Norman Vincent Peale was an early follower of Freud. Erich Fromm’s critique of Freud’s performance and his legacy, as opposed to his mission, is strongly negative. Fromm believed in the mission of Freud, but is critical of how Freud and his followers carried out the mission. Fromm seems to entertain in his book on Freud’s mission and in his work as a whole the apocalyptic notion that men and women of good will should go to any lengths that the mission be accomplished.¹

Dr. Peale told how, in his youth, he had “the worst inferiority complex of all,” which led him to develop his positive thinking/positive confession philosophy and theology. In 1937, Peale established a mental health clinic with Freudian psychiatrist Dr. Smiley Blanton in the basement of the Marble Collegiate Church. The “Religio-Psychiatric Clinic” has been described by Carol George as having “a theoretical base that was Jungian, with a strong evidence of neo- and post-Freudianism.” The Clinic grew to an operation with dozens of psychiatrists and pastoral counselors, and in 1951 became known as the American Foundation for Religion and Psychiatry. In 1972, it merged with the Academy of Religion and Mental Health to form the Institutes of Religion and Health (IRH). In the 1970s, the organization was renamed in honor of its co-founders as the Blanton-Peale Institute and Counseling Center. Until his death, Peale remained affiliated with Blanton-Peale as president of the board and chief fund raiser.²

Philosophy appears in many forms, both literary and non-verbal, but one of the least attended to is the precept, injunction, mandate, order, or charge. The metaphors most often used to express the nature of philosophy are the legal and the military. When the legal analogy is used, we usually think of the advocate’s construction of a case by appeal to the evidence already entered into the record, the examination or cross-examination of a witness, or points regarding who has the burden of proof and what standard of proof applies. In the military image we refer to taking up and holding a position, attacking and counter-attacking, or leaving ourselves undefended. These images have served us well in conveying the atmosphere that surrounds philosophical

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² [Blanton-Peale Institute and Counseling Center](http://accessed January 1, 2013).
endeavor, but tend to omit two crucial notions. (1) The admonition, instruction or mandate given by the judge to the jury in law, and (2) the sudden and fierce attack, blitz, aimed at quickly disarming and defeating the enemy. To understand better what is going on in philosophy, what has gone on, but especially what is happening now and what is likely to happen in the future, especially with regard to which side is to prevail, we might do well to see the history of philosophy not exclusively in terms of arguments and the presentation of evidence by adversaries but more in terms of injunctions by an informed but neutral third party participant that are passed from generation to generation of philosophers from their elders, and instead of thinking in terms of protracted combat to concentrate more on the single, but massive, initial strike that knocks out the enemy immediately. With regard to the latter notion, what I have in mind is the analogy between certain types of philosophical activity and a media blitz. Publications that do not get discussed everywhere and always for a time within the profession usually end up getting no attention at all. Fromm’s understanding of Freud’s mission—that reason can effectively rule the passions—is in the context of the tradition of Plato and Bishop Butler on the moral economy of the tripartite soul, and the great thesis of western ethics that somehow, God or no God, the life guided by self-love and the life guided by benevolence are reasonably coincident, and collapse into the system of reasonable self-love, which for the religious becomes the disinterested love of God, and for the non-religious something like John Dewey’s common faith.3

The conclusion is, of course, that while the libertine may get more of less satisfaction than those who attempt to attain satisfaction within the bounds of conscience, the best and wisest course for those who subscribe to the pleasure principle is still not to aim at pleasure alone but to desire and seek to attain objects that can only be considered other-regarding, and to do so in a proportion that has the full approval of a conscience that has been philosophically purged of self-deception. To be so purged means more than giving assent to the proposition that one is free of self-deception. It means at least that as a result of a searching Socratic self-examination one now knows oneself. When Wittgenstein said that philosophy can only be written as a kind of poetry, he did not mean that it would be set out in verse. He meant that philosophy cannot be written as non-fiction prose but must be musical, symbolic, and show its sincerity rather than merely say “I am sincere.” “I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: Philosophy ought really to be written only as poetic composition.”4

And when Lacan claimed that what distinguished his school of psychoanalysis was that, “We are serious,” he meant of course that what distinguished them was their seriousness and not the disposition to claim to be serious:

At a press conference during the Ecole Freudienne de Paris Congress in Rome in 1974, Jacques Lacan got involved in a question-and-answer session of a type guaranteed to set on edge the teeth of those not uncritically devoted to his cause.

Miss X: - Could you specify for us what distinguishes the Ecole Freudienne de Paris from other schools?

J. Lacan: - We are serious. That's the decisive distinction.

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Miss X: - The other schools are not serious?

J. Lacan: - Absolutely not!5

Peale applied Christianity to everyday problems and is credited with bringing psychology into the professing Church, blending its principles into a message of “positive thinking.” In Peale’s words, “through prayer you ... make use of the great factor within yourself, the deep subconscious mind ... the kingdom of God within you ... Positive thinking is just another term for faith.” Dr. Peale also cited Blanton to provide a psychological basis for the power of positive thinking. “As the late Dr. Smiley Blanton, a famous psychiatrist, used to say, ‘God presides in the subconscious.’ Therefore, an affirmation, being a positive form of prayer to God, stimulates power in the inward state that is manifested in the outward state to produce well-being.”6

In this general scheme, which I call the cosmological quotidian, the technical term for how the individual and his or her daily grind is related to the ultimate is by “participation.”7

Thus what philosophers do is to follow the charge that brought them into philosophy, attempt to construct a pipeline between the absolute and the particular, help to move material along on that pipeline, while also looking for better tactics, which usually plays down to landing the single, devastating knock-out punch. We navigate our way through this world by moving material in and out of the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. Philosophers and their auxiliaries such as poets, artists and psychiatrists assist in this work. These wisdom workers require tools. As long as one has the right tool for the right job, and the work is successful, nothing is left to criticize. Guideposts and the Critique of Pure Reason are on all fours for the psycho-philosophical investigation.

In 1945, Peale and his wife, Ruth Stafford Peale, started Guideposts magazine; with a worldwide circulation now in the tens of millions, the largest of any religious magazine. Peale published several best-selling books, including The Art of Living, Confident Living, The Power of Positive Thinking, and, with Smiley Blanton, Faith is the Answer. The Power of Positive Thinking, his most popular book, has sold more than 20 million copies in 41 languages. With his wife, Ruth, Dr. Peale founded the Foundation for Christian Living in 1945, which continues as the Outreach Ministries of Guideposts International. Norman Vincent Peale died on December 24, 1993, at 95.8

“If there is hope it is in the proles,” wrote Orwell. In the context of contemporary American philosophy, I have and will continue to take this to mean that the problems and issues that are acknowledged and analyzed by the academic elite can only be solved by the formation of public opinion, since it is public opinion that creates the water in which we all swim. In the American


6 Blanton-Peale Institute and Counseling Center (accessed January 1, 2013).


line we can see at least one clear path running from Jonathan Edwards (as Bishop Butler’s American complement), to American idealism and Platonism, and the general succession from Edwards to Emerson to James and Dewey, and running in opposition to the eventual triumph of predatory capitalism and the imposition of a consumerist ideology as a form of mental slavery on the American public. Another line runs from Plato to Plotinus, to Anselm of Canterbury, and the Cambridge Platonists, to William Blake, and on to Ezra Pound and Mary Oliver.

And we can see analogies of structure among the great works of those who held high office, were highly educated, but by one means or another were able to transmit the essential vision to the most humble works. I am thinking of Confucian philosophy and the Chinese empire, Stoicism and the Roman Empire, Bishop Butler and Archdeacon Paley, who trained millions in the ways of the British Empire, and Jonathan Edwards, as continued by William S. Burroughs, who saw our destiny manifest in the exploration of outer space. Perhaps even Gilgamesh among the Babylonians, or Wittgenstein, whose high position would have been as heir to one of the greatest European fortunes, but whose thought has now trickled down to all but the least educated. Many of Wittgenstein’s sayings as collected in Culture and Value would not appear out of place in the Guideposts context.

II

Healthy-mindedness can be achieved, provided one absolute essential is met: the opportunity to talk freely. Orwell said one taboo can cripple the mind, i.e., one cannot talk or write at all if one lives in fear of being shamed by “saying the wrong thing.” One-on-one psychotherapy sessions claim to offer this open environment, as do many small groups of friends (obviously self-selected because of compatibility). Since all such venues nevertheless have limits, the individual who wishes to maximize self-expression will need to create a portfolio of places in which the full spectrum of that person’s self can be exposed without fear. For purposes of true self-expression a mass audience is often more confining than a small one.

About Dr. Peale, Smiley Blanton said the following: “Dr Peale is a great pioneer. He was one of the first men—if not the first—to combine the new science of human behavior known as depth psychology with the discipline of religion. As a result, he has been able to help more people than either religion or depth psychology could help, acting alone.”

Guideposts magazine, the principal legacy of Norman Vincent Peale, and associated with Alcoholics Anonymous by friends and foes alike, is an example of the prosthetic extension of the self as described by Papini, Freud and McLuhan, now more broadly called (tele)presence. Media such as Guideposts do not pretend to be transparent, noiseless carriers. On the contrary, they are filters and amplifiers, drawing out one thread of my self-expression and customizing it for the self-selected audience, thus enhancing the transaction.

Fear of embarrassment varies greatly, of course, and there are those who seem to thrive on embarrassing themselves and their audience. Philosophers in training are often taught simply to

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take their lumps and forget it. Don’t worry about making an ass of yourself, don’t blush, don’t prolong the agony. On the other hand, it is also wise to follow Thoreau’s advice and live on a wide margin. As one develops one’s various venues of choice for the presentation of self, it is advisable both to make embarrassment highly unlikely and to arrange things so that the harm done, should it occur are minimized. What one does not do is allow unconscious repression of any significant element or passion in one’s underlying nature.

When I read some of my published poems, including some published in the campus literary journal, several students commented, publicly on the internet, that the material was inappropriate for the classroom by virtue of the language and explicit sexuality. I agree, “inappropriate in an instructional context” is the appropriate term for some of my work. So I have offended, and that is a bad thing, but self-censorship, holding back intentionally to spare myself embarrassment or controversy is the greater offense, to do so is to offend against the truth.

Race is a good example. In the “Moving Beyond Racism” group participants are encouraged to express their true feelings but not to engage in “cross-talk,” whereas in other racially mixed groups it may be obvious to everyone that the topic of race or any racial reference must be avoided. The wide margin is created both by repressing one’s desire to speak in some venues and then developing other venues in which virtually anything goes. If anything goes then the audience will generally discount whatever is said and perceive it more as an act than an expression of true feeling.

We naturally try to develop a personal audience or entourage that is most satisfying, but the standard philosophical point is that those who are easily pleased by our performances initially may not be the ones whose attendance (presence) gives most satisfaction in the end. Some bosses are so insecure that they need to surround themselves with “yes men,” but such a policy always carries with it the seeds of its own destruction. Most of us derive far greater satisfaction from being torn apart by a senior colleague who has taken the time to reply to a piece than from ten or twenty friends and fans telling us how much they enjoyed it. The first principle in the development of one’s philosophical entourage must always be that these are the people who will be most critical and least easily pleased with one’s performance. Some married couples engage in this sort of creative struggle throughout their careers.

Regardless of how one develops the philosophical entourage (or text circle, not hermeneutical circle), the only absolute essential is that true self-expression be cultivated, but cultivated without leaving the venue. “Something a bit different..but really awesome..but still in the venue. Why is this such a difficult concept?” As this process becomes institutionalized in a culture, full, fair, and free expression becomes the norm, and each is able to contribute his or her unique angle of vision on any subject.

Contrary to popular opinion, but in line with Wittgenstein’s thoughts, the members of the groups need not have anything in common, they need not be aware even of what language game is being played. It is not only the clueless, but the best-informed as well, who are left shaking their heads and wondering at the true nature of the transaction of which they find themselves a party. The

11 Rebecca Bauknight on facebook.com
public value of the process described here is that the public opinion, the fog, or chaos of opinions that results and is most reflective of the present state of our collective knowledge of the real.

In the system described here, every person, even every encounter or intervention, every analysis, is different. The specialists develop an eye not only for difference but for specific differences that matter most. Lines of poetry are rewritten 10s or 100s of times. Hypotheses are discarded by the score as falsifying evidence comes in. Subscriptions are cancelled, and books acquired at considerable cost and inconvenience go unread as more important matters press in. Stereotypes and generalities, all the racisms, fall away as useless for any purpose. The unbiased mind that knows individuals by name is what Walter Lippmann called lucid, and is highly resistant to what Lippmann called the manufacture of consent.

The society Freud envisaged can be seen as an answer to Dewey’s call for a common faith and for art to be seen as experience both explicit and militant, while Freud’s insistence on the reign of scientific reason (the reality principle) binds his method both to the great mystics, who also made truth the business of their lives, and to the great quotidian-cosmological philosophers who taught not so much which of our daily acts are in accord with the will of heaven as how to discover for ourselves the way of life which love of God has blessed, the way of life that best instantiates participation in the forms.

Bertrand Russell is a singular case in point for my purposes since he managed to produce, over many years, excellent popular works as well has highly influential technical writings. In his first popular book Russell argues for the practice of philosophical analysis, which while it was not a variety of psychoanalysis did serve a similar function, that is, we do not answer the great philosophical questions, any more, we might add, than we produce a good map of the unconscious. Our pay-off is in the kind of people we become by making the effort. We see the real world with less bias, and we understand the structure of reality better once out from under the curtain of self-deception. Wittgenstein put the point by saying that we are held captive by a picture and once philosophy frees us we can dwell in the chaos and feel at home. We can let the mystery (of the philosophical questions) be and get on with our lives.

Analytic philosophy and psychoanalysis are not related in any interesting way, and Wittgenstein for one was censorious of those who described his method as a form of therapy. Philosophical analysis and psychoanalysis are entirely different treatments for the ills of our human nature in our human condition, and when they work, if they work, they can induce the same state of healthy-mindedness, which, as we have emphasized, is essentially different in every case.

The foundational platonic point was that if we want to feel good and be good then we cannot leave everything to the free play of the passions but must order and arrange the passions with special attention to the self-regarding and the other-regarding, and we must find a way for the best that is in us, the reason, to also be the most powerful. Material from the preconscious and the unconscious appears in many forms: errors, omissions, dreams, hallucinations, delusions, psychoanalytic sessions, as well as many more cases of sublimated appearance.

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12 Culture and Value, pp. 18e, 65e.
When our conscious life is so full of stress, anxiety, and insecurity, it becomes even more difficult for reason/conscience to gain ascendancy over the passions. However, if there is a coincidence between lives that pursue self-love and lives that pursue benevolence, then we have a strong incentive to gain as much acquaintance with reality as we can. The controlled release of unconscious passions requires both a formation of public opinion that is friendly to such expression rather than hostile to it, and the discipline and sophistication, the breadth of experience, and the courage to act under uncertainty that can be found only in those with many years of professional training.

The alliance of popular and professional philosophy has little to do with the use of textbooks and videos to present philosophy to the people; its concern is with finding a way to extend the public’s attention span, to be willing to feel intellectual gratification, and to be willing to defer that intellectual gratification in pursuit of an even grander and more pleasant vision, even on to Bertrand Russell’s claim that those who have persisted in their philosophical studies may attain the human’s greatest good: union with the universe.

Bertrand Russell ended *The Problems of Philosophy* with the remark that the “unalloyed search for truth” makes us “citizens of the universe.” He went on to say that “through the study of the universe, which philosophy contemplates, the mind is also rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good.”

How important is it in one’s life as a whole to give such prominence to the search for truth, when there is little expectation of finding a satisfactory rendition of it, and when one is more likely to fall into conflict with those who do not share the same truth-priority? Is there such a thing as a private truth, or must the truth be vested by social institutions and, if so, how can we have any hope of a world culture of philosophy, such as envisioned by UNESCO, of which we should all be citizens, let alone the universal citizenship spoken of by Russell?13

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13 See “*The Value of Philosophy,*” in Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Home University Library, 1912)