with the patient.

Given that the processes and criteria of truth discernment in a court of law are different from those criteria used in a therapeutic context, we have noted that there are also different *effects* that result from the claims made in court as compared to those made in an empathetic understanding-oriented process. For example, in a court of law a client faces the risk of being cross-examined in such a way as to place their perspective in a potentially discrediting light. By contrast, this approach in a therapeutic context could cause great psychological injury and burden to the client’s recovery process.

I recall, for example, treating a client who was not only recovering from years of having been sexually assaulted, but also recovering from his courtroom experience. This client testified that during the assault he was being attacked from behind; however he was also able to describe aspects of his assailant’s face and he variously described his attack as if he were seeing the incident from above. When the judge gave his ruling on the case he cited the apparent fact that my client’s testimony was questionable (not sufficiently strong) because his descriptions had

incongruent points of view; i.e., the points of view of the victim's descriptions did not match his apparent physical position during the attacks. The court decided that the subject was not credible and, therefore, his testimony was not credible. This was a very unfortunate ruling for my client because he felt it diminished his credibility in the eyes of the court and, most significantly, in the eyes of his family. Subsequently, he fell into months of deep depression.

This is particularly unfortunate because, psychologically speaking, Herman (1992) says that the fractured psyche has many means for remembering trauma and does not only represent data logically or with empirically verifiable details (52-53). Many rape victims describe having the sensation of leaving their bodies during an attack, or the sensation of seeming to hover above or somewhere beyond the attack. This dissociative mechanism affects the memory of particular traumatic incidents and, so, the incident is recalled by the victim in a manner that is not consistent with recollections of typical (i.e., non-traumatic) embodied experiences (37). In fact, from a post-trauma and psychological perspective, this fractured and disjointed way of remembering could be seen to add credibility and legitimacy to the client's claims of injury.

This kind of sharing in a therapeutic paradigm would represent information that could be understood in a manner consistent with field-specific knowledge of trauma and post-trauma experiences. In the therapeutic context, we are not suspicious of the client's testimony but we are sensitive to the emotional truths and psychological vulnerabilities of what a patient chooses to share in a psychotherapeutic session.

Whereas in a court of law someone might be called to testify against a victim by calling the victim's behaviour after (a) trauma(s) "off-side," atypical, or sometimes hyper-vigilant, sometimes such behaviours are not easily comprehensible to a conventional outside observer.⁵¹ In a court of law, such testimony might diminish the credibility of the victim, whereas in a therapeutic context the practitioner and client are not aiming to discredit the client but to understand the motivations and emotions behind certain behaviours. Sometimes especially those

⁵¹ Herman (1992) says, "The study of psychological trauma must constantly contend with this tendency to discredit the victim or to render her invisible. Throughout the history of the field, dispute has raged over whether patients with post-traumatic conditions are entitled to care and respect or deserving of contempt, whether they are genuinely suffering or malingering, whether their histories are true or false and, if false, whether imagined or maliciously fabricated...." 8-9.

behaviours that seem inconsistent or not appropriate in an everyday context, makes sense in a therapeutic context. In a more contemporary context Schreber's convergence reactions would be evidence of the horrors of his childhood. Even in circumstances where he might still act with paranoid or nervous behaviours, these kinds of behaviours would not discredit Schreber. Rather, in the therapeutic context they would be evidence of the extent of his injuries. These kinds of investigations often, in the long run, add legitimacy to the client's experience versus devaluing the individual on the basis of normative character assessments, which sometimes happens in a court of law.

Where a court of law is looking to determine whether a claimant's evidence is good enough for legal conviction or action, the philosopher is investigating to assist the analysand to see how their beliefs and experiences affect, or show up in, their worldviews and experiences. In these ways a philosopher's approach ends up being therapeutic because the aim is not to legitimize or discredit particular claims, but to support the client in arriving at the best possible truths for coming to terms with their life and for their living a good life.

Thus, were a philosophical counsellor called to testify on behalf of her client— in this case the 27 year old in Hersch's case study — in a court of law she might, for example, say:

I do believe that there is objective reality that stands in relation to my client's symptoms. I am not at liberty to comment on specific facts about the originating trauma. However, I can offer the following professional testimony:

On a psychological level, my client's symptoms and the nature of her recollections and suffering around various recollections fits the standard symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) associated with childhood sexual abuse. Here I might enumerate those symptoms for the court as being, for example, drug or alcohol dependency, a history of self-destructive desires and activities, experiencing an ongoing sense of coping and keeping a secret, self doubt, fear of retribution for telling, sexual promiscuity, difficulty with genuinely intimate relationships, various sexual dysfunctions, night terrors, and various fixations.

On a general epistemological level, I can report to the court that the client worked with me over a course of three years. Her character and methods of self-evaluation remained consistent and at a high level of self-scrutiny aimed at discerning her best approximation of the truth. In other words, her stories remained psychologically and characteristically coherent. Where possible we did seek documented verification of her memories (e.g., medical records from various health care facilities) and these validated some of the facts of my client's memories, including numerous injuries and the names of her school teachers.

Given these considerations, I have good professional and clinical reasons for believing that my client has experienced sexual abuse.

In a courtroom context, my professional engagement pertaining to the truthfulness of a client's claims of sexual abuse are framed in a manner entirely different from the criteria for truth and validity that I engage with my client in the safety of the space we share therapeutically. That a client is empathetically engaged in therapeutic space, of course, does not mean that the therapeutic context is any less true. It means that the context for discovering truth, the kind of truths and the validity criteria for truth are, simply, different.

One consequence of this is that in the courtroom context I am going to aim to be clear about the kinds of claims I can reasonably make and validate. Whereas, if I were discussing with my client or a professional colleague, how my client has adapted, specifically with respect to their relationships, to their abuse history I would make claims that are more at the levels of epistemology, validity, field-specific claims as well as claims at the psychological level. I would be paying attention to what the client knows and the levels at which she claims to know. I would look, and evaluate with her, her criteria for assessing various knowledge claims.

As I will demonstrate later, in evaluating and understanding the client's claims in a therapeutic context I specifically rely on an understanding that was phenomenologically oriented. My understanding would be validated, at least in part, in term of how it coheres within the client's view. As we will see at the end of this chapter, this does not mean that likely and relevant facts

would be avoided. Most clients who are investing in psychological reflections want to understand the truths that are best for them.

This is why fallibilism is so relevant to the validity of philosophically based psycho-therapeutic work. Fallibilism is a philosophical approach that means that in a relevant therapeutic context the client and practitioner will evaluate and re-evaluate how they understand specific truth claims while remaining open in ongoing ways in their discussion processes to incorporating additional information and experiences and proving their current perspectives fallible. In this way a willingness to be proven wrong adds credibility to the psyche-investigative process.

In this next section it should become evident why Hersch's insights into a phenomenological, and to some extent a hermeneutic, approach to psychotherapy are useful for *instantiating* a more detailed and practically based discussion about truth and its validity in a psychotherapeutic context.⁵² The parameters of this discussion have been set to show how philosophical distinctions can be practically and therapeutically useful.⁵³ This kind of broad philosophical approach would support quests for determining truths about what happens in trauma in general, as well as insight into case-specific truths, specifically around emotional experiences and understandings which, in turn, affect agency and choice. For now I've shown how a philosophical counsellor, given their expertise pertaining to kinds of truth and theoretical distinctions, can make statements for trauma survivors without over committing to the details of particular claims, yet feel confident about speaking with sufficient precision and expertise to make useful legal and social claims as well as declarations of reasonable support and understanding.

The aims of "psychological truths" are different from legal, empirical, correspondence, or "factual" truths. The psychological level is its own theoretical domain and has its own engagement and prioritizing of questions of truth. Philosophers note and begin with these kinds

⁵² Oftentimes the courtroom context does not provide a sufficient understanding of PTSD symptoms and so these can seem like discrediting evidence, yet in the right context the same evidence adds credibility.

⁵³ The opportunities for future discussions abound. For example I would be interested in pursuing additional investigations into personal agency (especially with respect to the abuse survivors) to show how the theoretical distinctions used here support meaning making, and specifically support the survivors who need to make sense of things again, thereby engaging and potentially extending the student-client's agency.

of distinctions because they want to explore and investigate truths. We know different theoretical domains have different approaches to questions of truth and knowledge. Some of the distinct approaches can be identified by the terms; realist, idealist, coherence, correspondence, objectivist, and relativist.

By contrasting truth in a philo-therapeutic context with truth in a court of law, we can more easily see a practical elaboration of distinctions that affect (1) what truths are discovered (i.e., ontological and epistemological), (2) how truths are shaped (this can also be influenced by ontological and epistemological distinctions and can include the other levels), (3) how truths can be distinguished in terms of presentation (i.e., how they reflect specific ontological, epistemological, field-specific positions) and (4) how truths are evaluated (validity and field-specifically). These are some of the distinctions that can be seen to affect kinds of truth.

I have also begun to make a case for the claim that some field-specific knowledges and psychological knowledges set the knower up for particular kinds of knowledges — i.e., co-created, phenomenological, subjective, and relative, for example. These characterizations are all relevant to psychological truth. To better understand the particular nature of psychological truths we need to investigate in more detail the exchanges that happen at the psychological level; which I will do shortly but first I want to bring attention to another relevant practical point.

It is a brief call to arms for practising philosophers; based on the fact that because we can evaluate truth on various levels, especially with respect to understanding human experiences, we can be very good allies for bringing under-represented truths into greater social awareness. In other words, the currency for philosophers is the pursuit of truth; and, given this, philosophers could aim to add their voices to these kinds of pervasive personal and social injuries that because of convention, or dogmatism, or limited perspectives, are not often brought into the open to be counted as legitimate and knowable. I am suggesting that a strong philosophical orientation will support discovering truths about human experiences in a manner that is more detached from social convention, than, say, Freud was when he first tapped into the pervasive reality of this kind of abuse.⁵⁴ It is reasonable to expect that, in time, less biased or non-normatively-oriented

⁵⁴ We noted in Chapter One that Freud initially found much evidence for pervasive childhood sexual abuse, but later revised his evidence into the Oedipal Complex theory. Thus many

and genuinely investigative discussions can bring truths about the pervasiveness, and possibly the whys or causes, of sexual abuse to the surface. As advocates for truth, philosophical counsellors could be useful social contributors. If we could look at sexual and social issues and problem areas with both normative and non-normative approaches, then we could apply PC to these social ills and discover more about them. As in the field of psychoanalysis, psychotherapy could continue to apply philosophy's added perspectives about emotional understanding and so, perhaps, continue to garner measurably effective results especially, as I argue here, for trauma survivors and others seeking (their subject specific experiences of) *eudaimonia*.

2.9 Psychology: Level G

In Hersch's Hierarchy of Levels of Theoretical Inquiry, psychological inquiry is the final level. In part this is because Hersch (2003) makes use of the earlier theoretical levels to explain his particular psychological theory. While we do not need to adapt the particulars of his psychological theory to our purposes, his levels of theoretical distinctions are sufficiently useful for this chapter's purposes. Importantly, they orient us to understanding of "subjectivity" at the psychological level, including the "cares" of the subject and the significance of one's horizon of meaningful objects.

For Hersch, Psychology (Level G) is also the final level because one of the defining points of his project is the claim that any psychological theory can be characterized in terms of how it relates to the six previous levels of ontology, general epistemology, validity, and field-specific epistemology. So theory choices, at these levels, affect how one goes about the acquisition of knowledge in the field-specific domains and the psychological domain. For example, radical behaviourism⁵⁵ at Level G doesn't fit with a subjectivist or co-constitutional position of General Epistemology (Level C). Unlike a phenomenological approach to human psychology, radical behaviourism places its emphasis on data that are measurable, external, and observable. In other

psychological theorists, including Freud, indicated that this adjustment was made so as to avoid the hassle provoking much social resistance to such ideas.

⁵⁵ This approach was largely thought to be a scientific approach to psychology when there was a shift from studying the mind to studying human behaviours. B.F. Skinner (1964) advocated radical behaviourism wherein behaviour could be taken to include external behaviour but also private thoughts; both inner and outer behaviour, it was argued, were subject to the same standards of evaluation.

words, our theoretical approaches to psychology and psychotherapeutic practice are related to the beliefs and paradigms we hold at “earlier” levels of the hierarchy.

Given that it is useful to consider that distinct psychological approaches can be evaluated in terms of their epistemological and ontological claims and approaches, one could, on this basis, differentiate an existentialist and phenomenological approach from a behaviorist or cognitive approach⁵⁶ simply by indicating that phenomenological approaches do not need to make ontological assumptions, whereas cognitive behaviorists do.

However, while the strength of our perspectives at one level can influence other levels, this is not to say that one needs to take a position of determinism such that a position at a particular earlier level determines one’s position at the psychological level (Level G). Yet, given philosophy’s valuing of reason, this does mean that there is a valuing of, and aiming for, coherence among the levels.

Coherence is a technical term that refers to a theory of truth such that a statement is true if it coheres (i.e., does not contradict and is commensurate) with other statements, and false if it does not (Honderich). Were it studied, I speculate that we would find the use of subject-specific, and context specific, coherence in psychotherapeutic practice to be a well-used tool. In listening to make sense and in listening for meaning the listener often evaluates how shared statements are meaningful. A large part of meaning making happens for the listener when he or she assesses whether, and how, previously shared statements cohere with new ones. In this way of finding coherence, a “story” can be put together. The rightness and correctness of the story are decided because truth considerations need to come into play. Where necessary, truth can be evaluated consecutively in the conversation or when assessing what has been discovered to a particular point, and deciding how to proceed. Incoherences, when they are discovered, offer opportunities for more refined investigations into the student’s inner psychological workings.

⁵⁶ Many philosophical practitioners recognize the benefits of phenomenological and existential approaches to therapy. In fact, there are a number of professional organizations and journals that promote the sharing of theoretical and practical information on the matter. Again, my aim in this chapter is to orient the student, client, and practitioner in ways of philosophical thinking that are practical in everyday therapeutic engagements.

Yet, again because of the nature of psychological investigation, coherence isn't a fixed measure or formula. Hersch explains:

The issues at the various levels of the hierarchy at any given time are better seen as part of a complex field or system of phenomena. Simple, linear thinking doesn't account well for this class of phenomena. (235)

In other words, the psychological class of phenomena has its own validity criteria, which do not necessarily match our early simple definition of coherence. With respect to coherence at the psychological level, such evaluations are oriented towards meaning making and start out oriented towards interpretation. For the practitioner, it's worth noting that the obvious contrasting approach would be one that aims to "understand" the analysand in a judgmental or evaluative manner. By contrast, if a listener was not looking for coherences but was being judgmental and looking for contradictions, then the practitioner is not listening with the intention of understanding the patient's experiences. Rather, such engagements would suggest that the practitioner is more interested in promoting their own theoretical alliances. We will see in Chapter Three that identifying and understanding psychological coherence contributes to the art of an empathetic approach.

The quotation is taken from a passage where the reader is also provided with some indication of the extent to which Hersch's approach is open to being relativistic. As a practitioner, Hersch reflects his clinical and reasonable approach to understanding other human beings. At the psychological level, coherence remains a useful concept but it has to be held loosely and not be overly defined by "simple linear thinking." For a fuller sense of the kind of coherence we are looking at, we need to expand our understanding of some of what takes place at the psychological level.

To do this let us look, first, very generally at Hersch's BOLTT theory and *then* we can afford to be more specific by highlighting important canonical and historical insights in the field of psychoanalysis discussed by Orange.

Even though I do not endorse Hersch's psychological theory, he makes creative use of his phenomenologically based understanding of psychotherapy to advocate for the idea of a

“complex field.” The idea of a complex field is represented in Hersch’s adaptation of his beam of light metaphor. BOLTT symbolically represents human behaviour and interactions. The complex field of human relating can be likened to a complex equation in mathematics such that there is a somewhat known constant (in this case constants of analysand and analyst) and quasi-known, yet unpredictable, variables (which could be too many to note and might include things like dates, moods, surrounding political and social tensions, or what the participants had for lunch, and well as the general psychology of the analysand).

The epistemological orientation of this theory begins with Hersch’s following proposition:

If indeed we can abandon the ‘old’ sRo dualistic paradigm and instead begin with the second or ‘new ontological model, the Being-in-the-World, relational $sR \rightarrow o$ paradigm an essentially interactional or co-constitutional general theory of knowledge or Truth may be possible. (68)

Generally speaking, this kind of thinking affirms socio-historical and genealogical, approaches to truth. His reasoning is that *we can’t get outside of our language, nor our experiences*, because “our” ideas about truth are formed by our Being-in-the-World. This approach is fairly connected to phenomenological grounding in studying and trying to understand or investigate human experience; what we experience is what we can aim to understand.

This field-specific and psychological approach to knowledge is grounded in the assumption — and we’ll see how much the phenomenologist can make of this shortly in discussing Edith Stein’s work on empathy — that we cannot get outside of our experiences so it is best to work from human experiences. In this way what in fact is being done is an evaluation about truth claims pertaining to human experience from within the experiences. As we can never step outside our human experiences or our shared humanity, our experiences of truth are always about our being in the world. We know from being in the world that at least some of human experience is interactive and co-constituted; i.e., co-created. This is evidenced in a pragmatic account of truth wherein a claim is true if enough people in a given community verify the truth of that claim.

Thus, the proposition that co-created truths are features of human experience would be something that the phenomenologically open clinical philosopher would work with. Notably this is evidence that absolute truth is, indeed, a fundamental concept, but it is not the only definition or account of truth that can be worked with in practice.⁵⁷

Given these points, Hersch wants to develop a psychological account that reflects the complexity of human interactions and the human quest for truths. So by introducing this idea of a complex field he attempts to capture the unpredictability and random variables of human interactions. For Hersch, this means that:

[A] general epistemological model based on this ‘new’ paradigm must deny both subjectivist and objectivist solutions to our epistemological problems, since each of those approaches ignores or fails to appreciate the inherently interactional relatedness of our Being-in-the-World. On the other hand, when we begin with our irreducible connectedness with the world, we see that the truths of human experience are necessarily interactional. Truth can then be conceived of as ‘co-constituted’ through the experiencing human’s selective, interpretive, and meaningfully contextualized structuring and revealing of particular aspects of the world (which nevertheless is at least partially independent of and pre-existent to us). (69)

I appreciate the theoretical sentiment of the phrase “we see that the truths of human experience are necessarily interactional.” In this chapter I continue to develop a discussion about the ways in

⁵⁷ I do not mean relativism here in a way that indicates there is no absolute or perfect *a priori* ideal truth. One may be committed to the concept of truth, even though sometimes one may be able and willing to engage debates about the failures or misgivings of the concept or the social constructions of the concept. I maintain that, when it comes down to it, as a concept it is a logical necessity; i.e., we can have no derivative or context-specific discussion of truth without the ideal of Truth. At the very least, the concept of Truth enables broad-based and trans-paradigm reasoning. At the psychological and phenomenological levels, the term “relative” is used in a sense that the kinds of truth and the categories for evaluating truth can be discussed relative to each other. Strict logical criteria are not used in this paradigm and there is some flexibility in interpretation so that claims can be allowed, or enabled, to cohere.

which the “truths” of human experience are necessarily interactional. Hersch’s approach does not deny differences in theoretical approaches, but he works with and incorporates various levels at which objectivity and subjectivity are used as evaluative tools.

Throughout this thesis I incorporate and use the terms “subjective” and “objective” to support an epistemological perspectives that enable reasonable hope and that elaborates epistemological distinctions as therapeutically useful tools. These concepts can be seen to have beneficial effects in terms of quality of life and in terms of how we live our lives. We have seen that there are key concepts useful for practical investigative work. So in spite of a contemporary quandary that struggles with how to give up or move into and past these kinds of essentialist claims we find that we need some such consistent distinctions for basic logical coherence. There are good reasons for being cautious with respect to absolutist and dogmatic ideas about logic and reason, so while cautious we yet find some basic essentialist and logical claims necessary as premises to discern meaning about particular experiences.

Interestingly, it is from the ontological and epistemological perspectives that Hersch characterizes human subjects-knowers as “beams of light through time,” and this is because he wants to capture the idea that *what we experience is what we focus on*. Our cares influence our experiences. This is an example of how his ontology (realism) and epistemology (subjective and phenomenological) influence his psychological approach. The beam of light metaphor captures the idea of shared and individually specific aspects of human experience. Individual event horizons (horizons of our gaze and focus) are the result of our cares and the temporal nature of our human existence. In other words, like other phenomenologists, he wants to start with what we know to be true from experience: Experience reveals we are temporal and horizon-oriented creatures and our “orientations” are based on our cares; i.e., what is important to us.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The idea of our “cares” is a technical notion in the phenomenological realm. Hersch, being true to what he interprets as the essence of phenomenological understanding, does not want to use terms like “subjective” and “objective” because they are too scientific-like, and not oriented in human experience primarily and necessarily, but, arguably can be potentially used for some other agenda. Cares are not entirely subjective or objective; rather, they can be said to be a good example of intersubjective creations. Cares are the result of the individual and their context, so they can’t be said to be either entirely objective or subjective.

Making his theory more one that speaks to everyday experience, he ingeniously adds the metaphor of magnets and iron filings to his beams of light through time imagery. We have already established that the beams of light are our cares; they emanate from (and are of) us, and they indicate the orientation of our focus. Hersch's addition of the metaphor of the magnets is meant to indicate forces that can be seen to influence and shape our cares; sometimes we do not see the forces directly, but rather we see only the results of those forces that shape our cares. Just as a magnet has real effects on iron filings, so there are features of our living that strongly affect how we focus on a given event horizon. Thus, our "cares," while individualistic, subjective, and relative are also affected by real things, like whether one has enough to eat, whether one's family is healthy, and whether, and to what extent, we feel free. These are some quasi-knowable and predictable variables of human living. The traditional sRo epistemology and ontology that supports dualistic approaches fails to recognize, or misses from square one, the continually changing, interpretatively meaningful and meaning-creating nature of human existence. Thus, in Hersch's formula, "s" is a real and changing variable. This means that, in a way, the old model fails to account for the real effect the magnet has on the iron filings; and so while "s" is fixed, it can also be characterized as variable.

Just as the magnet changes the direction of the filings, our adaptive shifts in cares affect, in meaningful ways, how we experience our subjectivities. So a subject is not only affected and defined by needs and wants, but also by other real things that influence the direction of her gaze variously define a subject. In this way, an individual subject is a complex thing made up of objective and subjective realities.

Hersch is capturing the idea that in a newer psychological paradigm people and their worlds are not conceptualized as disconnected, static, and fully definable, nor as things that are object-like. This approach in the psychological realm does not see human beings as ever being either totally complete, indifferent, or uncaring. By "never totally complete," I mean that so long as we are living, we are not finished being and becoming, and so it is never sufficient to demarcate a fixed domain to characterize a human subject. "Indeed this new psychology understands human experience as occurring fundamentally in a context of relatedness, as always caring, and as an

essentially temporal process of becoming” (195). Our cares (or our meanings, to use Merleau-Ponty’s terminology), organize and structure our perceptions as they happen.⁵⁹ Hersch says:

This omnipresence of caring is perhaps the most fundamental feature of our existence – what truly distinguishes our peculiarly human mode of Being from that of inanimate object of “things.” Things don’t care, so methods for dealing with them can be more straightforward; they need not concern themselves with the current status of cares, for things have no cares. On the other hand, in the human world, our understanding of any given individual will rely, more than anything else, on our ability to appreciate the status of his or her cares, in his or her current situation or life context. Descriptions of human beings that lack an appreciation of the emotional context of their cares are of little value to us [i.e., practitioners.] Such descriptions may be valid for describing certain features of non-living bodies (which are things in this sense). But for living humans, using such descriptions alone is like trying to locate a position on a map when given only the longitude or the latitude, but not both. (182)

To understand cares, we have to go deeper than superficial judgments of what a person’s actions in the world seem to portray about them. We have to see them as living in bodies like us. Our bodies make us susceptible to forces that are outside of us. In these ways, we are always dealing with our vulnerabilities and existential realities. These, too, are our care. Thus in being phenomenologically present to our human experiences, we come to appreciate the complexity of others. This complexity is some of what Hersch attempts to capture in his BOLTT theory, and what Stein more usefully develops in her empathy studies.

⁵⁹ Hersch’s phenomenology is influenced by Heidegger, as was Merleau-Ponty’s. Like Heidegger, Hersch uses a care to refer to the attitude one takes to things and events and there may also, like Heidegger, be traces of hierarchies of ideas inherent in an individual’s cares. But I don’t take Hersch’s patient ideals to be necessarily absolute or imposed; they likely reflect the values of the individual.

To return to the more general discussion, in summarizing his therapeutic approach from his philosophical perspective, Hersch writes that:

[H]uman reality is always experienced within the context of an ongoing relation to a field of meaningful objects. The phenomenological world (i.e., this world as it is experienced) is constantly being organized and reorganized, patterned and re-patterned in a field-like manner in accordance with our concerns or cares of the moment. The phenomenological world is also always of a finite extent, that extent being limited to within a given horizon (or set of horizons along various dimensions). (181)

This moves us into a very important feature that is useful to expand with respect to elaborating a therapeutic approach to listening; namely, that understanding another human being via their event horizons helps identify their cares (what they need to, or want to, focus on). For the phenomenologist, an individual's cares affect and effect what one sees and experiences.

By "horizon," Hersch means those relations we have to what is meaningful for us. Later he writes that "in the human world, our understanding of any given individual will rely, more than on anything else, on our ability to appreciate the status of his or her cares in his or her current situation or life context" (182). We are reminded here of potential shifts in what one cares about, as well as potential shifts in what ranks as one's cares. Attentiveness to these shifts brings one to deeper understanding at the psychological level.

These passages are interesting and rich not just for how they capture a kind of therapeutic attentiveness, but because they support this particular work's larger claims about philosophical-therapeutic listening being reminiscent (and expands the idea) of Chrysippus' directive to get "inside" the patient. "Getting inside" is a practice. Getting inside is akin to Hersch's idea of understanding the other's cares. In Hersch's summation, we are reminded that this idea of getting inside can be seen as a simple idea with layered, complex, and unpredictable consequences and

revelations. The effort to really understand another individual requires an approach that aims to be more non-normative than one typically is by habit.⁶⁰

Moreover, we can now reasonably claim, based on our research so far, that more investigative and non-normative approaches can be seen to be supported, at least in part, by using philosophical levels of theoretical distinction making.⁶¹ We have also seen that to “normalize” is not necessarily to be attentive to the subject specific cares of the patient. Certainly such an approach does not put the patient’s cares first. Thus, in being normative what often happens is that empirical patterns are interpreted in terms of their conformity or nonconformity with paradigms that aim to quantify, qualify, and normalize. As we learned in the Schreber case, if our intent is not to be attentive to the patient’s particular cares, then while we can learn things about a normalizing category (e.g. people with paranoid dementia) such that the science may be advanced, the individual is left therapeutically unassisted. Attending to, identifying, and working with a patient’s cares can be a point of therapeutic focus that keeps the philosophical counsellor’s attention on the patient and not on the theory.

⁶⁰ Observing, identifying, and ranking cares can be approached in a way that does not force a conventional interpretation on behalf of the client. If a client gives conventionally dense interpretations of themselves — i.e., it doesn’t seem as though the client is basing much of their personal reflection on their own insight but more based on what they have evidently been told is “correct” or “right” — then the philosophical counsellor would at least identify the thinking patterns as such. The counsellor might go further and suggest the clients investigate where conventional approaches come from and why, and if they wish to sustain such ways of thinking. Most clients find areas of convention that are self-limiting and restricting and so assert personal agency in conscious decision to live without necessary mimicry of convention. Other psychologies seem to be stable enough to try and interpret their world outside of convention. A particular instance in which acknowledged normativity can come into play is where the practitioner questions the patient on, say, the integrity or ethics of their hierarchy of cares; this would likely happen if there were signs that the client needed to evaluate their cares, etc.

⁶¹ The theoretically minded could here note that there seems to be a confluence of terms, such that that “non-normative” and “objective” appear to be interchangeable terms. I acknowledge this fact in my closing remarks. Certainly these terms have distinct etymologies; however, for my purposes I aim to emulate some of the practices of the ancients (and Enlightenment philosophers, too, for that matter) to be minimally biased by convention in interpreting the world and to rely more on my own thinking. To question everything so as to discern what is reasonable for me is to claim to know and to question because there is a recognition that my actions in the world affect the goodness of the world or, at the very least, my experiences of the world.

In fact, in the Schreber case we saw that imposing an interpretive theory on a patient (as opposed to finding a way to legitimately interpret various experiences *with the patient*) can be injurious for that individual. In this case we can see the implication of misunderstanding because the misunderstandings (or better the not really understanding) exacerbated paranoid and demented symptoms. So, by using levels of distinction and the idea of non-normativity, philosophy can cultivate a stance that is both on the inside looking out, and on the outside looking in. Thus, we can comprehend, without too much bias, how normative approaches might advance sciences and particular fields, but not necessarily individuals.

On one hand, it could be argued that I am presenting considerations pertaining to psychological truth in a very reasonable and detached way. On the other hand, it could also be argued that I am extremely biased in favour of philosophy, and this bias, too, has consequences for knowledge. Well, this last statement is true. I know discussing the particulars of knowledge acquisition means revealing the potential politics of knowledge. And I am fine with standing behind reasoning and philosophy as a revolutionary act. Socrates, for example, dies for being the wisest man of all, yet incited the youth of Athens to reasonable democratic engagement.

So I grant that for those invested in protecting particular social power, this kind of reasoning can be seen as a revolutionary act. Yet, it is revolutionary in part because it undermines unwittingly buying into institutional power and knowledge. We say with confidence that, historically, the dominant epistemological perspective (in psychotherapy as well as in other domains) has been determined by whose voice and experience counts as knowledge. One of Michel Foucault's insights into knowledge generation was that, despite technological and evolutionary progress, there are institutions whose "knowledge regimes," if you will, can be seen to engage with knowledge such that knowledge was not co-created in a context, but rather it was imposed from dogmatic (protected) positions of perceived right action and social power.

By contrast, in these considerations about PC I advocate for co-created, co-evaluated claims in contexts of emotional relating that are based in shared human experiences. So the argument is reasonable, but also if seen in a particular way it is revolutionary because in the context of emotional understanding there are no impositions of how knowledge needs to look or who it needs to endorse. Thus, we can imagine making use of the theoretical distinctions we have noted thus far, and gain flexibility so that there is potential to gain new knowledge.

It follows from this that embracing the fact that social power does shape knowledge gives us some leverage on future knowledge. When it is acknowledged that different kinds of experiences and new voices can be heard, then we know that new and different knowledges have the potential to come forward and evolve. Lorraine Code (1995) would refer to this evolution as one that moves away from “monological epistemologies” (vix). In short, overly valuing objectivism, say, is a context of understanding other human beings, but it limits the fields of knowledge to something monological. Code calls to philosophers to hear those previously unwitnessed stories and voices. This is an apt way to characterize much of the contribution of feminist epistemological research — it ads social legitimacy to previously unwitnessed stories. It is said that history is a story told by the victors; this is why the insights from so many traumatized voices have been lost over the millennia and why these considerations are intended to be useful to practical philosophers and feminist epistemologists alike. The kinds of discussion this thesis engenders will further our understanding of human experience, and specifically our understanding of traumatized human experience. While explaining, legitimizing, and identifying the kinds of knowledge claims being made in therapeutic contexts, I also hope to explain how such an approach also gives space and voice to previously negated and delegitimized experiences. It makes sense that philosophical practice could offer its skills of edification not only to ongoing developments in human psychology, but there is also an important role for philosophical counsellors in giving their skills of non-normativity to, for example, trauma survivors.

As practitioners of everyday life, in our reasoning to understand we have come to see that each learning situation and psychological investigation is subject relevant (as BOLTT summarizes), and reasonably deserving of its own criteria of evaluation. We have also come to make use of universal, traditional, reasonable, and useful distinctions to further our investigations into understanding the human condition. I’ve referenced Hersch’s work for reasons that I have noted, including the fact that his way of presenting philosophy’s general theoretical distinctions assist in introducing the layperson and therapeutic practitioner to the quality and rigour of philosophical contributions. The fact that Hersch, like Donna Orange, specializes in both philosophy and clinical therapeutic practice was also significant.

However, Hersch’s theoretical distinctions aside, in discussing the need for newer paradigms for thinking about truth (in this case the new idea of psychological truth) I could have built a case by

referencing much of the contemporary and interesting work by feminist epistemologists. I could have just as easily referred variously to the work of Catriona Mackenzie (1996), Louise M. Antony (1983), Charlotte Witt (1983), Annette Baier (1993), Barbara Herman (1997) or Elizabeth Grosz (1999) to pull forward some of the relevant language and concepts for our discussions. Feminist epistemology, because it is concerned with how social power influences what counts as knowledge, has contributed much to critiques and evaluations of assumptions embedded in truth and knowledge. There are some similar results in the feminist epistemological realm, which as we will see, are also relevant to how we learn about the human psyche and human experiences. These researchers, too, affirm that social forces affect what counts as knowledge as well as how knowledge is acquired. So they, too, are sensitive to the effects of social power on knowledge.

For instance, in terms of language and agenda commensurate with our project, Lorraine Code stands out as a pioneer in the field of feminist epistemology. In her book *rhetorical spaces: essays on gendered locations* (Routledge 1995) Code talks about writing the book because she is:

...interested in epistemological questions that have to do with how we know one another, how knowledge of other people is constructed and circulated, how its deliverances are enacted in social practice, how it risks creating its object in its own image, and how it can become better of its kind – enabling, sensitive, and yet still be reasonable, just. (xiv)

This is very commensurate with, and aligns well with, Nussbaum's sensibilities in talking about the role of therapeutic philosophers in Hellenistic times and everyday life.

Yet, when we dip into the feminist epistemological work we are introduced to nuances that we have not yet explicitly discussed in this project, including (and importantly) the politics of social power, specifically pertaining to class, race, and gender as they relate to knowledge acquisition. These kinds of discussions, however, are best left for less fundamental and introductory research, yet it is difficult not to imagine that such research could include, for example, interesting discussions about how ethics relates to epistemology and whether therapy is its own ethical perspective.

One point among many where this research aligns with feminist insight is that it takes as evident that wanting emotional understanding and encouraging a quest for personal wholeness does influence how we go about gaining knowledge, and therefore what we know. However, my referenced theory choices, Hersch and Orange, are due largely to the way in which I want to present the idea of psychological truth with a particular emphasis on the practical importance of philosophy's ongoing relevance in everyday life. At this point I admittedly did not want to complicate our understanding with discussions about gender and social forces. I see feminist epistemological contributions and insights as being derived from philosophical tools of distinction making, so I am committed to sharing these more foundational tools to support epistemological quests. Moreover, Hersch's approach establishes good foundational reference points for future discussions about how particular theoretical concepts are deconstructed, played out, and enhanced by feminist epistemology.

At the psychological level (Level G), I have summarized Hersch's message to be that the criterion of coherence are validation criterion that is sustained at this level even though, as students of the human condition, we know that at this level coherence is not an uncomplicated concept because coherence, too, becomes subject-specific. To understand how emotions, motivations, and behaviours cohere for an individual we have to be willing to invest effort and time because we realize that interpreting another human being is like walking in a complex field where there are (apparently) known and unknown variables.

For now, in terms of the basics of the psychological realm, by way of Hersch's BOLTT theory, we have referenced the idea that what we hold as theory and as knowledge influences how we see, experience, and act in the world. Practitioners understand this, which is why both Hersch and Orange note that theory choices at earlier levels in the hierarchy (i.e., prior to theorizing about human experiences) matters. Theory choices affect how we seek out and apply field-specific knowledges and psychologies.

Whether the practitioner be a professor, a counsellor, or an epistemologist, we scrutinize our own knowing and ways of obtaining knowledge because we live with the impact of what Code writes about; namely, that our knowledge claims, understandings, and subjective biases not only influence how we know what we know, but also affect others too:

So this ongoing knowledge-and-subjectivity inquiry is as much about Intersubjectivity as it is about selves, persons, or subjects conceived singly or separately. And it is about subjective negotiations among people who are intersubjectively constituted (because that is the nature of being in the world), produced as epistemic and moral-political subjects in processes that are social, interconnected throughout their lives. (Code xiv)

Taken to the extreme, our knowledge claims are not only ours; they reflect our intersubjectivities, our connectivity with other people.

Thus, when a self-aware psychotherapist or philosopher applies the concept of understanding subjectivity and so aims to understand the client's point of view, she recognizes from the outset, based on her own experiences, the potential ways in which a student-patient's point of view is relative and subjective, and is sensitive to how the patient has been influenced by real things in her life. We will see that objective influences and subjective particulars of human experiences are evident, too, in Stein's account of the human being as approached through empathetic understanding. Thus, we can see that there is notable consistency in the work of philosophical and psychological theorists across generations and cultures. Noting that feminist epistemologists have been particularly aware and concise in showing how social power inequalities influence what counts as knowledge, for now we acquiesce to focus on more general and less gender or power sensitive discussions, because the aim here is to understand specifically what kind of philosophical things we can say about therapeutic contexts so that we might, at the end of this exploration, better understand claims that are psychological truth(s).

It should be noted that the reason I advocate for theory choices that combine the insights of Hersch and Orange is because while Hersch's BOLTT theory at the Psychological Level interestingly captures some of the complexities of human therapeutic interactions, it does not necessarily assist the philosophical counsellor in an efficient manner. We can, therefore, build a good understanding of truth without BOLTT theory. So with only scant reference to Hersch's BOLTT theory, let us add some additional perspective from Orange's take on the psychotherapeutic relationships. We will then have enough theory to make the kinds of

distinctions we need to complete our picture of the reasonable claims we can make about the usefulness and nature of psychological truths.

This is a good opportunity to address why I have chosen to write a chapter on psychological truth in a thesis about PC. To be honest, I see that in my work, survivors of PTS and sexual abuse can be very focused on sorting out *truths* — *the truths* about what happened to them and how their life experiences have affected them. Grounded in the reality that the student wants to discern and know truths about themselves, this is a rich domain for the epistemologist and the psychologist. The therapeutic explanation for the student's seeking is that moments of understanding and acceptance can bring comfort. But what are the justifications and criteria for truth claims that happen in a psychotherapeutic context? After all, all we have to go on in a therapeutic context is what the analysand chooses to share with the practitioner, and the practitioner's interpretations and listening. Unto themselves they can be seen as flimsy criteria for truth claims.

Nonetheless, there are tangible results in psychotherapy. Individuals experience improvements in their quality of life. This chapter addresses the hows and whys of psychological truth. We discuss the rigorous considerations and evaluations that enable us to hold psychological truths as a characterization of the legitimate and valid truth claims that happen in contexts of emotional understanding. My opinion, in short, is that understanding the validity and nature of psychological truth claims adds merit to the work; i.e., it explains and legitimizes what happens in domains of emotional understanding. I would also hope that explaining the theoretical rigour and contexts for the truth we seek in psychotherapy would comfort and edify both the patient and patient's families.

2.10 Applications of the Theoretical Distinctions: Perspectival Realism and Co-creation Characterize Psychological Truth

As we've seen, at least some of those who advocate philosophy's relevance to everyday life recognize that monological or singular accounts of truth are not adequate to the task of truth evaluations in everyday living.⁶² We need more complex accounts of truth that acknowledge

⁶² In reflection, what I've been trying to get at in noting the everydayness of some philosophical work, is that philosophy that is tied to everyday living is different in theory and application than

kinds of truth and the theoretical factors that influence what is eligible to be considered truthful in a given context.

Early in her book, Orange (1995) writes about the changes we need to envision in shifting to epistemologies that aim to make sense of other people's experiences. She writes, "Making sense stretches the bounds of traditional bivalued logic and forces us to think about experience in more holistic, but less neat, categories" (6). Sometimes the categories can be so unclear as to afford mistakes and misunderstandings. However, in safe spaces that support exploration for the purpose of understanding, sometimes misunderstandings and the sorting out of misunderstandings, can be therapeutically useful. Given this, later in her book Orange devotes a full chapter to discussing the therapeutic benefits of misunderstandings. We will return to "misunderstandings" in short order. However, for now let us notice Orange's claim that the means for evaluating truth in the domain of emotional understanding ought not to be limited by conventional, superficial, or overly neat categories and means of evaluation.

Orange's reasoning has something to do with the nature of reasoning in everyday life. She explains:

In ordinary life, the kind we live when we are less aware of being philosophers or psychoanalysts, we use both theories. I use an almost automatic correspondence theory to check whether my idea that I turned off the stove matches the dials and lights on the stove itself. Analogously, if I sit on a jury in a trial where physical evidence is scarce, I use a coherence theory of truth to evaluate the stories I hear. Both approaches to evaluating ideas function in our everyday thinking. Further, each method has yielded a theory of truth that its adherent's claim is the ultimate truth about truth. Nevertheless, neither theory alone is a good-enough theory to

primarily analytic philosophy that makes no explicit effort to connect with everyday living. I've suggested here that we need to be more fluid and flexible in how we analyze truth in everyday life. I'm not the only one who finds the need to make this point, though; consider Nussbaum, Rorty, Hersch, Orange, Gadamer, and Habermas, for example.

account for daily experience. We need to seek a more adequate or comprehensive theory of truth. (146)

So again, we need to approach gaining knowledge in more open, less limited, and yet more comprehensive, new ways because when we start applying truth analysis to varieties of life experiences and not just to analytic formulas, we notice the need for multiple considerations in our approach to truth. There is a need to develop approaches that are broader than just ontologically oriented perspectives. The domain of emotional understanding is precisely the kind of domain that requires multi-dimensional and specific approaches to truth.

One way to think about emotional understanding is as a domain that is “opening up.” Thus there is a need for more comprehensive investigative approaches to work with garnering even more understanding about this variously, and relatively, collaborative space that is *therapeutic*. The knowledge garnered in this psychological and field-specific space reflects the steady shift towards empathy in the psychological branches of the human sciences, which is evidenced in the history of psychoanalytic thought over the last century and a half. Notable practitioners have claimed that psychoanalytic success is not only built on “interpretation and insight,” but also on an explicit recognition of relational components of emotional understanding (Orange 109). In these kinds of interpretive exchanges between patients and practitioners, it is now taken to be just a fact that this relational component affects what and how truths are discerned.

We have noted that something unique happens in the realm of emotional understanding: Cares are exposed. Psychotherapeutically, we encourage the patient to work with the philosophical counsellor to feel safe to bring their cares out into the open. There are many ways in which we can characterize the realm of emotional understanding, but fundamentally this domain is encouraged to be *emotional*. There might be an inclination to think that being present with emotions means being present with only negative emotions but, of course, there are many emotions one could be present with, like contentment, conflict, upset, peace, enthusiasm, conflict, or happiness. Obviously, talking about and feeling present with one’s emotions is not limited to negative emotions. Simultaneously, however, the freedom to be emotional does not exclude so-called negative emotions.

The emotional realm is human in that it is typically reflective of issues in humans relating, so the patient’s relationship with the therapist in the investigative domain matters when discerning the

psychological truths of relevance to the patient. It is generally accepted, for example, that Ferenczi (1929, 1932, 1933, 1988) was noted among the first to advocate and theorize the relational point of view in psychotherapy.

Viewing the traditional reserved analytic attitude as inappropriate to heal the “traumatized child” in the patient, he thought analysts needed to put their efforts into being more responsive to the patient’s emotional needs. They ought to make the analytic relationship a place of safety in which the patient could relive the original trauma. (Orange 161)

Orange traces the influence of Ferenczi’s thought through to Strachey’s in (1934), then Ian Suttie’s and Greenberg and Mitchell (1983), and to finally to Newman (1990). In doing so she traces an evolution and a growing recognition of the importance of therapeutic *relationships in psychotherapeutic recovery*. These relationships are characterized by the recognition that the analysand’s emotional needs are being discussed and, in some ways, met.

It is possible to examine by way of these practitioners *what* exactly is healing about psychotherapeutic relationships. In these writings we can discern some of what happens when there is an effort made to extend *emotional* understanding. In large part — and this is very much the condensed version of what happens in psychoanalysis — what evolves in emotional understanding is caring, and an exhibiting of “healthy” love, for a patient. Healthy care wants what’s best for the patient, without bias against them. It is appropriately supporting clients to be their best selves. There is no expectation of emotional care returning to the therapist from the client. The unconditional care is such that the therapist has to want the best for the client in an unconditional way, i.e., without the therapist’s own moral, political, or aesthetic biases or wants obscuring the client’s life and choices. As we have noted, one way in which unconditional caring is evident is that the patient feels safe enough to explore trauma-related feelings with the practitioner. Relating to these emotions as a fellow human being, the practitioner comes to better understand the client. This assists the client in healthy emotional bonding because the client’s experiences of being related to, and the philosopher’s efforts to understand, enhance their experiences of emotional comfort and the patient’s own making sense of things. There are all kinds of potential responses the practitioner could make that are based on their own

subjectivities, but when the practitioner responds in an empathetic or caring manner, the effect for the client is found to be more therapeutic. “More precisely, the relationship between the patient and the analyst is not just the relationship involved in the transference, but the total relationship existing between the patient and the analyst as persons,” tying with a “reliable and beneficent parental figure” and often replaces the relationship denied to the patient in childhood (Orange 165). Very basically, the therapist’s premise for engagement with the student says, “I care (even if only in the phenomenological sense), your feelings matter, let us understand them together This attitude, likely a theory choice at the Psychological level (Level G), elicits the content for the psychotherapeutic process.

The therapeutic space has to be safe enough for historical, deep emotional issues to be worked out. Winnicott’s (1965) psychoanalytic work notably provides insights into potentially unique features of the therapeutic relationship. His theory discusses extending the relational model by focusing on the similarities between the mother-infant relationship and the analytic situation, whereby analysts provide a holding environment similar to that furnished by good-enough mothering (Orange 165).

I am not saying the relationship between patient and practitioner needs to necessarily be one characterized by overly engaged emotional bonds. In fact, therapeutic codes of ethics insist that there are many lines in exploring emotions that must not be crossed. Because the client needs to feel safe in a therapeutic relationship to explore their emotions, part of that safety includes a code of ethics. This, in addition to the Hippocratic oath, advises that therapists will not aim to have their emotional needs met by the client. In other words, unlike conventional intimate relationships, the therapist’s emotional, physical, and sexual needs are not relevant in the therapeutic relationship with the client. The therapist can empathize with the client’s emotions but typically there is no need to involve the therapist’s own emotional needs in supporting the client’s processing — of course, this is a tricky point worthy of additional discussion. It is enough, however, that there is emotional relating. The therapist does not need to parent the patient, although there may be instances in which that would happen. The therapist needs only to make it a safe enough space for the client to consider whether they were parented in self-honouring ways, or what the client would feel like if they had been supported and parented in healthy ways. The point is that the psychotherapist engages in shared emotional *relating*.

Because there is healthy emotional relating in the psychotherapeutic domain, we need to elaborate the idea of a co-created and therefore co-subjectively, co-constructed therapeutic space. In the mid to late 20th century, Kohut's work emerged in these theoretical and practical discussions, synthesizing theoretical and clinical data such that his findings again pointed clearly to something besides interpretation of the emotions as being a factor important for effective therapeutic work. Kohut, too, emerged as a voice that claimed emotional understanding achieved by way of healthy emotional connection between practitioner and client is key to therapeutic effectiveness. Kohut (1981) emphasized the therapeutic idea that mending or repairing the psyche is achieved by means of the "self-object tie, or empathic bond, between analyst and patient" (532). "Thus part of Kohut's legacy to psychoanalysis is the recognition that both relatedness and empathy-informed interpretations are crucial to psychoanalytic cure" (Orange 169). Kohut sincerely wanted *empathy* to be understood as a method of investigation, although not as a direct route to cure, through being kind to the patient. Kohut (1981) says, "Psychoanalytic understanding is among other things, a form of loving, and it can be experienced in that way by the patient" (532). If, in such a field, one subject finds in the other a support for stable and positive self-experience, it is that subject's experience of the particular other as providing support that designates "primary self-object relatedness." Again, in these empathetic relatings the patient has to feel cared for — not necessarily cared about, which suggests a more personal and intimate relationship. We noted that the patient feels cared for when what they care about is also cared about — i.e., becomes the horizon of focus — by the therapist. "This definition [of the therapeutic relationship as one with a particular kind of caring] does not refer to infancy or maturity. It requires only an important bond in which one or both subjects experience the other as support for valued, cohesive selfhood" (Orange 177).

So empathy is a factor in psychological truth because empathy supports the exploration and understanding of emotions — the domain of emotional understanding being the domain in which psychological truths occur. These considerations are meant to open up and allow us to consider the ways in which what occurs in the domain of emotional understanding is co-constituted. It requires two emotionally engaged participants and, so, is co-created. For the specific purposes of this chapter about psychological truths, let us take the gist of Kohut and similar psychoanalytic observations on relatedness and summarize them in terms of understanding the intersubjective

space of psychotherapy, a domain that requires the intersection and interplay of two differently organized subjectivities.

In a therapeutic co-created space, the practitioner's agenda is to care for the well being of her client based on how the client defines well being, as opposed to trying to fit the patient's experiences and concerns into a diagnostic box. She has to be willing, in the name of supporting a client's self-exploration and sharing, to offer an unconditional caring when trying to understand. This is a complex and simple offering; yet students of analysis know that Kohut repeatedly needed to explain rejecting the idea of there being shame over the need for human relatedness (Orange 1995) (177). This sentiment brings us to the more contemporary context in which therapy generates emotional bonding around making sense of one's life.

Contemporary explorers of human experiences in a therapeutic context admittedly create bias by providing a safe place for authentic emotions, fears, and anxieties to come forward. In this way it is an ethical bias towards 1) wanting authentic expression of experience — i.e., expressions that are true for the patient such that an authentic representation given an understandable expression of what is (truly) experienced by the patient inside of themselves — independent of conventional or regulated considerations and restrictions that might limit such expressions, and 2) believing that the honest evaluation of emotions brings about wholeness in individual self-understanding.

So the general idea being discerned for our purposes is that emotional healing happens in the domain of emotional understanding, and comes out of sufficient emotionally connected understandings that can happen in psycho-investigative relationships. This demonstrates that, at the psychological level, practitioners are not limited to a paradigm wherein the practitioner imposes or discerns a diagnosis, but rather can be a unique environment for mutual investigation and emotional understanding.

To this point we have a more particular sense of what it means for some contemporary therapeutic participants to allow themselves to co-create a unique environment for investigation and exploring. They, at some point, make variously explicit ground rules about expressing freely, and about being thoughtful of how the other is affected by the sharing. Obviously, the focus is that the practitioner supports the client's investigation of his or her own emotions and experiences. The convention in psychotherapy, for so many good reasons, is that the primary focus ought to be given to the patient's emotions. In this context we discover unique

psychological truths. These truths are true for the analyst and analysand, and sometimes we discover propositions that are true about human experiences, generally. These more general, theoretical claims about, for example, emotions, drives, emotional relating and empathy, can then be tested by the community of practitioners. Nonetheless, I contend that psychological truths are not less true than those discoveries made without taking subjectivities into account; they are simply true in notably different ways.

To elaborate, let us consider only briefly what happens when we create an environment in which experience is worthy of investigation. In such a space, we can approach gathering experiential and phenomenological data as empirical evidence. A more empirical way of looking at this means that emotions, and the clients' relating with themselves and the therapist are akin to "things" unto themselves. These relationships can be considered things to be evaluated and investigated. The validity of these experiences are measured by subjective means, including a subjective and relative pragmatic account of well being, coherence, and shared perspectival realism, and the content itself is considered to be subjective. Yet there are criteria of validity, which include, for example, the client's own sense of truthfulness. This might mean that the student is able to self-evaluate the degree to which they are being honest in their self-investigations. Experientially this additionally means that the client's honesty and depth of self-reflection depends, in part, on the context provided by the therapist. So the therapist's skill, as well as theoretical and empirical understanding, affects the outcome. We have also affirmed the importance of the practitioner's ability to engage with and relate to the emotions the client is sharing in order to engage the client adequately so as to get behind the motivations that pertain to certain emotions and emotional patterns.

In this way, the practitioner can gather information about the person's experiences over time. Providing a safe place for emotional exploration pertains to the supportive steadiness and consistency of the practitioner to gather good and more reliable information from and about the client. The balanced approach is that we take subjective experience seriously and we find that to investigate experience we have to do justice to attending to human experience, and not just "the facts." This balanced, steady, investigative, listening-oriented approach makes it easier to seek coherence amidst understanding experiences so as to assist in determining the validity of the claims if, and when, it becomes an issue in the process.

The therapist, in other words, is part of the equation when a client's emotions are being understood. It is difficult not to slip into the interesting and rich areas of investigating transference, counter-transference, and co-transference here.⁶³ One way in which the therapist can contribute via the qualities that they bring to the equation is that — and this is a notable feature of the therapeutic space characterized by Orange — there has to be a willingness, in particular and steadfastly, on the part of the practitioner, to adjust or find *fallible* the reasons they have come to understand with respect to the client's beliefs that support particular emotional tendencies. The willingness to prove their earlier interpretations fallible means that both the student and the therapist have to be willing to adjust their earlier interpretations, and this adjustment of earlier interpretations is part of the process. Self-imposed and mutually imposed rigour can be seen to contribute to the validity and impact of the therapeutic understanding process.

The therapeutic process is more a collaborative willingness on behalf of both therapeutic parties to determine, when relevant, whether certain interpretations resonate with and/or support a client. There will be hits and misses in interpretations. This means that the therapeutic context has to be a safe enough context for both parties to make mistakes or experience errors in understanding, i.e., misunderstandings. This fits with Orange's position on fallibilism. Her thoughts on this matter is that there is a willingness to adjust and find *fallible* the reasons, beliefs, or interpretations that support a particular emotional experience. So it's not only getting understanding right that shows understanding, but sometimes engaging misunderstandings is part of what makes therapeutic process valid. This also supports the clients to feel safe to share their misunderstandings or identify poor recollections, or even errors in reasoning and judgment, in

⁶³ As a practical note for further research, one notes in the history of investigations of ethical commitment to the emotional well being of the patient the importance of the tone and subtext of discussions. But the general literature lacks emphasis of the importance that needs to be placed on practitioners in obtaining good supervision and training. Practitioners need to commit to their own ongoing work at personal and theoretical levels precisely because the emotionally oriented therapeutic engagement can be fraught with the potential for abuses or misuses of power, and the transference and triggering of psychological issues. While there is ample discussion in the literature about transference, counter-transference, and co-transference, given that the practitioner's subjectivities affect the client's process, there is ample room, I think, to further analyze empathy and feelings as this pertains to the practitioners' perspective.

general. It is also worth noting that the exploration of how understandings came about can generate new avenues for truth and insight.

When core beliefs and interpretations of the world can be engaged, then it is often the case that patients can influence their own thinking so as to find relief from emotions and core beliefs that they do not experience as positive. This is why it is important that the client feel safe and not judged in the investigative process. In successful empathy the client *feels* that they can evaluate and revise their own investigative claims.

To carry forward an important concept from the first chapter into our present discussion, it is worth noting that non-normativity ties in with advocating a fallibilist approach. With this approach, the listener (the philosophical practitioner) has to be willing to step outside, and into, their own interpretive paradigms in order to empathetically understand another. And in their effort to have a good understanding, they have to be willing to let their understandings of the patient (and maybe even their understandings of themselves) be wrong. In some ways they even have to seek out where misunderstandings exist to further the bigger picture understanding objectives.

The practitioner, for example, has to be able to be wrong and so, too, the analysand. The patient in this context has to trust the counsellor's objectives and care enough to feel safe pointing out where the analyst makes errors in interpretation. Both parties have to feel free enough to be able to say "I was saying this and this (substitute x, y, z), but I think I conflated those memories or I was interpreting the situation in a way that was biased (say, against my mother)." The philosopher, thus, can appreciate that misunderstandings, when identified and worked with, are an important part of the therapeutic understanding process. Thus, such investigators can approach their work with a willingness to find where they might be wrong, or even slightly askew, so as to advance overall learning and the specific understanding of another individual. As Orange writes, "misunderstanding is part of the understanding process" (149). This is fallibilism at work. It is a theory choice that maintains an ongoing focus on the potential for improvements in understanding.

Working with theoretical orientation reflects the philosopher's commitment to the examined life, an aspect of which is to acknowledge the fundamental conceptual presuppositions or assumptions embedded in our clinical theories and in our work. In addition to this that Orange

states that the importance of fallibilism is “the commitment to hold theory lightly, to live with uncertainty and ambiguity, and to be always prepared to revise our views. This attitude keeps us constantly ready to learn something, from our patients and from each other” (3).

Thus fallibilism is consistent with a philosophical approach to therapeutic understanding that intends not to impose an interpretative paradigm or standard for ways of being in the world, but, rather aims to understand, with the client why the client experiences things the way they do, and to determine if those understandings suit the patient’s own sense of themselves.

In a therapeutic context, when encouraging the student to deeply self-reflect, the philosophical practitioner might use philosophical schools of thought as points of reference or contrast to encourage the student to contemplate their own ways of thinking. In short, approaching the student’s experiences investigatively (rather than in a manner that enacts or imposes dogmatic interpretations) better supports the acquisition of new knowledge, and allows for a creativity and unpredictability that is one of the guiding principles in self-reflective thinking. Here the experienced philosopher’s versatility at understanding, in subject-specific ways (and potentially on many different theoretical levels) can be particularly useful. I would support the claim of empirical psychotherapeutic evidence that fallible and safe investigative environments support and enable developments in (self) understanding, and, so, kinds of knowledge acquisition.

One more implement from the philosopher’s theoretical toolbox remains to be added to this study about psychological truth. To re-introduce this final feature, let us reference a passage from the final pages of Donna Orange’s book where she says that “genuinely psychoanalytic theories always include introspection and empathy as an essential constituent” but those who seek to develop psychoanalytic theories “must consider empirical findings and use these to improve our powers of empathic observation” (175). Here we see more explicitly that the philosophical practitioner balances empathy with introspection and reasoning.

The balances between reason and empathy, and reason in empathy, are discussed in detail in Chapter Three. The epistemological point here is that the kind of introspection that best characterizes what we are referring to throughout, makes characterizations at the ontological and epistemological levels (A, B, and C). The empathetic practitioner’s response to questions at those levels can be referred to as *perspectival realism*. *Perspectival realism* allows us to make a

qualified realistic claim. It takes as real that which comes forward from a particular context that is (itself) real. In the therapeutic context there develops a shared understanding of what is real.

This concept is entirely relevant to a phenomenological and Stein-like empathetic approach to understanding another human being. For our present purposes, it is enough to make use of the “perspectival realism” that is Orange’s characterization of the realities and truths discovered in a phenomenologically based psychoanalytic process. We know from our investigation thus far that the term takes a stance on matters of ontology, epistemology, and validity. It says there are knowledge domains in which subjective and relative claims can be verified. In this context, how we experience and characterize what counts as real depends on the perspective from which questions of shared reality are approached. Or, what we understand as real depends on the perspective one comes from. The use of the term “realist” here is intended not in the mind-independent sense, but in the sense that accepts that what we know as real depends on our perspectives.

Misunderstanding can interrupt what counts as a shared reality. The modifications that come from clarifications can make for a stronger shared reality. I would argue that on occasion, particular therapeutic stalls or interruptions occur when a client misunderstands a practitioner’s perspective, but this is a point for a future discussion.

With respect to validity, when pragmatists are concerned with meaning they are concerned with what a particular meaning has to do with life: What is the “cash value” of knowing things in a particular way? What practical difference does it make to life? How do we know that differences in meanings affect a different practice in life? The standard of truth is whether the client’s and practitioner’s interpretations assist the client to experience a better quality of life, which is a subjective point, too, because experiencing a better quality of life relates to the patient’s idea of *eudaimonia* and to the patient’s own assessment of better living. This can be an objective point, and it can also be considered a subjective point.

Generally we can say that empirical evidence of the science of psychology and the practice of psychoanalysis is that it appears to be of psychological benefit to the patient for them to be able to take time and space to make sense of their experiences. Trauma survivors affirm this therapeutic truth due to the nature of traumas and how these injuries fracture in various ways how we make sense of ourselves and our worlds (Brison 1999). One thing trauma survivors learn

in their recovery processes is to find or construct new and different ways of understanding and making sense of things in their world. Survivors choose to live having discovered in the hells of traumas and anguishes of their human experience; but they live with different knowledges than they had before. We are learning from those for whom integrated traumas are a part of living; making sense and finding coherences, even if only somewhat, helps one to live.

It is useful to note here that in this discussion that we could reasonably refer to survivors as *adaptive epistemologists* because subsequent to traumas and in their recovery, they have to adapt to new ways of knowing the world and seeing people and themselves. Studiers of the acquisition of human knowledge (especially epistemologists and psychologists) can learn much with trauma survivors, and from them.

Certainly there has been reasonable apprehension on behalf of many survivors to talk about their abuse experiences and about their hopes for (social) justice. As we have seen in our case studies, the legal system can be particularly hard on survivors. Yet other reasons for a patient's reticence to contribute their experiences to the domain of social knowledge include personal exposure, scrutiny and judgment, embarrassment, social inequalities, and basically an inconsistent return on investment. Often when survivors make the effort to speak out they encounter negative repercussions. In coming forward with personal stories of trauma, because of the social and cultural milieu, great stresses are placed on personal resources and, in some cases, the resources of family and friends, too. Herman (1994) explains:

It is not only the patients but also the investigators for post-traumatic conditions whose credibility is repeatedly challenged. Clinicians who listen too long and too carefully to traumatized patients often become suspect among their colleagues, as though contaminated by contact. Investigators who pursue the field too far beyond the bounds of conventional belief are often subjected to a kind of professional isolation. (9)

Some members of society judge survivors for being victims. Others are just uncomfortable with vulnerability and so project their issues onto the survivor or therapist. The experiences of the clinician described by Orange are amplifications of the struggles the victims go through in addition to having to incorporate the realities of their traumas.

Survivors know that what they've lived through affects their quality of life. They want to discover the psychological truths that will give them leverage on their behaviour and their thinking, so that they might free themselves from some of the consequential grips of their traumas. The experience of trauma can motivate them to commit to a deeper need for *eudaimonia*. Yet, discovering psychological truths entails such a significant emotional investment for survivors with post-trauma symptoms. Working through the traumatic consequences of the initial injuries it becomes evident that the perpetrators did not just steal a few moments or hours from the victims' lives, as well as their innocence, inner stability, and a sense of self; it becomes apparent that survivors' quality of life can be destroyed for years afterwards. Additionally, the repetition of the trauma in the conscious and unconscious mind steals so much from its victims.

These claims are especially applicable for adults who feel they have recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse. In my clinical experience, I have seen that the typical individual recovers memories when they are between 25 and 40 years old. When discussed, it becomes apparent that it is not as though they had actually forgotten their early and unwanted exposure to age-inappropriate sex; rather, they had put it out of their mind and, indeed, tried to forget about it so as to live good enough lives. Typically when they come to therapy with so-called "recovered" memories, some life circumstance has occurred that evoked an atypical personal reaction and, so, in the face of current stresses, their earlier memories have been triggered. And, typically, survivors of childhood sexual abuse minimize the effect of the experiences in their lives until they can no longer deny that their childhood experiences are affecting them in their adult life. They are not seeking to fabricate stress for themselves.

I note this because our social environment is often not supportive of individuals seeking help with recovered memories. Since the mid-1980s there has been an urban myth of "false memories" advocated by the False Memory Society. The two individuals who aimed to start the society were psychologists who were themselves accused of sexual abuse by their psychologist daughter. The Millers were so concerned that they would be discredited by their daughter's accusations that they lobbied to have False Memory Syndrome designated as a psychiatric disorder in the DSM IV. The Millers were not technically successful in their bid to create a syndrome for the DSM. They were, however, quite successful in spreading a wave of

propaganda about individuals who believe they had been sexually abused by claiming their memories were false.

Certainly I am not indicating that it is possible that some very ill individuals can lie about having been sexually abused. But I have not yet come across this in 20 years of clinical work. I cannot say such a possibility is common, nor can I report that false memories are much of a reality discussed among clinical peers. Nonetheless, as a fallibilist I always seek understanding and so I am open to being proven wrong and recognizing the exceptions as much as the rules.

I can report that in figuring out the truth of their trauma memories, feeling believed is a significant point of focus that is shared by survivors. In fact, in facing their memories and scrutinizing what is worthy of their beliefs, survivors put themselves through a great deal of emotional stress in the psychotherapeutic context. Again, unless someone was extremely unhealthy, I cannot imagine them faking some of the emotional processes or putting themselves through these stresses unnecessarily.

Another factor in dealing with memories of childhood sexual abuse, especially at the hand of a family member or friend, is that the victim does not want to believe that their loved one could have treated them in this way. So some clients spend a fair amount of time being fallibilists with respect to their own memories. In the early stages of recovery, clients sometimes approach their own feelings and recollections as if trying to prove that somehow their memories and symptoms must be wrong; they do not want to accept what seems to be the case. Clients sometimes want to prove themselves wrong even though some part of them knows they are in counselling because their symptoms reflect truths.

These reasons are partially why trauma survivors have so much to teach us about empathy and psychological truth. By seeking to put their own minds back together and/or by seeking better functioning for themselves, they become (sometimes without the theory) practising epistemologists because survivors so often ask themselves “what can I know to be true (now)?” Can I deny truths about experiences that I do not want to accept? What is the relationship between reality - what really happened - and what I want or wish to be true? As I have been attempting to demonstrate, these are the precise questions — a component of their theoretical toolbox — that the philosophical counsellor, a practicing epistemologist, wants to apply.

Some might say that there is an ethical perspective applied in the practice of empathy. But I am stressing that these theory choices are not necessarily motivated by ethics, but by an epistemological quest to know and understand human experiences. If empathy is an ethical bias, then so be it; I see empathy as more of an epistemological bias. Because I want to understand human psychology (i.e., the psyche, the soul of an individual), then I am going to aim to understand them on an emotional level, which means emotional relating, as an investigative domain.

At this point, it is still reasonable to persist in asking what kind of truths are being discovered and validated in therapeutic processes. There is ample room to debate, for example, how we might go about evaluating the psychotherapeutic truth claim that emotional wounds can be healed in safe emotional investigations. I suggest that, on one level of theoretical distinction, empirical evidence could be used. On another level (or maybe even the same epistemic level but advocating a different approach, and so also venturing into field-specific and psychological claims) we could gather evidence based on phenomenological data. And what can we additionally glean from the psychological evidence that humans feel more whole when they have safe spaces to explore their own emotions? This, too, could be its own empirical or phenomenological study. Obviously, we have much room for further debate and discussion using the philosophical tools discussed here.

In the end, then, what counts as psychological truth? Psychological truths are claims about real experiences that the analyst and analysand share in a therapeutic context. These truth claims happen specifically in relation to an ontological perspective that is called perspectival realism. They are approached from an investigative or fallibilist perspective, and they are co-created. There would be ways in which some of these truths could be deemed objective and “more true,” in a correspondence sense, than other truths. However, this is not our point in this discussion; rather, the point is to emphasize the need for safe spaces for emotional investigation so that, eventually when appropriate, fairly non-normative interpretations can be made that are of use to the patient. This is why Kohut (1959) indicates that what counts as psychoanalytic data is “*only* that obtained in empathy” (145).

I suggest that these distinctions for evaluating contexts and kinds of truth can be useful in trauma recovery discussion. For any survivor trying to find their way through the memories, determining

how to think about being in integrity with the truthfulness of their memories is part of the recovery process. Philosophical distinctions, as noted, can be relevantly and supportively introduced into the conversation so that the meaning of various claims can be evaluated for respective truthfulness (i.e., to the relative extent that this is an issue for the survivor).

Therapeutically, when a client learns tools of truth evaluation, this can also be a means for extending their conversation, and their healing narrative, on a topic that can otherwise be inherently silencing. In this way, clients are provided with additional language tools that can support investigations of their experiences. In my experience, truth evaluation tools do not directly affect what is shared, they “simply” help us in the evaluations.⁶⁴ Practically speaking, the theoretical levels are important because they provide the possibility of new and different means to try and interpret what might not readily make sense, given conventional or traditional approaches. Different theoretical tools and perspectives can afford unique, creative, and particular ways for aiming to understand clients’ unique approaches to the world.

⁶⁴ This is a point worthy of additional discussion and debate.

At the outset of this chapter there was some discussion of philosophy being connected to everyday life and how the distinction between theory and practice, once one is engaged in marrying the two, can be a tenuous distinction. In theorizing about practising philosophy, I found one of those Aristotelian bivalent comparison metaphors; theory is to practice, as philosophy is to living. Yet, as we have seen, it can be beneficial to look at the terms we have used to discuss theory and practice in this chapter and acknowledge where there are both differences and overlaps. Philosophical practitioner who want to engage with everyday life, note that they have particular approaches that are distinct from their colleagues who only theoretically based, or less proximate to the applications of their theories. As I indicated at the outset of the paper, when you are immersed in everyday life, concepts of theory and realities of practice inevitably intermingle.

Theory	Process
Intersubjective space	Co-created, co-transference,
Fallibilism	shared, safe, emotional
Epistemological, ontological,	Misunderstandings
perspectival realism	Phenomenological
phenomenological	Psychological
psychological	Epistemological, pragmatic
	Field specific
	Coherence, correspondence

The theoretical levels support us to make specific, reasonable claims about the container of emotional understanding to which I have consistently referred. We can say now that it is a field-specific and psychological domain. It is, hopefully, a non-normative domain. We could also say that the emotional domain is constructed in hermeneutic, or interpretative, means that views human experiences as worthy of investigation. Is a domain that acknowledges that (i) there are human biases, and (ii) individual subjectivities matter.

I have been arguing that effectively engaging the emotional domain relies on theory choices not only of a non-normative approach to knowledge acquisition, but an approach that acknowledges subjectivities and the influences of the cares of the patient and the doctor. Again, the aim here is wanting to get to the best possible psychological truth; being open to fallibilism and perspectival realism supports meeting pragmatic criteria for good effects from the therapeutic investigations.

2.11 Conclusion:

I have advocated for non-normative empathetic listening. I have also suggested that, in the realm of emotions, the non-normative approach will garner the best result for psychological truths. Those readers versed in contemporary philosophy debates also know by now that the onus is on me to say something about the fact that objectivity and non-normativity are not only juxtaposed terms but also compatible ones. The relationships between these concepts would make for a very good and useful analytic paper. For example, what non-normativity and objectivity have in common is the desire to discern truth as best (unobscured, clear, and non-biased) as possible. But, as we have noted, objective aims that are used without scrutiny and in overly determined ways can be biased, too — certainly it can be biased against knowledge that is not so apparent and objectively verifiable. And to further muddy the waters, aiming to be non-normative can be argued to be biased, say, in favour of non-normativity or relativism. Obviously more analytic and refined engagement with these terms and how they variously relate to each other will refine their usefulness in practice, i.e., how the concepts are useful for practice in an intermediate way.

What I hope is retained from the best objectivist and (sometimes) empirical theories is the aim not necessarily to impose a theoretical perspective, but to discern the best and most accurate truths for the sake of knowledge claims that are evidently contributory and of benefit to the well being of the client. So while there are some objectivist camps that impose ideals, there are others

that simply strive to work with and towards the ideal embedded in a scientific process of inquiry, which is more a process of discovery than one of imposition. To this point we can acknowledge that knowledge is socially constructed, and that we humans are relational creatures. We can say we want to maintain certain aspects of the ideal of objectivity, but we know there is no experience of pure (unadulterated) objectivity because all human knowledge necessarily is filtered through subjectivities.

One of the things that feminist epistemology teaches is that we can perhaps mitigate the harmful effects of imposing coercive power over others by acknowledging our biases and subjectivities. In psychotherapy, this includes our theoretical biases. Generally, our biases include our values and our cares. Being up front about one's biases (especially in epistemological, theoretical, or practice realms) simply adds honesty and legitimacy to the investigations. Being forthcoming about theory choices can enhance the potential ease with which we and others can evaluate our own knowledge claims. So while we may share the intent of "best", "most true" knowledge (sometimes embedded in aiming to be objective), as students of the human condition we can acknowledge that it is possible that perhaps the best way to get to that ideal is by being aware of our subjectivities.

My willingness to embrace terms such as "subjective" and "objective" could be characterized as a position contrary to, say, Richard Rorty's (1999) advocacy for philosophy's evolution in pragmatism. Whereas Rorty's approach wants to do away with dialectical terms, this paper's pragmatic perspective does not. Dialectical and metaphysical terms have a place in practising philosophy. Certainly, Hersch, Orange, and Code are of the position that holds that philosophical concepts such as subjective, objective, ontology, epistemology, and metaphysics, are useful in everyday life. Empirically speaking, these categories of distinctions have been helpful in day-to-day philosophical practice. This brand of pragmatism presents arguments in favour of philosophical categories being useful tools and that can be reasonably incorporated into a pragmatic approach to knowledge.

Code points to changes in "new conceptions of knowledge and subjectivity." She advocates for "storied epistemology to grant epistemic force to narratives that tell of the construction of knowledge, of theories of knowledge, and of subjectivities, stories which are specifically contextualized within and located in relation to human lives" (xvi). As I have begun to outline in

this thesis, therapeutic listening can create new and useful kinds of knowledge, and new parameters for how we want to garner knowledge. It is evident to me that paying attention to therapy as an epistemic domain can enhance the humanity of our day-to-day engagements – especially our philosophical ones.

And there are, admittedly, ethical and humanistic reasons why we need different contexts for truth evaluations, i.e., contexts other than those evaluations we have predominantly used in the past. For emotional understanding in particular, we need more than just those truth evaluations that we might use in a court of law. History and human experience shows, time and time again, that seeking (sometimes dogmatically) only certain kinds of truth results in only certain kinds of truths and views counting as knowledge. While this can be harmful to some, it is limiting to all seekers of knowledge.

In not listening to the typically disempowered and non-normative experiences, we limit our fields of potential knowledge; missing out on these knowledges furthermore means that injustices are extended and newly perpetuated.

I have been a philosophically based and oriented practitioner in the field of psychotherapy for almost 20 years. I, like many front line workers, have heard horror stories like those of Schreber, who have fled the medical and/or the psychiatric system because they have been more traumatized by “the system.” They feel more pathologized, less understood, and more alienated from human relating. And there are those, too, who have been helped by our “system.” However, I am concerned here to give time and voice to those voices that have been hindered by monological systems.

As indicated, once the levels of theoretical distinctions are understood, we can move forward in making and evaluating truth claims that pertain to the therapeutic process. Like, for example, what role does ontology play in therapeutic truth? How do enlightened, or at least contested and debated, epistemological processes help us to better understand and empathize with our fellow human being? What role does reality play in psychological understanding? How can we characterize the space therapists and their clients create together?

While considering these epistemological questions, critiques of some of the traditional distinctions and camps within philosophical history have been discussed, but only in a very

general way because the chapter itself aims to characterize some things of importance for contemporary psychotherapeutic thinking in practising philosophically grounded and oriented therapeutic processes. This theoretical approach provides more foundation for understanding empathy as an extension and elaboration of the therapeutic listening advocated and practised by the Hellenistic philosophers. When we look at empathy through the paradigm of Hersch's distinctions, we can develop more of a context for understanding empathy's theoretical (specifically epistemological) content and context of instantiation. Thus, we can address what kinds of true things we can say about therapeutic process and content.

Emotional understanding happens in a safe enough exploratory context. Although it might feel destabilizing, the psychological truths that evolve out of a context of emotional understanding agree to be open to being fallible. The emotional domain itself is intersubjective and co-created, which refers to a kind of perspectival realism that meets pragmatic standards.

An empathetic approach allows a broader perspective so the therapist does not rush to discern whether a particular psychological claim or experience is or is not absolutely true, or objectively true. This approach allows us to step out of a correspondence-only account of truth, and it allows us to take the time to look for interpretative coherence.

Given that there are different ways to analyze different kinds of truth, practitioners and clients are provided more room in which to flow and experience new things so as to find the best (i.e., the most therapeutically useful) interpretations for themselves. We are looking for their improved self-understanding to have tangible effects on the client's quality of life. Philosophers obviously can and do discern and incorporate empirical data about what is working in the human experiential realm in terms of *eudamonia* and self-contentment. And the nature of investigative inquiry is such that this also implies the negative claim; namely, that practitioners acknowledge the data of what happens when we do not listen well to each other's injuries and hurts. As our reference to Schreber attested, not listening well creates misunderstandings that can have real consequences for an individual's quality of life. However, as fallibilism and solid validity approaches to truth demonstrate, misunderstandings also can become, when reflected upon, (humble) information for better knowledge acquisition.

In the philo-therapeutic context, listening well also means being theoretically alert so as to catch and mitigate biases and interpretations that might be harmful to the recovery of the traumatized

individual. By engaging emotionally and empathetically, possibilities for understanding another's experiences are generated in ways that do not so readily exist in drives-based or pathologically based, interpretative schemes.

Clients suffering from PTS often seek reassurance that the symptoms they are recovering from are not necessary indications that they are crazy. "Crazy" is a rather colloquial term for not knowing whether one could or should trust one's thoughts or perceptions. Of course, the practitioner cannot rush to readily reassure the client, but given the information before them they can recommend that clients read some relevant research on how the body and mind copes with PTS. I direct clients to information about what cognitive theorists now understand about the biology and physiology of PTS. Where relevant, I remind my clients that even Freud recognized a feature of trauma to be the various subtle (and not so subtle) ways the client might go about *repeating* the trauma with the subconscious hope of making sense of the trauma. In my practice, I often recommend that trauma survivors they read Judith Herman's (1992) *Trauma and Recovery*. This education about the shared experiences and apparent facts about trauma appears to create the opportunity for clients to decrease critical judgment and increase empathetic understanding of their own coping strategies. This is a simple but practical example of sharing with students to engage understanding in a philosophical way that incorporates many different theoretical approaches (Herman's book is field-specific and psychological). These tools support the client in investigating and engaging their own traumas — i.e., enacting the values of non-normativity, or to at least consciously aim towards less normativity. It is in this environment that psychological truth has to do with how analyst and analysand put meaning together in a way that creates insight and understanding for the analysand.

We can appreciate how the more traditional or conventional idea of the doctor as knower might be seen as challenged or even undermined by engaging subjectively with a student-patient. Obviously, doing this well and ethically requires healthy boundaries, but it also requires a pliable and strong sense of self for the practitioners who put their own subjectivities reasonably on the line. However, as practitioners such as Hersch, Orange, Kohut, Stolorow, and others attest, the knowledge gained from these kinds of investigations is richly worth the investment of self, time, and effort required. This means that practitioners and students take risks emotionally, as well as spiritually (in the sense defined in Chapter Three) and intellectually. In these investigations there

is a willingness to entertain the possibility that certain organizations in our self-created worlds can be disrupted.

These are the kinds of realizations that evolve out of listening to human experiences. It is a careful, kind process not because this is mandated, but because, as investigators and seekers of knowledge, we know that empathy particularly assists in this kind of knowledge acquisition, which eventually reveals how the lines between self and other can be made ambiguous. (We will discuss this point in more detail in Chapter Three.) Empathetic emotional understanding also allows the listener to remain differentiated as an individual. Philosophy has natural capacities that make it a good container for these kinds of discussions. To support this claim I have noted some of the relevant parameters and distinctions, and then taken a position on what psychological truth means for a contemporary philosophical practitioner.⁶⁵

In talking about psychologies and traumas in a general way thus far, I have begun to make apparent why it is the case that when engaging in “psychotherapeutic understanding,” practitioners heal traumas by addressing fracturing and working towards various re-integrations or integrations. Yet, more important for our discussion is the point about what the psychotherapeutic process is. Ornstein (1991) says psychotherapeutic process involves making sense of the patient’s emotional life (9). This is consistent with Orange saying that “[p]sychoanalytic understanding is understanding *together*” (11).

⁶⁵ There are obviously distinctions to be made between psychoanalysis, psychology, psychotherapy, and philosophical counselling. I admit that there are times in this chapter when I appear to use the terms interchangeably. But I do not. The distinctions in terms is as follows: Psychoanalysis developed primarily around and in reaction to Sigmund Freud. Neo-Freudians use Freud’s theory as a foil but can be both or neither drives based and hermeneutic in their interpretative processes with their analysands. Psychology is a particular field of study that includes many different approaches and theories to understanding various aspects of the human condition, including a biological drives-based approach. Some say that psychology and philosophy really split into distinct fields around the 1880s. PC applies philosophical thinking and distinctions to the contents of a psychotherapy session. All psychoanalysis is psychotherapy, but not all psychotherapy is psychoanalysis. Psychotherapy is less regulated discipline in many North American jurisdictions than is psychology. Many untrained psychologists practice psychotherapy. (Although in Ontario this may change with the inception of the new regulatory college that is now in progress.) Psychotherapy is defined as investigating the client’s emotional experiences, thoughts, and beliefs about their experiences.

Admittedly, to make such a claim is to take a position in the debates as to whether psychoanalysis is a theory based in drives and instincts, or a hermeneutic practice. To say that it is hermeneutic means that primacy is given to subjective experiences over objective reality which, in my opinion, is really the basis of contemporary psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. And clearly, this says something about approaches to truth that are relevant to psychotherapy. One way to think about this working practically is that objective reality has as much meaning in an understanding-oriented process or discussion as the participants agree for it to have. This is a feature of perspectival realism. It also means that there are numerous particularities in this kind of understanding process. Because the process has a definite subjective basis, the particularities are indicative of the individuals involved and not necessarily indicative of mind-independent reality. Keeping in mind, however, that in a psychological paradigm, as we will see, this in no way weakens the validity of the truth claims.

Thus, here we see how contemporary philosophical thinking about what psychotherapy is, and claims to do, reveals that making sense of one's inner and emotional life does not fit necessarily or only into a traditional, or better, a scientific paradigm. This is why psychological truth does not aim to be only or primarily objective or to correspond with objective reality or evidence. Rather, psychological truth is *more* an engagement with processes of aiming to understand together with a patient that patient's spiritual self in relation to her in-the-world self. By "more," I do not mean that practical or physical evidence is excluded, but rather that primacy is given to understanding the patient-student's *experience*.

The therapeutic approach to truth is distinct from a hierarchically imposed *a priori* kind of truth that philosophers of the analytic and historical tradition are reasonably grounded in. Here we discussed truth in a unique theoretical and practical space that is oriented towards the student-patient and therapist looking together at shared understandings of the student-patient's (fundamentally subjective) experiences. Interestingly, many psychotherapeutically and psychoanalytically based approaches imply some emotional closeness with patients, and so in this way it also is not traditionally scientific because this approach doesn't aim to maintain a strictly objective observer status. Rather, Kohut (1981) contends that this context, at a minimum, refers to a willingness to understand the emotions of the patient as "if the listener-analysand were in the patient's shoes," which is a reasonable working definition of a kind of empathy (525). The idea is that some psychological healing is achieved in human emotional relating and

understanding together. Clearly, this is not the objective approach of most historically scientific investigators.

As we have noted, Kohut (1981) believes some therapeutic effect is achieved by the therapist's ability to "undergo the situation with the other" (529). Thus, the therapist's willing acknowledgement that they *are* subjectively relating to, and with, the patient so as to demonstrate empathetic understanding is a significant feature of therapeutic listening. It is in this context that I make the claim that this kind of intersubjective theory generates claims that are both psychological and field-specific epistemological claims.

The emotional domain generates unique kinds of knowledge that evolves out of human communicative exchanges oriented towards emotional understanding. These real domains have their own co-constituted means for evaluation and validity.

A philosophical method for emotional understanding provides a less judgmental forum for those who are struggling to make sense of themselves, especially those who fear and are concerned about not fitting in with colloquially perceived normal ways of being and doing things. This philosophical approach is quite supportive of the client and, as we will see, helps the client feel free to discern what is good for them.

These theoretical biases are oriented in favour of emotional understanding and developing increasingly better theories for characterizing psychological truths. We noted when discussing Orange's referencing the Schreber case, that practitioners can be limited by too rigorous accounts of objectivity, or a correspondence only account of truth. Often times too much stricture can lead to misinterpretations of the patient's experiences. This is also part of the motivation in referring to Antigone's story in Chapter Four, it is another example of how regulation and strict interpretative rule following can lead to inhumane treatment. When we do not aim to really emotionally understand our patients who are in pain, then as practitioners we can harm or further injure them and ourselves, and limit potentials for further knowledge about human experiences. As Code (1995) writes, "Not knowing people well enough we cannot care for them well, hear their testimony well, and we can not recognize when empathy is appropriate" (xiv).

In these pages I have been emphasizing that there are many philosophers who do care enough to focus on listening well and aiming to understand. Like the ancient philosophers, I believe that the

practices of reasoning, investigating, and distinction-making can create advances in our human understanding and so our human agency; for trauma survivors and those in soul pain, they support an integrated, empathetic, witnessed process of recovery. This is why this process engages reasonable hope.

Finally, in identifying what I think is a reasonable approach to psychological truth, I believe that there is further validation for the usefulness of philosophy in everyday life. What we have discerned about psychological truth is that it evolves in contexts of emotional understanding. These are unique contexts that value perspectival realism, co-created truths, and a spirit of fallibilism. Together these theoretical biases have the potential to create flexible, honouring containers for thinking about and experiencing domains that are safe enough for emotional investigations and, ultimately, reasonable and expansive enough to handle additional new knowledges about the human condition.

CHAPTER THREE: Phenomenology and the Therapeutic Context: Considerations on how theoretical approaches to empathy based knowledge are clinically significant

3.0 Introduction

This Chapter discusses Edith Stein’s important work on empathy. I chose to discuss Stein’s theory because it supports this thesis’ investigation into, and argumentation for, philosophers as particularly adept listeners and therapists. Again this is relevant because listening is a skill set that is often under-acknowledged by philosophers and practitioners. As we have seen, there is a rich tradition of the reasonable cultivation of these skills such that in contemporary terms listening can be considered the functional basis of psychotherapeutic work.⁶⁶

As we saw in Chapter Two, the theoretical, reasoning, and investigative skills that philosophers cultivate with clients create theoretical “containers” for the therapeutic experiences. As we have seen, such containers have the potential to enhance the therapeutic effect of discussion.⁶⁷ This is not only because philosophical theory helps us focus on *what* to listen for (including *how* to relate to the deep, or essential, humanity of another) but also because we can listen to the content in theoretical and multi-dimensional ways, as Chapter Two demonstrated. Here we look

⁶⁶ In this context (and this definition would be applicable in most clinical contexts) “psychotherapeutic work” is defined as an emotion-based, self-reflective processing undertaken with a facilitator who is focused with the analysand on the analysand’s processing. This process enables the identification, description, and discussion of emotions and lived experiences. Oftentimes beliefs are found, through emotional processing, to be “behind,” or, support certain emotional states. The analysand is encouraged to look at whether said beliefs are accurate, and/or could be modified in such a way that the analysand moves in a direction that better supports their experiences of personal happiness (*eudaimonia*).

⁶⁷ “Therapeutic effect” can be a contentious term because it could be taken to imply universal or fixed norms of goodness or health. In the context of this thesis, however, “therapeutic” refers to a particular individual’s experience of enhanced quality of life and/or well being, and/or sense of self.

specifically at how Stein, a philosopher and phenomenologist, considered empathy to be a means for obtaining valid knowledge.

In addition to discerning phenomenological and epistemological methodology, this exegesis echoes the important emphasis Stein places on knowing the essence of one's own individuality and then translating that primordial knowledge to co-primordial knowledge of another's experience. Thus, in keeping with a key theme of the previous chapter, this chapter offers additional theoretical motivation and appreciation for discussing and evaluating psychotherapy's knowledge claims — i.e., psychological truths. I also offer some perspectives based on clinical experience in favour of Stein's considerations which I think support the philosophical practitioner's theoretical skills in ways that enhance experiences of therapeutic listening and, also likely, the analysand's therapeutic experience.

Stein's account of the practice of empathy is couched in the aim to discern the practice's different epistemological features and claims. Key methodological and epistemological significances in her theorizing are grounded in what she discerns as essential and knowable, namely, human experience. The belief that human experiences are knowable is the basis of Stein's phenomenological insights. While this personal domain of knowledge is the key element of empathetic process and engagement, Stein's claim is that such knowledge is also enhanced by empathy. Thus, personal knowledge enables empathy and empathy extends personal knowledge.

One could characterize Stein's account of empathy by way of a phrase attributed to an eminent psychoanalytic theorist and self-psychology founder, who produced influential work for almost 25–40 years after Stein's death, namely Heinz Kohut (1913-1981). In short, Kohut's formulation mimics Stein's insights; which is not to say that Kohut's contribution is not his; he was a steadfast scholar and committed clinician until his death. Rather, this chapter will demonstrate the extent to which Stein provides the theoretical grounding for the aphorism attributed to Kohut: "Empathy happens when the empathizer aims to understand someone else as if they were walking in that other person's shoes."⁶⁸ This is a phrase that will take on more meaning as we

⁶⁸ "Introspection, empathy, and psychoanalysis; an examination of the relations between mode of observation and theory." H KOHUT - *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 1959. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/13672863>.

progress in our study, but for now it is a conceptual starting point. This same point can be made in more Steinian parlance, to empathetically relate to someone else's experience, I allow the most essential elements of me to relate to the most essential elements of them. Proceeding now to Stein's understanding of empathy's mechanics, let us start with addressing the question, what are the essential elements of the shared humanity that allow or enable us to relate empathetically with each other?

Early on Stein tells her readers that her approach to empathy is notably distinct from her predecessors, including and especially Theodore Lipps (1851-1914) and Max Scheler (1874-1928) because she grounded her account of empathy in what is most essentially known, namely the essences of the individual according to primordial experiences; in other words, discerning the essential features of an individual phenomenologically. This method of discerning *essences* is the basis of phenomenological practice as developed by Stein's supervisor, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Accordingly, Stein's empathy methodology argues that knowledge obtained empathetically is grounded in *what we essentially know of ourselves*, or the essences we know of ourselves. In fact, many psychotherapeutic practitioners hold that (likely not knowing that their theorizing is rationally grounded in Stein's reasoning) empathy is the only way we can have some valid knowledge of someone else's experiences.⁶⁹ I will show how the empathy we turn on ourselves, through the process of reiterated empathy, is a key means by which the claim that we can know something(s) about the experiences of other human beings is substantiated. This exegesis shows something more, as well; there are different *levels* of empathy.

My initial readings of Stein generated a fairly exegetical account of Stein's well known, but not sufficiently acknowledged, phenomenological insights into the particular knowledge gained when we analyze what happens in experiences of human empathy. However, when I reviewed my synopsis, I realized that in describing the concept of the psycho-physical individual (PPI), I needed to be clearer about her intended distinction between what is considered "spiritual" and what pertains to the "soul." These were important concepts to revisit because they can conjure imprecise meaning, given the ways in which such terms are used in everyday parlance. But more

⁶⁹ See, for example, Kohut (1959), Hersch (2003), Orange (1997, 1999), Applewood (1984,1997) and Stolorow (1984, 1997).

importantly, for the purpose of understanding empathy, these distinctions reveal *distinct levels, or kinds, of empathetic engagement at play in empathetic understanding*.

It will be evident that the distinction between soul and spirit essentially refers to (1) the causality involved in the naturalness of the PPI (the soul is in and of this domain), and (2) a way of characterizing the consciousness (spirit) of the individual. In this phenomenological paradigm, spirit is not meant to conjure anything close to religiosity. Rather, it is an approach that both acknowledges and takes as verifiable human consciousness such that phenomenological spirituality is an awareness of how consciousness is reflected in the gaze one brings to the world. In other words, phenomenologically speaking, spirituality is consciousness of consciousness, or better, self-consciousness experiencing itself (Stein 1921 <102> 91). The spiritual person has awarenesses of their emotions, how their emotions relate to what they value, and how their values are or are not commensurate with how they are in the world. We will see that this, of course, means paying attention to feelings or emotions as valuable points of insight into an individual because feelings, for the most part, relate to motivations and values. Certainly I will substantiate each of the claims in this paragraph throughout this chapter.

For now, in laying out the groundwork for the more practical significant points about empathy, it also needs to be noted that this discussion takes the opportunity to reiterate an idea we saw earlier, namely that when aiming to understand another individual's spirituality, it is useful for the empathizer to be aware of their own intention so as to minimize their blocks to empathetic understanding. Being attentive to not imposing normative judgments also minimizes blocks to empathetic engagement. In Stein's paradigm, the empathizer seeks to understand the meaning of various emotions and actions of the speaker/student, and so relies on subject-specific coherence at various levels in the spiritual realm. We will see that just as there are levels or depths of consciousness and depths of reflecting on what one is conscious of, there are also levels of being spiritual. Accordingly, I attempt to show that her insights into empathy at these levels can be extrapolated as being particularly grounded in a non-normative approach; such that the point of expressing one's experiences is not to evaluate those experiences with what is considered normal but rather, and only, to report on the experience.

As I have indicated, my effort to clarify the differences in these terms I realized that I could argue in favour of the claim that there are *two kinds of, or better, essential "levels," of empathy*

in Stein's famous work.⁷⁰ Each of these two kinds of empathy is useful for the philosophical counsellor. Moreover, the two senses of empathy together provide a more holistic account for understanding an individual, than does an approach that emphasizes either singular concept of "soul" or "spirit." Interestingly, in terms of this larger project, the second term, spirit, can be seen to be an extension of the philosophical tradition that recognizes particular health and value in the self-reflective individual's attempt to align with their own values, and that some "deeper" analysis of the self is required to discern a particular self's values and alignment. This allows us to see in detail how empathetic listening is a particular way of practising distinction making, philosophical questioning, and reflecting.

To elaborate, while most analysts can give a fairly causal account of how an individual's life shapes that individual's present and future experiences, greater richness and relevant ambiguities can evolve in understanding a fellow human being when we recognize that causal explanations are not sufficient. There has to be something more: That something more is evident when we look at the motivations that an individual chooses to cultivate and focus on. Thus, we are not *only* the result of our life experiences. Motivations are that something more which is essential in the spiritual (aspect of the) person.

Stein reveals that motivations have to do with the self-consciousness of the individual; in this way, motivations and self-reflection are of the spiritual realm. Thus, the phenomenologically grounded practitioner can understand an individual both in terms of (i) their experiences, and (ii) the consciousness the individual brings to their experiences.

In what follows I textually elaborate and substantiate these theoretical ideas.

Some might be inclined to criticize the amount of detail pertaining to this summation of Stein's psycho-physical individual (PPI) as excessive prior to discussing the spiritual person. However, I think it is useful. First, if time and space permitted, I would further elaborate, investigate, and debate Stein's notion of a spiritual person. Second, Stein's investigation into the PPI is

⁷⁰ "Levels" is appropriate not because I intended to conjure the traditional notion of hierarchy, but because Stein does refer to "deeper," "inner," and "outer" aspects of the person. Also, some use of quantifying the amount of self-awareness can be involved in evaluations. Here we could also argue that if there is a hierarchy of levels, it is not imposed, but experienced. Obviously, there is much room for discussion here. But use of the word "level" is arguably appropriate.

impressive, and so her points about what make up the essential features of a human being are insightful, thus we do ourselves, and our self-understanding a service to look at these suggested and revealed essences. The essences of the PPI include experiences of (i) not being other, (ii) a stream of consciousness, (iii) recognizing that one is particularly situated in space and time and these factors create and shape certain features of the individual, (iv) the possibility of self-understanding based on causal understandings, and (v) the recognition that others are PPI's like me, including having a "zero point of orientation".⁷¹ Each of these essences is worthy of some consideration because such consideration can ground and remind one about what, debatably, is most characteristically human. My third point of rebuttal to a criticism of over-elaboration would be that in order to understand the spiritual person we have to appreciate what is essential in the PPI, and what is lacking in that description of a human being. My fourth point reflects a pedagogical bias in so far as I think Stein's *methodology* for understanding, or relating to, the psycho-physical individuality of another is replicated in her account of reiterated empathy in the spiritual person. Again, as these theoretical ideas are philosophically rich, there are many approaches by which we could investigate empathy. Nonetheless, my reason for enumerating these ideas here is to provide theoretical grounding, as well as to inspire the practitioner in their therapeutic listening practises. My reason for sticking to a fairly exegetical account of Stein's theory is to give an account that is both comprehensive and useful.

3.1 Clinical Notes From a Group

This brief case study aims to provide some cursory insights into why looking at two levels of empathy is useful for understanding the life experiences of another:

Two years ago I lead a small PC group for sexual abuse survivors. There were three participants; two women and one man. All had, as children, experienced repeated sexual abuse for two or more years prior to the age of twelve. Four sessions into our weekly meetings I introduced the question, "What had allowed **you** to survive?" This question followed a particularly revealing meeting wherein the

⁷¹ This technical term is first introduced by Stein in her third chapter "The Constitution of Psycho-Physical Individual" at <46> p.43.

clients shared aspects of their stories about the kinds of abuse they had suffered. They talked about how they adapted to the chronic nature of the torture. For example, one client revealed the memory of having witnessed another child being severely harmed. Each of them revealed various strategies for coping, then and now. They shared memories of how they picked up the pieces, went back to school, and “tried to act like all the other kids.” When you hear stories like this, you appreciate the strength of the human spirit and you wonder how these tortured children grew to become relatively “successful”⁷² individuals. I felt I had to ask them to reflect on why and how they had gotten through. We noted in our discussions, for example, that some of their siblings and friends hadn’t “gotten through so well.” Some of the not so lucky ones were disabled by mental illness, alcoholism, or other injurious addictions. Others had killed themselves years later. So I wondered what about this group had helped them to survive and move towards thriving?

One had said, “I just knew that what was happening to me was wrong.” Another said that “somewhere inside me, I had a sense of being good,” and her own belief in an ember of goodness inside her helped her get through. Another shared how she would go and lie in a nearby field after the abuse and wait for the bad feelings to sufficiently “drain out” of her. One member kept telling herself that “one day this would all be over and I could have a good life.”

From a Steinian perspective, the question had allowed us to engage the motivations and, so, spiritual consciousness of these individuals. This line of questioning came to have an interesting therapeutic effect because we were able to refer to these chosen and cultivated aspects of their character as unique aspects of their self-

⁷² Success is always relative. My reason for making such a claim is that this was a term that the relevant participants used to characterize themselves.

reflective or, in Stein's terms, spiritual selves. Here was evidence that there was part of them that was not exactly the same as the PPI who could be destroyed, injured, or fragmented by what they were living through; and they saw that each had a slightly different "something" that they used for motivation to pull themselves through or, at least, get themselves to this point. The awareness of their respective inner motivations became a touchstone and a motivation for each of the participants. They used their recognitions of their own inner motivations to support themselves and each other in addressing the more challenging aspect of the dysfunctional strategies for coping with their traumas.

I appreciate that there are ways in which my summation of the group's experiences are brief. Surely, in such a summation I have not done justice to the listening and courage that allowed such a question to be sensitively and supportively aimed at understanding, as opposed to being inspirational or judgmental. However, what I am aiming to convey in these clinical notes is that, in support of Stein's distinction, I believe that it was in empathizing with the soulful — or what Stein calls the psycho-physical individual (PPI) — part of the client (the facts of what happened and what that must have been like) that enabled a deeper empathizing with the spiritual (feeling and motivating) parts of their identity. The awareness that they each had unique and particular motivating beliefs became the touchstones for each of the participants. It is also a notable piece of testimony in favour of there being two essential features of an individual: the PPI and the spiritual. We note in the stories that these individuals find motivation or sustenance to go on when there is almost no physical or psychic desire to live on. My reason for sharing some of this clinical data is to give an indication, a tangible foreshadowing, of the applicability and usefulness to therapeutic process of these two kinds of empathy. During this juncture in my clients' recovery, my questioning about why they survived supported them in finding, naming, and reclaiming conscious or spiritual (i.e., not just causally explainable) aspects of themselves that served to support them to experience life beyond the circumstances that, unto themselves, manifested consequently with great hindrances in their lives. By acknowledging a spiritual aspect of their surviving we could argue that they explicitly enabled themselves to be more than

just the effects of their experiences.⁷³ This became a useful point of psychological leverage later in the therapeutic process.

If, in terms of evaluating these kinds of claims, we refer to Hersch's theoretical categories, then our investigations here are within the epistemological realm. And within the epistemological realm, this is a phenomenological approach that aims for validity through coherence and common sense (including verification) and, it could also be argued, that "field-specific knowledge" is relevant to this discussion. I would suggest that the field-specific domain would be human motivations, i.e., what counts as sufficient motivation for being particularly relevant for survivors who struggle with whether to survive. Additionally we could argue that each of the two kinds of empathy are examples of field-specific knowledge. Accordingly, if these fields are unified again in understanding ourselves and others, then we find ourselves coming back to psychological and epistemological domains of knowledge.

In relation to what has been discussed in previous chapters, I'm certain that theorists, including Hersch and Orange, would agree that an investigation of phenomenological theory is a solid theoretical basis for enhancing contemporary practices of therapeutic listening. Thus the merit in attending to Stein's theory is that contemporary philosophical practices can be enhanced by a solid phenomenological approach to therapeutic listening, which provides clarity by way of self-reflection, philosophically grounded thinking, and phenomenological distinction making, especially in terms of the PPI and the spiritual person.

⁷³ It should be noted that individuals who do not "make it through" such experiences are not necessarily less spiritual or less self-reflective. Although, as we will see in section 10.0 of this chapter's discussion, such individuals may be variously less actualized spiritual persons, such assessments would be subject-dependent. These considerations might even be besides the point here. What is interesting, and moderately unique from a clinical perspective, is that this group seemed willing and wanting to identify themselves as strong and as putting something more of themselves into their living. For example, one participant indicated that her brother was also an abuser and this was likely because "he for some reason couldn't stand outside of what was happening to him" and so "he succumbed" to the conditioning. Contrary to the example of the brother, it would appear that some survivors do have a sense of their inner selves affecting the quality of their survival. Yet, it is also true that the strength of one's inner self affects one's quality of survival. This is true for all survivors. Generally speaking, seeing, influencing and working with this insight is therapeutically useful.

3.2 Stein's Empathy

On The Problem of Empathy is the title of Edith Stein's 1916 doctoral thesis in philosophy, supervised by Edmund Husserl, who is generally known as the father of phenomenology. Those familiar with the history of ideas can situate Stein's ideas in relation to other eminent thinkers of her time, including, Max Scheler (1874-1928), Theodore Lipps (1851-1914), and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). With the exception of Freud, we will see that she gave specific indications of how she differentiates her thinking from these other theorists. For example, one of the ways in which Stein's work is distinct from Scheler's is that his contribution has more to do with the spiritual being's focus on, and being motivated by, love. By comparison, Stein is more value neutral in investigating and discerning a particular other person's hierarchy of values. This value neutrality, I think, gives her particular insight for understanding others empathically, and gives a certain reasonable legitimacy to empathy as a means to verifiable knowledge. We will see that, in a phenomenological sense, by attending to the spiritual person (as opposed to viewing human spirit through the specter of love as a value, as Scheler does), she is able to be more empathetically insightful in relation to the spirit of a person and less biased than one might be given Scheler's approach⁷⁴. So a phenomenologist might argue that Stein is more phenomenologically committed than Scheler to get to the "essences" of the experience of human empathy.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ M Scheler. *On the Eternal in Man*. Tr. Bernard Noble. London: SCM Press, 1960. Reprinted: Hamden: Archon Books, 1972. It is noted by Pope John Paul II, who wrote his *Habilitation* and many articles on Scheler's philosophy, that Scheler is thought to have modified his later version of *On the Eternal in Man* based on Stein's criticisms.

⁷⁵ I also chose Stein to elaborate these points of listening and engagement with the human condition because her personal story of empathetic engagement led her to dedicate herself to understanding the human condition. In terms of manifesting this motivation in creative acts she chose, after studying philosophy, the acts of prayer and teaching. Her dedication to these pursuits was so thorough that she became a Carmelite sister in 1924. In 1944, because she was born Jewish, Stein was killed in a World War II holocaust death camp. Her understanding of Christian philosophy and her practice of supporting others brought her both the designations of doctor of the church and saint (1998). Practically speaking, her life is evidence of how humanly based, and grounded in values her philosophical perspective was. It is a beneficial irony that the gentleness of her careful excavations to reveal the essentials of humans relating to each other is entirely relevant to trauma survivors, and a general appreciation for the essences and differences of the human condition.

Consistent with the phenomenological issues of her time, Stein (1) makes a coherent case for what we can know about others (given that our own experiences are all that the phenomenologist can base their knowledge on). Yet her unique historical contribution is that (2) she creates forums for discussing values and the spiritual person.

Some might argue that Stein walks a line between the phenomenology of consciousness and that of existential analysis of being in the world (*dasein*). I think she sees the two as intertwined descriptions of a person's experiences in living. Obviously I will have to return to this point later, but for now I limit this discussion to Stein's idea that spiritual empathy allows the empathizer to have access to identifying particular values an individual lives by; to my mind, this points to how she succeeds in explaining the potential to reflect unified consciousness and being in a particular lived body. (We have now touched upon an important theme that is further developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty.⁷⁶ While this rich philosophical territory is worthy of much debate and investigation I limit this paper's engagement with Stein's dissertation to primarily an exegetical one.)

Stein's philosophical theorizing follows the investigative method of reducing an argument to its most fundamental terms or components. This is a well-known philosophical method, evident in Descartes, of building a foundational argument on indubitable premises. As I indicated two paragraphs earlier, Stein's premise is that there is, fundamentally, human experience. Her argument then aims to extract and build upon the most essential elements of human experience.

Two essential components of human experience are discerned to be (i) Stein's explorations of the PPI as a being who can be causally explained, and (ii) the related, but distinct, concept of a "spiritual individual" that builds on and into what can be considered to be additionally *essential* in human experience. This part of the self is more likely to be considered self-directed as opposed to being primarily causally constructed. These are the most essential elements of the human being. These two essences contain features that assist us in further understanding the respective essences of an individual, as we will see. This kind of reduction to essences reflects

⁷⁶ For excellent and relevant discussion on Merleau-Ponty's account of unified consciousness in a lived body see: *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and The World*, Eds, Dorothea Olkowski and James Morely, State U of N Y, 1999. And *Ontology and Alterity in Merleau-Ponty*, Eds., Galen A Johnson and Micheal B. Smith, Northwestern U P, 1990.

Husserl's phenomenological approach to gaining an intuition to a thing's essence (*Wesensschauung*).⁷⁷

The grammar of the first sentence in the preceding paragraph is intentionally ambiguous in so far as “additionally essential” could be seen to be a contradiction. However, in this context this means that essential features of an individual can be numerous *and* categorized into essential elements. An essential feature may be necessary but not sufficient in the making of a whole person. It will also soon be evident that the spiritual individual is a “flowering evolving kind of being.” (<125> 115) And so the spiritual individual is not fixed or determined or unalterable. This thinking, as I will summarize in the conclusion, creates an ease around the practitioner's effort to understand an individual because the aim is to understand a particular person for who the individual is, and not for who they ought to be or could be. In short, because not all PPIs are self-actualized, self-actualizing, or spiritual ones, we can be more relaxed and less normalizing in our interpretations of others' motivations.

Of course such distinctions could still be interpreted to imply a hierarchy, or levels, of being. In response, consider that there could arguably be instances in which hierarchies are not political or social but simply accurate evaluations or characterizations. Other theorists, notably for our purposes Isaiah Berlin, can be read to make use of similar hierarchies; Berlin talks about humans being “*more* free” the more they uncover and exercise choices for themselves.⁷⁸ As I will show, Stein indicates that some humans can be more “spiritual” than others in the sense of being more reflective, i.e., self-reflective and evaluative. So, while many politically correct, humanist orientations might want to avoid a hierarchy of spirituality that might imply some humans are better than others, if this characterization were attributed to Stein it would be based on a misunderstanding. Stein spends a great deal of time developing the concept of the PPI, as I've noted, so that her readers know individuals do have a shared humanity and equality in essential ways. At the PPI level of being human, there is no hierarchy; it is an essential feature of our being that, on a fundamental level, or at least some level, the category of *humans* share some things in common. So, in a sense, the level of recognizing that some individuals are more conscious or spiritual than others is not to necessarily participate in a social hierarchy of “better” or “more,” but is a relatively empirical observation about differences in how humans choose to

⁷⁷ Waltruat Stein. xvii.1989.

⁷⁸ See Chapter 4, sections 1-4.

engage their human condition. Individuals are distinguishable or can be differentiated based on their spiritual selves, their spiritual features or motivations, but are not different in the essential features of their humanity as identified phenomenologically by Stein.

3.3 Epistemic Grounding: The units of understanding our human experiences

Phenomenology is an approach that aims to understand, and place as central to its investigations, *human experience*. Further, it is a practice of trying to understand the world through investigating and valuing what can be discerned from human experience. Situating phenomenology's epistemological aims as she sees them, Edith Stein writes:

The goal of phenomenology is to clarify and thereby to find the ultimate basis of all knowledge. To reach this goal it considers nothing that is in any way “doubtful,” nothing that can be eliminated. In the first place, it does not use any results of science whatsoever. This is self-evident, for a science [that] proposes ultimately to clarify all scientific knowledge must not, in turn, be based on a science already extant, but must be grounded in itself.

(<1> 3)

Phenomenology cannot be grounded in other sciences but must be a pure field of investigation unto itself. So this is not knowledge about the world “out there.” It is not a kind of natural science.

To make claims about the world out there independent of our experiences is a much larger claim than a phenomenologist would make. In fact, it would be out of the realm of their possible claims, and just not relevant. So what does it mean if, in this paradigm, we cannot know the world and make scientific-like claims about it? What can we know?

In short, it means that all we can know for certain are our own experiences.⁷⁹ In everyday parlance, we can imagine that Stein and other phenomenologists are saying, “It’s not necessary to take (or suppose) an ontological position on anything. I do not want to say what is or is not in the world independent of my knowing it.” In a phenomenological investigation,

what I cannot exclude, what is not subject to doubt, *is my experience of the thing* (the perception, memory, or other kind of comprehension) together with its correlate, the full “phenomenon of the thing” (the object given as the same in the series of diverse perceptions or memories). (<2> 4)

In phenomenology, “[e]ach phenomenon forms an exemplary basis for the consideration of essence” (<2> 4). In other words, each time I experience something in the world, in *my* world (my realm of experience), I have the basis for making knowledge claims that attempts to say something(s) *essential* about my experience. This is evident in our attempts to capture some feature of the experience when we express that experience. And, it has to do with seeing something for what it is.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ There is much of philosophy’s historical methodology evident at play here. Already we can see an echo of the Socratic command to “know thy self.” And here, too, we see that Stein uses the familiar Cartesian technique of taking a foundationalist approach to knowledge, i.e., what is the most basic thing I can know without doubt? I know my experiences. In discussing empathy she shows how knowing our experiences is enhanced by, and enables having, some non-primordial experience of another person’s (PPI) experiences. Stein builds a system for aiming to understand another person’s experience by working from truths about our own human experiences. This process reveals similarities and differences between individuals — it helps us understand the *particular* and *universal* features of the human experience.

⁸⁰ This concept of *reflecting the essence of some thing* is a pivotal notion in a phenomenological account of empathetic experiences. “Essence” is a significant concept in the history of philosophy. The *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* refers to four kinds of “essence,” for example, so we cannot adequately investigate the concept here. I can only point to it as a concept and aim to define it in a context, as we proceed. “Reflection” and “reflecting” are also key concepts in phenomenological thinking because, unlike “perceiving,” there is less biased distortion in engaging the reflected object. Perception is a term that indicates that a subject is affected by their situatedness and consideration of which effects they are perceiving, whereas reflection aims to be more essential.

Early in her investigation, Stein establishes that the most fundamental unit of phenomenological knowledge is named “primordial.” That which is primordial is before me as experience (<6> 7). It is a tautology, for example, to say my experience is primordial to me because it (my experience of the thing) is, by definition, something I know from first-hand experience. Yet, I cannot know other people’s experiences primordially, i.e., via experience. This is one of the fundamental “problems of empathy,” or the apparent paradox of the phenomenon of empathy; I cannot experience how others feel, but I can experience myself in empathic relation to others. I seem to want to count this as knowledge. But should it count as knowledge? Keeping in mind that what counts as valid knowledge in this domain is what I know from experience, then I can experience my empathy for their experiences first-hand. But I cannot have first-hand knowledge of what others feel. Yet with respect to my human experience, it is reasonable to claim that I can have some knowledge of their experiences via empathy, which is a particular way of me experiencing them. Thus, Stein is indicating that empathy is a unique kind of phenomenological knowledge; it is my primordial experiential self who is relating to another’s experience. Similarly, it is my primordial experience of something non-primordial to me and that is primordial to another.

Up to this point in Stein’s first chapter we learn that a key feature of empathy is that it can be considered to have both primordial and non-primordial elements. As a practice of understanding, it is an engagement that, in turn, affects one’s understanding of oneself that brings us back to our own experience; i.e., that which is primordial to “I” (me), the PPI. This is a key point; namely, that one of the ways that we improve our ability to empathize with others is by grasping our own essences as PPIs. Grasping our own essence leads to the recognition that I *can never escape my “I-ness”* (<42> 39). Ultimately, my knowledge can rely only on what is primordial to me, even if that primordial knowledge is co-primordial with another’s primordial experience.

Briefly, to this point it could be said that the problem of empathy is that it seems to contradict a standard of knowledge based on my *experience*, because in empathy what I am claiming to know is something of someone else’s experience based on my experience and some understanding of the essences and variables of our shared humanity. Yet, how can such a claim be credible?

Stein points out that epistemological credibility comes from empathy’s bivalence; it is dependent essentially on “I” and how verifiably well I relate to another’s I-ness. Epistemological credibility

is sustained in the experience of creating a relationship between my primordial experiences and the primordial experiences of another. The potential corruption or distortion of empathetic knowledge process is mitigated by how well I understand myself and the degree of coherence I am willing to understand in the I-ness of an other. A primordial feature of human experience is that I can never escape my I-ness; *this* truth, also evident in others, enables the viability of empathy claims. We cannot escape our I-ness but we can have less accurate and more accurate ways of relating to another's I-ness. (The process and criterion whereby specific claims are verified will have to come later in this epistemological process and are, generally speaking, a distinct issues.)

One of Stein's significant contributions to this field of knowledge is that she explains how empathetic knowledge is possible. She elaborates in the first two chapters that empathetic knowledge is a valid kind of knowledge claim precisely because *it is grounded in understanding myself as a PPI* (an aspect of my primordial self), and I know this by way of my experience. The point that we turn to now is relating the essences of my self-understanding to what must also be essentially the case for other psycho-physical beings.

Stein's reasoning as to what renders empathetic knowledge claims reasonable or justifiable is themes that she extends through the remainder of her work. For the phenomenologist, what I know empathetically is all I can ever reasonably know in any domain, and that is my experience of the thing. Of course this does not mean that the quality of my experiential knowledge cannot be improved with refinements in the quality of thinking, observing, and relating.

So again, Stein's mediation on the components of the PPI aim to get at the essence of being human; and our shared essences are what legitimize our access to understanding others. This amounts to a reasonable teaching of how to be empathetic in a preliminary way; by developing understanding for ourselves as humans, we come to see our own humanity in both subjective and objective ways, and this helps us develop empathy for others as humans (like me). As we will see, this is an idea Stein develops under the rubric of reflexive, or self-reflecting, empathy. Self-reflective empathy is a concept that we will discuss later in more detail. For now, we will compare our burgeoning understanding of reiterated empathy as a similar notion to Donna Orange's point about the therapeutic effects of coming to see oneself as "self-object" (Orange 31). In the first level of empathy we see others as ourselves, and this helps us see ourselves as

others might see us, namely from the outside. Without getting too far ahead into what is really exciting about this theory, let us note the idea that I only know myself in any kind of objective way because of the other. Looking at myself as the other sees me enables me to see myself in an objective way, as if from the outside. Second level empathy, too, supports our reflecting of how we and our actions might be seen to be motivated, based on a position outside ourselves. Thus, this “reflexive empathy” happens at both the PPI and spiritual levels of the individual. We will see, too, that reflexive empathy can support an individual to more clearly live their values as they reflect on the difference between their internal coherence and what is perceived on the outside.

In the later (secondary) stages of empathy, the human relational feature of this way of knowing aids one in developing identity because identity is, in part, the result of the process is differentiating and finding similarities with others’ motivations which, in turn, supports ways to further understand our own identities and spiritual selves. This is an interesting perspective for the philosophical practitioner to consider; grounded in a willingness to look at ourselves; the more we aim empathetically to understand others, the more we potentially come to know of ourselves.

These points about Stein’s theory and its practical applicability are thus far presented as knowledge claims that are verifiable. These knowledge claims are practical and, in themselves, represent values of reflection, rationality, distinction making, and essential human equalities. But to stop here would, of course, be to miss some of Stein’s deeper mediations on human essence and what empathy reveals about those essences.

3.4 The Psycho-Physical Individual (PPI)

We now examine what Stein has deciphered as essential features of the psycho-physical individual (PPI). The reader may notice that in the second chapter of her book she develops arguments that explain what we know, phenomenologically speaking, about “I,” that might influence our experiences of “others” (<42>38).

First, she establishes that I know “I” as “selfness,” which has to do with my stream of consciousness pertaining to myself (<42> 38). The self is an affiliation of all the streams of experience present in the “pure living I.” Moreover, streams of consciousness likely include an individual’s past experiences as well as present desires for future experiences (<42> 38). In this

paradigm the concept of a “pure living I” captures some of the fullness and aspects of the temporal nature of human being:⁸¹ As “pure living I” each of us has a sense of events in time that affect, shape, and influence us such that the sense of experiences happening in time facilitates an awareness of *our temporality and our experiences*.

To this idea of my essential selfness, Stein adds the awareness that I am different from others in the world. Discerning that I am different from other individuals is a key feature of coming to know the “I” that is me. However, we need to be careful not to get ahead of ourselves or claim too much in this distinction because there are ways of differentiating self from others that would be a step beyond the premises that we first need to establish in order to phenomenologically understand empathy. The kind of “first order difference” that Stein has in mind here is *quantitative*. This refers to the very simple experience of “*that* individual is not me.” I am one, and not that one.

Second order differences (i.e., those ways in which I am different from others) beyond the specifics of time and space, provide more insights into *qualitative* ways in which I am different from other individuals. It is relevant to emphasize that, fundamentally, while we do not need to say too much more about quantitative differences, we could take Stein’s empirical insight as an affirmation that there are temporal and spatial ways in which each of us is clearly “one” — I am one unto myself and you are one unto yourself. Logically this has to be a basis for appreciating qualitative human differences. Obviously, it is in studying each of us as individuals that much more can be elaborated and understood about claims pertaining to qualitative differences.

The art of noting and understanding these differences, as we will see, can be developed and enhanced as one practises empathizing with others (<79> 71). Let us proceed reasonably and gradually with Stein’s description of “first order” quantitative difference.⁸²

⁸¹ An entire paper could be written that contrasts and compares the “pure living I” with “zero point of orientation.” The pure living I has to do with self-reflective consciousness and the zero point of orientation has to do with the essence of the sensing self. At this point of Stein’s introduction, the pure living “I” presupposes aspects of the spiritual self that she has yet to define. But she acknowledges many times that it is not realistic if we are capturing the essence of an individual to doggedly see as separate the PPI and the spiritual self.

⁸² NB: “First Order” is my distinguishing term, not Stein’s.

This “selfness” is experienced and is the basis of all that is “mine.” Naturally, it is first brought into relief in contrast with another when another is given. This other is at first not qualitatively distinguished from it, since both are qualityless, but only distinguished as simply an other. (<41> 38)

Once we know we are not “other” in a primal sense, then secondly we more comprehensibly know of ourselves that we possess our own stream of consciousness. A feature of streams of consciousness is that they belong to PPIs and they are also subjective, i.e., they are a reflection of *my* experiences. And, unto myself, my different “streams of consciousness are qualitatively distinguished by virtue of their experiential content” (<42> 39). So again, in terms of foundational arguments, Stein is clear that “[q]ualitative peculiarity without selfness would be insufficient for individualization” (<42> 39). This is because we can also arrive at qualitative differences without being a separate “I” — there could be a shared stream, or streams, of consciousness with only quantitative individuation. We now have a fuller, more *essential*, sense of what is meant by “selfness.” Thus far, my streams of consciousness are necessary but not sufficient for the PPI; quantitative self-differentiation is also a necessary condition. This is why we can say I am not other and my streams of consciousness are mine because they are contingent on me not being other. So these fundamental or essential levels of selfness are brought first into contrast with the otherness of the other. When we reflect on our experiences we can see that these are the essential factors that enable an individual to experience themselves. And in this way the reader is also introduced to the aspect of relating psyche (or soul) aspects of a self to an individual.

Upon reflection we can see how Stein reinforces her epistemological claim from earlier, namely that given this process, empathy is fundamentally an epistemological act; one grounded in self-knowledge. Empathizing with what is essential in others, because we know what is essential to us, in turn helps us know ourselves. This is a good explanation for the aphorism that all knowledge starts with knowledge about the self.

Yet, we can develop a fuller understanding of “I” as we return to Stein’s statement that “Selfness and qualitative variation together — thus individuality in two senses – constitutes a further step in progress to understanding the individual “I”” (<46> 43). We now know that the sense of self

as different from others, first in the quantitative sense, and the phenomenon of my own stream of consciousness, constitutes the psycho-physical unity of the “I”.

In everyday practice we might apply this level of understanding by questioning, and by encouraging the patient to inquire into how they see themselves as different from, and the same as, others. This line of questioning may be useful in supporting a client’s move beyond kinds of narcissism. Oftentimes in narcissism there are revealed assumptions such that the patient fails to consider what their “sense of selfness” might actually mean, and so they assume that other individuals are fundamentally different from them. This assumption of inherent difference, as opposed to essential sameness, can lead to falsely believing themselves to be in some way(s) inherently better than others (or even, in some cases, that they are much less than others). In discussion, the therapist might note that a patient distinguishes themselves as different in ego-based or defensive ways. As a prescription to either problem, empathy towards fellow humans could be enhanced by having a client consider that others, like them, cannot escape their psycho-physical individuality and all that it might entail.

Stein now “unpacks” what is behind this term “psycho-physical individual” (PPI). It should be noted that in this summation my exegetical intention is not to lead one to think that the term is so much a technical term as it is a concise and accurate term for characterizing what Stein considers essential to being human. We will see in more detail how it refers to spatial and temporal realities of being, as well as features of the psyche (particularly those features of the psyche that follow from experiencing one’s own life). However, prior to exposing more of the essence of the physical and psychological aspects of the PPI, I want to challenge *one of* Edith Stein’s cursory remarks.

I will frame my criticism by way of clinical experience.⁸³ Hearing individuals process their trauma recovery prompts me to want to note that one of the features of “I” that is identified by

⁸³ It likely could be argued that in pointing out this difference, I am merely noting a difference in time and space between Stein and myself. In other words, I do so noting that a contemporary understanding of “trauma” and “recovery” has been developed especially in the past decade and the plethora of clinical data were not so readily accessible to Stein in her studies around 1916. It is also the case that Holocaust experiences and the writing of trauma experiences, including war and genocide testimonies, have added much to our understanding of the human condition and thinking about personhood and inviolability.

Stein is that the unity of self cannot be broken up. She writes; “Precisely its affiliation of all the stream’s experiences with the present, living, pure “I” constitutes its inviolable unity” (<42> 39). The “inviolable unity” of the “I” is a concept that is contestable not so much in terms of a refutation, but rather as a call to qualification. Consider the experience of the trauma survivor. Recall that survivors can often characterize themselves, when in traumatic states, as “fractured selves” (Brison 2002). Survivors know, in very visceral and tangibly unsettling ways, that their experiences of a non-unified self(ves) challenges the assumption of inviolability. In other words, trauma victims who experience the opposite of self-coherence are counter examples to the validity of such claims. However, those who are variously able to live forward do sustain some level of coherent self because there is the story of the self that has been violated, who bears the trauma and the memory and the living past, and through, breaking and fracturing. So we have empirical evidence that at least some trauma survivors, (including some with psychosis) learn to live with fractured selves and yet logically we know there has to be a continuous self who is the bearer of experiences — who is ontologically necessary, but not always discernable, so that the derived, fractured, or adapted self can live.

Yet I think Stein has hit on a crucial feature of the self; the ideal of the necessity of a sense of being inviolable is part of what constructs an individual human’s integrity of self that has to be assumed on some level for there to be a coherent self. Perhaps it is this tangible feature of the self as violable when “it” feels as though it should not be, that makes traumatic experiences so very devastating. Some traumas (as do some psychoses) break, or threaten to break, that very thing which we seem to have to take as not breakable as one proceeds in life, namely ourselves, the “I.” This point, perhaps, adds insight into why “chasms of continuity” with respect to experiencing oneself are so very disruptive to living; in other words, this is one way of explaining why traumas are traumatic.

Granted, one could point out that in healing or recovering from trauma, the survivor often does experience a different relationship to a different self whose sense of self incorporates fractured realities. And yet, obviously for there to be self-reflective continuity there has to remain a coherent-enough sense of self that persists for there to be an “I” that was violated and who is recovering from the experience of that which is desired to be unfracturable, as being fractured. The phenomenology of these experiences would be fruitful grounds for further investigations.

It could be argued that Stein's point — that I cannot divide myself up into parts, "I" am my being and, as such, my substantial soul (the psyche of the psycho-physical "I") bears my experiences and my attributes — is a claim that could also be read to incorporate the insights of survivors. Stein would likely agree with the logic used in the previous paragraph, namely that our concept of the human "I" has to incorporate a notion of unity that recognizes both that self-consciousness *ought* to be inviolable and yet it withstands the horrors of being fractured as a potential injury to the fragility of human life. In this way there is violable and the inviolable somehow together in the self. In this way there would be more acknowledgment that "I" am a unity whose unity is fragile and vulnerable, and yet my own concept of my inviolability is central to me. We could also say, from a clinical perspective, that further evidence for this point about the value of violability lies in the idea that, in some ways, the fragility of the "I" is evident in how vulnerable its self-concept is to threats of disunity.

Our discussion thus far has described what Stein discerned and presented for us of her phenomenology of the PPI. I have noted the grounding of the self in primordial experiences and, subsequently, recognition of a stream of consciousness, as well as quantitative and qualitative differences between oneself and others. It was alluded to above that soul, or psyche, aspects of an individual include relevant ways of characterizing a personality. Much like Freud's characterization of an individual, Stein references the amount of life force and vitality of an individual as a means of subject characterization. In addition to the continuity of my selfness, attributes of the soul include things like vitality and intensity of feelings, "[t]he acuteness of our senses, the energy in our conduct, the vivacity of my will and the stamina and intensity of my feelings" (<44> 40). Variation in these characterizations is one way in which we have evidence for the claim that "the substantial soul bears our experiences"(<44> 40).

As such, the soul is a coming together of the physical and psychic aspects of an individual. An individual cannot be identified without *character and activity*. Our identities are based on how we are in the world. This is why Edith Stein says of the soul that it is based on and in *the living body* (<54> 49). Stein explains that examining the continuities of one's selfness in their living body can assist one in discerning attributes of one's soul. In other words, when we tell stories about what and how we do things in the world, we are characterizing PPIs.

We can see here that Stein's use of terms "soul" and "psyche" are very much in the keeping with the tradition of the Ancient philosophers. While it could be pointed out that it would not be useful to refer to "psychology" at this point, because such a term in this context is laden with scientism and therefore is not, strictly speaking, phenomenological. Yet, on a phenomenological basis we can affirm a truism of human psychological and philosophical science: namely, that in looking at "I," I learn that my character influences my experiences and my experiences influence my character. This recalls for us Hersch's earlier acknowledgement of individual event horizons; how I approach or interpret the world and what I chose to focus on is a reflection of who I am.⁸⁴ If one were to consider oneself as a PPI, they may not reflect so much on who they are and whether they like who they are, (which would be more spiritual than psychic), but nonetheless to this point we can still coherently say that my actions in the world reflect me.

And in this way we can say that the soul (psyche) is an experiential (or primordial) feature of the PPI as bearer of one's experiences and one's actions. Experiential evidence indicates that this particular primordial feature (i.e., one experiences of oneself) is subject to causal laws in much the same way the physical being is subject to causal laws evident in the world. The soul houses the qualities of the individual built on the unity of the quantifiable individual (<44> 40). In the realm of such soul claims one might, for instance, claim "Jim is stingy in his adulthood because he experienced a very impoverished childhood." Just as equally, one could say, " Jim is generous because he had an impoverished childhood." The difference in consequent is not relevant to the point here; while the difference in consequent can certainly be argued, the point here pertains to *the casual nature of the claims that characterized the individual*. So while the content of the causality can be debated, of pertinent relevance to our understanding of an individual's essence is that *PPIs can be/are discussed in ways that are causally descriptive*. Generally, in using the term soul as Stein does, such claims are soul characterizations that reflect the "I-ness" of the individual and the individual's subjectivities (in other words, the things that shape their living).

⁸⁴ And, it could be variously argued, that some events affected me. In other words, I carry traces of some of the events that have happened to me. As a PPI, I am to some extent a reflection of how the world has effected me. Whereas, as a spiritual person, I carry an awareness of how the world has affected me and depending on the level of spiritual reflection, I might consider what values I want to live in my actions in the world.

In this way, we can claim that the soul is causally affected and therefore can be characterized by life experiences.

This is a good opportunity to elaborate on the use of the term “causality.” Let us gain understanding of Stein’s intentions for the term by turning to a footnote explanation (#97) of causality where she writes that “causality” “designates the relationship of dependence intuitively comprehended and not the relationship determinable exactly physically”(127). In other words, Stein avoids the problems of causality that preceded Hume. In sum Hume’s formulation argued that causal relationships cannot be known in terms of the exact relationship of causality, but rather there is evidence that causal relationships represent series of “and” conjunctions, e.g., that I flipped the switch *and* the light turned on. A Humean would not technically say I flipped the switch that caused the light to turn on. We cannot know for certain that there is a causal relationship because it is not directly accessible to us. It is an inferred claim. However, we can know that *this happens and then that happened*.

With respect to the individual we see kinds of causal pairings between the physical and the psychic, the physical and the physical, and the psychic and the physical. So along with the “effects of outer causes, we comprehend effects *within* the individual himself” (71, <81>). The point here is that Stein goes to some length to adequately elaborate her thinking on causality, as it is such a relevant concept to understanding the PPI. Causality is a relevant concept when discussing and understanding a PPI, but the idea here is not causality in a scientific sense; rather, the point is *causality in a descriptive sense*. Her use of the technical term is that it is more descriptive (in the Humean sense) than scientific in the sense of claiming some kind of fixed or discernable relationship.⁸⁵

In practical terms we can sometimes use causality to distinguish between the soul and spirit aspect of the self; as we will see, causal descriptions typically apply to the soul and not so much to the spirit because the spirit realm is one where meaning and motivations are more at issue. As both spirit and soul are evident in the whole human being, with respect to causality they can sometimes intermingle. For example, to further characterize the psyche-soul, a reasonable

⁸⁵ Historical revisionism is an example of the ways in which descriptive causes are open to variability but this does not detract from the fact that humans can be described or better understood based on causal descriptions.

argument could be made to support the claim that soul holds experiences but it also mediates spirit. This is to say that it is fair to acknowledge that the character of someone not only reflects their experiences, but their considerations, or not, about their experiences. So spiritual motivation can be part of a causal description but it would still be applied to a psycho-physical description. By comparison, a motivation is a spiritual description that is not only causal, but points to “something more” inside of the individual.

So the terms “PPI” and “spiritual” intermingle in a person yet, according to Stein, thus far it is important to sustain the distinction between these aspects of a person. She now makes use of a discussion about thinking to differentiate between soul and spirit aspects of a human individual. We will engage this distinction because it has some useful considerations for us and it is relevant because it affirms one of the distinguishing features between the soul realm and the spiritual realm, namely that soulful descriptions are causally descriptive. These causal descriptions significantly point to how an individual considers their own prior experiences to be causes in their being, and they do not have much to do with innovation or creativity (as they do with the spirit realm). So, Stein writes that habitual thinking (as opposed to genuinely evaluative and explorative thinking) would have more to do with the soul than the spirit. In realms of differentiating between habitual versus reflective and introspective thinking we can make distinctions between these elements, but we also find ourselves having to note an interaction between the parts. Or, better stated, drawing sharp distinctions between the physical, the soul, and the spirit of a person is counterintuitive to a holistic understanding because sometimes these terms are conflated. Here Stein indicates that even spiritual motivations can become habitual. As Stein writes, sometimes even what we willfully and self-reflectively engage in becomes habit; in this way, even the spiritual can become (merely) soulful.

I want to consider the following passage as it picks up past the point where Stein makes the distinctions between innovative and habitual thinking because it reinforces her point about a phenomenological approach to causation.

On the other hand, at a certain “habituation” point the opposite effect takes place. I get enough of an “object of pleasure” continually placed before me. It eventually arouses boredom, disgust, etc. In all these cases the physical is phenomenally having

an effect on the psychic. But it is a question of what kind of an “effect” this is and of whether this phenomenon of causality enables us to arrive at an exact concept of causality or natural science and at a general law of cause. Exact natural science is based on this concept, while descriptive science deals only with the phenomenal concept of causality. It is also the case that exact concept of causality and unbroken causal precision are a presupposition of the exact causal-genetic psychology to which psychologists aspire in conjunction with the example set by the modern science of physical nature. We must content ourselves here with pointing out these problems without going into their solution (<56> 51).

Prior to where the above citation begins, Stein discusses how *capacities* affect our engagement with the physical world. She indicates that we can get better at training ourselves to manage and engage the world (in other words, we can have some influence over our capacities). In the passage above, we pick it up where the physical world begins to have an effect on the psyche (i.e., the soul.) She then raises the question of whether the causal relationships between physical world and soul domain reference to the same concept of causality as that used in the natural sciences. She answers the question that phenomenological observations do not evidently refer to the same kind of causality as scientific observations. This phenomenological approach does not appeal to causal law in the same way that science does. While there is acknowledgement that reliance on the concept of causality is apparent in phenomenological understandings of human experiences, we do not commit ourselves to the same meaning of causality as we do in science. Being its own fundamental investigation into human experiences, phenomenology does not have to assume the same standards, criteria, (biases) or problems implicit in scientific accounts of causality. This amounts to a reasonable justification for a phenomenological approach that engages differently with the concept of causality than does a scientific approach.

The phenomenological account of causality, different from more conventional accounts of causality, allows for the fact that there can be apparent breaks or stopgaps between the preliminary experience of an event and how that experience eventually affects one’s psyche and is then expressed. Notable in the extended passage quoted above is that it seems as if we can not

give an account of being human without some reference to explaining the PPI as causally affected and created; one is who one is as a result of a coming together of forces. Yet this coming together of forces is in some ways “merely” descriptive, not definitive. It is likely that Stein makes much of causality because she *is* bringing something new to the table. The new idea is that causality *can be descriptive* and not scientific. So causal explanations do not necessarily apply to the whole of the person, hence her reference to a characterization being “merely descriptive.” This is because, as we will see, the spiritual person is not adequately captured in causal descriptions; something more is at play in the spiritual realm.

To further substantiate the significance of causality in the PPI — aside from having to really discuss it in terms of how the physical being is in the world — Stein points to what happens when I observe myself; “I discover a *causal* relationship between my experiences with their announced capacities and the attributes of my soul” (<55>50). In this way another characterizing feature of the soul is that it reflects my experiences of things, which includes sensations and thoughts that result from sensations.

Evidently another aspect of the PPI is that it experiences sensations in the body. Sensations have their own kinds of essence. Whereas thoughts are more susceptible to affect and alteration, sensations apparently come from the thing being observed, yet they happen in the body and they bring us into awareness of our body (<48> 44). We feel sensations in our bodies when we turn our attention towards something or someone. Moreover, and interestingly, we can recall sensations from previous experiences. Sensations are part of our experiencing something other than ourselves. And sensations can, in the long run, cause one to have certain feelings depending on how one reflects on their experiences (including sensations). We can see that soul and physical being are related concepts, especially how both aspects of the self can be understood in terms of causal descriptions. But we need to note, too, that in some ways the “proposed division between soul and body was an artificial one, for the soul is always necessarily a soul in a body” (<44> 41).

This passage, along with those previously identified, indicates the primacy and necessity of the *sensing body as mediating the internal and external world* (the spiritual and psycho-physical body, respectfully). This is a key feature of Stein’s phenomenology. It also makes clear that if using the term *subject* in a phenomenological context, then the notion of embodiment is essential.

A subject in this context is not an abstract ideal, but an embodied, experiencing, and variously self-reflective individual.

Stein's additional insights into causality include the experience that while there are ways in which the physical and psychic are distinguishable (contra-Scheler), there is *not* a difference in the "phenomenal structure of efficacy in the physical and psychic domains" (<85> 75). One way in which the effects are similar is that, like psychic causes, physical causes can have latent effects. Secondly, just as with signs and symbols, the manifestation can indicate something else of another kind. Smoke can symbolize fire and therefore doesn't only symbolize itself. So in the PPI, physical manifestation can symbolize a psychic experience, and psychic manifestations can symbolize other psychic experiences even though the psychic and the physical are distinguishable domains within the individual — distinguishable, but interdependent.

Justifications for particular soul claims (i.e., those pertaining to vitality and other attributes) can be disputed in a phenomenological context on the basis of evidence from experience and evaluation. A point of distinction similar to that we made about descriptive causality is relevant here; the procedural point isn't how justifiable a given soul claim is, but rather that these kinds of causal claims about an individual *are subject to verifiability*. As noted in discussing some of the Ancient philosophers, it is a crucial point of therapeutic listening to be able to situate an individual in terms of their particular life experiences, and make explicit how we (the practitioner, client, and perhaps other sources) experience the individual as influenced by their physical life experiences. As we saw with the Ancient philosophers (and see here again), an additional step in the self-reflective therapeutic process is to include further investigations into how and which individual interpretations and meanings are attached to various experiences. And, of course, to pursue this would be to veer into the spiritual realm, so we will hold off on further elaboration of this point. Suffice it to say with respect to the PPI, causal descriptions of the PPI can be considered self-constituted, and/or co-constituted and verifiable.

Subsequent to discussing causality in the PPI, one of the author's tools for elaborating the relationship between body and soul is to explain that the idea of an "I" without a body may be possible, but a body without an "I" is impossible for human experience (<52> 47). Thus, knowing my PPI means knowing that *I am an embodied being* with all the accompanying limitations and experiences that entails. With painstaking elegance Stein teaches that when a person empathizes

with another individual, it is reliable knowledge based on one's own clarity about what is essential in being a PPI. In understanding another, the empathizer realizes that I cannot escape my "I-ness." I cannot escape the ways in which I'm physically and psychically shaped. And I cannot escape being temporal, embodied, having streams of consciousness, which is to say, an ongoing awareness of my I-ness, and a sense of my psycho-physical self as causally describable.

I step out of the textual ordering of my summations of Stein's arguments for a moment to note that, consistent with her overall theory, this kind of *knowing* would count as a spiritual act because it is based on a *reflection* that being embodied brings; as such, it is not just a causal claim, but a reflection on being human which, by Stein's own standards, brings something "more" to being in the world. More than being is awareness of being, i.e., consciousness. It would be interesting at another time to dissect and evaluate further Stein's insights and contentions pertaining to the spiritual natures of knowledge claims that reflect human experience.

Also, whether or not there are other beings that do not have a body can be a point of phenomenological or experiential debate, but it is not a key point for our discussion. Nonetheless, I indulge a brief discussion. In emphasizing the primacy of embodiment to empathizing with another and knowing oneself, it is interesting to note that Stein believes that by virtue of His omniscience, God does not need to empathize. He already is all omniscient. This emphasizes that empathy is, in Stein's view, a particularly human means of acquiring knowledge about others — it is knowledge limited by, and predicated upon, the extensions and limitations of human embodiment. Thus, it is notably an epistemological act that not only acknowledges, but is predicated on, embodiment. Consequently, embodiment needs to be reflected in, and reflected upon, in empathy, including the factors of how I sense my environment to effect my being. With respect to bodies, and primordially speaking, "I" always have a sense of being here in my body. I come to my body and the experience of my body by way of the sensations that my body produces (42). In this way, the soul is aware of experiencing via the body. God, in Stein's view, is not limited to a body and so will not have to rely on, or be relatively limited by, this kind of knowing (<55> 50).

Thus, again we come to understand that the *soul with the living body* forms the PPI. As we've seen, the psyche is, in meaningful and in cursory ways, dependent on somatic influences, yet it is notable, too, how feelings can remain parts of the individual that are known to persist independent

of somatic stimuli (49). Thus, we can consider feelings, for example, as soulful things even when the physical stimulus is removed; i.e., we can bring our consciousness to feelings even when the cause is not before us. This is how the persistence of soulful (and sometimes spiritual) feelings affect our moods and our character.

The more feelings are reflected on, the more they are a part of spirit. This means that insofar as feelings are only causal and not intentionally meaningful (e.g., Stein's example of different kinds of thinking noted earlier), they are more of the psyche than of the spirit. Thus, we have affirmed again from a phenomenological perspective that the soul is of the PPI **and** is body-dependent. Whereas the spirit is not necessarily body-dependent, we know of it through, and by way of, the P.P.I (or our body and its experiences)

As indicated, what we know of the spirit thus far is that it pertains to aspects of human essence not captured in discussing the PPI. We will see when aiming to understand the spirit of someone, we aim to capture some "deeper" elements of that individual being because spirit refers to those aspects of being in a "more pregnant sense" (<54> 49).

To elaborate, as I will in a subsequent section of this chapter, that which *is spiritual*, according to Stein, *has motivation*. But motivation cannot be understood without meaning. In the experiential realm, *meaning is understanding motivation* (<107> 97). This means that to experience knowing a spiritual person, we want to understand why they do what they do. When reflecting on one's experiences, Stein notes that we think of instances where we see motivation and we see that it is about *more* than recognizing being in the world and recognizing the effects of the world on the individual (as we have done thus far in cursory ways with respect to the PPI). Thus, *meaning* cannot adequately be understood in the psycho-physical realm. And while I do not want to get ahead of a thorough enough understanding of the PPI, the reason I am raising a point about meaning and motivation at this juncture is that what we can say about meaning can be verified by talking about it. Talking about meaning makes meaning experiential. In this way, meaning is brought back into the psycho-physical realm and can be experientially verified. Stein does not explicitly note this but given my considerable study of her work, I think she would agree with this play between the PPI and the spiritual such that the interplay creates a holistic understanding of human being that is verifiable.

Of course there are entire fields and studies contemporaneous and subsequent to Stein that devote themselves to understanding *meaning* and language in the human context. What Stein does say about meaning, in addition to what is noted above, is that *more is involved in meaning than (mere) acknowledging experiences*. And that something more *burgeons* in reiterated empathy.

Stein's penetratingly thoughtful attention to reasoning, essence, and distinction making assists the reader in realizing, with Stein, that much theory and understanding of the human condition can be built from the essences already discussed. Yet her insights are further developed in discussing "zero points of orientation," reflexive sympathy, and how values and feelings are part of understanding the spiritual aspect of human experiences. This is what we turn our attention to now.

3.5 Reiterated Empathy

To understand reiterated empathy and the essences it reflects we have to make a few more notes about the PPI. Exegetically speaking, Stein does not bring any particular attention to reiterated empathy as a pivotal act in empathetic knowledge.⁸⁶

At various points in her thesis Stein does, however, take the opportunity to remind us of empathy's epistemological importance. It deserves special attention as a means of extending the domains of experience-based knowledge because, for example, it becomes "the condition of possible knowledge of the existing outer world" (<71> 64). And, for example, empathy allows me not to be imprisoned within the boundaries of my individuality (<72> 64). These are extensive claims. How does empathy do this, especially if all we can base our phenomenological knowledge on is our own experience?

⁸⁶ The idea in reiterated empathy is that I look at myself as if I were the other person looking at me and see myself from the outside, as it were. When I see myself in this way, I am better able to imagine what the other, who is like me but not me, must be experiencing when experiencing me (<19> 18). When I look at myself from the outside, I recognize that the internal coherence I experience is not necessarily what others see when seeing me.

Still in the realm of understanding the PPI, we are reminded again that empathy succeeds through self-knowledge, specifically from knowing what is essential to one's self and then seeing that/those essential thing(s) in another. To develop this point, Stein reflects on our (primordial) experiences of sensations: When I consider sensations, I can envision myself as sensing such that my sensing hand is not just like other objects in the world. There is me sensing the world that is not a part of me but is conveyed to me via my senses, which affirms my being in the world. I also become aware that there is (1) my body sensing, and (2) myself who is aware of the sensing. This domain of self-awareness pertaining to the self who is sensing, provides access to acknowledging what Stein refers to as an individual's zero point of orientation and the pure "I". The zero point of orientation is the central processing for the physical and psychic sensations and the pure "I" registers the reflective self. In this way, there is no mind-body duality in the person because reflexive sympathy makes us aware of ourself as sensing, and reflecting on sensing.

I essentially know the physical body provides me with a "zero point of orientation" for my sensations.

I relate to the parts of my living body, together with everything spatial outside of it, to a "zero point of orientation" which my living body surrounds....This zero point is not to be geometrically localized at one point in my physical body: nor is it the same for all data. It is localized in the head for visual data and in the mid-body for tactile data. Thus, whatever refers to the "I" has no distance from the zero point and all that is given at a distance from the zero point is also given at a distance from the "I." (<46> 43)

To elaborate, the idea of a zero point of orientation allows that, for example, I can see, or sense, my arm to be a certain distance from core experiences inside of me. While this may seem like a rather subjective or speculative claim about a "zero point of orientation" in the body experiencing itself, it is a point about human sensuality that attempts to explain the intuitive differentiation of myself from other persons and things in the world. While I can sense the rock in my hand, I also sense the rock and my hand are not the same thing. This awareness of self as a sensing self is a theoretical explanation for how a sensing being differentiates themselves from the material world of which she is at least somewhat apart, and in relation to which she also has

the sense of being distinct (from the world out there). This concept of an individual's "zero point of orientation" is meant to assist us in knowing the living body as constituted in a two-fold manner (i) as a sensed (bodily perceived) living body — which is to say that I know myself in my body, *and* (ii) as an outwardly perceived and perceiving physical body which, like other apparently similarly constituted physical bodies, engages with the apparent outer world. Stein would say that this is essential about the human experience, namely awareness of my own point of zero orientation.

“And in this double givenness [here she means to refer to my awareness of selfness and the other-than-thatness of my physical being], it is experienced as the same. Therefore, it has a location in outer space and fills up a portion of this [inner] space” (<47> 45). I sense myself inside of my body. According to Stein this summarizes her understanding of how an individual is given to them self. The zero point of orientation captures the idea of an “I who relates to others whom I perceive.” It logically sets one up to understand how they (being like me in a living body) perceive me as I perceive them, i.e., as living bodies with their own points of zero orientation.

These are the essential and necessary features of empathetic understanding. Empathy refers to the moments when I deeply realize, because I have *reflected on my own essence, that others are psycho-physical beings like me*. The particulars of their psycho-physical being are not like my particulars, but we are both psycho-physical beings with zero points of orientation — i.e., an internal sensing self who experiences (is aware of) their respective sensings. The idea of a zero point of orientation acknowledges that there are both internally and externally oriented aspects of psycho-physical being.

Let us now further discuss the “like me” part of empathy, which for the analytic philosopher, would be the relational part of the analytic formula.⁸⁷ When I project myself into another's physical body, as it were, for the purposes of empathy,

⁸⁷ To experience empathy (E), one (A) must project their experiences (i.e., relate, R) into having another's experience (B). Stein has provided us with the essential features of A that relates (R) to B's essential features as if A were B. A extends empathy/E to B — A R B — as if A=B & A ≠ B.

I obtain a new image of the spatial world, a new zero point of orientation. It is not that I shift my zero point to this place, for I retain my “primordial” zero point and my “primordial” orientation while I am empathically, non-primordially obtaining the other one. On the other hand, neither do I obtain a fantasized orientation nor a fantasized image of the spatial world. But this orientation, as well as the empathetic sensations, is conprimordial, because the living body to which it refers is perceived as a physical body at the same time and because it is given primordially to the other “I,” even though non-primordially to me. (<69> 61-62)

We could imagine the following slogans for empathy — “how to enrich our world through experiencing others” or “empathize by orienting yourself to the other PPI’s zero point of orientation” — as a how-to manual for empathizing with others. The point in empathizing here is that *it matters that I interpret the other living body by attempting to align with their zero point of orientation*. The empathizer’s capacity to do this depends on their own habits of intuiting and thinking, which we will discuss more thoroughly in due order. Yet, regardless of the effectiveness of the empathizer’s innate or natural capacity for empathy, these capacities can be enhanced by challenging one’s own habits of experiencing the world by stepping out of one’s own perspective, or zero point of orientation. Once I can see my ways of viewing the world as such (i.e., as *my* ways of viewing the world) through relating to other PPIs like me (i.e., such that they also have their ways of viewing the world), then I open myself to the possibility of empathizing, i.e., the possibility of “enriching our own world image through another’s” (<70> 63).

What Stein has established for us is, again, what some might call an existential point that I, like other humans, am one zero point of orientation among many. From a psychological perspective it is interesting that her argument could be read as if to progress the reader through developmental phases of narcissism. Consider that the first developmental phase of narcissism is such that in learning to sense, be, and think as an embodied human, the child learns and experiences the world as if they are the centre. Then developmentally, as we further figure out who we are we see that there are others, and they are like me, and I am like them. As we develop and experience who we are, the better we can relate, on points of essential humanity, with others. This is because

empathizing with another, for example, can help us perceive what we take for granted in our approach. So in this way empathy helps us experience the “the real outer world” (<70> 63). To this point, empathy can be seen to be akin to a verificationist approach to truth; I can know more real truths about the outer world, the more members of my community can engage in verifying that truth from their perspective. In this way, empathy provides for me knowledge of the world that I would not otherwise have if I relied only on my own (zero-point of orientation) perceptions and experiences. Stein reasons, “were I imprisoned within the boundaries of my individuality, I could not go beyond “the world as it appears to me” (<72> 64). Empathy is a way of gaining knowledge through my experiences, specifically my experiences of how I relate to other people’s experiences in the world.

One of the important realizations that I glean from Stein, to this point, is that *empathy, at its essence, is an act of equality or equalization and it is a recognition of differences premised on this essential equality*. If we do not value others as PPIs (with the potential for a discernable spiritual self), then we cannot engage in empathy. What is abundantly clear to this point is that in empathy the “I” needs to come to know itself. It needs to know itself as a physical body, as one among so many others, yet empathetically realizes that its own zero point of orientation is one special point among many. In this way then, “I” is given to itself in a “fuller sense,” which is to say that when I attempt to relate to the full sense of another, it comes from my understanding of myself as one zero point of orientation among many. When I relate to myself from the outside as I would relate to another (or another might relate to me), then I am engaging in reiterated empathy.

When I come to consider another PPI to be like me, I come to see me as an object.

[W]e do all this in regard to foreign psychic life. Because the life is bound to the perceived physical body, it stands before us as an object from the beginning. Inasmuch as I now interpret it as “like mine” I come to consider myself as an object like it. I do this in “reflexive sympathy” when I empathically comprehend the acts in which my individual is constituted for him. <100>

By these means, reflexive empathy can correct inner perception, which “contains within it the possibility of deception” (89 <101>). If I try to understand myself from the outside, then I can

see where I might be deceiving myself by observing my apparent, or perceived, motivations and verifying those experiences with my “attributes primordially and not empathically” (<101> 89). We can verify our own primordial experiences and then compare them to what is perceived by empathetic means. This is why “[e]mpathy processes have yet another side as an aid to comprehending ourselves” (89 <100>). This unique epistemological feature is exercised by generously comparing my essential humanity with an other’s. In this way I am provided some knowledge of how I might otherwise experience the world (by going outside of myself), and thereby enhance self-knowledge. This knowledge can then be verified primordially.

At this next point in Stein’s argument, the reader is introduced to the idea that understanding another person means going a step beyond recognizing that they have a zero point of orientation. Now at the burgeoning of our understanding of the deeper spiritual level of the person, we apply another level of reiterated empathy and add coherence. At this level of empathy I realize that just as I see my experiences and my world view as coherent, so others likely experience their coherences, in ways that naturally make sense to their world view. I have to acknowledge, therefore, that if I want to understand another then I have to see them from the outside and yet try to understand them from the inside. When empathy goes deeper, the internal coherence we assume of own worldview is akin to the kind of coherence we have to seek or apply when attempting to empathize with the internal world of another. The kind of coherence Stein has in mind will be discussed further, but first it is useful to elaborate on where and how the coherence is being sought.

Reflexive sympathy on the level of the spiritual potentially provides access to “the something more.” We could imagine a client saying to their practitioner, “To really get me, you can’t just see how my life experiences identify me. You have to see how I’ve constructed my feelings and values in relation to those experiences.” This was evidenced in our early discussion of the question posed to the survivor’s group — i.e., what had enabled them to get through successfully. When one only seeks causally descriptive understandings, one is closed off to possibly learning more about that person. Obviously, based only on the physical presentation I do not obtain a full enough story of the whys or the motivations that are a part of what makes up that person.

At this point the student is given another hint about spiritual feelings; namely, that they do sometimes interact with the soul. At various points in my pursuit of understanding Stein's phenomenology, I was able to see how soul and spirit can be concepts that are variously distinct and, in other words, not always distinguishable from each other. We see in Stein's writing on the human "will" throughout this book, that spiritual, and not only soulful, motivations can also affect one's willing. And spiritual motivations that also show up in the actions of the PPI also affect willing. Clearly one can see how, in making points about the soul, it is easy to stray into spiritual thinking. It's hard not to get ahead of oneself by noting that self-reflection engages a part of the self that is more spiritual than somatic (or soulful); and so the degree to which one is able to reflect on one's experiences, affects the spiritual self's actualization.

Stein takes this opportunity to indicate that many psychologists and other researchers like Scheler and Lipps misunderstand the human experience of empathy because there are distinctions they have simply missed or misformulated. I hypothesize that Stein would rank her most formidable criticism of other theorists as their failure to expose and address the spiritual aspect of the individual. Others, like Scheler, might have formulated "love" as the investigative bias of phenomenology, but it begs the question, where does this idea of love come from? For Stein, it comes from the spiritual realm, which we need to understand prior to biasing such a realm with intentions (like love). Intention would show up in "willing," which itself has a spiritual component, and so willing love from the outset would really be begging the question as to what we can know about human spiritual essence.

Stein's approach to the spiritual person is based on careful differentiations, like the ones we have noted thus far, as generated in phenomenological investigations of the PPI. Yet even in trying to focus solely on the PPI, references to the spirit continue to arise. That the term is consistently apparent in discussing the PPI does not mean that "spirit" is a term that ought to be uncritically assumed in our study of individuals. Even her final chapters' introductory remarks introducing her formal discussion of the spiritual person indicate that the concept of the spiritual person has already been many times implied in the phenomenological investigation thus far (<101> 91). So, and I say this as an individual who struggled with how to present the separations and assimilations of PPI and spiritual person in Stein's theory, we need not be hard on ourselves for finding it relevant to periodically dip into discussing the spiritual person. However, that does not imply that one can assume that thus far we have adequately defined the essence of the spiritual

individual. Yet even so, prior to divulging her spiritual insights, Stein has to make a few more points about her methodology.

Stein indicates that her account of empathy, unlike Lipp's, explains what we are relating to in relating to another individual (65). She also goes further in explaining how empathy is a human relationship and not a mere relating of statements as per Munsterberg (64), but a relating of human essence to human essence. By identifying what is involved in empathy and the PPI, we get a better understanding of the mechanics of what happens in empathizing: It's about our essences in relation to others' essences. Essences appear to include, but are not limited to things such as the impact of our various life experiences (which impact our physical and psychological beings), the characterizations we make about ourselves and our experiences (some of which are soul characterizations) and, the yet to be explored, essential points with respect to individual spirituality.

Nonetheless, we are forced to a kind of practical clarity. When Stein breaks down the phenomena of life as the experiences of the individual she again provides essential points of reference that guide healthy empathetic engagement. How would I be if I went into the experiences 'x' went into, with the background 'x' had? What would it feel like to feel what 'x' felt? Physically? Emotionally? Psychologically? The phenomenological practitioner is, significantly, a practitioner of this line of questioning. Philosophical counsellors encourage making evaluations and distinctions between kinds of claims such that what results from the sharing and evaluating are kinds of relational and verifiable knowledge claims.

Again, towards the end of the first chapter (now that the self with the concept of a zero point of orientation has been developed), additional essences of the PPI can be reflected on. Stein notes that, in terms of human essences sensations, judging, willing, and perceiving are absolutely given. Senses do not issue from the "pure I" and are never aware of them selves, whereas in acts of judging and willing the individual is aware of themselves doing these things. So again we find references to the self-reflective self or the spiritual self evolves in spite of wanting to contain the discussion to the PPI.

We are faced with the fact that aspects of the self that are in some ways discernable also afford a certain unity by virtue of being part of the whole self. PPIs and spiritual persons come together in one and so, too, the physical and psychic self come together with the inner and outer self.

Interestingly, in each of these examples the body is the medium (the relation, the in-between) that connects different aspects of the human experience, as well as takes in sensing and puts out feelings, willing, judging, and perception which points to a double way in which the body is given; the body takes *in* the outside world and variously processes *out* one's own thoughts and reflections.

Stein now turns to the idea of general feelings by way of addressing the question of how feelings fill the body. What is established is that sensations in the body arise from being embodied in the world. In other words, the body is the engager and receiver of sensual stimulation. Even “[t]he psyche is in essence characterized by this dependence of experiences on somatic influences” (<54> 49). Theoretical points about emotions aside for the time being, Stein’s culminating point in this section, re-attune her audience to the fact that a foreign *lived body* is the bearer of a psychic life (75). Empathy helps us see this. It helps us see shame in a blush. And empathy helps us see sadness or joy in tears. A foreign living body or a PPI bears her life in her living, and the empathizer gets good at seeing this.

To this point we developed with Stein a deeper sense of how physically bound the idea of self is, and we have a good idea of how character is influenced by our senses of things in the world. In summary, we have learned that the soul is a reflective element that registers awareness of sensations and so it lies between the somatic self and the spiritual self. The spiritual self is additionally conscious, self-reflective, and thinks about sensations. We have also learned that the extent to which an individual can know themselves in turn affects how well the individual can know others. The process of knowing self and identifying with other feeds a spiral of extending knowledge. We have been shown that reiterated empathy applies to the PPI as the means of entering the spiritual realm, the realm of (variously deep) consciousness about self, and self in relation to other.

3.6 The Will also Mediates Soul and Spirit

I wish I had more opportunity to discuss the matter here, but for now, as in this chapter’s earlier discussion of sensations and the PPI, I can only point to some cursory and relevant points that Stein provides as insight into human will. The constraints of the project do not provide enough

opportunity to debate the merits of her arguments, but we do have the opportunity to note some of the more interesting and relevant points for our purposes.

Briefly, the will is creative, self-expressed and self-expressing, and begins in the spirit of a person even though it manifests in physical actions. One's will mediates the PPI and the spiritual realm of an individual. As such, the will is not expressed as will, but is *referred to* in actions

Will itself is not expressed in this sense, but, like feeling, neither is it isolated in itself, having to work itself out. Just as feeling releases or motivates volition from itself (or another possible "expression" in a wider sense), so *will* externalizes itself in action. To act is always to produce what is not present. (<61> 54-55)

Thus, every creative act in the true sense is a volitional action (<63> 56). One way we can see another's will is to see how they act in the world. What do they have the volition to create with their lives? This last feature characterizes the unique and creative, in the sense of generative and nuanced, nature of human action in the world. So we learn that the will, which we will see later to also be an aspect of the spiritual self, expresses a deeper part of the self and has often to contend with the expansions and limitations of the physical world. As Stein writes,

My strength may give out before I reach my goal, and I must call to life each requisite mental act by a volition to overcome a strong resistance. The will is thus master of the soul as of the living body, even though not experienced absolutely nor without the soul refusing obedience. Moreover through willing, the individual learns that the world of objects disclosed in experience sets a limit to the will. (<61> 55)

In other words, our will often meets with resistance and this is how we learn about our own limits. And, importantly too, we learn about our own relational limits and our capacities in relation to other things in the world.

Stein also asserts that it is important to understand that a willful act is always a creative act because a willful act is an expression of something inside the self that is not in the world. In

willing, something of the inner self is being put into the world. One's understanding of how one is in the world reflects one's psyche and spiritual self (i.e., that which is more inside.) When we understand of ourselves that I did 'x' because of *that* feeling and/or *that* motivation, then I better understand *what* I will to take place and *why* I will certain things to take place. There is much everyday evidence that this sequence of understanding the inner self—who-wills, is evident in various psychotherapeutic or even motivational approaches to personal development. So the ideas here about willing are intuitively comprehensible points that can be further debated and dissected. For now, it is enough to point to willing as a feature of both the spiritual person and the PPI.

It now follows that when one applies the principles of understanding one's own motivations along with coherences between one's actions and one's will, that individual is in a better position to understand the coherences in the actions of others. This is why Stein writes “the harmony of empathy in the unity of meaning also makes possible the comprehension of expressive appearances” (<96> 85). This means that in one's experiences, everything fits together as the whole in one's stream of consciousness. All that is in it makes sense to me as being in my world. Certain actions in my world, without question, make sense to me. The quest of the empathizer, thus, is to see how close they can get to getting inside the other person's experiences so that certain external actions make sense, as if the empathizer were experiencing the empathized from inside of the empathized. In other words, we can achieve understanding because we know of ourselves that our inner approach to the world is reflected in how we are in the world. This insight comes not from the esoteric points about our being, but it is the result of studying one's own human experiences.

Towards the end of her discussion on willing, Stein notes that a feeling essentially motivates willing. “Therefore an unmotivated willing is an impossibility” (<61> 55). This is another example of applying sense making, or logic, in aiming to empathetically understand another person. Each of us knows that to will something requires effort and persistence; resistance meeting willing is a particular kind of force generated by an individual. This willing is evident when one sees an individual put a great deal of effort into something, especially something evidently challenging like athletic success or a graduate degree. In these instances when one has the opportunity to ask something of the feelings they seek in doing the work they do, we understand more about their particular motivations in doing something challenging.

3.7 How Spiritual Empathy Supports Theories of Emotions That Are Subjectively Coherent

In this next section we will also see that feelings possess their own dualities, as does the body. In reflecting on corporeal essences, Stein affirmed that while the body is not ambiguous in its being it does, however, possess dualisms (or what some might call “dialectics”) of inner and outer (internal and external), and psychic and physical. Emotions can be likewise characterized; they have internal and external components, corporeal representations, and psychic representations. We will also see that emotions can be talked about both in terms of the PPI and in terms of the spiritual person. Again, Stein’s emotional theory could be its own study, but I am limiting my exegesis in the direction of guidelines that provide a practical understanding of Stein’s theoretical account of empathy and what empathy reveals about emotions.

Thus to begin this aspect of the study, let us note that in terms of phenomenological methodology we could say that turning feelings into an object realm — a realm to be studied — takes us deeper into understanding feelings by providing the opportunity to identify some essences of feelings. Approaching our feelings as objective things is useful in investigating them. This approach to feelings is evident in sentences like, “For as physical nature is constituted in perceptual acts, so a new object realm is constituted in feeling. This is the world of values” (<102> 92). This sentence affirms that just as we can investigate our knowledge of the physical world by investigating our perceiving and our perceptions, we can also come to know the spiritual world by observing how human beings (ourselves, most obviously included) experience different feelings. And notably, one of the things we observe in investigating feelings is that, as has been alluded to, some feeling are motivated by values (<102> 92). While some feelings are reactions to experiences that can be causally described, there are also some feelings that are motivated by values. To know one’s own values is to reasonably assume some level of self-reflection and therefore values are of the spiritual realm.

In a key passage that further substantiates the idea of two levels of empathy, Stein takes the opportunity to also indicate that *motivation* is key to this second level of understanding. She writes:

Motivation is the lawfulness of spiritual life. The experiential context of spiritual subjects is an experienced (primordially or empathetically) totality and intelligible as such. Precisely this meaningful proceeding distinguishes motivation from psychic causality as well as empathic understanding of spiritual contexts from empathic comprehension of psychic contexts. (<107> 96)

Notice the distinction between empathy in the spiritual context versus the psychic context. But more than this, here one of the features of the spiritual experience is that when I am in it, it is coherent, whole, intelligible, and meaningful to me. Moreover, motivation and meaning are relatively discerned. Thus, investigating motivation can enhance and expand the meaning of an experience.

As a quick example, if I see my friend sweating profusely while giving a talk, I know that he is not only affected by the lights, the number of people, and the poor ventilation and stuffiness of the room, but he is also motivated by feelings of pride and a desire to conquer particular personal fears. Knowing this, I know there to be a genuine internally discernable juxtaposition between his surface demeanor and his fear of speaking in public. I know what the sweat means for him that he is exerting great effort, determination, and self-control to present his ideas effectively. In this way, as Stein's passage indicates, we can describe my friend's actions in causally descriptive terms and we can also express understanding his spiritual self. Yet to better understand what this experience might mean to him, we benefit from describing which of his motivations are at play.

Granted, and as we noted, Stein referred to motivation in discussing the emotions of the PPI but if we acknowledge that there is "something more" than psychic and physical responses (regardless of whether such responses are stored in the individual or released immediate reactions) to stimuli in human experience, then we proceed to a notion of motivation that is necessarily on a different level of understanding. It is as if to understand an experience, we not only have to look at the contributing factors but the essences of that person that are evident in the something different, or more (than causal); which is to say, in a phenomenological sense, that something more is revealed in how they reflect on their experiences. So understanding oneself on a motivational level is not only to say that this makes me feel this way, but it is to say that I feel this way in response to x *and* I think y about that, or choose to feel z about x. In other words, in

the spiritual context we move deeper into understanding a subject's motivations. With this kind of description we develop the idea of (self-directed as opposed to causal-directed) motivation in the person, and that they (or a deeper aspect of them) are somehow behind their actions.

Stein now turns to discuss the fact that a feeling motivates an expression by its meaning to the individual, and this meaning defines the limits of a range of possible expressions just as the meaning of a part of a sentence prescribes its possible formal and material complements.

For as it feels it not only experiences objects, but it itself. It experiences emotions as coming from the "depth of its 'I'". This also means that this "self" – experiencing "I" is not the pure "I," for the pure "I" has not depth. But the "I" experienced in emotion has levels of various depths. These are revealed as emotions arise out of them. (<110> 98)

Whereas feelings in the pregnant sense are pervasively in us, pregnant feelings do more than colour our character and how we perceive the world; they affect our values and how we express those values. So understanding deep feelings can assist us to understand our personality and, generally, our personality type. Why? Because, according to Stein, deep feelings involve "theoretical acts" (<112> 101). Deep feelings require that we know them because they reach "into the I." When we analyze these feelings we come to recognize "hierarchies of values" within ourselves. This discloses essential relationships among the hierarchy of felt values, which could be called the depth classification of value feelings. Accordingly, every time we advance in understanding in the value realm we also make acquisitions in the realm of our own personality. One of the ideas here is that changes in one's deep feelings can affect changes in personality. There is also the idea that if there is comprehension of a value as a deeply felt value, then it can be seen to be more evident in expressions or personality.

Time and space do not permit us the luxury of debating the various relationships between values and feelings and depths of feelings, and values. For now, we can discuss values as a felt part of self-reflection and as entirely relevant to the kind of therapeutic mirroring that happens in PC and psychotherapy. We saw in Chapter One that another theme in PC is the aim to support the client in looking at the values that motivate their behaviours. Stein writes that empathizing with

another's values is a good way to figure out what motivates them as well as what motivates yourself.

In principle, all foreign experience permitting itself to be derived from my own personal structure can be fulfilled, even if this structure has not yet actually unfolded. I can experience values empathetically and discover correlative levels of my person, even though my primordial experience has not yet presented an opportunity for their exposure. He who has never looked a danger in the face himself can still experience himself as brave or cowardly in the empathic representation of another's situation.
(<129> 115)

We learn about what motivates others by asking ourselves what we would do in the same situation, and we can practise putting ourselves in their situations to experience their values and feelings. As an aside, this is likely why there is a correlation between avid readers of other people's stories and the capacities of those same individuals to be empathetic to another's circumstances and plights. This is because readers practise empathizing with the characters they study. Nonetheless, the point here is that the forum for considering what I would do, in contrast to what we see another doing helps us understand them, and we can construct from their actions their values and imagine how their values would relate to particular behaviour. In this way imagination has a role to play in epistemological expansion.

Stein recognizes at this point that it's difficult not to slide into discussing the ontology of human beings when we get into discussing particular spiritual essences. When we study human beings we often find ourselves asking questions wondering whether there is some *a priori* or innate essence in individuals. It is a difficult idea to sidestep and could reasonably be part of a PC discussion insofar as it fills out a client's ontological beliefs. It's interesting to note, too, that in her final paragraphs of the book she leaves the question of body-independent spiritual essence unanswered. So ontological questions are provoked by the ideas that are associated with the ramifications of grasping the spiritual part of a person. In short, ontological issues are alluded to in this discussion, but not investigated. Nonetheless, this passage reminds us of a pragmatic principle of psychotherapy; namely that the meaning of an action or attitude can be better

understood if it is recognized that it proceeds from, and can be enhanced by, understanding motivation. While more detailed reflections on “motivation” and “meaning” are offered in this chapter, to this point we can say definitively that, with respect to the spiritual realm (discussions of the unconscious aside), “meaningful proceeding” comes from reflecting on conscious awarenesses and intentions, i.e., the motivations, that an individual brings to their experiences which sometimes can include various ontological and metaphysical beliefs (regardless that such projects are not directly relevant to phenomenological inquiry.)

Feelings are unique *kinds* of things in the world. They are evident in how we can be characterized and they are evident in our actions. They are not like other kinds of objects or things, but they are evident *in* things and in how our experiences are coloured. They are subjective things (they are examples of my subjectivities) that I can turn my attention to. “Further in feelings we experience ourselves not only as present, but also as constituted in such and such a way. They announce personal attributes to us” (<110> 99). So when we study feelings, they can take us deeper into understanding ourselves. And, Stein notes, when we look at our feelings as if they do (or could) make sense to us, we learn more about ourselves because by investigating feelings there is a seeking to know our motivations and values.

In turn, when we empathetically relate to another person’s feelings, knowing what we know about ourselves, we look for that same kind of coherence in aiming to understand the other person’s worldview. This is because we know our worldview has its coherences and we perceive our own experiences in inherently coherent ways. By way of the same reasoning, Stein writes:

[W]e comprehend the unity of a character in each attribute, as we comprehend the unity of a thing in every material attribute. Therein we possess a motivation for the future experiences. This is how all the elements of the individual as constituted for us in empathic acts.
(<98> 86)

When we are getting to know someone we assume a kind of unity of character between their actions and their internal selves, and as we get to know them better we modify our comprehension of that unity of their character. To elaborate, for example, when I first met “Susan” it was evident that she was generous. But when I saw instances in which she wasn’t

generous, I came to understand that Susan was not habitually generous, but generous when she felt the person towards whom she was generous merited the effort.

From experience I would add to these considerations the practical principle that the important thing to keep in mind when investigating emotions is that the investigator needs to investigate emotions non-emotionally. When aiming to understand emotions one does so in a particularly rational way, namely by seeking the kinds of coherence discussed above. Stein is keen that we keep up a methodology of investigating emotion, and this is what was affirmed in the paragraph prior, i.e., that her methodology aims at a certain kind of objectivity. This obviously isn't an absolute kind of objectivity, but rather a kind of objectivity with respect to investigating one's own experiences. It is an account of objectivity where we would see ourselves from the outside, as if we could imagine how others, like us, would see us. So it is a fairly *subject-foundational account of objectivity*. But it is an account that aims for rigour and is open to verifiability, nonetheless.

Stein now turns to discuss the fact that “a feeling by its meaning motivates an expression, and this meaning defines the limits of a range of possible expressions just as the meaning of a part of a sentence prescribes its possible formal and material complements” (<112> 101). Here we see that logic and reason are relevant at the emotional level. Thus, reason is assumed and sought in attempting to identify personality types, but unlike absolutist reasoning it is, in ways, subject-specific. In other words we could ask, “what could possibly be meant by a particular behaviour or statement?” Answers can be discerned because meaning only has so many possibilities, but the possibilities happen within the variable contexts of a particular PPI and their self-reflections.

The practical logic follows principles like this one: intentional deception aside, it is difficult to see anger in an embrace or the intention to hurt another in a kiss. When motivations are outside our conventions of interpretation — like betrayal in a kiss — then we can know more of a true motivation by noting that information is provided when there is a discrepancy between values and conventional actions. This is due to the fact that there is an inherent logic in interpreting emotions. It likely integrates many features of conventionality, but there it is nonetheless there. At the very least, we look for the cohesiveness between apparent emotions and actions or behaviour.

So when we seek to understand another person on a spiritual level, we are seeking to understand their specific rationality and coherences. The point of this rational approach is not that it is intended to reinforce a kind of *a priori* reasoning or rationality, but rather it is rationality oriented towards discerning how a particular view could be coherent.⁸⁸ When one interprets the spiritual individual we recognize that “the spiritual subject is essentially subject to rational laws and that its experiences are *intelligibly* related” [emphasis mine] (<109> 97). In short, even though there are unpredictable aspects to understanding someone else’s motivations, there remains a certain rationality to discernment. Here interpretive reasoning is not limited to a totalizing account of reason and rationality, but it *is* minimally an aim at coherence. It could also be argued that a higher standard of logic, more traditionally analytic logic, is implied in this work, but it is not explicit. However, for our purposes, the point is that subject-particular logic can be made explicit in understanding human motivations.⁸⁹

Bringing together her previous points, Stein writes that “action also bids for understanding. It is not merely to be carried out empathically as a single experience, but experienced as proceeding meaningfully from the total structure of the person” (<125> 112). This means that it is possible to see into a person’s motivations, in a particular instance, as an extension (or not), of their general apparent character. This means that with empathetic practice, one can come to distinguish between what general feelings, moods, and pregnant feelings tell us about someone.

As seekers of meaning and understanding with respect to the other, we look for coherence in aiming to understand the other person’s world view. In fact, there is coherence evident in the complex relationships between feelings, volitions, and values, and this coherence reveals types of persons. Stein discusses this in more detail later when she discusses Dilthy (<126> 113). Regardless, for now it is sufficient to note that there is enough general coherence and laws of interpretive discernment that kinds of people can be characterized. And, the interpretive coherence that we apply at this spiritual level of empathy helps us see our spiritual type — in

⁸⁸ It is important to note that these claims about reason and rationality make sense in the context of the theoretical work done in Chapter Two. Recall that relativism makes sense and is useful at particular theoretical levels. We cannot get away from concepts of absolute, or *a priori*, logic and reason. It is the analytic standard of reasoning that makes the claims at other theoretical levels possible.

⁸⁹ Relative logic must appeal to absolute logic, even if only as an ideal and a standard.

other words, we can look more penetratingly at the forces that motivate us as we better understand the forces that motivate others.

I cannot help but note the degree to which the preceding statements sound like the theoretical underpinnings and foundations for psychoanalysis, relational psychotherapy, and self-psychology. Again, Stein's theory makes explicit the assumptions from which these other theoretical perspectives proceed. I doubt this self-other relational feature that legitimizes empathic knowledge has ever been made so explicit in the history of ideas. My aim in this paper is not to argue for this point, but to explain and bring forward the philosophically sound thinking that legitimizes these approaches to knowledge about others.

In short, when we attempt to understand someone's spirit, we are going beyond seeing them as PPIs, and we come to see the spiritual person is a "value experiencing subject in general" (113). Therefore, when we understand our values, then by reasonable means we can influence our being (behaviour and character) in the world by considering, developing our understanding of, and cultivating those values.

At the very least, recognizing what distinguishes the spiritual person from the PPI is a useful distinction for working with philosophy patients because the practitioner can say to the patient, "On what levels do you wish to discuss this matter? The psycho-physical? The spiritual? And, if on the spiritual level, do you want to discuss the matter in terms of, or in reference to, transcendental consciousness, or only in relation to your own individual consciousness?" More colloquially we might say, "Do you know which of your values you have acquired from your environment and which ones you have sought to understand more independently? Do you know which values you live by that you have chosen and why?" In this way, the patient comes to know that we are not going to look at their life in only descriptively causal ways. Patients know that when we attempt to discuss them in terms of their spiritual person we are seeking what makes their actions and motivations coherent (to them). Making these points explicit in theoretical ways that are comprehensible to the patient can provide some patients with organizing ideas that support their developing self-understanding.

3.8 Additional Understandings of the Spiritual Person

We have had the opportunity to reflect on the *something* that was missing in the description of the psycho-physical individual (PPI). In Stein's words:

In the constitution of the psycho-physical individual something already gleamed through in a number of places that goes beyond these frames. Consciousness appeared not only as a causally conditioned occurrence, but also as object constituting at the same time. Thus it stepped out of the order of nature and faced it. Consciousness as a correlate of the object world is not nature, but spirit. (<102> 91)

So we are conscious when we are experiencing (and reacting) to something (an object), but there is also more to consciousness: There is more when we are *aware* of our experiencing something: a kind of reflective consciousness that “stepped out of the order of nature and is facing it.”

I reviewed much research to pull these ideas together and, although Stein does not use the phrase, I feel it is an accurate reflection of her ideas to refer to this self-reflecting also as an “objectifying process.” Whereas, in a first order sense, I can be conscious in knowing the sunlight is hitting my face, in a second order sense I “step out” of the first order experiencing only, and *I am aware of the pleasure* that experiencing the sunlight brings to me. I am aware of not only visceral comfort in warmth, but the reflecting on the warmth that brings me joy. The claim is that “consciousness” is the awareness of our attention turned to objects in the world, which includes, at this level, my awareness of my experience of things. My awarenesses of my experiences is another level of consciousness that Stein is referring to when she says “consciousness pertains to spirit” (91). Consciousness is in and of the world, but its ability to see itself as something means that, in a way, it is also able to step outside of the world (as it were) and see it from this observing and potentially influencing position (as evidenced in the example of the doctor and empathetic practitioner, or listening to one's own conscience or inner voice).

Thus, it could also be said that the realm of the spiritual is the realm of self-reflectiveness, which returns us to an age-old philosophical theme: power over oneself in the world comes from reflecting on the powers that instantiate one in the first place. This is, of course, what I think

Berlin and Butler each address in their texts, and why it is the point of the next chapter. It is worth noting that we saw the foundations for this point in Chapter One.

Our levels of spiritual empathy are enhanced to the extent that the practitioner can understand how the patient reflects on themselves, i.e., their self-consciousness (including how they think about themselves and their world). What does the patient think of themselves and how do they see their values? Through this process we can relate to all people we choose to focus on and value. Once we value them as people, we can also relate to their values, i.e., the values behind the feelings that motivate them. Thus we see how a Steinian might argue that empathy is a creative act of will that is based on valuing people as people.

Although I will not develop the point here, it is worth noting that as an empathetic practitioner comes to recognize a relationship between the depth of empathy they can offer, and the depth of the patient's expressed self reflection, they will also recognize that the more the patient engages in their self-understanding, the more the practitioner can engage and attempt to understand the patient's spiritual self.

We have noted the specific textual evidence required to support the claim that there are, in fact, two levels of empathy at play in Stein's account. It has already been noted that approaching a client with these two levels in mind can be therapeutically useful, especially because the practitioner is provided with an additional domain for inquiry and reflection beyond the psycho-physical. And such thinking can support the student-patient in thinking about how they want to, and do, shape themselves in terms of their values.

Let us look now more closely at both Stein's (1) understanding of the spiritual person and (2) the different kinds of empathetic skills required. At the beginning of her third and final thesis chapter, Stein writes:

The soul and the psycho-physical individual are also natural objects. Empathy was necessary for the constitution of these objects, and so to a certain extent our own individual was assumed. But spiritual understanding, which we shall characterize in still more detail, must be distinguished from *this* empathy. (<106> 95, *emphasis mine*)

To give an account of the spiritual person is to explain more than the natural, environmental, and variously impactful occurrences that constitutes what we know of the individual at the earlier level of empathy. Granted, in and of itself, having some understanding of the mechanics of the PPI and the soul as an aspect of the PPI is a notable accomplishment in understanding another individual. Indeed, much is achieved when working at this level of understanding, so there is no need to therapeutically undervalue it. Yet in this passage we are reminded that *there can be more understanding*, and we can come to know the essence of spiritual individuals in the same way we come to know the essence of PPIs, i.e., by empathetic investigation, *but at a different level*. The claim is that we can relate to, and so gain knowledge about, another person's spiritual self. But of course, to do so empathetically requires that we identify the parts of the spiritual self that the empathizer will relate to, to facilitate correspondent empathy. Methodologically speaking, just as the essential aspects of the PPI were identified and investigated by Stein, the essential aspects of the spiritual person are also identified. In the end, this deeper empathy requires the step beyond some PPI correspondence, and the empathizer is required to seek out coherence amidst deeper feelings, motivations, and values. This approach, again, is based on a core understanding of how these essential features of spiritual persons are at play in each human individual.

There is no doubt that Stein is being clear in her wanting to add something to our thinking and acting empathetically because in various summations throughout her discussion of the spiritual person, she takes the opportunity (as she did earlier in her work) to differentiate her theory from proceeding theories pertaining to empathy and epistemology. Lipps' theory, for example, did not conceptualize that a domain of meaning could be understood as distinct from causal explanations. He, according to Stein, failed to investigate the spiritual aspect of the individual, and so failed to inquire into the unpredictable domain of what an experience may mean to an individual.⁹⁰ This is another opportunity for Stein to indicate that making meaning is not just about causal descriptions, but about something more (even unpredictable), which soon explicitly includes values as a feature of motivation.

In discussing the spiritual self, Stein points to a familiar technique or principle in contemporary PC: We want clients to reflect on their values. And we want them sometimes to reflect on

⁹⁰ (See <89>)

potential discrepancies between their internally reflected values and their actions in the world. Stein indicates that investigating feelings with someone can lead us to understand their values. Stein, in fact, says we can best understand someone by looking at his or her “value doctrines” (<121> 108); she experiences every foreign person as having actions that “proceed from a will and this, in turn from a feeling” (<121> 108).

Reiterated empathy (or reflexive empathy) also comes into play here because we need to see ourselves to both effect and affect our experiences in the world. In this way, empathy — and reiterated empathy in particular — has the potential to empower the individual. And Stein makes the interesting claim that objectifying ourselves (through the process of trying to understand ourselves as if from the outside) is crucial to affecting ourselves, and how we live our values. To place our objectifying focus on feelings is not to transition from one object’s givenness to another, “but [it is] the objectifying of something subjective” (<110> 99). Thus, while feelings are unique to me, I can look at them and investigate them as if they are objects.

Feelings are subjective not only because I perceive them, but also because I experience them. “Further in feeling we experience ourselves not only as present but also as constituted in such and such a way. They announce personal attributes to us” (<110> 98). By “objective,” Stein does not mean to refer to something as the best or absolute truth, but the process of looking at something as if it were an object that could be evaluated in the world. This is why emotions and spiritual aspects can be considered objective because they, too, can be evaluated and investigated as if they were things in the world, regardless of whether they are experienced differently from other kinds of objects in the world (because they are, nonetheless, objects in the world). As particular things in the world, they are more evidently *of us*. Whereas psycho-physical attributes can always be pointed to, spiritual motivations can only sometimes be pointed to; they are only sometimes ostensive. In practising empathy we learn that sometimes spiritual motivations have to be brought out of us to be seen in us.

The practice of understanding another individual’s spiritual motivations means that I come to understand similarities, as well as physical, environmental, and spiritual differences. In this way,

again, empathy grounds me in myself and connects me to others. How we are affected by feelings, how we see ourselves effected, reveals our values to us.⁹¹

When I strive to understand my feelings and the values behind them, I come to understand myself in a double sense as subject and as object. At this level we see that the original and reflected feeling of values takes hold at different depths in the person because, by way of experience, we know that feelings are not only rooted in a certain depth of the “I,” but they also “fill out the self” (<116> 103). “Since the experience of value is basic to our own value, at the same time as new values we acquired by empathy, our own unfamiliar values become visible” (<130> 116), which is one way feelings relate to filling out the self. We have to keep in mind that values are discerned in investigating feelings that motivate behaviour. In looking objectively at our subjective selves, we have the opportunity to expand our understanding of both the universal (significantly this relates the essential features of a human being) and the particular aspects of our selves.

Just a quick note to the contemporary pragmatist philosopher. I would argue that here we have evidence that the concepts “subjective” and “objective” are relevant in reference to making sense of ourselves in phenomenological and essentially experiential ways. Practising philosophers might note this point to be in contradistinction to Richard Rorty’s pragmatism, which holds that philosophically dialectical distinctions are artificial (22 1999). Yet it is perhaps worth considering that here Stein is an example of a thinker committed to, and disciplined in, thinking in terms of essences and yet even she finds it meaningful to use categories of understanding such as subjective and objective. Additionally I should note that, in my experiences, clients also find defining and applying such concepts to be useful.

Thus far Stein has noted that one finds, in investigating feelings, that feelings can lead us to better understandings of values. This is a rich claim for professional empathetic listening because it captures a part of the process of listening; in the description of daily life events, we listen for feelings and layers of feelings that motivate behaviour; and we look for a coherence between feelings and values. And like the ancient Stoic philosophers, we listen to and investigate

⁹¹ As a practical exercise, one might ask one’s selves, for example, what situation(s) make us more upset than other situations? And this would be one way in which to discern and individual’s (moment specific) hierarchy of values.

emotions so as to understand and be able to influence feelings in particular directions (philosophically speaking, we are oriented towards that individual's concept of happiness). Certainly the Ancient practitioners saw and advocated that values can be discerned in feelings. They also noted that there is value and knowledge to be gleaned in discerning feelings, and that feelings are a reasonable sources for coming to understand our experiential worlds.

To give this idea a pragmatic application, I often give my clients an exercise of dividing a page into two columns. In column one, they write down all their behaviours over the course of two days. In the second column they then write down their motivations or values. I define "values" non-normatively⁹² as any feelings that are behind an action. In this way, too, clients can come to see how their soul and/or spirit becomes visible in their daily activities. The client might write down, for example, "went to gym and worked out hard for an hour." What was their motivation? "I am fed up with feeling physically weak and tired. I want more vitality." In this case the feeling of wanting more and better for themselves is behind their decision to act on the feeling of being sluggish. In other cases an individual might be motivated to go to the gym because they are jealous of their fitter friend. (Note: At this point, philosophically speaking, the specifics of the motivation are not discussed so much to be judged and evaluated relative to other values, but they are only sought so as to be understood as values). There's so much more that could be said and debated on these points, but I just want to bring into a little more focus the practicality of introducing the idea of consciousness of the spiritual level in philosophical practice.

We have noted that terms such as "feelings" and "consciousness" are used with respect to both the psycho-physical and the spiritual aspects of the individual, but there is a distinction in what is intended at both levels. It could also be said that maintaining a consistent hard and fast distinction between spirit and soul can be seen as more forced than absolute. Yet both domains represent essential and distinct elements of being human; there are ambiguities and clarity even in the most essential components of human being. However, for the purposes of this investigation, I found a useful and sufficiently malleable metaphor to be one where I envision the spiritual part of the individual to be within the soulful part of the individual, which resides in and with physical being.

⁹² "Non-normatively" means aiming to be without judgment. It includes an awareness that norms and cultural standards influence judgments. (See discussion, Chapter One).

We could discern and focus solely on a theory of emotion that is discernable within this phenomenological investigation on empathy. I have only characterized some aspects of it for efficacy's sake and for the sake of understanding features of empathy in action. Some insights into emotion are, however, relevant and useful to note here: My spiritual self (i.e., my personality, character, and sometimes mood) develops along with my experiences in the world. Stein reveals through investigation that we know that my expressions of my feelings (in the outer physical world) do not necessarily reflect the intensity of the feelings inside of me, (this is due sometimes to the constraints of social convention). Yet nonetheless, what we do know of feelings is that they demand expression. Thus, Stein indicates that feelings inside of me eventually come to be expressed by me in one way or another (<59> 53). These (eruptions of truer) expressions reveal something about the character and essence of my spiritual self, that is to say, how I think about things.

Being empathetic allows us to try and fit these different aspects of a person together in a way that would be coherent to them. To better understand empathy, Stein directs her readers to the benefit of looking at an example of what empathy is not. "Suppose," she writes, "that I have taken over from my environment a hatred and contempt for the members of a particular race or party" (<35> 31). Endorsing or cultivating hatred or bias against another human being would not be a basis for empathetic engagement because it does not look at another as I look at my self — i.e., as a psycho-physical and spiritual individual who is motivated by particular desires and drives for freedom and living just as I am. The choice to relate to others with the assumption that in essential ways they are not like me, means that I am denying myself access to empathetic knowledge about them and their experiences. It means that the racist is such to the extent that that individual is limited to realms of knowledge within themselves and so, prevented from important knowledge that lies beyond the boundaries of their living experiences; i.e., to be a racist is by definition to be prevented from certain knowledge.

Similarly, if I were to interpret someone with extreme bias when assessing what their actions mean and I don't lend them sufficient empathetic engagement, then I would cut myself off from the possibility of knowing meaningful things about them. This is a good motivation for therapists to work diligently to be attentive to their biases and aim to mitigate the effects of counter-transference. If they do so, then there is more room for empathetic understanding. Too much bias from the outset prevents, or counters, empathetic listening because in empathetic listening we

want to see how their experiences are coherent to them, whereas entering a listening experience with strong biases encourages the creation of coherences from the listener's perspective. For example, if I choose to only see Chuck's actions as angry but do not attend to the why or how of his anger, then I have limited myself in terms of what I might meaningfully know about Chuck. So again, to approach listening from the perspective of what makes sense to the listener is not to listen empathetically because it doesn't aim to seek the coherence of the other perspective.

So we've examined how Stein's distinctions (both within and in addition to the psycho-physical individual or a foreign body like mine) provide more points for empathetic reflection than had empathy theory prior to her theoretical contributions. And this is exactly what she sees in her own theory when pointing to Scheler's (and Lipp's) theoretical inadequacies. What Scheler misses with respect to the PPI, for example, is that the "fundamental difference here is that, the same causes have the same effects" in the physical domain while in the psychic domain it can be shown that the appearance of the "same causes" is essentially excluded. Scheler does not distinguish that there are different essential insights and motivations into the human being who potentially relates empathetically to another like them (<82> 72). But Scheler is not alone in failing to engage thoughtful and perceptive distinctions.

To return to Stein's text, she writes of Scheler that he basically doesn't get the essences of human beings in a phenomenological way. So he "who strictly supports the relationship of causing to caused experience could hardly demonstrate a new kind of efficacy" (<82> 73). This might also explain why she strives to describe the causality of the psycho-physical realm as descriptively causal (we might now call it narrative causality) when discussing the PPI. According to Stein, Scheler does not get that the spiritual realm is discerned differently than the psycho-physical realm, in part, because he doesn't penetrate sufficiently into the essence of the human condition to get to these distinctions. Moreover I see a distinction in Stein's approach because to my mind she activates the therapeutic insight that descriptively causal accounts have real influence on the individual in terms of what they do, how they feel, and how they experience their lives. And her account notably indicates that we can see these influences as open to being influenced by intentions (on the part of the self reflective individual). Causal descriptions can be influenced or modified by the individual. The ability to change one's approach to the world, an event, or an experience is what happens in the spiritual realm when reflecting on values. Yet such modifications could also happen in the realm of the soul if the soul were able to attribute

different causal descriptions to an event. (To my mind, something like cognitive behavioural therapy [CBT] would be an example of modifying the soul self, the PPI, in causally descriptive ways.) But I think the particularly philosophical-therapeutic point here is that empathized individuals (either by reiterated empathy or by being empathetically listened to) can variously influence their being in the world via (influencing and acting on) their own self-identified values.

Stein criticizes Scheler for developing an inadequate understanding of the soul, and so an inadequate understanding of empathy. For her, the misunderstandings are related. Stein indicates that this has to do with the fact that Scheler splits the soul or psychic part of the individual from life and living (<78> 69). He describes the soul as a *lived* experience, as opposed to a *living* experience. Soulfulness, according to Stein, precisely has to do with living life; it is our awareness of living *as we are living*. Stein says clearly that the “[s]oul is not to be separated from life” (<79> 70). Our soul isn’t lived; it is living and reflects the particular temporal living of an individual. Again, the idea here is that particular human living is more than reacting, which brings with it temporal awareness and an awareness of one’s own motivations. Her distinction between soul and spirit, at this point, also indicates that there is living and the something more (or reflection) not separated from living that is more than living (the “in addition to” is an awareness of), and it appears humans bring this something more to life in reflecting on their experiences. In Scheler’s perspective, however, there was no need to really develop the concept of a spiritual person. Scheler is said to have later modified *On the Eternal in Man*⁹³ because of Stein’s criticisms.

There is also a burgeoning sense here that deeper values begin a more specific defining of the individual. One’s environment can explain a person’s development, but the individual also develops according to which levels of his own values he is exposed to and which values he strives to actualize. Stein has the idea that certain character traits and values more evidently and strongly define the individual even if we could imagine him or her in different physical or temporal circumstances. There are deeper aspects of the self, which is why Caesar would remain Caesar even if he were transferred to living in the twentieth century. “His historically settled

⁹³ *On the Eternal in Man*. Max Scheler. Tr. Bernard Noble. London: SCM Press, 1960. Reprinted: Hamden: Archon Books, 1972. Cusinato, Guido. *Life, Time Max Scheler's Philosophy of Time*. Kluwer Academic Publishers. Dordrecht / Boston / London. *Phaenomenologica Series*, 169, 2003.

individual would then go through some changes, but just as surely he could remain Caesar” (<123> 110). This is not a flawless argument. Truly, it is a point for further study and debate that would involve a more sophisticated account of innate versus environmental traits. However, this particular flaw does not weaken her overall argument: She wants to say that spiritual persons can be differentiated based on the depth of feelings and a hierarchy of values. If a particular value is inaccessible to a particular individual, it is likely to remain so. The levels of the person do not develop or deteriorate but they can only be exposed or not in the course of psychic development (<123> 110).

As a point of clinical interest, I find it helpful to keep the idea of the soul of an individual as “living” as perhaps a very obvious but, also curiously, a very useful reminder and ideal. This allows that both client and practitioner can use the metaphor of seeing how the client has been shaped and is “growing out” of their experiences, and how *modifying their experiences of themselves is a living and dynamic thing, too*. Sometimes it is relevant for us to track their sense of therapeutic progress in terms of their sense of increasing vitality and the steady feelings of feeling better as they cultivate the freedom to investigate themselves and their experiences, including their motivations.

Stein may appear to be overly critical of her predecessors, yet her style is not egotistical, arrogant, or combative; rather, she uses her peers as foils for her own thinking, contrasting her work with theirs to show how her work is different and, I think, particularly useful. Stein acknowledges, for example, that Scheler might have been onto something in pointing out that there has to be another realm or level in understanding an individual that isn’t so evidently causally engaged. Here again, she notes that the spiritual realm is what is alluded to but not identified or discussed. As she does with her discussion on the PPI, Stein goes to considerable effort to discuss the essences of the spiritual person.

3.9 Doctors of the Soul and Gardeners of the Spirit

It is now justifiable to claim that self-reflection and standards of truth and knowledge are discernable values in Stein’s thesis; from a spiritual perspective these values motivate her investigation into empathy. Moreover, the values of accurate self-reflection and standards of truth are affirmed and discerned in the process of investigating empathy. To motivate the efforts

of, the yet to be introduced, empathetic gardener, Stein writes that those who do not look outside themselves stand susceptible to falsifying historical truths: “if we take the self as the standard, we lock ourselves into the prison of our individuality. Others become riddles for us, or still worse, we remodel them into our image and so falsify historical truth” (<130> 116). Certainly there is the implicit argument that empathy is motivated by knowledge and that this kind of motivation is a “higher value” such that when focused on, allows one’s personality and expansiveness to unfold in a way that “doesn’t falsify historical truth.” If we are limited by our own experiences, then we can’t learn from others’ experiences. One of the unique contributions of empathy is that it does not leave us limited in knowledge. In fact, by way of empathy we can go beyond the perspectival limitations of our embodiment.

I want to add to this discussion of the epistemic merits of empathy and look at it as a tangible, applicable, and verifiable skill. We clearly see in this next section that Stein *does* envision the possibility of practical, and likely therapeutic, applications for empathetic listening and distinction making. For example, in the last third of her second chapter Stein develops a comparison between a practised empathetic observer and a doctor (<80> 70-71). In her description of the empathetic process, not only does the patient get better, but the observer-doctor is also improved in both skill and personal edification with the application of empathetic practice.

It is also notable that Stein makes a point about the empathetic practitioner’s evolution in her relatively extended critique of Scheler, who, as we saw, Stein criticizes on the grounds that “were he a good observer of the experiences of life,” he would notice that life is not so much a “composite of stretches connecting high points” (<79> 70). Such an approach would be to describe one’s life only in terms of desires or innate drives, and is an overly simple explanation of living. However, because human growing (and particularly spiritual growing) is complex in terms both of motives and experiences, Stein prefers to compare human development to that of a plant. She reasons that the empathetic observer, who aims to see the meaning in others’ experiences, of course, sees the development of the spiritual individual as akin to the development of a plant.

The practised observer also sees the nature of causes and emotions; i.e., as we saw, emotions can have causes with deferred effects, and effects and emotions typically need to be released or

represented at some point. Thus, the trained observer sees a variety of single traits in the whole disease picture that remain hidden from the fleeting glance. This is why the “schooled view” of the physician is more beneficial than the view of the layperson because the observations gained initially in empathy become the basis of knowledge that is part of a “clinical picture” (<79> 70).

The “clinical picture” is knowledge that a given effect is the result of “the cause in question.” In other words, it becomes the knowledge that certain diseases cause certain symptoms based of cumulated experiential data. This knowledge is developed by “focusing on groups of phenomena and by long practice in extensive differentiation” (<79> 71). In referring to a clinical picture for the practised empathizer, Stein means that empathy helps create focus and, eventually, knowledge about groups of phenomena by enduring practice and by steady, relevant distinction making, which results in more adept skill into the (emotional, psychic, and spiritual) causes of particular behaviour and character. So for example, if you want to understand melancholy or depression, then it helps to empathize with many individuals with such conditions so as to see similarities amongst them — not only similarities in symptoms, but also possible similarities in causes that generate particular symptoms. Clinical practitioners can affirm that engagement in the repetition of personality traits and causes opens possibilities of deeper understanding. Thus Stein builds again the, by now obvious, claim that to be good at empathy on both levels one needs to practise seeing many people empathetically because practical knowledge gained by focusing with many clients about their motivations and emotions helps garner insights into types of persons, categories of values, and motivations in persons. Thus, we can gain insights into kinds of spiritual persons.

Also as we noted earlier in reference to one of Stein’s critiques of Scheler, human development can be best understood when emphasis is placed on the living (i.e., changing and perceiving) essence of human experiences. As we saw, in this way humans are like plants; and so the gardener metaphor is consistent and captures some of the dynamic, living, changing features of human life.

It is interesting that Stein adds the gardener metaphor to the traditional physician metaphor. The metaphor aptly takes Stein beyond the traditional medical metaphor applied to philosophers. I will argue that just as we can make distinctions between the PPI and the spiritual person, we can similarly make a parallel comparison between the doctor and the gardener. The doctor has a

causal, descriptive influence on the health of her patient, whereas the gardener influences change *in tandem* with the essential work a plant does on its own. The gardener attempts to influence healthy growth not only curatively or prescriptively, but in cultivated practices that pertain to the plant's general becoming and well being as revealed by the plant. Moreover as we will see, the plant does not need to be "ill" to receive benefit from an attentive gardener.

Both approaches of the doctor and gardener metaphors are biased in terms of *eudaimonia* (or good health for self-fulfillment) generated by self-reflection and, therefore, subjective accounts of happiness. However, Stein means to add something to the physician idea and extends the caring metaphor by introducing the gardener.

And the physician's relationship to his patients, with whose welfare he is entrusted is no different from the gardener's relationship to he plants, whose thriving he oversees. He sees them full of fresh strength or ailing, or recovering or dying. He elucidates their condition for himself empathically. In terms of a cause, he looks for the cause of the condition and finds ways to influence it. (<80> 70-71)

As indicated, both practitioner metaphors conjure apt descriptions that could apply equally well; however, as Stein indicates in her introduction of the gardener metaphor, there are nuanced subtleties at play in thinking of the phenomenologically grounded listener as a gardener. For instance, a good gardener's observation and understanding influences the conditions that will support healthy growth and optimal maturing for the plant. There is the understanding that a healthy part within, and of, an individual knows (or can at least consider) what is best for them in living their lives, however a given individual may need particular support. Just as a gardener supports the taller plants with trellises and sticks, and all plants with rich soil, so the practitioner provides many good options for growth based significantly on what the patient knows to be the case for themselves. We might imagine gentle, supportive "spirit" gardening conversations between practitioner and patient to be something like the practitioner saying, "So, you think 'x' event influenced your sense of self in 'y' and 'z' ways? What kinds of influences would you have preferred and why? And, how do those influences work against your sense of self, or what you

want for yourself?” In this example, these empathetic and understanding-oriented questions⁹⁴ provide the patient the opportunity or the space to speculate about what would be best for them.

It is also worth considering that it could be perceived that there is more normativity in the role of the physician than that of the gardener. The criticism might be that a medical doctor has a particular, and perhaps relatively narrow, view of health that he or she might impose on the patient. The gardener, by contrast, is meant to conjure a more supportive, understanding-oriented subject and context-specific influence on a patient-plant. By contrast, too, a doctor’s interventions could be construed as more invasive and drastic.⁹⁵ To play out the medical metaphor a little more, such a metaphor has to include the assumption that the patient is ill, sick, or flawed and the task of the physician is to find, eradicate, or cure the illness, whereas, the metaphor of the gardener is one that reflects the ambition that the patient-client grows well and appropriately (for them), and that the plant avails itself of support, nourishment, and guidance that might enhance its self-flowering. In short, the gardening metaphor could be argued to not be object-oriented, prescriptive, intrusive, or hierarchical in relation to the seeker-patient-student such that it is more supportive of (and attentive to, which I argue in more specificity below) the “spiritual” aspects of a person than is the traditional medical metaphor.

When Stein writes of our souls (our perceiving and experiencing selves), a number of existential insights into the human condition are revealed, including, for example, that an individual cannot be separated from the phenomena of their life. Yet how much of this experiential structure I can bring to my fulfilling intuition depends on my *own* structure (<129> 115). In these pages Stein repeats the idea that who I am depends on how I allow and support my spiritual-self flowering

⁹⁴ These would be questions that reflect the practitioner’s aim to understand the patient.

⁹⁵ As we saw in Chapter One, Martha Nussbaum (1994) exerts significant effort to best portray and discuss the philosophically ethical doctor. She produces a careful discussion about what happens when a philosophical doctor has more knowledge about a patient’s illness and situation than the patient, and yet ethically aims to work in tandem with the patient in ways that are not hierarchical or oppressive. Nussbaum’s philosophical doctor heals not coercively or forcefully, but with essential recognition of shared humanity and genuine compassion for the patient. She goes to some length to note that “philosophy is a set of arts of intervention, closely allied with “nature” in this normative sense... in search of norms of a flourishing life” (31). But we might consider that a significant number of these explanations and caveats could be avoided for the philosophical practitioner were they to use a more organic, holistic metaphor for engaging the student from the outset. Stein’s gardener metaphor addresses some of these complex issues.

(<129> 115). In our earlier discussion of emotions we saw reference to the PPI's flowering to be dependent on the spiritual self (<41> 49). Spiritual flowering, which is spiritual self-awareness, is relevant to the general well being of the person-plant. This is why Stein writes:

So the psycho-physical empirical person can be a more or less complete realization of the spiritual one. It is conceivable for a man's life to be a complete process of his personality's unfolding; but it is also possible that psycho-physical development does not permit a complete unfolding.... (<124> 111)

As if being insightful into her own life, Stein points to the fact that there are some individuals who have the predisposition to become a saint or an academic regardless of whether their environment exposes them to such possibilities or not, and they often attempt to engage in these pursuits even if the relevant resources are not easily accessible. As we have seen, there are numerous ways to characterize the relationships between the PPI self and the spiritual person. This example points to the fact the PPI, and the world of the individual, do not pose the only resistances or reasons as to why a spiritual self might not flower; after all, some persons actualize their spiritual self regardless of their physical environment and capabilities.⁹⁶ The persona might resist their own spiritual natures.

Certainly, there are numerous factors that influence an individuals' spiritual self-flowering, and there are various situations that can limit this flowering. Stein proceeds to offer an example of situations in which a spiritual personality may not unfold:

Finally it is also conceivable for the personality not to unfold at all. He who does not feel values himself but acquires all feelings only through contagion from others, cannot experience "himself." He can become, not a personality, but at most a phantom of one. (<124> 111)

⁹⁶ This is an interesting point with respect to how Stein's life and legacy unfold. In 1998 she was, of course, made a Saint and a Doctor of the Catholic Church, even though she did not get the opportunity to complete the particular aspirations and contributions in her own embodied life. Stein's saintly designation has much to do with her death camp behaviours.

Thus, the psycho-spiritual person can be an incomplete spiritual one. It seems a tragedy for Stein when she notes that the spiritual persona exists even if he has not unfolded (114). One imagines that there can be a spiritual self inside of a PPI that just is not known. It is “in” there but latent and unknown to the self. So we have to recognize that not all PPIs have flowered, and some never come into the full splendor of their spiritual being. But as I indicated earlier, I do not interpret this to imply a hierarchy of humans. In Stein’s scheme, all humans would be essentially (so equally) valuable as PPIs. Yet, it remains true that some spiritual selves are not able to actualize themselves. And, some spiritual selves flower, or flower with even greater yield, when supported by the empathetic gardener’s nurturing of self-reflection.

Many long-term practitioners would likely agree that “unfolding” is an apt description of how an individual changes as they engage over time in practices of self-reflection and empathy. Both self-reflection and empathy soften an individual’s intensity perhaps because they come to know their psycho-physical selves, recognizing how they are shaped by their time-space experiences, and how bound they are by their psycho-physical bodies. In identifying their values, there is a sense of them wanting to create their own ways in the world, wanting to live according to their own values, and in this way to have the experiences of being less tossed around by happenstance and convention.⁹⁷ Individuals who are more self-actualized (blossomed or flowered) can assert more of what is important and valuable to them, and they can variously gently, not judgmentally, understand their own motivations. Thus, the gardener nourishes with an empathy that supports self-reflection. In this way, understanding is enhanced with descriptive coherence so we can make sense and/or meaning out of what motivates our particular ways of being.

Like the gardener, the empathizer realizes that one’s circumstances may prevent the spiritual self from unfolding. Yet too, the experienced empathizer also recognizes that by the soil (of self-reflection), the light and water of evaluating (of one’s behaviour, motivations, and values), and the nutrients of personal willingness (to be motivated by higher values) are the support systems by which one’s personality can continue to unfold over a lifetime. In short, my rationale for choosing to acknowledge and elaborate the gardening metaphor is to provide the opportunity to

⁹⁷ As we noted previously, “values” are defined as any force that consciously motivates behaviour.

consider its relationship to the essence of the *spiritual* person's potential beauty and evolution in ways that a more traditional, unidimensional patient-doctor relationship does not capture.

Stein's readers cannot help but note there remains the idea/implication of a spiritual ideal in each person. I'm not always sure about what to make of this claim from a philosophical perspective except to note that the spiritual realm is phenomenologically apparent when we reach for reasoning and values that are more than our temporary circumstances or environments allow us to be.

It has been shown that, for Stein, meaning is finding coherence between values and actions. I further expand upon this in section 12.0 of this chapter to present additional points about the spiritual person where we see more of the human spiritual essences and, I hope, develop even more appreciation for the spiritual gardener.

3.10 Case Study: Empathy as Useful Spiritual Intervention

A crown attorney (CA), who was having difficulty communicating with her client well enough to perform her duty and build a good defense, referred this particular client to me. When I entered the arrested client's consultation room at the local courthouse, I realized that this middle-aged Aboriginal woman was evidently, by her carriage and demeanor, a proud person. And given her demeanor, and by all accounts, she was likely not guilty of the alleged infraction of which she was accused. I realized early into our engagement that whenever the discussion turned to explaining her behaviour she was neither willing to discuss nor defend her behaviour. She was a quiet, kind, and respectful woman. I had to do just the right kind of prompting, with her as a willing kind of participant, to learn more about some of the challenges and horrors she had lived through. After three hours of general talking and getting to know her, it was evident that she certainly was an excellent survivor: As a result of proceedings following her child's death by a drunk driver a few years ago, she decided that she had no more energy to defend and fight for herself. She had decided she would just take whatever came her way and "just be with my love for the Lord, inside myself." I learned that, through her many life experiences, she justifiably came to think it unreasonable to explain her experiences and thinking because "no one wants to listen to me anyway." In aiming to understand the meaning of her actions *for her* (i.e., why she was not talking and being helpful to her lawyer), I realized that although her current predominant motivations, or values, pertained to a kind of self-preservation, this was the not the right kind of

preservation for moving easily in this world; she had exceeded that kind of reacting to life long ago. Rather, this was the kind of self-preservation that involved controlling only what she thought she reasonably could. She believed she had no real power or influence in the white institutions and felt, in this way, she was just at the “whims of the judge, anyway. So it doesn’t matter what I say.” She had long ago decided to use her emotional energy sparingly and finding peace in small things.

Stein teaches us, and I present this rather summarily, that the spiritual subject “is essentially subject to rational laws and that its experiences are intelligibly related” (<125> 112). This woman’s world view and approach to her current predicament made sense to her; she valued peace, felt that she did not really have much power in the world anyway, and did not think it reasonable to defend herself. Eventually, after learning more about “Connie,” I commented (as any empathetic person would) that I thought she must also be quite strong inside herself to bear the challenges of her being in custody so very well. Acknowledging this other spiritual aspect of her deeper character seemed to assure Connie that I just wanted to understand her and know her story. I assured her that I would do my best to support her in making decisions that reflected her cares and values. While considering her possible choices pertaining to action and disclosure in this particular legal circumstance, I assured her that our discussions were confidential and that mostly I wanted to understand why she apparently would not speak up for herself. It took about ten hours of meeting and gentle conversation to discern what I have shared here.

As it turns out, this was a lucky break for me because the forced-to-be-“defendant” was glad to find refuge with a genuine empathetic listener. Being listened to was a significant part of the practical and human-relating remedy that she needed. Connie told me in a later conversation that, as a result of our work together, she felt “less naïve” in the world. In our engagement she learned to figure out whether someone was really listening to her, whether their concern for her well being was legitimate, or whether they were “just trying to tell her what to do and boss her around.” When we talked, she did not need to defend herself; we *just* made a context where she could be understood, and where her reasoning and motivations were valued along with her experiences.

When I reflected back to her that up to this point her silence was a reasonable act of self-care and preservation, we could then reflect together on the idea that a deep part of her does value herself

and the quality of her life. This led us to consider that, given this healthy value of self-preservation, she might do more to help herself by sharing her side of the story. As a point of interest, Connie did disclose an explanation of her behaviour about the events in question to her lawyer and, because it added up with the evidence at the crime scene, she was released unconditionally.

3.11 Case Study: Schizophrenic Man

The client is a thirty-two-year-old male, medically diagnosed as schizophrenic, whose mother was referred to me by her family doctor to see if we could find some good tools for her to cope with him because he had not left home since the age of 24 when his father died.

After three visits with his mother to obtain a clearer understanding of how she would “get pulled into his craziness,” I welcomed the opportunity to make a home visit. Besides, “Jeff” was curious to meet with the philosopher his mother was meeting with. Jeff’s mother and I also thought this might be a good opportunity to observe his interactions with someone else, as he was largely a recluse and not really interested in one-to-one engagements with anyone other than his two long-term friends who stopped by maybe once or twice a year. After my second home visit Jeff inquired whether I would work with him to “help him with his demons,” and I have continued to meet with Jeff for the past 18 months on a bi-weekly basis. As for his mother, I am confident that there is ample evidence in favour of her being more able to “get on with her life and living and yet feel she is giving Jeff the best support she is able to give him.” I explained to his mother that I could make no guarantees of progress, but I would engage Jeff and determine to what degree he was amenable to philosophical discussions influencing his being in the world.

Curious myself, my first aim was to understand the angry outbursts that were a part of the control mechanisms shaping his current relationship with his mother. By all accounts, Jeff’s outbursts were intense but contained. I had no fear that he might hurt me, himself, or anyone else. Early on we developed alternatives to punching the walls. Subsequent to this behaviour shift, we worked on understanding Jeff’s anger. This was possible especially because, once reasoned with, Jeff realized that his mother had the right to feel safe in her home. Subsequently, we were able to investigate his anger at the world and his mother for their “phony behaviour. People are not allowed to be themselves in this world. My dad died of cancer because he couldn’t deal with his

issues. When I try to deal with my issues people think I'm crazy" To this I eventually responded, "What if I said that there's a sense in which I don't think you are crazy. On some level, what you are saying makes sense to me. At some point we can evaluate what validity and weight to give to what other people think about you appearing to be crazy or weird. Why don't we just work first with what makes sense to us?"

Here I am reminded Stein points out that, notably, empathy is not an experience of oneness; but, she argues, following the experience of otherness via empathy creates an experience of "we." We learn about this not through experiencing oneness but through empathizing, i.e., recognizing the physical-spiritual other. My schizophrenic client makes sense to me because I have a temporary point of understanding with him and of him, namely that he wants to (and needs to) feel responsible for making sense of his father's death. And I recognize with him that this is his own kind of Christ-complex, that if he can sort the world out in his head, then his dad's death can take on the most ideal kind of meaning and importance in the world order — even if only the client's world order. This is what he feels his father's memory deserves. His father was a professor who placed great value on learning. So he wanted there to be some great insight gleaned from dad's death, which is why he was interested in speaking with someone "who is at least close to being a philosopher." As a practitioner I empathize with the client's reasoning, but that doesn't mean I buy into it as being good, reasonable, or best reasoning according to my standards. I am certainly not motivated by the need to redeem a death. My sense of personal boundaries, responsibilities, and experiences does not afford me that degree of feeling responsible. However, as Stein says:

Now I have before me intuitively what they feel. It comes to life in my feeling, and from the "I" and "you" arises the "we" as a subject of a higher level. (<123> 110)

So it is also the case that together we are more. Recall how this is a kind of transcendence. In empathy I learn that my feelings are not the same as another's feelings, motivations, character, or type; but I come to know this by knowing our similarities first, and out of those similarities we create a shared experience because I experience the other as a psycho-spiritual being like me. Although I know their feeling through my feelings, this way of knowing emphasizes the spatial and temporal differences between individuals, and therefore is a deeper knowing of one another. This is a curious way in which two distinct unities come together to form a "we." Investigating

this reveals a lot about the human condition because, for the philosophical practitioner, it affirms that there is a relationship between knowing ourselves and knowing others. There is an imprecise relationship between better understanding my own human character and being able to empathize with another human being's experiences. Nonetheless, Stein reveals that by understanding my physical-spiritual self I can better relate to other psycho-spiritual beings.⁹⁸

We have proceeded to make steady progress with Jeff. He is more functional and has left his home on four occasions over the past two years to socialize with friends. Recently he has dealt with the death of his fourteen-year-old cat without a significant impact on his daily schedule of sleeping, bathing, eating, and note taking. This contrasted with my early observations that an apt description of his home life and personal schedule would have included extensive hours sleeping and avoiding eating and bathing. I continue to work with Jeff, and his level of personal happiness and functioning grows steadily.

3.12 Case Study: Woman Survivor

This case study is an example of how supporting an individual in identifying their deeper desires, feelings, and motivations does evolve out of attempting to be with the client where (ever) they are at on their terms, or regardless of where they are in their self-reflection and emotional processes, and shows how beneficial it can be for a practitioner to be present to ongoing living engagement with empathy — i.e., focused reflecting and striving for purer reflecting. If the practitioner-client (teacher-student) relationship is founded on trust (that the practitioner is aiming to understand and not judge), then learning that approach of aiming to understand becomes useful to the client in their own self-understanding and self-reflecting. This creates a space for the client to engage themselves and the practitioner without normative judging prior to develop a base for evaluating motives and emotions.

A lanky, androgynous woman in her mid-forties, “Sue” was referred by her family doctor and presented herself as a successful IT specialist. Sue, medicated for diagnosed symptoms of ADHD, was looking for ways that I might be able to assist her to improve her focus. It soon became apparent in our work together that she was suffering from the stress of suppressing and

⁹⁸ Recall from our earlier analytic point that “we” is a representation of A&B, ≠ A=B.

copied with life-long, ongoing extreme anxiety due to extensive sexual abuse at the hands of neighborhood children for up to two years. There were subsequent violations of her person while seeking treatment at mental hospital in her late teens. It was evident that Sue was hyper-vigilant to being injured in anyway. The following therapeutic exchange takes place after we had worked together for over a year, meeting weekly and sometimes bi-weekly, depending on her anxiety levels. During those meetings we discussed her experiences, struggles, and sometimes traumatic memories. Sue spent a lot of time, outside of sessions and work, piecing together the timelines of her abuse. She, in fact, developed a massive graph on her computer that indicated when she thought particular events had taken place, and she created drop-down information screens that appeared when clicking the cursor over an event on the timeline. In this way, Sue created the means to represent particular details that she had found in her memory and history.

Approximately 18 months into our work together, Sue took a therapeutic break and returned to our work about four months later. At our first return meeting she unexpectedly brought her partner in for support to the session. It seemed obvious that she was not feeling safe and something was up, but I chose not to comment and went along with her in the hopes of making her feel comfortable enough to disclose whatever was on her mind. During this session she recounted her recent visit to many of the places where the kids of her childhood ran wild and “played.” Her memories revolved around particular houses in her hometown, as well as a storage silo. She recounted how these buildings were so much the same and yet so different.

I mirrored how much of her narrative she had put together and how many of the recalled details she was able to verify by both her recent journey to the actual places of her memories and the acquisition of medical records. I suggested that many of our meetings had been reasonably spent giving the past the affirmation it needed, that she had gathered ample evidence to verify her story, and convince herself that, indeed, these “crazy” memories and challenges in her life were, importantly and in fact, true.

There’s always a line in therapy that negotiates empathy with gentle challenges that support a client in making a shift in a core belief that may be influencing their actions in the world. My experience with other trauma survivors supported my belief that some gentle guidance was needed so that Sue might move further along in her recovery process. So while I acknowledged her progress, I also shared my concern that she might be careful to not re-traumatize herself by

going over and over the details of these horrific events, particularly because I observed she appeared emotionally exhausted, and I was concerned.

Up until that point in our work it appeared evident to me, and agreed upon by both of us, that what was important was to investigate and then reasonably affirm the trustworthiness and truth of her experience. Also on the day of this visit, I affirmed all that had been learnt and confirmed by the diligence in her investigative work. I ended my comments by voicing concern that maybe now would be a good time to support herself in being alive in the present. I thought I was being gentle, supportive, and caring. However, she walked out barely mumbling a good-bye and not booking another appointment. I let her go without too much encouragement to work through why she was so upset and at a loss for words because I believed she had reached both a volatile and potentially transformative emotional place. I hoped that, by giving her space, she would feel empathized with and supported. I simply affirmed that I was here when she wanted to talk further and reiterated the affirmation and facts about her good work to this point.

I made that last point because it occurred to me when she was walking out that today she was only looking for affirmation — and only affirmation — from me. She wanted to be told that she was doing a perfect job in her recovery, and her need to strongly control whatever feedback I might provide revealed the depth of her underlying injuries around trust.

Granted, survivors sometimes need to learn or re-learn healthy emotional relationships. Sue will learn, in time, that being excessively controlling and demanding of how others respond to her is not reasonable and is motivated by fear and lack of trust. How quickly Sue understands this is not the point now, though. She is still at a stage of her putting the pieces together, and she seems to need significant amounts of affirmation and positive encouragement. (This will be an issue for later investigation if she is willing to go there.)⁹⁹ I know also how sensitive and volatile she is because I have heard, over the course of our time together, how strongly she reacts in the relationships in her life when she does not feel understood. Sue, as it turns out, on that day did not feel sufficiently empathized with and was wanting my empathy and understanding; when I offered reasonable feedback about moderation, she felt so hurt that she left quietly. What is relevant at this point in her process is that Sue was being motivated by the need for affirmation.

⁹⁹ I could also present the argument that understanding Sue at this stage is understanding her PPI.

She just wanted more of my support, and so much so that my feedback at that moment felt like being blamed or criticized and it felt like something additional was being asked of her. She was volatile and she knew it, which was why she needed back up (i.e., her partner).

With this brief perspective of various therapeutic applications of empathy, some might argue that I failed my client by encouraging moderation and thus not being sufficiently empathetic in that particular session. This case study is relevant to understanding the therapeutic benefits and challenges of empathy. On one hand it illustrates that just when you think you've applied enough empathy, more might be required to support a therapeutic process; on the other hand, the consistent enough efforts at being empathetic are also seen to have had tangible therapeutic benefits, otherwise we would not have progressed as far as we did in the trauma recovery process. In addition, as a practised empathizer, I have learned that sometimes clients know a particular behaviour is wrong (headed) or awkward (that's why they are sharing it), which is why working it out has to happen in an empathetic environment that is spacious enough to "not be petty" or "right" in while working things out.

Thus for example, if the client knows or understands the degree to which therapeutic sharing is evaluated non-normatively (and so the practitioner is trying to be adequately flexible so as to understand the patient's worldview), then they are more inclined to share without editing and the practitioner can get a clearer look into their world view. The art of empathy effectively returns the listener's understanding of the individual back to the individual such they can see him or herself more clearly and feel understood. My experience teaches me that clients (chronic sexual abuse survivors, for example) may shut down entirely if they perceive any judgment from a practitioner. In this case, Sue would shut down relevant topics of conversation if she perceived she were being judged. In Stein's terms, this experience assists me to understand the group of people who share the experience of being chronic child abuse survivors; it affirms for me how sensitive this group of individuals can be about being honoured and trusted and not infringed upon. By contrast, an individual who has not suffered from chronic childhood sexual abuse (CCSA) might not be as sensitive to how others support them with their self-reflection and introspection.

Some weeks later I received an email from Sue, which testifies to the overall benefit of her knowing that her therapeutic space with me is a place of support and non-judgment. She knew

her job after that session was not to stop, shape, or suppress her feelings, but rather to investigate and explore them; and if she needed help doing that, then she said she knew I would be there for her.

“When I stormed out of here a few weeks ago, I never wanted to come back. I felt so hurt by you judging me. I know how many times you’ve told me that you don’t and won’t judge me, but your comment felt like a slap in the face. I know you were doing your job and what you said was right, but it wasn’t what I wanted to hear. I wanted to be understood. In looking back, I see how sensitive and controlling I was.... Initially I was mad at myself for my anger. Why did I get so angry?.... But our work together has allowed me to consider that maybe my anger was trying to tell me something. In sum I think it was trying to tell me how hurt I’ve been.”

Among some other points that we followed up in future sessions, my responses let Sue know again that I would be there for her. I noted that we would continue to work on her being able to express her emotions of not wanting to be judged or imposed upon. I encouraged her to think about how a strong sense of self was helping her protect herself. I affirmed that she was worth protecting. It was ok that she was angry and it was ok that she just walked out. There will be a time in the future when she will be able to talk about her anger and intense feelings, and when she trusts herself enough not to be over sensitive to encouragement in favour of healthy moderation.

By being patient with her reactions, I let her know I was there for her regardless. I felt the need to affirm for her that my response to data collection efforts was not meant to control or judge her. But I did note how susceptible she was to feeling judged.

Practising empathy took us a long way into Sue’s recovery. In this case, we can see that Sue’s empathy, both towards me and towards herself, bodes well for her and allows us some different and additional domains for investigating what motivates her in the world.

3.13 Case Study: Distinction Making

This last case study is brief and generalized. It is an application of empathy to the commonly experienced jolt of being rejected in love. Here I demonstrate how empathic engagement with an individual’s emotions assists in making useful and verifiable distinctions that, were they not

made, can be seen to potentially prevent the jilted lover from moving forward in their willingness and capacities for love.

Here a patient described their experiences of loving someone in a way that felt like true love, only to have the beloved leave. Oftentimes, early in a love-recovery process, the patient believes that their loving was flawed in some essential way, that somehow their failure in their loving caused the beloved to leave them. But careful distinction making, and empathizing with the lover's emotions, can demonstrate that this is not the case. After listening to the events, the practitioner might say; "What is true of the experience is that you felt a kind of love. And unfortunately it is not true, based on evidence, that the beloved loved you in the same way." This is a relevant distinction because the lover can be stuck in confusion due to the fact that inner perception is affected by what we are inclined to believe, and want to believe, and not often enough by what is. However, as Stein points out, when we are thwarted in what is, we do not have to give up the value or capacity for love; we only have to more appropriately, or accurately, direct our affections. The lover's flaw was not in loving but perhaps in loving one who did not return the sentiment.

Like inner perception, our thinking can be flawed. The idea here is that reflecting the essence of something back, in this case feelings and values, the person can see themselves more clearly, with less self-judgment, and with more appropriately directed discernment. This person was hurting because they had been rejected. Their loving another was not an invalid feeling; but the feeling was not reciprocated. If the client adds to the observation the thought that they are rejected because they deserve to be rejected, have a flaw, or because the beloved deserves better than them, then they are not being empathetic towards themselves. Rather, they are adding their negative perception of the experiences and moving into the realm of judgmental evaluations. Empathy about a patient's emotions, in this case, helps the patient stick with the truth of their feelings and actions. It has the potential to prevent the individual from judging themselves because they did not receive the reaction they were hoping for. Empathy sticks with the facts of the lover's feelings and, in doing so, validates the reality of those feelings.

Because empathy looks for coherence between acts and psychic states, when I apply empathy to myself I can expose self-deceptions. Did I love the beloved because I hoped they would act in a particular way? Or did I love them because love was an authentic and legitimate feeling in me?

Yet to recognize the moments when we think we are acting for one reason and to find out (through observation of the therapist and the client, say, that the motivations may be different), then that can be upsetting, but it is often a point for breakthrough in shifting a stubborn habit or destructive attitude to life.

We have noted in the therapeutic context how sensitively perceived criticism can affect therapeutic progress positively or negatively. Simultaneously we recognize how it can feel upsetting to recognize one's own self-deceptions; so as practitioners, we gently but definitely work to provoke insights into the investigation of such issues. Recall from Chapter One that one of the features of Socrates' *elenchus* was that it sometimes left the interlocutor feeling unsettled or disturbed, but the eventual effects are said to be feelings of edification because the individual is engaged in evaluating and acknowledging the truer¹⁰⁰ motivations for their behaviour.

3.14 Additional Considerations Pertaining to Feelings and the Spiritual Person

Stein emphasizes the significance of the phenomenological approach when she guides her readership to engage in a thought experiment about what would happen to our understanding of empathy if we failed to make a distinction, yet acknowledge the cohesion, between the PPI and the spiritual personal in human beings? The reader is provoked to ask how our understanding could possibly be complete if we were to fail to acknowledge the importance of the self-reflective consciousness one brings to the world. To make her point with even greater emphasis, Stein imagines that it is possible that we could be a kind of being who only reflects and reacts to objects in the world. We could imagine an individual who is not aware of their experiencing. Yet, the picture is largely counterintuitive because human consciousness is more than the

¹⁰⁰ The phrase "truer for them" is not an unladen philosophical term. There are, of course, questions of how truth relates to Truth. Depending on the client, the practitioner can discuss whether this means that the individual believes themselves to be aligning with Truth while discovering themselves or not. Taking a position on such a question provides insight into the client but is not necessary to continue on a process of evaluating, for example, to what extent someone's life is motivated by fear when all the while they give the impression, to themselves and others, that they are not at all fearful.

consciousness we perceive, or that we attribute to trees or plants. In these cases, while we do experience these other living things to be reacting to their natural environment, we do not perceive them to be expressing their “take on” (or their perception of) their experiences. Yet most humans have various degrees of awareness about their own perceptions, thoughts, or feelings. Being aware of how we experience and think about things in our world does take a certain presence and practice in directing one’s focus towards one’s own thoughts. Perhaps this is why contemporary anti-stress gurus talk about (and, indeed, have to encourage students) being “present with yourself and feeling the moment.” The idea is if you feel your feelings in the moment, then there is the possibility of doing more than reacting to the world. Typically we are not so evidently or easily reflective of how elements in the external world are affecting us, or whether they ought to be affecting us; however, we are aware that we are being affected. With respect to the idea of increasing our awareness of how an individual experiences things, the philosophical counsellor can be compared to the personal trainer who encourages the athlete to perform one more set of weights so as to strengthen a particular muscle or muscle group. By comparison, the philosophical counsellor and empathizer encourages increasing self-awareness and self-reflection on one’s experiences and on how one’s experiences have affected them.

Given the way in which even empathy originates in and comes back to the individual, a critic might argue that my reading of Stein gives the impression that empathizing with a foreign individual is a solipsistic or narcissistic act. However, Stein is merely explaining and enacting what phenomenologists take as a worthy basis of knowledge, namely our experience. And that basis of knowledge comes from being clear in understanding ourselves; in this way, too, the legitimate basis and reasonable limits of our knowledge claims are grounded in human experience. In short order then, it is evident that this phenomenological account is an experiential basis for the kind of knowledge generated in empathy. As a matter of fact, it is evident that on an ethical level, understandings of self give way to more universal understandings of human experiences. As a relational experience it is a way for the self to relate to another, and it is a way to see the other as relating to the self.

As if Stein needs further evidence that she is “onto something,” she writes: that “[e]ven *Dilthey* recognizes that man is both nature and spirit.” He expresses it by saying that being and ought, fact and norm, are inseparably linked together in the cultural sciences” (113 <127>). Based on this it could be argued that Stein was supportive of much of Dilthey’s social science project.

Consider, for example, that Dilthey's arguments about social science methodology centered on the idea that the natural sciences seek to explain phenomena in terms of cause and effect, or the general and the particular; in contrast, the human sciences seek to *understand* in terms of the relations of the part and the whole (<127> 113). This sounds a lot like Stein's two essential components to the human being. Dilthey's social science approach is also much like Stein's methodological approach to understanding the essence of human beings because he held, as noted above, that the social sciences may also combine the two distinct kinds of approaches. So Stein's argument to investigate empathy with both the spiritual and the embodied aspects of an individual in mind can be seen to participate in the leading edge thinking of her time, at least in terms of both psychology theory and cultural science.

As an extension of her innovative thinking, Stein continues and indulges her approach as applied to a big picture perspective: What is it about the cultural sciences that intrigues our thinking? Well, she writes, the cultural sciences reflect on and think about human thinking and creating. So the cultural sciences are, like us, being conscious of ourselves and of different, or distinguishable, cultural geists. Thinking this way enables questioning about what is transcendental consciousness and what is individual consciousness. Here Stein holds that her larger project could be taken to be a commentary on a way of doing cultural science and, as such, we should try to do cultural science by explaining the realm of the spirit first and foremost. This represents a willingness to question what we think of, and about, with respect to our own values. And it asks us to question why, socially speaking, we hold particular values. To close a significant point, Stein speculates that if cultural sciences were limited to causal explanations, then cultural sciences can de-evolve into being reactionary (<127> 113-114). Given her times, this suggests a warning about cultural propaganda. So in this section Stein could be read to hope that her reflections encourage the social thinkers to consider cultural science and, specifically, what spiritual actualizations could be brought about by a more holistic approach to cultural sciences.

One example of applying this more holistic approach might be that I consider every subject whom I empathically comprehend as experiencing a value as a person whose experiences interlock themselves into an intelligible, meaningful whole. How much of his experiential structure I can bring to my fulfilling intuition

depends on my own structure. When I understand that different people are motivated by values different than mine, I can come to see what values are closed to them that I might possess, and vice versa. I can understand that they are motivated by different values and so are a different type of person. (<128> 114)

Being motivated by different values means, in Dilthey's terms, I'm a different "kind" of person. So we can ask questions about what kinds of spiritual persons make up the cultural values. Or even more generally, we can develop specialized knowledge about kinds of (spiritual) persons based on their motivations. Yet to this point, even in her engagement with Dilthey's work, Stein stays on track with her epistemological aims; understanding different kinds of people in this way (empathetically and holistically) assists the seeker in their quest for knowledge because if we take our self as the standard, then "we lock ourselves into the prison on our individuality" (<130> 116).

Interestingly, while Stein indicates that she feels a real contribution to knowledge is generated in this account of empathy, what is left under-developed as a discussion is how empathy affects the individual who is being empathized with. Certainly there is much recent theoretical literature on the effects of empathetic and therapeutic listening, but it would likely be worthwhile to phenomenologically analyze the effects of empathetic listening on the patient. This would have made a very interesting second volume for Stein.

For now we can assert that empathy is transformative for the empathized because it helps them see themselves as others might, and it affirms their *being* in the empathized acknowledgement from another. Yet, Stein does not sufficiently discuss this, but she discusses in detail (which I hope I have made concise and clear) the mechanics of empathy for the empathizer. The implication is that in supporting others to see their experiences from the outside, maybe they will have more kindness and empathy towards themselves and others. In empathizing well with others, then maybe they can look more clearly at themselves in subjectively objective ways with respect to their values and actions and so when they feel the need to take responsibility, they might be more likely to do so. For the empathized, the idea is that empathy can help make sense of one's world view; the basis for empathy, as we have investigated it here, is that the listener directly honours the student/patient as a person, which means as a sensor, perceiver, feeler, and

thinker. Thus, empathetic communications helps us and others to better experience our respective and shared essential selves.

As we learned in our study of Hersch in Chapter Two, Stein affirms that our aim in therapeutic listening is not to discern the Truth. But, rather, our aim is to deeply understand another, which means taking into account subjective and possibly relative truths (although we have not explicitly discussed relative truths in this chapter). In Stein's phenomenological investigation, we are provided with some points of reference with other human beings like us, and thus we develop investigative objectivity with respect to human experiences.

It is worth saying that other therapeutic practitioners, in particular psychoanalysts with philosophical training — Donna Orange, Edwin Hersch, Heinz Kohut, and Hobson, for example — have attended in their writings to the centrality of empathy for therapeutic process. As we noted in our introduction, Kohut was a psychoanalyst known for thinking about psychoanalytic knowledge as being knowledge from within. This passage written in 1995, almost eighty years after Stein's paper, captures much of these theoretical ideas.

While we can know something about human being through social psychology or neuropsychology, according to Kohut, understanding *can only* be achieved through empathy.

Intersubjectivity theory (Stolorow, Brandcraft, & Atwood, 1987) refines this view by clarifying the notion of “within.” Psychoanalytic understanding is knowledge gained from inside the intersubjective field formed by the intersection of two differently organized subjectivities. In dialogue both participants attempt to expand their original subjective perspectives to take in, comprehend, and understand more of the other's experiences. We do this, as Kohut and other self-psychologists have shown, by placing ourselves as consistently as we can in the other's shoes, both cognitively and emotionally. We understand by attempting to participate in the emotional experience, in the being of the other. (Orange 187) [emphasis mine]

Clearly empathy, as a practical knowledge tool, has gained momentum since Stein. Donna Orange captures the contemporary hope that empathy offers: “The process of struggling for and reaching good-enough understanding can heal emotional wounds and alter a person’s organizing experiencing” (Orange 2). In the terms we just discussed, as students of Stein we would likely concur that one’s approach to the world is affected by feelings and values that are at play at various levels. And so we could influence one’s approach to and feelings about the world by influencing, “as a gardener” influences her plants, the well being of the individual being empathized with by supporting their reflection on a spiritual level. However, I believe that Stein would be more cautious (as per her criticisms of Scheler) about aligning herself with relatively normative notions like “healing.” Others might have good grounds for taking up empathy as a healing or a hopeful act, but that’s not Stein’s motivation. Her motivations are less biased because they aim to be epistemological. Or, if it is a hopeful act, it is reasonable hope because it is grounded in epistemology.

As for the much talked about therapeutic “struggle” noted in Orange’s quote, I have not said much about the struggles in using empathy to be able to, as accurately as possible, mirror a person back to themselves so that they might evaluate themselves effectively from the outside, as it were. It is definitely theoretically rich territory. Some of the useful struggles of empathetic mirroring have been illustrated in the case studies. Of course there are challenges in the purity and accuracy of mirroring because the therapist-empathizer has to use their own human experiences as bases for the potential shared knowledge. Some of these problems can be averted if the empathizer sticks to relating their human essences or values to another, versus relating the particulars of their life to another’s particulars. This is a therapeutically important and debatable point.

The point of discerning human essences is that there is a universal feature to them — although that is not (universally) the aim of essences. Our essences create the domain of shared humanity that allows us to relate to each other. From these points of sameness we can talk about particulars and differences. In empathizing, were we to talk of particulars in the first place then, we could not logically empathize or relate, and we would be enforcing biases as opposed to relating to shared human experiences. In some of these instances where there is a failure to empathize well,

relating to the other as a mirror can take both parties into the territory of transference and counter-transference, which will also have to remain a topic for another time.¹⁰¹ Yet, practically and clinically speaking, I think that in these struggles to empathize well (as with the development of most skills), the challenges and struggles in learning we work through can provide us with our greatest insights and most optimal instances of knowledge acquisition.

The practised empathizer most likely will naturally keep the virtue of the Aristotelian middle-way as a proximate value in practice because, as noted above, it is possible to slide into empathizing too much with what someone else is feeling. Yet logically speaking, over-empathizing would not be empathizing because the “as if another” component of empathetic relating would be distorted. If I think I feel someone else’s feelings so much that I lose my sense of myself, this would technically count as transference and not empathy. In these cases, the “as if” component would be removed, and therefore such instances would not count as empathy. Empathy is knowing that I am a psycho-physical being who is relating to another PPI (who is similar in some ways to me but not the same as me). If I slip into thinking we are the same, or that my empathetic relating to their experience is the same as their experience, then I am claiming too much. I can’t possibly know someone else’s experiences as I would know my own, nor can I really lose myself if I experience the other as a psycho-spiritual being in time and space. In this way, empathy is knowledge that, by definition, evolves out of moderation and balance. The case study showing some effectiveness with a schizophrenic patient is a relevant elaboration of the middle way approach inherent in effective empathizing.

In Chapter Two we encountered the idea shared by some truth and/or liberty-generating theorists that, by making our theoretical biases explicit, we expose our levels and orientations with respect to our spiritual self. By extension, we encounter the idea that accounting for our perspectives in the domain of co-created knowledge exposes the potential for having to account for how an interpreter’s perspective might limit or enhance both the empathizer’s understanding and the general effectiveness of their empathy. This practice of appropriately identifying one’s values and theoretical orientations is a practice that also supports the active engagement of verifiability

¹⁰¹ Of course, if we related essence to essence, then these pitfalls could be avoided. Also, as we noted in our discussion of the schizophrenic man, over-identification and a lack of centredness in one’s “I-ness” is not empathy.

and fallibilism discussed in Chapter Two. Thus, we can claim that empathy, for Stein, is the valuing of knowledge in action. And this value endorses the value of honouring other people as humans like me because there are empirical and verifiable ways in which they are like me.

A reasonable extension of the value of recognizing the ways in which others are (essentially) “like me” is to not over-extend one’s influence on another, i.e., not to be coercive, but to encourage the other to be the best they can be, in the same manner all of us would like to be honoured by (an) other individual(s) who are interested in our best self being in the world. Thus, the value of shared human essence tends to bring with it attentiveness to historical power imbalances, too. This awareness affects one’s alertness to what counts as valid knowledge, and what counts as the means to valid knowledge. This theme is one of the intellectually significant contributions of feminism to be discussed in the next chapter (values of different knowing and not only knowing through a particular paradigm). For now, we can assert the evidence that empathetic knowledge aims not to be coercive, but investigative. We do not need to convince others that our values or perspectives are right; rather, we want to aim to understand their values.

As such, Stein notes in the final sections of her second chapter that empathy as a process is open to correction. To empathize well we have to collect information about the PPI and the spiritual motivations over time and through questioning, and be open to better and more objective information for better understanding. The practitioner’s aim is not to get it right, but to keep getting it better. This, I think, mimics Orange’s emphasis that empathetic engagement is, by its nature, fallible. Valuing fallibilism keeps the quest to understand others open to revision, discussion, and progress.

It is notable, too, that her insightful attention to emotions as pivotal to human understanding comes decades prior to the valuing of emotions as a theme in psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic research. In a much stronger version of her earlier claim, Orange writes “the only sort of understanding that can heal emotional wounds and integrate experience is emotional understanding” (Orange 2). We can certainly see how Stein’s contribution values the insights potentially yielded from the emotional realm. In short, Stein values emotions to such an extent that she even indicates that knowing can be based in feelings, too, and not just pure intellect. As Stein described empathy, especially on the spiritual level of being, it is emotional relating.

If we understand what Stein has to say, then we really get a sense of what to do and listen for when empathizing. As I've indicated, the therapeutic effects of empathy need ongoing evaluation and discussion. However, the aim of this exegetical account is to provide good grounding to discuss what we do when we empathize. If Orange's strong claim is true, then this approach can only extend the quality of life to philosophical patients. And, if Stein is right, then such practices further extend epistemological horizons.

3.15 Conclusion: Why Listening Is Not Judging (Non-normativity and Empathy)

The person with understanding does not know and judge as one who stands apart and unaffected; but rather, as one united by a specific bond with the other, he thinks with the other and undergoes the situation with him.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* [1993 xi]

This passage from Gadamer emphasizes an important point in Stein's approach: Notably, that understanding another does not come from judgment or imposed knowledge, but from identifying with the other. This is an integral point for empathetic understanding that, arguably, Stein does not make as explicit as I do in these final remarks.

Prior to discussing the non-normativity of empathy, it is worth making a number of points in summary. What we have learned from these selected philosophic approaches, in both Chapter Two and this chapter is that therapeutic understanding emerges in collaboration. It is created, framed, and investigated by both the philosopher-practitioner and the client. For the practitioner who has sufficient theoretical knowledge and skill, the application of theoretical ideas can enhance the listening process. The theoretical domains and skills identified here include identifying theoretical levels so that knowledge claims can be discussed in terms of validity, aiming to understand the causal descriptions that make up the current individual, and seeking subjective coherence between emotions, motivations and values. In addition to these points, I have attempted to demonstrate that effective philosophical therapeutic work requires emotional and thoughtful participation on the part of the client, as well as empathetic and therefore

emotional (at least emotionally relational) and thoughtful participation on the part of the practitioner.

Practitioners know that an important part of empathy is wanting to understand (or aiming to get) the patient's experience; yet in addition to this, the practitioner also has to *communicate* the particular points on which the practitioner is empathizing with the patient. These efforts to mirror the client back to herself via communication of empathized points support the student-patient in seeing herself from the outside. It also provides an opportunity to explore and explain herself from the inside, and thereby the practitioner supports the patient's own reiterated empathy and expansion of knowledge. Thus, the patient benefits from the listener's identification of different values and emotions and can then consider whether they are acting in accordance with, as Stein would say, the values that are inside of them.

Whether the values inside a person are generated by the individual or are predominantly a result of social convention is a theme of philosophical self-reflection. Pragmatically speaking, the issue really is not only whether a value is a conventional one or not, but whether a value is one that the patient identifies with and wants to endorse in his or her behaviour. Stein acknowledges the influence of social convention in discussing the expression of emotions and discerning values. Yet regardless of the origin of values, empirical (practical, clinical, verifiable) evidence demonstrates that self-reflection and self-understanding enhance both the patient's and the practitioner's alignment with their respective, self-identified values. These processes take the patient and practitioner into deeper levels of the spiritual self. As we saw in discussing the coherence of a personal perspective, these acts of spiritual consideration have *rationality* (as described here) inherent in them and can be evaluated in terms of truthfulness. So there are ways in which, once identified, the client and practitioner can together more objectively evaluate (the subjective) values of the client. Thus, in Stein's terms we can reasonably engage in spiritual evaluations of persons.

As I was beginning to note above, Stein and other empathy theorists do not discuss the particulars of how we convey empathy. They do not, for example, elaborate empathetic questions. Nor do they develop an empathetic mirroring technique. They do not, for example, indicate that one ought to say to a patient "so what you're saying is...." Reflecting a patient's perspective back to them frames the client and provides an entrée to deeper thoughts and

apparent (to the patient) logical connections. And while we have noted that corrections and fallibilism are critical elements of the therapeutic process, more detail about how to convey empathy to a client via therapeutic conversation would be a useful venue for future study that would promote being fallible as a corrective and investigative method between patient and practitioner. Asking questions and mirroring are an important part of the empathetic process and being good at it is an important aspect of being a practised empathizer. Practitioners get better at listening by practising listening and then by asking useful questions that take one deeper into the psyche of the patient. It is at the level of discussing what makes up a client's world view that practitioners can influence a modified or enhanced understanding by the patient of the patient's motivations. I can only note the lack of practical information about the importance of asking questions and being explicit in mirroring the client back to themselves as crucial parts of aided self-reflective practice. Notably, both mirroring and question asking are practices that Socrates is reputed to have not overlooked.¹⁰²

I think that another real power in empathy (in addition to the empathizer's knowledge acquisition, which is what has been reasonably emphasized in this discussion) is that in being empathized with, the patient comes to envision themselves and some of their experiences *as knowable*. At this point much could be discussed about the significance of someone and some particular claims being knowable, yet unfortunately we cannot go into those benefits here. Suffice it to say that in extreme instances where an individual feels they have been shattered or derided, knowability offers affirmation of being, as well as verifiable points of substance that can be sometimes used to stitch a memory or person back together. So we can note that there is benefit to the individual in knowing that they and their experiences are knowable, which accords to them and their experiences a certain kind of validity.

Not all individuals want to know themselves, and some specifically do not necessarily want to know their spiritual selves. Empathetically speaking, it is not necessary for an individual to want to understand their spiritual self. We can still deeply and authentically empathize with someone's circumstances or causal descriptions without having to engage a deeper aspect of the self. This is why the distinction between the two levels of the self remains useful. The empathizer only goes

¹⁰² See Chapter One of this thesis where it was noted that much pre-Hellenistic philosophy was built in response to Socrates.

as far or as deep into the person as the patient-student is willing to go. There are times when self-understanding can be satiated by understanding some of the causally descriptive events that constituted an individual to a particular point in time.

What has been affirmed in Stein's understanding is a fact evident in everyday living: while our souls (our perceiving and experiencing selves) cannot be separated from the phenomena of our life, our spiritual selves can be variously, disassociated from living. In other words, an individual can choose not to reflect on their experiences or themselves as experiencers. Oftentimes, and we see it in clinical practice especially, there has to be some conscious provocation to bring the spirit into perceiving and reflecting on their perceiving and experiencing selves. How much experiential structure one can bring to fulfilling one's intuitions and enhanced self-reflections depends on one's own makeup and the values that motivate (epistemological) use of one's experiences. Yet, even while certain traits are evident as a result of our experiences, and some traits are somehow more innate or deeper in us (<129> 115), nonetheless "every capacity can be strengthened by training" (<56> 51). So one who is not a natural empathizer can become one with practice. And one who does not naturally self-reflect can also improve that skill with practice, too.

It is worth noting, in keeping with the point at the beginning of the previous paragraph, that the empathizer is not a spiritually disassociated kind of individual. So too, an individual who is spiritually empathized with also cannot help but become aware of themselves, reflect on themselves, and thus cannot be considered disassociated or detached from their spiritual self as they reflect on their experiencing. It remains nonetheless important to note that the spiritual self is not always engaged in human living – not all flowers bloom - but this does not necessarily prevent one from empathizing with an individual because the PPI can provide enough fodder for empathy.

I return now to the practical and important point that I wish to draw attention to in this conclusion, which is only indicated and not emphasized in the exegesis but is entirely relevant to the patient focused point above; namely, Stein's method of investigating experience reveals that when we are dealing with human essences, normative judgments do not have much of a place in empathy, whereas seeing others, in the first place, "like me" does. It is subsequent to noting our shared human essences that *then* having different experiences, feelings, and values from me matters. Her methodology reminds us that we can see difference as its own point, as simply

different from me in such and such a way. Thus, normative evaluations are not introduced too readily into the understanding process. And as far as human essences go, we really only appreciate how differences affect us through understanding essences, which is to say that differentiation happens within the domain of “like me.”

In other words, the epistemic quest of aiming to understand the coherence of another person’s world view and their character via their actions is a non-normative process because it is not a process of rating, but of a process of relating. This investigation has indicated that to best, most truly, understand another human being we have to be empathetic before we can be critical, or even (hopefully) merely evaluative. In empathetic understanding one does not question whether ‘x’ should have done such and such until there is sufficient understanding of why ‘x’ did such and such. In keeping with this point, Stein’s thesis could be read as advocacy for non-normative knowledge. Late in her argument we are reminded that we have learnt via empathy that we cannot take our self as the standard (<130> 116). And because we cannot take ourselves as *the* standard we cannot judge other’s values, but rather we identify similarities and differences with them and try to understand them. This leads us to understanding another by asking, how are those values coherent for that person?

This perspective is evident in therapeutic practice when we talk with our clients about focusing on their observations and less so their opinions. We do aim to be non-normative by assuming coherences within an individual — i.e., how their world view makes sense to them — and then aim to expose those coherences. Sometimes therapeutically we can even ask what makes a particular behaviour coherent to an individual. This is of course premised on, as I indicated earlier, understanding versus judging the PPI. In practice, understanding a PPI creates a greater likelihood of us getting to the deeper level of the spiritual self. In this realm, looking at spirit and how and whether being in the world corresponds with one’s values can become an important part of the philosophical evaluation and contribution.

There is a technical distinction between reflection and perception. However, I choose not to develop a textual argument for these distinctions at this time. Yet, to this point we can say, in summation, that if one thinks about it, then one can see that reflecting depends on a concept of objectivity — i.e., to reflect we have to (reasonably) assume that there is something there to be reflected. By contrast, the act of perceiving originates in the observer and is affected by the

subjectivity of the perceiver. The ideal of reflecting, therefore, is that it is ideologically less biased, and more object-based. This is likely one reason why practitioners discuss self-reflection and not self-perception. Perception is more innately burdened with one's biases, intentions, and life experiences. To reflect is to aim to see things more as they are. Thus, empathy is a reflective process, and not a perceptive one. In keeping with this insight, I have been generous in using the concept of "mirroring" a patient-student back to themselves; mirroring, too, aims not to be bias laden but reflective (so it can reflect identified biases).

To some it could be considered a curiously biased thing to talk about one's experiences and feelings. Conventionally there is a tendency to regulate and evaluate feelings and experiences (typically justified by appealing to greater social goods). However, the pursuer of knowledge about human experiences is not going to be so biased against emotions, but look at them as preliminary points of information. In most conventional settings, the idea of investigating these personal experiences in a non-normative environment that supports conscious and conscientious evaluating of one's motives and feelings is a relatively radical approach to being in the world. Typically, when an individual's emotions and motivations are understood, valued, and validated by an individual, the individual becomes freer and less regulated to conform to social convention. This is why early on Freud's work could be considered as threatening to the state and social structures.¹⁰³

Again, as has been noted, normative is an adjective derived from the noun "norm," which signifies an average or usual level of attainment or performance for an individual or group. In philosophical discussion, a standard, rule, or principle used to judge or direct human conduct so that rules are complied with, would be considered normative. Stein's approach is, as I've indicated, significantly non-normative. I have enumerated her points of empathetic engagement to show the non-normativity of her approach. As is evident, points 1-5 are non-normative in that they simply point to knowledge that can be acquired about an individual. In this way, philosophical data is not judging in the first place but, an attempt to determine what is so with respect to human experiences.

¹⁰³ See Freud's essay, "Civilization and It's Discontents" in *Volume Twelve, Civilization, Society and Religion*, Penguin Freud Library, 1961.

We see from Stein's analysis important points that empathy:

- (1) Is grounded in substantial recognition of who "I" am;
- (2) Seeks to understand and recognizing the "I" in others;
- (3) Seeks understanding in the other by looking for the psychic and physical coherence that I would expect for, or have of, myself, given what I know of myself (which is also changing and is reflected in my changing event horizon);
- (4) Attempts to be reflective instead of judging or socially normalizing;
- (5) Exposes and identifies emotions, moods, and character;
- (6) Once points of personhood are identified and understood in a descriptive causal sense, then values or feelings or motivating behaviour can be explored both normatively and non-normatively, with the clarity of motivations in mind.

As we have noted, the phenomenologist in empathetic conversation aims to enact the ideal of "reflecting." In doing so, they aim to reflect the potential depth of that individual in the moment. This level of mirroring recognizes that the spiritual self is influenced by life experiences and, importantly, an individual's thinking and perceptions about their experiences.

So the remaining points of empathy are:

- (7) The soul and the spiritual self can be evaluated in terms of how they express the values of the individual;
- (8) We can evaluate how they are evaluating their values because the practitioner can evaluate with the patient the criteria and validity of the patient's values;
- (9) Presumably changes in values or how one sees one's motivations can facilitate changes in the patient's character;
- (10) Finally, the practitioner can evaluate with the patient the values that substantiate the values they hold, i.e., we can question a client's relationship to transcendental values, for example.

The last four points are evaluative points that can be discussed in mutually respectful ways once the mirroring stages are worked through. These evaluative points can be seen to be more normative in terms of discerning what values motivate one's behaviours and why. But there is no reason to be stuck in normalizing one's values. The final point of investigation, summarized above as (9), opens up the question of valuing a value for its own sake, i.e., goodness for its own sake versus for some other good. Some individuals may not care to be motivated by purer values. Practitioners can find that, subsequent to the simpler mirroring stages, evaluations might rely on more normative reasoning. However given that we can to minimize normalizing evaluations, acknowledging biases can mitigate the silent powers of judgment and socialized influences.

Non-normative discernment, or understanding, aims to be less (unwittingly) biased. For instance, a non-normative approach can be seen to apply to the case of the spiritual person insofar as the empathizer does not judge emotions normatively, but look at them as factors in understanding the human condition. The point is not to be overly mechanistic, but to look at emotions as part of the human condition like as if they are "real" facts about humans, just as having 23 chromosomes or skin is a fact about humans. Like variations in chromosomes, we have variations in human emotions. Emotions cannot be taken as given and fixed, but are relative and particular to an individual. Experiences influence emotions and emotions influence experiences, so emotions themselves are investigated and understood through our experience of them. The listener and the analysand can seek out non-normative truths about emotions and their relationships with the patient's values without judging an individual in a manner that aims to fit that individual into a spectrum of the normal.

Empathy is a key component of therapeutic listening and is essential to developing a more than superficial understanding of someone else. With respect to understanding another individual, we can see how this approach to empathy develops empathy as an art of knowing what to pursue for the sake of understanding another. The elements of practice are tools, or a methodology, of relating to someone else in a manner that reflects how you would want to be understood, based on some features of how we understand our essential selves. Here we have discussed empathy as an experience of relating that is based in discerning human essences, facilitates causal descriptions, acknowledges emotions and values, and makes use of coherent reasoning. Moreover, empathy has been discussed in terms of the knowledge seeker and, in this way, it is a gateway to additional primordial knowledge about oneself and co-primordial knowledge with

another. In practising empathy, phenomenologically, the practitioner relates the distinct levels and parts of their self (i.e., the PPI and the levels of the spiritual person) to these same distinct parts in another. Thus, Stein's meditation reveals the possibility that discerned essences of human experience supports our knowledgeable relating to others.

So, while it is the case that I can only empathically experience another's sensations (i.e., have a primordial relationship with a non-primordial experience) I cannot feel them, but I can more or less accurately relate to them. So empathetic knowledge is experienced-based and relational. It is also potentially expansive and expanding. This is notable because, as we have seen, an important feature of empathetic knowledge is that, as a knowledge tool, it can be practised and improved. This is a wonderful affirmation by Stein on behalf of how empathy can increase our knowledge and understanding.

Throughout these chapters I have developed the case for philosophers as professional listeners and investigators into the human condition. What I have outlined here is that, as expert observers, philosophers truly understand the work involved in aiming to understand another human being.

When we aim to truly, clearly, and reflectively understand another or others, then we want to be aware of how our personal conventions and biases might affect the research. Phenomenologists address this by trying to get to the essence of things to see and understand something with as little observer-biased influence as possible. This creates standards and criteria for what counts as good evaluations.

The philosopher does not want to advocate a particular position so much as they want to advocate the best possible position or truth in the circumstances. The philosopher does not aim to impose the truth, but aims to discover the best possible truth. For instance, we might say that the philosopher does not need to see light as a wave or a particle because one position or the other will best suit their research and grants. Rather (and consistent with the history of quantum physics), the true philosopher is willing to see light as both kinds of things; and even if not easy or comfortable, it is best to stick with the best, least biased knowledge possible, given the data we have. This is why philosophy has been able to be steadfast in standing behind mathematical, physical, social, and psychological insights for over two millennia of human development and

growth. As a discipline, it advocates and *aims to* refine standards of truth and validity, independent of various social conventions.

I would argue that non-normative investigations and insights are something that feminist philosophers have been particularly tenacious about pursuing. In the last forty or so years much excellent research has been done by these scholars into investigating the various relationships between ethics in epistemology, and whether and how ethics can affect and bias epistemological inquires. For example, less than one hundred years ago women were not considered to be typical or legitimate holders of knowledge, however feminists pointed out that the exclusion of women was not only a misogynistic ethical stance that limited particular knowledge in important ways, but that the exclusion of women limited and restricted entire fields of study, as well as an entire category of potential human knowers. In the social science field, the inclusion of feminist scholarship has had a significant impact on creating new fields of knowledge and on extending traditional knowledge domains. A particular contribution of feminist scholarship is the encouragement for knowers to acknowledge their situatedness so that perspective-limiting biases can be accounted for upfront, and so that one's claims can be named as subjective or objective, perspectival or reflective. In this way, contrary to the demonstrated historically gendered pitfalls of traditional knowledge inquiry, feminist or contemporary knowledge is ethically prevented from claiming too much, or not enough. And in this way, the philosophical tradition of unfettered knowledge investigations and the seeking of best possible truth lives forward. In this sense, we can advocate standards of truth that are not restricted by the circumstances. Thus, some contemporary truth claims can sustain a standard of credibility that is linked to present circumstances, but can also exceed those circumstances in logically sound ways.

In the next chapter we consider not whether biases or social convention (or injury) can be escaped, but how to incorporate particular instantiating social forces into one's own identity. This also affords us the opportunity to look at mechanisms of self-reflection in ways that we have not had the opportunity to do thus far.

Chapter Four: A Peculiar Marriage's Contributions to Reasonable Hope: Isaiah Berlin and Judith Butler; Shared insights on social forces and the potential for freedom and agency

4.0 Introduction:

In this chapter we will see how social forces enable individual powers. We will look specifically at how social forces enable subjective agency — a particular kind of human freedom that reflects the reality that subjected individuals can make choices that reflect their engagements with their subjectivities.¹⁰⁴ Yet, excesses in social forces are sometimes experienced as dehumanizing to individuals who are prevented — or at least limited — in exercising their freedoms and choices. Incarceration, physical and mental cruelty, torture, injuries, and restrictions to movement and self-expression, as well as many forms of coercion and oppression, are all examples of excesses in social power. We note that the power of social forces is not only conveyed or translated by way of threat to essential human rights, but also by way of conditioning subjects to maintain social norms.

As we have seen, the task of the philosophically supported individual is to find their identity amidst their negotiations of the social forces. We have already suggested that social forces instantiate both subjects and their personal agency, and yet have the potential simultaneously to dehumanize and injure people. It is an interesting fact of human living that, despite the immense power of social forces on subjects, as subjects we often function unaware of the primacy and impact of these forces on our psychological selves. In this chapter we consider social forces and

¹⁰⁴ Agency is akin to human freedom, but it is a very particular kind of human freedom. Agency requires some (albeit subjective) self-awareness, and it requires that the individual agent exercise choice. Agency refers to chosen actions in the world. For our purposes, agency is choice in action. Freedom is a broader category, in that typically in the politics of freedom, freedom pertains to rights. Some argue that, as a concept, “freedom” can be reduced to rights. But that is a discussion for another time. For our purposes, agency requires attention to particularities of (and potential choices of) an individual agent, i.e. a subject.

subjectivity so as to substantiate agency as a reasonable aspiration and therapeutic tool for the Philosophical Counsellor.

These claims emerge in reflecting on the writings of Isaiah Berlin and Judith Butler, both of whom orient the reader to an awareness that personal agency lies in acknowledging and working with the social forces that instantiate subjects. As with the other philosophers we have investigated, Berlin and Butler demonstrate that in attending to the laws, structures, and beliefs that are reflected in our experiences and in our language, we can come to recognize the significant impacts that regulations and social forces play in shaping subjective experiences; including subjective agency. Again, this gives us an opportunity to consider how agency can be evident in everyday life.

In developing some understanding about subjectivity and agency we come to see that the trope of the self-reflective turn is a central concept. Therefore, it is worth considering what is entailed in self-reflection, in addition to a self-reflective turn. Some elements worth considering include (1) the depth and resilience of the subject's self and social understandings, (2) the skills of synthesis and distinction making, and (3) definitely the matter of intention would be relevant in truly understanding what happens in the self-reflective turn described in psychoanalytic and sociological literature. From a philosophical point of view, we do not have the resources to investigate all of these factors. So I am not going to spend time defining and discussing (and so, in this context, ambiguating) self-reflection. It is enough for now that we recognize self-reflection is an essential step in the direction of freedom and agency — it is the subject seeing herself as a social subject in the self-reflective turn. Although it is worth noting that the issue of intention with respect to agency deserves greater attention at a later date, for now a coherent enough account of self-reflection can be presented, without discussing intention, to demonstrate the reasonableness of agency. For the time being, if we need to further evaluate self-reflective turns, then it is enough to indicate that they can be evaluated on a continuum from intuitive acting to thoughtfully engaged considerations. However, for our purposes we can note that the amount of self-reflection does not affect the fact of the turn. Only in terms of characterizing particular subjects and their potential for agency do we want to debate and evaluate the characteristics of the turn.

Judith Butler's considerations on the "topology" of the self-reflective turn allow us to appreciate how agency is an ambiguous concept because of the ways in which it is pervasively imbued with social forces. Thus, many find themselves questioning whether a self exists independent of social forces. This question will be addressed in our investigation. Along with Berlin and Butler I affirm, from therapeutic practice, that these considerations ultimately extend our understanding of the uniqueness of particular subjectivities and agencies. We could argue, therefore, that considerations about subjectivity and agency extend the quality and number of psychological truths available for evaluation with a patient. For example, a practitioner could have a patient give some consideration to their own subjectivities, and have them give consideration to how they act based on choices they make. Although engagements with patients will not be a focus in this chapter, I will on occasion reference the therapeutic and practical uses of this way of thinking about subjectivity and agency. However, I do not have the time to argue for the explicit relationship between agency and psychological truths in this chapter. Rather, the focus of this discussion is how one might consider agency to be a reasonable hope and a reasonable therapeutic endeavor.

To better understand the bonds of agency and subjectivity, let us elaborate; participation in certain fundamental laws enables engagement in kinship and social groups. (In some cases, by definition, non-participation in social laws means exclusion from the group.) Individuals who do not follow the basic laws of a group are often excluded from the group and are potentially considered abnormal. This fear of being "cast out" from the forces that instantiate us, and by which we initially come to know ourselves, holds significant (regulative) power over the psyche. An extension of this idea is evident in Berlin's discussion on the "Search for Status" in subsection six of his *Two Concepts of Liberty* essay. There he discusses, for all its compromising ways, that what is compelling about positive liberty is that it plays to human beings' search for status amidst their communities. We will reference this factor later when discussing Berlin's coming to terms with the degree to which I am "intelligible only in terms of the social network in which I am . . . an element" (155). The last statement can be startling when seriously considered. Sometimes, as will be demonstrated in the story of Antigone, those instantiating forces are so powerful that if subjects do not engage those forces in manners consistent with social norms, then for the subject the consequences can mean annihilation – or kinds of annihilation.

The empirical evidence of centuries of psychotherapeutic investigations suggests strongly that the more reflective the individual, the less pervasive and predictable are the powers social forces have over the individual. (Note that this idea can be discussed in reference to the Ancient Hellenist philosophers through to the contemporary philosophers and psychotherapeutic practitioners discussed in earlier chapters.) It seems evident that individuals feel more contented and free when they believe they are choosing, or at least influencing, how social forces shape them. Yet reflective or not, the force of social laws and norms play a substantial role in keeping subjects in line with the social laws and norms to which they are accustomed. So if social forces are used not only to instantiate individuals but also to coerce them (us), then what does this mean for individual freedom?

One factor in laws and rules becoming social norms is that — and this is often forgotten — norms have been regulated over time. Social norms are beliefs in relation to which individuals are identified, both externally and internally (i.e., in relation to the outside world and in terms of how they/we think in terms of themselves). Individuals are subjects in relation to social forces and norms; i.e., they are subjects because they are subjected to social laws and instantiated in social regulations. At some point self-reflective individuals — as the Ancients reminded and taught us — come to consider whether their particular idea of happiness (*eudaimonia*) involves conscious (i.e., intentional and self-reflective) compliance, opposition, or something other in relation to particular social norms.

As we have seen, Philosophers do not want individuals to be limited by norms. Rather, they hope that while social standards inform and inaugurate us, there are also points in relation to which individuals can exceed the forces by which they are instantiated. This is a consideration in favour of agency not just being a false hope. Thus, it is possible that some subjects really can exceed the forces that define them.

Not all hope needs to be a metaphysical chimera. For instance, creative opportunities also demonstrate instances in which subjects exceed the forces that instantiate them. This, then, is another point in favour of the idea that individuals are not only the sum of their forces. In the end, given how carefully we have defined and considered the evolution, flexibility, and pragmatic use of reason in previous chapters, we will see that subjective agency is a reasonable hope, not an empty one.

Since philosophers identify and work with these social norms and forces to advocate individual expressions of agency, it is worth asking, therefore, along with these two theorists of agency and freedom, whether and how it is reasonable to hope for subjective agency? In other words, since agency is so connected with subjectivities, what is freedom?

In keeping with these themes, this chapter demonstrates how Isaiah Berlin attempts to enhance his audiences' understanding of social forces — by responding to the forces with an awareness of negative and positive liberties; or more specifically, social forces are evident in appeals to positive liberty, and managing those forces, is evident in negative liberty. Berlin's insights are not based on *a priori* claims; rather these distinctions evolve from the empirical evidence that he gathered in observing human history and experiences, as well as from inquiring into human motivations. In this way, Berlin supports us in understanding an individual's most fundamental engagements with their society.

He advocates that to maintain a self in relation to society there has to be a minimum domain of negative liberty, an area of non-interference in which the individual negotiates for themselves their chosen relationship to laws and norms. If we do not advocate for negative liberty, we lose what — presumably besides space, time, and genomic distinctions — differentiates one individual from another. Moreover, according to Berlin, if we lose negative liberties, we can lose an appreciation for humanity. This is particularly evident when the power of coercive forces goes unchecked; here we can assume that some of Berlin's point of reference is the Holocaust and World War II.

While Judith Butler does not explicitly argue for negative liberty in her theorizing, she does consider whether and how subjects acquire and engage subjective agency. We will see that Butler's version of subjective agency can be seen to have strong affinities with negative liberty. Berlin and Butler's insights into the power of social forces can be shown to be commensurate with each other. For example, aspects of negative liberty are especially apparent in Butler's discussion of Antigone.

More generally, though, Butler demonstrates how, given that subjects are socially constructed (i.e., the result of social forces), then self-reflective awareness of these social forces can sometimes and ambiguously instantiate unique (i.e., differentiated) domains of individual power; domains we will come to refer to as domains of subjective agency. We will consider that these

domains potentially point to self-reflection or, at least, self-perceiving domains of non-interference in which subjects negotiate themselves in relation to laws or norms.

Towards the end of our investigation we will see that subjective agency sometimes happens without full awareness of the effects of choosing for one's self. Yet always, subjective agency extends a subject's potential domains for self-expression. These extensions in self-expression, and self-reflection, are the material and spiritual effects of one's experiences and actions that extend subjects' domains of choice. In a manner of speaking, subjects can identify choice and potentially create more choices for themselves. For Berlin, this extends and enhances our being human. He indicates that the freer humans are, the more choices we make. The more choices we make, the more human we are (i.e., the more self-reflective and not reactive we are).

For many contemporary social and political theorists, including Butler, the idea of being "more human" could imply an uncritical hierarchy of assumptions pertaining to what the best human is like, as well as implicit judgments about what is entailed as deficient. A reasonable modification of Berlin's claim by a Butlerite would be that choice enables subjects to be more self-actualized and more fulfilled as their self. We can speculate that, in Butler's terms, to the extent that choices relate to self-actualizing — and they do — when subjects choose, they become more the kinds of subjects they want to be. She does not argue in an analytic way for choice as Berlin does, but it is clear that agency, and identifying and challenging the convention of norms is a value in her work, and so in this way choice also emerges as a value for Butler.

Butler might agree with the sentiment of this approach to agency, but her understanding of subject agency is more critical and less prescriptive than Berlin's advocacy of freedom. She is not saying that we should be free or ought to be free. She is indicating, given our understanding of subjectivity, what agency might mean.

For now, Butler's adaptations allow us to argue that negative liberty requires that individuals — or in Butler's paradigm "subjects" — can identify the social forces that instantiate them and that they choose to act in accordance with, or disruptively in relation to. These choices "deepen" subjectivity — in that this understanding can deepen a subject's self-awareness — and potentially,

engage subjective agency.¹⁰⁵ To deepen subjectivity is to reflect on a deeper (than superficial) understanding of how social forces shape them and how to manage these forces.

In this chapter our investigations into the unique therapeutic contribution of PC comes full circle. We return to the values espoused by the Ancients who advocated awareness of social normativity in our thoughts and beliefs. They held that by self-reflective awareness, individuals might find *eudaimonia* as well as self-expression and freedom in engaging the reality of social forces. Butler affirms along with Berlin — and in keeping with the insights of the Ancient Hellenist Philosophers (although Berlin and the Hellenists would not use the same language as Butler) — that in the self-reflective turn, the psychic life of social power can be seen to instantiate subjective agency. We can imagine many therapeutic effects spawning from such an insight, and I will, in cursory ways, point to these possibilities.

Along with developing an explicit theory of social forces and normativity, Butler's writing can be seen to extend important aspects of Berlin's insights.¹⁰⁶ Butler will be read to show how subjects repeat instantiating social forces and that in the repetition they create opportunities to express their experiences of agency. Interestingly, it is in the repetition of norms that agency is found. Yet this is why agency, so defined, leads one to question what makes this kind of freedom remarkable if it is simply re-instantiated and repeated energy from social forces? If agency is only a kind of repetition of social forces, then why should we bother putting our hope in it? So defined, agency is neither remarkable nor redemptive.

Obviously in exploring considerations about how we subjects deal with social forces, I think there is something more to subjective agency than the mere regurgitations of social forces. Subjects can, and do, uniquely express how the power of social forces affects them. Thus, subjects express agency and they do so in subjective ways. In this chapter we consider how

¹⁰⁵ To deepen subjectivity is not only to be defined more in terms of instantiating forces, but also potentially to investigate the “what if,” if not defined in terms of those forces. Nonetheless, even though the instantiating forces of subjectivity may be interpreted differently over time, instantiating forces are reinforced as such — either directly or indirectly when discussing subjectivities.

¹⁰⁶ Certainly this is an imagined intellectual marriage, as I can find no instances in Butler's work where she mentions Berlin. This essay is the result of an earlier supervisor asking questions about how Berlin's ideas of liberty relate to Butler's, as a means of trying to make more “substantial” Butler's ideas in an “analytic way.”

subjects can arguably enhance their agency by way of appreciating the potential powers revealed in the self-reflective turn and, in repeating, in their own (subjective and variously self-directed) ways, social forces.

A significant reason for making this chapter one about personal agency has to do with my claim that philosophical theory is unique not just for its commitment to best possible personal understanding — and so, by application, personal happiness — but because, as a healing modality, it has uniquely maintained its commitment to individual freedom or, in more contemporary terms, subjective agency. PC is unique because it wants its patients to be self-reflectively happy, and to experience personal agency and freedom. I would argue that no other healing modality has the history of valuing individual freedom and autonomy as does the philosophical tradition. Nor does any other tradition teach reasoning and thinking so as to enhance the skills of its students towards happiness, self-expression, and agency.

4.1 A Strange Marriage

Admittedly, bringing Berlin and Butler together is a strange, perhaps even an unpredictable, marriage of philosophical thinkers. Both are 20th century thinkers, yet in some ways the similarities could be thought to end there. Berlin's significant influence in political philosophy ranges from the mid-20th century onwards, and his contributions were such that he was not only a philosopher, but also a diplomat. In comparison, Butler's work, considered post-structuralist, emerges in the mid-1980s and extends into present time. So both philosophers are political, yet in notably distinct ways. We could say that they differ in how they define the scope of the political.

Isaiah Berlin's Latvian-British perspective responds directly to the holocaust and injustices of political domination. His discussions pertain to the individual in relation to social forces and whether, or not, individuals are respected by the state or government where that individual is located. Butler's attentions to injustices are observed differently. Her politics have to do with social and gender theory, as well as the politics of language and performativity (various social performances that are indicative of identity and have real political consequences and realities). The scope of her writing indicates that she sincerely intends to challenge social power at its most

fundamental levels, which includes challenging and investigating subjects, language, gender, family structures, and theories of law.

It could also be argued that the substantial differences between the theorists end there. While Judith Butler makes no reference to Isaiah Berlin in any of her works, her current work on the challenges of critiquing Jewish politics, in light of a history of oppression, suggests that there are a number of notable domains upon which they would have shared political interests and affinities (2009).¹⁰⁷ Given what has been discussed so far in this thesis, we can appreciate that both theorists evolve out of a philosophical tradition that focuses on understanding individuals, social forces, and freedom. Both are well versed in Hegel and the classic enlightenment philosophers.

I contend that each theorist provides important and unique insights into freedom and agency. An entire chapter could be devoted to the potentially therapeutic insights of both theorists. For example, I could imagine a self-help book titled *The Benefits of Negative Liberty in Intimate Relationships*, or *How Negative Liberty Prevents Co-dependence: A How-to Manual*. In these summations we would discuss exercising how negative liberty in a relationship helps enact healthy boundaries. Yet for our purposes — the purposes of determining whether it is reasonable to hope to be a free and self-expressed, self-directing individual — it can be beneficial to see each theorist's work as enhanced, or filled out, by the other.

Berlin alerts his readers again to the fact that social forces influence the individual and he tells us how the individual is either “free from” or “free to” in relation to these forces. We can also see the ideologies behind positive and negative liberty as two distinct “attitudes to life” in response to social forces and individuals (118). Berlin argues that negative liberties require particular advocacy for the well being of human kind. Butler is obviously concerned with social forces as well, but her considerations pertain largely to how social forces in relation to the subject are potentially agency generating and not only limiting and defining.

¹⁰⁷ Butler, Judith, Ronnie Gilbert and Aurora Levins Morales. “Jewish Voice for Peace advisory board members respond to efforts by the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation and others to police acceptable forms of Jewish identity and cultural expression. *jewishvoiceforpeace.org*. Jewish Voice for Peace, November 19, 2009. Web. (July 03, 2011).

For Berlin, in considering the value of choice and freedom, individuals ought to choose freedom, whereas in looking in more detail at the particulars of how individual subjects are shaped by social forces, Butler explores the intricacies and mechanics of agency. One such detail about agency, for example, has to do with the degree to which social forces are evident in subjects, and so evolving out of subjectivity; agency does not always mean that we choose to be free of social forces. Sometimes we choose to participate in conjunction with those forces. So agency can support and sustain norms, as well as destabilize norms, or disrupt those forces. Appreciating these possibilities comes from understanding the internalization of forces.

Where Berlin values choice and considers choice to reflect some intentionality, Butler discusses how subjects create opportunities for subjective agency and choice, acknowledging that agency can happen with or without various degrees of intentionality on the part of the subject. In other words, the subject cannot always, and often does not, predict the full outcome of his or her free actions. We will discuss this point in more detail from section 4.0 onwards of this chapter.

In Butler, the intention associated with agency is more momentarily defined as the subject's beliefs and desires. It would appear that, as an analytic category, intention is not relevant. This is possibly due to the fact that while intention would be an interesting topic for Butler to investigate and deconstruct, it is not a concept necessary for her to develop in order for her to give an account of agency. To the degree that a Butlerite would talk about intention at all would be to say that it captures a subject's beliefs and desires; in this way, Butler's engagement with the idea would be, at least in part, a very practical incorporation of the term. While we can infer certain things about intentionality — for example, it is likely shaped by our subjectivities — there is no dictum, equation, or prescription about intentionality in Butler such that the more subjects self-reflect and are intentional, the more free we are. She is simply investigating to see if agency is a possibility for a subject. It follows that intentionality can evolve with varying degrees depending on how subjects understand their subjectivities. Intentionality also likely involves some real tension in relation to social forces, as it is characteristically cognitive and spiritual, and therefore of the psychic realm. As such, intentionality can tell us about (1) the subjects, and (2) some things about social power, too.

Although to be fair to Butler, her telling the story of Antigone in the way she does, certainly advocates for, and values, self-direction — i.e., being directed by one's own inner self. Although

social forces also shape aspects of the inner self in the form of a conscience, how that conscience plays out in a particular subject is dependent on the forces and the specific internalization of forces that make up a subject. It is true, therefore, to recognize that while some readers may note that there is not so much a valuing of intentionality in Butler's theories, there is a valuing of bringing forward Antigone's legacy of self-direction.

Butler's language reflects her extended immersion in the work of Hegel, Sartre, Foucault and Freud and this is reflected in her attentive struggles with subjectivities and political realities. Whereas even though there is a shared background in Hegel and Marx, Berlin's language is more of the analytic, epistemic, and liberal political philosophical traditions. Yet, they are struggling with similar issues. What might personal freedom, or subjective agency, mean in the world as we know and experience it? And, how might these freedoms play out for individuals in the world?

For Berlin, that an individual *intends* is assumed. This is largely because an individual is not elaborated to be as ambiguous a term as "subject." Although again, as we proceed, reasons become evident as to why, for these theorists, intention is not pertinent as an explicit concept — it is a discussion that can be left for another time. The question for these theorists is not so much about the origins of freedom per se, but rather they are interested in the fact that the concepts of freedom and agency capture a spirit of voluntarism. In other words, it is already evident that, for both, the origin of agency lies in social forces. Given insights around this point, I will throughout this chapter make explicit additional compatibilities between the two theorists in their valuing and advocacy of choice and differences in humans being.

Butler identifies choice in a subject's recognition of instantiating social forces; this is discerned in reflective turns. She points to agencies playing out with respect to these powers, particularly in language and in social performances. Berlin also explains the general force of social pressures in relation to the individual, and the individual in relation to social forces. However, influenced by Freud, psychoanalysis, and Foucault, Butler goes further in discussing how social forces shape, or are internalized by, (agents with) psyches; these forces are then pushed out in behaviour in the world. The question Butler provokes is whether individual psyches are (mere) conduits for social forces or, is it reasonable to consider them/us as energetic resistors that have the possibility to harness social forces in favour of, say, genuine, autonomous self-expression? Either way, we can see that the question places emphasis on the potential for truly voluntary capacities of subjects.

Let us now turn to consider Butler's investigation of, and advocacy for, subjective agency as a means of enacting (the ideals of) negative liberty by daring to address the questions of how free can subjects be from social forces and norms. How might choice play out for subjects? And again, for our purposes, this analysis will support this project's conclusion that, because we can discuss real instances of agency, it is reasonable to hope for the freedom of subjective agency.

Before going further it is worth noting that another distinction in language between the theorists can also be marked by the shift from "freedom" to "agency." As I understand, and will elaborate, Butler's use of the term "agency" reflects the reality that we are not always individuals, but realistically we are always subjects — i.e., individuals and groups who necessarily negotiate and internalize social forces.¹⁰⁸ Berlin's use of "freedom" reflects the Western political philosophical tradition and the concerns of individuals in relation to their communities, governments and institutions. Berlin's work is useful because it sets us up in terms of a history of ideas and a particular twentieth century coming to terms with the impact of social forces on the individual. The attitudes to life in response to social forces are positive and negative liberty. They respectively refer to like domains of the subject in the world and the independent domain of the subject. In Butler's paradigm, the subject is only ever coming to terms with the degree to which he/she is subject to social forces; even agency is animated by these forces. The subject's internal organizing of social forces creates the opportunity for agency, i.e., how the subject acts in the world. The primary dialectic in both approaches is the individual and the social world.

Notice, too, the shift in terminology from "individual" in Berlin, to "subject" in Butler; Berlin is very much concerned with the value of individual lives and so this is reflected in his language choice, whereas Judith Butler is concerned with where power lies and, for her, there are ways in which power fundamentally lies with subjects and social forces. She writes that "[t]he subject is the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition of its existence and agency" (11). A "subject" and an "individual" clearly are not, technically speaking, the same thing. When an individual moves to express his or her self, then

¹⁰⁸ "The subject is the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition of its existence and agency. No individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected and undergoing "subjectivation" (a translation of the French *assujétissement*). It makes little sense to treat "the individual" as an intelligible term if individuals are said to acquire their intelligibility by becoming subjects." (Butler 11)

technically speaking, he or she is a subject. To the extent that an individual is expressing and being seen to act in the world, an individual is always a subject. However, a subject is not always an individual because (for various reasons) an individual does not have to have a linguistic occasion. It is also the case that the term “subject” can designate more than one individual; it can represent a community of individuals with shared subjectivities.

As we will see, the concept “subject” is dense and historically imbued. Butler argues that coming to understand a subject’s agencies is to appreciate the subject’s ambiguities. In a way, the subject is there because s/he is willing to play the game of subjection to social forces and how the subject enacts the power she transmits is part of that game. In being intelligible, or in the effort to be intelligible, the subject buys into the language games of their social group. This means that there are many shared assumptions when a subject is intelligible. I give a fair amount of attention to the term subject in this discussion because that is where — according to Butler and the intellectual giants upon whose work, and in whose work, she synthesizes her theories — agency exists.

Berlin appreciates the impact of social forces on individuals and advocates for ways that individuals cope with social forces which, given some understanding of the power of those forces, is to declare a domain of non-interference. Berlin’s approach to freedom is at a more mechanistic level, and more concrete in dealing with political systems. Butler’s subjects are not necessarily intending to deal with outside forces, but nonetheless they exist as potential agents at the moment they come into existence because subjects’ agencies are enhanced the more they are aware of themselves as subjects.

Beyond the broad brush strokes of theoretical similarities, their theoretical applications can come together in the shared space of understanding particular subjectivities. To demonstrate this, I reference Butler’s work on Sophocles’ play on Antigone. Referencing the play is also a means of affirming an insight that lies at the heart of both theorists’ understandings of freedom; sometimes resisting positive liberty in favour of negative liberties comes at a profound price. To really challenge the laws that enable or instantiate subjectivity at fundamental levels is, it appears, to put one’s society and therefore one’s self in mortal peril.

The story of Antigone shows we cannot not be subjects; as social creatures, we are necessarily subjects. However, Butler’s story of Antigone demonstrates how fragile and ambiguous

subjectivity and agency are. Yet even this story can be taken as a consideration in favour of agency being a reasonable hope, at least some of the time. Prior to this paper's conclusion, I will show how negative liberty is epitomized in the figure of Antigone. In this analysis, then, we see this strange marriage as being effective, and burgeoning useful understandings about subjective agency in a contemporary context; a useful merging of the insights of subjective agency and negative liberty.

4.2 Berlin

It is clear in his famous essay that Berlin's agenda is to meaningfully contribute to human freedom.¹⁰⁹ Later, we will have the opportunity to comment more on his motivations. For now, what is important is that Berlin advocates that we can achieve freedom by using our thinking and our understanding, specifically of external forces, or what he sometimes refers to as laws, to help us determine how to be free. For example, early in his "Two Concepts of Liberty" essay he writes that "[t]he only true method of attaining freedom . . . is by the use of critical reason, the understanding of what is necessary and what is contingent" (141).

As we specifically saw in Chapter Two of this thesis, contemporary philosophers can reference good use of critical reason without implying or enforcing singular and totalizing perspectives of what counts as reason. Certainly, this is how Berlin intends to advocate for reason as a means to freedom because these themes make up a good part of his critique of positive liberty. In his critique of positive liberty — specifically the rationalism associated with positive liberty — he argues against this kind of totalizing perspective largely because such perspectives are used to justify, or initiate, a slippery slope into coercive uses of power. In the following passage we can see Berlin's summary of the idea that coercion based on beliefs in rationalism slide easily into oppression.

The perils of using organic metaphors to justify the coercion of some men by others in order to raise them to a 'higher' level of freedom have often been pointed out. . . . This renders it easy for me to conceive of myself as coercing others for their own sake, in

¹⁰⁹ "Two Concepts of Liberty" in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford U P. 1969).

their, not my, interest . . . Once I take this view I am in a position to ignore them in the name of, and on behalf of, their ‘real’ selves, in the secure knowledge that whatever is the true goal of man (happiness, performance of duty, wisdom, a just society, self-fulfillment) must be identical with his freedom — the free choice of his ‘true’ albeit often submerged and inarticulate self. (133)

These excerpts, in fact, represent the significant parts of Berlin’s critique of positive liberty as set out early in his essay. He goes on to develop these points with refinements through the remainder of his essay.

Like the Ancients, Berlin advocates that understanding enables the student and philosopher to not only identify external forces, but to cultivate awareness of their impact so as to influence whether and how the reflective individual uses those forces to shape their own lives.

We are enslaved by despots — institutions or beliefs or neuroses — which can be removed only by being analyzed and understood. We are imprisoned by evil spirits which we have ourselves — albeit not consciously — created, and we can exorcize them only by becoming conscious and acting appropriately. (143)

Thus we ought to understand the forces that have shaped us because, according to Berlin, the potential negative (evil) impact of those forces can be minimized only by understanding them. Berlin goes to great lengths to explain why humans are susceptible to these “evil spirits, which we have created.” In short because we are fearful of the power of social groups and the ways in which they might use their force, individuals tend to compromise their values, in particular liberty is often compromised for social acceptance and ease.

It is worth noting that earlier when Berlin referenced the use of critical reason as understanding “what is necessary and what is contingent,” he is referencing the importance of distinction making for the philosopher — both epistemological and field-specific distinctions — as a means to engaging deeper understanding of the subject in relation to society (as per methods of investigation we noted in Chapter Two of this thesis). While it is not useful for our particular project to debate which elements of identity are necessary and which ones are contingent, it is

relevant to identify the art of distinction making and consideration as a part of a practice of “man’s free exercise of his natural reasoning capacity” (141). Berlin notes that practising reasoning can unleash insights and creativity and result not in compulsion, but in “free unimpeded exercise.”

These ideas are expressed by Berlin metaphorically in the following passage:

The musician, after he has assimilated the pattern of the composer’s score, and has made the composer’s end his own, the playing of the music is not obedience to external laws, a compulsion and a barrier to liberty, but a free unimpeded exercise. The player is not bound to the score as an ox to the plough, or a factory worker to the machine. He has absorbed the score into his own system, and has by understanding it, identified with it with him self, has changed it from an impediment to free activity (141).

In short, the argument is that when we use our natural reasoning capacities, we can free ourselves. Once relevant rules and practices are understood and integrated, then greater freedom can be achieved. However, it is curious that Berlin’s argument here incorporates one of the observations he attributes to positive liberty (which can be taken to prove that Berlin is insightful with respect to positive liberty and not only in opposition to it). In an everyday sense, we give up some freedoms and we (have to) allow ourselves to be subject to some forces in order to acquire other freedoms.

In the above passage, the excerpt that reads “has by his understanding it, identified with it him self, has changed it from an impediment to free activity” sounds curiously like Butler’s account of agency. For Butler, agency reflects the conditions of subjection and subject formation and then a turn either against, or in favour of, or ambiguously in relation to, those conditions. In agency it is not just a matter of moving powers from one place to another — i.e., from social power to a subject’s actions in the world — there also has to be some alteration in that power so that it is not an “impediment to free activity,” but somehow the subject’s own activity.

Given the way in which I summarize Berlin’s argument in his famous “Two Concepts of Liberty”(1954) essay, those familiar with the literature will note that I am of the opinion that

many critics are overly simple in their interpretations of Berlin's essay when they indicate that, in sum, Berlin is only advocating negative liberty.¹¹⁰ Such summations fail to see the power of his psychological insights.

Those psychological insights are some of what I emphasize in this comparison of Berlin's insights about freedom to Butler's considerations of subjective agency. Some of the key features of these insights pertaining to how subjects negotiate social forces are picked up and elaborated with greater detail in Butler's book, *The Psychic Life of Social Power* (1997), and her revisiting the story of Antigone in *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (1993). However, let us stay with Berlin's psychological insights a while longer.

I find it useful to approach Berlin's theory as a balanced appreciation of two "attitudes to life."¹¹¹ He recognizes that some positive liberty needs to be admitted in order to have some negative liberty. However, negative liberty is particularly important, and we need to be intentional with respect to garnering it if we are to experience liberty, freedom, and expansion of self in relation to social forces. Yet, Berlin acknowledges that we need positive liberty and that it even historically precedes negative liberty. This is why those who say that Berlin advocates negative liberty over positive liberty in his "Two Concepts" essay overly simplify the psychological insights into human motivations that stand behind his advocacy of negative liberty. In short, in the face of the holocaust and its atrocities, we have to be intentional with respect to individual liberty; to have spaces where others do not interfere with me is to retain something essential in my humanity.

¹¹⁰ MacCallum, Gerald C., Jr. *The Philosophical Review* 76.3 (July 1967). Print. M. Cranston, Gerald C. *Freedom*. City: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953, Print. Crocker, Lawrence. *Positive Liberty: An Essay in Normative Political Philosophy* (1980).

¹¹¹ To appreciate Berlin's aims in this essay we must recognize from the outset that Berlin's use of the phrase "attitudes to life" is intended to be a precise and technical term. An individual's attitudes to life reflect the personal and cultural experiences she or he has in the world. "Attitudes to life" consist of particular and universal ideas. They are ideas that are relative to an individual, but they are also broadly meaningful to all human beings. "Attitudes to life" include things like what an individual values. Thus, while we can differentiate our own attitudes to life from another's, we also understand another's perspective because the concepts involved in attitudes to life contain some elements we understand only because of our shared humanity. The best textual support for this account of the term "attitudes to life" can be found in Berlin's essay "The Purpose of Philosophy" (1962). There is also textual support for this in Berlin's opening remarks referring to Prof. Cole in the "Two Concepts" essay.

I imagine that if Berlin and Butler were to be conversing, then Butler would say, “Yes, freedom is a nice idea, but what does it really mean?” How can a subject have a domain of non-interference when the nature of the subject is so very much a social construct? How does an individual enact freedom in a world where they are necessarily tied, committed to their subjectivities?

It is true that Butler’s discussion opens up the possibility of radical engagement with social forces as a kind a freedom, but she also acknowledges freedom does not have to only happen in resistance (to social forces): The idea of choice does, to some degree, appear inherent in the subject who makes the self-reflective turn. In seeing oneself as a subject, one can choose to sustain or resist the social forces represented as subjectivities that identify a given subject. So she would agree with the importance of choices and would note the importance of the self-reflective turn in relation to social forces. Thus, recognizing a subject in the self-reflective turn, she goes some distance in discussing what subjective agency can look like. In this sense, in a manner of speaking, Butler picks up the question of agency where Berlin leaves off. In comparison to Berlin’s broad notes on political theory, Butler’s theory is a microanalysis, and a specialized approach, to understanding the trajectories of social forces with respect to subjects.

In developing a practical understanding of subjective agency, let us first pay some additional attention to Berlin’s essay. Then we can move efficiently to investigating some additional points in Butler’s works so that we can look at what they further agree on with respect to freedom and agency.

To best understand Berlin’s objectives in this essay, and indeed in his work, it is helpful to note the extent to which he was aware of his own socio-political context in Germany and Europe during and after World War Two. His context was one in which his fellow citizens gave rise to Nazism because those political ideals appeared hopeful and influential amidst chaos and starvation. He knew about politics and philosophical ideas, so he knew the very real consequences these realms of thinking have in the material world. He knew that the material reality of politics simply clothed the ideas and motivations that lay behind behaviours and laws.

By discussing liberty he wanted to drive this truth home. In such a context, Berlin chooses not to dismiss an outlook that can be sometimes “called utopian by those for whom speculation about this condition of perfect social harmony is the play of idle fancy” (Berlin 118).¹¹² On the contrary, he recognizes the power of ideas (which is important in understanding Berlin’s broader philosophical project), yet he is critical of utopian ideas associated too readily with reason, or more specifically rationalism. While he does not believe that total social harmony is likely, he does offer speculation pertaining to how humans can best adapt to living with each other. In other words, Berlin’s pluralism acknowledges differences in opinions and values, and those differences are such that, when acknowledged in the context of a shared humanity negotiating social forces, our ability to live together as many individuals with differences is humanely enhanced.

To extend the point about the power of ideas, Berlin investigates liberty because he sees this as a primary concern in living with others. His reasoning can be summarized thus: as soon as we encounter others, then from a very primal, libidinal perspective, we have to negotiate safety and this presupposes a self and a minimum area of self control — a minimum area in which we are free to be ourselves and a minimum area wherein we can be free from interference from others. This is negative liberty, a domain in which the individual is free from coercion and interference by others. Yet history demonstrates that humans tend to compromise personal liberty (negative liberty) and the personal liberty of others for ideals of freedom (positive liberty) that do not necessarily enhance our self-control (negative liberty). Why is that? What is it about that other kind of freedom (freedom to/positive liberty) that causes us to sacrifice personal liberty (negative) for it? And in terms of the human condition, is the jockeying of liberties the best we can do?

In short, Berlin’s answer is “No.” It is as if he is saying, “We can do a bit better by way of value pluralism. What human history has done so far is adequate — but not great; we can do better.”

¹¹² Berlin’s ideas about utopias are worthy of further debate and discussion. In his 1978 essay “The Decline of Utopian Ideas in the West,” he primarily criticizes the idea of utopias due to the static features of perfection embedded in such ideals. In this way, he argues, utopias are kinds of deaths. The particulars of the 1978 essay are useful in analyzing “Two Concepts” because the later essay provides additional discussion about what features of reason and utopic ideas Berlin does find useful.

This then, is the context in which we can come to appreciate Berlin's broader philosophical and pedagogical project of critiquing powerful ideas. It is a context wherein some ideas "sometimes acquire unchecked momentum and have an irresistible power over multitudes of men that may grow too big to be affected by rational criticism" (119). History demonstrates that freedom — positive freedom that acquires unchecked momentum in particular — is precisely such a concept.

This particular point about the irresistible power over multitudes of men, is one that must have resonated meaningfully with masses of individuals worldwide who at this same time in history were trying to make sense of the power of political regimes. These are the reasons why Berlin intends to "disarm" the power of the ideal of freedom and why he prescribes, and carries out, investigating some of the stark realities of liberty. Clearly, his agenda is more than to simply develop a position on whether the negative or positive versions of freedom are correct. His intention is to refine the ideas associated with freedom so as to have a practical effect on the quality of people's lives. We can thus say, this is Berlin's own kind of therapeutic intention.

It should also be noted, in an argument consistent with the theme of his arguments about liberty, that to merely take a position in favour of negative or positive liberty is to participate in the familiar patterns that arise when there are opposing worldviews, i.e., differences in values. However, to not empathize with and appreciate an alternative worldview would be to not participate in living with a plurality of values, even those pertaining to liberty that Berlin advocates. In other words, he really needs to understand and appreciate the power of positive liberty so as to appreciate its power (as a social force) and consequently be better able to work with or against that power.

There's no doubt that Berlin takes a strong position against some of the less favourable aspects of positive liberty. Early on he indicates that he intends to negotiate the relevant issues — i.e., what we will identify here as the differentiated desires of negative and positive liberty — so as to participate in debunking metaphysical chimera at the heart of wrong-headed views pertaining to positive liberty. The metaphysical chimera being referred to here is a belief in a universal human teleology that implies or indicates universally applicable means to social harmony. Berlin argues that any participation in a metaphysical chimera — i.e., the chimera of there being an ideal or best final answer (utopias in the material world) — is immature.

By virtue of taking such a position it is not the case that Berlin is of an idealist camp in the sense that “all historical movements are reducible to conflicts of ideas or spiritual forces” (119).

Rather, it is the case that for Berlin, to understand such conflicts is to understand the “ideas or attitudes to life involved in them” (119). In this way, Berlin is very much a realist. According to Berlin, it is “attitudes to life,” which are dialectical in nature — in this case referencing material reality and ideal values — and so cause potential conflict. In a very meaningful way, such dialectical conflicts make ideas a part of history. In other words, tensions make realities manifest.

Tensions between ideas and ideals allow one to identify and differentiate compatibilities with others. So by way of tension and conflict personal values become more defined. Moreover, Berlin’s approach to solving conflict is commensurate with the values he discusses. We do not have to annihilate the differences; we simply need to understand them. In this way, negative libertarians can understand positive libertarians. It is difficult not to note that the emphasis Berlin places on understanding another’s values is commensurate with the empathetic understanding advocated by Stein in Chapter Three. Both are motivated by their philosophical projects to aim to understand the values and perspectives of others.

Berlin’s position is not so much that we have to take a position on metaphysical ideals, as much as it is the case that we ought to acknowledge that there are realities, dialects, and real forces that affect and shape us. Our job as self-reflective humans is to negotiate these forces, as opposed to not being self-reflective, and so “pushed around” by these forces.

Thus, dialectical conflicts give ideas a kind of “material” life. Berlin’s well known metaphor is that “[i]t may be that, without the pressure of social forces, political ideas are still born; what is certain is that these forces, unless they clothe themselves in ideas, remain blind and undirected” (120). In other words, such conflicts make the subjective differences in attitudes (to life) apparent. Our attitudes towards life — because they participate in the material world — expose or materialize the beliefs that we have about particular issues at certain points in time. The resistances that are sometimes experienced in living in a material world with others also helps to refine our ideas and understandings about being in the world (and so understandings about the human psyche.)

We can feel Berlin's on-going coming to terms with the changing and unpredictable nature of human social living. There is an understanding that the pressures of social living (the forces) cause one to have to get clear about one's values. In this way, the self-actualizing human subject can make reasonable choices about how to best go about living the values they come to choose.

Towards the end of the essay, and moving his audience towards non-violent pluralism, what Berlin would have his audience consider is that:

Principles are not less sacred because their duration cannot be guaranteed. Indeed, the very desire for guarantees that our values are eternal and secure in some objective heaven is perhaps only a craving for the certainties of childhood or the absolute values of our primitive past. To realize the relative validity of one's convictions, said an admirable writer of our time, 'and yet stand for them unflinchingly is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian.' To demand more than this is perhaps a deep incurable metaphysical need; but to allow it to determine one's practice is a symptom of an equally deep, and more dangerous, political immaturity. (172)

Thus, we need to see things as they are, not as we would like to see them. While certainly advocacy for political pluralism, this passage can also be read as an existential coming to terms with the realities of life; even though we cannot be certain that our values are "the" right ones, we still have to have sufficient courage to believe in and stand up for the values we have. And so, we believe in the best values we can until we evolve into better ones. Berlin would say what distinguishes civilized humans is the aim to live principled lives, specifically our own principled lives. So even though we should not blindly buy into totalizing metaphysical ideals, this does not mean that personal values, principles, and metaphysical principles in general, are less worthwhile or sacred to human and personal evolution.

Let us look now, with more specificity, at Berlin's arguments and insights so that we might cultivate a more sophisticated working understanding of negative and positive liberty: Negative and positive freedom are most easily differentiated, according to Berlin, in the distinct answers

they provide “to what has long been the central question of politics — the question of obedience and coercion — why should I (or anyone) obey anyone else” (121)?

In response to this question, advocates of negative liberty consider it valuable that there are areas wherein “I” do not obey anyone else. Advocates of negative liberty are interested in there being an area of influence within which the subject “should be left to do or be without interference from other persons” (121-122). Negative freedom is therefore characterized as freedom *from* coercion or interference.

Positive liberty, on the other hand, pertains to our freedom *to* be involved in political processes. The positive concept of liberty is “involved in the answer to the question “what,” or “who,” is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that” (122)? Whereas negative freedom emphasizes an area free from the influence of others, positive freedom has to do with who or what has control over a subject (122). Positive liberals tend to hold liberty as a value alongside other values like, for example, solidarity and brotherhood. So the critics of positive liberty say that, in a positive liberal context, the amount of self-control an individual has over their life can contain negative liberty, albeit a massively watered-down amount of negative liberty from the outset.

Proponents of negative liberty answer the question about whether one should obey anyone else in the negative sense. By indicating that they want to identify an “area” in which an individual is free from the influences and, more specifically, the coercion of others. Positive libertarians answer the question by focusing on “what or who” is making the request and the subject who carries out the “request.”

Contrary to positive libertarians, strong advocates of negative liberty do not want to take the idea of having to obey others or negotiate self-direction as a given of social living. They want to be in control of themselves, exclusively in particular areas (with respect, for example, to their bodies and families and property). Subsequent to this, other values can be negotiated. Positive libertarians, however, acknowledge that social living requires a negotiated approach to individual liberties and encourages individual participation in a governing (i.e., admittedly coercive) process.

Since the key idea of negative liberty is that “[t]he wider the area of non-interference the wider my freedom” (122), the “classical English political philosophers intended this in their references to liberty and so they debated how wide the area of non-interference should be” (123). They reasoned that positive libertarians do not value an area of self-control or liberty over other values. And they are willing, from the outset, to compromise liberty for something else. Positive libertarians, for various reasons, are willing to obey someone else. In other words, since human activities do not automatically harmonize and because other values such as culture, security, and equality, like liberty, are considered to have social merit, then liberty is limited relative to these other values.

Because English political philosophers held that natural freedom was seen to not necessarily relate to social harmony, political theorists limited the area of freedom so individuals would not boundlessly interfere with each other. Accordingly, “[i]t followed that a frontier must be drawn between the area of private life and that of public authority” (124). Advocates of negative freedom including Benjamin Constant, Thomas Jefferson, Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and J.S. Mill have essentially the same argument for a minimum area of individual liberty. “We must preserve a minimum area of personal freedom if we are not to degrade or deny our nature. Yet we cannot remain absolutely free, and must give up some of our liberty to preserve the rest” (126). The boundaries between public and private, which are the frontiers of negative liberty, remain ongoing matters for social debate. In these preliminary characterizations of the relationship between positive and negative liberty, we can already see that traditional liberals acknowledge that negative liberty for the individual happens within the context of socially negotiated positive liberty.

Berlin’s response to conflicts between the value of social justice and laissez-faire unrestricted liberty is to value both, but remain consistent in particularly advocating for negative liberties. Thus he develops his value pluralism. His value pluralism is not about tolerance, but is based on 1) valuing self-transformation in individuals, and 2) recognizing that human values, including freedom, are socially dependent. When there is recognition that humans evolve and change, then there is also the realization that their alignments with certain values do not have to be fixed over time. Individuals grow and change and so, too, their values. So taking into account that values change, one recognizes that values are as variable as cultures are. He writes, “it is no great way from that to the generalization that not all good things are compatible, still all are ideals of

mankind” (167). Berlin’s intention here is to provoke political subjects to engage with each other not as if there is a final solution, but as if human values are distinct and not readily subsumed under a single umbrella value. This non-subsuming, non-coercion-oriented objective is, as we have seen, contrary to a pure positive liberal perspective.

A value-pluralist approach does not strive to mitigate differences in values or opinions, but acknowledges differences as reflections on some of what is most essential to being human, reflecting their respective social forces and their ability to make choices. The comparison can be drawn such that just as the metaphor of a “melting pot” can be seen in relation to the idea of “a multicultural mosaic;” so positive liberalism stands in relation to value pluralism.

Berlin’s position in favour of the value of choice is not based on abstract reasoning, but on empirical observations. If *a priori* knowledge is not justifiable because metaphysical assumptions or desires are not justifiable on the grounds that they are biased towards a totalizing perspective and so they are not knowledge so much as hopeful beliefs, then empirical means are the most reliable means for knowledge. Accordingly, there is no empirical evidence for the pervasive compatibility of human values. Oftentimes human values are in contrast to each other and sometimes these values are in conflict with each other.

But if we are not armed with an *a priori* guarantee of the proposition that a total harmony of true values is somewhere to be found — perhaps in some ideal realm the characteristics of which we can, in our finite state, not so much as conceive — we must fall back on the ordinary recourses of empirical observation and ordinary human knowledge. And these certainly give us no warrant for supposing (or even understanding what would be meant by saying) that all good things, or all bad things for that matter, are reconcilable with each other. (168)

In this passage, Berlin can be seen as a realist empiricist. As such, the values that enable his political pluralism and reflect his realist empiricism are introduced in the following sentence:

The world that we encounter in ordinary experience is one in which we are faced with choices between ends equally ultimate and

claims equally absolute; the realization of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of other. (169)

Because some choices are equally absolute and individuals find themselves weighing their choices, this reveals that choices are valuable to humans. If it were obviously the case that some choices were clearly and perpetually better than others, then reason would dictate all actions, and there would be no room for choice. Yet humans are not slide rules or computers and, given that some ends are equally absolute, choice remains an important value.

He also argues that if perfection were evident in the world, then there would be no need to value choice. However, there is no evidence of perfect compatibility or commensurability between human values; therefore, it is reasonable to value choice.

In brief, choice is an emphatic addition that Berlin inserts into the traditional concept of negative liberty. Thus he takes the term beyond defending a domain of non-interference to a definition that includes valuing an individual's freedom to choose for themselves as something that ought not to be interfered with. Certainly, the notion of choice is crucial to Berlin's thoughts on human social psychology. Unfortunately, in this essay we are not further exposed to Berlin's additional psychological insights insofar as he is only able to point at valuing the human ability to be self-transforming and creative. He observes that, unlike Buridan's ass, humans persist in demonstrating their ability to choose between ends that are equally absolute.¹¹³ He also notes, observationally, that while there can be creativity without freedom, choice does enable some expressions of creativity (156). Choice is enabled by creativity and creativity expresses choices (156-57). Nonetheless, these points support the idea that it is the choice at the heart of negative liberty that leads to Berlin's value pluralism. Given the

¹¹³ Buridan's ass refers to a hypothetical situation wherein an ass that is equally hungry and thirsty is placed precisely midway between a stack of hay and a pail of water. Since the paradox assumes the ass will always go to whichever is closer, it will die of both hunger and thirst since it cannot make any rational decision to choose one over the other. The paradox is named after the 14th century French philosopher Jean Buridan but has its origins in Aristotle: "...a man, being just as hungry as thirsty, and placed in between food and drink, must necessarily remain where he is and starve to death." Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, ca.350 BCE

incommensurability of values, it is important that individuals or groups of individuals are able, in a pluralist societies, to choose the values that are important to their sense of self.

What we learn when we look to the world of ordinary experience is “that one is faced with choices between ends equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute (similar claims to the ones represented by two concepts of liberty) the realization of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others” (168). Note here that one line following Berlin’s identification of his empiricism and his investigative methodology, he slides into a proposition that is the crux of his argument: “Indeed, it is because of their situation that men place such immense value upon the freedom to choose” (168). For Berlin, choice is a necessary and essentially valuable feature of human living. We see choice in the facts of human living. And we see choice reflected in the best features of humans, including creativity and ideological differences.

Moreover — and this is a really interesting point in light of his critique of the slide of positive liberty into coercion — choice has to be valued above other ultimate claims otherwise all forms of coercion would be justified. Choice and coercion are at opposite ends of the spectrum of human values. One end of the spectrum holds human choice as intrinsically valuable and the other end of the spectrum coercion is used to bring about some other end. These opposite values are also not compatible, but, says Berlin, when it comes down to it, to *live* together, we have to choose choice over coercion.

In reference to this metaphor, Berlin’s political pluralism becomes enacted when he articulates a balanced perspective with respect to positive liberty:

I do not say that the ideal of self-perfection — whether for individuals or nations or churches or classes — is to be condemned in and of it self, or that the language which was used in its defense was in all cases the result of a confused or fraudulent use of words, or of moral or intellectual perversity. I have tried to show that it is the notion of freedom in its ‘positive’ sense that is at the heart of the demands for notional or social self-direction which animate the most powerful and morally just public movements of our time, and that not to recognize this is to misunderstand the most vital facts and ideas of our age. (169)

Many commentators, in summarily asserting Berlin as a negative liberal, obscure his pluralism. Interestingly, as we have seen, while positive and negative do sometimes conflict, they also represent values that enable existence of the other. We have seen that positive liberal contexts can be good contexts for enabling negative liberty. The relationship can be conceptualized as reciprocal in so far as, on the one hand, negative liberties need to be affirmed against the momentum of the coercive and sometimes too pervasive force of positive liberty. (Which is to say that negative libertarians need to affirm and enact boundaries of self-protections so that a differentiated, not entirely subsumed, self can exist distinct from the social forces that initially identify the subject.) Yet on the other hand, we can see in the citation above that the value of pluralism that evolves out of Berlin's negative liberalism does not disregard the value of positive liberty.

A final point, to be argued in the remainder of his essay, is evident in Berlin's first paragraph asserts that freedom is an end in itself. It is not valuable because it is a means to bringing something more ultimate about. It is valuable because it enables us to choose between absolute claims.

If, as I believe, the ends of men are many, and not all of them are in principle compatible with each other, then the possibility of conflict — and of tragedy — can never wholly be eliminated from human life, either personal or social. The necessity of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition. This gives value to freedom as Acton had conceived of it — as an end in itself, and not as a temporary need, arising out of confused notions and irrational and disordered lives, a predicament [that] a panacea could one day put right. (169)

If human purposes are many and not in principle compatible, then conflict can never be wholly eliminated; and, therefore, choosing between absolute claims is inescapable. The primary arguments for freedom and choice are that (1) choosing is an inescapable characteristic of the human condition, (2) choice does not have to bring about any other value than the enactment of freedom, and (3) freedom, therefore, is an end in itself. This means that (again but differently) conflicts are simply a part of being human and we just have to live with that reality. Obviously,

this does not mean that we ought to expect eruptions into actual conflict, but it does mean, simply, that we notice that differences in attitudes to life can inform us about differences in values. So this means that we have to find ways to deal with difference. Recall that Stein had us discern motivations of people when we were engaging the spiritual self and, in this way, we could know more about the individual. Similarly, differences in values can show us how different values or different value hierarchies enable distinct engagements with the world.

Consider a fundamental point about ends in themselves: If freedom is choosing — and in choosing we are free — and freedom is an end unto it self, then choosing and freedom are not esteemed values in a positive liberal paradigm. Positive liberty does not value freedom or choosing as ends in themselves. Positive liberals do make choices not only as ends in themselves, but also so that they might be free to choose freedom or some other ultimate end. Thus, positive liberalism does not value choice as an essential feature of the human condition (whereas negative liberty does).

A final point about human values:

I do not wish to say that individual freedom is even in the most liberal societies the sole, or even the dominant criterion of social action. We compel children to be educated and we forbid public executions. These are certainly curbs to freedom. (169)

So here we are brought to understand that the relationships between positive and negative liberty are not unilateral. Our society values some restrictions on individual freedoms and such restrictions reflect values that are culturally good — e.g., education and a public respect for life. Even though negative liberty is a primary value for Berlin, in a social context it is weighed against other values. In this paragraph we are reminded of features of Berlin's value pluralism; for negative liberty and positive liberties to coexist in society, individual liberty cannot be unlimited. It is limited by our moral respect for the rights of others (i.e., that they not to be infringed upon). What we also see in this passage is a reminder that, for Berlin, how we manage our values is culturally and socially dependent. Thus, how we experience liberty is culturally dependent: We can value and fight for the values of negative liberty and live with the realities of positive liberty.

Values are sometimes incommensurate, which likely has a lot to do with the fact that values can result from the distinct cultural and social influences they reflect. Values reflect the social contexts in which they are identified and used. To elaborate on the idea of values being socially dependent, let us note, for example, that our solutions to social problems “are based on our vision by which we are consciously or unconsciously guided, of what constitutes a fulfilled human life” (169). What constitutes a fulfilled human life reflects, of course, cultural and subject specific values.

These are the arguments that lead Berlin to write that “pluralism with the measure of ‘negative’ liberty that it entails seems truer and more humane an ideal than the goals of those who seek in the great disciplined authoritarian structures the ideals of ‘positive’ self mastery by classes or peoples, of the whole of humankind” (171). Pluralism is more humane than the traditional view because, according to Berlin, “it does not (as system builders do) deprive men, in the name of some remote or incoherent ideal of much that they have found it to be indispensable to their life as unpredictably self transforming human beings” (171). So the potential for self-directed transformation is not taken away from the individual; the value of freedom of choice is affirmed.

I note all this to summarize that Berlin does believe in freedom, not as metaphysical chimera, but as a reasonable kind of freedom — freedom to be self-directed, i.e., negative liberty. We have discussed that negative liberty, domains of self-control, value the importance of choice to optimize the human experience. To allow individuals to have domains of self-control, we need to work in a political context that embraces differences and accepts conflict as a part of life, not a system that is stymied by difference and conflicts, but one that is inspired by those realities to live together better. Such a pluralist system would value agency and autonomy, and not indulge the complacencies and controls of a monological or totalizing system. Butler would agree that a monological system is not a fair or adequately just one. She, too, would endorse the need for a system that supports diversity.

In recalling Berlin’s mastery of music analogy from earlier, we could say that Butler would agree with Berlin’s sentiment: The more we understand subjectivity and social forces, then the more we open up the possibility for self-expression by way of our agencies. We all internalize social forces. It is, to some extent, up to the subject to determine how those forces will be used to express themselves. Butler is not so prescriptive (i.e., advocating that we subjects need domains

of self control); rather, she wants to understand the power of social forces and then leaves it to subjects to figure out what to do for themselves; i.e., she does not advocate that others ought to focus on liberty; she only identifies how agency might evolve. Although anti-structuralist, Butler holds the opinion that a subject has some very fundamental choices to make (conscious or not) about how they relate to social forces: Social forces can be accepted, endorsed, resisted, parodied, mimicked, repressed, denied, sustained, or withdrawn from.

For the purposes of understanding what is fundamentally entailed in individual freedom, we can say that when taken together, Berlin and Butler's theories amount to a contemporary understanding of freedom, specifically subjective agency, as the capacity to identify and engage social forces. The hope is that subjects evolve in freedom as they come to understand those forces, just as the musician evolves beyond mere obedience to the composer's score, and into creative self-expression.

4.3 Berlin and Butler: Compatible Positions on Social Forces

You will recall that just prior to elaborating Berlin's position we noted, in discussing Butler, how the subject makes social power evident or explicit. In that description there was a trope of the subject to which it is now relevant to return. In the trope of the turn subjects see themselves and the forces that instantiate them. Butler writes that in this way power acts on the subject in two ways: (1) as a formative condition of possibility, and (2) as taken up by the subject's own acting. This was the topology of the subject in reflection. In this context, it can also be said that once a conscience is in place, the subject can be seen in recoil turning on itself so as to see itself.

Just as social forces clothe ideas in Berlin's essay, so in Butler social power and the subjects become evident in the (subject's) self-reflective turn. The self-reflective turn clothes — i.e., makes evident and apparent — the subject and social power. Ideas and social forces need engagement with people in order to be seen.

Subjects internalize social power and potentially translate that power as norm, into a challenge to the norm, or something in between. Interestingly enough, this last claim points to the idea that norms, like subjects, are vulnerable. When a subject internalizes norms, the norms are subject to being altered. In this way, when a Butlerite considers the question of how forces translate into

ideas, it is reasonable to respond that the translation requires human subjects. Butler summarizes the translation of social power through the subject thus:

Power acts on the subject in at least two ways; first, as what makes the subject possible, the condition of its possibility and its formative occasion, and second, as what is taken up and reiterated in the subject's "own" acting. (14)

The conditions of power "are made present in the acts of that formation and in the acts of the subject that follow"(14). In a subject's "own" acting, the acts of formation are, initially and as such, always in response to the normative. The acts following are, in response to norms, normative or not, or ambiguous. The point is that in the first place subjects are always subject, then in the second place, the subject's "own" (possibly chosen) acting is apparent, or not.

Appreciating the significance of social forces is crucial to understanding subjective agency because for both of these theorists the origin of the power of agency lies in social forces. In Butler's scheme, the power of agency does not originate in the subject. The power of social forces comes from outside. The subject sees these forces when they are forced to respond to them, and in the reflective turn. In this way, in addition to the subject's turn, the power of agency can be said to begin in social forces. And, the subject is instantiated in social forces.

To reference Berlin again for a moment, in the following passage he reflects considerations commensurate with Butler's understanding of the pervasiveness of social forces. Here he is coming to terms with the pervasive importance of social forces with respect to, and in, the individual:

It is not only that my material being depends upon interaction with other men, or that I am what I am as a result of forces, but that some, perhaps all of my ideas about myself, in particular my sense of my own moral and social identity are intelligible only in terms of the social network in which I am (the metaphor must not be pressed too far) an element. (169)

At the outset of his famous essay Berlin affirms that it is the role of the philosopher to identify and work with these forces. In particular, philosophers need to identify the power in ideas, or social forces that shape us. Philosophers have an obligation to do so because to fail to do so is dangerous:

Dangerous because when ideas are neglected by those who ought to attend to them — that is to say, those who have been trained to think critically about ideas — they sometimes acquire an unchecked momentum and an irresistible power over multitudes of men that may grow too violent to be affected by rational criticism.
(119)

In the traditions of Hegel and Marx, and Herder and Vico (in particular), Berlin notes that we can free ourselves *only* by becoming conscious of the forces that shape us. He recognizes that we are intelligible — i.e., we can understand ourselves and “we are what we are” — as a result of some shared understanding of social forces. The point is that social forces are so pervasive and so instantiating in terms of individual identity that I cannot think of myself outside of them. And understanding social forces is a means to autonomy and freedom.

In other words, I can only think of myself in terms of “the social network in which I am a part.” This is a kind of existential coming to terms with one’s self. It is similar to the existential coming to terms with subjectivity that Butler works with in her reading of Sartre. In the third chapter of *Subjects of Desire* (1987) Sartre is said to indicate that our freedom is evident in what we choose to do. (In this case, I would add, what we choose to do in the social specter of intelligible options.) At this point, Berlin points to a factor in understanding the individual and social forces that Butler goes to great pains to develop and elaborate in her study of subjects and social forces.

Here I am thinking specifically of her writing in *Subjects of Desire*, *The Psychic Life of Social Power* and *Antigone’s Claim*. As I will explain, these texts demonstrate that being a subject means recognizing, in meaningful ways, the degree to which I cannot escape the social forces that make me intelligible — even to myself. Therefore, subjective agency must lie in subjectively negotiating social forces. But then how is agency true freedom if we are always subjects, and so always coming to terms with forces that instantiate us? Where is the autonomy in agency?

The rough idea of the trope is that the forces which subjects put out there, having been filtered through the subject, are the subject's own — but variably. Presumably, the amount of agency is dependent on the subject. But what does agency mean if the subject is constructed from social forces?

To better assess the claims of agency, we follow a method similar to Butler's and aim first to understand the terms "subject" and "subjectivity" to help us critically evaluate how ambiguous the term agency can be. Thus, at the end of this chapter, we will be in an even better position to address our position counter to agency being only a hope - as opposed to a reasonable hope.

4.4 Subjectivity

Part of the appeal for me in doing this part of the thesis project had to do with being able to investigate Butler's reputation for fundamentally and tenaciously challenging normative power structures. These challenges, if valid, in my opinion, would then represent quintessential acts of freedom. As I have been observing patients for almost 20 years, I cannot help but notice how common it is for subjects to be unaware of their potential for agency in given circumstances: therefore, I would argue how uncommon truly self-directed and free acts in fact are for many who do not value self-reflection and agency. Sometimes I think individuals come to PC to be reminded that there is the possibility of agency and that they can possibly self-direct their lives. In observing people, it is evident that complacency with social forces, (howsoever we specifically identify the complacency and/or the strength of the social forces) and non-consideration about their own agencies is more evidently the norm (in a mathematical sense) than not. Thus, in light of this ennui, I wanted to understand Butler's contemporary and apparently provocative methods as well as her enlivening insights.

In providing summations of Butler's account of subjectivity, I am staying true to the value she places in understanding this concept in her works I mentioned above. While my more developed introduction to subjectivity in the following paragraphs does provide a fuller philosophical and socio-historical view of the term than Butler does, I only mean to make the term useful and accessible to a broader audience and to amplify and contextualize the philosophical issues for the therapeutic practitioner.

There are three points I will develop in this summary of “subjectivity.” First, with respect to the history of ideas, the term develops its unique currency due particularly to acknowledging the interpretative nature of the human condition. Then, second, in grasping the significance of interpretation, let us also note that, for the philosopher, the term engages dialectical — and, in some instances, paradoxical — tensions that can be seen with some investigation to be aptly characteristic of the term. Such dialectical tensions include necessity and contingency, interpreted and given (or fixed independent of interpretation), socially constructed traits and innate ones, and the dialectic of freewill and determinism. The concept of “dialects” is rich in philosophical history. I think of it in terms of opposite positions that lie on a spectrum of possibilities, and the spectrum is defined in terms of certain key questions. There are a number of dialectics to ponder when considering whether a subject has agency. As a brief example, consider that good and bad are dialectical tensions with respect to the question of how we might characterize a moral spectrum of human behaviour. And, for example, realism and idealism can be seen to be opposite positions on the question pertaining to the (ontological) nature of the universe.

The last of the three points with respect to subjectivity has already been introduced and discussed, as it is a major concept in this essay. The third point pertains to understanding the instantiating power of social forces and so looking at where agency might lie for the subject. Later we will have the opportunity to see how this account of agency can support trauma recovery. These considerations will also put us in line to better assess whether agency is a reasonable hope.

Typically, references made to “subjectivity” that acknowledge (i) the interpretative nature of the human condition, indicate that the speaker is referencing the technical philosophical, post-Kantian, uses of the term. This usage is such that a “subject” embodies philosophical issues, debates, and tensions that pertain to *freedom* and *identity*. I characterize the term as starting in a post-Kantian paradigm (although there are scholars who claim to be able to trace use of the term back to Plato) because philosophical responses after Kant recognized that the world is not entirely given — a textbook merely to be read and known — but rather, humans are “meaning making machines.” Humans make meaning in experiencing the world (Pippin 2). As a result, it is difficult to say what is *given* in the textbook of living. Consequently, our various interpretations of the texts of life and living are just that, *interpretations* and experiences unto themselves that

reflect an individual's being influenced by the social, and interpretative forces, in which she is variously situated.

Thus, a "subject" is more than a human individual who can be differentiated from other similar members of the species. To recognize human subjectivity is to recognize that what we make it mean in an everyday context reflects the social features of meaning-making which influences how we think about ourselves and how we engage others' thinking about us. Judith Butler offers the following definitions of subjectivity in her introduction to the *Psychic Life of Power*:

The subject is sometimes bandied about as if it were interchangeable with "the person" or "the individual." The genealogy of the subject as a critical category, however suggests that the subject, rather than be identified strictly with the individual, ought to be designated as a linguistic category, a placeholder, a structure in formation. Individuals come to occupy the site of the subject (the subject simultaneously emerges as a "site"), and they enjoy intelligibility to the extent that they are, as it were, first established in language. . . . (10-11)

Tautologically speaking, social identity — who we say we are to others and ourselves - has to be intelligible in the context in which it is spoken in order to be meaningful. This historical insight means that when we acknowledge being a subject — which can be as an individual or a member of a group — we are interpreting the social forces that bring that subject into being. (Ian Hacking and Michel Foucault could be seen to be working with similar concepts in their understandings of social construction and the making up of people). The citations from both Pippin and Butler allow us to note that questions about subjectivity erupt in post-Enlightenment Europe in distinctively conceptual, interpretative, and linguistic ways.

Another feature evident in post-Kantian thinking is that questions and concerns about subjects abound increasingly in terms of how being a *subject* is relevant to everyday life. Consider the historically pivotal example of the French Revolution and bourgeois and proletariat uprisings from the seventeenth century to the present. Consider their questioning of what it means to be a political and legal subject, and a free individual before laws. Notice that these social and political

evolutions have been influenced by the question of whether one can make oneself, as a subject of a state, more free? Or, in Berlin's formulation, how extensive is my domain of non-interference?

While subjectivity and everyday life has increasingly become a concern post-Kant, the intention to tie the theoretical into everyday life takes a deepening turn in the wake of feminist contributions to understanding social power and subjectivity. To acknowledge "differential positioning within and relation to a range of social orders is to care about *whose* everyday life is being considered" (1995 Code xii). Feminist influences tell us that it does not just matter that we are able to situate the subject in their socio-economic-historic-biological contexts, but that what makes that subject a *person* matters too. Given feminist influences, we can see that some contemporary uses of the term identify more than the situatedness of the subject, they also attempt to account for the person(s) (this includes the meaning the individual makes of their situatedness) who expresses their subjectivity. So let us note, then, that both the *who* of the subject and the social forces that enable and define subjectivities are ideological markers to be included in our summation of a history of ideas on subjectivity.

To elaborate in a way that brings analytic philosophy and feminist epistemology together, let us briefly refer to the work of epistemologist Lorraine Code. Code notes that analytic philosophy has sustained a paradigm of knowledge represented in the formulation "s knows p" where "s" is a universal, objective, disembodied subject who knows proposition "p." The analytic idea being that this formulation allows that knowledge represented by proposition "p" can be knowable by *any* (rational) subject "s." However, Code challenges the implicit hierarchies and interests being served in the traditional formulation (and, of course, this formulation includes who counts as a "rational" subject). Code indicates that *it matters both who knows and the locations from which they claim knowledge*. So for Code, the subject is not a static abstract entity, but a real knower who can be situated in "textured locations" that shape, allow, and affect subjectivity of "s." These textured locations tell us about what counts as knowable by a subject and what is "taken up" by the acknowledging community as legitimate knowledge (for that subject). These considerations are ways of extending our understanding the subjectivities of "s." Code indicates that the problem with thinking that there is *one* way of doing epistemology or representing knowledge, "s knows p," is that "monological epistemologies tend to downgrade testimony unevenly" and "tend to mark their own complicity in structures of power and privilege" (xiv).

Such a formulation obscures what we have come to know about the significant factors that influence how subjectivities for “s” influence the proposition “s knows p.”

So, in even in the analytic paradigm, “s” can no longer be a universal placeholder for a “rational” individual. It now has to be a placeholder for a truly subjective textured location. In therapeutic engagement, as we saw in Chapter Two of this thesis, a client and their subjectivities, the “locations” of the particular subject, has much to do with their knowledge claims and how client and practitioner evaluate those knowledge claims. The contemporary feminist influenced “s knows p” incorporates all of that.

Code is, in my opinion, also correct in noting that listening to non-traditional subjects’ locations — i.e., previously disempowered and disenfranchised locations — that new and different kinds of truths are brought forward for evaluation. A point that, again, we were able to substantiate with our investigations in Chapter Two because we saw how listening to and validating trauma survivors, for example, brings forward additional understandings about trauma, recovery and, as I argued, the importance of psychological truths. To possibly achieve the “more” we could be learning; we need to be more willing to listen to survivors’ voices as intelligible. We will return later to this point.¹¹⁴ Presently, this approach to fieldwork aims to understand how a subject can be thought of as a knowledge seeker whose knowledge is constructed from the “ground up,” and is not only about knowledge paradigms imposed from “the top down.” That is to say, a hierarchical paradigm that historically edits out the kinds of claims (proposition p) and subjects (s) that count as potential knowledge or knowers from the outset. A feminist, or non-hierarchical approach, values the patient’s knowledge as a kind of knowledge that is subjectively situated with all that this entails. Similarly, in therapeutic listening we are valuing that there are truths for the client. These truths are discerned by listening to what the client is putting together as knowledge from their experiences. These approaches reflect more developed and complex understandings of subjectivities, and particularly for epistemologists, how the more aptly complex concept (subject) relates to knowledge claims.

¹¹⁴ The more accurate elaboration of this statement is that, as therapists, we can listen to survivor’s stories as if they are intelligible because even though there are ways in which they are intelligible there are ways in which, because of trauma, the stories are not intelligible. So we have to listen to find the (subjective) coherences and consistencies.

Through these discussions and investigations into subjectivity we learn that we subjects cannot escape the contexts that shape us. In the writings of both Berlin and Butler there is ongoing coming to terms with the pervasiveness of social forces on individual psyches, and frequent questions about the individual's relationship with those forces.

One way in which Butler explains a coming to terms with the power and pervasive impact of social forces on (individual) psyches is by way of her discussion of the master and the slave relationship. I will briefly note that metaphor now so as to assist us in introducing and elaborating additional features of subjectivity. It is a canonical metaphor and certainly could be the focus of an entire thesis, so we are only very briefly pointing to some of the archetype's key aspects, including viewing the master-slave relationship as a metaphor that describes the impact of social forces on individual psyches, wherein the slave is the subject and the master is equated with social forces. It is also an interesting relationship to reference as paradigmatic because it contains acknowledgement from the outset of power differentials and the ambiguous power for each participant. Neither party is who they are independent of the other. The dynamic relies on their relatedness, so the master cannot be powerful as "master" without the "slave."

The master-slave reference originates in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977)¹¹⁵ wherein Hegel addresses the paradox of whether or not a subject can make him or herself freer than their defining parameters, given that subjects are socially constructed. (Despite colloquial and everyday adaptations that act as if we know what freedom and agency are, we can see in this reference that philosophers have long considered the particular problems of agency and subjectivity.) In this chapter Hegel traces a theoretical slave's approach to freedom and indicates that the slave comes to realize that there are essential ways in which s/he cannot be free outside of the context in which s/he is defined. The slave cannot know herself as she is without acknowledging the submission that enables her being. When she knows herself as slave, she consciously acknowledges that she is subjected. Consequently as a slave, the subject learns to work to sustain the master who — in literal, practical, and identifying ways — permits, allows,

¹¹⁵ G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 160-221. In most translations Hegel's terms for the categories of master and slave are "lordship" and "bondage." (See, for example, Hegel (Chapter 14).

or enables the slave's being. In this way the slave can be empowered by sustaining the master as master, so sustains herself (albeit as slave).

By playing the necessary game the slave has, and comes to have, recognizable and intelligible identity because "slave" is how the subject is identified as being. In fact, the subjection by the master is so crucial to the slave that Butler writes, "[t]he master, who at first appears to be "external" to the slave, reemerges as the slave's own self-beratement, the effect of the transmutation of the master into a psychic reality" (3). This idea of the "transmutation of the master into a psychic reality" is a point that will be returned to shortly when conscience is discussed. For now, let us stay on track with the idea that even if the slave can decide *not to* define him or herself in terms of "slave" (so would have to die to the identity slave), the instantiating power of the master would have to be assumed as part of the identity of the "not-slave." No matter the contestable nature of the final outcome of a subject's identity, the "power that at first appears as external, pressed upon the subject, pressing the subject into subordination, assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject's self-identity" (3). In other words, as subjects we come to see ourselves via the forces that press into us, or press us into (intelligible) being. Even if subjects are able to move in some ways beyond the instantiating impact of these subjecting outside forces, such forces remain, nonetheless, always a part of the subject's formative and fundamental identity. I understand Butler's point here to be that even though the slave can escape, she cannot leave behind the instantiating and formative impact of the master.¹¹⁶

Instantiating forces are the means by which subjects come to know themselves. Examples of instantiating forces include being a child to our parents. Or later in life, one might choose to be a student, and that choice means being shaped by certain regulations that make one a "student," e.g. taking instruction and doing particular learning exercises. Being a doctor, for example, might not be to subject oneself to an essential or fundamental subjection in the same ways that being a child to our parents is fundamental and inescapable, but such subjection, nonetheless, is instantiating for that kind of subjectivity. So, to be a lawyer or a doctor is to subject one's self to being shaped by certain trainings and conventions. We do not have the luxury of giving too

¹¹⁶ There is a point here, too, that I will pick up later, and that is the point that the concept of "master" is given primacy. There is the master and the slave — i.e., the not master. This will be relevant later in terms of a contemporary critique of the law of excluded middle.

much attention to *kinds* of social forces, but we can certainly note that some thinkers (Klein and Kohut, for example, were referenced in Chapter Two of this thesis) explicitly recognize that certain forces are more primal than others, including love, hate, repressions, or foreclosures of desire. The point is that once we become subject to specific forces, those forces are inevitably, even if historically, a part of the subject's identity.

The master-slave example does not mean to answer or solve the paradox inherent in subjectivity and agency, only to elaborate it. The aim is to bring the reader to recognize the instantiating nature of social power, and to demonstrate certain ways in which it is impossible to escape from the forces that shape subjects, and by which subjects (variously) agree, or not, to know themselves.

Make no mistake, though:

Subjection signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject. Whether by interpellation, in Althusser's sense, or by discursive productivity, in Foucault's, the subject is initiated through a primary submission to power. (2)

Use of the phrase "process of becoming a subject" recollects Simone de Beauvoir's phrase that "one is not born a woman, one becomes one" (717). Although innately a woman in some ways, one also becomes a woman by practising and adapting to certain social conventions. Butler would agree with this observation and add that one becomes subject through the repetitions of social norms and laws. The repetition of the norm can both stabilize and destabilize the norm the subject sustains. Evidence of the ability for subjects to play with norms is traced, for example, in how the category and meaning of the category "woman" has been expanded, challenged, and even enacted ambiguously over time. The fairly recent history of this subject category demonstrates that initial subjectivities can undergo notable and effective challenges and ambiguating responses. Nonetheless, "[i]n each case, power that at first appears as external, pressed upon the subject, pressing the subject into subordination, assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject's self-identity" (3). In other words, there is still implied some core ideals of what it means to be a woman, even though becoming a woman comes to mean things in response to those (albeit difficult to articulate) initial forces.

Interestingly, the paradox of social freedom can be obscured by how we emphasize responsibility for subjects in colloquial, everyday social contexts. In contemporary contexts, including political, legal, and social paradigms, one often speaks in terms of a subject's freedom being expressed in that subject (variously) recognizing that they stand behind their deeds, i.e., those deeds they exercise in leading a life. One can see how this everyday adaptation of subjectivity fits nicely with judicial concepts of being free under various laws. And, as such, it fits with colloquial notions of responsibility. In this context, to be a free subject references having choice and having the potential to exercise that choice. But this way of thinking, with great emphasis on responsibility, obscures the question of *who* is standing behind these deeds? And what counts as choice? If the subject is pressed into being by social forces and can only possibly influence the defining power of those forces over time through repetition, then what exactly is being chosen? Or, given that subjectivity is a necessary response to social forces, so what exactly is being chosen?

In Butler's paradigm a pre-reflective self, a self there prior to the turn, can be inferred. So the subject is there in the first place, but until subject to laws the subject is not intelligible. As we noted in our earlier discussion of forces being clothed in ideas, the subject comes into being when social forces are translated into ideas. The idea is that power other than the subject's power enacts the subject and is evident in the subject's enactment. However "an irresolvable ambiguity arises when one attempts to distinguish between the power that (transitively) enacts the subject, and the power enacted by the subject, that is between the power that forms the subject and the subject's "own" power" (15).

This is an elaboration of the above question, what does choice mean? The notion of valuing choice does not mean that we as subjects can somehow step outside of the forces that shape us. Logically we can note that choice in a subjective context would mean choosing between possibilities in that context, or it could mean making "new" possibilities. Although, as Hegel's slave example demonstrates, "new" possibilities for one's subjective identity cannot really get too far away from the forces that instantiate our subjectivities. We cannot choose instantiating forces, and we cannot choose some laws to which we are subject. Those laws we do not choose for ourselves and that are imposed on us make us subjects in the first place. What is left is that choice lies in the possibilities that come from acknowledging, and engaging or challenging the forces that instantiate and shape us.

It is relevant to here elaborate a point of logical reasoning; subjects, by definition, are intelligible in the particular social contexts in which they are situated. So by laws of reasoning and inclusion, the social group asserts through social forces that there are some laws that subjects must respond to in order to be subjects; one example would be laws that determine whether you are “one of us” or not. There are assumptions that occur when things are categorized or differentiated into, for example, “us” or “not us.” Logically this is represented as $A \vee \sim A$, (A or not A) and called the law of excluded middle. Accordingly, this law is said to be valid on all interpretations of A. The problem some critics have with this logic is that too much is assumed in choosing A in the first place, or choosing to define inclusion in terms of A. What is assumed is the primacy, and sometimes the correctness of A. In other words, A becomes the standard by which all relevant things are considered (as either A or $\sim A$). But for some instances of $\sim A$, this does not seem just. There may be an $\sim A$ who wants to be known, say, as a B or C or Q.

As we will see, Antigone’s story challenges the law of excluded middle. Once we know her story we can better consider that her subjectivity is not limited by the law of excluded middle. For example, initially in her story, she is not a citizen, but she also dies as if she was a citizen and subject to her state’s laws. Another way in which Antigone’s story challenges the law of excluded middle is in Butler’s indication that laws can be disrupted in such a way that a subject can do $\sim A$ thus repeating the defining assumptions that empower A to be the standard of inclusion, yet in so doing, said assumptions are challenged by being sometimes parodied and always ambiguated.

Let us not, however, get ahead of ourselves. Let us understand more of the key insights of Butler’s theory with respect to choice. As I have indicated, Butler would say that the powers of parody and mimetic function (which enables irony) mean that with repetition subjects can alter the impact and consequences of the forces to which we are subject. It is in repeating norms, and in time making them our own (referencing the self that is there before being subjected, but who cannot be recognized until after subjection), that makes it possible for subjects to have some influence on how they (we) are shaped by social forces. Berlin would say the fundamental human choice is an ongoing question of whether one has a minimum area of self-regulation or not. In this case I cannot choose to be shaped by some (instantiating) forces, but I can perhaps make some choices as to how as an agent I will enact the power of those forces through me in the world.

In response to Berlin's claim that it is inhuman not to have choice, Butler would likely say that she finds humanity pervasive, not contingent on choice. In light of this consideration I would expect that Berlin would modify his statement to say that we are more self-actualized — not more human — when we choose for ourselves. He is advocating that individuals not give up choosing for themselves and not give up having domains of non-interference in which self-control is expressed.

So, for example, on this point Berlin argues against subjects retreating into an “inner citadel” because they cannot, or choose not, to deal with social pressures and so give up vast areas of person freedom (135). That, for Berlin, is not freedom. To stop engaging in the material world is not to engage negative liberty; it is to give up vast domains of self-control. Self-actualization, and optimal human *being* requires domains of non-interference.

Butler, Freud, and Foucault converge in recognizing that subjects can find ways to disrupt the standardizing power structures. Yet notably too, these theorists also concur in noting that at some points, when subjects attempt to stand outside of instantiating forces, there are consequences for the subject. However, eventually in discerning the self and social forces, subjects come to know themselves, and agency emerges.

At some point, a reversal and concealment occurs and power emerges as what belongs exclusively to the subject (making the subject appear as if it belonged to no prior operation of power). Moreover, what is enacted by the subject is enabled but not finally constrained by the prior working of power. Agency exceeds the power by which it is enabled. (15)

The trope here is that agency diverts power from its original purposes and this is possible based on self-reflection. At this point it is easy to see why there is such a strong association between a subject's acquisition of agency and some purposes of psychotherapy. Psychotherapy encourages understanding the power in the trope of self-reflection. And more than this, encourages the subject to be free to redefine themselves if the subject feels limited or oppressed by the configuration of forces that press into them and have instantiated them.

This process, too, is one way in which agency exceeds the social forces that instantiate the subject. There are instantiating forces, but once the subject identifies those forces and how the psychic life of social power works, it would seem that there is the possibility of the subject consciously choosing to try to act so as to be defined by something other than the normalizing subject instantiating forces, i.e., they can choose to be subjected in some, not necessarily conformist, way. But what does this mean?

On this point of choice — to elaborate a point of choice in relation to an insight we encountered in Chapter Two — we noted that the use of reason in self-understanding contexts is subjective and relative. Moreover, as domains of reasoning change, validity criteria also change, and reason in this way can be seen to be subject-specific. With reason, as opposed to rationalism, the idea is to be free to reason for oneself what one's values are and how one's self as a subject would like those values to play out, or be reflected in the world. The point of noting these earlier insights about reasoning here is that this approach to reasoning acknowledges that subjects do have the potential for choice versus only being compelled.

If one were to counter this point about choice with the idea that some subjects are compelled by a configuration of values, the choice-advocate could counter that consideration by noting that if a subject's values are chosen in self-reflection, then choice would nonetheless be evident in the subject. The choosing would then be locatable at an earlier point in self-reflection, a point prior to letting oneself be, i.e., choosing to be, compelled by values.

At this point, however, we need not get too technically imbedded to note that experiential, pragmatic, and phenomenological observations in everyday life show that subjects who aim to be reasonable are nonetheless — apparently due to being human — far from acting and thinking in ways that are consistently logical, sound, and good and yet they experience choosing. Insofar as ideas can limit choice in everyday life, ideal rationality cannot be achieved, and so neither, by this same spectrum of reasoning, can ideal freedom be achieved. We are reminded that a totalizing ideal of freedom would be in contradiction to individual freedom.

It might be useful to take a brief clinical interlude at this point to keep the points grounded in everyday life. If using a basic metaphor of social forces and subjectivity, then in practical terms I

talk to my clients about working with a definition of subjectivity such that a subject is one who *aims to be* free in leading their life.¹¹⁷ This means that there are likely ways in which we cannot be free, just as we cannot escape experiences that have shaped us. But we can influence the meaning we attribute to these formative forces or experiences, and so gain some agency in this way. Thus we are using subject-specific reasoning with some objective validity standards (and not a paradigm of rationality) to figure how to have agency in particular instances.

Therapeutically speaking, what this very preliminary analytic evaluation of choice reveals is that in dealing with subjects, we are dealing with subjects who are not free from the outset, but are necessarily ontologically tied to the forces that bring them into being.

This theoretical thinking is applicable in day-to-day practice as the philosophical counsellors can make use of the notion of subjectivity to develop understanding of a client. A counsellor, for example, can formulate questions for understanding how their particular clients see or conceptualize themselves as initiated (or brought into being intelligible) by the forces outside of them. What forces do they perceive themselves to be particularly subject to? How much reflectivity and agency do they show in responding to those outside forces? How does the client identify themselves in terms of their job? Appearance? Income? Sexuality? How do they stand in relation to norms and social differentiations? By looking at these questions or similar such questions we can begin to identify some of the component forces by which a subject is known to themselves and others. While allowing understanding to evolve it can be useful to keep in mind that a subject's self-described subjectivities (identity categories) are sometimes, and reasonably, different from the external subjectivities (identities) by which an individual is identifiable. Even though some might indicate that identities can also be made up of narratives that reflect values and relationships, which would be, at some level, self-designated subjectivities, such descriptions of one's identity, by these definitions of subjectivity, would be about subjectivities nonetheless. As such, they are initiated in relation to outside forces.

As the relevance of some of these ideas begins to percolate in the minds of clients with respect to why they are in my office, I like to take opportunities to provide the client with additional conceptual considerations that may assist them in deciphering their own subjectivities, their free

¹¹⁷ "One" is anyone who is at least partially defined by the conglomeration of social forces or interpretations that make one identifiable.

choices, their domain of non-interference, and so, too, where their potential agencies exist for them.

As I have a deep appreciation for the benefits of philosophical thinking, I further elaborate ideas about free will and determinism to assist in expanding the concept of subjectivity. This is one of the dialectics I referred to earlier in characterizing the contemporary term “subject.” As any university instructor knows when introducing students to conversations about freewill and determinism, to develop a perspective that advocates that human choice is determined (and so not actually chosen) is an argument that strikes most undergraduates as counter-intuitive. However, that determinism can be seen as counter-intuitive is not a sufficient reason to reject its conclusions. As students of philosophy know, free will advocates explain how they understand freedom in the face of determinism’s arguments. Without getting into technical arguments or summations about what counts as choice relative to determinism, it is useful for our purposes to turn to an argument that prioritizes choice in the context of pervasive social forces.

By way of this integrated reading of Isaiah Berlin and Judith Butler I am showing what acts of choice, and therefore agency, may in fact look like. The power to choose does not lie with rational coherence but with a subject’s self-awareness of social forces and norms that are apparent in and to the subject in their self-reflective turn. As I noted earlier, self-reflection can exist on a continuum of awareness and with differing depths of awareness. The subject can simply be aware of themselves as being and/or as being different from others, as in the case of the individual who responds to the “hey you there” of a policeman’s call (107-117). Or self-reflection can be deeper, and so express itself with an awareness of the values that motivate.

What a subject chooses or does not choose is another matter. Also, there are degrees of choice. A half choice might include statements like, “If my wife is nice to me I’ll stay, if not I’ll go.” This is like passive choosing. It happens when it must, if the circumstances are right. I think Berlin would say that this example would be a lazy way of being human. Occasional resistances and a willingness to engage creative potentials as opposed to a blind commitment to maintain the status quo remind subjects of the potential for choosing, and so the potential vitality and creativity in the reflective turn. Again, it is the self-reflective turn that has the potential to reveal the pervasive power of social forces, but, also interestingly, additional insights into the nature of the subject.

Although Butler makes no specific advocacy for self-understanding being a part of self-reflection, we can appreciate that the need for *understanding* is sometimes implied. Take for example the idea of subject vulnerability: In discussing a subject's vulnerability to power we find that if the subject can come to understand themselves as subjects (i.e., as particularly vulnerable, as I will explain), then there is an interesting way in which they can come to be empowered. Understanding — not just reflecting on — the inner workings of power can enable subjects to empower themselves.

Similarly, if they do not come into awareness of how they can be affected by outside forces, then subjects can remain un-defensively vulnerable to those forces. To elaborate, when we consider the development and formation of a subject we come to see that the subject is an exploitable kind of being because they (we) are by definition vulnerable. Attachment to submission or subjection, as the case may be (submission being a particular kind of subjection), is produced — as we saw in the master-slave discussion — through the workings of power. Slaves come to embrace their subjection as a simultaneous sign of their intelligibility and the possibility of their continued existence (even if only within the subjecting system). We noted how difficult it is for the slave to define his or herself outside of their instantiating subjectivities. We also saw that Hegel and Butler note that agency can be found in this way, but it takes time and involves the subject repeating their stances outside of the paradigm that makes them (which, simultaneously, in ways we discussed, sustains the “old” social forces, i.e., the norms).

This means, for example, that a child's subordination to their provider provides the child with continuing conditions for the possibility of their existence (20). This is useful on a practical-clinical note because when victims of childhood abuse realize the very fundamental ways in which they were vulnerable to their providers, they are often able to stop, or at least limit, blaming themselves for their perceived weakness in submitting to the wants, demands, or seductions of their abusers. The point is that the nature of the subject is to be “pushed into being by outside forces,” and subjects rely, maybe only initially, on those forces for sustenance. Where one's subjectivity is particularly heightened as dependent, the more there is an actual connection between those outside forces and the need for existence. So in a manner of speaking, a subject is not only shaped by outside social forces, but also vulnerable to being impinged upon by others, and so in real ways open to injury and damage. Butler captures this when she writes:

But if the very production of the subject and the foundation of that will are the consequences of a primary subordination then the vulnerability of the subject to a power that is not of its own making is unavoidable. The vulnerability qualifies the subject as an exploitable kind of being. (26)

Thus at some points, desiring the conditions of one's own subjectivities and subordinations is required to persist as oneself.

Subsequent to this passage on vulnerability, Butler makes an interesting connection between vulnerability and choice by suggesting that certain limits to choice exist where there is too much vulnerability. In its extreme, if one is too vulnerable, then there is no choice. (Survivors of chronic childhood abuse will certainly confirm this statement to be, empirically speaking, true). In this brief passage we see Butler's valuing of the subject's need for choice.

Acknowledging the force of social power, Butler writes; "Choice is not possible when submission is a means to existence" (20). In many instances choosing to live — when the only choice is that or to die — is not a sufficient choice to count as liberty or agency. This is why we need to be reminded, by both Berlin and Butler, that subjects' vulnerabilities can limit choice. In other words, vulnerabilities can limit freedom.

Curiously, this realization is commensurate with Berlin's insights into choices about sustaining oneself by way of positive liberty. Recall that while acknowledging the coercive and oppressive force of positive liberty, Berlin acknowledges what compels one to choose in the direction of positive liberty is the desire to sustain oneself in the group. Berlin acknowledges with Butler the insight that subjection makes one primarily vulnerable to the "other" in order to be. This is some of why he needs to remind his peers of the humanity of choice. In the face of the reality of our vulnerability to each other, in the wake of realities of war, he wants to remind people that to take away choice and certain fundamental freedoms of self-direction, in the name of a greater good, is in a way inhumane.

At this point there is much potential for discussion, however to focus the discussion I want to continue on a point of continuity for Berlin and Butler. The following considerations evolve out of their shared considerations about regulatory regimes as maintaining norms in the subject; that is to say that subjects incorporate social forces, laws, and norms into their being. Berlin would

say that when we fail to seek freedom first we fail to recognize this. The ancients would agree; we need to know ourselves in order to be free and self-actualized. The mere incorporation of norms is not sufficient for freedom. Norms are particularly powerful social forces because they have the endorsement of the community and because they, like laws, can be forces that instantiate subjectivity. In other words, norms can define and so restrict subjects. Yet norms are also ambiguous because it is in response to norms that subjects can express their agency.

In Butler's words,

[T]o the extent that norms operate as psychic phenomena restricting and producing desire they also govern the formation of the subject and circumscribe the domain of a liable sociality. The psychic cooperation of the norm offers a more insidious route for regulatory power than explicit coercion, one whose success allows its tacit operation within the social the psychic operation of the norm is derived — not mechanically — from prior social operations. (21)

The formation of the subject involves the regulatory formation of the psyche. This means that psyches develop in response to laws, and/or negotiating desires in relation to laws. So if we want to address what agency might look like for a subject in post-libratory times, this is where field-specific psychoanalytic investigations can be very useful. As we look at the psyche's development through a psychoanalytic paradigm we can interpret experiences in terms of an individual's negotiation of outside forces; then in the end, agency looks like perpetuating and disrupting social norms.

Given the law of excluded middle, and given the primacy of laws and norms in shaping (social) subjects, we can make various notes about individual psyches internalization of social forces, and so, too, the internalization of norms. Norms produce desire to the effect that they act on the desires of the subject; and the subject, in short, either conforms to those norms, or resists them in manifesting, or struggling with how or whether to manifest desire. Butler reminds us that according to both the psychoanalytic tradition and Foucault, social norms have particular effects on the psyche. Both schools of thought recognize that norms regulate the psyche, but not in always-predictable ways.

To summarize Butler, we learn from the example of Althusser that in at least one aspect of an instantiation, subjects are formed in relation to laws or in relation to lawgivers, and certainly socially speaking in relation to authority (1997 Butler 109). This is one way in which laws initiate subjects. It is a feature of laws that Butler incorporates into her theory of agency; namely that as much as laws can be criticized for controlling or as shaping our being, they can also be seen to bring us into being (in what are functionally important material and social ways). But what happens when some contingently self-reflective aspect of the subject resists, or identifies as socially constructed, those very laws that instantiate subjectivity? Is freedom being diminished? How can freedom be enhanced? What happens when there is the recognition that the laws are not the “Laws?”

In such cases the subject inevitably comes to see possibilities in “playing with” conventional norms. Nonetheless, the point is that norms inevitably affect and shape the psyche. One way this normative conditioning is accomplished is when the reflexive turn turns into self-beratement and criticism. This signals the development of a conscience. The conscience is a means of internalizing the regulative mechanism of norms. In short, the idea is that psychic power is internalized and the internalization made evident in self-regulative mechanisms, i.e., a conscience. The field-specific domain of psychoanalysis leads us to recognize that self-beratement consolidates over time as conscience. In this way social norms are internalized by the psyche. The subject then goes on to interpret the world through a paradigm, or attitude to life, that reflects their conscience.

Individuals are characterized in terms of forces that subject them, and exploring this provides insights into how a particular individual subject is instantiated as a subject. Practically speaking, this means that once we know what instantiates us we can choose to keep enacting those identities or not, which includes challenging, or not, the most fundamental of those laws that enable certain normative standards.

This is comparable to one of the characteristic relationships between positive and negative liberty illustrated by Berlin. Positive liberties are like the forces that instantiate subjectivity; they are necessary forces, but do not have to remain primary forces to which we are subject. When an individual enacts negative liberty, they are challenging the forces of instantiation. So the reason why negative liberty needs to be particularly advocated is so it is not lost in the norms of who

(i.e., someone else) controls us. Berlin would say for the subject to be human, for the individual to have choice, means that there must be acknowledgments of the distinct and different experiences of individuals and a plurality of values.

It makes sense that some laws are more fundamental, more initiating, or ontogenic, than others. For example, Butler cites Lacan as indicating that the law against incest is one such law. The social reasoning around this law is (very generally): To be treated as human is to agree to follow basic laws of social convention. The prohibition against incest is fundamental to social structure based on family relationships. To understand who is a sister, it is less confusing (more coherent with easily intelligible laws) if sister is not also a brother's mother.

These considerations of course provoke the question, how radically can subjects resist those forces that define them/us and bring us into being? How necessary is acceptance of fundamental social laws, instantiating laws, to subjectivity and so to social being?

Very necessary. Acceptance that social laws are necessary for subjectivity is an analytic necessity. Definitions aside, empirical evidence shows that self-reflective humans come to realize that they are subject to laws that govern their lives. However, just as the law of excluded middle can be shown to not always apply, so some ambiguous subjects reveal that the initiating laws of subjectivity make assumptions that are sometimes exclusionary (sometimes from the outset) and limiting of who counts.

For example, the Victorian system did not allow women to be property owners; as such, they were not subjects before the law and they were not considered fully human. Conventions about who counts as a subject can be considered the most fundamental norms of social engagement and so are deserving of ongoing consideration. In this case, ongoing considerations extended the domain of who counts, i.e., who is represented as a subject.

It is worth noting, as we have — based on conceptual and empirical considerations — that, at least some of the times, even in light of the power of norms and social forces, there does appear to be agency and choice. There are times when subjects seem to add something more to the norms, and often, when subjects act, there are outcomes that appear not to be the result of only sustaining norms. In other words, there are instances in which subjects can challenge, disrupt, and ambiguate social norms and in these ways subjects appear to act as free agents.

As briefly noted, one way to challenge norms, for instance, is to reject or challenge the most essential and fundamental assumptions that enable the power of instantiating social forces. Fundamental assumptions include those that sustain norms that pertain to social order and include assumptions pertaining to kinship, gender, and who ought to be obeyed.

4.5 Antigone

The strength of the story of Antigone is that, to some extent, it does not matter that this faithful daughter does not always choose to go against the establishment; it is enough that she symbolizes resistance and challenges fundamental assumptions. Certainly with respect to the act for which she is punished in Sophocles' play, there is good evidence that she chose to bury her brother despite her Uncle King's (Creon's) edict that Polyneices not be buried. However, reflectively chosen or not, as I will explain, there are the many ways in which Antigone embodies challenges to social norms. Judith Butler interprets Antigone to bring into crisis (1) the representative function, (2) kinship, (3) the relationships between state, kinship, and the symbolic, and (4) exposes social norms as temporal. Butler's own enticements encourage her readers to revisit Antigone's story to remind us that challenges can be made to social norms, and agency can be enacted.

In fact, at the beginning of her study titled *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* Butler specifically calls out feminists working for change in governments reminding them that they do not always have to buy into the power structures as they are. She encourages her readers to see Antigone as "a counter-figure to the trend . . . to seek the backing and authority of the state to implement feminist policy aims" (1). She reminds feminists that radical challenges to power structures do not have to be as complicit to assumptions of power as they tend to be.

From the outset of Butler's investigations into *Antigone's Claim* we are alerted to the juxtaposition between complicity with the state and the negative liberty of self-direction. We can take this passage in favour of the idea that, from the outset Antigone's story is going to reinforce the call to act against complicity, i.e., good-enough liberties, positive liberties, in the form of playing the games. Thus, from our interpretative perspective, Butler sets Antigone up to be interpreted as a symbol of negative liberty.

Conventional ideas around agency can tend to be over simplistic, assuming that the consequences of free actions are always predictable, and the result of our intentions. Neither is true. First, we do not always know the consequences of our free behaviour. Gandhi, for example, knew of some of the consequences of his hunger strike but not about other consequences. Second, we can hope for a certain outcome from a free action, nonetheless for various reasons, that desired outcome, too, can be variable and ambiguous. For Butler, because agency evolves in subjectivity, the ambiguities of subjectivity are reflected in agency.

This relates back to an important feature of subjectivity — namely that it is formed in relation to social forces, and that subjectivity itself changes with changes in social forces. Self-understanding is a journey of learning. Along that journey the impact of the self-reflective turn changes and varies depending on one's textured location. In short, self-understanding, as does action in the world, influences subjectivities and so subjectivities change. Thus, agency, which comes out of the same powers as subjectivity, by definition, has ambiguities built into it. We will return to this point of not being able to choose or control all of the outcomes of free actions in due time.

For now let us further consider what Butler hopes Antigone represents. As noted in Sophocles' play, Antigone does appear to make choices that extend her non-participation in social regulations and conventions. As such, we can see these choices as extending and reinforcing resistance and agency in relation to instantiating subjectivities.

Through Butler's interpretations, Antigone's story is not only the story of one who does not follow "the" law, but one who destabilizes and confounds the most fundamental, most essential ideas for foundational configurations of family and state. More than just a resistor, she is (somewhat unwittingly) an anti-establishment figure. And, as such, the story of Antigone gets to the heart of the matter with respect to the politics of representation.

Indeed, it is not just that as a fiction the mimetic or representative character of Antigone is already put in question but that, as a figure for politics, she points somewhere else, not to politics as a question of representation but to that political possibility that emerges when the limits to representation and representability are exposed. (2)

In other words, politics, by way of the subjectivity it enforces, excludes some from being represented. The exclusion of “others” is often a curious means of reinforcement used by those who are in power. The empowered, to shore themselves up, and variously due to fear, find themselves considering whether “others” are worthy of counting in the politics of representation. The other side of the coin is that, to some extent the subjecting powers look at those subjects whose core beliefs are consistent with their own and mime and reinforce specific values evident in those who are chosen as worthy of being acknowledged. Sometimes even self-reflective individuals cannot say their values are their own without defining themselves in contrast to others. For the law to be the law, some people have to be punished for not following the law.

The norm cannot exist without perversion, and only through perversion can the norm be established. . . . The problem as I see it is that the perverse remains entombed precisely there, as the essential and negative feature of the norm and the relation between the two remains static, giving way to no re-articulation of the norm itself. (18)

By extension, the implicit claim is that if norms can be challenged in the politics of representation then maybe norms can be re-articulated. When we cannot identify what is perverse without reinforcing the norm because the norm is the standard in relation to which everything non-norm identifies itself. So norm is identified and reinforced by the not-norm. This is a version of the law of excluded middle. The non-heterosexual woman can cause the heterosexual to consider how she identifies herself.

Typically, in socio-historical thinking, family and state convention dictates who counts as a citizen. However, due to her unconventional family — a unit that typically (i.e., normally) inaugurates citizenship — Antigone is not meant to count. She represents not just a challenge to human laws, but by virtue of how she challenges the laws she demonstrates that ultimately as a subject she, too, must submit to being subject to the laws in inevitable ways. So she sustains the norm and yet undermines the law. Notably though, laws come to hold the power they do in part by repetition, and so participation in and with regulative norms. Interestingly then, repetitive challenges to laws, and regulative norms, are what ultimately destabilizes these subjecting laws. This is another phenomenological testament to the fact that the social forces to which we are

subject are not easily altered. Repetition has much to do with reinforcing and destabilizing the social forces that instantiate us.

We have been noting that kinship is “the sphere that conditions the possibility of politics without ever entering into it” (2). And while this statement can be seen to be accurate, it is also the case that Hegel, Lacan, Levi–Strauss, and Luce Irigaray hold distinct positions on the relationship between kinship and politics. In the first chapter of *Antigone’s Claim*, Butler succinctly discusses these theoretical differences. In short, Antigone’s ambiguous kinship relations make the possibility of her political representation unlikely from the outset. So in this sense she represents the “social deformation of both idealized kinship and politic sovereignty” (6). Representing those who are excluded from social power, Antigone should not count and yet, we are discussing her, and so she does.

Even at this moment, in our retelling of the story, discussing the story’s significance participates in the subjecting powers (say the power of language as we understand it). We are also, because of the way Butler recasts the story, participating in destabilizing those powers by telling the story of a disrupter.

Some might recollect that Antigone is heir to the sins of her father, Oedipus. From the outset her family structure is not a conventional one. Her father, Oedipus, unwittingly killed his father and married his mother by whom he then fathered three children. Thus, Oedipus is husband-son to his mother-wife. Antigone is one of the three children produced from that union. Polyneices and Eteocles are the sons. Once the incestuous sins of Oedipus had been revealed, the entire family was banished from their home kingdom. Subsequent to Oedipus’ death, the brothers fight for the throne from which their father-brother was ejected. In an ensuing battle, Polyneices is murdered by Eteocles. Despite the king’s edict that Polyneices — because he is a traitor — cannot be buried, Antigone buries her sibling-uncle. For this crime the king sentences Antigone to be sealed into a cave where she will carry out the remainder of her days. Thus, as if social exile (of Oedipus’ family) were already not sufficient, Antigone is then sentenced to a living death and sealed into a cave in the side of a mountain.

Certainly, as both Oedipus’ sister and daughter, Antigone is an ambiguous character from the outset. To complicate matters, as Butler points out, due to her loyalty to Oedipus, he, the play’s Chorus, and even Creon, sometimes referred to his daughter as though she were a son and a man.

Evidently Antigone's primary subjectivities are not clear-cut. She and her family represent challenges that are at the heart of the most fundamental of social laws — those pertaining to family structure. For these reasons:

Antigone is the occasion for a new field of the human achieved through political catachresis, the one that happens when the less than human speaks as human, when gender is displaced and kinships founders on its own founding laws. (*Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* 82).

By way of Hegel and Lacan in particular, Butler reminds us that kinship laws have historically been considered the most basic laws of social intelligibility. If one does not embody the proper participation in the fundamental definition and structure of a family, then it follows — because kinship enables the state — one cannot reasonably participate in politics.¹¹⁸ On one hand, then, Antigone is less than human because she and her ambiguously structured family have been exiled and cast adrift in the wilderness, so she is not entitled to political representation. Yet, on the other hand, Antigone has the audacity to speak as human before the law and this further ambiguates her own engagement with the law.

Antigone's statements before her uncle epitomize her own subjective ambiguities, and so her power. Butler's summary is this: "Antigone of course acknowledges her deed, but the verbal form of the acknowledgement only exacerbates the crime. She not only did it but she has the nerve to say she did it" (34). This is because when asked by Creon as to whether she buried her brother, Antigone answers "I say that I did it and I do not deny it" (8). This interesting act reveals that, at least to her own mind, she is not without her own responsibility and, indeed, autonomous humanity. Even though these features of her subjectivity cause her to stand outside of, or in contradiction to, social laws, she feels entitled to exercise some subjective agency in defiance of his law and speaks before the king.

Antigone's deed is, in fact, ambiguous from the start, not only the defiant act in which she buries her brother but the verbal act in

¹¹⁸ This is an interesting consideration, one that Butler frames as mothers breeding sons for war.

which she answers Creon's question; thus hers is an act in language. She not only does the deed but refuses to deny that she has done it. (11)

According to Butler, Antigone's "agency emerges precisely through her refusal to honour his command, and yet the language of this refusal assimilates the very terms of the sovereignty that she refuses" (11). This returns us to the insight of instantiating subjectivities that we saw in discussing the master and the slave in Hegel; it will be recalled that instantiating subjectivities, in tangible ways, cannot be escaped. Moreover, the powers of certain subjectivities are less (easily) escapable, although such powers can be (at least symbolically) defied. Even though cast out, Antigone recognizes that she is still subject to some social laws.

Yet again, her specific acts of agency are defiant and powerful:

She transmits those words in aberrant form, transmitting them loyally and betraying them by sending them in directions they were never intended to travel. The words are repeated, and their repeatability relies on the deviation that the repetition performs. (58)

The repetition of norms is what entrenches those norms. Similarly, repeated challenges to norms and acts of agency destabilize these conventions. Repetition is itself a power — for social forces, and potentially for subjects.

Antigone is insubordinate, refuses to submit to Creon and defies him, yet inevitably to the extent that she is intelligible at all, she has to bow to this outside power — this immense institution of social force that has power to sustain her or (further) annihilate her. This is an essential experiential truth of human social living. "Thus her autonomy is gained through the appropriation of the authoritative voice of the one she resists, and appropriation that has within it traces of a simultaneous refusal and assimilation of that very authority" (11). Butler points out that even the language of her refusal "assimilates the terms of sovereignty she refuses" (11). Yet even so, Antigone's language before her king is not that of survivable political agency (28).

What Antigone speaks is the spirit of negative liberty. And for Creon she speaks those truths in excess. Antigone basically says to the chorus there is an area in which she is answerable only to her gods, an area in which she will not be interfered with by man-made laws. Some translations have her say something like her conscience is outside of the domain of the state (32).

This last sentence is also a fairly extensive claim to attribute to Antigone, given that a subject's conscience reflects the internalization of social norms. It makes sense that communities can coerce subjects by having subjects internalize social laws. Some psychoanalysts call this, developmentally, the initiation of the superego. In fact, in the Freudian paradigm, the superego basically represents that part of an individual's psyche that has internalized, manages, and interprets laws of the "father" and social laws and norms. For now it is enough to note that the internalization of social laws shows up in the conscience of the subject. Antigone, however, indicates that she is not subject to man-made laws but the laws of her gods. Thus, to claim her conscience as not socially regulated is a subtly radical and autonomous claim.

It is reasonable to argue that Antigone *embodies* negative liberty; arguably she exists so much outside of cultural social order and is so much on the periphery that she (albeit as the living dead) has literal areas of non-interference represented first as wandering in the desert, and second as an additional living death in the cave. She is subject to segregation, and then subject again.

Still, Antigone does declare domains of negative liberty, a domain within which she will not be controlled. Not only has she buried her brother and so acted contrary to the law of the state, but she chooses not to participate as a perpetrator, as defined by Creon, in her own trial and so creates her own domain of non-interference from the state. In looking at this passage again we notice that Antigone creates a domain of non-interference by "appropriating the rhetoric of agency:"

She not only does the deed, refusing to obey the edict, but she also does it again by refusing to deny that she has done it, thus appropriating the rhetoric of agency from Creon himself. Her agency emerges precisely through her refusal to honour his command, and yet the language of this refusal assimilates the very terms of sovereignty that she refuses. (11)

She linguistically enacts domains of negative liberties and there are consequences. Affirming in literal ways that language is at the heart of power no matter the ways in which kinship, symbolism, and state stand in relation to each other, Antigone affirms the use of internalized social power in the form of rhetoric (knowing how to use the power of language) to create her domains of non-interference. As such, it could be said that Antigone symbolizes a hero of self-determination and embodies recognition of the courage it takes when fundamental laws are challenged.

Butler gives priority to Antigone's story because she wants to show what happens when founding laws are challenged. And admittedly, Butler only suggests the outcome (because such outcomes cannot be fully anticipated) is unpredictable. Nonetheless, we are left to infer that the consequence of telling Antigone's story is such that every time it is told Antigone enters into the realm of the intelligible and symbolic, and so norms are disrupted.

This returns us to the matter of representation such that it does matter who is allowed to count as a subject. Creon's act is to try and ensure that Antigone does not count. Yet if we pay close enough attention to the story, then we come to question the hows and whys of determinations about who will live as one among us, and who will live in (whatever symbolic and literal forms of) exile.

This is why Butler writes:

Who then is Antigone within such a scene and what are we to make of her words, words that become dramatic events, performative acts? She is not of the human but speaks in its language. Prohibited from action she nevertheless acts, and her act is hardly a simple assimilation to an existing norm. (20)

As a symbolic advocate for negative liberty, she brings forward another occasional truth about subjective agency, namely that when social norms are challenged we do not always get the outcomes we had hoped for. We do not always know the full implications of our free actions. However, those actions (what Butler would also call performances) that are disruptive of norms can have eventual freeing effects — just not necessarily for the active subject who has gone against those norms.

The story of the Stonewall riots can be seen as an example in support of this point. On the night of June 27, 1969, the police of New York City executed an all too common raid on a gay bar on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village. The outcome, however, was not so common. On this particular night gay men and women protested against the police harassment. Riots ensued that night, and protests against police and mafia harassment continued in the following weeks. Many of the individuals who chose to protest against social conventions and oppression suffered as a result of their political actions; many were beaten, some raped, and some arrested. Over a quarter of a century later, so many human rights, including queer rights, have been advanced as a result of those arrests and protests, and the symbolic meanings attributed to those free actions. Despite the fact that those free actions had very real material consequences in terms of arrest and battery for those initial resisting subjects, additional tangible freedom in the form of domains of negative liberty (for others like them) had been won on the shoulders of their efforts.

Like Antigone, the participants in Stonewall resisted the force of convention and spoke out against oppressive laws and practices. Those individuals' agencies eventually won freedom for others, but the consequences of their actions of negative liberty were not immediately felt. Like the Stonewall protesters, when Antigone's story is revisited challenges to oppressive assumptions are challenged, and questions about who counts are raised. Perhaps like the Stonewall protestors the story of her free actions will have eventual freeing effects for others. (Keep in mind Butler's nod to the political feminists at the beginning of *Antigone's Claim*. She intends that her revisiting of Antigone's story will have a liberating effect for contemporary political feminists.)

On this point we can say that Antigone did not know the freedom she would come to symbolize. This is likely some of what Butler was referring to when she wrote: "On this reading, the symbolic thus captures Antigone, and though she commits suicide in that tomb, there remains a question of whether or not she might signify in a way that exceeds the reach of the symbolic" (44).

Antigone represents those who are excluded from social power; the living dead, the "less than" human of society, and those who do not quite fit in, for whatever reasons. By way of Butler, Antigone's story is meant to provoke considerations on how matters of social inclusion and exclusion influence and frame how subjectivity enables social power. Discussing the Oedipal

story from the perspective of Antigone is to disrupt the implications of symbolic order; but more, it is to disrupt the idea that intelligibility requires laws. Recall that laws, by definition, in order to sustain themselves, have to enact boundaries that tell us whom is excluded and who is included.

Telling Antigone's story in this way goes beyond having Antigone defined only in terms of her family's challenging "family structure;" giving voice to particular realities of an incestuous family, she challenges the question of whose stories count. So in relation to the canon of Western values, the simple act of attending to Antigone's story is disruptive because the discussion introduces new and complex considerations that challenge assumptions (evident in social norms) that often go unchallenged.

Of Antigone's subjectivities we can say she was not a citizen and yet she disrupted political coherences. Because she is who she is, we know that she would not be allowed to be a self-actualized subject in the bosom of the social structures into which she is born. Butler writes:

Antigone represents a kind of thinking that counters the symbolic and hence, counters life, perhaps it is precisely because the very terms of livability are established by a symbolic that it is challenged by her kind of claim. And this claim does not take place outside the symbolic or, indeed, outside the public sphere, but within its terms and as an unanticipated appropriation and perversion of its own mandate. (54)

Thus, telling the stories of subjection both participates in, and has the potential to disrupt, the status quo. Every time the story is told, there is the potential to disrupt the effect of social forces. Yet to be intelligible there has to be a minimum amount of acquiescence and participation in sustaining social norms. However, as Butler notes, participation also allows for the potential of disruption of conventional power. She has us consider that Antigone must submit to the subjective realms in which she ultimately and undeniably is located, yet her acts ambiguate and exceed the realm of inclusion and intelligibility as they are given to her.

It makes sense that the instantiating power of kinship norms contributes to cultural intelligibility. This is why Butler writes that "the abiding assumption of the symbolic, that stable kinship norms support our abiding sense of culture's intelligibility, can be found, of course, outside the

Lacanian discourse. . . .” (71). This small passage is only meant to point to the fact that there are conventional, conditioning, relationships between family and state. (Butler points out that one way of characterizing a relationship between family and state is to see the family as producing soldiers for war and service.) Consequently, when kinship norms are themselves ambiguous and so not really intelligible — i.e., by definition a sister ought to not also be a daughter to the same person — it is difficult to understand what reliable laws can be inferred and built from these conflicting subjectivities. How can there be coherent proceeding if the laws that instantiate everyone, do not instantiate this one? Perhaps this means that the conventional instantiating laws and symbolism at work are not the best ones, or the most inclusive ones? Or maybe it is just a feature of the fear-based competition and ego-based mal-adaptation of the principle that when a social group can define themselves in terms of what they are not, they can also (eventually) declare what they are. Antigone exceeds the conventional and shows that there can be meaning outside of the social group (for a price). And presumably, the effects of her agency exceed her life because we are still telling her story.

Consider though that Antigone’s story is not rare; it is only quintessential. Consider, for example, that those who are “queer” identified struggle against being captured by binary sexuality. In this identity there is an acknowledgement of what is given and what is socialized and allowed, and in queer identity there is the desire to exceed what is given. So there is an acknowledgement of the norms but also ultimately a rejection of them. Like the example of contemporary queers, for Antigone there were consequences that demonstrated “the un-livability of desire outside of cultural intelligibility” (54). Yet some freedom fighters have shown that “the position outside of life as we know it is not necessarily a position outside life as it must be” (55).

As a result, Antigone’s story holds the potential to provoke our coming to terms with the fact that social norms are not static. They do not have to be as static as we tend to treat them. This includes the social norms of say gender and family. Do things really fall apart if we allow some flexibility with respect to, say, defining the family — which would include the family not being in relation to the state, normatively speaking and/or, for some, ideally speaking, in terms of producing sons for war? Butler predicts, presumably not.

Presumably as self-reflective individuals, there are various degrees, levels, and ways in which subjects can express themselves as not necessarily limited in their being shaped by the power of

social convention. To speak of the subject differentiating themselves from their social group in levels or realms fits well with Berlin's negative liberty wherein the individual differentiates her or himself from interference when exercising their freedom. Given that subjects know themselves in relation to their family and their community, then upon self-reflection the subject can reflect, determine, and influence the ways in which those subjecting relationships define them. Again, empirical evidence suggests that subjects can more effectively and meaningfully select which forces to challenge and which forces – once subjects come to know themselves better - to endorse or sustain. Recall Berlin's early claim that "we are enslaved by despots — institutions or beliefs or neuroses — which can be removed only by being analyzed and understood" (143). At this point we can agree that Berlin, like Butler, wants individuals to become conscious of the power of social forces, and more, he wants people to manifest their understanding in their actions.

At this point it is reasonable to question whether Antigone consciously attempts to exorcise herself from instantiating rules or not? Some of Antigone's resistances are presumably grounded in self-reflection, and some are not. Her decision to bury Polyneices and to not deny that she did the deed when she was before Creon is evidently based in self-reflection, whereas being an outcast due to her ambiguous family structure is not so much chosen and situational. In both cases, by either means she represents being on the outside of, or in resistance to, social conventions. To the extent to which she is intelligible to her social group she is intelligible as an outcast, a living dead. Clearly she is there, but she is not to be included. So subjects, especially in the face of instantiating forces, are particularly vulnerable to coercion — yet as Antigone demonstrates, not necessarily.

What happens when we do not have negative liberty, when we are not granted intelligibility? We are forced to live living deaths. Antigone exercised negative liberty but she claimed too much — certainly more than the symbolic wanted to allow. So in claiming too much, her negative liberties were extremely enacted and denied as she was sealed in the cave.

The conformist might read the story of Antigone to be one that reinforces the importance of rules and laws as instantiating forces. And a story that proves that if you do not play the game, if you do not play by the laws, then the laws will not only not sustain you, but they will act against you - even insofar as to not acknowledge you or the possible legitimacy of your perspective. They

will act against you. Empathizing with the force of the conformist's perspective, Berlin is not pressing the metaphor too far when he writes:

It is not only that my material being depends upon interaction with other men, or that I am what I am as a result of forces, but that some, perhaps all of my ideas about myself, in particular my sense of my own moral and social identity are intelligible only in terms of the social network in which I am (the metaphor must not be pressed too far) an element. (155)

In response to this metaphor we can imagine Butler's Antigone saying something like:

I am an element of society. I know I am that, but I am not only that. I know this because I know there is and can be something else. To the extent that I can be understood, I play by the rules. My legitimacy and intelligibility depends on the degree to which I play by the rules. But I can also ambiguate the rules, and I can choose to resist what social laws attempt to normalize through me. I also acknowledge that there are consequences for challenging laws.

We have noted that some who ambiguate the rules have effects beyond their own predictions, but that, too, reflects some of the ambiguity of agency. In other words, we do not always know the effects of free actions. Those who had been at the Stonewall bar knew that their rights were being infringed upon but did not know that their anti-law resistances would have real consequences for others. Because of the ways in which homosexuals and queers have ambiguated, and continue to ambiguate, laws and create protest so as to be respected, human rights and laws are now more inclusive.¹¹⁹

Let us consider Butler's question, "what happens if we hear the story of Oedipus from Antigone's perspective?" A variation on that question, although not as extensive a question, is what happens when the symbolic is exceeded? It would seem that she exceeds how we represent

¹¹⁹ I realize for some the use of the terms "homosexuals" and "queers" might be jarring, but I use the terms simply as fair descriptions of relevant categories and as one well versed in feminist and queer theory.

family and social subject. In the end her various ways of resisting reminds us that laws can be challenged. Social assumptions can be challenged. What does Antigone's exceeding freedom have to do with exceeding the symbolic? We have to maybe modify our essential definition of family.

But more than these important challenges and reminders, in the context of Berlin's value pluralism, I can not help but wonder what would happen if we really were able to listen to Antigone's voice? What if we lived in social groups in which we could be free enough to let subjects be guided by their conscience and not, as in the case of Creon, so threatened by the differences we see in others that we have to silence them? What if we took the time to listen and aimed to understand the differences and similarities between one attitude to life, or set of values, and another? If it had been possible to really listen to Antigone's voice and not be threatened by how she seemed to destabilize what the community thought it needed to hold dear, then maybe the tragedy of her death could have been averted? What if we were free enough (socially and inside of ourselves) to encourage subjects to be guided by their conscience — or, as Berlin would say, by their own values?

Berlin's value pluralism would have been better able to accommodate listening to Antigone. So, in a sense, we could note that Berlin's value pluralism can be seen to be compatible with Butler's subjective agency.

In terms of the question posed above about what would happen if subjects were encouraged to be lawful according to their conscience? We can infer that Butler would envision results to be additional challenges to assumptive norms, additional reconsiderations of the symbolic, and laws, and ongoing discussions about who counts as being able to be represented and listened to. For both Berlin and Butler, such challenges to the status quo would be the welcomed result of self-reflective understanding of social forces.

This is a good opportunity to extend the symbolism of Antigone to those who, excluded from social intelligibility, are also sentenced to living deaths. In this part of our discussion we have much used the example of homosexuals and queers. But at different points in history women have also been excluded from social intelligibility as political subjects, as have, variously, the disabled, the poor, the young, the old, and those who can be found to be weak in some ways. In my trauma work I have found that the testimony of children and adults who have suffered

chronic abuse and exploitation have often been excluded from the realm of intelligibility. (In relation to exile and exclusion: From a humanistic perspective, it can be even more difficult going through challenging life experiences when it feels like no one can understand or relate to what's happening to you.) Due to fears spurred on by social conventions (norms) that evoke fear, discomfort, apprehension when abuse is spoken of, personal stories of trauma can all too often automatically disqualify a speaker as worthy of being listened to. Recognizing that social norms support those in power and so those particularly in positions that enable exploitation, the philosophical practitioner with these theoretical considerations behind them will take particular care to listen for intelligibility amidst those conventionally considered unintelligible.

Butler uses Antigone to make an argument for extending how we think of the symbolism of family. For example, Butler questions whether in the traditional family there are aspects of loss and love that cannot be claimed as love and loss and so cannot be properly mourned/grieved. “In confronting the unspeakable in Antigone, are we confronting a socially instituted foreclosure of the intelligible, a socially instituted melancholia in which the unintelligible life emerges in language as living body might be interred into a tomb”(80). In the psychoanalytic paradigm melancholia is unresolved grief. The unresolved grief references the love that cannot be avowed. It cannot be avowed because it is prohibited from the outset. Son and mother are — as are father and daughter — prohibited from romantic love. And consider, too, social prohibitions against homosexual desire such that one cannot grieve the loss if one has never been allowed to love (*The Psychic Life of Power* 133-134). This can be understood in a literal and varied sense such that if a woman lost her friendship with another woman but the depth of that friendship, and perhaps romantic feelings, cannot be admitted then the “lover” is destined to a state of melancholia, unresolved grief. In contrast to this, Antigone claims grief despite the laws that govern who can be grieved. After all, Antigone is not a melancholic with respect to her brother, because she will not agree to Creon's edict and not grieve her brother's death. She makes it clear with the double burial that she must grieve.

A key feature of Butler's account of agency is that she is willing to look at or for expansions of human agency and freedom in the face of social regulations. Her analysis of Antigone draws particular attention to those laws that are laws by virtue of their power to instantiate and to compel their subjects. Butler's distinctions lead us to realize that resisters and law-breakers are not denying the necessity of laws in being subject — i.e., being social humans, so therefore being

recognizable and identifiable. They are, rather, denying pervasive and assumed (given) effects of how such laws shape them. They are, in other words, a challenging of the predictable impact of these forces. Thus, according to Butler, while subject instantiation via laws cannot be denied, the pervasive control of the laws on a subject (i.e., on subjectivities) can be limited by the subject.

But where does intentionality fall in Butler's paradigm? As we have noted historically and with unfortunate histories of violence, non-conformists are considered and treated as less than human. With Berlin and Butler's reformulations and endorsement of resistance to outside forces and a minimum area of self-control, they are advocating a concept of human that requires being aware and self-reflective, as opposed to directed and conditioned by social forces in manners that encourage conformity and enforced consistency.

For Butler and Berlin, being human — being a subject — does not mean just fitting the mould, it means making choices, especially in the face of those fundamental laws where choice previously did not seem possible, or better, where choice was an unconscious impossibility:

Antigone is the occasion for a new field of the human achieved through political catachresis, the one that happens when the less than human speaks as human, when gender is displaced and kinship founders on its own founding laws. (82)

Some could say this has been a story of rejection, incarceration, and excommunication, but that misses so much of the story's contributory potential. It is also a story of freedom and agency. It is a story about how a subject's self-reflective action (anywhere on a continuum from inauguration to deep consideration) sustains, destabilizes, or challenges social forces. Thus, agency can have expansive and profound effects.

4.6 Conclusion

It is reasonable to hope to be not only reproducers of social norms, but contributors to evolving norms — or better, contributors to non-normalized points of inclusion and boundaries of self-direction. In other words, it is reasonable to hope for negative liberty.

True enough, sometimes the consequences in the name of agency are not what we expect, as in the case of Antigone. And sometimes the effects of agency exceed the conditions of their origins

and can have extensive consequences — as was the case for queer inheritors of Stonewall’s resistors, and Antigone’s legacy. But to want agency is, nonetheless, reasonable.

Agency exceeds the powers that enable subjects because free agents do not merely do what the “powers” dictate. However, even though on the internal level agency is an independent project, it does not happen independently. Agency is, necessarily, enabled by outside forces. Thus, we cannot escape the truth that freedom is a social occurrence, even though it is the experience of discernibly independent subjects. If we mean more than this by agency, then agency cannot be a reasonable hope.

There is a sense in philosophical approaches to questions of freedom that taking a position on either free will or determinism can be like comparing apples and oranges; one position is talking about voluntariness and the other side is talking about origins of freedom and voluntariness (Honderich). With Honderich’s distinction, we have discussed both options. For my purposes, I am more concerned with an approach that pursues the link between a subject’s causal actions and their past life, so that their action makes sense as theirs. To my mind, in discussing social forces and subjective responses to such forces we open to the possibility of being able to give some account of an individual’s, or more accurately, a subject’s free actions.

We have also noted that there are, potentially, multi-dimensional conduits for power in the reflexive turn of the subject. It would appear that the reflective turn could go in any number of directions (depending on the subject). Social power is not just transferred from outside the subject, to inside, and then back out again. Thus, we have good evidence that agency reflects subjects’ values and in this way agency exceeds the social power from which it originates because subjects add indications of their volition. Thus, we have good evidence that there is agency.

And we have noted that norms have power through repetition. Norms can also be substantially challenged through repetition. It takes repeated engagement with questioning those norms to see the full effects of freedom that is resistant to the standardizing force of norms. But we can see instances of freedom in how individuals tell their stories. Each time trauma victims tell their stories they have the potential to gain control. Even in identifying the forces by which they do not wish to be defined, the power of certain shaping forces can at least be questioned, and so not complicitly assumed.

In this study of agency we have come to know that there are ways in which agency is ambiguous; this is especially true because agency can only be understood in relation to a subject's subjectivities. In this way, agency is never pure agency. From an observer's perspective (including the PC's), one can look at and, for the effects of agency, to discern a subject's values. For example, sometimes the effects of agency stabilize, ambiguate, or destabilize norms.

Similarly, negative liberties are their own thing; they are their own self-declarations, but in a way, too, they are never "pure" negative liberties either. They happen, pragmatically speaking, as we noted in the context of positive liberties.

Berlin's presidential address to the 1963 Aristotelian Society was entitled "From Hope and Fear Be Set Free." In that paper he debunks the metaphysical chimera of rationalism and totalizing worldviews, some points of which we discussed here as they overlap with aspects of positive liberty. The hope for negative liberty, by virtue of his "Two Concepts" essay is itself not a metaphysical hope. The reasonable hope that Berlin reminds us of in the end is that freedom means living with the different choices of others because we value our own areas of non-interference. Butler's freedom, too, is reasonable; she exposes ways in which subjects can engage their agency being themselves in relation to social norms. So it is empty hope that we need to be set free from. Reasonable hope, however, is a whole other matter. Reasonable hope, as we will see in Chapter Five enacts agency.

Berlin would, I think, appreciate that we can see his insights as psychological and not just political. I reminded a client recently that he was resentful towards his partner because he was giving up too much negative liberty in being overly accommodating to his spouse. When I reminded him that he was resentful because he was choosing to, or allowing himself to, give up too much negative liberty in the name of peace, he was able to make corrections in his behaviour. He set himself free from a self-imposed tyranny that was tyrannical because it valued non-conflict over integrity of self. This is, I think, a small instance of a subject being able to understand the forces that act on them and so is better able to make decisions about what might be good for them. As Berlin noted with respect to negative liberty, sometimes it is better to reach for freedom over compliance and peace.

On a broader scale, Butler reminds us that debunking power regimes can be a way of expanding what is (normatively) meant by family and who is included as a subject. For the philosophical

practitioner she usefully reminds us to take a look at the formation of a subject's conscience as a means to understanding how they have internalized social norms. These simply are practical ways of understanding how a subject is situated in a social context, and provides the opportunity to look at where their agency might lie.

I have also indicated her explanation of agency as repetition of subjectivities is a useful reminder for survivors. First, because in repeating the horrors, in telling the story, the subject/victim takes away some of the power of the initial impact of (the) injury(ies) and reproduces some of that power as agency in storytelling as her own. This is potentially, and variously, achieved every time the story is told. The more the victim sees how the forces of the trauma have impacted them, the more they tend to take power where they can, creating agency in telling the story. This does not mean that the story is altered in a factual sense, but that the meanings attributed to the story can be shaped by, and for, the survivor. The fact of the perpetrator's act does not have to be the only power that moves forward in time; the survivor's agency can become a factor in the impact of those forces. In some instances for example the retelling of a story can allow victims to gain agency over how they are affected by the facts that make up the story. In retelling victims can change the meaning of an injury's impact over time. Typically and therapeutically the changes in meaning reflect the victim's own healing or recovery and so sense of self. Gaining freedom from the oppressive symptoms of being disempowered by traumas by allowing for variations in how the story/events are meaningfully repeated over time by the victim. Thus, it is a practical example of understanding subjective agency.

Both Berlin and Butler consider freedom and agency reasonable things for individuals and subjects to pursue. Butler considers the pursuit an engagement in life force. Independent of the psychoanalytic tradition, Berlin would definitely agree — negative liberties are tangible and reasonably hopeful affirmations of the value of individual lives and experiences.

To allow for best possible alignment between the concepts of Berlin's negative liberty and Butler's subjective agency, it has to be shown that there is independence (an area of non-interference) in the subject's self-reflective turn. But I do not think it would be a stretch for a Butlerite or a Philosophical Counsellor to encourage the turn to be one of no or minimal outside interference. Yet independent of intention, the turn reflects the subject's coming to terms with themselves. The subject must see herself as the result of social forces but she nonetheless

becomes, and variously “remains,” herself in (the) self-reflective turn(s). The turn brings observable reality to many facets of the subject: The idea of the self that is there before the turn but that can only be identified in the turn, as well as two temporal realities for the subject — the self before the turn and the self after the turn, who has derived power from social forces. Thus, we can assert that in the self-reflective turn the powers of social forces are (potentially) exceeded.

5.0 Conclusion & Chapter Five: Reasonable Hope

5.1 Why hopefulness?

Reasonable hope is a rather specific concept. It evolves out of our thinking about the processes of - and acknowledging the limitations of - contemporary PC. As such, this chapter references arguments from each of the previous chapters and is able to demonstrate that reasonable hope has the following components: (1) Self-reflection that is oriented towards self-understanding. (2) The seeking of subject-specific and useful truths in aiming to understand the subject's experiences. (3) A subject's reasonable hope is based on understanding of their subjectivity not only in terms of social forces but also in terms of personal motivations and values. (4) Finally, reasonable hope evolves out of contexts that recognize that a subject's *agency* stands in relation(s) to the social forces that shape the subject.

We saw in Chapter Four – and we will see it again in Chapter Five - that recognizing and applying these understandings can provide the subject with the reasonable hope of being free and self-expressed – even if “only” in contextual ways. So reasonable hope, as defined here, is very much connected with valuing human agency. One way in which reasonable hope and agency are connected is by way of the recognition, as we will see, that it is reasonable for self-reflective subjects to hope to have agency. In the previous chapter we discussed why it is reasonable to hope to be free, or more specifically, why it is reasonable to hope to experience subjective agency. We saw that both Berlin and Butler advocate that individual subjects aim to understand themselves in relation to social forces and this effort to understand themselves enacts the possibility of subjective agency.

This chapter sets forth a theory about what PC can hope to do - therapeutically and realistically speaking - in devastating circumstances, which is the context in which reasonable hope evolves. In such a context, we can say that the aim of PC therapy is to provide *reasonable* hope and not merely wishful fantasies to support patients in “getting through.” This kind of hope is not easily achieved, but can be therapeutic; therapeutic in the sense of supporting subjects in living with life's realities in manners that align, and enact, the particular subject's values. Grounded in self-

understanding, these kind of knowledge seeking investigations can be supportive in valuing human experiences. That reasonable hope can be therapeutic and does have tangible effects is another point in favour of this hope being substantial and not spurious (– i.e., reasonable).

Such considerations have lead me, in this last chapter to align my use of the term “reasonable hope” with Jonathan Lear’s (2006) concept of “radical hope” and, so as to clarify my use of the term, to argue against the usefulness of Richard Rorty’s (1999) concept of “social hope.” This further contextualizes the theoretical positions taken in this approach to PC. The comparison between Lear’s and Rorty’s positions clarify this thesis’ arguments: Grounded in Ancient practices of self-reflection, investigating human emotions and experiences, distinction making, and reasoning, PC offers the potential for useful insights into, and knowledge about, the human condition. The Crow’s story as discussed by Lear, for example, provides our investigation further opportunity to consider what reasonable hope might look like in a subject-specific context and how it evolves in human experiences.

The parallel for psychotherapy is that, as with cultures being devastated, so too do individuals have to come to terms with various levels of devastation, and then figure out how to live, or whether to live, into their futures given that so much has changed or is falling apart. In this context, one of the therapeutic questions is - given that things will not ever again be what they were, what can we, or should we, hope for?

By understanding, or at least identifying, particular propositions that count as psychological truths for subjects, it turns out that this philosophical practice can be hopeful in the sense of offering the idea that some of a subject’s life circumstances can be made better by focusing on the (salvageable) self selected values of a subject. In such circumstances, something of meaning to the subject can be redeemed, and subject-specific values and motivations can be affirmed. Enacting one’s values in devastating circumstances in this way is not acting on beliefs that are empty or fantastical. What evolves by philosophical reasoning is subject-specific hope – i.e., hope for the freedom to do or enact something that is of value to the subject.

Thus, our position, unlike Rorty’s position, argues for a substantial impact for the subject when practicing this kind of reflective philosophical reasoning. I argue that Rorty’s hope is more akin to wishful thinking - even if also political thinking - than the kind of radical hope that arises out of a subject’s philosophical self-reflections and reasoning. Given our investigation thus far, our

understanding of reasonable hope rises - just as Lear's radical hope rises - in the face of personal devastations (both imagined and real) and our efforts to cope with those realities.¹²⁰ This of course is relevant to the PC's approach to post-traumatic stress. The theoretical foundations established in Chapter's One through Four allow us to further consider and develop Lear's insights so as to demonstrate particular kinds of understandings that can evolve given this approach to PC. In other words, by studying the subjects, Plenty Coups and the Crow in this instance, we can glean subject-specific insights into hope, which also carry the benefit of general knowledge insights about human experiences of being hopeful. Such instances of hope can be empirically verified. (Verified insofar as we can ask subjects whether, given that they are affirming values that are important to them, do they feel more hopeful? Are they better equipped to live into their future than if they were not hopeful?)

As a practitioner I know that experiences of reasonable hope are induced, faced, discussed and investigated in philo-therapeutic contexts. So it is reasonable to say that Philosophical Counsellors have - through practiced, repeated supportive engagements - particular insights into the reasonable and radical hope that evolves when there is some self-reflective awareness in situations of pain and deep personal challenges. This is relevant because, as we noted at the outset of this thesis, in contemporary terms, PC is the teaching and application of philosophical thinking, specifically the application of useful distinction making, to arrive at better understandings of the contents of psychotherapy sessions and so deeper understandings of human experiences. Thinking about reasonable hope in devastating circumstances allows us to acknowledge another of philosophy's contributions to a field of knowledge (the phenomenology of hope) and everyday living. These engagements support reasoned insights about the nature of hope – the nature of reasonable hope. One kind of insight for example, and as we will discuss, is that in instances of reasonable hope, subjects do not know the (material or physical) outcome of their hoping but, what is referenced as knowledge is/are the subject's

¹²⁰ For example, in psychotherapy sometimes the patients allow themselves to feel the terror, smallness and angst of their own finite and vulnerable lives. Oftentimes the patient is not actually "terminal." Therapeutic thought experiments allow the client to consider what would happen if they were to lose aspects of themselves or their lives that are assumed to be fundamentally important to them. In other instances, delusion, paranoia and neurosis can cause patients to think they are losing some thing(s) when, in fact, such losses are not at stake.

values and motivations in devastating circumstances. In instances of radical hope subjects come to know their values in more tangible ways.

Prior to this chapter I argued that philosophical thinking and practices, evident in PC, historically precede and are the conceptual reasonable foundations of contemporary psychotherapeutic practices. For the sake of philosophers, therapeutic practitioners, and the layperson, who may not be familiar with practical philosophy, this thesis has focused on four of those fundamentals of psychotherapeutic practice; namely (1) therapeutic listening – i.e., evaluative and non-normative listening, (2) the investigative and supportive process of therapeutic truth seeking i.e., this also speaks to the issues of truthfulness in therapy contexts; accordingly, the philosophical counselor can make use of the rather specific term “psychological truth”, (3) the practical insight that empathy cultivates particular knowledges, and (4) support for subjective agency. Thus, it is worth stating that philosophy, because it pertains to reasonable investigations, by its nature is clearly about more than wishful thinking. (In this chapter, for example, we draw connections between reasonable hope and the four retrieved aspects of the practice of PC.)

Both Berlin and Nussbaum write that reasoning separates philosophy from religious and magical perspectives, and other approaches to life (see pages 120-121 and 35, respectively). *Reasoning* about ideas is precisely what differentiates philosophy from other practices. Other practices, such as dogmatism or religion, do not value reasonableness as much they do beliefs - whereas philosophy, by contrast, values reasoning. As we have seen in our overview of some historical features, in more contemporary engagements with philosophical reasoning, such reasoning can be flexible and subject-specific as well as theoretically specific, yet remain sound and useful and rely on standards of logic (e.g. in Chapter Three we referenced the law of non-contradiction as a principle as well as a point of differentiation in Butler’s philosophy) and distinction making. Reasoning does not have to be monolithic in its applications. This is another way in which philosophical distinction making facilitates the appropriate use of particular and universal knowledge claims.

We have noted that the principled practices of contemporary psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic practitioners can be traced to the Hellenistic philosophers. While there are numerous other studies pertaining to the therapeutic features of philosophy and philosophical

considerations, I chose to ground this research in Nussbaum's historical writings on subjectivity, listening, philosophy's therapeutic intentions grounded in self-reflection and philosophy's advocacy of personal agency. I have interpreted Nussbaum's argument of Hellenistic philosophical practice as an approach to psychological wellness that is intentionally subject-specific and neither totalizing nor dogmatic. Consequently, there is coherence in the values that supported my clinical and theoretical undertakings. Both philosophical practices advocate empathetic engagements with clients that aim to be appropriately non-normative, but nonetheless advocate for the use of distinction making and reasoning applied to emotional understanding, attending to human experience, as well as investigating subject-specific values.

Pertaining to the effectiveness of philosophical medicine, in Chapter One I wrote that "[t]he ancient philosophers intended for philosophical practice to be, and to be seen, as a healing medical practice that met the criteria of science and reason because its pragmatic benefits were verifiable" (25). These practitioners intended their philosophical approach to be considered soul, or psyche doctoring such that their systems and means of investigation and reasoning could verifiably be shown to support psychic healing. While other philosophers and philosophies have had therapeutic effect or influence, it could be argued that no other philosophers - until recent developments in philosophy and the sciences in the last century and a half - were as thoroughly interested or as intentional in generating psychotherapeutic effects as were the Hellenists. Until recently - with some notable and arguable exceptions - the use of philosophy as therapy fell by the wayside, or was secondary to, or covert in, the conceptual and intellectual developments of philosophy. This is another reason why this particular understanding of contemporary PC's retrieval is noteworthy. These Ancients are the first to make the connection between subjective thinking, self-reflection and mental/psychological well being. This is a truth that deserves resuscitation in our current culture - a culture that can be characterized as obscuring some of philosophy's original insights into mental and psychological wellbeing.

Some of the substantial studies into philosophy as therapy include, for example, expansive fields of scholarly works pertaining to existential philosophy and psychotherapy, Marxist psychotherapy, Cartesian therapy, Levinas' contribution to therapy, Rousseau's therapeutic

agenda, and Leibniz's moral therapy, to name but a few philo-therapeutic references.¹²¹ In addition, particularly rich and prolific work has been done in the fields of existentialism and psychotherapy, with entire journals devoted to these philo-therapeutic investigations.¹²² And for those interested in therapeutic techniques, methodologies and principles in relation to philosophical insights, recent work on Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and the existentialists have been rich fodder. However, with notable exceptions, few contemporary studies acknowledge the precedents set by Ancient philosophical methods. One such exception is Michael Ure's book *Nietzsche's Therapy: Self-Cultivation in the Middle Works*. This book traces a kind of psychological development in Nietzsche's writing from obsessive narcissism to mature individualism through processes of self cultivation that, notably for us, draw on the model of Hellenistic and specifically Roman Stoic *therapeia* (2008).

While it is true that in advocating philosophy as therapy this research could very well have been more specific to a particular philosopher or philosophical system, such an approach would, however, limit the extensiveness of the claims available for these purposes. The claims here aim to historically and conceptually situate contemporary Philosophical Counselling as having useful insights into - and even a genealogical history in - the art and science of self-reflection and the pursuit of *eudaimonia*. Thus, this thesis chooses to emphasize particular points of retrieval that are brought forward from the Ancients into contemporary practice so as to specifically orient the conceptual foundations of contemporary PC and, emphasize philosophy's - and particularly epistemology's - ongoing relevance to human psychological well-being.

¹²¹ Philosophy as Psychotherapy. *Philosophy of Science*. W. Eliasberg. Vol 13. No.3. 1946. Levinas and Depth Psychology. Betsy Cohen. *Jung Journal of Culture and Psyche*. Vol 2 No.2. Spring 2008 (3-45). "Is Philosophy a Sickness or a Therapy?" John W. Davis. *Antioche Review*. (Vol 25 No. 1) Spring 1963. "Practical Philosophy as Therapy: Rousseau and the Pre- Social Origins of Consciousness." James Glass. *Political Theory*. Vol. 4 No. 2 May 1976. 163-184. "The Ontological Argument as an Exercise in Cartesian Therapy." Lawrence Nolan. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 35. No 4. December 2005. 521-562. "Ethics and Aims in Psychotherapy: A Contribution form Kant." John Collderder. *Journal of Medical Ethics*. Vol.24. No. 4 1998. 274-278. (Note to readers: these references will be formatted and moved to the biography in the final draft as per MLA 5.0)

¹²² See for example, Gerd B. Achenbach, Peter B. Raabe, Ran Lahav's essays and books on Philosophical Counselling and Irving Yalom's book on Existential Psychotherapy and there is the *International Journal for Existential Psychotherapy*.

This is the refrain that we saw evident in both Berlin's and Nussbaum's philosophies. It is evident in the clinical work of philosophers like Edwin Hersch and Donna Orange. Moreover, it is a value that motivated Stein, and it is a belief that, more arguably, initiates and terminates phases in Butler's philosophy. It is also a point of compatibility with Richard Rorty's critique of philosophy; i.e., philosophy ought to be relevant to everyday life but is not. However this thesis' alignment with the politics of Rorty's philosophical positions ends there because reasonable hope can be a useful effect of philosophical practice, whereas Rorty holds that this is not the case. I will substantiate these positions momentarily.

Hope is a reasonable and significant outcome of therapeutic work- especially post-traumatic therapeutic work. There are also other results that can measure the effectiveness of the work; including diminished anxiety, better self-understanding, greater self-liking and self-love, an ability to enjoy (subjectively experienced) good moments in life, a reduction in ennui, improved vitality, and recovery from symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Discussion about kinds of therapeutic effectiveness can be engaged in future research. Here though, attention is brought to the idea that if we understand the concept of "reasonable hope" in therapeutic contexts we can summarily capture how PC edifies human experiences in difficult times. This idea of therapy stands in alignment with an application of the four retrieved aspects of the practices of PC.

In order for hope to be reasonable and not just a form of faith or magical thinking, the possibility of hopelessness must be admitted. In Chapter One the idea of a "dialectic" was introduced. This idea is relevant at this point in the thesis because earlier we defined it as a concept that captured the idea of opposing positions on a continuum that characterizes responses around a central philosophical question or issue. For example, "real" and "imagined" are dialectical positions on a continuum that characterizes understandings about how some things are, i.e., have being, in the world. Also consider that "essential or innate" and "socially constructed," for example, are dialectical positions on a continuum of questions pertaining to the ontology and essences of some concepts useful for some experiences and understandings of our world. Similarly, the dialectic of a subjective emotional self in various horrible experiences can be "hope" and "devastation" or, "hope" and "experiences of emptiness or meaninglessness".

The benefit of considering dialectical concepts as existing on a continuum is that as investigators we are not limited to one extreme or the other on the continuum, but we have a

shared interpretative paradigm for understanding differences. Different positions on the continuum can also demonstrate points of convergence between opposite ideas – i.e., as points of shared perspectives. So a subject could conceivably be a realist idealist, as long as they are able to defend the particulars of their perspective in terms of their situatedness on the continuum. For example, a subject might indicate that they believe ideas are not real (things in the material world) but it does matter significantly that they appear to have real effects in the world - Ian Hacking's variation on this position is called dynamic nominalism (2002). The point is that a continuum helps investigators to conceptualize distinctions pertaining to positions on a central question. With dialectical concepts each binary opposition helps inform our understanding of the other; for example, positive informs our understanding of negative, and black informs our understanding of white, and nothingness informs our understanding of being. This is a conceptual tool that dates back to Aristotle's *On Sophistical Refutations On Coming-To-Be and Passing Away* (trans. E.S. Forester, 1955). In other words, because their hope has evolved in a dialectical context, subjects who are hopeful face the reality that they could choose not to be. Devastating circumstances by their nature tend to propel subjects to hopelessness.

Dialectically speaking then, hope happens in the context of a willingness to attend to human devastations. It is in these contexts - if there is to be something more than devastation - subjects learn of the necessity of hope in living forward. So the opposite of hope is hopelessness, and both exist on a continuum that characterizes how individuals face devastations. These points not only recognize the contexts in which hope emerges, but also recognize that instances of being hopeful are not totalizing, rather they are subject-specific and they are chosen by the subject given that they could just as understandably not be hopeful.

Importantly too, to recognize the dialectical context in which reasonable hope is experienced is to apply the first principles of phenomenological investigative methodology. Addressing the questions; what are the most essential features of reasonable hope, and are there shared features of human contexts in which reasonable hope is experienced?

To this point, we can already note that in PC contexts, reasoning, even and especially subject-specific reasoning, precedes hope. In short this is because PC patients are not supported in having unexamined beliefs or merely wishful thoughts; rather, they are supported in understanding as much as they can, or are willing to learn, about themselves and their

experiences. Thus, they are supported in reasoning, self-understanding and, in devastating times, relevant and reasonable hopefulness. Consequently, there is nothing spurious about the kind of hope advocated here. In short this hope is reasonable: 1) because it is meant to be effective and therapeutic and 2) because it pertains to the values and practices evident in the history of PC and 3) because when sought in difficult circumstances it supports subjective agency (which is relative, subjective, coherent and reasonable) and finally, 4) because subjective freedom, itself, is reasonable to hope for.

5.1 Three Kinds of Hope

In considering instances in which philosophers reference hope, I have come to realize that there are generally three different ways in which we use the term. In the first context, hope is like inferred beliefs. This is a weak sense of the term but is evident in ideas like “I hope the sun will rise tomorrow,” “I hope some things will continue to be as they are.” This is a kind of inference based on knowledge of how things have been so far. Thus, it is reasonable - in a weak sense – to believe that similar results, or rules, can be relied on to persist into the future. This is a kind of reasonable hope because it is based on inferences from good evidence. However, from an epistemological perspective, it is not sound knowledge because while we can have justified beliefs about the future, we cannot yet evaluate whether such claims are true and therefore count as knowledge, as the future has not yet happened. So while this weak sense of hope really is about hoping for a particular future - i.e., projecting expectations into the future based on what a subject has come to know about their life and living – and it is reasonable, but it is only reasonable in a weak (inferred) sense.

The second use of the term hope is evident in Richard Rorty’s term “social hope” as discussed in his book *Philosophy and Social Hope* (1999). While Rorty’s hope is an intentional attitude directed into the future, it is not at all, by Rorty’s own definition, reasonable. It is not based on evidence but primarily on desire for idealized ways of social living. It is, admittedly, utopic thinking and not based on reasoning. Initially, our weak sense of reasonable hope might seem like Rorty’s social hope because it is not knowledge about the future but it is hoping about the future. For Rorty, to apply reasoning to the future prospects is not a hopeful act. However, as Rorty’s position elaborates, philosophy can be radically utopic – wanting and creating utopias – without reliance on reason per se. This is evidenced by Rorty’s references and advocacy of

social utopias throughout his 1999 book. Here I argue that our weak sense of reasonable hope is still a more useful concept than Rorty's because it acknowledges and works with the limits of knowledge, as opposed to giving up the possibility of knowing all together.

The third use of the term "hope" is "radical hope." I equate this with a strong sense of reasonable hope. This hope evolves out of desperate and devastating circumstances in life. It comes after reasoning, and after there is acknowledgement that what we know, or can know, has taken us to the edge of supporting how we cope with being (vulnerable) in the world.¹²³ This kind of hope is akin to stepping into the unknown because it exists at the juncture of knowing what we know and acknowledging what we do not know. Survivors of trauma know these truths about hope. We will see that at points of having to reach for radical hope, our understandings have brought us to recognize that there are things simply beyond our grasp and control. Thus, in a manner of speaking, aspects of this hope exist on the other side of the reasoning. So reasoning takes us to this hope.

As we will see, this hope also recognizes that there are things that hopeful subjects do not understand, or cannot really understand, and that understanding soothes painful emotions only so far, and therefore we have to hope, in the strong sense, in order to live forward. We will see how hope in devastating circumstances can cause us to be courageous, and/or motivated by subject-specific values. In this way this strong sense of hope, reasonable (and radical) hope, leads one to define, reaffirm, or retrieve, not necessarily a way of life but a subject's values. This strong sense of reasonable hope projects subject-specific intentions into the future and it does so with a notable ambiguity that recognizes the limitations of a subject's knowing.

Each of these kinds of hope shares some core characteristics. In the first place they share the feature of being future-oriented desires. All hope reflects the desire for something, or someone, to live or survive into the future. Secondly, they share some recognitions of human vulnerability – even if, in a weak sense, the vulnerability in question is that humans cannot predict or know the future, so we hope with respect to it. In the third place, each of these kinds of hope is

¹²³ There is a shift here between using the references "we" and "subjects." This happens in psychotherapeutic writing as well. Theorists often attempt to demonstrate objectivity by referencing "subjects," but in fact what we are learning about subjects is something that "we," patients and theorists, relate to.

characterized by intentional attitudes that come out of subjective contexts of human experiences. However, unlike these points about the genus of hope (and specifically the two other kinds of hope), radical hope requires that subjects project retrieved values into the future.

A subject's values are retrieved in instances of radical hope, because such subjects have to bring their values back, or forward, from the brink of annihilation. It is already evident that hope – unlike wishful thinking – does not necessarily exist as opposed to, or in opposition to reasoning. Weak hope is based on kinds of reasoning. Radical hope exists at the edge of reasoning and can be understood (even if, as we will see, in limited ways) by reasoning. This point leads us back to Rorty.

Richard Rorty is, arguably, one of contemporary philosophy's clearest and loudest voices against philosophy's social relevance. It is therefore pertinent to differentiate this thesis' position from his. Unlike Rorty's indications that philosophy ought to be relevant to everyday life but unfortunately is not, I indicate that philosophy ought to be relevant to everyday life, and can be seen to be – especially in the psychotherapeutic domain.

Prior to further situating this work in contrast to an important contemporary philosopher who argues against philosophy being able to support useful processes of reasoning and investigation, I want to complete this chapter's preliminary remarks by addressing who, and what, this research aims to speak to. As indicated, it is my intention that these investigations might speak not only to academics but also to trauma survivors and trauma therapists; which is another important reason for ending this thesis on considerations pertaining to hope. After all, sometimes in a therapeutic process there is the need to hope beyond what reasoning has to offer and at other times there is the need to reason beyond a weak sense of hope.

In the face of social and cultural fallibility - and specifically challenges pertaining to false memories - I think this work offers a take on some of what philosophy has to add to discussions about valid truth claims pertaining to trauma and childhood trauma memories. Because epistemologists, as was elaborated in Chapter Two, are interested in discussing and debating issues of what counts as knowledge and truth, they (we) have critical and evaluative tools to offer the survivor who has sought therapy to put their personal narrative together as truthfully and as coherently as possible. Moreover, ongoing therapeutic effects can be supported by reasoning and hope, as we will see.

We saw in Chapter Two that the skills of the epistemologist are relevant to trauma survivors because, due to the ways in which trauma survivors and their understandings of life are devastated and destabilized, they proceed cautiously in putting their lives back together. For example, a characteristic of trauma survivors is that when there is no clear visual and sequential memory, they are very (reasonably) critical and cautious in making inferences based on what their trauma symptoms seem to point to. To elaborate, patients who are survivors often want to evaluate whether their powerful non-intentional body reactions, memories and flashbacks during intimacy, for example, are sufficient to make claims about the specifics of their trauma experiences. Philosophical investigations have some specific insights and points of investigative stability, and credibility to offer.

Epistemologists can incorporate understandings that the criteria for evaluating distinct truth claims are context and subject-specific. Epistemologists can also practically apply the recognition that ontological claims are evaluated differently than psychological claims. Epistemologists recognize that the criteria of coherence, fallibilism, deduction and empirical evidence are some means to determining verifiability and truthfulness. Moreover, in the practice of PC, the strengths of particular claims are evaluated relative to the subject, the data, and extent and implications of those claims. For these reasons, and in reference to these distinctions introduced and discussed in Chapter Two, philosophers – specifically epistemologists - can be particularly useful in contributing their expertise to evaluating truth and knowledge claims about trauma in social contexts; whether in courts of law or therapeutic or theoretical contexts. Moreover, their ability to make distinctions about kinds of truths offer traumatized patients the opportunity to explore experiences in a primarily non-normative context that aims to understand instead of pathologize. In the field-specific domain of psychotherapy this often provides more textured and subject-specific understandings for coping with traumas. In addition, the potential for subjects to understand how they have been affected and shaped by their experiences and surrounding social forces, reasonable hope aligns patients with agency. Thus trauma patients can be hopeful about regaining, or claiming, key features and aspects of themselves in such empathetically investigative processes. The PC therapist gains insights into values and motivations by empathetic means and in devastating circumstances this can promote hope and agency.

To summarize, in addition to offering a willingness to listen and support best possible self-understanding, philosophical counsellors can direct trauma survivors to reasonable hope, where necessary. Trauma survivors – akin in this chapter to “survivors of devastations” – are given no therapeutic, or humane, benefits when offered false or spurious hope. By spurious I mean that such offerings are empty or are so far into the future so as to not be of benefit to the here and now for the survivor. By contrast, reasonable hope has tangible effects for living through devastations.

For instance, reasonable hope means that while it might not be reasonable for an abuse survivor to hope to never again have flashbacks, it is reasonable to hope – in the weak inferred sense of the word – that once they have worked through a number of issues in therapy that they can support themselves in working through a flashback without needing sedatives. Or, it becomes reasonable to hope that they can go for days or weeks without being triggered into having a flashback. A radical form of reasonable hope might look like a thought similar to “even though I have lost my naïve faith in the goodness of humanity; I have faith in my own inner strength to help me survive.”

By contrast, Rorty’s version of social hope, in the face of an abuse survivor’s experiences, might be to hope that eventually in the right kind of social democracy there will never be violence, torture or sexual assault again. Obviously though, this version of hope offers no clear or specific benefit to the psychological well being of the survivor. Nor, for many would there be a trace of achievability in such a hope. Granted, for some survivors, the motivation to make the world a better place might give them a reason to live, but this does speak to the kind of social usefulness of hope that Rorty has in mind. Moreover, this kind of hope would be useful to only some patients. So, if this were the only definition of hope it would be an imposed application of the concept, as opposed to the hope that evolves out of a subject’s own hard won acknowledgement and understanding of their circumstances.

For these reasons, I suggest that for the Philosophical Counsellor, Rorty’s hope is at worst spurious and at best applicable only for some subjects. It is too idealistic and future-oriented to be of consistent use to a survivor. By contrast, all radical hope recognizes the extent to which a subject is/was devastated by their experiences, and nonetheless hopes for a better future with less pain and away from the acuteness of the injuries.

5.2 Rorty's Position

Let us now look more closely at Rorty's position on the relationship between knowledge and personal flourishing or happiness. In his book, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, Rorty writes that, "I want to demote the quest for knowledge from the status of end-in-itself to that of one more means towards greater human happiness"(xii). Throughout this discussion we have been able to discuss wellness and aspects of various kinds of knowledge without necessitating knowledge as an end in itself. We have taken knowledge – especially self knowledge- as a means towards greater happiness. Evidently, just as in the tradition of soul doctors, Rorty orients philosophy's usefulness to the practice's contribution to human happiness. And, as has been advocated in this thesis, his position is against imposing a totalizing philosophical perspective. Yet, while it is true enough that happiness and knowledge are not necessarily compatible, there is no need to promote a separation between the concepts. Certainly we have been discussing contexts in which happiness and knowledge can be compatible. So let us investigate further to determine where Rorty stands in relation to reasonable hope.

We have noted that the commitment to epistemology as connected to human happiness is a position akin to the perspective of the Hellenistic philosophers, as well as Hersch and Orange. We have also seen that none of those perspectives necessarily advocates for a monolithic or totalizing philosophical perspective or system. On the contrary, we have discovered the possibility that the coherences between happiness and knowledge do not need to be, or are not, imposed, rather we have revealed that the relationship between these two concepts is subjectively discovered, created and affirmed in therapeutic processes.

In my opinion, we lose nothing as practitioners in noting that human experiences of the relationships between knowledge and happiness are created in some instances. To say so, especially in a PC context, is simply to say that participants do not think it is harmful to explore and investigate such relationships. Certainly philosophical history and psychological practice point to the usefulness of such discussions.

In pursuing happiness through knowledge, even though there might be some discontent and upset along the way in specific therapeutic processes, these variables are to be expected in such subjective, sometimes emotional, and always non-imposed explorations. Even though there

might be upset along the way, psychological engagements aim to keep a big picture perspective that values health, as expressed in happiness and vitality, as the subject's objective or aim. It is worth noting that at Hersch's Psychological Level (Level G) the bias is connected to the idea of greater *eudaimonia*. In other words, psychotherapeutic work often pragmatically aims for greater human flourishing through increased self-knowledge, which as a process can sometimes be disconcerting - as has been discussed in Chapter One's reference to the Socratic *elenchus*. Thus, to say that the relationship between happiness and reason deserves more investigation, and also may be created, is not to say that it is artificial or unreal. Rather, the relationship is real in meaningful ways as evidenced by the fact that we can make and test empirical claims at Level G.

The knowledge that arises in such contexts does so because subjects direct their investigations and cares to such issues. Thus, Rorty's arguments against happiness and quests for knowledge are not useful for investigations such as this one - investigations that aim to address human suffering. This suggests that Rorty's position against philosophy is too general to recognize that some relationships between knowledge seeking and happiness are evidently beneficial at the psychological level.

Granted, by indicating that there are many means to happiness, Rorty is indicating that knowledge does not have to be *the* means to happiness. But this is an obvious claim that simply depends on how one defines happiness. For example, if one were able to claim to be truly happy by eating lollipops then knowledge of lollipops does not have to be in place for happiness to be achieved via lollipop. It is enough to eat lollipops and be happy. However, there are different kinds of human happiness.

The level of non-reflective engagement with life that the above lollipop example demonstrates, does not interest most inquisitive minds or introspective individuals, and certainly such an observation would not interest most philosophers. Although it is true that many individuals may be content with engaging what makes them happy in life at this less reflective level, this does not take from the fact that there are other subjects who enjoy using their subject-specific experiential awarenesses and self-reflective capacities. So for those who are interested, those subjects with particular cares oriented towards self-reflection or the pursuit of knowledge, there

can evidently be various relationships with introspection and in the pursuit of eudaimonia, which is a point that stands in contrast to Rorty's position.

On one hand it seems a curious thing to promote the idea of a split between self-reflective happiness (eudaimonia) and some self-knowledge. At the very least - as the other philosophers we have studied have indicated - self-understanding has to be in place for meaningful (to the patient) happiness to be experienced. Patients can know that they are experiencing happiness, or not, or variously, and so they simultaneously have by way of self-reflection, the potential for knowledge about what makes them happy.

On the other hand, Rorty's point notes that there is a way in which the relationship between self-reflective knowledge and happiness can be question begging; i.e., self-reflective knowledge is assumed to be related to happiness because we cannot have self-reflective happiness without some self-knowledge. The claim, if made explicit would be that for both concepts, self-knowledge is the constant and so is the assumed, or question-begging, concept. Yet, in response to this concern, I again offer the empirical evidence of two thousand years of investigation, and in particular the result from the art and science of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy over the past one hundred and fifty years. There are some notable relationships between these concepts and these relationships have proven useful for human development and health.

Thus, the relationship between happiness and knowledge is simply a pragmatic insight that withstands tests of fallibility and is verifiable.¹²⁴ Moreover, in the field-specific domain, if one

¹²⁴ A review of psychological, sociological and philosophical literature can be referenced to support this claim. However it is true that many, if not most, studies about ignorance and happiness hold a perspective that favours knowledge. Nonetheless, it appears that most of the substantial research does favour self-reflection and knowledge in relation to happiness. See for example; "Subjective Well-being: Three Decades of Progress" in the *Psychological Bulletin* 125:276-302. Also see Jennifer Lyke's "Insight, but not self-reflection is related to subjective well-being" *Personality and Individual Difference*, 46:66-70 (2009). For a cross-cultural perspective that affirms the relationship between knowledge and happiness see Yaniv Shani's 2008 research on the effects of modernization on Kuwaiti women in the *Journal of Economic Psychology* (29:643-653). Potential counter examples can also be found in John Just and Jaime Napier's "Why are Conservatives Happier than Liberals" in *Psychological Sciences* (2008) 19:562-572. However, Just and Napier's study has been criticized for not having an adequately developed definition of happiness. As noted at the outset, because much of the research favours

were to study the relationships between the concepts of happiness and knowledge, then we could easily imagine that a scientific observer would be able to draw correlations between a subject's levels of self-reflection and understanding, and various levels of self-knowledge, and levels of subjectively experienced eudaimonia (possibly measured as intensities of happiness). So it is easy to speculate that these are, or could be, domains of scientific expertise - or better, for us, phenomenological expertise.

As we have noted, in an effort to move away from what Rorty sees as the limitations of philosophy, he would have us give up knowledge for hope. Certainly his is a provocative kind of honesty about epistemic limitations. Thus, he advocates replacing the desire for knowledge with claims that are hopeful (about society or social relationships) (xix). Hope, Rorty argues, indicates that we cannot know what is best or right, we can only hope for best ideas about what an evolved society (or life) might look like (18). Given that there are so many things we cannot know, it is more practical, according to Rorty, to name hope as what subjects want - i.e., hope is what we want as the best possibility for both others and themselves. In this way we can, or ought to, give up seeking knowledges and verifying knowledge claims, and rather just hope, and so presumably act (although Rorty does not make this point about action) in favour of the utopian ideals of social democracy.

However, contrary to Rorty's assumption, the argument here is not simply that what we hope for can be known. It is, rather, that in seeking knowledge about one's world, one's experiences and one's self, that subjects come to have the power to make themselves - by way of different kinds of reasoning - hopeful and/or, as we saw in Chapter Four, (subjective) agents. In a manner of speaking, this thesis' approach can be differentiated from Rorty's by noting a difference in

knowledge - a practical bias of such research - the relationship between unhappiness and ignorance is difficult to support because the ignorant would have to become knowledgeable in order to evaluate and contrast their experiences, so an accurate investigation is difficult. Yet again this does not mean that the more ignorant are not happy. However, statistical data does suggest that they are less happy than their more knowledgeable counterparts. See also: <http://www.freakonomics.com/2009/01/15/is-ignorance-really-bliss/> and http://www.estebanvalvo.com/files/teaching_files/Ignorance_v2.pdf

perspective that originates in theoretical orientations: from my perspective, insight into hope comes from aiming to understand human experiences and not from what I, or Rorty, want subjects to hope for, or want hope to mean. As we will see, it is interesting to note that when faced with true radical hope, what subjects hope for is only partially known because hope is based in present values. Unfortunately, Rorty's totalizing anti-epistemology perspective prevents insights into the particulars of these human experiences. Such a perspective is unfortunate because in devastating circumstances, strong reasonable hope, similar to Lear's radical hope, can be necessary simply to continue to live into the future - Rorty's version of hope does not offer such tangible results for survivors.

It is already evident that there are many reasons why the kinds of hope advocated here are instances of reasonable hope. Primarily we can see that these kinds of hope value reasoning and knowledge, which makes this account reasonable. Thus, for example, because reasonable hope includes considerable clinical (i.e., empirical) data and pragmatic evaluations of psychological theories, this kind of knowledge gives us reasonable hope for ongoing therapeutic effects, and for continued benefits to arise from self-reflection. As we noted earlier, weak hope is an inferred belief, which is based on historical knowledge (versus a deductive argument), and reasonable wishes for the future. Hope in this sense acknowledges the unpredictable future. A strong reasonable hope, or radical hope, is hope that happens at the limits of reasoning, and so also relies on subject-specific reasoning that recognizes an unpredictable future. In other words, strong reasonable hope has to do with values and does not focus so much on the importance of specific outcomes. By virtue of this hope's ontogenesis, it is inherently ambiguous in ways different from weak reasonable hope.

In Jonathan Lear's summation of the Crow's story of cultural devastation, we learn that for a subject to arrive at a point of having to be hopeful, they meaningfully reflect on the knowledge they have, and do not have, about their world (2006). As such, and in such circumstances, subjects often have to take into account what they do know so as to survive. However, given the acknowledgeable limits of reasoning in dealing with devastating circumstances, and because loss devastates assumptions, there is some limit to the knowledge and values directed into the future. Thus, when individuals want to live through such circumstances, this kind of radical hoping is reasonable yet ambiguous. Consequently, the hope that is therapeutically advocated

here is the hope that emerges from reasoning and is enacted by acknowledging reasoning's limitations.

It is worth recognizing, prior to going further, a common experience of self-investigative journeys is that it not only leads to being hopeful, it is also the case that some of the time such journeys and some devastating experiences also lead to nihilism – as Kierkegaard, for example, shares in his writings.¹²⁵ Yet, consider that nihilism is a struggle precisely because, in the face of the evidence (say that life can sometimes be seen to be meaningless), we humans often find ourselves conflicted because there is the experience of wanting to be hopeful.

From a Steinian perspective we might say, if hopeless were a comfortable place from which to live (i.e., if we could be motivated by nihilism), then nihilism would be more pervasively a part of life, or there would be more stories and theories about living life nihilistically. Granted it could be argued that for various conventional reasons many such stories are likely suppressed so this could be considered a weak argument. However, the onus would be on this counter position to demonstrate or point to cultural and social expressions, or personal creative expressions, that value being “motivated”- if one could be - from a place of nihilism. From a vitality perspective I have found that individuals who argue for nihilism are, by virtue of their arguing for it, are arguing against it.

By the same empirical reasoning, there are considerable numbers of individuals who try to be happier than their circumstances dictate and so they seek reasoning and sometimes hope in addition to acknowledging what is potentially meaningless. In the face of better self-knowledge, hopelessness does not facilitate living forward in self-directed and intentional ways – i.e., when one is hopeless one does not attempt to manifest one's values in life. Thus, in this context we can say that in the face of self-knowledge only hope can motivate living forward given the realities of life's sometimes, and ultimately always, dire circumstances.

From a Steinian perspective one might also say that when hopelessness is a factor in living, then this is evident in the vitality, or lack of vitality, of the individual. This would, according to Stein, limit an individual's “flowering” or coming into full bloom as themselves, which is a claim that

¹²⁵ See *Either Or*. London 1992.

deserves debate at the psychological level (Level G). Humans do sometimes encounter hopelessness in which instances we find ourselves not being motivated from that place of wanting to live vitally. It is very difficult to live (in engaged ways) from such a perspective. So as therapists, “hopeless” is an experience we acknowledge, and are inclined to be biased against as a fixed position or goal of inquiry, because the therapeutic goal is vital health.

In philo-therapeutic contexts, various methodologies and tools for distinction making can be used in empathetic and power sensitive engagements with a patient’s understandings (meaning attributions) about how their life experiences affect their sense of well-being and flourishing into the future. Moreover, I have pointed out that the quest for knowledge does not have to be monolithic or totalizing in its methodologies as there are many relevant and distinct methodologies that generate different kinds of knowledges and distinct truth claims in particular contexts.

For these reasons too I do not take hope as an alternative to some knowledge(s), or to some potential knowledges. The kind of hope I have in mind - the reasonable hope that particularly evolves out of facing life’s challenges as well as traumas - is based on some knowledge. And, in some instances it is based on the seeking of knowledge and understanding as there are some things that cannot be known, especially earlier on in facing challenges.

Nonetheless, in recovering from devastations it follows that just as the knowledges that generate reasonable hope are not monolithic, neither are the subject-specific accounts of hope. Or otherwise stated, hope must evolve out of life’s circumstances, thus, specific instances of reasonable hope reflect the reasoning processes, field-specific knowledge quests and lived realities of subjects who hope. Thus, in his contrasting hope with knowledge Rorty obscures the potential for understanding the real life contexts in which hope arises.

Moreover, Rorty’s social hope - which he intends to use to replace what he calls Platonic dualistic thinking – can only be speculative and utopian (xii). One can take various positions, as the Ancient Hellenists did, for and against Plato’s theories which is to set up “Plato” or “not Plato” as potential positions on a dialectical continuum that addresses questions of how to interpret the world, or whether to make use of Plato’s distinctions in interpreting the world. It is also the case that Plato generated some resonating insights; insights that are variously close to accurate, or at least, are highly useful for thinking about human experiences because so many

subsequent thinkers reference his work as points of departure when trying to understand experiences of the world in abstract ways; i.e., beyond being descriptive of experiences. Moreover, because Rorty does not want to assume Plato, or dialogue with Plato, this does not mean that all quests for knowledge and understanding need to be abandoned. The phenomenological approach for example, generates knowledge claims that reference no interpretative system other than the subject's experiences. In these investigations, with the exception of the first chapter we have made various knowledge claims and have by choice, not of necessity, made few references (explicit or direct) to Plato.

So again it is worth noting that in the face of the human pains that philosophical counsellors bear witness to in their day-to-day work, Rorty's version of hope reflects a privileged position that appears not to be grounded in the real agonies of everyday life. His perspective is more concerned with larger-scale social politics than the contributions philosophy can make to everyday people struggling with life's meanings (as well as those who struggle to survive, and those who seek the best possible psychic wholeness they can, given their life's circumstances). We can also note that the kind of pragmatism that is relevant in the therapeutic domain is more refined and field and subject-specific than Rorty's rather extensive generalizations pertaining to all truth claims. Obviously, as we have seen, Philosophical Counsellors do not use one concept of truth but apply their thinking skills to obtain best possible contextual truths that are both verifiable and effective.

In his reflections on social hope Rorty seems intent – if not fixated - on fighting against absolute and universal truths. This is notable given that his earlier writings reflect a more moderate view and tone that rejects the limiting privileged positions of universalizing claims and yet, simultaneously argues that relative truths are useful (*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 1979). Moreover, this earlier book was an insightful and provocative engagement with how we have come to know things and then questioned how to go about changing our (potentially) socially limited ways of knowing.

However, the later book, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, is dismissive of anything that could hint at universal claims or is overly committed to traditional philosophical systems. Granted, in this later work he does a poetic and genuinely personal job of representing the kind of dialectical

engagements that many of us have with universal and specific concepts (although Rorty would not use the term dialectical).

Rorty is seemingly impatient with a lack of, what he envisions as, social progress (18). Additionally, we can see that he is of the opinion that the subject, or subjects, who has/have the interpretive power, is the one whose version of truth controls outcome (15). In other words, sometimes in the traditional model, the “bullies” win even when they should not. However Rorty’s solution is not really a resolution of the issues because Rorty remains conceptually committed to the old monolithic paradigms (as he assumes such paradigms in contrasting his position with theirs), he does not cope with these paradigms *in some ways* failing, while allowing for different kinds of progress in *others ways* that are distant from entrenched historical perspectives. It appears that given frustration with these philosophical challenges, he just walks away from the game.

I am curious about why Rorty appears to give up seeking an intersubjective approach – which would be consistent with his hero Dewey? Why is he not willing to find out where there are points of compatibility between differing parties and then build alliances in accordance with the respective subject’s values? If he were to acknowledge these questions he would be acting in a manner consistent with recognizing that truth is relative and truth claims are subject to the tests of fallibilism. However, in a move atypical of being a pragmatist, Rorty wants to cut off the discussion prior to discerning what the pertinent claims are and whether, and to what extent, there can be shared verifiable claims given different worldviews.

In response to the suggestion that he is simply dropping out of certain discussions, Rorty would likely respond, “actually, I’m just trying to have a different kind of discussion” – a new language game, if you will (xxiii). On one hand I understand that if you are going to give up the concept of there being anything that can be discussed as an ideal, then a new language game is in order. However it seems evasive for Rorty’s way around the struggle for best truths and understanding to be to give up fighting for truth altogether and to fight instead for a whole other (new) way of doing things (8). He is saying, let us not talk about truth but let us talk about how we might live together.

To my mind, this approach can be, ironically, taken to indicate an underlying combative stance. This is a slightly different take on the point above; i.e., instead of resolving the conflict he is just

going to get the results he wants by different, less transparent, means. If it is going too far to claim that Rorty retains a combative stance, then at a minimum we can note that his stance is dualistic as evident in his claim, for example, that liberals are “just luckier” than “bullies” (14-15).

In this example in aligning “universalists” with bullies, Rorty indicates that he recognizes that once we give up an imposed approach to reason, or reference one version of truth or morality that trumps all other versions, then it is likely that one subject cannot prove to another that their particular position is *the* correct position (15). But even if we are able to find intersubjective positions (that do not necessitate there being *the* correct position), he argues that because bullies do not care about the reasonableness of the “lucky one’s” logic, we cannot convince the bullies (15). So Rorty’s response is, “why bother”? Let’s not bother to convince the bullies they are wrong. Let us play a different game. This way the “lucky ones” are no longer required to make the effort to engage “bullies” at this level of discussion. Obviously this is not an advocacy for combat or war given distinct positions; it is, rather, an encouragement to be compliant with lived realities as Rorty envisions them. It is as if his version of hope takes the political position of “let’s just try accepting these differences, and create societies that can live with these differences as opposed to wasting effort to have lots of discussions about our differences.” However, it is not clear what living with differences would mean if participants do not make the effort to understand these differences. Moreover, we need to grasp differences so as to eventually be able to point to (meaningful) similarities.

We do have some textual evidence to support the inference that Rorty’s position is due, at least in part, to not wanting to engage the real and particular challenges and conflicts of living and that he has lost patience with trying to change or engage what he observes as existential realities of humans living together. For example, in his coming to this position on social hope he writes that; “...accepting your finitude. The latter means, among other things, accepting that what matters most to you, may well be something that may never matter much to most people” (13). This is an experiential truism but it does not evidently lead to Rorty’s conclusion.

To give up a value because others do not adhere to the same values is to think more of the opinions of others than of one’s own opinions. A subject not standing behind his or her own values, suggests that a client might need to do more introspective work to determine if their

values really are their own and thus are important to the subject. If this person were a hypothetical client then I would encourage them to look at how they substantiate their values.

My position is in contrast to one that says to philosophers “let us just accept that the masses do not like reasoning. Let us, therefore, give up reasoning. Instead, philosophy can usefully offer society the ideals, and possibly the practices, of social utopias.” So, while Rorty’s writing enjoyably brings together philosophical issues in personal ways, at a certain level he does not address or engage the conflicts inherent in human living. Were we to have the opportunity to engage him in a PC session, I would urge him to consider – likely re-consider - that investigating points of conflict can provide additional useful insights into human experiences. I appreciate his efforts to retrieve philosophy’s social relevance, however, I would encourage Rorty to look more at the consequences of his position not just for humans living together – e.g. that they might be denied insights into similarities and difference – but also for those individuals who really need what (strong reasonable) hope has to offer.

There are a number of points that I could raise here pertaining to the practicalities of intersubjective agreement and how such approaches can be deeply compatible with the theories being presented in this thesis. Such points might be especially relevant for the non-philosopher. Unfortunately, it is not entirely relevant to elaborate those points here

To return to a more succinct and relevant point, in contrast to Rorty’s position on philosophy, I do not think that philosophers have to back away from their conventional social contributions – i.e., the generation of insights, focused analysis, including multi-dimensional and distinct theoretical analysis, as well as creative and, often times, reasonable insights – to be of social use. Philosophers can continue to offer these contributions as useful to social progress. Moreover, this approach to PC and this encouragement of Rorty to express more understanding of other’s positions, matches a Deweyian perspective. Dewey too, thought that useful kinds of objectivity were achieved by seeking as much intersubjective agreement as you can (234). He was not about maintaining totalizing or contrarian positions. Rather, Dewey’s approach aimed in a similar way to achieve what is achieved in a therapeutic context; intersubjective agreement. Intersubjective agreements between practitioner and patient are the explicit bias of psychotherapeutic investigations. Such considerations can be considered ontological, epistemological or field-specific. Regardless, it could be noted at the pragmatic level that it

matters only that they are discussed, or are of interest and use, to the patient, or not; certainly in such circumstances, the criteria of social usefulness can be met by these means.

Finally, I would like to point to a small category error in Rorty's definition of hope in his essay "Failed Prophecies, Glorious Hope" (202). There he writes the glorious hope he envisions is based on caring for others and oriented towards better social structures. My critique would be that the values of caring for others and wanting a better social structure are not hope. Rather, they point more to the enacting of virtues or values when being hopeful. Clearly, enacting values and virtues can be something someone does without having to be hopeful. Moreover, improved social structures can be what one hopes for but this does not tell us anything about the essence of hope.

By contrast the features of hope discussed here are grounded in a multi-layered theoretical distinctions approach that enables the use of context-specific reasoning, and so, knowledge. Our version of hope is a real response to life's challenges. It acknowledges what one knows and what one does not know, and so points to the possibilities and limitations of one's subjectivities. Lacking these useful insights, Rorty's definition of hope is better and more accurately called – even by Rorty - utopian speculation (234). In the PC domain, we deal with the negative effects of psychically engrained responses and because we value useful kinds of truths for coping with the world, and more generally and fundamentally, we value self-understanding, then utopian speculations (by definition wanting what one cannot have in this world because utopias are by definition no where) are not helpful. In the PC domain we value "here and now" engagements with living; engagements that simultaneously acknowledge present circumstances and the reasonable possibility of a better (than now) future. In short, while we can be virtuous or values-driven because we are hopeful; virtues and values in and of themselves are not about hope so much as they are about ethics.

5.3 The Radical and Reasonable Hope of Jonathan Lear's Position

In comparison to Rorty, Jonathan Lear's theory of hope is grounded in the realities of human experiences. His insights reveal the potential to learn something about the circumstances in which humans engage radical hope. It is relevant to the therapeutic process that such insights are guided through what he refers to as a kind of philosophical and anthropological lens (i.e., a very

subjective, and experientially based investigations) that emphasizes the retelling of a story, thus affirming that narratives can generate specific knowledge claims (7).

The story in question pertains to the devastation and adaptation of the Crow Nation to Western colonization. It is recounted through a narrative of the Chief of the Crow, Plenty Coups. In attending to the Crow's experiences we can better understand how his concept of radical hope distinguishes between the kind of weak sense of hope we use everyday and the kind of hope required when we face traumatic realities. It is in looking at traumatic or devastating realities that we are able to address the very difficult challenges of human beings living in the world. It is in the face of tragedies that radical hope is relevant.

At the time of their way of life ending, Plenty Coups said: "when the last Buffalo went away the hearts of his people fell to the ground.... After this nothing happened" (59). The extent to which the Crow lost their way of life is captured by the phrase "... after the last buffalo ... nothing happened." For Lear this is a way of signifying the Crow's tragedies and characterizes the kinds of deaths they experienced. And yet, paradoxically, there is enough of the Crow spirit living forward to allow the telling of their story. So something did happen after the last buffalo, it was just like nothing they knew before and, in a manner of speaking, it was also something they could not know (or relate to). Thus, there were deaths. Yet evidently when there is hope there also exists the possibility of something - if only a remnant - living through the devastation. This radical hope, thus, originates in profound loss.

To appreciate the significance of what remains, Lear makes the extent of loss and death for the Crow empathetically understandable: For instance, for the Crow, the planting of coup sticks indicated a warrior's way of life. However, that way of life and those behaviours were given up in the Crow's adaptation to being conquered by Europeans. Consequently, the act of planting of coup sticks, literally, became unintelligible (60).

They became conquered people in such radical ways that the actions that made up the core of their social structure, and by which they had previously defined themselves, were no longer meaningful. So much of the Crow way of life had to be given up in order for them to live at all. Another way to think about the extensiveness of the colonization is to consider that even what the Crow previously thought made them happy could not reasonably make them happy any longer. Lear writes that:

The Crow had a conception of happiness, a conception of what life was worth living for. They lived in relation to a spiritual world in which they believed God had chosen them to live a certain kind of life. Happiness consisted in living that life to the full. This was an active and unfettered pursuit of a nomadic hunting life in which their family life and social rituals could prosper... with the destruction of this way of life came the destruction of the end goal – the telos - of that life. The problem, then, was not simply that they could not pursue happiness in the traditional ways. Rather their conception of what happiness is could no longer be lived. The characteristic activities that used to constitute the good life ceased to be intelligible acts. A crucial blow to their happiness was a loss of the concepts with which their happiness had been understood (55).

The excessive destruction that resulted from the white man's engagement with the Crow is also evidenced in the records that show that over fifty thousand horses were slaughtered so as to literally destroy the Native value system (58). The story of devastation makes clear that in order to live forward there is a break in a weak sense of hope – i.e., inferred knowledge based on how things have been in the past. Prior to these devastations they had reasonably hoped to be able to continue with their way of life. However, in the face of devastation weak senses of reasonable hope are no longer sufficient. Weak senses of hope neither indicate how to live in the post-devastation paradigm nor is this kind of hope enough to motivate intentional living forward in the face of devastation.

This is some of what lies behind Lear's recognition that for the Crow their subject-specific "practical reasoning became attenuated"(57). Thus, it follows that if they were to proceed, their system of reasoning needed new points of reference, new ideals – or radically modified perspectives on old ideals. This was precisely because the material and embodied cultural values the Crow had come to rely on had been ravaged. Their cultural cornerstones were devastated; only hope allowed them to express intentions as to which pieces might live forward.

This is also how survivors of trauma cope; they assess the situation, assess that some things have definitely been lost and try to figure out how to live forward. Susan Brison captures this point in a personal way in her book *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (2002). She writes:

I understand the appropriateness of what a friend described to me as a Jewish custom of giving those who have outlived a brush with death new names. The trauma has changed me forever, and if I insist too often that my friends and family acknowledge it, that's because I'm afraid they don't know who I am (20).

Here Brison acknowledges the extent to which she is changed and fundamentally altered; she questions whether she can any longer know (her own self or) who she is. In therapy, significant aspects of recovery work notably include acknowledging the death and near death aspects of trauma, as well as a willingness on the part of the victim(s) for there to be some self-retrieved values or traits to live forward.

It is worth considering a Steinian interjection at this point. In devastating times when aspects of the Psycho-Physical Individual are injured or taken away or used as reasons for incarceration and/or injury, a Steinian might note, or explore, whether, in such times the PPI comes to rely more on its spiritual self – in terms of having to tune into their values and motivations? Nonetheless, as practitioners, in devastating times we are required to relate to the emotional aspect of the individual and to learn how, and whether, they will sort their way through the devastations they are living – so we try to tune in to the individual's spiritual self.

As told by Lear, experiences of radical hope affirm that injured subjects need to recognize that destruction has occurred if they are to move beyond its occurrence. Certainly such statements are also relevant to healing processes that move from trauma and despair to hope. In such circumstances, survivors have to come to terms with the realities of what they have lost. Willing engagement and evaluation of experiences in the process of PC means - as it did for the Crow - recognition of horrific realities and existential truths.

In devastation recovery, because so much is lost, something “more” is required in experiences of radical hope - something more than was evident (as values or identity of the subject) prior to the trauma. To live through devastation, victims have to add something (more) of them self. Again,

this makes sense from a trauma recovery perspective; part of the process of healing is recognizing that people are broken in traumas, and testimonies suggest that those who recover retrieve parts of themselves and then add something more. They might add a value or values, or focus on a virtue, and/or determination and resolve, so as to be able to live on. This “something more” expresses an aspect of the intentional character of the (retrieved) subject (who is surviving).

In the Crow’s story Lear argues that the “something more” is courage. I want to suggest that it is more accurately represented in this specific instance as modified courage because, as I will elaborate below, the Crow had to adapt their warrior ways of life to being more like chickadees than warriors.

In a more general sense, the “something more” is intentionally living forward with subject-specific chosen values. So even though courage may be, or often is, one of those values that moves a subject to radical hope, courage is not mandated even though it is often chosen. Nonetheless, courage does point to the need for chosen values as a means for acting hopefully.

In terms of explaining Plenty Coup’s courage, Lear offers that the chief was courageous because he acted in a manner consistent with a spiritual interpretation of the Crow’s cultural and traditional beliefs. (Recall that we defined spiritual in Chapter Three as thinking about, or reflecting on, one’s own thinking and experiences.) It was courageous also because despite the cultural and material-historical context, Plenty Coups found imaginative ways to guide his people to live key aspects of their cultural values into the future. Consequently, even though so much of their identity was taken from them, it can be said that they transferred their courage from the courage it takes to live in a warrior society to the courage it takes to live as “the last tree standing in the forest” (73). In the case of the Crow, being the last tree standing references the fact that other native tribes lost their way of life too but the Crow uniquely adapted to an agricultural way of life. Lear indicates that as a result of this courage, the Crow children have gone on to be well-educated and successful in the colonizer’s new world with an arguably stronger sense of their cultural roots than other conquered indigenous tribes (152).

When considering courage as what enabled the Crow (arguably) to survive their devastations, we can appreciate that because the old ways are lost and the future is unknown, that in such circumstances, to go forward with hope is always to go forward with courage. Courage in these

circumstances acknowledges what it takes for people to adapt to living with newly claimed, retrieved, and sometimes modified, values into the future. Lear argues, by way of Aristotle, that part of what it is to be courageous is to see reality accurately and to respond well (i.e., in balanced or moderate ways).

My clinical experience also supports the idea that in living through devastations, courage often manifests as principled or virtuous ways of being. This is consistent with what we have reviewed thus far, namely that new ways of being are courageous because enacting values in a new context happens at the edge of what a subject knows (given the recognition of what now is not known). Everything is different in post-trauma living. This courage – inspired by hope, or enabled by radical hope - includes the belief that striving for something good or better than what is now, even though everything appears to be lost, is a worthwhile thing to do. There are various reasons why this kind of hope is courageous, but the point here is that in instances of radical hope there is the intention to enact particular values in circumstances of devastation so as to live forward.

Lear wants to argue - for reasons that are not entirely clear to me - that Plenty Coups enacts courage in a manner consistent with Aristotle's insights into courage. In this way, Lear ties courage to radical hope. But speaking from a broader more experientially diverse perspective, I would argue that the something more is the *intention* to be courageous, i.e., values driven or virtuous in some way. So what I am choosing to emphasize is the intention to enact one's values. In the face of so much being lost, the Crow, as is the case with other survivors, find some fundamental value(s) to hang on to, or to bring forward. Thus, the Crow find different ways of being a warrior, or different ways of being courageous. Like other trauma survivors, they chose to enact values that best represent their understandings of themselves in those circumstances. So, we do not need to over-evaluate the particulars of the virtue of courage *per se*. In philosophical practice it is up to the client to discern what values assist them in living forward. From this perspective there is no need to particularly advocate, or direct, a patient to be courageous. Such an approach also recognizes that patients who address their traumas are evidently courageous.

Nonetheless, it is worth considering that as a result of his attitude to life, Plenty Coups tells his story to Linderman, upon whose book Lear is basing much of his research. Lear's insight is that, in this instance, storytelling can be hopeful because "it is basically hope for revival, for coming back to life in a form that is not yet intelligible" (95). This is truly a radical way of living. After

being colonized, raped or abused, one's way of life is never again the same. But to stop here (at this insight into reality) would not be hopeful. To be hopeful is to figure out how, given this reality, can one discern living forward in his or her own way. Plenty Coups recognized that in telling the story of the Crow, he was reinforcing the value of the chickadee, so as to allow future generations the possibility of retrieving what they can from the Crow's values and experiences. It could be argued that because the Crow were so changed by colonization, that they were, in fact, truly annihilated, and so after the last buffalo died truly nothing happened. But Plenty Coups story suggests that some intentional values – even if little else - can be retrieved from devastations.

There is another point of the Crow's story that is relevant for our purposes. This point, for example, as we saw in Chapters Two and Three, is that understanding another, as if walking in their shoes (i.e., empathic understanding) indicates that the listener appreciates the practical values and subjective coherences of survivors, i.e., the philosophical patients they are working with. For example, Lear explains that it is by way of earlier vision quest dreams that Plenty Coups had been given divine guidance and an indication that his people could survive. Dream culture supported the Crow in understanding themselves as being on the receiving end of divine guidance and so they held that if they followed this guidance they would survive the inevitable devastation being brought to Native America by Europeans. In his dreams Plenty Coups was told to follow the example of the chickadee. Following divine guidance in this way made sense to the Crow. We can assume that for others, this kind of practical reasoning would not have made sense given a difference in core beliefs, values or attitudes to life. This is an instance of subject-specific (reasonable) coherence.

The unique cultural perspective of the Crow enabled them to interpret the symbolism of the practical learning advice of chickadee. Interestingly, this advice can be seen to be of relevance not just for the Crow but also for contemporary PC practitioners. When we are first introduced to the chickadee we are told “[t]he chickadee is a bird that learns from others. But what exactly they needed to learn was unclear”(77). This curious introduction references an ambiguity - a usefully consistent way to introduce living forward. It points to an important truth in radical hope.

Let me explain, by way of example, why this ambiguity is important for the Philosophical Counsellor to keep in mind: When the counsellor, for example, is supporting parents who have

lost their child by horrific means to find ways to live forward, we have to acknowledge the ambiguity of radical hope. As practitioners we are not telling them everything they need to know to live forward, we are just encouraging them to find ways to live forward with an integrity of values, while sharing the knowledge that it can be possible to do so – i.e., live forward in the face of devastation. However, what this means in day-to-day ways remains ambiguous for the clients. Their future and their understanding of their lives will never be the same again. Their sense of the world has entirely changed. What values should they retrieve and live forward with? In devastating circumstances there is so much that can no longer be known, so what can they reasonably hope for? The fact is, we do not often know. This example reminds us of the importance of recognizing the limitations of knowledge in devastating times.

In addition to the symbolism of the chickadee's ambiguous knowledge, there are definite things known about the bird. We learn that:

He is least in strength but strongest of mind among his kind. He is willing to work for wisdom. The Chickadee-person is a good listener. Nothing escapes his ears, which he has sharpened by constant use (80).

Again, these are relevant points for the therapeutic listener and survivor to keep in mind. It is reasonable to say that in this context, being like a chickadee becomes a virtue, a form of human excellence. In terms of our earlier claim of modified courage, the chickadee replaces the warrior form of human excellence previously valued by the Crow. And, for the purposes of survival, it matters that the chickadee is willing to acquire new kinds of knowledge so as to deal with this new situation.

In the above passage Plenty Coups also introduces the idea that the significance of this kind of knowledge is its potential to become wisdom. However, the power and specificity of that wisdom is up to the chickadee/survivor to discern. So the chickadee's wisdom is not *a priori* knowledge. Nor is it knowledge that is decreed or given. It is knowledge that is learned and acquired. Lear writes:

...but for the moment it suffices to note that Plenty-Coups used the chickadee to radicalize a second-order virtue. It may be that the

chickadee will learn from the white man in the sense of acquiring his skills and values, it may also be that the chickadee will see that there are failures in what the white man takes to be his successes, and will learn from that. And it may be that the chickadee “learns from others” in ways that allow him to go forward in entirely new directions. The only substantive condition embodied in the chickadee virtue is that if one listens and learns from others in the right way – even in radically different circumstances, even with the collapse of one’s world – something good will come of it (82).

With the passage of time, evidence supports the idea that the chickadee survives because he is able to learn from others. Thus, Plenty Coups had urged the young men and women of the tribe to be educated in the white man’s schools. Even today he is remembered for telling his people: “With what the white man knows he can oppress us. If we learn what he knows, he can never oppress us again” (138). We can now more profoundly understand that Plenty Coup’s telling Linderman his story is among his last enactments of the values of the chickadee. This is likely precisely because “[t]he chickadee understands that in a period of cultural onslaught one not only needs an ideal like the chickadee; one also needs to learn new ways to preserve and transmit it” (145).

The inferred belief that there will be a future is a feature of all hope, but the Crow had to accept that many aspects of their future could not be inferred, yet the Crow *accepting* the fate of all the buffalo being gone, also meant that they could hope for a future - albeit a radically new kind of future. The point of emphasis here is that had they not accepted that all the buffalo were gone, and so their way of life was over, they arguably would have continued to fight as their traditional warriors did, and therefore many would have died in battle. Accepting devastation helped them adapt their values; otherwise their people might not have lived into the future nor might they have lived into the future with such relative success.

It is important to note that this kind of hope is the result of vulnerable attempts to understand the world – i.e., it appreciates how vulnerable we humans are. In other words, radical hope is grounded in recognizing one’s existential limitations largely because one’s vulnerabilities have been made undeniably evident. Lear’s hope, like Rorty’s, engages existential realities but Lear’s

insights do not stop at recognizing those realities. Lear discerns hope as engaging those realities, rather than being acts of avoidance.

Pragmatically speaking, the Crow recognized the need for adaptation, and this hopeful adaptation prevents them from giving into despair. So, while on one hand, we might say of the Crow that their warrior way of life became irrelevant in the Westernized paradigm. On the other hand, maybe it did not become entirely irrelevant because “they had to instill a new sense of possibility in their young” so remnants of their way of life, and of their earlier identity, are retrieved (84).

Beliefs in the possibility of their young having happy full lives, and belief in being chosen by God, moved the Crow to radical hope (94). Thus, the Crow chose to have a strong sense of reasonable hope so as to carry forward key aspects of their culture. In doing so they found new ways to transmit the value of being a warrior. Being a warrior in the new sense retains the value of fighting so as not to be annihilated, but it is also characteristically more spiritual, and less violent. Thus, when the Crow come to be as the chickadee, they come to know, by way of hope and acquired knowledge, how not to be annihilated in the face of devastation.

So we can say that in radical hope, there is knowledge of some things; including knowing how one’s subjectivity had been defined and knowing that there has to be understanding that is somehow deeper than subjective identity that is defined in terms of social forces and that deeper self-understanding (i.e., of the spiritual self) is crucial to living forward. Sometimes hope lies in choosing one’s values when so much else is withheld from choice. Thus, in radical hope subject-specific knowledge claims are the jumping off points of hoping, and simultaneously this is the very real way in which radical hope includes not knowing what was previously known about one’s self or living forward. This of course makes sense, as we noted, because the Crow can no longer rely on their old beliefs, therefore, “in an important sense we do not know what to hope for or what to aim for” (92-93).

To even further empathize with the Crow’s experiences let us consider the relevance of Lear’s use of the word “radical.” Etymologically speaking, to be radical is to get to the root of something, the fundamentals of a point of view, and to question or uproot those fundamentals. So radical hope too points to an uprooting of a way of life. To be radical is to get to the heart of the assumptions that make a way of life possible. Thus, to be radical one can uproot assumptions or,

one can fight for those rooted (and so radical) assumptions. Either way, when one is radical one engages fundamental assumptions.

Given that so many assumptions are challenged in devastating circumstances, which assumptions does one fight to live forward with? Or, which identities and values does one give up altogether and not adapt to the new circumstances? Consider that for the Crow this meant that simply choosing to live forward was a radical act. This was especially true in relation to other native tribes who argued that the Crow by not fighting, but by acquiescing to the Americans, demonstrated cowardice. This points to an inference from experience; when a subject is at a point of needing radical hope, it means that on so many levels it might make sense to give in to the devastations or it might make sense to fight for one's old way of doing things and so lose everything. For the Crow it meant to not give up some of the spiritual essentials of their way of life. For them it meant not to fight for their way of life, as they had thus far been known to do – i.e., unto death. It meant to choose to live differently than they had prior to the catastrophes they were facing.

In review, and in relation to these characteristic insights into radical hope, it is worth noting again that radical hope is only meaningful in a context where one can choose not to be hopeful. After all, without the pressure of devastation there is no need to be radically hopeful – recall our earlier point about the dialectical ontology of hope. It is also radical because when everything is taken away what one is left with are the fundamentals, or the remnants – depending on how one looks at it - of one's values. The question is, given the reality of entirely new circumstances for living forward, how can one reasonably live one's values into the future given that so much has changed? Lear's position is that Plenty Coups found imaginative ways to live those values in entirely new circumstances, including encouraging the younger generation to learn the white man's knowledges, and adapting to an agricultural way of life from a warrior way of life. To understand these adaptations as reasonable hope, and not just as adaptive giving in or giving up, it is useful to discuss in more detail some of the features of a strong sense of reasonable hope – i.e., radical hope.

Recall that Plenty Coups was able to bring about “astounding imaginative transformation” because his people had the perspective that new good forms of living would arise for the Crow, if only they would adhere to the virtues of the chickadee (146-47). As we have been told, the

chickadee has the ability to learn from the wisdom of others – but it is left systematically unclear what this wisdom is. That is for the chickadee to find out. Plenty Coups dreams were “thread(s) through which he could lead his people through radical discontinuity” (147). This was the Crow’s own kind of reasonable coherence that supported their move to radical hope. Living forward based on dreams requires a belief system that allows dream interpretation to be part of a coherent perspective.

To better understand reasonable hope, it is worth asking, do we name this as reasonable and radical hope because the Crow story can be shown to have generated good results (142)? Can there be hope and bad results? To my mind it makes sense that there can be radical or strong reasonable hope and bad results. In fact that is the risk - and not the knowledge - of radical hope.

Lear seems to appreciate Plenty Coups story, as opposed to Sitting Bull’s, because the Crow people were radical in adapting to devastation and they arguably had relatively good successes. (Relative to the Sioux, for example, they have not needed to negotiate land claim treaties since the late 1800’s) (149). But that does not mean that by the definition of radical hope discerned here that the Cree, Sioux and Blackfoot were not also strongly reasonably hopeful. However their tribes were, simply, less successful relatively speaking. However, if one were pro-radical-hope, then one might argue that the Sioux’s lack of relative success, for example, was due to the fact that they did not accept their existential realities, as the Crow were able to do, as and they were reasonably supported to do in coherence with what could be salvaged, or what is retained in spite of attacks, from their belief systems. Their radically hopeful approach therefore is not giving into despair, but finding ways to survive as both themselves and no longer themselves - a point that reminds me, again, of some of Susan Brison’s existential insights into trauma recovery (2002).

On the point that good results are not what define radical hope, I wish briefly to pursue a thought experiment. This experiment provides fodder for future conversations pertaining to the distinctions noted earlier in this Chapter, differentiating the weak sense and strong sense of reasonable hope. In developing the idea that one can be radically hopeful and yet not be “successful” in surviving, let us consider whether one can have radical hope in dire circumstances, which are arguably different from devastating circumstances.

Let us consider what happens if one is hoping to be saved while one is being burnt at the stake, for example. In such instances, as the subject progresses to the fiery stake, the subject's weak sense of reasonable hope (the realities one has come to rely on in life as moment to moment realities, like, for instance, one's freedom) shifts and the subject is left to make adjustments to being in the world and so progressively faces stages of being radically hopeful or feeling hopeless. To continue – and apologies for the graphic imagery – eventually while one is being burnt at the stake, given one's changing circumstances, what one hopes for has to adapt and change too. Presumably, if one remains radically hopeful for something better, then in such a circumstance one's hope is no longer that one's body will be saved (often in such excruciating circumstances there is the future projection of wanting death) but one radically hopes one's soul will be saved and acts accordingly. The point is that what one radically hopes for changes as the assumptions that enable a weak sense of reasonable hope to change in relation to a subject's circumstances, becoming progressively more devastating, or dire. Thus, given how we have defined radical hope so far, we have to allow that in some circumstances, radical hope can be a moving target.

It appears that the subject's interpretations of their circumstances can, in and of themselves, be therapeutically relevant to a subject's own sense of living and health. This is the thread of a theme we saw to be of philo-therapeutic relevance in Chapters One, Two and Three. The philosophical counsellor can support subjects in looking for the right kinds of coherences for themselves in trying to find ways to come to terms with their lives and make peace with the limitations of their power in the world. In this case we saw the example of the interpretation of the chief's dream, affirming their cultural devastation and that the Crow survive by becoming like a chickadee. So the Crow, like many who are imprisoned and/or tortured and/or traumatized, cope by becoming (potentially more) virtuous. Thus, the survivor focuses on some things other than the aspects of the way of life that are clearly gone.

We can note that in this field-specific and psychological investigation, radical hope is experienced in subject-specific contexts. From a pragmatic and phenomenological perspective, this affirms that meaning-making is subject-specific and cultural. Hope for the Crow means survival - even if the survival is a radically modified way of living. Those struggling to survive have to find other ways in which to live forward. It is psychologically and/or emotionally a very painful transition to make – the transition to having to be radically hopeful. Radical hope can be

considered in relation to the reasonableness of weak hope as defined above as the hope that is taken for granted in day-to-day ways - including the inferred claim that when a subject works at x they can improve x. However, in instances where one has to hope radically, such inferred claims, as we have noted, are no longer viable.

There are some things that can be known, and some things that cannot be known in radically hoping. One way in which Lear characterizes this is in the phrase, “given the abyss one cannot really know what survival means” (97). What one seems to know in radical hope are one’s intentions. But there is a vague relationship with outcome. There is hope for a good *telos* but there is also recognition that given what we knew, but no longer know, it is not reasonable to have inferred knowledge about what we are hoping for, so we have to have radical hope into the future.

Our meaning-making and reasoned understandings of human experiences leads to an understanding of hope such that we can recognize that subjects who enact strong reasonable hope, hope to be more than their defining circumstances. This allows us to note that on one hand, subjects who hope for agency do so in a weak sense of the term because when being agents such subjects do not have to hope. When we enact agency it can be a hopeful act, yet at other times subjects know where and how they have agency and thus, sometimes subjects, to be agents, do not need to be hopeful (because in such instances, subjects know their agencies).

The epistemic claim is that a subject can know their intentions and knowing one’s intentions is a key feature of radical hope. This kind of hope requires the enacting of intention and so, with respect to social forces and agency it can be reasonable to hope that the subject can do something to better cope with the world. “This was not merely wishful optimism but a sustained thoughtful engagement with the world that, in terrible circumstances yielded tangible positive results” (142). Because “... although they suffered many strategic setbacks, the Crow were able to leverage for themselves a better outcome than they could have done by pursuing any other strategy. In this way the dream helped them to face up to this new reality and to deal with it in imaginative, resourceful, yet steadfast ways” (137). In the face of devastation the willingness to look to the future becomes a value, as does the willingness to give up some things one has come to expect, and rely on. Radical hope anticipates a good for those who choose to hope yet acknowledges that they do not wholly understand what they are hoping for.

Thus, in studying Plenty Coups' story, as with many stories of personal devastation, we can affirm the insight that in the face of various devastations, the act of making a choice is a hopeful act (because it enacts the hope there will be a future). It is interesting, in the context of this thesis' Chapter Three, that Lear's description of Plenty Coup's narrative provides an account of the experiences of the Psycho-Physical Individual (PPI), as well as insights into the Crow's motivations and so, their spiritual selves. Plenty Coup's story is told on both empathetic levels. However, because these claims cannot be verified with Plenty Coups, they cannot count as particular psychological truths, as defined in Chapter Two. Yet, presuming verifiability, as would be achieved in a PC context, we have discovered and generalized many kinds of psychological truths.

Courage supports subjects in knowing about themselves and their world, as well as acknowledging how vulnerable they, in fact, are. Yet given all this, the courageous person aims to act well. This is Lear's adaptation of Aristotle on courage (108-128). Thus, we learn that in hopeful experiences, greater contentment is not found in the subject's social context, but in "something else -" which we can reference here as being of the spiritual realm of the individual and pertaining to values and motivations. And we learn that courage embraces the existential realities of humans' finite resources. This is another level of seeing things as they are. Thus, radical hope happens when subjects have the courage not to be in denial, and when they acknowledge the limitations of their resources. Epistemologically speaking, using the considered and experiential distinctions of hope noted earlier, in dire circumstances subjects often find themselves having to move beyond a weak sense of inferred knowledge and move their motivations to support radical hope.

We have also noted that in the face of devastation, to live into the future requires acts of intentionality. The entré to the "something more" starts with the requirement of acknowledging destruction - not only to be limited by it, even if one must empirically or historically be defined in terms of it - and then to move beyond what is so. In this way, intentionality points to agency and means not only being defined in terms of the realities of destruction, but points to the idea that there is something more that supports potentially hopeless subjects to choose virtues or values in the face of destruction. Note that the subject's self-reflection and intentions are essential to being supported by radical hope.

In sum then, there are seven key features of radical hope, all of which develop our strong sense of reasonable hope. Strong reasonable hope (1) happens in devastation and (2) because of this there is profound loss. Therefore, (3) in contexts of radical hope only remnants of the pre-trauma subject live forward. Thus, (4) dialectically, there are ways in which radical hope includes not knowing what a subject is hoping for (because so much is lost and the future cannot be inferred in the same way as prior to the trauma), which tells us that reasonable hope expresses knowledge (of what is lost and is no more, and that there will be a unknown future) as well as the limits of knowledge. Therefore, (5) in instances of radical hope, new reasoning systems are needed. For the Crow this was represented in the symbolism of the chickadee. We learned from these insights that (6) reasonable hope expresses something more than weak hope. And, (7) that “something more” is the future- projected intentions of salvaged subjective values.

Adapting to this radical way of hoping demonstrates what Lear refers to as “psychological flexibility” (124). As with psychotherapy, this idea of psychological flexibility and cognitive plasticity are concepts that can refer to particular measures – common in clinical work - for evaluating a client’s mental health. This points to some criteria of wellness being cognitive plasticity; i.e., a patient’s ability to adapt to challenging circumstances. For example, I talk with my clients about the need for developing and valuing inner resilience, or even of valuing something likeable about themselves. A good deal of psychotherapeutic negotiation has to do with recognizing and coming to terms with the fact that there are circumstances beyond a subject’s control. Then in PC we have to support the client’s well-being, taking into account how they negotiate their potential to creatively, self-supportively negotiate realities in their lives.

5.4 Reasonable Hope

In Chapter Four Isaiah Berlin was cited as writing that “the only true method of obtaining freedom . . . is by the use of critical reason, the understanding of what is necessary and what is contingent” (141). This insight is useful for contextually relevant reasonable distinctions. In this chapter, for example, we have applied such distinctions to investigating human experiences of hope. And we have learned of hope that it is not fixed hoping for something but it is belief in reason – this is inferred hope - and, sometimes, it is also hoping for what is beyond reason and knowing (strong reasonable hope), based on what is known. Consciously chosen values come out of acknowledging what one can handle knowing about one’s experiences and circumstances, for

example. So Berlin's distinctions and encouragement about the benefits of reason are relevant here. Reasoning gives us insight into hope as well as the limits of reason. We have also seen that good reasoning can support psychological flexibility and adaptation because such reasoning can limit the effects of dogmatism and monolithic approaches.

This, then, is reason leading to hope; i.e., something beyond reason. So we recognize that reason can take us quite far in coping with, and understanding, our experiences of the world - but only so far. Then, beyond that, we are compelled to hope, in radical ways. Thus, at least some of the time, recognizing the limits of reason, we can still choose to hope and so in devastating circumstances too, subjects can enact agency. Subjects reason where possible and hope where they cannot reason. In discerning what is necessary and contingent we do not need to hope for what is necessary. Enacting radical hope always pertains to contingent realities.

These kinds of ideas about reasoning and the limits of reasoning remind me of why Berlin, beyond his insightful understanding of human experiences of freedom, was chosen for this investigation. Isaiah Berlin took a stance on reason, and like Berlin I am opposed to rationalism, and simultaneously advocate that when we use our natural reasoning capacities we are led to freedom – which I have defined here as wanting to make choices for ourselves where we can. This means that sometimes subjects have to find places where they can make choices – sometimes choices are not given, and so, they must be reasonably sought.

Contrary to the way in which Rorty defines useful philosophy, as political philosophy (228), and as a counsellor who engages the four retrieved principles, I am not interested in telling students or clients how to think, or how to be this or that kind of a pragmatist – nor to advise them to take this or that point of view or approach to living and understanding life. I am, rather, truly interested in what can be learned from differences and personal experiences. I am interested in encouraging independent thinking for therapeutic benefit. However, I do make use of philosophical values and distinctions so as to make spaces (“containers,” if you will) for self-reflection and subject relevant distinction making – including thinking about experiences.

In such a context, happiness can be an end, but it does not have to be *the* telos; understanding or the experiences of less anxiety can be a subject-specific telos. For the Philosophical Counsellor, it is an exploration of the connection between eudaimonia and individual objectives and ends. To impose a version of happiness would therefore be wrong. That is why of the four principles

retrieved from ancient practice there is no direct emphasis on happiness; only that subjects self-reflect, and aim to reach enhanced self-understanding and agency. We are not, however, opposed when the subject seeks happiness, nor would we deny that we are biased towards health, which often includes happiness and vitality as measurements. But happiness, as a philosophical end, is not imposed, nor is knowledge – rather as concepts that are sought in subject-specific ways, they are offered as ways of engaging the realities of life.

What our position recognizes is that political and social aims can be entirely distinct from survival aims in the face of devastations. Radical hope is how to live forward given the limits of our knowledge. Radical hope is also strong reasonable hope because it acknowledges that we know some things – not that we know nothing. And sometimes, even knowing what we know about the realities of life and humans living together, we find that it is possible to find imaginative ways to live forward. The pragmatic approach to psychological investigations embraces distinctions we have valued throughout this thesis as means for supporting such imaginative engagements. This is in contrast to Rorty's all or nothing pragmatism, and his attack on reasoning and truth, which in my opinion, throws the baby out with the bathwater.

I have noted that we could find valuable insights in knowledge-seeking explorations and distinction making. Our approach to hope recognizes the importance of philosophical distinctions in making claims that are then evaluated for truthfulness by a number of relative and relevant means. We also use the pragmatic tool of fallibilism to prevent claims of excessive certainty. Our contemporary philosophical approaches acknowledge ways in which practical truths can be relative, subjective and verifiable.

To further respond to Rorty, I would want to note that one's means also reflects one's values. As Berlin's value pluralism recognizes, for example, there can be many means and many ends. Valuing that there are true justified beliefs – e.g., knowledge can edify and support healthy living - does not have to stand in contrast to a plurality of means and ends. Knowledge-seeking journeys or processes do not need to be devalued even if many different ends are valued, or are arrived at by a plurality of means.

Thus, we can value that Rorty is a relativist and has an affinity for the potential (but not yet exemplified) usefulness of philosophy, but reject his brand of pragmatism, as it does not value truth seeking and epistemological quests. His radical kind of relativism wherein truth and

knowledge are given up altogether in the name of usefulness prevents us from being able to make distinctions, and generate insights in terms of best understanding, which can be, as we have seen, its own kind of usefulness. For example, here we have considered that we can think of hope in three ways: one kind of hope is social and political and the other two are experiential and phenomenological. In our experiential and phenomenological considerations of hope we differentiated a weak sense and a strong sense of reasonable hope. Each of these distinctions has helped us to further understand human experiences of hoping. Using epistemological principles of reasoning and distinction making we gain insight into hoping.

In Chapter Two we saw there are different levels of knowledge claims, because there are distinct theoretical levels that have different criteria for evaluation. For example, on the pragmatic level it does not matter whether knowledge is made or found, it matters what is experienced. Thus, there can be interpretive and experiential knowledge. This supports the pragmatist idea of words as tools that deal with environments and not only represent them. So while truth can be an ideal, the goal in a given investigation can simply be greater understanding, or better coping, and that can be a measure of usefulness or accuracy in dealing with understanding one's experiences, not only truth *per se*, i.e., usefulness can be a measure of accurate understanding.¹²⁶

One of the ways in which Rorty's claims are too extensive is in relation to reasoning and moral principles. As we have discussed in Philosophical Counselling case studies one would aim to make subject-specific connections between reasoning and moral principles, which is a position against traditional philosophical perspectives, especially those with a Kantian orientation, who indicate that good reasoning leads necessarily to certain moral principles. Yet we have seen, theorizing does not have to be totalizing. Often in devastating circumstances we reason but we do not know what moral virtues, if any, will emerge. Sometimes reason dictates that this means coming to terms with what is being lost, or will inevitably be lost; sometimes this context-specific reasoning suggests that what we ought to hope for is what is indicated by the limits of reasoning. Nonetheless, all this is in some ways reasonable and often times in radical hope, as we

¹²⁶ This point is in distinction to Rorty's blending of these concepts on pages xxiii and xxv of social hope.

have seen, moral virtues are enacted but not necessitated. This is another reason why reasonable hope supports, and is consistent with, subjective agency.

Moreover, the theoretical levels of distinction in Chapter Two are useful to the PC in explaining that moral perspectives can be viewed as distinct from reasoning. For example, matters of reasoning and knowledge have to do with Levels B & C, and questions of goodness or morality or moral reasoning reference the psychological levels and the field-specific levels, Levels F & G. Moreover, the reasoning used to substantiate claims at either of these levels might be ontological or metaphysical (Level A). So debates about morality and reasoning are their own debates within our investigations into subjective happiness and client specific engagements with reasoning. There is no necessary connection between these issues. At the psychological level (Level G) moral feelings, and so reasoning towards, and in, morality comes easier for some than for others. In trying to understand the clients' deeper motivations we come in touch not just with the feelings that motivate them but their own moral reasoning. In some cases, where I see that others could also be at risk, I often invite clients to talk about and improve their reasoning with respect to their moral behaviour, but this is a conversation for another time.

As we have seen, the phenomenology and psychology of reasonable hope recognizes that it is the hope that arises in the face of devastation. Rarely in the depth of their recovery and survival have I seen survivors be political or oriented towards democratic and collective social utopias as a cure for their pains. However, given that reason can only take us so far in coping with and understanding devastation, we can say that reason takes us to hope. It shows us that we have good empirical evidence to be hopeful about the relief that comes from self-reflection oriented towards greater happiness.

In seeking knowledge, we are willing to make living meaningful. In desperate circumstances hope is not magical thinking, but given what one understands about their world, it can be an imaginative response to a desperate situation. This too can be considered the "something more; i.e., "the imaginative response." To be hopeful in the human sense is to reference human capacities for insight, to generate insight into meaning-making, and to know our limits and to be hopeful, often imaginatively so, in the face of those limitations.

So Rorty forces a conflict (between knowledge and happiness) that need not exist; greater human happiness can be an end-in-itself and there can be many means to that end. We have seen much

evidence that affirms alignment of quests for knowledge with happiness. Of course there can be knowledge without happiness and happiness without knowledge, but when agency is valued, then the happiness that comes about is self-reflectively generated happiness. Moreover, reasoning subjects can find alignment between happiness and their values.

5.5 Conclusion: Reasonable Hope and Agency

This final section summarizes the key conclusions of our research.

First and foremost, is the strong claim that grounded in sound psychotherapeutic and clinical practice, and millennia of considerations and debate, what differentiates PC from other kinds of mental health practices is a therapeutic bias that values subjective agency. The arguments and considerations presented here are intended to support clinical philosophers in their practices of guiding and witnessing their patients by advocating that the making of good choices grounded in self-investigation and oriented towards fallible self-understanding makes for good mental health. In other words, the evidence suggests that these practices support psychological health and quests for increased *eudaimonia*. Attending to the client's thinking about their experiences reveals that supporting subjects in making choices for their own best, or better, health requires attentive interpretations of the subject's experiences as well as distinction making with the client so as to discern where choices might lie. To understand agency in particular instances, we must listen and want to empathetically understand. In this way we respect the potential for subjects to discern their (sometimes life-saving) agencies. We see that, in practice, engaging subjective agency is relative and achievable.

We have learned that we can aim to empathetically understand others by relating to, or "walking in the shoes of," their psycho-physical aspects as well as, potentially, their subject-specific spiritual motivations. Antigone's story was very much a story shaped by the realities of exile and physical and social limitations, but her agency was grounded in her spiritual motivations; i.e., those values (of love for her family and brother) that caused her to act contrary to the laws to which she was physically and socially subject. Antigone's story exposes the listener to understanding some of her motivations and so her acts of agency can be identified. Now admittedly, we can imagine that for a Butlerite the distinction between spiritual self and PPI,

given the social construction of identity, is not necessarily so clear-cut as it might be for a Steinian. Perhaps on this point the Ancients would have been empathetic with Butler. They might say that we can aim to understand social forces and in so doing, understand ourselves, but it can be nonetheless, difficult to differentiate between the values influenced by social forces and those that are chosen as my own. Likely Berlin would indicate that this is why the boundary of negative liberty is an important one to consider and maintain. Obviously this is a discussion for another time; how does autonomy relate to agency?

Considering subjective agency in the cases of Antigone and the Crow, we can argue that neither was predominantly (and certainly not exclusively) defined by the social and outside forces that were shaping them. Antigone could resist those forces but had no influence on the trajectory of those forces in shaping her final outcome. The Crow resisted the forces that were shaping and colonizing them and like Antigone stuck to the values they could stick with which (arguably – unlike Antigone -) mitigated the impact of those regulating forces. We have learned that resisting social forces does not always have a predictable outcome, but what *can be* known in such resistances are one's values and motivations.

I have introduced various kinds of distinctions in this thesis that support the self-reflective knowledge that philosophy, dating back to the Hellenists, seeks to generate. This is not anti-establishment research, nor does it take a position against mainstream philosophy but rather it takes a position in favour of philosophy – specifically epistemology. Epistemological considerations have relevance in everyday life and so I am pro-epistemology. In short, it is therapeutically useful to discuss knowledge and the hope for a better life.

In response to Rorty, we hold the counter position that we can know things. Not necessarily as they really are - but in some circumstances that question does not matter – it is enough that we can know some things, and knowing some things helps humans live intentionally forward. It is reasonable to make knowledge claims oriented towards helping one live a good life. And given that this is subject-specific, particular individual patients may not be interested in metaphysical discussions then, accordingly, the shift can be to useful concepts or questions that can be evaluated pragmatically. For example, what would or could, make you happy, or happier, today?

For the numerous reasons we have noted here, the Philosophical Counsellor does not need to reject the notion of reason. Quite simply, there are verifiable therapeutic uses for reasoning and

self-reflection. This PC position allows that at different levels of the discussion, metaphysics and epistemology do have roles to play in individual and social progress. So, if these paradigms or tools for deeper kinds of understanding are thrown out altogether then, in my opinion too much is given up unnecessarily.

It is, thus, reasonable to make general knowledge claims (about the nature of knowledge and processes of knowing), as well as specific claims about human experiences (when we study human experiences as such). Specifically, when we study the realities of devastation and trauma we can make claims about what actually occurred, for example when subjects endured abuse that was denied by all involved or framed as “their fault”, and claims about what it is reasonable to hope for. These kinds of discussions affirm philosophy’s ongoing relevance to everyday life. In particular we have seen that using traditional tools and distinctions from the trove of philosophical reasoning supports the quest for a better life.

Beginning this thesis’ investigations with the Hellenists was intended to bring attention to PC’s grounding in epistemology, as well as point to psychology’s and psychotherapy’s sound – but often unacknowledged - grounding in epistemology. The Hellenists wanted to know what could be known from and about human experience in relation to the idea of self-fulfillment and *eudemonia*. Insights were achieved by studying human emotions, experiences and motivations. Discussing and investigating one’s emotions is part of a process of discerning, deciding and acting based on one’s values. In the time of Seneca – and even Freud notes his reliance on the ancient theorists and Plato – the ancient soul doctors sought benefit in non-normatively investigating emotions, motivations and desires so as to better understand the essences of human beings.

This is a theme that was picked up as subjective coherence in Chapter Two, and it was developed for the purposes of empathetic understanding in Chapter Three. The Hellenists approached emotions and psyches non-normatively. They wanted to gather as much information as they could first without bias prior to evaluating the data. Thus, they were open to the possibility of understanding emotions and not only regulating them. In our discussion of Seneca for example, anger was not only considered in a negative sense, but it was also considered as being able to tell us something about the values that an individual was instinctively willing to defend. For example, sadness and jealousy informs the individuals about who and what is important to them.

At the very least, negative emotions can inform us about experiences and motivations we do not want and so can be used with reasoning to support the individual in aligning with what they do want.

In these investigations we have also seen that there is no need for extreme dualism between emotions and reason. Emotions can be reasonably understood and when understood, emotions can support easier and better reasoning. For example, when subjects are less anxious or angry they reason better.

In the domain of emotions some traditional epistemic distinctions are useful for the creation of subjective, relative and verifiable knowledge. To these considerations we add the idea that some of the covert, and/or destructive effects of biases can be mitigated by acknowledging the heuristic perspectives that enable particular biases. We need to make appropriate levels of distinction to make reasonable – including not too extensive or grandiose or too minimal - knowledge claims. Moreover, as we have seen, there can be heuristic perspectives – including psychotherapeutic ones - that value both reasoning and emotions.

We might, in fact, note three kinds of relationships between reasoning and emotions: First, that emotional self-understanding can lessen anxiety and so allow for greater concentration and better reasoning. Second, that emotions can be sometimes understood by reasonable means. And third, emotions can be used to edify subject-specific reasoning. We noted that in Stein's work, some subjects were best able to discern their values when they investigated the emotions that motivated their behaviours.

In this thesis a significant amount of effort was spent, particularly early in these investigations, to explain how distinctions between normative and non-normative are useful in philosophical practice. We saw, for example, that PC takes a non-normative approach to investigating and understanding emotions. In acknowledging biases we try to mitigate the oppressive effects of biases by acknowledging how perspectives influence what counts as norms. Practically speaking, this means that clients and practitioners can aim first to gather as many facts –i.e., non-normative claims - about the subject's experiences prior to applying various normative filters for the purpose of analysis. In supporting self-reflection, philosophical counsellors encourage patients to make distinctions between normative and non-normative beliefs.

Due to the four features of retrieved values from ancient practice as our points of investigative focus, and given how “subjectivity” was defined in Chapter Four, we were justifiably able to move from a phenomenological account of empathy to an approach to human experiences that is more in the realm of social philosophy (Chapter Four). Bringing together Berlin and Butler provided the opportunity to return to the idea of self-reflection and understanding as a means for coping with, and variously enhancing, being in the world. Coping with social forces, the individual subject reflects to determine where their agency lies, which is again, a contemporary take on ancient philosophical values.

Chapter Four provides an example of the kinds of claims we are able to make when we talk about our very human experiences; particularly those that negotiate self in relation to one’s society. This approach acknowledges phenomenology but also speaks more broadly to social philosophy issues. In this context we find that the individual is negotiating themselves in terms of outside laws and social structures. We developed a sense of agency that indicates subjects are autonomous in a particular identifiable circumstance, and as such can find ways to avail themselves to spectrums of choices. As agents, subjects have the opportunity to choose what best reflects what they value about themselves (i.e., their subjectivity). One would of course claim too much of agency if there were to say that an individual is free to do whatever he or she wants. But subjects can find ways to enact their relative agencies.

For instance, given her circumstances, Antigone made choices from her own conscience. She created choice in the face of no apparent choice and her story affirms that subjects can create freedoms for themselves by engaging with the forces that make up and define our subjectivities. Thus, we can appreciate how acting in hopeful ways is a form of agency. In Chapter Four we saw that in studying the circumstances and choices that individuals find themselves in (the individual consciousness being a like a beam of light in time), we can better appreciate instances of subjective agency.

Like Plenty Coups, Antigone retains her dignity by living the values she chooses to stand for. Plenty Coups recognized that he was giving up everything and had to have faith in “Ah-badt-dadt-deah” (God) (94). Antigone did not have faith in God but faith in the rightness of her actions in the face of her loyalty to whom she loved and her own conscience. These experiences suggest that subjects can attain and create knowledges by reasoning within their own psyches;

i.e., within their experiences. This again points to some reasoning being subject-specific and/or subject-coherent. Moreover, we can learn particular things about particular subjects and make more general claims about categories of human experiences when attending to subjectivities and agency – as per the insights we discovered in discussing reasonable hope.

Finally, I encourage the advocates of reasoning to consider at least one more probing and provocative question; what would happen if I were to give up reasoning? In my personal considerations of the question I realized that if I were to give up reasoning I would feel more vulnerable and powerless. I would feel more affected by the world and less effecting in the world. Reasoning to the points of agency or hope helps subjects find power beyond the defining realities of their/our circumstances - and this is the point. Life experience and psychological data suggests that we cannot live happily only in the face of vulnerability. Other things are needed; recognizing our vulnerabilities and the limits of our abilities, reasoning, subjective agency and radical hope are tools that can lead us forward, or support us in living forward in the face of life circumstances, including devastating ones. As a therapeutic point of interest, this is perhaps why twelve step programs require addicts to come to terms with their faith in a higher power. I point this out not because faith in a higher power (which could be their higher self) is being advocated, but to recognize that many forms of recovery include come to terms with the destruction that has occurred and the need to believe in something more than what was previously known or assumed. Thus, in recovery they need to change their core beliefs and reasoning habits to get to the point of hope – i.e., in healing, subjects go beyond what they have known.

Given what we now understand about hope, it makes sense to add to our earlier statement that it is reasonable to hope to have agency, so that it also includes the idea that we do not have to hope to have agency. This is because we now understand that subjects seek out and create agency for themselves. So agency can be a reality, not only a hope. In this sense, it is reasonable to hope that our acts of agency will bring us greater happiness.

However, our investigations point to the experience that it can be reasonable to be hopeful in devastating circumstances. It has been interesting to note that in human experiences, the evidence suggests that it is at these points of devastation that (we) subjects attempt to retrieve those values that are most important to them (us), and to live forward with those values they (we)

think best identify them (us). In the face of devastations our agencies have the potential to bring forward hope and to support living in the face of great losses.

This thesis' position on epistemology and PC is *not* one that advocates rationality or rationalism, but rather it is one that advocates the usefulness of reasoning. When referencing rationalism, what is being referenced is a totalizing view of reason such that reasoning - and often a particular kind of reasoning - is the only means to knowledge and understanding. Extreme rationalists would advocate particular styles of reasoning, typically analytical and overly rational, and logical approaches to understanding. As noted earlier these rationalist approaches fail therapeutically not only because they are totalizing but because they limit whose knowledge claims count as well as how such knowledge is achieved and legitimized or validated. In contrast to rationalism, in this thesis reasoning has been flexibly defined as the use of distinction making, being coherent, aiming to be logically sound, non-contradictory, and referencing claims that are both subjective and can be substantiated. I consider this thesis a position against rationalism and an act of resistance (and so an act of negative liberty) against totalizing or monolithic perspectives. This research does identify with those who stand against a rationalist position, which is to say that we are against a theoretical position that reason - and typically only one kind of reason - is better than all other means of knowledge acquisition. Obviously for the PC this would be a very limiting, and not useful point of view. The advocacy and willingness to acknowledge the use of reason in PC acknowledges the retrieval of core philosophical values, including self-reflection, distinction making, truth evaluation, usefulness, empathy and agency. Again, in this approach to PC, the use of reasoning does not at all advocate a position that is totalizing, unilateral, imposed, *a priori*, or monolithic. This claim is in alignment with Nussbaum and Berlin's indications about what differentiates Philosophy's use of reason from overly dogmatic, religious or magical approaches to understanding the world. According to the perspectives advocated here, styles and criteria of reasoning are context dependent, subjective and verifiable, as well as falsifiable.

It can rightly be difficult, and sometimes unreasonable, to say definite things about what philosophy is about, or how to do philosophy. Here I have approached philosophy not so much in terms of methods but in terms of considerations. The considerations here pertained to self-reflection, agency (which includes choices and values) and self-knowledge by way of distinction-making and empathetic practice. Thus, the rigour I refer to in this work is the rigour, not of a particular method, but of a willingness to think carefully, to make relevant and useful

distinctions, and to acknowledge where possible that there are various ways to experience the world that can count as generating potentially verifiable knowledge claims. It is cognitive flexibility and intentionality that supports the client in many different kinds of considerations, and so encourages clients to be attentive to how they experience the world, how they want to be in the world, as well as to test the validity of particular claims and perspectives (by seeking, for example, fallibility). Certainly there is an intensity and drive for best possible truths in these kinds of approaches, yet I consider it an expansive and engaging quest, not an oppressive or dogmatic one.

In conclusion, let us consider whether, given that we can identify therapeutic results in PC contexts, does this support the claim that the hope that evolves in therapeutic contexts is reasonable hope? In other words, does empirical evidence add to the reasonableness of the kind of hope we find in therapeutic processes? Therapeutic effects are evaluated the only way they can be: subjective, relative, and sometimes objective, and in contexts that value intentional therapeutic effect; i.e., aims for therapeutic effect. Given this as the context in which hope evolves the answer is “yes.” And “yes” in both the weak and strong senses. Philosophically guided and supported self-reflection does have therapeutic effects, and so it is reasonable to be hopeful, in a weak sense, i.e., the sense in which we can reasonably hope that PC will be beneficial for many psychological challenges and ailments.

A strong sense of radical hope - although arrived at by different means than weak hope - can have its own therapeutic effects in the face of devastation. It can identify some ideals, like courage, upon which to focus one’s identity in the effort to go forward. Interestingly, in therapeutic contexts, - contexts that deal with devastation and traumas - the more essential components of identity are not known to the subject until they are put in jeopardy or lost, whereas weak hope does not require deep reaching within because circumstances (or imaginations) have not required that such a psychological experience arise. So again, there is intentional reaching for something better and yet, something unknown in radical hope. By definition, radical hope, even though there are ways in which it is not knowable and ambiguous, is therapeutic because it stands in contrast to the understandable alternative of despair. When a client reaches for hope in therapeutic processes, it meets the criteria of strong reasonable hope as listed on page three hundred and sixty six and three hundred and sixty seven (366-67) of this chapter, so by definition they are enacting radical hope (in philo-therapeutic contexts). Thus,

there can be hope without hope for specific therapeutic effect, but therapeutic effect does support the reasonableness of hope in the face of what could be hopeless.

We have also recognized that it can be reasonable to move to a strong, or radical hope when one comes to understand that some psychic pains cannot be cured by reasoning alone; in this way reason brings us to hope. Reasoning brings us to the relative limits of our knowledge(s) and hope informs reasoning into the future - but only so far. In therapeutic contexts we reason with the hope of healing ourselves. Strong radical hope is arrived at by reasonable means, but it points to something that exceeds reason. These are some of the numerous ways it could be argued that the concepts of reason and hope stand in practical relationships with each other.

We have also seen reason stand in relation to subjective agency by way of the self-reflective turn. Subjective agency comes about by way of the self-reflective turn. In reflecting on what can be learned in the turn, the subject accesses the possibility of reasonable hope for himself or herself. At the end of Chapter Four we saw some of what self-reflection makes it reasonable to hope for: Judith Butler, for example, reminds us that it is reasonable to hope to be contributors to evolving social norms. She also leads us to consider that sometimes agency can exceed the social forces that instantiate the subject. This is an insight that applies to the Crow as well, because to claim chickadee courage is to exceed being defined as “conquered” by non-Indigenous Europeans. Isaiah Berlin advocates that it is reasonable to hope for individuals to have areas of non-interference and choice. From both theorists, and Plenty Coups too, we learned that it is reasonable to hope to have choice.

To enact freedom, Berlin led us in the right direction by asking his audience to question what is necessary and what is contingent with respect to the forces that shape a subject’s identity. Notably, even those forces that appear necessary - like absolute categories of sex and gender - can be challenged by Butler’s post-structuralist investigative methodologies. In this paradigm we can imagine that the more contingent forces are, arguably, easier to manipulate. Nonetheless, in all of these instances we have seen that subjective agency is a reasonable hope, not an empty one.

In this concluding chapter many aspects of the relationships between reason and hope have been identified. While there are many points of summation we can note about reasonable hope, as we have discussed it here, let us complete the investigation by noting that reasonable hope (i) relies

on self-reflection and reasoning, (ii) relates to agency and (iii) can have a therapeutic effects – i.e., supporting less painful attitudes to life and helping subjects cope with devastating circumstances in the world. These are substantial claims not only about reasonable hope but about the contributions of PC too.

Throughout our discussion we have variously noted that sometimes, human experiences point to the fact that reasonable hopes are necessary for living forward. A final case in point is a philosophical client, who after years of PC therapeutic work, was embarking on dating and the seeking of healthy intimate relationships. These aims were notable as he had he been sold into sexual slavery as a child from ages three to fourteen and so prior to therapy, the likelihood of him even wanting to experience safe healthy relationships was very slim. He recently said to me: “What I have learned in my work with you is that hope is the capacity of the strong. You have to be strong in yourself to hope to get out from underneath some of this pain”. The supported wisdom of this client’s self-reflections led him to this gem of an insight. By way of Lear we can imagine that Plenty Coups too, would have concurred: “Hope is a gift to the courageous”. Both warriors’ statements are insightful, and both capture aspects of a strong sense of reasonable hope. In the end, both reflect what we have considered here about hope; that hope evolves when there is self-reflection, and knowledge seeking in subjects who choose their values. Understanding hope in this way, points to therapeutic uses of reason in contemporary practices of PC.

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