

Contents

Acknowledgements	7
1. We Need as Much Philosophy as Technology	9
2. From Philosopher's Fight with Everyone to Philosophy's Opening to All	21
2.1. Philosophy, counseling and therapy	21
2.2. Coming out of the ivory tower	26
2.3. Philosophical practice and theoretical philosophy between hostility and reciprocal conditioning	29
2.4. Psychiatry and psychology, enemies and friends of philosophy	37
2.5. Philosophy's dispute with ideology	43
2.6. About the recognition and professionalization of philosophical practice	46
3. Philosophical Counseling and the Practices of Dialogue in a World Built on Communication ...	53
3.1. Counseling as Philosophical Practice	53
3.2. The Golden Triangle of Human Beings as the Foundation of Philosophical Counseling	57
3.3. Dialogue as Therapy	62
3.4. Counseling or Philosophical Therapy?	74
4. Philosophy, Spirituality, Therapy	83
4.1. Philosophy and the Religious and Scientific Imagery	83
4.2. From the Diminish of Traditional Concerns to the Rediscovery of Philosophy	91
4.3. Philosophy and Existential Therapy	95
4.4. Philosophy and Therapy in the Spiritual Dimension	102
5. Philosophy as Existential Style. From Desire to Love as Communication Instrument	109
5.1. Philosophy as a way of life	109

5.2. Love and the ontology of detail	111
5.3. Taming desire and raising the subject in communication	117
5.4. Love, ideology, and political correctness	120
5.5. Desire reconstruction and philosophical counseling	126
6. Our Daily Body and Its Instrumental Role in Communication	131
6.1. Rediscovering the body and its sacredness	131
6.2. Death and the body's symbolic investment	136
6.3. Love, Life and Death	141
6.4. Body centrality in the postmodern human condition construct	145
6.5. Body as communication instrument	150
6.6. Body as restoring principle of the human being ..	156
7. From Metaphysical Desire to the Desire of Being Desired	163
7.1. An introduction to Hermeneutics of Love	163
7.2. From Love as Passion to the Sentimental–Erotic– Appealing Postmodern Model	164
7.3. The games of desire and the desire of being desired	169
7.4. Communicating desire and the challenges introduced by the new technologies	175
7.5. For a Philosophy of Love	179
8. Philosophical Counseling and Human Being's Continuous Restoration	185
8.1. Philosophy, communication, and human becoming	185
8.2. From assuming meaning to seeking support in philosophical counseling	189
8.3. Good life and happiness	193
8.4. A life not assumed is a lost life	198
References	203
Index	219

1. We Need as Much Philosophy as Technology

We are witnessing a reinvigoration of this century's soul. It is under the sign of philosophy. Transformations taking place in the world built on communication have instituted structures that bring a new challenge to the reflective person, who feels the need to seek and find oneself as a thinking being. I hope that reading this book will help you posit in such a perspective.

Unprecedented development of communication and its means triggers fundamental changes to the relational structure of human beings. Transformations are so deep that they affect one's rapport to oneself, to others, and to reality. This reality also includes the virtual space that has already become a part of the relational reality of daily life. Relations' world affect the very mode of human situating in the real existence and in the virtual one. Hans Jonas anticipated the profound changes that were to take place at the same time with technological development, in connection with improved life quality and human connection with the world. All these are relevant from a bioethical and bio-political view, as well as in terms of changes caused by artificial intelligence development, or by communication technologies development, and by applied ethics in general.¹

¹ Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).

Transformations are so complex and so deep that they affect the human mode of situating in the world in general and yours in particular. These bring along reflections on the human condition and on new ways of thinking for man and humanity that lead to the need to redefine the postmodern human being. Therefore they indicate an increased importance of philosophical reflection, a return of the whole human problematic to philosophy, and they challenge you to take a reflective and active attitude towards your life.

It is not at all accidental that philosophy entered a stage in which language, dialog, communication have become the most significant and determining themes to philosophy. Aurel Codoban convincingly theorized the system of philosophical ideas and indicated that having practiced the theme of what it is, and then of what we can know, philosophy focuses on the theme of what and how we can communicate.² Thus, if we, as postmodern people, are the subject construing the world in the realm of communication, then philosophical reflection and practice could guide us to several ways to redefine and accomplish ourselves as human beings. Judging by the direction of the development of communication technologies, survivors in the communication world will be only those who understand that in communication a balance is needed that may be summed up in the statement: as much technology as philosophy. It is ever clearer that if reality is built on communication, our life is based on this

² Aurel Codoban, *Introducere în filosofie*, (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Argonaut, 1995).

balance: *we need as much philosophy as technology*. The present volume is not about the connection between philosophy and technology. It is a proposal to you to understand the need for a return to philosophy at the crossroads generated by the appearance of the digital generation.

In the era of communication, technological development and digital expansion, philosophy responds first of all to your need to seek. Authenticity is no longer a response to alienation. The development of technology and communication science, as well as of various technologies of the self³, does not cause alienation, it does not lead to estrangement from one's self. It only sets the premises for self-discovery to no longer be available to humanity. Philosophy does not become a reaction against technologization, but rather a form of integrating it in your life. For this reason, a return to philosophy is not a consequence of the need to restore the humanity which has become estranged from its own condition, but a requirement for humans positing in their development. Philosophy opens reflection on acting to avoid forgetting Being as archetype of the human being. In the context of generalized communication, returning to philosophy means taking a first step to escape from the threat of forgetting.

Such an attitude is not only metaphysical. It bears consequences on the relationship of philosophy, communication science and various communication practices.

³ Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutica subiectului. Cursuri la Collège de France (1981–1982)*, Edition by Frédéric Gros under the guidance of François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, Translated by Bogdan Ghiu, (Iași: Polirom, 2004); Cristian Iftode, *Filosofia ca mod de viață. Sursele autenticității*, (Pitești: Editura Paralela 45, 2010).

The special nature of their relationship may be found in the ways in which philosophical counseling and practices act to develop communication. The presence of philosophy is significant in virtual communication through the informal structures represented by philosophy clubs or cafes, as also through the mechanisms set to motion by ethical, social responsibility, and philosophical counseling, and in some cases by philosophical therapy understood as an instrument to re-establish connectivity and authenticity in inter-subjective communication.

In the present volume, I focus on a few aspects of the role played in your life by applied philosophy, philosophical practices, philosophical counseling and therapy. For this purpose, I am calling on the experience of thinkers devoted to philosophy and philosophical practice such as Lou Marinoff, Emmy van Deurzen, Aurel Codoban and others, as I believe that by presenting their ideas we can support understanding the importance of philosophical counseling in a communication-shaped world.

In “From Philosopher’s Fight with Everyone to Philosophy’s Opening to All”, I focused on Lou Marinoff’s analyses to emphasize the practical philosophy’s relations with theoretical philosophy, psychology, psychiatry and ideology, to understand the specifics of philosophical therapy and counseling as applied philosophy practices. Each of these relations is used as an argument to assert philosophical therapy and counseling as a distinct field of counseling, which Marinoff opines it needs special recognition from the state in the context of professionalizing philosophical practices. Beyond apparently conflicting relations between the practices proposed by philosophy,

psychiatry and psychology, Marinoff believes there is a common interest to all of them: to provide care services at a high professional level. This special vocation of various counseling practices should be the base for reciprocated recognition and cooperation by the distinctive forms of services that are provided. In Lou Marinoff's perspective, philosophical therapy and counseling should be regarded as a 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.

Marinoff's perspective on philosophical practice as a specific form of counseling may be showcased in the connection between philosophical counseling and communication. In part, the problems that philosophical counseling may solve are determined by the new communication-based society or are a consequence of the new technologies' development, especially of communication technologies. However, the issues under discussion are generally human, and philosophical counseling supposes an intervention at the human condition level. The communication-built world provides a good base to re-discuss these issues for their adapting, redefining, abandoning or reshaping. As we can find in "Philosophical Counseling and the Practices of Dialogue in a World Built on Communication", the increased visibility of philosophical counseling and therapy is a consequence of the importance of communication in the life of the postmodern individual. Some problems are generated by the world reconstruction in communication, others find a better solution in the context of the new world mechanisms. The rapid

development of communication technologies and their increased importance in postmodern human life entail the need for the development of technologies of the self, personal development, and quest for authenticity. In this context, Lou Marinoff stands out as a prominent voice in asserting the importance of philosophy applied to personal, professional and organizational life. He supports the importance of communication philosophy, of philosophical dialogue as a therapeutical method, of existential and ethical counseling. The need for philosophical counseling is closely linked to the dialogical nature of the human condition and the individual's need to build a coherent life project based on a philosophy of life assumed as a personal perspective to understand, interpret and valorize the world.

While we called on Lou Marinoff for his recognition of the autonomy of philosophical practice as a specific practice in support relations, we summoned Emmy van Deurzen's studies because she is among the most authentic voices vouching for the importance of philosophy in contemporary human life. As one can find in "Philosophy, Spirituality, Therapy", as a philosopher and psychotherapist, she advocates philosophy as the foundation of existential counseling and therapy. Starting from the premise that existential therapy is the practical application of philosophy to the analysis, understanding and modeling of everyday life, Emmy van Deurzen aims to reflect on the complex relationships that philosophy, psychology and therapeutic techniques have in building the spiritual life and in asserting man on the four dimensions of existence, from the physical one to the spiritual or religious one.

To reveal the way in which philosophy rediscovers its meanings and asserts itself as the foundation of therapy, I have summoned a few elements that focus on the difference between the religious imagery and that of scientific and philosophical practices. Against this background, there is the need for philosophy to abandon the marginal status it took under modernity's terms, and to show itself as a form deciphering and assuming meaning, transcending human being, and formulating paths that lead to an authentic existence. Philosophical dialogue as a therapeutic dialogue is favored by the fact that, without eliminating the forms of symbolic thought typical of religious communication, philosophy may propose a conceptual, critical and demythologizing way of thinking, in opposition to mythical manifestations but in full agreement with human beings' existential needs. Such an approach becomes more and more important in the context of the development of communication, technology, and new mediated modes of being in the world.

While Emmy van Deurzen places philosophy at the core of therapeutic practices, the existential stylist Aurel Codoban's interdisciplinary position turns philosophy into a fundamental instrument for existential counseling and communication.

In "Philosophy as existential style. From Desire to Love as Communication Instrument", I focused on the fact that philosophical counseling proves to be today among the most complex intervention forms in the post-modern individual's daily life. Aurel Codoban proposes a way to interpret and act in the existential field. He starts from the premise that philosophy must propose a

way of life. He takes on a philosophical practice that builds an ontology of detail in which the fundamental element in the human condition definition is no longer rationality but desire. As an existential stylist, the philosopher elicits in his analysis the benefits of philosophical counseling on the love-desire relationship in the context of transformations in individuals' lives along five dimensions as an existential datum of the human being: physical, social, personal, spiritual and religious. We have to expect a future sixth dimension to add to the five, which will be linked to the presence in the virtual medium. In this context, love as a cognition instrument denotes the way postmoderns use the resources of desire for personal development, alterity cultivation, and subject instituting as relational reality. Bringing together erotic desire and the desire for transcendence, love proves to be a transfiguring force in the postmodern world, even if some of the forms we used to associate to love are blurred or metamorphosed.

I have used Aurel Codoban's philosophical perspective in "Our Daily Body and Its Instrumental Role in Communication" to show that as in religious traditions, the soul organizes entirely the human condition horizon, postmodern culture sets the body as the organizing centre of all significant registers defining human being. Relevant in this sense is the dynamic of relations between meta-physical love, life and death. Body rediscovery creates a series of mechanisms sacralizing it; some even speak about a cult and about ritual mechanisms having a religious charge. On the one hand, the body is attributed a symbolic dimension surfacing in the fight against the

finite and life's lack of meaning. On the other, turning the body into a centre of the existential universe triggers a better delineation of the functions it may fulfill. An important role belongs to the networking function that crosses over the human inhabited worlds, from the physical one to the spiritual and religious one. To highlight these aspects, I called on the reflections in Aurel Codoban's communication philosophy. The new view on corporality brings the image of body as language, as communication instrument and as significant surface. Against this background, the body sets a self-concern whose consequence, symbolically, is a dialectic movement of body and soul nourishing one other and improving one another in light of authenticity.

As a hermeneut and existential stylist, Aurel Codoban proposes a philosophy of love in which love as a significant surface reveals a world of practices, representations, rituals and the assumption of love content that are under the sign of an occidental Eros evolution towards the desire of being desired. In "From Metaphysical Desire to the Desire of Being Desired" I valorized the way in which Aurel Codoban describes the metamorphoses of love through classical theories of desire, that reveal a paradigmatic behavior from the classical age to the postmodern condition of love. Relevant in this sense are the transformations that take place in the field of desire from love conceived in a manner similar to the religious one, fuelled by the metaphysical desire, to love as passion, to the establishing of a love based on corporeality, to the plurality of the self and the emptying of love relations of personal identity of those who engage in the discourse

of love and in its communication. With the generalization of the construction of reality in postmodern communication, love is increasingly proving to be rebuilt on an empty transcendence, a transcendence without transcendence, which accompanies the virtualization of love and the transformations brought about by its association with the virtual space mediated by the new technologies.

Without being a concluding text, “Philosophical Counseling and Human Being’s Continuous Restoration” could play such a part as it provides an opening to the field of philosophical counseling and reveals its importance for personal development. Starting from three authors that are significant for the philosophical practices associated to counseling, I outline several elements that could be the base for everyone’s option for philosophical counseling.

On the one hand, I intend to show that the development of communication technologies and of the technologies enabling virtual spaces construction involves the need for a position vis-à-vis the new reality, which is marked by the digital world’s impact on the individual. The challenge in this life context supposes new approaches of fundamental topics and new answers concerning the human values related to the meaning of existence, personal identity and finding oneself, and also the approach of happiness as a central value in a good life. One solution could be the return to the spiritual traditions and their reevaluation from the perspective of the present postmodern individual’s life, through philosophical dialogue as provided by philosophical counseling.

On the other hand, there is the need to redefine the human being and his/her quest in an expanding existential

register, with a perpetual dynamics from the real world to the virtual one and back. In this context, philosophy can offer philosophical practices that support human beings in their quest for authenticity, for ways to commit to living their lives in the spirit of the values typical of the postmodern human condition.