From philosopher's fight with everyone to philosophy's opening to all

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FROM PHILOSOPHER'S FIGHT WITH EVERYONE TO PHILOSOPHY'S OPENING TO ALL

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Abstract

In order to understand the specifics of philosophical therapy and counseling as applied philosophy practices, Lou Marinoff proposes an analysis of practical philosophy relations with theoretical philosophy, psychology, psychiatry and ideology. Each of these relations is used as an argument to assert philosophical therapy and counseling as a distinct field of couseling, which needs special recognition from the state in the context of professionalizing philosophical practices. Beyond conflicting relations between practices proposed by philosophy, psychiatry and psychology, Marinoff believes there is a common interest to all of these: to provide care services at high professional level. This special vocation of various couseling practices should be based to the reciprocal recognition and work together of distinct forms of services provided. In Lou Marinoff's perspective, philosophical therapy and counseling should be regarded as the most complex way by which the individual can discover his/her own being so as to solve the problems he/she faces at the intersection of the physical, social, virtual, personal and spiritual dimensions.

***Keywords**: philosophical counseling, philosophical therapy, practical philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, ideology, recognition, professionalization of philosophical practice, Lou Marinoff.*

Philosophy, counseling and therapy

The 21st century shall belong to philosophy. Philosophy will help us become free from various forms of barbarianism that may be installed in

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the absence of a return of philosophy to public life, to ordinary people's life: from technological barbarianism to the extremisms of all kinds, including religious ones. It will be wide spread as personal development philosophy. Taking a life philosophy and practicing it to a large extent will be one way to restore human being, to find oneself and to have a continuous personal development. But philosophy is especially called upon to provide content to communication and counseling.

We can already note that the need for counseling is a reality of everyone's life. It is becoming more and more an important matter for individuals and for organizations. It is true that today, given the easy access to information, at various quality levels, as provided by virtual world development, everyone believes to be sufficiently experienced and connected to the world's wisdom. Everyone may be convinced there is no need for a companion or for any kind of systematic initiation down the road of personal development. Everybody has the illusion of knowledge and unlimited access to the deep resources of one's life. Consequently, there is a self-sufficiency that may settle in some of our contemporaries' lives who have a rudimentary and superficial access to the data provided by the world's significant surface.

Nevertheless, we find that in the social and individual situations of specific life, consulting an expert by individuals, groups or organizations has become a routine practice, which led to a generalized need for counseling. We call on counselors for the most diverse problems that philosophy has been concerned with along philosophical reflection development: from success or happiness recipes to social responsibility solutions; from particular ways in which we understand or practice love to the adequate understanding of the joy of being together and of the option for various alternatives of relational authenticity in the human sensibility register; from clarifying moral dilemmas to solving the moral crises of large public categories or even society as such. Thus, counseling may be used for varied purposes: from solving conflicts with the ones we engage with in joint effort of professional construction, to the negotiating of deontological codes according to the mission and objectives of our professional organization; from issues regarding the position to a significant problem for ourselves to a nuanced interpretation of life issues; from finding solutions for self-esteem and love, to a harmonious

construction of respect and responsibility relations with the physical, social, spiritual, religious dimensions and with the virtual dimension developed by the new technologies; from practicing ethical decision based on our community tradition norms and family values, to revalorizing them through critical thinking and reflexive tradition in the history of culture; from positive thinking development to the critical investigation of arguments and decisions; from personal development to the personal brand and leadership qualities.

One may call on the expertise of counselors in a large register encompassing almost all significant aspects of our life, from the role of money in a certain context of our action, to the significance of wealth, prosperity or a better life and the ways to increase life quality; from responsibility regarding individual choices to the responsibility we have to future generations; from how to be better to how each of us should do something for a better world; from existential anguish in the personal register to crisis waves about which mass media warns they are coming to our world; from choosing between to be and to have, to reconsidering the ultimate reasons of existence and the spiritual shaping of values we may appropriate, etc.

Counseling practices are beneficial in terms of restored balance, increased efficiency, structured value systems, personal development, ethical efficient communication development, ethical enviroment for professional action, increased care and responsibility to the world we jointly manage as current property we should leave to be lived in the future, etc. There is practically no piece of our life we could cut out according to various criteria that should stay outside the need for counseling as manifested by institutions, individuals or different public categories. Out of the infinity of problems that individuals, groups or organizations may face, we have listed but a few revelatory for the importance that counseling has in postmodern man's life. Philosophical counseling is one of the counseling forms in full swing in the past years. I shall stop next to one of the most representative practitioner philosophers, Lou Marinoff, a Canadian by origin, an American by cultural integration, option to practice philosophy and impose philosophical counseling in the spiritual environment of the U.S.A.

Before venturing into Lou Marinoff's perspective on the specifics of philosophical practice, I would like to mention the philosopher's response to the question: what does recommend philosophers for philosophical counseling and spiritual therapy? His response leaves no room for doubt:

> Philosophical counseling therefore proceeds by attending to certain kinds of problems through the medium of dialogue. There is nothing mystical or medical about it. Philosophers are trained in the rigors of valid argumentation and the exposure faulty inference; in the heuristics of ampliative logic and the grounds for holding beliefs; in the exercise of moral reasoning and formation of aesthetic judgment; in the theory of making decisions and the justification for acting on them; in the method of resolving conflicts through the building of consensus; in the juxtaposition of scientific knowledge with skeptical challenge; in the maintenance of humanity in the face of dehumanizing aspects of technological change; in the acceptance of personal, professional, and social responsibility; in the acquiescence to conditions imposed by birth and death; in seeking to understand the meaning, realize the purpose, and fulfill the potential of sentient being in a universe replete with mystery, uncertainty, and unknowability. (Marinoff 2002, 85-86)

We have listed here a series of openings that the philosopher makes, which are as many action lines for those well initiated in philosophical thinking to use in counseling relations. These openings that a professional trained in philosophy has, provide the possibility to offer counseling and philosophical therapy services aimed at building professional action and a life project based on valid arguments, through adequate clarification of opinions, motivations and beliefs; provide the framework to solve moral and existential dilemmas, a use of the power of thought to transform human beings first of all morally, and also in the entire existential horizon; support the individual first to articulate aesthetic judgement, scientific judgement, judgements that should help live with mystery and the irrational, with love and hate, and later in the integration process into a coherent whole that ensure one's own vision on the world. Philosophical counseling may bring the instruments to support the individual's decision making and rational and emotional justification of actions and their integration in non-conflicting relations, based on connectivity, communication, and dialogue in a technological expansion era; valorizes the ethical datum of a human being to take

responsibility for oneself, for the community one is part of and for the other people, as well as for the natural world and cosmos one is integrated in; directs the individual to build harmonious relations between one's life and death, by valorizing daily action down the path of authenticity, synchronized with the way one understands life's sense. But, philosophical counseling and therapy could be useful first of all to solve the individual's unrest and problems as a human being who needs to think about all the significant aspects of life, given the existential datum, involving one's development in all dimensions: physical, social, personal, spiritual, religious and virtual.

Coming out of the ivory tower

Lou Marinoff is surprising through his style that combines polemics, conceptual analysis, deep interpretation, existential exploring, therapeutical innovation, efficient counseling development and practical solutions for individuals, groups or institutions. The philosopher gives the impression of being on a battle field, and that at fight's end one anticipates a meeting of recognition and dialogue. All these are a vast process including getting philosophy out of the ivory tower in which the popular imaginary and various specialists isolated it, and on the other hand to give philosophy back to the ordinary person and to the daily life.

Considering the stereotypes connected to the contemporary status of philosophy, the question "how about the ivory tower may be legitimate. Is not philosophy an activity essentially cut off from reality, a web of ideas woven in the ivory towers of academic life?" A possible response is that "the ivory tower story is a very good illustration of the way in which, for lack of philosophy and a solid humanist culture, we may get references mixed up" (Jalobeanu 2018)[2]. A complementary way is that of the cultural vocation of philosophy, its humanist opening, its complementarity with any discourse on the human being, be it scientific or poetical. Ciomoş provides a suggestive relational construction of

[2] See https://www.marginaliaetc.ro/dana-jalobeanu-timpul-filosofiei/

philosophy and culture when he states: "if not all men and women of culture started off in philosophy, almost all ended in a philosophical reflection on their own vocation. Happy are those who start with philosophy, happy those who end in it" (Ciomoș 2010)[3]. To give importance to philosophical education, in particular, and to the humanist one in general, is often deemed to be a subject for public attention. More and more, public discourse reiterates the conviction that a harmonious development in the 21st century is not possible without the role of humanities and a humanist education (see Dumitru 2016). Despite being marginalized in contemporary society, education is claimed as a balance element in the present civilization development. This marks not only a spiritual field but also an educational one, it extends also to the social, economic and political crisis. Thus, "the current economic crisis may have even been, in Marinoff's view, the result of the educational systems that have failed to instill their students with humanistic virtues"[4]. When there is talk about the uselessness of the humanities, and especially of philosophy, one believes it is a lack of understanding. To this understanding Marinoff responds by an invitation to thinking, to critical spirit, to reflection in terms of the philosophical systems developed in time or of the philosophical writings of a certain author. Such a process should lead to creating a context in which philosophy's theoretical problems should be put in the context of personal, professional or community life. It is the meaning of the known formula: "You'd find this true peace of mind through contemplation, not medication. Plato, not Prozac" (Marinoff 2012, 18).

Considering the stereotype representations of the current status of philosophy, although they never abandoned the fortress, philosophers should join the game of the long awaited coming out from the ivory tower and give up returning to the fortress. This means announcing every once in a while that philosophy is returned to the public sphere, that philosophers' theories are more important than ever in practical life. Philosophical practice was never a stranger to philosophers. For this

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[3] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gDpX01wqyQ

[4] Beatrice Popescu, "The Inner Philosopher: Conversations on Philosophy's Transformative Power", *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 2013, Vol. 9(3), 642.

very reason, an additional effort is needed for them to bring back to public consciousness the association of practice and philosophy. Philosophy provided all through its development stages, even to various degrees, instruments for thinking, decision-making and valorization that people used on a daily basis[5]. From its start to the present, philosophy has not been only something to study but rather a certain state of participation to the one studying it, a certain conscience of the fact that theorizing in philosophy may be applied efficiently in the personal life. Through the very fact that each person may have access to different levels of philosophical base of his/her existence makes desirable not only philosophy study but also the legitimacy of an existential counselor's intervention who may help the client reach faster and more efficient conclusions to problems. In this context, meeting philosophical systems or significant passages in the philosophical literature to illuminate or change our life is not important, but rather understanding dialogue, the exchange of ideas, constitute the therapeutic aspect that Marinoff lists among top virtues of philosophical practice.

In fact, Lou Marinoff wishes both to give philosophy its dignity back, which seems diminished through the distance from daily life problems, and to increase the relevance of philosophy for contemporary man and the personal, professional and institutional situations in life. Therefore, he rethinks philosophy across three lines of development and involvement, philosophy as practice facilitating discussion and problem solving in various working groups, and philosophy meant to develop the corporation's environment – philosophical practice overlapping in this case what is known as ethical consulting for organizations or ethical counseling.

Philosophical practice and theoretical philosophy between hostility and reciprocal conditioning

Practicing philosophy in a competitive environment like the American one, faced with market economy exigencies and rules on service exchanges,

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[5] See Lahav 1995; Hadot 1995; Koestenbaum 2002.

including counseling, Lou Marinoff finds himself in confrontation with dominant tendencies typical of a market of ideas and services. Hostility on the part of the other providers of intellectual products, that may be perceived as similar up to a point, is the higher the more Lou Marinoff takes it upon himself to be the front representative of introducing philosophical counseling in counseling practice and in the therapeutical practices of philosophy in the American cultural space. He is for professionalizing philosophical practice and setting it as an important player on the counseling market. Thus, he is in the situation of a competitor compared to other counseling services aimed at a better management of personal life, crisis resolution and finding solutions to the dilemmas of human situating in the world and the efforts to fit in with his/her life. Of the subjects with joint interest elements in human nature investigation, Lou Marinoff disputes with at least two: psychiatry and psychology. In addition to them there is philosophy, which he describes as "theoretical philosophy", unlike the practical one that he practices.

Therefore, among those who contest practicing philosophers, besides psychiatrists and psychologists, there are the philosophers who teach various subjects in universities. Although there seems to be a war on the position on the counseling market and on the division of areas of influence between different professionals, in reality it is about something beyond such concerns. First of all, it is about redefining the status of philosophy, the ways by which philosophy can be communicated, the relevance of philosophy to individuals' and communities' life, as well as the new significance and shaping power of philosophy by regaining its place of centuries which it had been abandoned. Postmodernity faces us with the pressure of the crisis caused by the marginalized institutional status of philosophy in Western universities, including the ones in Romania (see Frunză *et al* 2010). It is one of the reasons for which philosophers find themselves compelled to redirect philosophy towards solving personal life problems, daily life, personal and professional development, towards an organizational and social responsibility philosophy, rational research of opinions and personal and community beliefs, and towards public space reconstruction. Together with discursive practices typical of theoretical philosophy, forms of applied philosophy are developing, especially those connected with applied

ethics, and new forms of philosophical practices are recovered as they were once practiced in various cultural contexts according to the history of philosophy.

It is the very logic of philosophy development that such a process should bring together only a part of philosophers. As it was expected, such a turnout should stir rivalries even among those in charge of philosophical creation and philosophy teaching. Against the background of such debate, Lou Marinoff opines that the best friends as well as the worst enemies of philosophical practice are the philosophy teachers. An important wave of contestation came from professors who teach philosophy in universities. Consequently, a conclusion that may be reached is that "professors of philosophy must assume responsibility for having managed to reduce their subject to irrelevancy in the larger community" (Marinoff 2002, 3). Although he too belongs to the academia, Marinoff believes that professors promoted a philosophizing mode that ceased making the individuals engage in relationship to themselves and to the world. In this way, they reduced philosophy to a self-reflexive subject in its conceptual concerns and to an abstract reflection way, distant from human concerns that do not take concepts into account or from the ordinary student who is not attracted to philosophical meditation and speculation. To this way of philosophizing among theorists, practitioners oppose philosophy as a way of life, as ethical communication and privileged interpersonal communication. They wish to return philosophy to the ordinary man, to take it out from self-isolation and give it back the role of active force on public market, the place where it had started flourishing in ancient Western culture (see Marinoff 2016, 21). The call on philosophical practice is a process pertaining to the nature of philosophy and philosophical communication. Marinoff notes that this guiding to a better life was simply called philosophy in the ancient world, experimental philosophy in modernity, applied philosophy at the end of the 20th century, and receives the name of practical philosophy nowadays (Marinoff 2016, 43). By everything it does, philosophy should appear as a living mode based on value communication and a diversity of ways to achieve personal development and authenticity.

Although he deems philosophy to have a great intrinsic value, the philosopher states that the value of a product is given not by the

producer but by the consumer. For this very reason, he proposes looking not for the bureaucratic milieu of practicing philosophy in academia, but for the past that brings us down at present to the encounter of philosophy and the public market. This tendency is present in philosophy development across the centuries. It got various forms. It could be conceived as a blessing or as a "curse". However, it has never been estranged from the philosophical spirit. Philosophy proved to be in its manifestations as much theoretical as practice-oriented. In this sense, Marinoff reminds us a few scenes of philosophical life assumed by philosophers themselves:

> Philosophers have tutored emperors (*e.g.*, Epictetus), administered empires (*e.g.*, Seneca), and have been expelled from cities (*e.g.*, Rousseau). They have leapt into volcanoes to prove their godhood (*e.g.*, Empedocles) and have withdrawn from society to improve their personhood (*e.g.*, Thoreau). They have been accused of every heresy extant (*e.g.*, Hobbes), have been excommunicated (*e.g.*, Spinoza), and burned at the stake (*e.g.*, Bruno). They have served as physicians (*e.g.*, Locke), diplomats (*e.g.*, Hume), parliamentarians (*e.g.*, Mill), and foot-soldiers (*e.g.*, Wittgenstein). Some lived opulently as aristocrats (*e.g.*, Bacon); others were unemployable aristocrats (*e.g.*, Russell). Some accepted money as stone-masons but philosophized freely in public (*e.g.*, Socrates); others accepted money as historians but philosophized clandestinely in private (*e.g.*, Leibniz). Philosophers have fomented revolution (*e.g.*, Marx); rejected morality (*e.g.*, Nietzsche); resisted tyranny (*e.g.*, Sartre). (Marinoff 2002, 39)

All these situations indicate that far from isolating in a self-sufficient world, the philosopher was always in the midst of great challenges received either as existential data of his/her own life lived with the others, or as unrests in the life of his/her community which he/she felt the call to help solving. These examples of personal and professional life situations in which we can recognize a few of the great philosophers, are mentioned by Lou Marinoff to showcase the very diverse challenges that philosophers and philosophy faced in history. From the privileged status to the marginalized character or problematic one, the philosopher covered the entire range of situations that may seem uncomfortable or dangerous. We may expect anytime that the philosopher supportive of philosophical practice should be at the present and in the future in most delicate situations, considering that he/she is promoting a new field of activity, believed nowadays to be a new counseling field, and proving to be determined in the effort to

professionalize philosophical practice in general and philosophical counseling in particular. The fact that we find Lou Marinoff today in an open confrontation with the academic philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, ideology and with the amateurism that might settle in the philosophical practice, proves the delicate situation of the philosopher fighting to establish philosophical practice as a clear profession with all the invisible forces represented by the above mentioned.

It was to be expected for these tendencies to manifest every time the philosophical practice started taking shape as a distinct professional practice, either within philosophy, or in the realm of practices typical of the personal, group or institutional counseling. We have experienced hostility towards applied philosophy and applied ethics practiced by philosophers in Romania. Nevertheless, we may note an increase in these concerns both in the philosophy departments and in other departments in universities that encourage applied ethics, professional ethics and deontology, even if philosophy-trained professionals do not always support them. However, philosophers' presence seems to me already significant in the area of applied philosophy. And I could give but a few names here, inevitably being unfair to many personalities not mentioned: Virgil Ciomoș, Aurel Codoban, Mihaela Frunză, Dan Eugen Rațiu, Bogdan Olaru, Ștefan Afloroaei, George Bondor, Antonio Sandu, Sorin-Tudor Maxim, Ana Bazac, Adrian Paul Iliescu, Cristian Iftode, Valentin Mureșan, Laurențiu Staicu, Emilian Mihailov, Marin Bălan, Constantin Stoenescu, Dumitru Borțun, Mihaela Miroiu, Claudiu Mesaroș, Florin Lobonț etc. [6]

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[6] To be consulted Virgil Ciomoș, *Être(s) de passage* (București: Ed. Zeta Books, 2008); Aurel Codoban, *Body, Image and Relationship. From Culture of Knowledge to Culture of Communication* (Saarbrücken, Germany: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, 2013); Mihaela Frunză, *Expertiză etică și acțiune socială* (București: Tritonic, 2012); Dan Eugen Rațiu (ed.), *Politica culturală și artele: local, național, global* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, 2011); Bogdan Olaru, *Ideea de știință riguroasă. Proiectul husserlian de întemeiere a științelor* (Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2004); Ștefan Afloroaei, *Cum este posibilă filosofia în estul Europei* (Iași: Polirom, 1997); George Bondor, *Dansul măștilor. Nietzsche și filozofia interpretării* (București: Editura Humanitas, 2008); Antonio Sandu, *Etică și deontologie profesională* (Iași: Editura Lumen, 2012); Sorin-Tudor Maxim, *Conștiința morală*

A few elements have been highlighted in Vasile Hațegan's attempt to indicate a series of premises for philosophical counseling in Romania (Hațegan 2018, 126-137). Although contextualizing in the Romanian philosophical landscape is very vague, his studies have the merit of articulating for the first time a manual of philosophical counseling in Romanian. The model for discussion in this book is inspired by Lou Marinoff's books. It is a PhD study coordinated by Florin Lobonț, a promoter of Marinoff's works in Romania. Vasile Hațegan, following the example of the American philosopher, seeks to create the necessary framework to professionalize and institutionalize the philosophical practice. The whole process is designed to tackle the complex connections that philosophical practice outside the university may have with the philosophy taught in the philosophy departments of educational institutions. Such a counseling textbook inspired by the work of Marinoff is relevant in the Romanian philosophical context because it mixes the academic side with philosophical practice. Equally exposed to the academic experience and to the one of a practitioner philosopher, Lou Marinoff does not ignore at all the importance of the

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(Iași: Editura Junimea, 1999); Ana Bazac, "Philosophy and Reform: a word about current philosophy – religion dialogue within the Romanian educational system", *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 10, issue 28 (2011): 108-128; Adrian Paul Iliescu (ed.), *Etică socială şi politică* (Bucureşti: Ars Docendi, 2007); Cristian Iftode, *Filosofia ca mod de viață. Sursele autenticității* (Pitești: Editura Paralela 45, 2010); Valentin Mureșan, *Un filosof rătăcit în agora* (București: Editura ALL, 2013); Laurențiu Staicu, *Trei istorii metafizice pentru insomniaci* (București: Editura Trei, 2017); Emilian Mihailov, *Arhitectonica moralității* (Pitești: Editura Paralela 45, 2017); Marin Bălan (coord.), *Atena și/sau Ierusalim. Eseuri despre relația dintre știință și religie* (București: Editura Universității din Bucureşti, 2014); Constantin Stoenescu, "Viitorul filosofiei, universitatea managerială și revigorarea spațiului public", in Claudiu Mesaroș (coord.), *Filosofia în universitatea contemporană* (Timișoara: Editura Universității de Vest, 2017), 37-50; Dumitru Borțun, *Relațiile publice și noua societate*, ediția a doua (București: Tritonic, 2012); Claudiu Mesaroș, *Filosofia ca act de rescriere. Studii de istoriografie filosofică* (Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2013); Mihaela Miroiu, Gabriela Blebea Nicolae, *Introducere în etica profesională* (București: Editura Trei, 2001); Florin Lobonț, "Forme filosofice ale consilierii și psihoterapiei", in Lou Marinoff, *Înghite Platon nu Prozac! Aplicarea înțelepciunii eterne la viața de zi cu zi*, traducere, note și studiu introductiv de Florin Lobonț (București: Editura TREI, 2010).

theoretical foundation to the philosophical practice and is attached to this creativity type even when he firmly criticizes it.

As regards his disputes with the theoretical philosophy in universities, Lou Marinoff takes a critical stand which is nonetheless balanced. He emphasizes the fact that theoretical philosophy is not bad in itself but rather self-sufficient as it does not accept that it merely represents a part of the mode in which philosophy is done. Besides theoretical reflections, philosophers should be significantly concerned with philosophy applications in the daily life, as philosophy should also be "an exoteric and practical guide to leading ordinary lives" (Marinoff 2002, 43). Additionally, the practitioner philosopher cultivates the conviction that there always is a reciprocal support that the theoretical philosophy and the practical philosophy may provide each other. They are part of a common process even though the philosophical discourse and its practice differentiate in the emphases and privileges they attribute. A statement on the two types of philosophy working together that is worth mentioning is Marinoff's conviction that "to legitimize itself as a profession, philosophical practice must establish itself in the Academy" (Marinoff 2002, 348). The theoretical philosophy and the practical one feed each other from the same philosophical creativity resources, they condition each other and have the responsibility to valorize each other.

Psychiatry and psychology, enemies and friends of philosophy

Marinoff believes that applied philosophy contestation comes actually from those who may be friends and enemies at the same time. He also examines other forms of hostility towards philosophical practice in the same terms of enmity and friendship. He uses such terms when he analyzes the confrontation between certain representatives of theoretical philosophy and applied philosophy, and holds a similar attitude to psychiatry and psychology.

From such perspective, if philosophers have a critical reaction and rejection of philosophical practices, it is to be expected that the hostility should be stronger from related subjects already well grounded in

providing counseling services on the human being that believe they are legitimate in covering the whole sphere of therapies for the soul and human mind. The monopoly of these subjects in the American cultural space may be invoked in any cultural space as status quo, which may render illegitimate attempts by philosophy to gain grounds for its practice that seems to have been abandoned at certain stages in its development.

To understand the confronting situation of philosopher Lou Marinoff in his relations with psychology and psychiatry, it is useful to remember what a psychologist said, namely that "he viewed philosophical counselors as trespassers and poachers on psychological turf" (Marinoff 2002, 48), while the Head of the American Psychiatry Association accused him of practicing medicine without a license, when in reality, Marinoff did not anything except provided ethical counseling.

Against such tensioned relations, the philosopher is launching criticism of psychiatry and psychology starting from the ideas inspired by the anti-psychiatric trend developed by psychiatrists like R.D. Laing, Thomas Szasz or Peter Breggin, who rejected the tendencies to medicalize excessively human emotional problems, and fought in various ways for a return of rational and relational dimensions to a central place. In support of his resistance to the excessive medicalization of therapeutic matters, Marinoff provides the example of classifications based on mental disorders, that are more and more sophisticated:

> In 1952, the DSM-I isted 112 disorders. In 1968, the DSM-II listed 163 disorders. In 1980, the DSM-III listed 224 disorders. The latest edition, the 1994 DSM-IV, lists 374 disorders. In the 1980s, psychiatrists estimated that one in ten Americans was mentally ill. In the 1990s, it was one in two. (Marinoff 2012, 45)

Marinoff is against such proactive attitudes to labeling that should have similar weight to medical diagnosis. Marinoff's main reproach is that psychiatry as well as a part of clinical psychology, "does not passively await patients, as mechanics await vehicles. Rather, psychiatry and psychology have colonized not only the health care system, but also the education system, the legislative system, the justice system, the corrections system, the military, and other branches of state and federal government." (Marinoff 2002, 103)

Putting aside the criticism by authors who believe that "the medical model was left behind for years even in the psychotherapy based on deep analysis" (Popescu 2010)[7] dispute along such lines, although important, is not significant for our discussion. Finally, Marinoff's studies do not aim for placing psychiatry and psychology at lower levels, even when he shows their limitations in practice. His entire effort should be associated with his attempt to establish philosophy as a clear subject of counseling practices. In this context, one should understand the discrepancy of opinions with American practitioner philosophers, initially close collaborators with Marinoff, who opted for removing any barriers between philosophical and psychological counseling, promoting the idea of the complementarity of the two counseling types and of the need for a close interdisciplinary cooperation (see Cohen 2014)[8].

Despite everything separating them, Marinoff believes that philosophy and psychiatry may cooperate very well to provide care services. He explains the exacerbated conflict between the two on account of media communication, which showcases the sensational and is interested in perpetuating the image of the conflict between the two counseling fields. In reality, psychiatry, psychology and philosophy are complementary. Each has a specific role in the mutual aid and care on a wide range, from counseling and medical therapy to counseling and existential therapy. Although he is against tendencies to turn any human action or feeling that does not follow certain patterns into an object of diagnosis, Marinoff finds a complementarity between philosophy and psychiatry, visible at least under three aspects worth mentioning. Firstly, he believes that beyond the tendencies to supra-medicalize in psychiatry and pseudo-medicalize in psychology, there are problems of psychiatric nature that philosophy could not treat and for which philosophical counseling could not be used to stabilize the patients. Secondly, he is convinced that despite cases of malpraxis in psychiatric practice,

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[7] See https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/de-cind-filozofii-se-ocupa-cu-terapia-de-cuplu/.

[8] See https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-would-aristotle-do/201409/how-can-you-become-philosophical-counselor.

psychiatry is necessary and sometimes sufficient too. Thirdly, philosophers and psychiatrists have a potential for cooperation beyond the diagnosis versus dialogue, medication versus thinking pairs, and each should benefit from taking steps towards the others (see Marinoff 2016, 348).

As regards, psychology, philosophy is different from it first of all through its metaphysical background (See Yu-Chin 2011, 117-132). However, as both are non-medical practices, the philosophical counseling and therapy, and the psychological one have a lot in common. Each may contribute to the development and support of the other. In such context, Marinoff sees the contesting by psychologists as one along the lines of counseling in a market competition. Psychologists contest philosophers' competing with them on a sole counseling market. In such tensioned situation, Marinoff is reproachful of psychologists for ignoring the fact that psychology inherits from philosophy and that philosophy has given psychologists a good home for a comfortable life, as it may be noticed throughout the history of philosophy from Plato to William James. Examining the relationship between psychology and philosophy, Marinoff notes that psychology has had the advantage of "monopolies on nonmedical talk-therapy subsidized by third-party medical insurers" (Marinoff 2002, 330). Beyond the hostility built on such a monopoly, psychology and philosophy have proven to be complementary in a series of therapy models. This interdisciplinary cooperation, which Marinoff finds as a good example of good practice both for philosophers and psychologists, each being compelled to strengthen the dialogue between philosophy and psychology for mutual professional enrichment (Marinoff 2016, 354).

We should mention that the philosopher keeps emphasizing that philosophical practice is not of medical nature, even when it takes the form of philosophical therapy. At the same time, Marinoff believes that most philosophical practitioners do not function in fields complimentary to the medical one, as it often happens with non-medical practice of psychologists. Consequently, it does not have among its important activities the concern with diagnosing the disease and indicating treatment.

Besides the fact that philosophy is among the most important of the humanities, unlike psychology, it does not propose a scientific method, but a philosophical one – which, indeed, does not involve any

contradiction between the scientific and the philosophical. Marinoff believes philosophical counseling to be closer to an art of living, applicable in a unique way to each individual (Marinoff 2012, 91). Consequently, there is the need for one's personal involvement in one's life with everything it entails. As an existential counselor, it seems natural to the philosopher that we experience unease, and are concerned with our existence. Philosophical counseling balances accurate answers to the questions articulated adequately and consistently. In this perspective, the dialogue with an existential counselor may gain a self-awareness that should guide towards authentic relationships with one's own being. In this register, one should understand the statement: "If you neglect, ignore or deny the spiritual aspect of your being, you will fail to live life as fully as possible" (Marinoff 2003, 262).

Marinoff does not plan a program in which philosophy replaces or removes psychiatry or psychology in counseling and therapy activities. His main objective is action on all possible planes to defend the dignity of philosophy and to secure its well-deserved place in the partnership with other professions, especially with those with an important component of care, counseling and therapy. Leaving aside what separates philosophers, psychiatrists and psychologists, Marinoff emphasizes what the best above mentioned professionals have in common: "the ability to dialogue effectively with their patients or clients - and one another - about matters of meaning, purpose, and value in life experience" (Marinoff 2003, 12).

Philosophy's dispute with ideology

Marinoff considers there is a major conflict between philosophy and ideology, the two being hard to reconcile. One of the most aggressive attitudes that we notice with Marinoff is that in connection with the ideology of political correctness. The open conflict with the manifestations of political correctness takes a radical form in the context in which Marinoff takes this conflict personally, as a problem to be solved in relationship with political correctness supporters in the

professional association of practitioner philosophers, who contested various aspects of his activity (Marinoff 2016, 227).

We may note that the philosopher is speaking from inside the conflict he theorizes. He starts from a life experience that is significant to understand and describe the phenomenon. At the base of the hostilities that Lou Mainoff expresses are often his personal experiences, in which his own philosophy as a way of life is at stake. He deems political correctness to be an unhealthy ideology that requires refraining from telling the truth. Nevertheless, truth has to be said on every occasion, even at the risk that some people may feel offended by it. In his view, the offense does not come from the one who tells the truth but from the mind of the one receiving the truth as something offensive. Thus, responsibility should not be set for the representation that may occur in one's mind, but for one's own person and the responsibility everyone has to tell the truth. At the base of the negative reactions as formulated by Marinoff is not the relationship with alterity, diversity or pluralism, but the thematic of philosophy's truth as opposed to ideology contents.

Among the ingredients that the philosopher brings into discourse is the inability of political correctness and of other ideologies to solve the problems facing individuals and communities. He reproaches the excesses that political correctness has come to. What is problematic, however, is that the philosopher's fight with excesses of political correctness takes him to a radical position close to the violence he complains about in the criticized ideology. Apart from conflicting positions of a personal nature that he raises in this context, Marinoff emphasizes the fact that the Professional Association of Practitioner Philosophers in the United States of America, without encouraging ideological practices, is open to all forms of philosophical practice promoting pluralism and diversity as a natural way of interpersonal relations:

> It is an inclusive association that welcomes all who wish to apply philosophy to their own lives and to help others to do so. It has attracted persons of all races, classes, genders, religious persuasions, political affiliations, and philosophical inclinations … by treating all individuals as persons in the first place. (AJP 2016, 16)

Marinoff does not bring into discussion the value of diversity, multiculturalism and pluralism. He looks fascinated with cultural diversity and the interactions we may establish with people of various thinking types. He shows revolt against the way in which communication contents may be made uniform under pressure from political correctness ideology. The solution he proposes is philosophical intervention, philosophical practice aimed to bring balance by practicing the sense of measure (see Marinoff 2016, 335). Against the force of ideologies, Marinoff launches the challenge of philosophical intervention through knowledge, contemplation, practice of philosophical ideas accumulated in centuries. Philosophy is deemed to be an antidote to the insanity of political correctness ideology (Marinoff 2017)[9].

In lieu of conclusions: about the recognition and professionalization of philosophical practice

The philosophers with whom Lou Marinoff takes the first steps to establish on American grounds the activity of philosophical counseling practice, opined there did not have to be dichotomies and artificial barriers between psychologists and other practitioners in mental health. Philosophy could be used both by specialists in various counseling fields, and by philosophers as practitioners of applied philosophy (see Cohen 2014)[10].

Unlike his collaborators, Lou Marinoff believes it is necessary for philosophical practices to have a clear profile and have their autonomy recognized in the general framework of counseling practices and non-medical therapies. Therefore, he calls on his readers to be part of a movement aimed to support the development of philosophical practices, professionalization of philosophical counseling and the institutional recognition of philosophical counseling. In this process of the recognition and legislative regulation of the profession of practitioner philosopher,

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[9] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4HjZ5weGwc&t=199s.

[10] See https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-would-aristotle-do/201409/how-can-you-become-philosophical-counselor.

he believes it is necessary that a solidarity should exist between practitioner philosophers as professional philosophical service providers and their customers, including through governmental mediation.

Marinoff militates for regulations of the profession under the umbrella of a strong professional association that creates the American Association of Practitioner Philosophers, which provides various certification levels and membership. It is very usual for philosophers to have different opinions or even divergence on issues of common interest. In this case too, practitioner philosophers have a variety of attitudes about the role of the professional association and the types of regulations they should enforce. Opinions are divided and cover a wide range: from the importance of a legislative regulation of the practitioner philosopher profession to the refuse of regulation and strictly of the idea of professionalization, from the idea that only graduates in philosophy should be allowed to practice philosophical counseling to the idea that philosophy should be considered a free practice and be used by all with abilities for philosophical counseling. Marinoff insists that certain standards are necessary first of all so as to distinguish between professional counselors and amateurs (Marinoff 2016, 227). He starts from the fact that the respect for professionalism, well advanced in America, renders Americans open to access the counseling services and be willing to pay for them. In this context, securing a certain level of standardization and professionalization is necessary in order to protect the philosophical practice from vulnerabilities and to increase trust in philosophical practices. This triggers the need to formulate qualification standards, skills and abilities formation and development standards, and ethical standards. Professionals need to promote and impose high standards in philosophical counseling, in philosophical practice in general, and to play this card of professionalization in connection with governments in the process of recognizing and regulating the profession (Marinoff 2016, 198).

To obtain a legislative framework of the professionalization and professional practice, Marinoff reveals the need to beat at least two opposition types: from the outside, on the part of psychiatrists and psychologists, who are not willing to share the counseling and therapy market with philosophers, and from the inside on the part of intolerant

academic philosophers or of amateur philosophers, who do not wish to go through a process of their job professionalization.

Beyond any disputes and hostilities, Marinoff advises that we appreciate the new popularity of philosophical practices in terms of what they may provide to postmodern man and women no longer willing to live from the perspective of an illusory past, or of an imaginary future, but rather to live life at present. In this sense, his works are meant to be "a guide, not only to the art of loving wisdom, but also to living in the present, whenever that may be" (Marinoff 2002, 52). Philosophy is a guide talking to the present man/woman, irrespective of where he/she lives. Philosophical practice has the merit to showcase this eternal dimension of philosophy, pushed on a secondary place, sometimes, but ready to surface by assuming living an examined life, meaning a life lived consciously, at full capacity, by any willing individual. It is known fact that "in terms of philosophical practice, the philosophical effort is justified to the extent that one feels it provides an existential balance" (Iftode 2018). Such an effort should be constant, until all problematic aspects facing us are solved, and in this case the results will be in steadily growing. Against this background, one may state that "it is possible to add a little philosophy to our life, so we may live a happier, more peaceful and better life" (Moraru 2016).

Even if there still are tensioned relations, and potential disagreements between psychiatrists and philosophers, Marinoff believes that psychiatry and philosophy each has its own field for expertise and action. Each should enjoy recognition in the care and support systems. Thus,

> those who are dysfunctional by reason of physical illness entirely beyond their control – such as manic-depressives – are helped by medication. For handling that kind of problem, make your first stop a psychiatrist's office. But if your problem is about identity or values or ethics, your worst bet is to let someone reify a mental illness and write a prescription. There is no pill that will make you find yourself, achieve your goals, or do the right thing,

says Lou Marinoff (2012, 65). The philosopher positions under the sign of a close interdependent also the relationship between philosophy and psychology. He insists on the special role that the philosophy expert may play together with the psychology expert. He establishes the limits

between the two fields of expertise, believing that the dialogue with a psychologist may be a very good start point, while the dialogue with a philosopher may be an excellent finish point. He is convinced that "the balance of psychological and philosophical insight is what will actually benefit most people" (Marinoff 2012, 72).

A very good solution could be that the dispute between those who are friends and enemies at the same time should be solved on the wider grounds of the complexity of the problems facing them. The disputes between various counseling practices may be brought to the general field of solving problems by communication and building complex connections. The way a symbolic consciousness is built may be a good meeting point[11]. The capacity to investigate relational universes and their reconstruction in dialogue with the customer could be another meeting point. To such territory James T. Hansen introduces us when he states:

> I believe that this relational principle also applies to ideas. Concepts, theories, and philosophies can be rich sources of connection, renewal, fascination, and disappointment for those who regularly court them. Indeed, these experiences may be particularly engendered by ideas from the helping professions; theories of counseling are born out of a desire to alleviate the suffering of others. (Hansen 2014, IX)

In this way, without wasting too much energy in disputes with the other theorists and practitioners of counseling, philosophers may develop strategies to bring philosophy in the life of the ordinary individual, as part of the personal, professional or community life.

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[11] Lou Marinoff, *Puterea lui Tao. Cum să-ți găseşti liniştea în vremuri tulburi*, Traducere de Florin Tudose, (București: Editura TREI, 2015); Ștefan Vlăduțescu, "Postmodern Convergence of Dao with the Apophatism", *Postmodern Openings*, Vol. 9 Issue 1 (2018): 129-146; Araceli Rojas, "Reading Maize: a narrative and psychological approach to the study of divination in Mesoamerica", *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 15, issue 43 (2016): 102-124; Iulia Grad, "The symbolic dimension of responsibility in organizational communication", *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 16, issue 48 (2017): 112-124; Sandu Frunză, "Positive Thinking as Moral and Existential Virtue", *Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială*, vol. 59 (2017): 261-276.

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