

Postmodern Openings

ISSN: 2068-0236 | e-ISSN: 2069-9387

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2019, Volume 10, Issue 1, pages: 296-302 | doi: <https://doi.org/10.18662/po/68>

Philosophical Counselling as a Ground for Philosophizing. Reflections based on the Volume: Communication and Philosophical Counselling, Author Sandu Frunză, Eikon Publishing House, Bucharest, 2019

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Abstract: A number of peculiarities of philosophical counseling will be analyzed as a particular way of philosophizing. The paper analyzes philosophical counseling based on the clarifying insistence on the meanings of philosophical counseling, elaborated by Sandu Frunză in the volume *Communication and Philosophical Counseling*, published by the Eikon Publishing House in Bucharest in 2019, the type of particular discourse necessary for philosophical practice and its claims to be a branch of philosophy.

Keywords: *counseling; Sandu Frunză; philosophical therapy; philosophical practice.*

How to cite: Sandu, A. (2019). *Philosophical Counselling as a Ground for Philosophizing. Reflections based on the Volume: Communication and Philosophical Counselling, Author Sandu Frunză, Eikon Publishing House, Bucharest, 2019. Postmodern Openings, 10(1), 296-302.* <https://doi.org/10.18662/po/68>

Introduction

An ever more constant concern in the sphere of applied philosophy is that of philosophical practice, which includes or, as the case may be, overlaps the philosophical counseling (Fatic, 2013). The idea of philosophical practice, applying to all efforts of using philosophy as a personal development tool, may include a series of philosophical activities that are not necessarily of a counseling nature such as philosophy for children (Frunză, 2018), the construction of organizational philosophy, the philosophical-spiritual meditation, or the philosophical café. If the former designates the approach of the love of wisdom as a means of recovering the human being from the humdrum of an unexamined life and of whose meaning is not fully brought into awareness, the latter designates the (re)institutionalization of philosophy as a dialogical practice with therapeutic, reparative purpose in confronting the existential dilemmas of the person. We will draw a series of specific features of the discourse used in philosophical counseling. In our approach we will have as a starting point the clarifying insistence on the meanings of philosophical counseling, elaborated by Sandu Frunză in the volume of *Communication and Philosophical Counseling*, published by Eikon Publishing House in Bucharest in 2019.

Philosophical counseling is a branch of philosophy

The first interrogative action focuses on the status of the philosophical counseling and generally on the philosophical practice in relation to the philosophy itself, more precisely questioning if philosophical practice is a form of philosophy, and whether the philosophical counselor is entitled or not to consider himself a wisdom lover in the true sense of the word?

Sandu Frunză's opinion (2019a) seems to bend towards an affirmative but tactful answer. The philosophical status of this counseling practice is strictly dependent on the ideological content of the process, and not on the structure as per which the dialogue takes place, in a socratic manner, or in the more recent – PEACE- format proposed by Lou Marinoff (2010). To be a truly philosophical one, the encounter with the other must occur on a base of self-seeking (Marinoff & Ikeda, 2012).

The rediscovery of philosophy as a dialogical practice is a postmodernist construction after all, for the philosophers counselors try to recapture something that systematic philosophers have condescendingly transferred to science, which is the interrogation upon the essence of being,

to eventually transform philosophy into an annexation of theology (Frunză, 2019a) or, more recently, of science. None of the two were called upon to explain the Being to the understanding consciousness, while for the first of them the way of comprehension is the faith, therefore it does not address to the type of consciousness towards which philosophy opens, the second one studies the act of being and not the Being itself.

The recovery of the thaumaturgical dimension of philosophy in advisory practices, although claimed to belong to a purely Socratic tradition, it is tributary to the postmodern lode, for it is nothing more than a deconstruction of the ivory tower where the philosophy has withdrawn itself. Its return to the city can be accomplished by flooding the metaphysical ether by the daily mundane that sets philosophical thinking on a Procrustean bed, with the purpose of questioning it about its ability to give meaning to the life of the individual and not to find the ultimate meanings of the un-lived lives. The philosophical counselor, therefore, forsakes the strong essences of thinking of the universal in itself, knowing that he is called to be the refuge for the particular, in front of the absurd of a technologized world where the individual is increasingly marginal. The philosophical counselor is sometimes so detached of the traditional philosophy that he stubbornly professionalizes this practice in the horizon of psychology, bringing it to competition with psychology and psychiatry, when actually it has the same origin as alchemy, in the sense of royal art, oriented to the transmutation of the constitutive elements of consciousness into the philosophical gold of Self-consciousness.

Philosophical counseling between professionalization and vulgarization

The subtle criticism of the attempts to professionalize philosophical counseling (Hațegan, 2018) by disrupting this practice by other forms of counseling (Frunză, 2019a), is concerned precisely with its status as a post-systematic philosophy, being, as such, another form of cultural creation than psychiatry or psychology. Consequently, we draw attention upon the tendencies emerged inside the very community of philosophical advocacy practitioners to deprive philosophical counseling through inefficient, didactic and educational training that generates an interpretative drift of the idea of philosophical counseling toward a therapeutic discussion, a vaguely humanistic and unsystematic one. If the learning of counseling practices for someone familiar with the philosophical depths can be a challenge over weeks or months, the reciprocal, the philosophical training of a psychologist or a teacher or of any other profession close to this may be an impossible

challenge to them because of the antimetaphysical form of the practice of evidence-based therapy. We can not therefore agree with the organization of short-term training courses in philosophical counseling that certify professional skills in the field of other professionals who do not have a solid philosophical training. Philosophical counseling, in order not to reduce this practice to that of philosophy for dummies, must be practiced exclusively by people initiated in understanding the issues exposed by the client and the philosophical aspect of the latter. Philosophical counseling can be a chance to extract the individual from the trap of the daily medication - we here refer to Lou Marinoff's work: *Swallow Platon not Prozac* (2010) - by conceptualizing it. Philosophical practice in general and philosophical counseling in particular can articulate an individual's response to self-estrangement in the technology competition. Philosophy does not exclude technology but humanizes it, makes it accessible to human consciousness, modeling it and integrating it into the mystery of the act of being specific to human -Dasein.

The philosophical practice between critical thinking and the philosophical intrinsic of the act of being

The confusion, sometimes non aleatory, of philosophical counseling with critical thinking, another essential and absolutely necessary component of philosophical practice, creates the impression that any person who possesses Aristotelian logic and possibly a series of elements of formal logic, can practice the counseling of the client, dressed in the mantle of philosophical counseling. The specificity of philosophical counseling is the access to the intrinsic philosophy of each person, for the specificity of philosophy is the interrogatory approach to everything and all, and to the interpenetration of the rationality of the universal with the individual's anguish in every response. The philosopher counselor is able to listen to the client with the finesse of the psychologist, bent to his needs, and dedicated to accompanying him to self-development, and even more, he has the metaphysical profoundness of understanding the client's existential anguishes that do not have to do with his everyday problems, but with the deep meanings that the subject associates to those issues.

Philosophical counseling as a spiritual practice

The volume proposed by the philosopher Sandu Frunză (2019a) proposes a topic of interest for philosophical practice, namely the relationship between philosophy and theology, and the transformation of life

through philosophical meditation on certain truths of faith, and beyond them to the relationship of the individual with the Alterity, especially with the ultimate alterity. Starting from the words of the philosopher of Cluj (Frunză, 2018a, 2019b), our own philosophical meditation led us to the interrogation: which of these two ways of reporting to the Divinity suits the best the structure of one's own consciousness of Being and of one's own being in the world: that of self-emptying / kenosis and implicitly of his own passions by giving up everything that is not spiritual? or being filled with joy through the deification that transfigures the nature? We can understand the act of philosophizing in the horizon of spirituality, starting from two traditions of the emerging toward God (relating to God as to the Supreme Alterity \neg). The first comes from the understanding of the words of Jesus Christ "God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. "(John 4:24) and to which St. John Chrysostom comments: " When he says that God is a Spirit, he declares nothing else than His incorporeal nature. Now the service of that which is incorporeal must be of the same character, and must be offered by that in us which is incorporeal, to wit, the purity of soul and mind!" (Coman, 2010). The second understanding of worship comes from patristic tradition. This participation embraces the totality of man, all his constitutive, material and spiritual elements. In St. Gregory Palamas' vision, deification embraces both "material" and "moral" aspects of man. Stressing this completeness, the Fathers focus on the ability of the material to receive God, to the extent that one could speak of a "Christian materialism" in St. Gregory Palamas' work. (Louth, 2014). The two ways of understanding worship are convergent with the two universal ways – which can also be found in other spiritual traditions. The first one can be considered a way of giving up nature as being subjected to corruption. Man being alike God, essentially spiritual, the shunning of passions is a result of renouncing to Ego through compulsion and obedience. The second way is a way of deification and redemption of nature, by theandry, the whole nature is getting spiritual, and thus has access to the spirit through participation. This can be regarded as the foolishness for God , the mystical contemplative of the All, who can not accept the existence of any point in space or time in which there is no mysterious presence of God. From the psychological point of view, the first path corresponds to renunciation, the followers have an ascetic nature, the second being psychologically under the sign of acknowledging the world as a celebration of Creation, in the whole and everywhere shining the beauty of God's Creation. Philosophical counseling helps the individual to find his own way of appertaining to Transcendence as a way of being in the horizon

of the Absolute. Meditative philosophical counseling takes on a number of spiritual practices that it revalorizes in the context of self-understanding of man, when his existential crisis is related to the way he refers to finitude and to what can be Beyond it.

Counseling and philosophical therapy

Sandu Frunză wonders in his volume *The Communication and Philosophical Counseling* (2019a) if from the point of view of the content of this philosophical discipline, the name of philosophical counseling is appropriate or should be thought of as a philosophical therapy. If we are talking about a therapy, then who is the patient to whom it is addressed? The therapist philosopher's patient is the one affected by the awakening to the Consciousness, and with it by the emergence of the consciousness of the existential void that must be filled not with representations of prosperity but with authenticity (Frunză, 2018a).

Instead of conclusions

To the philosophy of the philosophy teachers one can counterbalance the lived philosophy, philosophy as a way of life. Since the former is sterile, from a cultural point of view, being impoverished from the transfer of substance to theology and science, philosophy as a way of life is the assumption by the individual of a set of values, and especially of a way of understanding the world that is coherent and allows a consistency of life when the individual answers the question of what you have done or what do you have to do with your life?

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