

Philosophical counselling as transcreation: Towards an African hermeneutic and conversational approach

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Abstract: The role of translation in philosophical counselling has not yet been sufficiently acknowledged, despite the importance it might play in multilingual contexts such as South Africa. In these contexts, translation becomes fundamentally philosophical. Concepts and ideas are firstly formulated in one language and translated into another, situated within a philosophical framework. However, this presents a unique challenge: philosophical counsellors are not necessarily translators. To mitigate this potential problem, I argue that philosophical counselling is best conceptualised as incorporating the practice of transcreation – a process of co-creating and co-cultivating meaning through a radical re-interpretative engagement. I turn to two African philosophical traditions to illustrate but also ground this process of transcreation, namely, Tsenay Serequeberhan’s hermeneutic philosophy and Jonathan Chimakonam’s conversational philosophy. Serequeberhan’s notion of a sifting and sieving or a cultural filtration and fertilisation of a living past demonstrates that philosophical inheritance is not passive reception but active reinterpretation, listening, and responding to contemporary needs. Similarly, Chimakonam’s method of conversationalism emphasises how knowledge must be “forged” through dynamic and radically reciprocal conversations grounded in a conversational dialect. With the help of these perspectives, I argue that philosophical counselling embraces a similar process of transcreation, shifting its focus to a radical reciprocity and cross-pollination of co-creatively cultivating different ways of thinking.

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Introduction

The philosophical counselling session, one might initially argue, is constituted by a fundamentally conversational process. This presupposes a minimally shared linguistic framework between the philosophical counsellor and the counselee. Linguistic commonality saturates the philosophical counselling discourse; few have acknowledged and discussed the role that language plays in the philosophical counselling session. (The only references made to language in philosophical counselling is when “case studies” are translated from especially Hebrew to English. See Lahav (2001). However, here the translation only happened after the session has happened to provide the case studies to English readers.) As the practice of philosophical counselling extends into the global South, language choice itself becomes part and parcel of the session. In especially South African contexts, the uncritical acceptance of English as the default medium of expression eventually reproduces marginalisation, exclusion, and occlusion. That is, it already begins to determine which ontological and epistemological frameworks become accessible or foreclosed (Katunich 2006, 139-140; Ntombela 2023, 3-4; Nyoni 2023, 50). What one might call the *multilingual problem in philosophical counselling* constitutes a significant gap in the philosophical counselling discourse that requires attention. While the philosophical counselling discourse has tentatively acknowledged intra-linguistic translations – providing the counselee explanations of philosophical concepts or ideas in the same language (Tuedio 2003, 27; Pollastri 2006, 111) – there remains relative silence regarding inter-linguistic translations – when the philosophical counsellor and the counselee speak different languages, and some translation is needed. In African philosophy, language has been a serious topic of discussion for many years. It manifests in some respects as an *aporia* concerning the very possibility of African philosophy as such. Kwasi Wiredu (1998, 17), for example, notes that the African who has learned philosophy in English [...] has most likely become conceptually

westernized [...]. To that same extent he [or she] may have become de-Africanized. It does not matter if the philosophy learned was African philosophy. If that philosophy was academically formulated in English and articulated therein, the message was already substantially westernized.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (2005) raises similar concerns within his seminal work *Decolonising the Mind* and the idea of linguistic reclamation. Reading wa Thiong'o, Brian Sibanda (2021, 143-144) recently noted through the notion of *language as being* that not being able to speak one's language is like losing a limb – it is not having access to one's history or heritage. According to the likes of Bruce Janz (2015, 488), this becomes a fertile and productive moment, in which translation becomes philosophical. And in the context of philosophical counselling, especially when bringing its practice into contact with African philosophy discourse, translation seems like the most likely solution to the problem. But this raises a significant issue: The philosopher is by definition not necessarily a translator. That is, her primary focus is not in translating her ideas from one language to another, even though this might be entailed if she speaks different languages. Instead, there is a focus on the process of creating or constructing ideas. The ontological distinction between creating ideas and linguistic translation reveals a significant problem for the philosophical counsellor. Here and the subsequent first section of this paper, I want to introduce the idea of *transcreation* as a possible solution to this aporia – where transcreation is understood as the process of creative reinterpretation and cultural adaptation. This is a somewhat novel idea in philosophy, as it is more widely used in translation studies pertaining to the advertisement industry. However, I argue that some of the ideas found in this literature provides fertile ground for further work in philosophy, and especially philosophical counselling. In the second section, I turn to African philosophical perspectives which I argue illustrates various overlaps with the process or practice of transcreation. Even though the two African philosophers to which I turn do not refer to the idea of transcreation in their respective work, their praxes exemplify it, or so I will argue. In this section, I turn to the work of radical African hermeneutical philosopher Tsenay Serequeberhan and the African conversational philosopher Jonathan Chimakonam. Of particular focus are both these philosophers' approaches that deal with problematic inherited concepts and philosophies, and also the confrontation with their pasts, or heritage.

In these praxes I find insights that not only resonate with transcreation, but also the practice of philosophical counselling, to which I then turn in the third section of this paper. Here, I want to argue that philosophical counselling in multicultural contexts such as South Africa, with the insights provided by these two African philosophers, becomes a fundamentally co-trans creative meaning making process that might co-cultivate alternative ways of thinking and living. The conversational encounter between the philosophical counsellor and counselee, when situated within multilingual contexts, undergoes significant changes so that transcreation emerges as a type of event, or a happening. This event becomes a liminal or in-between space in which new concepts and ways of thinking might be co-cultivated through maintaining a productive tension of linguistic differences.

On the notion of transcreation

Conversation happens in and through a particular language, and the choice of this language is not always a value neutral practice. This is especially the case in multilingual contexts. Janz (2015, 488) writing from an African philosophical perspective, notes, for example, that, “[t]here is no lingua franca, and no neutral language, which means that dialogue between cultures will always put the onus of translation on one side.” And African conversationalist philosophers Egbai and Chimakonam (2019, 182-183) write that, the choice of language has always been an issue for theorists in intercultural communication: since stakeholders converge from different linguistic backgrounds; whose language should be adopted for intercultural exchanges? [...] Who decides which language we should communicate in? These questions are important ones to ask, especially in intercultural philosophy and multilingual contexts, manifesting as substantive theoretical issues. However, without unduly becoming entangled in these complexities, the central issue for this paper might be distilled to the following question: “Is translation the best practice for the philosophical counsellor facilitating a session in multilingual contexts?” While the likes of Janz and others have praised translation as inherently philosophical or a philosophical moment, I propose instead a theoretical reorientation towards the concept of *transcreation*. This derives from two appreciations; firstly, that the philosophical counsellor qua philosopher lacks training and specialisation in translation, especially with philosophy

being notoriously hard to translate (e.g., Rée 2001, 226); and secondly, that transcreation involves particular philosophical aspects that is often absent from translational studies and practices – precisely the elements to which Janz indicates even though he only refers to translation. Additionally, recent empirical studies illustrate the potential efficacy of transcreative approaches in “the adaptation of health education materials for improved understanding and cultural relevance to specific language and ethnic groups,” (Díaz-Millón & Olvera-Lobo 2023, 349). While these studies do not speak to philosophy nor philosophical counselling as such, it illustrates that transcreation can have benefits in these medical and therapeutic settings. Having established my rationale for turning to transcreation, I now want to give a brief overview of the notion of transcreation, focusing especially on its creative-adaptation element.

Broadly speaking, transcreation can refer to the process and/or event of creative reinterpretation of texts, making them relevant to specific audiences in different and new contexts. This process combines the practices of “linguistic translation, cultural adaptation and (re-)creation or creative re-interpretation” (Díaz-Millón & Olvera-Lobo 2023, 347). Focus is on the inherent creative process involved, distinguishing it somewhat from the mere act of translation (Gaballo 2012, 95-96), and why transcreation is sometimes referred to as “more than translation” (Pedersen 2014, 57, 62). This is, *inter alia*, because transcreation purportedly involves and incorporates the process of creating “new content” (Carreira 2020, 24). Here, focus is on “fluency (the ability to generate ideas and meaningful responses), flexibility (the ability to repurpose ideas), originality (the capacity to produce rare and novel ideas) and elaboration (the capacity to develop ideas). It requires the translator not only to conceive new words, but also to imagine new worlds” (Gaballo 2012, 111). One might note that transcreation occupies what I want to call a liminal space between the radical creative act that is, on the one hand, completely separated from the source text and, on the other hand, a total preservation of ideas and intent (which one might conjecture is the goal of what one might call faithful translation). Or using the phrasing above, it is to imagine a new world which itself becomes this liminal space conducive for creative re-interpretation. I refer to this as an in-between space because of the focus on a kind of negotiation (Eco 2004) or transaction involved in the creation of new ideas and concepts. Of importance is that

meaning or the new worlds created “does not reside readymade “in” the text or “in” the reader but *happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text*” (Rosenblatt 1988, 4). Transcreation thus becomes a sort of event that can happen between the transcreator and the text, which are both dynamic and in the process of happening, and that meaning, especially new concepts, are created between them. Meaning here does not reside in the transcreator, neither does it wholly reside in the source text which they attempt to transcreate. It emerges through the event of transcreation, in between the two. What is important here is the reciprocal nature of transcreation; the transcreator creatively engages with the text, giving and taking meaning in a relatively unrestricted manner. Or one might state, following Claudia Benetello (2017, 245), that emerging from this process are “new originals”, or what the transcreator and poet Haroldo de Campos (as quoted in Lima 2017, 462) notes as a “simultaneous production of difference.” The link to the source text is not used as an authoritative structure, sameness is relinquished in the acceptance and preservation of difference.

Additionally, this problematizes the idea that there is a “correct” or “more correct” transcreation. This is, perhaps unintentionally, evident in the use of transcreation in marketing (Pedersen 2014, 57-58; Benetello 2017, 237; Carreira 2020, 24). According to Benetello (2017, 245-246), the transcreator in a marketing context is expected to provide multiple options from which the client may choose. The implication here is that the transcreator does not present their version as a final or faithful product, but rather as one of several possible renderings that may better suit the needs of a particular situation. There is an inherent and seemingly endless negotiation at play – not only between the transcreator and the text, but also between the transcreator and the presence of another. More importantly, when transcreation is viewed as a kind of political moment, it allows for a certain “degree of separation from the original” and “enjoys a literary status of its own.” As Lima (2017, 462) notes, “This proposition Carrie[s] a significant political subtext. [...] [Transcreation] works as a form of resistance to the hierarchical and asymmetric shape of world literary relations.” This approach challenges the notion of the translator’s “invisibility” in the process – not as one who produces a “translation,” but rather a kind of “original.” In contrast, “[t]ranscreated texts bear the marks of the translator’s individual style and artistic choices; they openly display

the deviations from the source material” (Lima 2017, 473). This again unsettles the idea of sameness. What makes transcreation even more relevant for the context of this paper, is the emphasis on cultural adaptations (Gaballo 2012, 95-96), and its “freedom to address cultural gaps” (Ray & Kelly as quoted in Benetello 2017, 239). This is particularly important for philosophy, as conceptual frameworks and different systems of logic are not purely linguistic and get carried over when especially philosophy is used in different contexts. If transcreation in this context is successful, the product should be relevant to the client or the counselee’s life world, and it should not feel like it was wholesale imported from elsewhere. This will ultimately demand and reinforce the creative and constructive elements of transcreation, especially when concepts, ideas, and possible solutions need to be created, generated, or cultivated where there were none before or where those that were there have become inadequate for the current situation (Gaballo 2012, 111).

With this in mind, I want to now argue that various African philosophers have been practicing forms of transcreation in their respective philosophical approaches – even without explicitly referring to what they are doing as transcreation. I want to specifically turn to the work of Serequeberhan and Chimakonam, who both demonstrate transcreational approaches with their respective focus on navigating between indigenous African philosophical traditions and Western philosophical frameworks imposed through neo-colonialism. Specifically, Serequeberhan allows for the direct link to the hermeneutical tradition, and Chimakonam allows for the link to conversation – both key factors for transcreation, interpretation, and creation of concepts and ideas. Through my explicit turn to these philosophers, I argue that one might both gain insights for the practice of philosophical counselling itself but also a deeper understanding of transcreation as a fundamental philosophical practice emerging out of different African perspectives.

Identifying transcreationary praxes in African philosophy

1. Radical African hermeneutics: A praxis of filtration-fertilisation and organic appropriation-indigenisation

Broadly speaking, Serequeberhan’s writing focusses on the hermeneutic or interpretative actuality of the lived and felt experience of

the post-colonial present. Most of his work thus follows a somewhat western hermeneutic tradition, albeit transcreated, as will become clearer. But according to the likes of Abraham Olivier (2023, 534) one might also understand his practice as African hermeneutic *phenomenology*. Even though Serequeberhan himself does not mention his task as a phenomenological one, he does consistently deal with issues pertaining to the horizon, or “lived finitude” (Serequeberhan 1994, 1), which warrants the label of phenomenology in addition the Serequeberhan’s almost exclusive usage of hermeneutics. It is thus not just about interpretation, but also the limits of our interpretation as situated and embedded in a concrete life world and what this means, that is, “an interpretative study of life-world experience” (Olivier 2023, 535). Additionally, as per Justin Sands (2023, 32), Serequeberhan’s African hermeneutic philosophy offers us not the tools to overcome what I will later refer to as the neo-colonial situation, but to work through it, that is, “to debate it, disentangle it, decolonise it – in pursuit of uncovering other parts of ones’ heritage which Euro centrism denied, overtook, or sought to colonise as their own.”

By re-enunciating and reinserting African history into philosophical discourse through the praxes of a filtration-fertilisation (or sifting-sieving) of the past, and an organic appropriation-indigenisation of that which emerged elsewhere, Serequeberhan is not merely recovering ideas but reshaping or creatively re-interpreting them to serve a decolonial liberation. One might note here that this is one of the ideals of transcreation: it actively negotiates meaning between different contexts and different times. To further establish this connection with transcreation, I begin by discussing the process of filtration-fertilisation. (It is worth noting that my reading of these processes or what I like to refer to as dispositions, are rather peculiar. See, for example, Olivier (2023) and Sands (2023) who provide more “standard” readings, especially in terms of reading a sifting and sieving and an organic appropriation and indigenisation together rather than separating them as I do here. See especially Louw (2023; 2024a; 2024b) in which these dispositions are discussed separately.)

Early on in Serequeberhan’s (1994, 108-109; 2015, 35) work, but also found throughout his oeuvre, he talks about a type of dialectical synthesis of what he understands as “good” from the past or one’s heritage with the contemporary situation in mind. For him, this contemporary

situation is one that is still stuck in what he calls the neo-colonial situation. The synthesis, or what I rather want to call a transcreation, is a product of the process of a “cultural filtration and fertilisation” or Serequeberhan also sometimes refer to as a “sifting and sieving” process. This is a critical appraisal process or event in which the philosopher selectively takes from the past or their heritage what is needed to overcome the neo-colonial situation, but also discarding what might hinder this ongoing liberation process (Serequeberhan 1994, 5, 109; 2015, 52-53; 2021, 38). It is thus important to understand the past as something that manifests itself with a type of *eagerness* in the present moment (Serequeberhan 2015, xii, 94). That is, it is not something stagnant and unchanging, but rather exhibits malleable properties such as clay in the philosopher’s hands.

One might consider the filtering (sifting and sieving) process separate from the fertilising process. The former is tied to achieving understanding through the development of what Serequeberhan (2015, 80-81) gains from mostly Hans Georg Gadamer, the idea of an effective-historical consciousness. Serequeberhan (2015, 81) notes here that, “[i]n this way the horizons of the past and the present – in process – ‘combine . . . in us,’ fuse, or fail to do so, out of the concerns of the present and in view of a possible future.” Consisting of a “variety of voices” or multiple histories, the past is approached by the African philosopher with reverence, respect, or an open-minded listening attitude (Serequeberhan 1994, 103; 2003, 51). What emerges from this process is a dynamic interpretative practice of filtering, or a sifting and sieving. The African philosopher establishes what is worth keeping in their process of understanding the present but also in order to open or project a better future (Serequeberhan 1994, 5; 2015, 81).

As soon as the past is engaged with not as a simple given, there will always be more to discover about it. But more importantly, and tying this with the fertilisation component, there exists a wealth of ways of *being becoming* that preceded the current moment, itself then becoming resources for alternative ways of being becoming in the hands of the African philosopher who embodies this disposition. Not only is the past and one’s heritage a rich network of ideas that change how we might interact with the present, but the present itself can also open up critical ways of making sense of the past that led to the present and still affects and shapes it. Of importance here is the focus on seeing human life as never

complete and always in motion, revision, and reconstruction. Sands (2023, 35), in reading the early Serequeberhan, notes as much:

By accepting this and ‘letting go’, being open to truly encounter otherness, one recognizes a “fusing of horizons” where one’s historicity is not static, not merely an object to be studied, but is *living and ongoing; it has possibilities (both good and bad) yet to be realized or actuated*.

This, I want to maintain, links well with transcreation, and its link mentioned earlier regarding it being a process, an event, something in-between or liminal. Not only does the African philosopher deal with an inherited past through the disposition of filtration and fertilisation, but she also needs to deal with an imposed heritage or works that emerged from elsewhere. At the start of Serequeberhan’s (1994, 2) magnum opus of kind, he mentions his process of organic appropriation and indigenisation of the existentially aware position of especially Martin Heidegger; i.e., a “phenomenological hermeneutics of facticity” (see Olivier 2023, 535). One might explain this with a *digestion analogy*. Serequeberhan does not wholesale copy Heidegger; instead, through a process of digestion he dismantles and breaks down Heidegger’s complex ideas, extracts and selects from it useful elements, and then modifies or adapts these concepts to African contexts to fit his goals of understanding the neo-colonial situation. Serequeberhan (2015, 101) in fact writes, “what we hope to do is to mould and/or shape [...] ‘Our Heidegger,’ so as to press [him] into service in engaging the contemporary African situation.” Moreover, it means taking up a hermeneutic of suspicion and the notion that “reflection [i.e., philosophy] is the courage to make the truth of our own presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called in question” (Heidegger as quoted by Serequeberhan 1994, 4). Here, Serequeberhan (1994, 4) effectively critiques Heidegger in failing in his own project (see Olivier 2023, 537). More importantly, this hermeneutic of suspicion in the hands of Serequeberhan (1994, 8) means “[t]o think the historicity and presence of this situatedness means to concretely query the contradictions of *our* post-colonial and “independent” Africa.” This effectively transforms into what one might refer to as a hermeneutic of resistance against the ontological erasure of the historicity

of the previously colonised and those under the yoke of the neo-colonial situation. Serequeberhan (1994, 21) writes subsequently that, “unlike Heidegger, for us, the question of our existence, of our “to be”, is an inherently political question”. To be in this context refers to one’s situatedness in a particular place and time, or socio-political context (Olivier 2023, 540). One might here refer to Frantz Fanon’s (1986, 10) “zone of nonbeing”, but more recently African centred psychologist Kopano Ratele (2019, 8-9) calls this a *fractured self*. It is a self that is not represented, for example, in psychological or philosophical discourses. This contrasts with the “whole of your being” emphasising to “look with the whole of our selves” (Ratele 2019, 9).

This is especially noted in the context of language use, where Ratele (2019, 70) also notes that ... [m]eaning resides in words. Without the right words we are really lying to each other. *Without knowing what the other person could have said if given a chance to speak in his or her language, you are being dishonest about what relief you can bring.* You are deluding yourself. You are not being honest. (Emphasis mine)

Serequeberhan speaks of *heritage* rather than *language*, yet following the likes of Wa Thiong’o and Sibanda – who argue that *language is being* – language becomes the vehicle through which we access our past, or Serequeberhan’s heritage. To be cut off from one’s language is, therefore, to be cut off from that access. For Serequeberhan, this severance is part and parcel of the reproduction of the neo-colonial condition in the postcolonial present. Hence the importance of the first disposition of a filtration and fertilisation. As Serequeberhan (e.g., 1994, 23) repeatedly insists, it is through constructing an inventory of the ways of being becoming – especially those embodied by the liberation fighters and their know-how – that one may begin to enunciate one’s own historicity.

2. *African conversational philosophy: A praxis of creative struggles and ceaseless conversations*

Turning to Chimakonam’s conversational philosophy, I focus on the notion that meaning is co-created through an active, ongoing, dynamic conversation. One might here talk about the analogy of a *reciprocal dance* that closely aligns with transcreation, both emphasise that meaning is not simply transferred but negotiated and reshaped in a to-and-fro interaction. Chimakonam’s (2019, 183-185) practice of “merging” “local content” with

“borrowed foreign content” to “forge” new “epistemic visions”, one that includes re-shaping and restructuring, I want to argue is already a practice of transcreation. Philosophising or conversing here is itself a radically interactive process where knowledge is co-constructed and co-cultivated. This is especially visible through his ideas of a creative struggle, and what can be called conversational dialectics or arumarustics. Just the mere fact that conversationalism encourages the philosopher to engage with various traditions beyond her own on a horizontal, i.e., non-hierarchical level (hence the dance analogy), she is already involved in a kind of transcreational practice because not only does it possibly enrich the philosopher and the overall philosophical discourse, it also tries to (trans)create contextually relevant knowledge influenced especially from where one is speaking (the embedded lived experience of those around oneself, or in this case a counselee). I now deal with the ideas of a creative struggle and conversational dialectics respectively. Chimakonam’s (2015, 463) project can be understood through the lens of creating new concepts and revising old ones – especially with their potential to give rise to new ideas. The dialectical process that leads towards a kind of synthesis for Chimakonam resembles what he calls a *creative surrender*. After synthesis, the original position is lost, and there is a ceasing of what I began calling the conversational dance. This contrasts with what Chimakonam (2017b, 17) prefers and refers to as a *creative struggle*:

Creative, in that its foremost goal is to birth a new concept by opening up new vistas for thought; struggle, in that the epistemic agents involved pit themselves against each other in a continuous disagreement.

This “continuous disagreement” is grounded in conversational dialectics or arumarustics. It refers to the logic behind the relationship (*nmeke*) between the conversationalists or conversational partners, namely, *nwa-nsa*, i.e., the proponent, responder, or defender of a position, and *nwa-nju*, i.e., the opponent, inquirer, or doubter of the position proposed by *nwa-nsa*. Arumarustics itself is based on the Igbo word or phrase *arumarụ-ụka*, which can roughly be translated as either “engaging in critical and creative conversation[s]” (Chimakonam 2017a, 120), or “engaging in a relationship of doubt” (Egbai & Chimakonam 2019, 181).

This thus denotes a fundamentally sceptical relationship between the conversational partners, not one steeped in doubt, but one that allows the conversation to perpetually unfold, always being becoming. More specifically, Chimakonam (2016, 231) notes that the aim of *nwa-nju* is finding “inconsistencies and complementarities” in *nwa-nsa*’s propositions/statements which might then lead to new conversations and the potential creation of new concepts. The mechanics behind this is that *nwa-nsa* will be forced to amend their original position, leading not to a new position but a transformed *nwa-nsa* position, which itself is again open to critique. Here I briefly elaborate the analogy of the reciprocal dance, not only to illustrate some of the complexities within conversational philosophy, but also to reaffirm its affinity with transcreation. The conversation is likened to a dance to highlight its movement, as well as the immediate interpretation required by ever-changing music – inviting experimentation, improvisation, and creative reinterpretation. The dance is reciprocal because, like the conversation, it is interdependent: it cannot emerge without two or more partners. Yet there is no fixed or eternal lead – this role is fluid, shifting continuously in response to the demands of the dance or the unfolding conversation.

With this analogy in mind, a synthesis can illustrate the collapse of the dance – that is, both dance partners lose their individuality, merging into a singular entity. By emphasising a creative struggle rooted in conversational dialectics, Chimakonam seeks to resist this collapse into one. *Nwa-nsa* and *nwa-nju* must therefore always remain autonomous dancing partners. Moreover, if the conversation ceases, so does the dance. It is reciprocal movement that continually rejuvenates both. It is in the event of the dance that new meaning and fresh concepts emerge – a shared exchange of give-and-take, a to-and-fro of continual disagreement and complementarity that propels the dance forward (or backward), always attuned to the shifting rhythm of the music. The dance is thus generative: it depends on mutual responsiveness, improvisation, and the co-creation of meaning. Linking this with what was said in this passage, but also all of the above, the conversation as conceptualised here resides in the liminal space of meaning-making, constitutes as an event between the conversational participants and the ever-changing music or life that has become a text. Because nothing is ever complete or comprehensive, including the past, the present, a text, the other, or the other as a text, one

can continually converse about matters in an open-ended manner, without taking anything as final, fixed, or closed off. This is based on the idea and proverb used by Chimakonam (2019, 104) that reads *uwa eze oke* and translates to as “nothing is complete or comprehensive.” There are thus always more conversations to have, more transcreations to create, and alternative ways of interpretation a matter at hand. With emphasis on a horizontal dance, the conversation already denotes a kind of transcreationary practice, but linking it with the interdependence on the other that sustains the conversation, the importance of transcreation as a mutual practice emerges. In the context of this paper, it is not just something that the philosophical counsellor does, or in the context of conversational philosophy *nwa-nsa*, but it is something that the counselee, or *nwa-nju*, also actively participates in.

Philosophical counselling as transcreation

Theoretical or meta-philosophical considerations

In a certain sense, philosophical counselling demands that the counsellor qua philosopher offer the counselee all that philosophy has to offer. Implicit in this is the view that “philosophy” cannot be confined to a single tradition, language, or historical moment. With the help of Serequeberhan’s practice – read through the lens of transcreation – philosophical counselling gains the “tools” to engage the history of philosophy without becoming beholden to it. Through acts of sifting and sieving – or filtration and fertilisation – philosophy is dynamically approached, treated not as fixed or inert but as something to be continually reinterpreted, reshaped, and indigenised. The philosophical counsellor, adopting this orientation, applies it not only to the philosophical canon but also to the counselee. In line with Chimakonam’s position, the counselee and the history of philosophy become dancing partners in the intricate, ongoing conversational dance. Through Chimakonam’s apparent transcreative practice of forging new epistemic visions, the philosophical counselling session itself as a kind of liminal or in-between space begins to facilitate the creation of new ideas, concepts, and ways to relate with the present. This becomes available for both the counselee and the philosophical counsellor, as both the conversational partners in the philosophical counselling session will fundamentally be transformed

through the reciprocal practice. That is, the counselee is not a “problem” that the philosophical counsellor needs to resolve or ameliorate. Rather, she becomes the driving force for creative experimentation with alternative ways of thinking and living. The complex question of “How might one live, here, today?” (Louw 2022, 72) might, for example, be asked and critically engaged with. Philosophical counselling thus becomes a fundamentally transcreational event, since it requires both engagement with all that philosophy has to offer, but also transcreating it for contemporary, concrete, and possibly multilingual context. Philosophical counselling, informed by African philosophy and especially through the lens of Serequeberhan and Chimakonam’s practices understood as transcreationary praxes, is not merely drawing on the history of philosophy and the counselee’s own concrete situation. Instead, it is about actively reshaping and re-creating meaning in ways that are potentially truly liberating rather than limiting or reinserting the counselee into a history/heritage which is not her own.

Possible limitations

One might point out here that philosophy has always been busy with this process of transcreation, and that it is just another way of saying what philosophy has been doing all along. The moment of philosophising simply is transcreation itself – or successful translation. The same kind of critique is raised against transcreation by translators who note that there is nothing special about transcreation: if translation is successful, it already entails what transcreation purportedly is (see Gaballo 2012, 95). However, one might here note that transcreation situated within a philosophical counselling framework takes on a rather different role than the expected limitation mentioned above. The philosophical counsellor is not simply philosophising, even if this is entailed in their practice. Instead, she is also transcreating as she philosophises *with* the counselee. The interpretative dance becomes important – it is a continual re-interpretation and adaptation of the history of philosophy, the counselee’s input, and the philosophical counsellor’s continually shifting perspective regarding the situation on hand. A second limitation is that the discussion at this stage is purely speculative, theoretical and meta-philosophical. There are some studies, especially in medical professions that illustrate the importance and benefits of transcreation. However, these studies do not pertain to

philosophy nor philosophical counselling as such, so at this time, the ideas proffered here remains tied to abstract speculation. The focus on theory and abstractions at this stage, however, serves as a conceptual groundwork for potential empirical investigations, collaborative work, and further exploration of these ideas. And lastly, there is a potential tension inherent to the practice of transcreation, especially as it is applied or incorporated into philosophical counselling. There is a possibility that transcreative products might move so far from the source material that the original philosophical intent becomes almost unrecognisable. One might rightfully question the boundaries of creative adaptation and the commitment to meaning as such. As a response, the tension might be viewed as productive rather than strictly problematic. With the help of especially Chimakonam's conversational philosophy, a type of conversation between traditions serves a deeper function. It becomes a question of what transformation, adaptation, or creative re-interpretation in the moment helps with understanding and response to the current situation.

Conclusion

In the end, one might note that PC is not just occasionally transcreational, but that it is necessarily so through these frameworks and philosophical lenses. More importantly, as I hope to have achieved through the incorporation of the idea of transcreation is that PC is practiced differently in multilingual and intercultural contexts – that is, there is a focus on creative re-interpretations, continuously and conversationally adapting to new situations. This is especially the case if philosophical counselling is to successfully bring the counselee in contact with all that philosophy has to offer. Understanding philosophical counselling as fundamentally transcreative, situated and read through African philosophy, I offered a potentially valuable set of tools that might begin to help the philosophical counsellor deal with the history of philosophy in such a way as to adapt it to the needs of the situation and the counselee. The history of philosophy, linked with the presence of the counselee and the philosophical counsellor's disposition, becomes an infinitely deep and wide well from which alternative ways of thinking and living can be co-cultivated and co-transcreated.

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