



Silence and the unspeakable as the abode of being: Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Rosenzweig. Philosophers among ruins.

El silencio y lo indecible como morada del ser: Wittgenstein, Heidegger y Rosenzweig.
Filósofos entre ruinas.

DOI: 10.32870/sincronia.axxv.n79. 4to 21

Carlos Alberto Navarro Fuentes

Tecnológico de Monterrey. (MEXICO)

CE: betoballack@yahoo.com.mx / ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4647-9961

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCoercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

Received: 25/07/2020

Reviewed: 03/10/2020

Accepted: 05/11/2020

ABSTRACT

The objective of the essay is to follow the tracks of silence philosophically, as multiplicity not reducible to unity; there are instances of silence, not silence, neither objectively nor subjectively considered; it is not an 'object' or a 'subjective experience'. Recognize the relevance of silence based on its apparent irrelevance, and, nevertheless, point out the importance that it can have in the attempt to lead to philosophical reflection and to philosophize in general what is essential in it: THINKING. The proposed path requires LISTENING to language, rather than taking for granted the immediate disposition and transparency with which the world appears to us. To do this, we will reflect on excerpts from works written by three thinkers who lived 'war' up close: Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929). This work proceeds peripathetically, alone, reflections emerge in the middle of a world that crumbles between the complexity and destruction that technique and modernity have brought. It is undertaken by welcoming resonances, sensations, representations, images, verses and musings, reflecting in the midst of daily daze. Is there a logical-grammatical silence or an ethical-mystical-liturgical silence? Is silence equivalent to an impossibility of saying or is it the result of an impossibility of saying itself, which does not say when what it most wants to say? Silence of existence or silence in the face of events that threaten to overwhelm us? Is silence silent or is being silent?



Keywords: Silence. Language. Path. World. Think. Knowledge.

RESUMEN

El objetivo del ensayo consiste en seguir las huellas del silencio filosóficamente, como multiplicidad no reductible a la unidad; hay instancias de silencio, no el silencio, ni objetiva ni subjetivamente considerado; no es un 'objeto' ni una 'vivencia subjetiva'. Reconocer la relevancia del silencio a partir de su aparente irrelevancia, y, no obstante, hacer notar la importancia que puede tener en el intento por reconducir a la reflexión filosófica y al filosofar en general a lo esencial que hay en ella: PENSAR. El camino que se propone requiere ESCUCHAR al lenguaje, más que dar por sentada la inmediata disposición y transparencia con la cual -en apariencia- el mundo se nos presenta. Para ello, reflexionaremos a partir de extractos de obras escritas por tres pensadores que vivieron 'la guerra' de cerca: Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) y Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929). Este trabajo procede peripatéticamente, en solitario, afloran reflexiones en medio de un mundo que se desmorona entre la complejidad y la destrucción que han traído la técnica y la Modernidad. Se emprende acogiendo resonancias, sensaciones, representaciones, imágenes, versos y cavilaciones, reflexionando en medio del aturdimiento cotidiano. ¿Hay un silencio lógico-gramatical o un silencio ético-místico-litúrgico? ¿Equivale el silencio a una imposibilidad de decir o es resultado de una imposibilidad del decir mismo, que no dice cuando lo que más quiere es decir? ¿Enmudecimiento de la existencia o silencio frente a los acontecimientos que amenazan con rebasarnos? ¿Calla el silencio o enmudece el ser?

Palabras Clave: Silencio. Lenguaje. Camino. Mundo. Pensar. Conocimiento.

Japanese: The journey of such a dialogue must have its own character, so there would be more silence than conversation in him.

Questioner: First of all, silence over silence...

Japanese:... because talking and writing about silence causes pernicious discussions...

Questioner: Who could simply keep silent about silence?

Japanese: This would be the real Say...

Inquirer: ... and the permanent prelude to the true dialogue of speech would remain.

Japanese: Don't we try the impossible like that?

"Of a dialogue about speech between a Japanese and an inquirer"

Martin Heidegger



The incitement of silence

*Why does a man write? Because it has no
character
enough not to write*

Karl Kraus

"The Passion of Joan of Arc" (1922), directed by Carlo Dreyer, instead of using shots fixed to the face of the accused, directs the camera recurrently to the hands, a form of non-verbal communication. When Joan brings her hands to her face trying or signaling the intention of silencing the imminent cry of the one who knows the ruling of her judgment in advance: death, with all the symbolic and liturgical presence of God in the ritual required by the judgments of the time in the middle of the Hundred Years' War between France and England, (1337-1453), chooses to bite a finger, break the guilty silence of irredeemable anguish, there is no possible salvation. The inquisitors watch as if they were spies, with clandestine glances and insane curiosity inside the cell where the devout and patriotic Juana awaits her fate. The silence conveyed by the scene seems to conspire, also conspiring against the accused. The gaze of the viewer of the film, of the one who looks at the overwhelming silence and waiting seem to turn him into part of the jury, a jury that fulfills mere aesthetic functions during the process that follows him on the screen -and that also knows that the luck is cast-, which seems not to serve to establish limits between inside and outside, between those who move inside the film and those who are outside it, all expectant, waiting, silent and unable to break it. Silence interwoven with guilt and perversity, where she seems to look only inward, her few movements are not visible except for the monologues disguised as dialogue and the intensification and harshness with which the gestures of those who participate in the interrogation are represented. The imminent threat between shadows, candles that barely illuminate the darkness that circumstances do not attenuate, are barely interrupted at the moment when the looks furtively coincide, no one hides anything, there is nothing to hide, the looks intersect only to confirm the impossible justice of the trial that is carried out. Meanwhile, it is the objects present there that silently signify, communicate, speak, waiting



without haste for their turn: the cross, whose shadow can be seen on the floor of the cell illuminated by the light of the candle, the instruments of torture, the ostia, the burning wood and from whose embers a hot and dying light summons us to be part of the assembly exercise inside the screen. It could be us, the Heideggerian existential anguish before the most authentic thing that each one has to go through in life for our temporality in this by the world: death, in this case, the death of Juana. One-All, Heidegger would say, where totality becomes present; the universality from which, according to Rosenzweig, philosophy becomes a white lie, deception, in the face of the fleeting and at the same time enduring motive and permanently repeated interest in forgetting death as the most genuine domain of what happens to human life. ¹

The cross, just a shadow signifying the silent divine presence that looms as hope that does not save, but awaits, liturgically the signature, conferred by God himself to the pen and the ink that runs through it, nevertheless, that Joan for god and not for France fought. It is not the man who signs the sentence that leads Joan to death through torture, it is the silence, the shadow, the presence of god that is revealed and not entirely, once again the Heideggerian One-All. The film and in particular the interrogation – the long and core sequence of the film – to Juana, results from a composition in which the montage, the lighting, the perspective given by the angles directed by the camera, the set and the chosen presence of the objects both in the cell and during the trial and the final sentence, and the sounds emitted by the piano that already accompanies but not as background music, which already accuses, until dictating the sentence and the lowering of the curtain. Here, Wittgenstein, would invite us to ask ourselves the questions with which we would have to approach the drama viewed, because this if we can talk about ... or should we be silent?

Logic and mysticism. Approaches to Ludwig Wittgenstein

[...] It happened like this: I suddenly felt my complete inanity and understood that God could demand of me whatever he wanted, with the consequence that my life would immediately become nonsense if I did not obey. I thought immediately if I could not explain

¹ Carl Dreyer, "The Passion of Joan of Arc", (1922), in <https://vimeo.com/86583190> (accessed June 30, 2020).



everything as an illusion and not as a command from God; but it was clear to me that then I would have to explain how all religion illusions in me. That I would have to deny the meaning of life.

After some resistance, I followed the order, gave the light and got up. There I was, standing, in the room, with a horrific feeling. I went to the mirror, saw myself in it, and my image looked at me so frighteningly that I hid my face in my hands. I felt that I was completely shattered and in god's hands, that He can do with me whatever He wants at every moment. I felt that God can force me at any time to take upon me the most horrible, and that I was not prepared to take upon me the most horrible. That I am not prepared to give up now friendship and all that earth. But will I ever be? [...] (Wittgenstein, 2006, n.d.).

Ludwig Wittgenstein undertakes a generalized critique of language in his *Tractatus*, largely motivated by the logical symbolism and propositional calculus of Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege, attempting from a revision of the logic of mathematics to offer a new logic to language based on the inherent and ordinary limitations of it. According to Paul Engelmann

Positivism holds – and this is the essence – that what we can talk about is all that matters in life. While Wittgenstein ardently believes that everything that really matters in human life is precisely what, from his point of view, we must be silent about. When he undertakes immense work to delimit what is devoid of importance [i.e., the scope and limits of ordinary language] he is not applying to make a recognition of the coastline of that island with such meticulous pressure, but what is being dealt with is the confines of the ocean (2009, p.241).

For Wittgenstein, the meaning of language cannot be determined on the basis of propositional logic or its logical constants, for it says nothing about reality. Likewise, it considers that there is no 'objective structure of thought' in which the meaning of language originates, which implies considering the relational limits of meaning and the plurality of languages as a 'linguistic game', without implying the reduction of the multiplicity of propositions to a mere semantic relationship



(Wittgenstein, 1987). In a letter Wittgenstein expresses what he considers he had carried out in the *Tractatus*:

The central point of the book is ethical. On one occasion I wanted to include in the preface a phrase that is not in fact found in it, but which I will transcribe for you here, because perhaps you will find in it a key to the work. What I wanted to write, then, was this: My work consists of two parts: the one exposed in it plus everything that I have not written. And it is precisely that second part that is important. My book draws the boundaries of the ethical sphere from within, so to speak, and I am convinced that this is the ONLY rigorous way to draw those boundaries.

In short, I think that where many others today are doing nothing but suffocating with gas, I have succeeded in my book to put everything in place in a firm way, keeping silent about them. And for that reason, unless I'm so wrong, the book will say a lot of things that you yourself want to say. The only thing that happens is that you will not see what is said in the book. For the time being I would recommend reading the preface and the conclusion, as they contain the most direct expression of the central point of the book (Wittgenstein, 2000, p.35).

For Wittgenstein, in the world of facts there is nothing to do with values, so "the meaning of the world has to reside outside of it. In the world everything is as it is and everything happens as it happens; there is no value in it, and if there were it it would be worthless" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p.129). He adds, "It is clear that ethics is not expressible. Ethics is transcendental. (Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same thing)" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p.129). "The enigma does not exist" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p.129). The ²*Tractatus* becomes a kind of mysticism of language in which it grants art a significant role in human life, being the only one capable of expressing the true meaning of life. "Not how the world is the mystical, but let it be" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p.129). "The feeling of the world as a limited whole is the mystical" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p.129). "The inexpressible certainly exists. It is shown, it

² See, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Conference on ethics. With two comments on the theory of value* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1997).



is the mystical" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p.129). Wittgenstein basically comes to two conclusions about philosophy in this work:

The correct method of philosophy would be properly this: to say nothing more than what can be said, that is, propositions of natural science – that is, something that has nothing to do with philosophy – and then, as many times as someone wanted to say something metaphysical, to prove to him that in his propositions he had not given meaning to certain signs. This method would be unsatisfactory to him – he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy – but it would be the only one strictly correct (Wittgenstein, 2005, p.129).

And the other conclusion, also put to close the work says: "what can not be talked about must be silenced" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p.129). Karl Kraus said of the possibility of coming to understand Wittgenstein's mind: "Why does a man write? Because it does not have enough character not to write" (Kraus, 1998, p.254). Mathematics is for Wittgenstein a 'philosophy of the game', a writing, that is its logic, a logic that does not depend on externalities, demonstrations or essences. "Thought is wrapped in an aura" (Wittgenstein, 1967, p.62). Both the rules of combination and relationship of signs are all given within the text. "We want to put order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a certain objective; one of many possible orders; not order" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p.71). Says Wittgenstein, "when we say that every word 'designates something' we have said nothing" (Wittgenstein, 1967, p.15). Which leads us to a certain despair

By the fact that it does not 'designate', does not have aprioristically determinable 'meanings', it pours into its being-game, in its conventionality, in the techniques that express and apply it. It is no longer a question of discovering 'what is inside', of acting an *aletheia*, nor of deceiving ourselves with a correspondence between the 'essence' of the proposition and 'states of fact', but of the analysis of our multiple forms of expression, of the 'family' of our languages (Cacciari, 1982, p.88).

Wittgenstein assumes the limitations of the word to inspire or achieve total contact with God and men. He refuses to resort to extreme positivism that desires a perfect match between words and



deeds, where obviously there is no room for any mysticism. Therefore, for him, ethics is the sacred place of silence, which we must not only identify, but respect as an act of faith, implicitly declaring the existence of a 'beyond' paradoxically parallel to what is expressed, but which cannot be explained logically. That is where mysticism could operate in his work. According to Wittgenstein's own reflection on the *Tractatus*, collected by Janik and Toulmin, namely, "[my]n work consists of two parts: the one expounded in it plus everything I have not written. And it is precisely that second part that is important" (italics of the author), there would be in it, then, "two parts": the written and the unwritten, one exposed and one silenced. The first, moreover, would say what does not matter, while the second would be omitted, but, at the same time, would allude to what matters. The *Tractatus* would be marked, in this sense, by a double split; between the decible and the unspeakable, and between the important and the unimportant.

With regard to the "duty to be silent, impossibility to say", the unspeakable or important seem to converge simultaneously, however, of being two very different operations. On the one hand, an interdiction (don't talk about what you can't talk about! You have to keep quiet about it!); on the other, an impossibility (it seems that you speak, but in truth you do not! You are silent even when you say!). These are two senses of 'power': 1) 'power/non-power' as being (or not) 'allowed'; 2) 'power/non-power' as 'ability' or 'incapacity'. They are discernible operations insofar as the interdiction on saying presupposes the possibility of doing so. It would not make sense to prohibit speaking if it were not, in some way, possible. In other words, we de facto say what can't be said, we talk about what can't be spoken. And precisely on this attitude lies the interdiction: the *Tractatus* commises silence as a silence or cease to say about what is important. However, according to the second operation, even if there is a saying, that is, even if words are issued, heard and read, this saying says nothing. It seems that, in the field of the important, we can say something, but the truth is that it is an appearance of saying. It is no longer a question of a possible saying which, however, must be avoided, but of a saying that is impossible. Therefore, a provisional conclusion would be: silence in the *Tractatus* appears as a duty to be silent and, at the same time, impossible to say.



On the 'aphoristic saying, silent philosophy', the duty to remain silent, as well as the insistence that it is impossible to speak of what is important, they point, in a special way, to the philosophy that Heidegger and Rosenzweig, in the same years, accused of providing tranquility or quietness. The *Tractatus* is a huge philosophical gesture that ultimately denies itself; it only accepts a justification for its usefulness in deploying the call to silence. That is what the metaphor of the staircase that is abandoned once used to climb means. Because *Tractatus* himself, in effect, says something that cannot be said. Its aphoristic structure, however, seems to be, in its own way, a form of silence.

In 6.5, Wittgenstein points out that in the realm of what can be said, there is room for answers and, therefore, questions ('the riddle does not exist'). In turn, where there is no answer, there is no question either. A problem that cannot be answered, such as life, is also not susceptible to questioning. It is beyond what can be said; its 'solution', in truth, is for it to disappear as a problem. The question remains of a question that suspends its transit to the answer, a question delayed in itself and in the limit. Like the one Heidegger started.

Regarding the 'logical and mystical silence', proposition 6.4 speaks of 'outside' the world. The world/out-of-world split is equivalent to the split between what matters and what doesn't. Logic, which constitutes almost the entire written 'part' of the *Tractatus*, is the saying of the world and, for this reason, a saying about what does not matter (there is no pedantry in Wittgenstein's assertion that the *Tractatus* solves all problems in an 'untouchable and definitive' way: it is a text that affirms the very irrelevance of such a resolution). The logical silence or silence of logic is the irrelevance of saying about the world. Now, what is 'outside' the world? The mere there is of the world, without a where or to where, without truth about why there is a world and nothing. Good (the will) and beauty. The enigma of life and death. God. That is, everything that matters. The mystical. The mystical silence or silence of the mystical, with or without words, is a being before the world, but *sub specie aeterni*, that is, experiencing it as a limitation and permanent announcement of the 'outside'. Not only art, but also an ethical act such as healing the wound of the sufferer or chanting a prayer collectively could be in the same direction. All this is reflected in the expression 'the mystical'.



As far as the 'showative saying' is concerned, according to another formulation of Wittgenstein, while – if the expression can be used – the saying says, the not saying or mystical silence, shows. 'The inexpressible' exists, but it is only shown. Therefore, he writes, those who saw the meaning of life or the world, also experienced the impossibility of saying, they could not say what such a sense consisted of. Or they said, but only mostly, where the experience of guilt at the Last Judgment offers the guilty the meaning of life. It's a poem that shows, not says. Poetry, understood in this way, is always a mostative saying or, what is the same, a form of silence.

For Jacques Bouveresse, if we interpret the *Tractatus* as an ethical proposition – which is nothing more than a way of speaking since there can really be 'ethical propositions' – the closure of this work ('About what cannot be spoken, we must be silent'), implies that "if the fundamental principle of the corruption of the means of expression, whether in philosophy, in morality or in art, is the pretension to say something that when much can be shown, the remedy to be adopted can only be a kind of ethics of forced silence" (Bouveresse, 2006, p.153). That which cannot be said, it is up to art to say, in particular poetry, architecture and music, because it must be inexpressibly contained in what it expresses. Therefore, Kraus says: "modern architecture is the superfluous created from the correct knowledge of a need that is unmet" (Kraus, 1955, p.15). Wittgenstein both in his philosophy and in the idea of architecture (house, his own dwelling), opposes ornament, what is left over, what is not strictly functional and austere, in short, makes *tabula rasa* like his contemporary in architecture, Adolf Loos. Wittgenstein called both Loos and Kraus 'embellishment wrests', while Kraus called this cultural manifestation within the empire 'the laboratory of the end of the world'. "What can an era still want to express that perhaps has nothing to express?" (Bouveresse, 2006, p.162).

The philosophy of the *Tractatus* is tied to the architectural style of the house. Architecture, then, is a gesture that must express economically the purest and most abstract form possible. Both Wittgenstein, Kraus and Loos, from their trenches ethically protest against the hegemony of ritualism and self-righteousness. Says Gunter Gebauer:



[...] in an ethical interpretation, the *Tractatus* and the house become comparable to each other: as an attempt to purify the language of the moral and aesthetic corruption it contains and as a construction of a pure syntactic and semantic system, in the ethical sense. (Gebauer, 2009, p.229).

And he adds about the house that Wittgenstein built and designed: "The house of the Kundmangasse does not need to hold a discourse about the world. It is oriented exclusively to the expression of its internal structure" (Gebauer, 2009, p.232). Thus, the things that say something say it from within and you do not have to go outside of them to look for what they say, because it is not something personal or subjective, but a rigorous objectivity.

Andoni Alonso, in his work *The Art of the Unspeakable. Wittgenstein and the Avant-Garde* tells us that:

[...] Wittgenstein's interest does not lie in constructing a theory of architecture with a view to a social reform, but in giving himself a concrete, ethical answer to a concrete problem thanks to a particular vital and aesthetic expression: its scope is reduced to a purely personal sphere, as an individual who must inhabit that house (Alonso, 2002, p.86).

He considers that there are common references between Wittgenstein's motives, vital attitudes and thoughts. Says:

The approaches are central to this theme: the sought after solitude in the forest, the desire for a different life in retirement, the overwhelm produced by the city of Vienna and the high social condition, the desire for a maximally pure intellectual work, and the love for his sister. To this we must add [...] the continuous obligation to correct what has already been done, a characteristic that can be seen in Wittgenstein not only in the Viennese house, but in the continuous hesitations regarding his own work (Alonso, 2002, p.82).

In fact, Wittgenstein finds any reflection on reality that cannot be translated into pure mathematical language anti-philosophical:



For this reason, Wittgenstein's architecture cannot consist in any case in creating differentiated areas, but in presenting with the maximum possible purity a space that makes clear at all times that difference, that presents the isolation and the complete distinction between the two areas" (Alonso, 2002, p.84).

The house of the Kundmannngasse 'shows' itself according to proposition 6.4.2.1 of the *Tractatus*, shows the union between ethics and aesthetics, where order and clarity are manifested. "And precisely what is missing is what is really important, absence is what truly gives value to the world" (Alonso, 2002, p.86). Wittgenstein wants to recover the vital simplicity and peace that the city prevents him and that he finds in his house in the rural space; the house acts as a refuge from that and all other superfluous exteriority. The house is an attempt to show that limit in which logic ceases and the mystical begins. Wittgenstein, philosopher-architect, who, stripping the construction of ornament, places its inhabitant before a transparent world without enigma. In such dispossession, one stands before the world, but *sub specie aeterni*, that is, before the world as a deaf announcement of what is outside of it. The *Tractatus* says: "The meaning of the world has to reside outside of it. In the world everything is as it is and everything happens as it happens; there is no value in him, and if there were he would be worthless" (6:41). The house suspends the saying of the how of the world to show what it is.

Muteness and speech. Approaches to Martin Heidegger

From the essay "What is metaphysics?" by Martin Heidegger, collected in *Milestones* (1929) we will reflect on Heidegger's silence in these years. It is a text with many correspondences with the final pages of the *Tractatus*. In general, we will try to understand how muteness emerges in the experience of distress. When Heidegger asks what is metaphysics, he is referring not properly to metaphysics in general but to a certain metaphysical question. He considers that science does not want to know anything from nothing and based on that, we do not know anything about it, but what about nothingness? Do we admit it or do we dispense with it? "Asking about nothingness (what and how it



is) turns the questioned into its opposite. The question deprives itself of its own object" (Heidegger, 2001, p.96), regardless of the rejection of it by science. In fact:

[...] the fundamental rule of thinking in general, to which he currently resorts, that is, the principle of non-contradiction, the universal 'logical', casts down this question. Indeed, thinking, which is essentially always thinking of something, dedicated to thinking about nothingness would have to contravene its own essence. (Heidegger, 2001, p.96).

Since then ask for nothing? from what logic? "Because in effect, nothingness is the negation of the totality of the entity, the absolutely non-entity" (Heidegger, 2001, p.96). Heidegger wonders:

Where will we look for nothingness? How will we find nothingness? Doesn't we have to know anymore, in general, that it's there to find something? [...] Man is only able to search when he has already taken for granted the existence of what is sought, when he presupposes that it is there present. But now what is sought is nothingness [...] (Heidegger, 2001, p.97).

Paradoxically, we speak of nothingness as something ordinary on a daily basis.

Nothingness is the complete negation of the totality of the entity. Doesn't this characteristic of nothingness already point in that direction from which it is precisely she who can go out to meet us? The totality of the entity must be given beforehand so that, simply as such, this totality can fall under negation, in which nothingness itself should then be shown (Heidegger, 2001, p.96).

For the Heidegger of the late twenties, as for the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, logic – to say about the world, to say about the entity – cannot assume the metaphysical question. In other words, a question like 'what is nothingness?' cannot in any way be answered logically. Any answer in the form "nothingness is..." violent, by definition, the logical principle of non-contradiction, because it makes out of nothing, which is not, something that is. Nothingness is non-entity and answering what it is makes it entity. Wittgenstein's departure was to show the limits of logic and the split between the world and the out of the world, between the decible and the unspeakable. Heidegger, in a similar



walk, also aspires to break the domain of logic in metaphysics/philosophy and start another path (an essential metaphor in his thinking). In "What is Metaphysics?", a text two years after *Being and Time* and still in the line of the youth texts, the tempted path is to find some experience in which the metaphysical question referring to the totality of the entity involves the questioner – the *Dasein*– and, at the same time, takes root in an irreducible field to logic. This experience is anguish. Rare, usually numb and latent, anguish also refers to something, it is anguish before something, but this something not only lacks determination, but its determination is essentially impossible. Here, and especially here, nothingness is revealed by a simultaneously existential (*Dasein* is involved in it) and a-logical revelation. The entity departs, disappears, vanishes or flees, harassing, overwhelming and crushing *Dasein* in its departure. Moreover, such evanescence of the entity drags with it *Dasein* itself, leaving it suspended, depersonalized (not a 'me'), powerless. *Dasein*, anguished and far from everyday life and the logical-scientific care of the world, cannot hold on to anything in the world. It is before a nothingness that is revealed. And then comes the displacement that silence introduces: "[T]he anguish leaves us speechless. Since the whole of the whole escapes and that is precisely the way nothing harasses us, in its presence it mutes any pretense of saying that something is" (Heidegger, 2001, p.100).

The insubstantial talk that seeks to silence the silence of anguish or the succinct saying that fails to explain what there was anguish before, show that here nothing was revealed. The effect of this revelation, understood as both silence (lack of words) and empty saying (words that do not say), constitutes one of the Heideggerian versions of silence. It will not, however, be the only or the last. It is possible that Eastern meditation techniques, immobile or moving, constitute experiences of revelation from nothing to *Dasein* other than anguish. If this were the case, they would also be existential and a-logical paths to the metaphysical question. For Heidegger, there are three dangers that lurk when thinking:

The good, and therefore healthy, danger is the vicinity of the singing poet. The evil danger, and therefore the most acute, is thinking itself. He has to think against himself, something he



is rarely capable of. The danger due to a bad constitution, and therefore disorderly, is philosophizing. (Heidegger, 2004, p.23).

That is why Heidegger considers that the advent of the poetic character of thinking is still veiled. And it says (Heidegger, 2001, p.41):

Camp the forests
Precipite the streams
The rocks endure
The rain falls meekly.

Fields await
Fountains sprout
Moran the winds
Meditate on Grace.

In this way, we can consider together with Heidegger that it is the dusk and in solitude where the world becomes free, the moment when "the wind filters into silence [and] thinking, medroso, likes to calm down" (Heidegger, 2010, p.307). At night "the world becomes free" (Heidegger, 2010, p.309) and "language plays in the sound of silence" (Heidegger, 2010, p.309). In this way, the silent word is the key and the lock at the same time of access to the simple, a world in which language has reached excess and emptiness, inexpressibility and denial of thought. "The hard thing about keeping silent is talking ... to be silent requires to make the discourse, because, without this realization, to remain silent would be degraded to mere silence" (Heidegger, 2010, p.313). Solitude is the real possibility of uniting oneself, of attaining true freedom in the world. The way speaks, that is, it consists of a speech that is certainly silent, and yet it says. And, in this sense, silence as 'mere silence' predominant in the twenties, has been abandoned. Silence and saying are not opposed. Secondly, when you compare the speech of the road with a breath, you are conveying the idea of its fragility. On the one hand, the speech of the road is fragile to the extent that it only says if it finds someone who hears its saying, a



Dasein, the thinker of the enigma, the peasant in the harvest, for example, in any case, always 'the few', those who manage to remain serene, not to deviate or misguid in the technical calculation.

On the other hand, it is a fragile speech in the sense that it is tacit, with omissions and secrets, infinite setbacks, always loaded with unspoken elements that are subtracted at the same moment in which it says. To paraphrase Heidegger's own passage: like God, the speech of the way is only such in what his saying does not say. Finally, what he says about the way, his breath, is the simple; an expanded silence that reaches even those who died; or, if you prefer, a resignation that, far from taking away, donates. And here emerges the question of origin/beginning/beginning, a path that would have to be traveled, if one wanted to follow what heidegger's thought was from the forties to the end of his life. Is it the soul that speaks? Is it the world that speaks? Is it God who speaks? Soul, world and God are the three great 'objects' of Western metaphysics. Heidegger's answer – can it be called that? – is: he speaks the country road.

The field path is an 'image' of the Self. On what I called 'poetic-thinking speech', it should be noted, following reflections of Heidegger himself collected in the volume *Poetic Thoughts*, that these are not poems or rhythmic philosophy and in verse. It is a speech that does not veil any doctrine or theory. Unlike poetic saying, it does not resort to images; these only appear in it when the display of a saying without images, which would be in principle its task, fails to achieve what it seeks. What, then, is it about in this saying? Heidegger recalls, as an indication, the (so-called) 'poem' of Parmenides. But he warns, immediately, that it is not a language that returns – whatever that means – to lost Greece, but one that takes charge of the destiny/call of the being that corresponds to us at this moment. He also says that it is a speech that aspires to take care of the original silence – like that silence of the country road.

Grammar and liturgy. Approaches to Franz Rosenzweig

For Rosenzweig, "the new thought" is a new system of philosophy. Previously and up to that point, all philosophy has been concerned only with asking about the essence. What does this mean? Philosophy when it asks about the essence does nothing more than spin on the very thing it asks:



[...] the world certainly cannot be world, God be God, person can be person: everything must be properly something else. If they were really just what they are and nothing else, philosophy would turn out, finally— God free us and keep us! – superfluous. (Rosenzweig, 2007, p.319).

All of the above philosophies are concerned with asking about what we identify today as what has been tirelessly reduced to the 'I':

This reduction or foundation of the world and the experience of God to the 'I who experiment', today is so understood for scientific thought that whoever does not believe in that dogma and prefers to reduce his experiences of the world to the world and his experiences from God to God, is simply not taken seriously. (Rosenzweig, 2007, p.320).

Rosenzweig considers that in this way the philosophy of thought is historically confronted with the philosophy of experience, because we have become accustomed to asking ourselves about God and the world from the 'is' as if they were already given. Neither the world is only the mundane, nor is God only divine. If so, then why philosophy? World, Man, God in terms of 'essence' there are no ontological hierarchies, therefore, for questions about the essence you will find nothing but tautological answers, for example: "God is only divine, the human being is only human, the world is only worldly; you can dig into them as deep as you want: you will find again and again only themselves" (Rosenzweig, 2007, p.321). The essence of none of these three concepts or ideas is more or less accessible to the human being, in fact, these concepts metamorphose, so when thinking about them it could turn out that they are something different from what they are supposed to be. Goethe writes on the *Eastern-Western Divan*

It's stupid that everybody
I am praising your particular opinion.
If Islam means submission to God,
we all live and die as Muslims.³

³ See, Wolfgang Goethe, "Book of Sentences", in *West-östlicher Divan* (Stuttgart: Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1989).



Divine, human, worldly... what are they? In what or where could their essentiality lie, considering that they constitute the presupposition of our reality? Must the 'I' of the last three centuries really be present? If the answer is yes, how could we be certain of the knowledge we possess? What do we exercise the narrative about, about what events? What and how to understand at the right time?

Goethe continues

Why is the truth distant and remote,
and takes refuge in the deep abyss?
No one understands at the right time!
If it were understood at the right time,
the truth would be close and broad,
and it would be adorable and benign.

Rosenzweig proposes a philosophy based on experience, which instead of the method of thinking is based on the method of speaking, because speaking is tied to time and lives the lives of others, while the method of thinking is always solitary. "Needing time means: not being able to anticipate anything, having to wait for everything, being dependent on the other with the most proper of oneself [...] To speak means to speak for someone and to think for someone" (Rosenzweig, 2007, p.329). Prayer as action and not "mere" passive passivity. The freedom of the action of love as God's will. Both ideas always in a conclave between solitary and silence: "Prayer founds the human order of the world" (Rosenzweig, 2006, p.322). And yet, in addition to the magic that comes with prayer, there is a certain risk in it. The light projected in time and space, oriented from the present to the future, to the times that will come through the liturgy and silence that guess the truly eternal (the route of the star). "The eternal is hidden behind. They are the light in which we see the light: silent anticipation of a world that shines in the silence of the future" (Rosenzweig, 2006, p.351). The route of the star is the route of silence, it is built with it. "It is a silence that is not that it still lacks words, like the muteness of the



anteworld, but that it no longer needs the word. It is the silence of perfect understanding" (Rosenzweig, 2006, p.352). Perhaps that is why Yehuda Halevi said.

But the main goal is another: to make the reader take each poem as a thing in itself, in the same way that the poet has composed it as a thing in itself and in the same way that the singer and the listener sang and listened to it in the place for which it is intended, as he sings and hears it, he will sing it and listen to it. That is, that the reader goes from being a reader and critic to being a guest and friend of the poem (Rosenzweig, 2007, p.311).

Did we know anything about the limit? In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein said: what is beyond the limit, that is the mystical. The passage from *The Star of Redemption* is placed in the same place: "Prayer is the force that moves beyond the threshold" (Rosenzweig, 2006, p.351). 'Threshold', however, seems to add something to 'limit': it means, certainly, the edge, but also its darkness or its shadow. Thresholds, we might say, are shady boundaries. Prayer – prayer, prayer – crosses the threshold. Beyond the differentiations that Rosenzweig introduces between his types, the prayer that refers to silence is that which consists in being supplicated for the coming of the Kingdom. If one insists on the image of the threshold, it must be said that prayer cries out, at the limit, for enlightenment, for the advent of light. 'Light' refers to 'Kingdom', and 'Kingdom' is here at least two things: eternity and redemption. Cultural prayer and, in general, worship, constitute earthly images – non-figurative, real images – of eternity. They are ways of welcoming, sheltering, enabling the dwelling / room or making room for the guest.

In this sense, praying culturally is a mode of hospitality; a hospitality that is also displayed in common, in an assembly, community way. In worship, an eternal guest is welcomed into a temporary house. That is the plea of the praying community: that eternity be made time, that what does not happen dwell in the instant that passes, that the seed of redemption be introduced into undeemed history. Make the invisible visible; to make the farthest, the closest. This hospitality to the other is exactly the idea of Rosenzweig's translation: not to 'Germanize the foreign' but to 'foreignize the Germanic'. After translation, "the [host] language will have," he writes for the edition of Halevi's



poems, "after it has spoken, a face different from the previous one" (Rosenzweig, 2006, p.351). The translator, like the speaker and the thinker, makes one language welcome another in itself, radically renewing itself: "If the foreign voice has something to say, the language [that welcomes it] must then look different from how it was before" (Rosenzweig, 2006, p.294). The cultural prayer is oriented to the illumination of the end, of the eternal instant – note the oxymoron – in which everything ends and fulfills. In this sense it enables the knowledge of something, but such something is not contemporary with or simultaneous with the prayer that allows us to know it.

What does this non-contemporaneity mean between supplication and what it makes known? Prayer in common, inseparable from liturgical gestures, is what gives rise in today to the eternal. But the eternal, the Kingdom, is future, not something already given. It is something to come, not something already come. That is why common prayer and liturgy, Rosenzweig writes, 'represent' the future. To think about the relationship between supplication/liturgy and Kingdom, instant and eternity, present and future, perhaps a more precise term than 'representation' is 'allegory', in the sense given to it by Walter Benjamin: in the liturgy we do not know the light itself, but an allegory from which we know the light that, as (yet) not given, remains unadns known. In other words, we do not know the light itself but only through the light of its allegory. It is precisely in this relationship between allegory and the allegories of it that silence appears.

Both aspects, the allegory and the allegories, protect the silence, they manifest themselves silently. Supplication is silent as silent is the Kingdom; the present liturgy is silent as silent is future eternity. It is the silence of a double gesture. Rosenzweig recalls that, usually, the gesture appears when the words fail. For example, when two speakers lack a common language and, in order to communicate, they resort to gestural babbling as a method to procure what words cannot give them. The gesture is, then, a supplement to verbal language. In the liturgy, however, it is not the word but the gesture – again: common, communal – that is supreme. "The liturgy redeems the gesture of the shackles that have it subjected to being the clumsy servant of language, and turns it into something that is more than language" (Rosenzweig, 2006, p.352).



But there is another silent gesture that is not that of the believing community in the liturgy. The light to which it is pleaded cries out, for it to come, does not speak, it only shines. It does not abandon itself, externalize or alienate/alienate, like the usual language. It remains in itself. It radiates like a 'face', like the eloquence of an 'eye' that suddenly appears. A face-eye that says, although in a different way. Gesturally. It does not lack words, it does not need them. It is the gesture of the eternal. About Dreyer's film: the 'silence of God'. That is what, in its own way, Halevi's religious poem seems to express, that poetry that needs the liturgical calendar to be welcomed, in the recitation of the intonator and the singing of the community. For Halevi, there is a path to the eternal, one that makes the eternal today, or makes us inhabit the divine 'dwellings'. But this path is not, by the way, that of 'dark words'.

It wasn't dark words that brought me closer to you.

It is the path of enlightenment.

I have seen you, Lord

From the silence of the liturgy:

I saw the beautiful divine oblations,

holocausts, sacrifices and libations,

and clouds of swerling smoke, dense.

I gladly listened to the song of Levites

when they come together to arrange the liturgy.

That's the way. There, when the liturgy ends – time passes – the eternal, however, remains: it leaves in time a mark that, in the memory and waiting of those who plead communally, does not pass.

It's all over, but when I woke up

you were still with me, Lord.

Rosenzweig comments:

[...] prayer, when it illuminates, shows the eyes the farthest goal. But since the prayer is at the precise point of his personality, this very distant and common goal to all appears to them in a



completely personal foreground of perspective: the perspective, precisely, of the point where he is" (Rosenzweig, 2006, p.325).

In Arnold Schönberg's opera *Moses und Aron* towards the end of Act II, when the drama of the play reaches the top, Moses says:⁴

! Oh, word, you, word, that I lack!

And it immediately falls to the ground.

Conclusions

Rosenzweig brings into play something that is also relevant to Wittgenstein and Heidegger: experience. It seems to me that for all of them the life experience is precisely the anguish before death, in addition to the facticity raised by Rosenzweig and Wittgenstein. In Rosenzweig's latest work on *The Star of Redemption*, we can identify a certain mockery of philosophy as an approach to facts, from an ideal conceptual framework that refers more to itself as a system of thought, to its internal logic, than to be concerned with effectively establishing a bridge between experience, the reflection and sensations that precede the speech of the thinker in his interaction with the mundane. There is a 'distrust' in the three philosophers, in that words can access the plane of the true without falling into tautologies, in 'closed' conceptual sequences that 'bite the tail' and end up for the layman, in being redundant ... and at least two of them find in him or the poetic languages the greatest possibility of rapprochement with the unspeakable, in one tragically assumed, in the others, as 'naturally' coupled in human life, although obviously endowed with a role that manifests in that silence its indeterminacy, its impossibility of being explained.

In Heidegger, the experience of the way, its aesthetic configuration, the concrete experience of walking and the natural and artificial signs of the way, are a turning point to outline his idea of

⁴ See, Arnold Schönberg, "Moses und Aaron", <http://www.kareol.es/obras/moisesyaaron/acto1.htm> (accessed August 9, 2016).



silence, as fraternally coupled with experience, much more than discourse. To give us directly his own assumption of this silence, dropping only a few lines, some short verses, which have that lightness that shows a faithful and silent companion at his side. For Wittgenstein, the experience of life, knowing our condition as mortals, is in essence 'dramatic', it is a struggle to understand God in his silence and to try to understand him through a physical posture, from prayer, from individual insignificance on that narrated night. In short, there are no words that can 'translate' experience without reducing it and in any case, Wittgenstein would be more on the side of ordinary language for description, than from the theoretical construction that annuls 'those' transcendental human experiences, turning it into a 'language game', into a confusion of senses.

From my point of view, one could, first of all, compare the insubstantial of logical speech in Rosenzweig with what we call 'logical silence' in Wittgenstein, which appeared as a saying that became irrelevant by being directed at what does not matter. But, secondly, and perhaps in a deeper way, in Rosenzweig you can detect a different silence, a grammatical silence or silence embedded in grammatical speech. What does it consist of? Where to place it? It can be found in the simultaneous intensification of time and the other that lies in being waiting. Here, again, silence is not the opposite of saying. It is only that moment when, as usually happens in conversation, I have already said something, but the other has not yet said anything. It is that expectation that follows me to say, a waiting that is oriented to the saying of the other. Being waiting, I cannot anticipate whether those other words, which are not mine, will be said or not, whether they will come or not... ultimately, I can't anticipate whether my wait will be endless. Nor can I anticipate, in the event that they come, whether the wait will be long or short, what those words will be, whether they will continue mine or interrupt them, whether they will affirm or deny... I simply remain, in silent recollection, waiting for the word of the other, for the word that (perhaps) comes. Rosenzweig's grammatical silence is this silence of waiting.



References

- Alonso, A. (2002), *El arte de lo indecible. Wittgenstein and the avant-garde*, Cáceres: University of Extremadura.
- Bouveresse, J. (2006), *Wittgenstein: modernity, progress and decadence*, Mexico: UNAM-Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas.
- Cacciari, M. (1982), *Krisis. Essay on the crisis of negative thinking from Nietzsche to Wittgenstein*, Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores.
- Engelmann, P. (2009), "Memories of Ludwig Wittgenstein", in *Wittgenstein, Ludwig and Paul Engelmann, Letters, encounters, memories*, Valencia: Pre-texts.
- Gebauer, G. (2009), *Die Syntax des Schweigens*, München: C.H.Beck.
- Goethe, W. (1989), "Book of Sentences", in *West-östlicher Divan*, Stuttgart: Cottaische Buchhandlung.
- Heidegger, M. (2010), *Poetic Thoughts*, Barcelona: Herder.
- Heidegger, M. (2004), *Desde la experiencia del pensar*, Madrid: Ábada Editores.
- Heidegger, M. (2001), *Hitos*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Janik, A. and Toulmin, S. (1998), *La Viena de Wittgenstein*, Madrid: Taurus.
- Kraus, K. (1955), *Beim Wort genommen*, München: Kosel Verlag.
- Rosenzweig, F. (2007), "El nuevo pensamiento", in *Lo humano, lo divino y lo mundano*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones Lilmod: Libros de la Araucaria.
- Rosenzweig, F. (2006), *La estrella de la redención*, Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2007), *Philosophical Observations*, Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas/UNAM.



Wittgenstein, L. (2006), *Luz y sombra: una vivencia (-sueño) nocturna y un fragmento epistolar*,

Valencia: Pre-Textos.

Wittgenstein, L. (2005), *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

Wittgenstein, L. (2000), *Briefe an Ludwig von Ficker*, Innsbruck: Brenner Studien, vol. I.

Wittgenstein, L. (1997), *Conference on Ethics. With two comments on the theory of value*, Barcelona:

Paidós.

Wittgenstein, L. (1967), *Ricerche filosofiche*, Paris: Gallimard.