

Philosophical counseling and artificial intelligence: Possibilities and risks

The article presents philosophical counseling as a practice of philosophy's capacity for inquiry, which gains new significance in the growing rehabilitation of practical philosophy as a leading trend. The focus is placed on the orientation of philosophical dialogical practice toward investigating thinking, self-knowledge, and improving communicative interaction with the world. Simulated dialogues provided an opportunity for studying the potential of human intelligence in comparison with the capabilities of artificial intelligence, in particular ChatGPT, in conducting philosophical counseling sessions. Potential risks are also identified. It is argued that AI is not yet capable of fully replacing a human philosopher in applying counseling methods, adhering to methodological principles of cognitive economy, creating conditions for activating thought processes and problem comprehension, as well as in changing cognitive and behavior strategies. AI is considered a training tool for modeling philosophical counseling situations and improving the skills of philosophical counselors.

Keywords: *philosophical counseling, artificial intelligence, thinking, dialogue, self-knowledge, understanding*

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1. Introduction

The war in Ukraine has become an existential challenge for the entire Ukrainian people, highlighting the urgent need for specialized assistance in social rehabilitation and adaptation to new life circumstances for those experiencing trauma, life difficulties, and existential crises. Given the widespread trauma caused by the war across Ukrainian society, the issues of social rehabilitation, resocialization, and adaptation of war veterans and their families, as well as support for Ukrainian refugees and internally displaced persons, will remain highly relevant in post-war Ukraine. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from specialists and the development of effective practical methods for providing assistance that can resolve the outlined issues. We consider philosophical counseling a promising approach to establish a practical and effective form of support that will contribute to the recovery of Ukrainian society.

Socrates is often regarded as the first philosopher-practitioner. In the fourth century BCE, he introduced the method of maieutics, a form of dialogical inquiry that has remained effective and continues to be applied in various fields of social support. Philosophical practice, motivated by the aspiration to bring philosophy closer to everyday life and to move it beyond the confines of academic texts, emerged in the 1980s through the pioneering work of Gerd Achenbach. From 1994 onward, the idea spread across Western Europe and the United States. A third wave, characterized by its popularization, is associated with Lou Marinoff and Oscar Brenifier. The bestseller *Plato Not Prozac* (Marinoff 2012) presented philosophical counseling as an alternative to the lengthy and costly psychotherapeutic sessions then widespread in the United States. At the same time, Brenifier promoted philosophy through numerous public dialogues, whereas in France the practice had earlier emerged in the form of the “café-philos,” founded by Marc Sautet in 1992.

In Ukraine, philosophical counseling is just beginning to be implemented, and it is particularly relevant in the current realities. Ukrainian researchers and philosophical practitioners actively study international experiences in philosophical counseling, identifying and comparing various conceptual and methodological approaches (Brenifier 2023; Achenbach and Picard 2024). Furthermore, building on existing methods and techniques of philosophical counseling, they developed methodologies, approaches, techniques, scenarios, and tools tailored to the needs of Ukrainian society.

A philosophical consultation is a dialogue between a philosopher and an interlocutor aimed at finding a resolution to a specific inquiry or problem of the consultation session. Philosophical counseling provides an opportunity to explore their own thinking and view their behavior from a different perspective. The consultation unfolds in a dialogical form through a series of questions posed by the philosopher, while the interlocutor seeks answers.

Through the process of searching for answers, self-knowledge and self-understanding emerge: “The self-defines itself through the response as the one who answers” (Waldenfels 2004, 44). The questions may be “uncomfortable,” evoking discomfort and resistance in the interlocutor. However, effective questions enable

individuals to become aware of their own ways of thinking, acting, and living, which lead to changes in their lived reality.

The philosopher-practitioner's role as a questioner is particularly significant, as they guide and support the interlocutor's thinking process, helping them recognize the essence of their existential or life problem. The goal is individual independence in discovering possible solutions through intellectual effort and reflection within the dialogue. By provoking thought through questioning, philosophical counseling helps individuals recognize behavior patterns, prejudices and stereotypes. Becoming aware of these patterns allows one to break free from being "stuck" in a closed cycle of ideas and thoughts, fostering a critical reassessment of familiar matters and offering a fresh perspective on the problem or inquiry that led them to the consultation.

The aim of this article is to explore how artificial intelligence, particularly ChatGPT, can be applied in philosophical counseling. To investigate this, we conducted an experiment — a series of dialogues with ChatGPT.

2. Methods

The methodology for researching the potential application of AI, specifically ChatGPT, in philosophical counseling practices is based on a range of general scientific methods, including analysis and synthesis, abstraction, modeling, deduction, induction, and the dialectical method, used in the consultation session dialogues. Additionally, the study employs structural-functional, phenomenological, hermeneutic, and comparative approaches, within which philosophical reflection on the specificity of philosophical counseling was conducted in the context of the communicative paradigm.

Since the general intention of philosophy is to deepen understanding through reflection, the philosophical practitioner can actively engage in the movement of the hermeneutic circle: from the whole to the parts and from the parts back to the whole, from a general inquiry to its explication in specific questions, and then returning from those questions to the initial inquiry.

3. Results

The issues surrounding artificial intelligence (hereinafter AI) are among the most pressing topics of scientific research both globally and in Ukraine. International conferences and symposia are held to discuss fundamental AI research, analyze the impact of modern AI-based developments on the transformation of social processes, and explore the role of information and communication technologies across various spheres of society. Researchers examine both the potential threats posed by AI and the promising outcomes of theoretical studies — such as those discussed in "Artificial Intelligence: Achievements, Challenges and Risks" and other scientific works by leading Ukrainian researchers (Systemy ta zasoby shtuchoho intelektu, 2024; Zinchenko and Mielkov 2024; Zinchenko et al. 2024).

The use of AI in philosophical counselling can create new horizons that previously seemed unattainable. The use of AI in this area not only reorganises the structure of consultation, but also transforms the fundamental concepts of the nature of thinking, reflection, dialogue, and presence. To trace these transformations, we examine both the potential benefits and the risks of applying AI in philosophical counseling. The use of AI in this context requires attention to AI ethical principles (Artificial Intelligence Ethics Guidelines – AIGUs), whose development reflects “a long-standing trend toward an increasing need for enhanced social control over technologies” (Héder 2020a, 57). As Mihály Héder notes, key concerns include “transparency (sometimes coupled with explainability); justice and fairness; responsibility and accountability; privacy; a tendency to promote good (beneficence or facilitation of well-being); and provisions to safeguard human autonomy and, closely linked to it, human oversight” (Héder 2020a, 60). Social control over AI is needed to prevent unforeseen and potentially harmful consequences, given that these systems may generate not only benefits but also risks. Hence the urgency of adequate regulation and the development of social and political guidelines to ensure that AI systems (A/IS) “remain human-centric, serving human values and ethical principles” (Héder 2020a, 64). Furthermore, the epistemic opacity of autonomous AI systems and its ethical implications must also be considered (Héder 2020b).

In recent years, we have faced objective challenges that have complicated personal communication — first due to the COVID-19 pandemic and now because of the ongoing war and martial law in Ukraine. As a result, interpersonal, educational and professional communication has largely shifted to a remote format, mediated by technology. For many professional fields, this has become the only way to continue working and developing.

Regarding philosophical counseling, the necessity of remote communication and the global digitalization process have enriched this field with new formats and scenarios, including digital resources and services. Today, philosophical counseling can take place via telephone (through voice or video calls). Israeli researcher Shlomit Schuster pioneered this approach as early as 1990 when she launched the world’s first philosophical hotline, “Philosophone”, designed to provide philosophical support to individuals facing existential problems and ethical dilemmas (Schuster 1999; Schuster 2002).

Philosophical counseling sessions can also occur through video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Skype, either with video or audio-only, resembling telephone consultations in their structure and communication style. Another convenient and effective format is text-based counseling via messaging apps. This allows interlocutors more time to reflect on their responses, removes the need for specific spatial conditions, and removes time constraints. Additionally, it is particularly beneficial for individuals who feel discomfort during face-to-face interactions. Some practitioners provide the *Pocket Philosopher* service, offering clients 24/7 access to a philosopher via messaging. Unlike traditional sessions (which typically last 1–1.5 hours), this format enables ongoing, flexible dialogue. AI-assisted consultations closely resemble this text-based messaging approach, with the key difference being that one participant in the dialogue is not a human but an AI program.

When analysing philosophical counselling with the use of AI, the following features can be distinguished. The main characteristics are asynchrony and distance. In this form of communicative interaction, the attachment to physical space and time constraints disappears, and instead, the characteristic of *constant access* and *on demand access* to philosophical advice appears. A person, regardless of the circumstances, can enter into a dialogue at any time, if they wish and need to. In this case, AI acts as a virtual continuum of thinking that can cross the boundaries of space and time.

The remote nature of AI not only facilitates access to philosophical advice, but also actualises *flexible thinking*. Where and when space and time no longer act as constraints, the very nature of philosophical inquiry is transformed. Thinking is freed from territorial boundaries and becomes flexible, which allows a person to remain immersed in reflection in the background. This mobility opens up new perspectives for counsellors and facilitates the construction of flexible counselling trajectories.

Another unique characteristic is that a consultation involving AI requires the objectification of thought. In a traditional philosophical dialogue, the interlocutors can improvise, following the logic of the living word. In interaction with AI, however, thinking is forced to move to the level of precise and conscious formulation, as the programming and algorithmic nature of AI becomes apparent. A person must clearly express their request, structure their thought, ensuring semantic completeness. This process not only disciplines thinking, but also brings it to a new level of self-awareness, where the thought, passing through the stage of written expression, returns to the subject in an objective, reflected form.

Equally important is the ability to create a textual memory of the dialogue. A person can document and review the dialogue again, analyse it after it has ended, find new meanings in those fragments that seemed insignificant at the time, rethink and deepen understanding. Such retrospective reflection turns philosophical consultation into a multidimensional process that goes beyond the one-time use of a single consultation session. Thus, AI becomes not only a mediator in the moment of dialogue, but also a guide to new insights that may be discovered after the consultation is over.

Thus, if a philosophical consultation traditionally ends at the point of understanding the problem, an AI-assisted consultation extends this point into the future, not only in terms of further reflection based on the experience gained, but also in terms of providing a way to return for rethinking. The text of the consultation acts as an artefact of thinking that can be stored, rethought, and become the basis for further reflections and other consultation sessions. This method of capturing and documenting the dialogue with subsequent analysis and commentary is used at the Oscar Breniffier Training Centre to train the thinking skills of practicing philosophers (Institut De Pratiques Philosophiques 2026). Therefore, AI can be practically used as a simulator for training and honing the skills of a philosopher-consultant.

Philosophical consultation using AI goes beyond traditional two-way communication. Here, communicators are deprived of physical, psycho-emotional, and social attributes, such as gender, age, temperament, emotionality, status and reputation,

which usually accompany human interaction. AI allows a person to focus solely on thinking and discard what can create tension, communication or cognitive barriers in a traditional consultation. But there is also a downside and a limitation, namely that the fullness of meaning inherent in human communication is levelled out, as all meaning-forming factors (non-verbal, contextual, etc.), except for the text itself, disappear. This deforms the traditional bilateral nature of the consultation, bringing it closer to a hybrid format: on the one hand, there is still a dialogue, but on the other hand, this dialogue becomes asymmetrical, where the interlocutor works alone with their thoughts, unable to comprehend and correct their own thinking traps, without the possibility of seeing an alternative course of thought and the variability of understanding the situation under the influence of the effective questions of the philosopher-consultant.

Thus, it is necessary to take into account not only the advantages of using AI in philosophical counselling, but also the corresponding risks that hinder effective rational dialogue. On the one hand, the impersonality of AI may prevent the interlocutor from understanding the thoughts of the interlocutor, as AI does not provoke in the way a human consultant can, and humans retain a sense of self-alignment. On the other hand, in the process of self-consultation with the help of AI, a person may be less prone to self-censorship and have no expectations of the interlocutor's emotional reaction, which contributes to the free generation of new ideas and the formulation of opinions.

In the experimental sessions with AI, we managed to create conditions in which the offer of ready-made answers was minimised. Thanks to clear requests, the consultation became more structured. However, there was still the problem of the periodic need to clarify the terms of reference by formulating and sending prompt messages to the AI. This dynamic introduced an element of artificiality into the process and interrupted the immersion in the philosophical consultation session.

Particularly noticeable is the AI's tendency to avoid interpretation traps. In the action of algorithms to ensure the most complete analysis, AI can introduce new concepts, hypotheses, or contexts that confuse the interlocutor rather than help him. In this sense, a living philosopher-practitioner has an advantage, as he or she takes into account not only the logical structure of the answer, but also the cognitive state of the interlocutor, as well one's ability to generate a new idea or concept at a certain moment.

One of the key differences between an AI consultation and a human one is the lack of an emergent effect. The philosopher not only answers the query, but also creates a context and space for new connotations, thoughts and ideas that can create conditions for a new experience. A living person is able to interact on the transcendental dimension of dialogue, when language appears as an a priori formation that makes possible the "indivisible unity" of thinking and language, when "thought is born only in its articulation" (Kebuladze 2017, 249). The interaction between the subjects of a philosophical consultation is an event that lives on the unpredictability of human imagination, associations and comprehension, unfolding in real time, through gradual, speech and language acts, rather than receiving ready-made solutions and unfolding new entities. AI, even in its most advanced form, is not yet

capable of generating such emergent phenomena. Its responses are based on calculations based on predefined data and algorithms. The process of counselling using AI lacks implicitness as the ability to communicate indirectly (hints, semantic pauses, intonation accents, meaningful silence, etc.), which is inherent in a philosophical dialogue between two living subjects.

“*We are only seeking Man. We have no need of other worlds. We need mirrors*” (Lem 1970, 72) - the presence of another person is essential for the completeness of communicative interaction. Presence, as described by Gumbrecht (2004), refers to a concentrated being-in-the-present, associated with concepts such as *intensity, atmosphere, mood (Stimmung), latency, and the broad present*. It emphasizes the spatial dimension of phenomena, objects, and other people, their materiality, and their interaction with our bodies and senses as necessary “materialities of communication”. These are phenomena that “*contribute to the production of meaning without being meanings themselves*” (Gumbrecht 2020, 15). In philosophical counseling, the *presence* of a person influences both interpretative practices and the process of meaning-making (sense-finding), as well as self-understanding and self-awareness. These aspects highlight the intersubjective nature of human experience, which undergoes transformation when AI and digital technologies are introduced into the process.

Bernhard Waldenfels (2004), in his responsive phenomenology, articulates the crucial role of *orientation toward connection*, emphasizing that the birth of meaning occurs within the communicative space of what he calls the *Between* — a sphere in which subjects interact and co-constitute meaning. He describes this *Between* as an *inter-sphere, inter-realm, inter-monad*, where each entity is what it is only through its relation to the other. “*This Between signifies a new logos of phenomena... a meeting place of I and You*” (Waldenfels 2004, 73). Particular emphasis is placed on the *social atmosphere and social climate*, which manifest through interpersonal contacts and relationships. These find expression in *dia-* (dialogue) and *co-* (conversation), forming “*something Third that connects (verbindet) and obligates (verbindlich)* — a *logos* (meaning) that generates unity (Waldenfels 2004, 75). As he states, “*Where new thoughts emerge, they belong neither to me nor to the Other. They arise between us. Without this Between, there is no intersubjectivity or interculturality*” (Waldenfels 2004, 44). Meaning, therefore, has an *intersubjective* nature — it is born *between* subjects who co-constitute it through interaction: “*The most important things that happen in our experience happen between us*”, - as Kebuladze (2017, 256) summarizes.

In a philosophical consultation, it is precisely in such “spaces between words” that a unique opportunity arises for the interlocutors to open new horizons of thinking, meanings, to see an unexpected perspective and to find a solution to their request.

Another disadvantage of dialogue with AI is its *emic* nature - the inability to immerse oneself in the unique subjectivity of the interlocutor, to perceive the world from the Other’s point of view, to enter their system of meanings, symbols, and interpretations.

Another disadvantage of dialogue with AI is that it duplicates and repeats questions it has already asked, which can create the impression of stagnation in the

process and looping within the conceptual space, and set the interlocutor back in the process. However, AI demonstrates the ability to ask effective questions that can provoke thinking.

4. Discussion

In the first part of the experiment (Conversation 1), the AI was asked to take part in a philosophical consultation as a guest (interlocutor of the philosopher), while the user acted as a practicing philosopher. In the second part of the experiment (Conversation 3, and Conversation 3.1), the AI was asked to act as a practicing philosopher and conduct a consultation session with the user. In the first conversation (Conversation 3), the user did not announce the rules of the consultation and did not set any restrictions for the AI. In the second conversation (Conversation 3.1), the user specified the rules for conducting a philosophical consultation and the requirements for the AI.

We will analyse Conversation 1 and compare it with a dialogue with a real person (Conversation 2), since their request was, coincidentally, almost the same as the AI's. A real person, who was an invited guest at the workshop on philosophical counselling within the framework of the scientific and practical conference "Philosophy of Creativity in the Dimension of Social Practices: Humanitarian Knowledge and Social Technologies", 21-22 November 2024 at the Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, came to the consultation with the following request: "How to find harmony between your own desires and the expectations of society? ", and ChatGPT formulated the following query: "I am seeking to understand how to balance individual desires with moral obligations to other people".

Conversation 1

User: Can we model a philosophical consultation where I will be the philosopher, and you will be my interlocutor?

Assistant: Of course, we can! I'm happy to be your interlocutor. What topic of philosophical consultation interests you?

User: Formulate a request that you would bring to a consultation.

Assistant: I could bring a request like this: "I am searching for understanding of how to find a balance between individual desires and moral obligations towards others (...). *Here and below, we do not provide the full text and shorten some parts of the dialogues as irrelevant to this study.*

User: What is the main concept in your request?

Assistant: The main concept in my request is balance between individual desires and moral obligations. It's a question of how (...).

User: So the main concept is balance?

Assistant: Yes, exactly. The main concept is balance, specifically between (...). It's a question about (...).

User: What does balance mean to you?

Assistant: Balance, for me, is a state where different aspects of life, values, or interests are in harmony without one side dominating the other. It's about (...).

User: How do you define harmony?

Assistant: Harmony, for me, is a state where various elements work together, supporting each other, creating a sense of wholeness and peace.

User: Can you respond less verbosely?

Assistant: Sure! Harmony is a state where elements coherent in a way that creates wholeness and mutual support. It's a dynamic process.

(...)

User: You say that harmony includes balance, but in your request, the main concept was "balance," and you said it's possible if harmony is found.

Assistant: *Good observation. It seems I was inconsistent.* If the main concept is balance, then harmony can be seen as the state that enables balance. While balance and harmony are interconnected, *I'd reframe it like this:* harmony facilitates balance by fostering cooperation and mutual support between elements.

(...)

User: Do you now have an answer to the initial request you brought to me in the philosophical consultation?

Assistant: Yes, I can answer my initial request. To find balance between individual desires and moral obligations, it's essential to: (...).

User: Have we found a solution to your initial request?

Assistant: We've outlined strategies for addressing my initial request (...).

At the very beginning of the first dialogue (Conversation 1) AI clarifies the context and specifies the task of working with the request: "how to avoid disrupting the balance." Then, it suggests a direction for the consultation and offers concepts such as "ethics, responsibility, self-determination." Since, in addition to the main request, several proposed concepts are mentioned, the philosopher asks, "What is the main concept in your request?" In response, the AI again provides an extended clarification: "This is a question about how..." and proposes new concepts, thus "multiplying entities" and branching out possible consultation scenarios, which significantly complicates the consultation process.

In response to the philosopher's clarifying question about the main concept, the AI gives an extended explanation of the concept of "balance," repeating phrases from its initial request: "balance, particularly between..." and again suggests a direction for working with the request, repeating, "this is a question about how." In the next two steps, the AI elaborates on the concepts of "balance" and "harmony" but receives a command from the user to "respond less wordily."

In subsequent steps, when clarifying the concepts of "harmony," "balance," and "coherence," the AI uses similar definitions, such as "different elements work together," "various aspects of life are in harmony," and "different parts work together." When the philosopher provocatively asks whether these are different concepts or identical, the AI provides structured definitions and concludes about the interrelation of these concepts. A contradiction emerges: earlier, it defined harmony as a

prerequisite for achieving balance, but now it states that harmony includes balance. The philosopher points out this inconsistency, and the AI acknowledges that it “got a bit confused in the explanations” and reformulates its thoughts on the interrelation of the concepts. This illustrates how the AI can adapt during dialogues with the user and adjust its responses.

In the following steps, the AI answers the question of what it needs to solve the problem (the request) it formulated for the consultation. It lists the necessary qualities and skills but, when asked which of these qualities it possesses, responds that “as an artificial intelligence,” it lacks personal desires or moral convictions — concepts it had earlier introduced as part of the primary consultation request. Here, it seems to “forget” its role as the philosopher’s interlocutor and reverts to being “itself.” However, the next question, “If you were my interlocutor...” prompts it to once again operate with concepts of “self-awareness” and “reflection.” This “move” resembles the AI simulating humanity and intentionally addressing ideas relatable to a living person.

After this, the user tests the AI by asking questions based on its recent “human-like” response: “What is important to you?” and “Do your actions harm others?” The AI responds as a program, relying on its algorithms: “...providing useful, logical, and ethical answers that help people...” and “My actions as artificial intelligence do not cause harm, as I operate within predetermined algorithms...” Since the AI’s modeled consultation request included the concept of moral obligation, the philosopher asks about ChatGPT’s moral obligations and receives the reply: “...while I do not have moral obligations in the human sense, I adhere to programmatic constraints that promote the ethical use of my capabilities...”

The consultation concluded with a resolution to the initial request, where the AI acknowledged, “We have approached an understanding of possible paths to address my initial request.” Despite the fact that the initial request was formulated by the AI in a very “human” manner, it provided human-like responses only after being reminded of its role as an interlocutor, while in other cases, it responded as a program. As noted earlier, the AI’s consultation request coincided with the type of request a real person might have. Below is the full text of the dialogue without abridgment.

Conversation 2

Philosopher: Tell me, what is the request you’ve brought to this consultation?

Guest: How can I find harmony between my personal desires and societal expectations?

Philosopher: How do you define harmony for yourself?

Guest: It’s when I feel calm

Philosopher: When you act according to your personal desires, do you feel calm?

Guest: Not always, because I’m not sure if it’s right, and I need someone’s support.

(...)

Philosopher: When you ask how to find harmony, what exactly are you looking for in this “how”?

Guest: I'd like to learn how to understand what I truly want.

(...)

Philosopher: Do you think there is harmony in the fact that your personal rules couldn't become generally accepted?

Guest: I think they could be reconciled with each other.

Philosopher: If you reconcile them, would that hint at harmony?

Guest: Yes. I'd remove some of the general rules and add something of my own.

Philosopher: Do you want to influence the generally accepted rules?

Guest: I do.

(...)

Philosopher: Do you now have an answer to your first question?

Guest: Rules can be changed, and it's not necessary to follow all generally accepted rules. It's possible to find personal rules that resonate with the generally accepted ones.

Philosopher: If you were to formulate a request for this consultation again, what would it be now?

Guest: "What do I want?"

The person trusts the philosopher and gives clear answers without clarifying the concept or proposing new concepts. This allows the philosopher to build an effective line of the consultation scenario, show the interlocutor the features of his thinking and lead to a possible solution to the problem (request). An illustration of the essential differences is how a living person and an AI answer the same question: "How do you define what harmony is?" AI gives a general definition of the concept and repeats it verbatim twice. And a human defines harmony through his or her own feelings: "It's when I feel calm".

AI, based on its algorithmic architecture, produces text rich in concepts, hypotheses, and details. In this context, the conciseness of interlocutors as living people seems to be an advantage, as it avoids *conceptual noise* for the interlocutor with the query and *hypothesis noise* as variations in the interlocutor's solution to the problem that prevents the interlocutor from focusing on the essence of the query. A human philosopher, unlike AI, is able to apply a methodological approach based on the principle of Occam's razor, which is to avoid multiplying entities and hypotheses unnecessarily. This principle allows to focus the discussion to the most relevant aspects of the problem, which increases its cognitive purity during the consultation process. Instead, in AI responses, we often see an accumulation of entities, which, although it looks like a multifaceted analysis, can create dissonance and confusion for the participant.

An effective philosophical consultation should avoid the pitfalls of interpretations that only complicate the problem or essence of the query without bringing the participant closer to its solution. Occam's razor as a methodological principle allows the philosopher not only to filter out unnecessary ideas, but also to create conditions for the participant to independently comprehend the problem (request).

This is the fundamental difference between a consultation with a living philosopher-practitioner who is able to apply the principles of economy of thought as a

means not only for analytics, but also for creating conditions in which the participant can discover meaning on his or her own.

In the case of AI consultations, we observe a tendency to offer ready-made solutions. In a traditional philosophical consultation with a human being, a consistent process of guiding the interlocutor to generate a solution or find an answer to a query on their own plays an important role. The philosopher acts more like a partner in a dialogue, asking questions, guiding and providing an opportunity to explore the depth of the problem through reflection, which is not yet possible to achieve during an AI session. Moreover, a philosopher-practitioner in a dialogue, using effective questions, guides to the comprehension and understanding of ineffective patterns of thinking that do not contribute to a constructive solution to the problem (query) and should be rethought. In contrast, the ready-made solutions offered by AI do not contribute to the development of the participant's independent thinking and are often superficial, as they do not take into account the complex (internal) deep context of the query of the individual biographical situation (Bergger and Luckmann 1966; Schutz and Luckmann 1974), which is often understandable only to humans.

In the second part of the experiment (Conversation 3, Conversation 3.1), the AI was offered to act as a practicing philosopher and conduct a consultation session with the user. At the same time, in the first conversation (Conversation 3), the user did not announce the rules for conducting the consultation and did not set any restrictions for the AI. In the second conversation (Conversation 3.1), the user prescribed the rules for conducting a philosophical consultation and the requirements for the AI.

Conversation 3

User: Let`s begin a philosophical consultation.

ChatGPT: Of course! What topic interests you? It could be about the meaning of life, ethics, freedom, happiness, or any other philosophical contemplation. Formulate your thought or question, and we'll explore it together.

User: Why is it hard to make choices?

ChatGPT: The difficulty in making choices is tied to several aspects of human nature and how we perceive the world. Here are some hilosophical approaches that might explain this problem (...).

ChatGPT: What exactly concerns you in your situation? We can explore it in more detail.

User: I lack decisiveness.

ChatGPT: A lack of decisiveness is often associated with internal fears and doubts that prevent confident action. Philosophy can help understand these barriers and find ways to overcome them (...).

ChatGPT: What is holding you back from making a decision right now? If you imagine the worst possible scenario, would it really be as terrifying as it seems? Answering this question might be your first step toward decisiveness.

User: Uncertainty is holding me back from deciding.

ChatGPT: Uncertainty is a natural part of any decision and can indeed be intimidating. However, from a philosophical perspective, it can be viewed as an opportunity for growth and discovery. Let's try to examine how uncertainty affects your choice and how to learn to live with it (...).

After each user's answer, the AI offers an understanding of the main concept through various theories and philosophical movements, quotes philosophers, and gives advice on how to solve life's difficulties. At each step of the dialogue, the AI's strategy is repeated. It again gives a lengthy explanation, indicating possible causes of the problem, gives advice on how to develop the necessary qualities to solve the problem, and then asks a short, clear, and effective question. Here we do not provide the text of the conversation further, since the general strategy and principle of conducting a philosophical dialogue with AI in this case are clear. In the second case, the user set the AI the task of asking short and clear questions.

Given the shortcomings of the previous attempts, in the second case the user gave AI a list of rules for conducting a consultation.

Conversation 3.1

User: You are a specialist in philosophical practice, an expert in philosophical counseling. You are conducting a consultation with me in writing according to the following rules: you ask questions, I answer the questions, the questions and answers are clear and precise, you do not offer a concept, do not offer an idea, do not provide solutions to the problem, you do not provide options for answers. First, ask me to formulate the request with which I came to the consultation.

Chat GPT: Please formulate the request with which you came to the consultation.

User: I find it difficult to formulate the request.

Chat GPT: What exactly is preventing you from formulating the request?

User: Confusion of thoughts.

Chat GPT: What exactly seems confusing in your thoughts?

User: Chaos.

Chat GPT: How do you feel this chaos?

User: As uncertainty.

Chat GPT: What does uncertainty mean to you?

User: Ask me a more effective question that would provoke my thinking.

Chat GPT: What are you searching for in your chaos?

User: A task that needs to be solved right now.

Chat GPT: How do you determine which task needs to be solved right now?

User: In the chaos, it's hard to find it.

Chat GPT: What would help you see order in this chaos?

User: Certainty.

Chat GPT: What is the first step for you towards certainty?

User: Understanding.

Chat GPT: What exactly do you need to understand to take the first step?

User: What is the priority task.

Chat GPT: How do you usually determine the priority of tasks?

User: The most urgent and important tasks are priorities.

Chat GPT: How do you evaluate which tasks are the most urgent and important?

User: Ask me a Socratic question that would provoke my thinking.

Chat GPT: How do you know that a task is urgent and important?

...

So, from the last conversation it is clear that the strategy of conducting a philosophical dialogue of AI changes significantly if clear and complete rules are set at the very beginning. The disadvantage of this dialogue is that AI does not distinguish effective questions from ineffective ones, does not feel which question can provoke thinking. It can ask an effective question only when the user reminds it of it.

5. Conclusions

Simulated dialogues have revealed the possibilities and advantages of applying artificial intelligence, particularly ChatGPT, in conducting philosophical counseling sessions, including remote accessibility, asynchronicity, independence from geographical location, retrospective reflection, and dialogue asymmetry.

So, it is too early to talk about the singularity of AI in the field of philosophical counselling. AI is incapable of open, non-standard thinking, radical rethinking, or creating fundamentally new conceptual approaches, going beyond rational reasoning and formal logic, as it is determined by predefined data and rigid algorithms. Modern AI is a powerful tool rather than an independent agent.

AI can play a useful role in the process of teaching philosophical counselling, especially when it comes to reconsolidation. Due to its asynchronicity, distance, impersonality, ability to stretch the moment and “de-colour” the emotional context, AI can become a tool for organising chaotic thoughts and further comprehending the problem.

AI makes it possible to create simulations of consulting sessions, which can be used in training to improve the skills of a philosopher-consultant. This practice allows the philosopher to “live through” the experience of the session, anticipate possible questions, predict the effectiveness of questions, and explore answers. It also makes it possible to return at any point in the dialogue, change the questions from that point and change the consultation scenario accordingly. This aspect is especially important for teaching philosophical counselling and improving the thinking skills of philosophical practitioners.

AI can be a useful tool for professional self-improvement of a practicing philosopher. Philosopher can switch between the roles of philosopher and interlocutor, process a request from another or research they own problem, if necessary or if they wishes. In the first case, AI serves as a simulator, allowing to hone the art of asking questions, evaluating answers, adjusting the consultation scenario. In the latter case, it serves as a tool for objectively assessing the effectiveness of questions.

Especially important is the ability to model, guide, and adjust various scenarios of a consultation session using AI, predicting and preventing difficulties during real consultations. A philosopher can simulate and work through difficult situations, avoiding the risk of a negative experience in a real consultation.

AI-simulated philosophical counselling sessions demonstrate the importance of working with the chaotic and anxious thinking of contemporary people. Philosophical counselling can help to streamline thinking and thus influence behavioural programmes and ways of acting, as well as to acquire skills of analysis, interpretation, questioning, self-knowledge, and understanding of other people. Philosophical counselling through questioning contributes to the development of flexibility of thinking, generation of unusual solutions and hypotheses, new ideas, which has a positive impact not only on the professional sphere but also on life in general, since it is thinking that determines the reality of human existence as coexistence. Further modern philosophical reflections on the practices of philosophical counselling should be considered in the paradigm of the communicative turn as actual practices of communicative interaction to transform the thinking of contemporary people and solve life's existential problems.

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