



Jaromir Brejdak

University of Szczecin, Poland

ORCID: 0000-0003-1444-2945

E-mail: jaromir.brejdak@usz.edu.pl

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/RF.2023.037>

## The Logos of the Communicating Silence\*

[...] the word arises in a substantial way between men who have been seized in their depths and opened out by the dynamic of an elemental togetherness. The interhuman opens out [*erschließt*] what otherwise remains unopened [*unerschlossen*].<sup>1</sup>

This text attempts to describe the phenomenon of silence and explore what silence is and what its relationship with communication looks like. These questions will lead to establishing “communicating silence” as a category valuable in describing non-verbal types of communication, such as communication between humans and animals or humans and God. Let us initially try to get closer to the nature of silence based on language and its phrasemes, which already tell us a lot about it. We can see that nothing has so much to say as silence itself. So let us look at the ambiguous shades of silence. The expression “silence is gold” hints at the virtue of discretion and the art of concealing knowledge for the sake of some cause, “breaking silence”, while showing the aspect of revealing

---

\* This paper is based on my previously published text “Logos komunikującego milczenia”, *Ethos* 113 (2016): 21–35.

<sup>1</sup> Martin Buber, *The Martin Buber Reader. Essential Writings*, ed. Asher D. Biemann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 215.

something hidden, breaking the silence that could otherwise be “gold”. In turn, “silencing” draws attention to denying someone their freedom of expression. “To be silent as a mum” reveals the voluntary or compulsory aspect of concealing something; “ignoring by silence” reveals an aspect of someone’s presence being apparently not noticed; silence here is not uplifting but hostile. Finally, “the rest is silence” presents an aspect of helplessness in the face of an inexpressible mystery.

A phraseological analysis of expressions involving the concept of silence convinces us that silence is active through a non-verbal way of communicating something or pointing to an area beyond possible verbalization. Silence is a meaningful shadow of a word, and as such, it completes the spoken word. The Gadamer-like characterization of speech as a bridge and boundary will also apply to silence itself.<sup>2</sup> Silence, like speech, seems to open or close communication. It is a sense-creating and enlivening breath of what has been petrified due to objectification and verbalization. Therefore, it is a constant oscillation between opening and closing, between entrusting and refusing. Fitting into a diverse ontological horizon, it is a transgression of openness and secrecy. Heraclitus tried to tell us this truth, calling us to listen to the logos, not the speaker’s words.

Silence can be problematized in various ontological horizons. In this article, we will be particularly interested in the dialogical horizon, which, when culminating in a personal relationship, will open another horizon – a religious one. For the sake of completeness, the remaining horizons will be referred to at the end of the article.

## 1. A silent source of words

In his poem *Das Wort*,<sup>3</sup> Stefan George describes a wanderer who goes to the source of the Word being born, to wait there for the Word that precedes our vision of the world. The source is guarded by the mythological Norn, the goddess of destiny. Having reached the source, the wanderer

---

<sup>2</sup> See Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Text und Interpretation”, in: *Hermeneutik 2, Gesammelte Werke 2* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986), 330–360; see also: Ewelina Suszek, “Milczeń na wiele sposobów. Milczenie w filozofii i nie tylko”, *Czasopismo Filozoficzne* 7 (2011): 1–23, access 2.07.2014, [http://www.czasopismofilozoficzne.us.edu.pl/pliki/nr\\_7/czasfilo7\\_suszek.pdf](http://www.czasopismofilozoficzne.us.edu.pl/pliki/nr_7/czasfilo7_suszek.pdf); Krzysztof Stachewicz, *Milczenie wobec dobra i zła. W stronę etyki sygetycznej i apofatycznej* (Poznań: UAM, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Stefan George, *Werke. Ausgabe in zwei Bänden*, vol. 1 (Düsseldorf und München: Verlag Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1968), 466–467.

(the poet) confesses: "So I renounced and sadly see: Where word breaks off not a thing may be".<sup>4</sup>

The sacrifices preceding the birth of the Word are the hardships of the journey and a silent, patient waiting at its source. Martin Heidegger, who searches for the essence of the Word, says:

Where words are missing, there are no things. The available Word grants only the thing of being. The Word becomes the Hermes of being, revealing the shades of its presence.<sup>5</sup>

Martin Buber was critical not so much of the result of Heidegger's analyses but of their starting point and the path leading to that source. This source, Buber says, is not *Dasein*; it is not human from the perspective of a concrete being, human as an incarnation of being, but *Dusein*, that is, being *you* for another human being is a manifestation of the presence of a demanding word. In this manifestation or emanation of existence flowing from another person, but also from a work of art or from nature, a person reaches the whole dimension of existence – their own, the world, or the other person. In his lecture *Das Wort, das gesprochen wird* Buber distinguishes three dimensions of speech: the living speech (German *präsender Bestand*); the historical speech as a reservoir of expressed thoughts that can be recovered and acquired from the perspective of living speech (German *potentieller Besitz*); and the speech as a willingness to utter a word in front of another person.<sup>6</sup> This third dimension helps us to bring out the Word that appears in the conversation; the "in-between" dimension is the trustworthy source of its birth. "Between" includes and confronts both the ambiguity of the Word and the differences in the identity of the participants of the conversation. The ontological condition of a real conversation, according to Buber, is the other's otherness. A conversation with oneself, which could be called thinking, is still a conversation with the nameless or absent, and is, therefore, a non-source experience of the nascent Logos. The egological paradigm of thought does not reach its source. In the dialogical paradigm, therefore, a word is born of a difference – both in the sense of the difference between the partners in the conversation and the difference resulting

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Words", in: Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, transl. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper&Row, 1971), 140; see Martin Heidegger, *W drodze do języka*, transl. Janusz Mizera (Warszawa: Aletheia, 2007), 199.

<sup>6</sup> See Martin Buber, "Das Wort, das gesprochen wird", in: *Logos. Zwei Reden* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1961), 7–29.

from the ambiguity of the words used, and forces a joint effort to merge these differences, which is not to eliminate them, but to withstand the tension between them. The Word that reveals a being introduces it to the dimension of openness and concealment and demands fidelity to what has been revealed to a specific person. Referring to Stefan George's poem quoted here, Buber states that the truth is not only the unconcealedness, the Greek *aletheia*, but also the Hebrew *emuna*, the faithfulness to what is being revealed.<sup>7</sup>

This fundamental difference between man as *Dasein* and man as *Du-sein* touches the very phenomenon of silence. According to Heidegger, the silent call of conscience, outlining the horizons of human possibilities, comes from the existence within. In Buber's concept, the communicating silence, as we shall see, comes from within the I-You relationship, from the above-mentioned sphere of "in-between".

Now silence will be discussed along a dialogical horizon, focusing on the relationship with You, and further on with true You *qua* God, leading us to the religious horizon.

## 2. The communicating silence (the silence which is communication)\*

### 2.1. The silence of a pet

Are animals silent? Or is their communication inaccessible for humans? Is there, maybe, another non-verbal type of communication typical of living creatures, including Man? Let us try to understand the nature of such non-verbal communication.

Buber writes:

The Eyes of an animal have the capacity of a great language. Independent, without any need of the assistance of sounds and gestures, most eloquent when they rest entirely in their glance, they express the mystery in its natural captivity, that is, in the anxiety of becoming. This state of the mystery is known only to the animal, which alone can open it up to us – for this state

---

\* "Silence which is communication" or communicating Silence ("*Das mitteilende Schweigen*") is the title of a subsection of Buber's Dialogue (*Zwiesprache*); see Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, transl. R. Gregor-Smith, introduction by M. Friedmann (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, 27–29.

can only be opened up and not revealed. The language in which this is accomplished is what it says: the anxiety – the stirring of the creature between the realms of plantlike security and spiritual risk. This language is the stammering of nature under the initial grasp of spirit before language yields to spirit's cosmic risk which we call man. But no speech will ever repeat what the stammer is able to communicate.<sup>8</sup>

We find the “stammering” of a seemingly silent nature in Max Scheler's concept, when he writes about a vital feeling, embracing and constituting a bond between all living organisms, including the bond between an animal and a human.<sup>9</sup>

Buber continues:

[...] had the burden of the length of one glance? At least I could still remember it, while the animal had sunk again from the stammering glance into speechless anxiety, almost devoid of memory.<sup>10</sup>

An animal, deprived of permanent identity frameworks based on memory, suffers, being subjected to constant change and passing away.

The mute, vital unity between living beings enables their silent communication, revealing to man, for example, the pain of an animal, its joy, or unconditional devotion. This emotionally founded sense of vital unity is a non-verbal, “silent” message that people refer to. They, however, develop more complex forms of communal living, such as family, society, culture, nation, or the ecclesia.

According to Scheler, human experience covers all spheres of emotional existence. It begins with an automatically emerging feeling of unity which is the basis for the development of higher forms of sympathy, which in turn is the foundation on which compassion is built. Compassion is the foundation in which love for man is grounded, enabling a cosmic love for the person and God. The experience of another person and living creatures is conditioned by the fullness of all forms of sympathy, starting with the feeling of unity.

The epistemological conclusions of this book will show us how, to be aware of any organism as alive, to distinguish even the simplest animate movement from inanimate one, a minimum of undifferentiated identification is

---

<sup>8</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, transl., prologue and notes by Walter Kaufmann (New York–London–Toronto–Sydney: A Touchstone Book, 1970), 144–145.

<sup>9</sup> See Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, transl. Peter Heath, introduction Graham McAleer (New Brunswick–London: Transaction Publishers, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Buber, *I and Thou*, 145.

necessary; we shall see how the simplest vicarious emotion, the most elementary fellow feeling, and over and above these the capacity for a specialized identification with the particular dynamic pattern of another creature's lifestream will seem altogether less peculiar.<sup>11</sup>

We can say, following Scheler, that the whole rich emotional sphere of man, starting from the feeling of unity with what is alive, emotional contagion through fellow feeling and compassion to the sphere of a community of shared feeling,<sup>12</sup> constitutes various communication dimensions of silence or, in our approach, a dimension of the communicating logos. Man is an emotional being, *ens amans*, before they become a willing being, *ens volens*, and finally, before they become a knowing being, *ens cogitans*, who knows and articulates themselves. Scheler's intuitions seem to be confirmed by M. Tomasello's psychology of development, as pointed out in other texts.

## 2.2. Man's silence

For Buber, the medium of a real conversation is not the spoken word; it is silence which makes it possible to experience the familiar presence of specific people, united by the anonymity of experiencing silence. The medium of language petrifies this experience, immobilizes it, and objectifies it; therefore, it cannot be conveyed through concepts, but only through examples from one's own life, flowing – in Henri Bergson's words – in the order of time rather than the order of space, in the order of "You" rather than the order of "It". Before we move on to such an example, however, let us take a look at the description of a meeting between two men during which the behaviour of one of them reveals his inability to communicate verbally.<sup>13</sup> It is an exemplification of a silent communication, a communication involving being touched, or perhaps struck, by the presence of another person:

And now – let us imagine that this is one of the hours which succeed in bursting asunder in the seven iron bands about our heart – imperceptibly the spell is lifted. But even now the man does not speak a word, does not stir a finger. Yet he does something. The lifting of the spell has happened to him – no matter from where – without his doing. But this is what he does

---

<sup>11</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 31.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 4.

now: he releases in himself a reserve over which only he has power [a maieutical activation takes place – J.B.]. Unreservedly communication streams from him, and the silence bears it to his neighbor. Indeed it was intended for him, and he receives it unreservedly as he receives all genuine destiny that meets him. He will be able to tell no one, not even himself, what he has experienced. What does he now “know” of the other? No more knowing is needed. For where unreserve has ruled, even wordlessly, between men, the word of dialogue has happened sacramentally.<sup>14</sup>

As we can see, an honest dialogue does not convey any specific content but a much newer way of existence born of the experience of presence. This kind of transmission of existence turns the communication into a communion.<sup>15</sup> What happens between the participants of the conversation is described by Buber as a “living reciprocity” or a “personal presence” (German *Vergegenwärtigung*). The personal presence replaces the classical perception which has a limited meaning about the person as a sensually inaccessible reality. This presence must leave the protective sphere of silence and become one day a linguistically objectified reality; it must therefore pass into the sphere of It. This carries the responsibility for the quality and precision of the language which must do justice to its purity, and a complete absence of words born of a genuine conversation:

Where the dialogical word genuinely exists, it must be given its right by keeping nothing back [*Rückhaltullg*]. To keep nothing back is the exact opposite of unreserved speech [...]. And of course, I must also intend to raise into an inner word and then into a spoken word what I have to say at this moment but do not yet possess as speech. To speak is both nature and work, something that grows and something that is made, and where it appears dialogically, in the climate of great faithfulness, it has to fulfil ever anew the unity of the two.<sup>16</sup>

The stronger the answer, the more it binds you, making it an object. Only the silence before You, the silence of all languages, this silent waiting, in what is the unformed and undivided, in a pre-linguistic word, allows you to be free, in an attitude in which the spirit no longer announces anything, but is – as Buber will say in the response to the question of the silence of the passage.

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, 4–5.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, 6.

<sup>16</sup> Buber, *The Martin Buber Reader. Essential Writings*, 214–215.

But I can really show what I have in mind only by events which open into genuine change from communication to communion, that is, in an embodiment of the word of dialogue.<sup>17</sup>

The change must be witnessed for it to be accurately described and conveyed. An example of communication that became communion was for Buber his Easter meeting with a Christian clergyman in 1914:

The discussion of the situation between Jews and Christians had been transformed into a bond between the Christian and the Jew. In this transformation, the dialogue was fulfilled. Opinions were gone, in a bodily way the factual took place.<sup>18</sup>

The Word born of the “in-between” dimension became flesh, transforming the lives of both the Jew and the Christian.

## 2.2a. The emotional ground of the communicating silence

So what happens to us when we are communicating silently? Buber drew attention to three aspects of this experience: the experience of unity and connection, the experience of meaning, and the experience of the normativity that flows from it.<sup>19</sup> Remaining in silence in the non-verbal, non-intentional, and non-subjective sphere turns into a “vocation and mission”<sup>20</sup> which reveals the meaning in the world. “In your mission – Buber says – God remains a presence for you [...]. Bending back, on the other hand, turns God into an object”.<sup>21</sup>

Some help in understanding the dense tissue of the relationship with interpersonal silence is offered to us by the previously mentioned Max Scheler’s *The Nature of Sympathy and Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. We can distinguish here three different perspectives: those of acts, values, and emotions. Let us focus on the first perspective, the perspective of acts. It shows us a broad spectrum of emotional acts of sympathy leading to different forms of communal unity. The second perspective casts more light on the communal unity from the perspective of values

---

<sup>17</sup> Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, 7

<sup>19</sup> Buber, *I and Thou*, 164–165; see also: Jaromir Brejdek “Buberowski projekt religii jako obecności”, *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 24, 4(96) (2015): 138.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, 164

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, 165



and the communal subjects they form. These combined approaches give us a complex perspective on the issue of collective intentionality: first, from the perspective of various acts, whereby acts of sympathy correlated with values build the core of human identity, followed by acts of will, leading ultimately to acts of cognition (*ens amans, ens vollens, ens cogitans*); second, from the perspective of values, correlated with emotional acts. This leads to a complex picture of interpersonal bonds between I and You:<sup>22</sup> 1) An immediate community of feeling (shared, mutual feeling – *Miteinanderfühlen, unmittelbares Mitfühlen*); 2) A parallel feeling; 3) A fellow-feeling/compassion (*Mitgefühl*) including vicarious, reproduced feeling (*Nachgefühl*); and 4) An emotional infection (*Gefühlansteckung*).<sup>23</sup>

These forms of feeling are the most fundamental, and at the same time pre-verbal, “silent” ways of accessing another person or other living beings, as is the case with vital feeling, and constitute the basis of non-verbal communication. These forms of feeling anticipate and at the same time enable both the rationality and linguistic nature of the encounter with another human being (according to Scheler’s principle that a human being is *ens amans* before they become *ens volens* or *ens cogitans*). Scheler exemplifies these forms of a silent bond by referring to parents standing over the body of their beloved child. Their silence is the deepest because it includes both performing the same act of feeling on the vital and personal level and experiencing the same emotional state. A different bond connects a friend of the family with the parents who, while intentionally experiencing the same suffering, does not directly participate in it. We can see some traces of the bond with the parents even in a person who accidentally passes by and is infused with sadness due to emotional contagion. All these types of feelings constitute a form of silent communication. This presence of the other in us reaches its apogee in the maieutical duplication of other being’s acts, the so-called “reduplication”, to use the term coined by Søren Kierkegaard. While a com-

---

<sup>22</sup> “Let us turn to fellow-feeling (*Mitgefühl*) which is primarily based upon those constituents of ‘vicarious understanding already dealt with. Here there are four quite different relationships to be distinguished. I call them: 1. An immediate community of feeling (*das unmittelbare Mitfühlen*), e.g. of one and the same sorrow, ‘with someone’. 2. A fellow-feeling ‘about something’ (*Das Mitgefühl ‘an etwas’*); rejoicing in the other’s joy and commiseration with the other’s sorrow. 3. A mere emotional infection (*Gefühlansteckung*). 4. A true emotional identification (*Einsühlung*)” (Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 12).

<sup>23</sup> See more on the issue: Jaromir Brejda, “Genealogy of collective intentionality: Max Scheler and Michael Tomasello”, *ARGUMENT. Biannual Philosophical Journal* 11(2) (2021): 383–402.

munal unity on the level of a vital feeling occurs somewhat automatically, a unity within the personal, acted union framework requires our attention.

## 2.2b. Attention of silence

As we have seen, silence becomes a way of talking – talking in the sense of non-verbal communication. Silent communication is based on various forms of sympathy. Thanks to the emotionally rooted silence, we experience a substantial presence of another human being. If we wanted to supplement Buber's experience of presence with a kind of emotional act correlated with the presence, this act would undoubtedly be an act of worship. However, the presence can be overlooked, thus depriving You of the only and perhaps unrepeatable opportunity to meet the other person in their whole dimension. Max Scheler wrote about meeting an authority constitutive for our identity. The "germs" of a new reality that pass us by unnoticed plunge into the "night of destruction". The communicative silence can go unnoticed and be missed in a loud stream of words and thoughts. However, when we experience the "speech of silence", the reality changes its face for us; we stand in the truth and are closer to the truth. An example of such a screaming silence in a stream of insignificant words can be found, among others, in Henry James's story *The Pupil*.<sup>24</sup>

Silence and mindfulness seem to have an unbreakable bond. It is a form of non-verbal, silent communication that tears off masks and opens up new paths for participants with their masks off. Inattention to the communicating silence, to the "longish glance", can make the "night of doom" destroy a unique chance to experience the presence of another person or the presence of a seemingly ordinary landscape.

In his *Speech and Silence*, Karl Löwith says that truly open to the Other is neither the one who listens only to the Other's words (it is simple listening) nor the one who listens with the intention of answering, but the one who listens to the Other beyond the necessity of answering.<sup>25</sup> Si-

---

<sup>24</sup> An example provided by Angelika Krebs, "'Vater und Mutter stehen an der Leiche eines geliebten Kindes'. Max Scheler über das Miteinanderfühlen", *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, ed. Tilman Borsche (Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2010) 35.1: 9–44.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Eva-Maria Heinze, "(An)Rufen–(Ver)Antworten–(Ent)Sprechen. Zum Schweigen aus der Perspektive Dialogischer Philosophie", in: *Jenseits des beredeten Schweigens. Neue Perspektiven auf den sprachlosen Augenblick*, ed. Sandra Markewitz

mone Weil, on the other hand, described the state of attention as seeing above and beyond the visible:

Attention is based on the exclusion of thinking, on the readiness of the soul, on being empty and open to things. [attention] is based on keeping information, gathered by necessity, close to the soul and accessible, but in deeper layers as if it did not touch the soul at all. Because of its particular and preformed thoughts, the soul is like a person on a mountaintop who gazes ahead and simultaneously down, beyond the forests and valleys, not noticing them at all. Foremost, the soul should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything, at the same time ready to accept the thing in its bare truth that desires to penetrate it. There is a fault when the soul rushes to seize something and fills itself prematurely, losing access to the truth. The cause is always the desire to be active.<sup>26</sup>

### 2.2c. A closing silence – an “away” silence\*

In his *The Philosophy of Drama*, Józef Tischner spoke about a “dialogical time”.<sup>27</sup> By analogy with this term, we can speak of a dialogical silence which, as we have seen, has many dimensions. “Another is with me as long as there is silence between the question and the answer”.<sup>28</sup> However, not every silence means communion. Apart from the approaching silence, the author of *The Philosophy of Drama* distinguishes forms of a dismissing silence, a silence which accompanies a failure to enter into a relationship. My silence in the face of the inviting presence of another human being can be seen as an act of crime. “My answer is not to kill. If I were silent, I could commit a crime on the face of the questioner”. An attempt at such a crime, the killing of God, was the silence of Adam who, when asked by God: “Where are you?” does not answer and remains silent. To avoid answering the silent presence of the other can be considered as a crime. Killing by silence, apart from objectifying the living

---

(Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2013): 177; cf. Karl Löwith, „On Speech and Silence“. *Sämtliche Schriften. Band 1. Mensch und Menschenwelt. Beiträge zur Anthropologie*, ed. Klaus Stichweh, Marc B. de Launaz (Stuttgart: Mentzler, 1981), 163.

<sup>26</sup> Simone Weil, *Cahiers*, vol. 2 (München: Hanser, 1993), 62; cf. Jaromir Brejdek, *The Thorn in the Flesh. The Thought of Apostle Paul in Modern Philosophy* (Zürich: LIT Verlag, 2017), 127–147.

\* This distinction can be found in the article by Ewelina Suszek, “Milczenie na wiele sposobów”.

<sup>27</sup> Józef Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu* (Kraków: Znak, 1999), 99.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

presence of I-You, is another form of crime. An attempt to transforming You to It can also be seen as a specific form of killing God present in You.

This type of silence towards God should not be confused with another type – no longer towards God's call but towards God's silence.

## 2.3. The silence of God

### 2.3a. A hidden God (*Deus absconditus*)

The silent and mystical side of a religious act is inscribed in the very dialogical nature of the deity who is both a revealing *Deus* (Latin *Deus revelatus*) and a hiding and silent *Deus* (Latin *Deus absconditus*). Richard Schaeffler draws our attention to the tension inherent in this dialogical nature of the deity. This tension manifests itself in two forms of religion: revelation and mysticism.

Schaeffler writes:

The noetic unity of the opposites of the invoking word and the mystical silence, as well as the noematic unity of the opposites of the invoked presence and the nameless inaccessibility of God, is, therefore, a perfect example from which to read the dialectic of hierophany.<sup>29</sup>

The nameless inaccessibility forces us to remain silent in the face of what eludes our rationality, to remain silent in the face of divinity. According to Rudolf Otto, the acclamation of holiness and silence before the Nameless are complementary sides of a religious act.<sup>30</sup> Both aspects of the divine reality – revelation and silence – require a silent attention on man's part. Attention involves being liberated from all activity and emp-

---

<sup>29</sup> Richard Schaeffler, *Religionsphilosophie* (Freiburg: Alber Verlag, 2010), 130–133.

<sup>30</sup> Otto carries out both noetic and noematic analyses of the praphenomenon of holiness, reaching an interesting characterization of the religious act. From the noetic perspective, it is a triple synthesis of opposites: irrationality (emotionality) and rationality (analysis of concepts), fascination and fear (*fascinostremendum*), and the acclamation of holiness and silence before the Nameless One. On the noematic side, Otto finds a corresponding noematic structure: holiness as a constantly escaping presence, namelessness (holiness, as Schaeffler says, demands an answer by name acclamation, retreating into the sphere of namelessness), and holiness as an unfulfilled requirement (cf. Is. 6: 5). Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923).

tied of its content correlates, both sensual and psycho-spiritual, described suggestively by St. John of the Cross as various forms of the night.<sup>31</sup>

### 2.3b. A maieutical dimension of God's silence

God's silence has also a maieutical aspect which can be illustrated by the words of Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov who, when asked why God created atheism, replied:

So that you do not have to console the poor man with God who could help him, but that you immediately give him what is necessary. You should help as if there were no God; you should pray to know that everything depends on him. Moreover, both – the help and the prayer – do both at the same time.<sup>32</sup>

Atheism is a specific *contractio* of God here, an expression of God's generosity. The silence in which God leaves Man must be filled with his action. This silence, showing both the death and the silence of God in their maieutical dimension, that is requiring testimony and action, is a pre-requisite of human freedom. "My departure is beneficial for you" (John 16:7) says Christ in the Gospel according to St. John, and Nietzsche through the mouth of Zarathustra adds: "Now I bid you to lose me and find yourselves; and only when you all have denied me will I return to you".<sup>33</sup> The lack of divine activity is the time for human action, the time of birth of a new Adam and his divine responsibility, sometimes the deification of Man.

## 3. Ontological horizons of silence

In the above considerations, we have sketched two horizons of silence: the religious horizon and the dialogical (anthropological) one. Let us now try to outline the character of silence from the perspective of other, equally essential, horizons.

---

<sup>31</sup> St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, transl. Allison Peers (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Pinchas Lapide, "Umgang mit Schuld im Alten Testament", in: *Schuld und Schuldbewältigung. Keine Zukunft ohne Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit*, ed. Gerd Haeffner (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1993), 122.

<sup>33</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, transl. and ed. W. Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1968), 103.

### 3.1. The hermeneutic horizon

One of the founders of hermeneutics, Friedrich Schleiermacher, introduced the concept of “style” as an invisible and individual semantic background that grants a specific meaning to what is being spoken. Understanding the style happens through “prophesizing”<sup>34</sup> or alternatively – as he says – through “divining”<sup>35</sup> and is an attempt to reconstruct the invisible background. We are dealing with guessing and silent listening to what is unspeakable but constitutive of what is verbally articulated. The style is, therefore, a unique way of using language, innate for a given artist, expressed in a unique rhythm of revealing silence. The style takes us beyond the system of signs, pointing to the subject, their user, so it is not a linguistic but existential reality and eludes grammatical and conceptual analyses. Schleiermacher writes: “Individuality cannot be grasped on the grammatical level. The style cannot be closed in a concept”.<sup>36</sup>

One can remain silent about the style in this sense. It cannot be a subject of positive science that loses the singularity of facts in the general sense of language. The style, as Sartre would say, can be lived, not understood.

The style here is the silent core of speech which “can never be fully described, so it can be called harmony”.<sup>37</sup> For Schleiermacher, this harmony is not a harmony of signs, “but a certain synthetic unity of their invisible chanting”.<sup>38</sup> It is the effect of a constitutive void between signifiers. The common experience here speaks of reading something between the lines. Sartre calls it a constitutive silence, while Jacques Derrida calls it an operative silence. It is about a void or a peculiar nothingness of harmony, separating an unmistakable sign from an ambiguous symbol, or as in the case of Gustave Flaubert’s “silent feeling”<sup>39</sup> described by Sartre. The “silent feeling” is the basis of a viral and then authentic expression

---

<sup>34</sup> Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, ed. Manfred Frank (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 167–185.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, 115.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, 115.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, 120.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, 120; Cf. Manfred Frank, *Das individuelle Allgemeine. Textstrukturierung und Textinterpretation nach Schleiermacher* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 317.

<sup>39</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre. *L'idiote de la famille: Gustave Flaubert de 1821 à 1857* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971–1972), 3 vols.; I follow: Frank, *Das individuelle Allgemeine*, op. cit.

and has led Sartre to introduce the term “hermeneutics of silence”<sup>40</sup> to represent silence, or the unspoken, as the basis of all speech. One could describe this phenomenon – after Lao Tse – as follows: “We join spokes together in a wheel, but it is the center hole that makes the wagon move”.

### 3.2. The phenomenological horizon

The presence of a sense-creating horizon, no longer behind the façade of language signs (Derrida) but behind the façade of what is sensually available, is the point of reference for phenomenology and its method, with reference to Plato’s metaphor of a man leaving the cave into the light of day.

An intentional awareness directed at specific contents is rooted in the horizon of potential, that is, unfulfilled intentions. This phenomenal originality is shrouded in silence that phenomenology tries to break by articulating the hidden horizon of phenomena (Husserl’s *ideation-formalization-generalization*).<sup>41</sup> Breaking the silence through expression makes it possible for the phenomenon to be described. The finesse of this description lies in simultaneously keeping silence and breaking it. We are dealing here with a constant oscillation between the passive (silent) and active (verbalizing) constitution, starting from the level of the inner Word. The transgression of interrupting and maintaining silence is at the heart of the method. To describe its invisible, “mysterious” co-presence, Husserl uses the concept of *apresentation*.<sup>42</sup> This intuition of the invisible horizon within which our intentional acts move was grappled with by Derrida, who, using the notions of non-presence (French *de-presence*) of what is being articulated, emphasized the constitutive role played by what is unexpressed and enveloped in silence.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Sartre, *L’Idiot de la famille. Gustave Flaubert de 1821 à 1857*, 302.

<sup>41</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* (Halle: Verlag von Max Niemeyer, 1928), Paragraph 3 and 13; Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, transl. F. Kersten (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982).

<sup>42</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, transl. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), Paragraph 50; see also Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, Paragraph 44; Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Paragraph 44.

<sup>43</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Ousia and Gramme”, in: Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, transl. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 57; ff.

### 3.3. The historical horizon

The historical context can be illustrated by Heidegger's concept of truth as the unconcealedness (Greek *Aletheia*, German *Unverborgenheit*). Truth in the Heideggerian sense is not an epistemological concept related to the truthfulness of judgments about the world or the adequacy of things and the mind (Latin *adequatio rei ad intellectum*). Truth in the sense of unconcealedness is the historical manifestation of being (*sein*) which reveals and hides itself. While revealing one aspect, it hides another. It is difficult to talk about the absolute truthfulness of any manifestation. They all constitute a new version of reality, a new horizon of understanding the world. The process of hiding and discovering is inscribed here like the Being itself which is revealed to Man as the openness (*Dasein*).<sup>44</sup> To await in silence in the face of the happening Being (Heidegger's Adventism) is a proper attitude of human beings (*Dasein*) in the historical world.<sup>45</sup> Adventism is connected here with a particular imperative of silence, whereby an individual, to manifest their human existence, both in their sensibility (Ger. *Stimmung/ Befindlichkeit*)<sup>46</sup> and understanding (Ger. *Verstehen*) should remain in silent attention.

---

In my book *Odcienie obecności (The Shades of Presence)* (Kraków: Aureus, 2007), I discuss the relationship between secretiveness and openness, defined by Husserl as a shade (German: *Schattierung*) as follows: "A shade is something intermediate between the shadow and the openness, it is a state between a total secretiveness and a direct accessibility and a visible presence of things. A thing is never shown in its entirety; we see its fragments where our experience does not end, but with which it only begins" (Jaromir Brejdek, *Odcienie obecności. Próba analizy fenomenu* (Kraków: Aureus, 2007), 7).

<sup>44</sup> The structure of *Deus absconditus* – *Deus revelatus* discussed earlier corresponds, in Heidegger's work, to the structure of the concealing and occurring being. See: Martin Heidegger, "Zeit und Sein", in: Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1988), 1–25.

<sup>45</sup> Before Heidegger, the problems with the inexpressibility of what is most important were noted, among others, by Thomas Aquinas, for whom *esse*, as a divine act of existence, was a foundation that could be named only indirectly, through the concept of Being or Essence (cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia. O bycie i essentia*, transl. and ed. M.A. Krąpiec (Lublin: Editorial Office of the KUL Publishing House, 1981), 9–46). Thus, for Aquinas, what is most important remains unnamed, silently present as emptiness or nothingness in the order of substance and as an act of creation in the order of existence (for more on the subject, see Etienne Gilson, *Byt i istota*, transl. Donata Eska, Jerzy Nowak, (Warsaw: Pax Publishing Institute, 2006), 188–235.

<sup>46</sup> The possessive pronoun "his" here refers to "being" both in its subjective (Latin *genetivus subiectivus*) and objective (Latin *genetivus obiectivus*) character.



The image of silence that emerges from our description shows silence as the source of communication. It is subjected to the multidimensional emotionality of Man, especially in the act of worship and shared feeling. The emotions, to which Max Scheler's philosophy grants an ontological status, speak in silence, which makes them the primary means of accessing the reality. This perceived presence of the world forces Man to constantly articulate the emotions; these, however, still remain as only a tiny fragment of the ineffable richness of the manifested world.

## Bibliography

- Brejdak Jaromir. 2001. "Genealogy of collective intentionality: Max Scheler and Michael Tomasello". *ARGUMENT. Biannual Philosophical Journal* 11(2): 383–402.
- Brejdak Jaromir. 2007. *Odcienie obecności. Próba analizy fenomenu*. Kraków: Aureus.
- Brejdak Jaromir. 2015. "Buberowski projekt religii jako obecności". *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 4(96): 131–148.
- Brejdak Jaromir. 2016. "Logos komunikującego milczenia". *Ethos* 113: 21–35.
- Brejdak Jaromir. 2017. *The Thorn in the Flesh. The Thought of Apostle Paul in Modern Philosophy*. Zürich: LIT Verlag.
- Buber Martin. 1961. "Das Wort, das gesprochen wird". In: *Logos. Zwei Reden*. Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider.
- Buber Martin. 1970. *I and Thou*, transl., prologue and notes by Walter Kaufmann. New York–London–Toronto, Sydney: A Touchstone Book.
- Buber Martin. 2002, *Between Man and Man*, transl. R. Gregor-Smith, introduction by M. Friedmann. London: Routledge Classics.
- Buber Martin. 2002. *The Martin Buber Reader. Essential Writings*, ed. Asher D. Biemann. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Derrida Jacques. 1985. "Ousia and Gramme". In: Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, transl. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frank Manfred. 1985. *Das individuelle Allgemeine. Textstrukturierung und Textinterpretation nach Schleiermacher*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

---

Silent waiting is most closely related to the eventual, historical way of showing indiscretion, lying beyond the limits of human agency. When he wrote about silent attention to his own experience, Heidegger was inspired by Apostle Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians (Thess. 5: 1–5), cf. Brejdak, *Thorn in the Flesh*, 100 ff. Undeniably, there was a specific "philosophy of the cross" based on the maieutic form of the message (German *Vollzugssinn*). See Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks*, vol. 59 (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1993), Paragraph 10, 74–86; see also Jaromir Brejdak, "Majeutyczny zwrot w fenomenologii", *Phenomenologia* 9 (2011): 82–88.

- Gadamer Hans-Georg. 1986. "Text und Interpretation". In: *Hermeneutik 2, Gesammelte Werke 2*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).
- Gilson Etienne. 2006. *Byt i istota*, transl. Donata Eska, Jerzy Nowak. Warszawa: Pax Publishing Institute,
- Heidegger Martin. 1971. *On the Way to Language*, transl. Peter D. Hertz. New York: Harper&Row.
- Heidegger Martin. 1988. "Zeit und Sein". In: Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- Heidegger Martin. 2007. *W drodze do języka*, transl. Janusz Mizera. Warszawa.
- Heinze Eva-Maria. 2013. "(An)Rufen-(Ver)Antworten-(Ent)Sprechen. Zum Schweigen aus der Perspektive Dialogischer Philosophie". In: *Jenseits des bere deten Schweigens. Neue Perspektiven auf den sprachlosen Augenblick*, ed. Sandra Markewitz. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag.
- Husserl Edmund. 1928. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Halle: Verlag von Max Niemeyer.
- Husserl Edmund. 1982. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, transl. F. Kersten. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Husserl Edmund. 1988. *Cartesian Meditations*, transl. Dorion Cairns. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Lapide Pinchas. 1993. "Umgang mit Schuld im Alten Testament". In: *Schuld und Schuldbewältigung. Keine Zukunft ohne Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit*, ed. Gerd Haeffner. Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag.
- Löwith Karl. 1981. "On Speech and Silence". In: *Sämtliche Schriften. Band 1. Mensch und Menschenwelt. Beiträge zur Anthropologie*, ed. Klaus Stichweh, Marc B. de Launaz. Stuttgart: Mentzler,
- Nietzsche Friedrich. 1968. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. and transl. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Viking Press.
- Otto Rudolf. 1923. *The Idea of the Holy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schaeffler Richard. 2010. *Religionsphilosophie*. Freiburg: Alber Verlag.
- Scheler Max. 2009. *The Nature of Sympathy*, transl. Peter Heath, introduction Graham McAleer. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Schleiermacher Friedrich D.E. 1995. *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, ed. Manfred Frank. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Stachewicz Krzysztof. 2012. *Milczenie wobec dobra i zła. W stronę etyki sygetycznej i apofatycznej*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza.
- Suszek Ewelina. 2011. "Milczeń na wiele sposobów. Milczenie w filozofii i nie tylko". *Czasopismo Filozoficzne* 7: 1–23. [http://www.czasopismofilozoficzne.us.edu.pl/pliki/nr\\_7/czasfilo7\\_suszek.pdf](http://www.czasopismofilozoficzne.us.edu.pl/pliki/nr_7/czasfilo7_suszek.pdf).
- Tischner Józef. 1999. *Filozofia dramatu*, Kraków: Znak.
- Weil Simone. 1993. *Cahiers*, vol. 2. München: Hanser.

## Summary

The following thesis is an attempt to establish the communicative dimensions of silence. In it, I put forward a thesis in the spirit of Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue and Max Scheler's phenomenology of emotion, according to which true dialogue does not convey specific content but modes of existence born of the experience of presence. This kind of normative transmission of existence makes communication a communion. Underlying tacit communication are various forms of affection, through which emotionality becomes one of the main dimensions of communicating silence.

**Keywords:** Martin Buber, Max Scheler, presence, unity of joint feeling with others, maieutic birth, ontological dimensions of silence