

In Memoriam: Guy du Plessis (d. 2025)

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*And life itself, confided this secret to me:
“Behold,” it said, “I am that which must
always overcome itself.”*

Friedrich Nietzsche,
quoted by Guy du Plessis

There are lives whose meaning cannot be gathered into a biographical notice without losing something essential. Guy du Plessis was one of those figures. For those who knew him personally, his absence will carry the texture of voice, gesture, conversation, wit, disagreement, encouragement, and memory. For those who did not know him, his writings still offer something unusually direct: the sense of a practitioner who wrote from within the difficult places where philosophy is asked not merely to interpret life, but to help life endure, recover, and become more truthful to itself.

This *In Memoriam* does not pretend to be an archival closure. It is, rather, an act of philosophical remembrance: a way of allowing a body of work, a professional presence, and a distinctive vocation to speak at the threshold of a philosophy journal issue devoted to philosophical practice.

Guy du Plessis was a South African addictions specialist, philosophical practitioner, academic, author, and publisher. Across his published work, one encounters a rare crossing of disciplines: addiction studies, existential psychotherapy, theoretical psychology, Logic-Based Therapy, Nietzschean life-affirmation, integral theory, and the older conception of philosophy as a way of life (du Plessis, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024). This was not an accidental mixture. It expressed a central conviction: that human suffering cannot be reduced to

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symptom, mechanism, social location, or diagnosis alone. It also belongs to the order of meaning, freedom, self-deception, value, responsibility, and the ways human beings imagine what their lives are for.

This is why Guy's work matters for philosophical practitioners. He did not treat philosophical practice as an elegant supplement to academic philosophy. He treated it as a real practice of orientation. In his writing on addiction and recovery, philosophy appears not as decoration, not as consolation in the cheap sense, and not as abstract vocabulary placed over pain. It appears as a discipline of awakening: a way of helping persons examine the premises by which they live, the stories by which they excuse or condemn themselves, the forms of self-deception that narrow the world, and the virtues that may help them return to agency.

One of his recurring themes was the ancient idea that philosophy is a way of life. He returned to the Hadotian insight that philosophy, before it became primarily an academic profession, was a mode of existence, an art of living, and a practice of transformation. In Guy's hands, this idea became more than historical recovery. It became a proposal for contemporary care. In the context of addiction recovery, he argued that philosophy as a way of life could become a genuine recovery pathway, one among many, but a deeply needed one: a pathway that gives people techniques, language, self-understanding, and a worldview capable of supporting sustained change (du Plessis, 2021).

His interest in Logic-Based Therapy was part of this larger vision. LBT offered him a rigorous but humane structure for addressing problems of living. It begins with the practical reasoning that underlies emotional and behavioral disturbance; it identifies irrational premises; it refutes fallacies; it searches for guiding virtues; and it turns to an uplifting philosophy capable of sustaining those virtues in life (du Plessis, 2019, 2023). For Guy, this was not only a method for counseling rooms. It was a way of reconnecting philosophy with its therapeutic ancestry, while keeping it intellectually responsible and practically usable.

This commitment also took institutional form. As Director of the South African Logic-Based Therapy & Consulting Institute, Guy helped give LBTC a South African home: not only as a training and certification pathway, but also as a form of outreach addressed to addiction treatment and recovery. The Institute described its work as including courses in the theory and practice of Logic-Based Therapy and Consultation, workshops offered in cooperation with the U.S. Institute, and the promotion of philosophical practice through the National Philosophical Counseling Association. In that context, Guy's work stood in close collaboration with Elliot D. Cohen, the founder of Logic-Based Therapy and a central figure in philosophical counseling in the United States. This connection was not merely administrative. It expressed a shared conviction that philosophical reasoning can become a disciplined, compassionate practice for people facing concrete crises of life. Guy did not simply apply Cohen's method; he extended it into the terrain he knew most

deeply, where suffering, self-deception, relapse, and the search for meaning meet (du Plessis, 2019, 2021, 2023).

Perhaps the most characteristic feature of his philosophical temperament was his refusal to abandon either rigor or compassion. He could write with severity about reductionism, ideology, resentment, narcissistic injury, and the dangers of worldviews that rob people of agency. Yet the aim was not condemnation. It was liberation. He wanted to recover the person from the conceptual cages in which addiction, self-deception, victimhood, shame, and false consolation can trap the human being. He knew that theories matter because they can either enlarge or diminish the person who lives under them.

This is especially visible in his existential approach to addiction. Guy insisted that addiction should not be understood only through natural-scientific, biopsychosocial, or behavioral categories. Those categories have their place, but they do not exhaust the human reality of addiction. Addiction also concerns the person's confrontation with death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness (du Plessis, 2019). It can be a desperate and destructive response to existential anxiety. It can be a refusal, or an inability, to face the givens of existence in a way that preserves freedom and dignity. To bring philosophy into addiction treatment, then, is not to intellectualize suffering. It is to take suffering seriously at the level at which human beings actually suffer: as embodied, desiring, self-interpreting beings who need meaning as much as they need relief.

Guy's use of Nietzsche should be understood in this light. He was drawn to Nietzsche not because Nietzsche offers comfort, but because Nietzsche refuses false comfort. In Guy's interpretation, Nietzsche's analysis of suffering can become an uplifting philosophy precisely because it does not promise a life without resistance (du Plessis, 2023, 2024). It asks whether suffering can be understood, endured, transformed, and even integrated into a more affirmative relation to life. The will to power, read in this practical and therapeutic register, is not domination over others, but the activity of overcoming resistance. It is the courage to meet life where it is difficult and to discover, within that difficulty, the possibility of self-overcoming.

This made Guy's philosophical practice unusually honest. He did not present recovery as a sentimental return to normality, nor philosophy as a polished discourse delivered from above. He wrote as someone who knew that recovery requires structure, discipline, community, practice, and a repeated confrontation with illusion. He also understood that people often need more than instructions; they need a horizon. They need a philosophy strong enough to hold them when old forms of certainty collapse. His work attempted to offer such horizons without turning them into dogmas.

There is, in this, a lesson for the whole field of philosophical practice. Philosophical counseling is sometimes misunderstood as conversation for the

already articulate, a refined activity for those who can afford reflective distance. Guy's work pushes against that misunderstanding. It shows philosophical practice entering the terrain of addiction, relapse, shame, anxiety, distorted reasoning, existential dread, and the search for a livable future. It shows that philosophy can meet people not only in seminars, but also at the point where life has become painfully unmanageable. It shows that philosophical practitioners must be willing to think where thinking hurts.

For colleagues who knew Guy, this issue may bring grief close to professional memory. For readers meeting him through these pages, it may offer a different kind of encounter: the discovery of a thinker-practitioner who made philosophical practice more courageous, more existentially serious, and more attentive to recovery as a human and philosophical task. His writing does not ask us merely to remember him. It asks us to continue the work: to keep philosophy close to life, close to suffering, close to freedom, and close to the possibility that a person may still become otherwise.

To dedicate this issue to Guy du Plessis is therefore not only to honor a departed colleague. It is to affirm a task he helped make visible. Philosophical practice is at its best when it accompanies human beings in the labor of becoming clearer, freer, more responsible, and more alive. Guy's work reminds us that this labor is never purely theoretical. It is lived in fragile rooms, difficult conversations, relapses and beginnings, despair and courage, arguments and virtues, losses and recoveries. In that space, philosophy becomes again what it once was and what it must continually learn to be: a way of life (du Plessis, 2021).

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