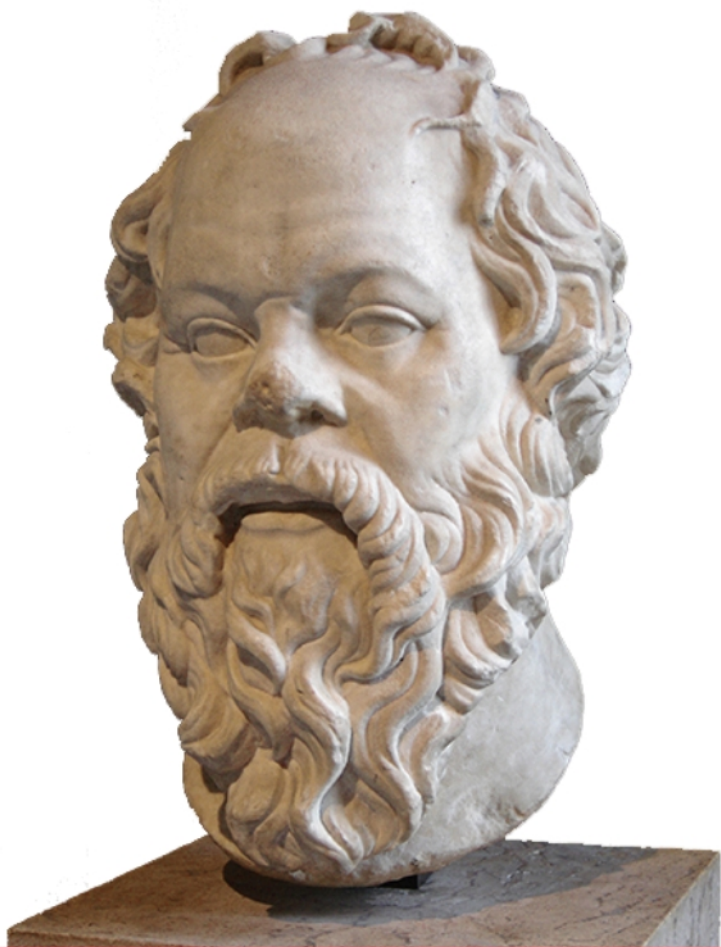


# Philosophical Counseling *and* Communication



Sandu Frunză

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**Sandu Frunză**

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and Communication**

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COMMUNICATION

Sandu Frunză

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# Chapter 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> 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 communi-

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

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

ation 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 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 self<sup>3</sup>, does not cause alienation, it does not lead to one's 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,

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<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, *Hermenutica 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).

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. 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 ap-

plied 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



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