

Editorial

Coming to the word

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21501/23461780.3289>

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*Meditate, observe, and meditate again,
This is the only way
That leads you to every single wonder.*

Vicente Huidobro

After being dedicated for several years to scaping death; after lighting altars I have not looked for by my own decision, several friends and other people have told me they would like to have a conversation with me to share about their lives and about life in general. I still do not know if I am able to accept such an invitation and such a compromise.

This request, however, has given me the opportunity to think again about some conditions I may not have adopted properly due to my theoretical and experiential immaturity. For this reason, I am reconsidering some words I have already published so that I am able to give them a new meaning, bringing them closer. This is my intention now.

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I started working in the *consultorio filosófico*, in March 1994. I have been developing these words since then, sporadically, and bringing them to my writing looking for a bigger perspective. The idea was to provide a service to the community focused on the study of thought through language and on the search for oneself as an answer to the personal development.

Hailing from several readings and experiences done and lived during some years, there was the need to intensify and project philosophical *praxis* as medicine. This has been done successfully in France, Belgium, German, Spain, and the United States of America. In 1982, doctor Achembach (Germany) began with the idea of establishing a *philosophical office* where every single consult was charged trying to get to a “healthy” answer in respect to the different existentialist crisis his customers suffer.

Practical philosophy has been developed due to people such as Lou Marinoff (USA), José Barrientos Rastrojo and Mónica Cavallé (Spain), Rainer Matias Holm Hadulla (Germany), Roxana Kreimer (Argentina), Oscar Brenifier (France), Ran Lahav (Israel) Hernán Bueno Castañeda, Eufrasio Guzmán and Óscar Fernando Acevedo (Colombia), and many others.

I must clarify that *philosophy as medicine* is an alternative practice among the different therapies but it is not precisely an alternative therapy. This one aims at thinking about the health problems in the field of interpersonal relationships and self-reflection concerning the actions and consequences in the lives of people.

Apart from working with people who have difficulties in their work or family environment due to the “inability for dialogue”, or people who are in anguish, in crisis, in lack of meaning, in despair, or in permanent existentialist emptiness, and people who are therefore considered to be suicidal, this also applies to people in pain and in terminal stages.

In the same way, some services, academically, can be offered; and in one way or another, there is the necessity to do some activities that are important for people who have doubts about death, love, solitude, freedom, and others that could be “problematic” at the moment of interacting with others.

In my personal experience, the *philosophical office* offers a kind of therapy that I call *dialogical*, since the use of questions and answers looks for a moment of reflection in order to get to an answer to the question or to the doubt the patient suffers. As stated by Marie Louise-von France, *every single man has to examine his own problem and try to determine what it is fair for him*.

More than a method, *philosophy as medicine* is walking through the Word and its representations at the moment of thinking about the experiences people have lived and the ones to come. This means, living the moment of dialogue and what it is the dialogue inside it. Whoever consults and goes to the office, like going to the doctor, can learn about his own questions- and its possible answers- in order to make the decisions he or she considers convenient to satisfy his or her needs. This does not mean they are the answers: life has the answer; and dialogue, as life, is always hazardous and one never knows where it takes us.

This is the magic of philosophy and its “therapeutical” outcome: learning how to travel without presumptions, with no luggage to carry, learning to be wrong, and discovering memory places that help to clarify meaning in respect to the wonders and mysteries of life and its hidden problems. Maybe it is this, or it is a bit more.

The dialogue is a main function to develop such clarities about the meaning of what we are being, and it should be realized with a dynamic attention that gives, more than just the possibility of communicating, the possibility of being communicated between each other- consultant and consulter- so that we get to an acceptable comprehension of the other.

This would allow a closeness with no traumas on all those contrast and differences that generate misunderstandings and then can result in violence. Because, the important thing about dialogue is to serve as a way to learn and correspond with our human dimensions. This, since the possibility of growing, accepting, and respecting our own vital condition, and that of the many multiple beings that composed this world, is inside us.

Human activity has separated from nature creating a condition that has been weakening and continuous growth. What man has “perpetuated” inside him, and what it has tried to take to others is the world where he participates on the constant interpretation of a reality that for the lack of interaction, could chain us to a unique perspective of existence. Even though, the opposite is part of our daily evidence.

In order to make out of that reality of the world a possibility that unites us to the world and can correspond to every single being- including the many variables which are developed in daily interaction- humans beings need dialogue as a fundamental: in which, thinking and speaking generate actions. This way, the human being could generate the realization of its own presence and that of the other with no other condition than learning, listening, and taking into account, no matter who he is., he who is in front of him.

This is defined this way since that we called “human nature” is intimately related with the word that defines and activates it. Aristotle, for instance, affirmed we are gifted with the *logos*. This is confirmed by Octavio Paz, when he states that: “*the man is a being of words.*” Even more when life is totally disastrous since everyone is expecting words to be filled with love. For this reason, some people want a quiet and relaxing place to tolerate the oppression and transform it into an opportunity for growing and, why not, being happy.

Dialogical therapy aims at warning, all those who visit the *philosophical office*, about the representations they have about the world. At the same time, it aims at making them realize about the posible manifestations that allow them to go from the individual to the universal. This does not mean one intends to find a uni-directional way: just from the inside to the outside.

The idea consists on opening your eyes- which are regularly closed due to the inability to cope with a problem one does not perceive as a consequence of external factors- in front of a reality that, in some cases looks univocal, but it has a lot of different ways to be looked and analyzed. As some poets assert, the prism appears as a more sensible option than the window.

As a consequence, the approach one tends to do during a visit to the office intends to activate a *will* to create that offers a series of opportunities to perceive new things, as well as a *poetical conscience* which uses intuition. In this way, this allows the new to be explored and inhabited since as Hölderlin states: *the man inhabits the world poetically*.

So, the conditions for a creative life are there. In principle, because of the understanding of the symbols of a personal reality that could be liberated or built by the language and the poetical Word; which means: a correspondance between the events and the experiences they give us when we interact with the outside.

This is the so called dimension of imagination and dream. It is the beginning of that ability to go beyond those things we have lost in routine and its immovility. It is the absorption of that thing that identifies us with the world and the way to express it back. It is what makes us who we are.

This subjectivity that starts shaping itself as a way of identity and interior presence is supposed to offer the inevitable outcome of integration with the culture. Whatever happens to a man happens to all of the others. Being certain about this, all that existentialist motivation you have to keep on living becomes part of a community which also suffers the bad decisions of particular actions.

So, the word, as irrationality or unacceptance of a standardized grammar that permits us to be in touch, is extremely important in some actions involving art and its freedom conditions. However, one must have a plan B that gives the possibility to make an interpretation that is able to promote that closeness and empathy in all those who listen to this word.

The sessions in this office operate in the same way. Trying to promote a proximity for all those distractions so that this anxiety could be taken to a common language that facilitates the interaction and closeness understanding needs; so that one is able to observe and appreciate reality at peace.

In other words, I must clarify that what I have called *dialogical therapy* is nothing but a relaxing and conscious conversation that takes place as a discovery of our own existence and that reality surrounding us. *Dialogical*

therapy encourages people to free and plural thinking. That one that gets close to the decisions one must make in one's life and the reckoning of its contingencies and the way to the transcendence of forgetfulness.

I mean, the acceptance that life can be lived and that we are now here playing its game. Because it is her, the one which has the answers and the one which will give us the answers about the way we should live it since one learns to live by living. No matter if this implies pain or suffering. This is also living: going from happiness to sadness and learning the way to face difficulties so that we are on the move with the melody of existence.