

PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOTHERAPY CONFERENCE

NORWICH, UK 8 – 11 July 2011

The UEA Centre for Counselling Studies is arranging this conference in association with our School of Philosophy. We are aiming to bring together focusing people, people who are interested in Gene Gendlin's philosophy, and philosophers and therapists from other traditions. We hope in this way to make Gene's philosophy of psychotherapy more widely known, and to make it more a part of mainstream philosophical discussion.

Full details and an application form are on our conference website at:

www.uea.ac.uk/edu/counselling/philosophyconference

Amongst the philosophers whom Gene has written about is Ludwig Wittgenstein (see especially Gene's article 'What happens when Wittgenstein asks "What happens when.....?"' in the *Philosophical Forum* (1997), and in the Gendlin On-Line Library). In order to create a more focused discussion, and because of the main orientation of the School of Philosophy, we are looking especially at resonances between Gene's work and that of Wittgenstein, but presentations from within other traditions are very welcome.

Our three keynote speakers are

Peter Hacker (University of Oxford) who is a world-renowned philosopher in the tradition of Wittgenstein. His book *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* is a brilliant critique of the difficulties involved in relating neuroscience to our ordinary ways of talking about human experiencing.

Hans Schneider (University of Potsdam) is a philosopher living in Berlin who is very familiar with Gene's work and is a contributor to the book on Gene's philosophy, *Language Beyond Postmodernism*. He also has a fascinating article on Wittgenstein and William James in our earlier conference book *Spirituality and Counselling: Experiential and Theoretical Perspectives*.

John Heaton (Philadelphia Institute, London) was a colleague of the existentialist therapist R D Laing, and is in private practice in London as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist. He is a regular lecturer at Regent's College, London and at Roehampton University. He is a founder member of the Guild of Psychotherapists and was editor of *Journal for Existential Analysis* for seven years. His books include: 'Introducing Wittgenstein', 'Wittgenstein and Psychoanalysis' and his most recent book, 'The Talking Cure: Wittgenstein's Therapeutic Method for Psychotherapy'

The conference theme, as sent to the philosophy Lists, is the following - but we also have our 'hidden agenda' of getting Gene's work more widely discussed!

Conference theme

The nature of psychotherapy is in many ways problematical. Current proposals for the statutory regulation of the field in the UK and other countries have led to much discussion of the nature of the discipline, for example about whether it can be subsumed under a 'medical model', or whether approaches should be primarily cognitive or experiential.

Some of the issues involved are of an empirical nature, but others raise conceptual and philosophical issues. Research in the area has tended to concentrate on empirical issues of process and outcome, but psychotherapy inevitably works with contested notions such as those of consciousness, mental illness, delusion, diagnosis and so on. Further, in the development of psychotherapy theory technical or semi-technical concepts such as those of 'the unconscious', 'experiencing level', 'cognition', 'information', 'archetype', 'self-concept' have evolved, whose relationships to the concepts of everyday language and clinical practice are not always clear.

The purpose of this conference is to bring together philosophers who are interested in psychotherapy with psychotherapists and psychotherapy researchers who are interested in the philosophical foundations of their field. We would encourage participants to explain technical terminology and generally present their work so that the more philosophically-oriented papers are accessible to psychotherapists, and the more psychotherapeutically-oriented papers are comprehensible to philosophers.

We welcome contributions from practitioners in any approach to philosophy or psychotherapy. The Centre for Counselling Studies at UEA has been especially involved with the traditions of Focusing-Oriented and Person-Centred therapies, and the School of Philosophy has a strong interest in the philosophy of Wittgenstein. Contributions relating to these areas of interest would be especially welcome.

If you are interested in Gene's philosophical work - please do come!