

Silence of an Author and Silence of a Madman

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to analyze silence as a specific experience that is formed on the border between that what is psychotic and that what is creative. Trying to deepen the reflection on the area of silence in our experience I will recall two conceptions: Merleau-Ponty's and Lacan's. Both of these authors attempted to go beyond the dichotomy of the subjective and the objective perspective in pursuit of a new definition of the subject. Both of them analyzed cases of mental illness and creativity. Merleau-Ponty focused on the bodily aspects of experience, whereas Lacan focused upon the lingual. However, though the phenomenological and the psychoanalytic approach are not entirely reconcilable, in many points they may turn out to be complementary, especially when brought into particular contexts with Martin Heidegger, a figure each considered their main inspiration.

Keywords:

silence, madness, literature, psychotic experience, tacit *cogito*, Merleau-Ponty, Lacan

Introduction. Where language ends, madness begins

The area of silence is a territory within which we can find both great metaphors opening culture to a new dimension of experiences and also solipsistic neologism, cutting off the way to any communication. It is no coincidence that art or philosophy, in sometimes reaching the limits of understanding, comes to the point where illness or madness begins. On the other hand, it sometimes happens that someone considered mad discovers a new dimension of experiences and the meanings behind those experiences assume the role of inspirations for other individuals, sometimes even within the context of setting new cultural trends.

At the outset, we should recall Michael Foucault's claim that literature towards the end of 19th century reveals an odd tendency strictly connected with a social practice of the isolation of madness: author disappears,

the sole speaking appears, within which something significant is to be found.¹ Isolated madness and the act of writing seem to sustain one another. Western culture, claims Foucault, on the one hand recognizes itself in the writings of Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Artaud, Strindberg; on the other, it rejects them as flesh and bone individuals.² What they say deserves admiration, while who they are demands isolation and is a failure. As long as they speak they are genius. When they become silent they change into the pitiful ill. We write, we say, we articulate always at the expense of something that remains silent and is not articulable. The spoken *cogito* is always followed by a shadow of the speechless *cogito* which is never going to be able to express itself fully.

One of the authors who treated this matter very seriously and made it a theme of his work was Samuel Beckett. At the beginning of his way as a writer, fascinated with Proust, still being James Joyce's secretary, Beckett in his first novels tries to exploit English language to the maximum of its capabilities. The intensification of his own personal mental health issues (recurring depression and therapy at the Tavistock Clinic) contributed to an evolution in his way of writing. He changes the language of narration, and begins to write in French, which would become his main literary language. He intentionally switches from his native tongue to a language which will always remain in one sense foreign to him, at a particular tool for narrative change. It becomes simpler, continually circling around one main purpose. It reports an unrealizable moment, a moment of transfer from our heads into speech. The ability of articulation itself and that what will never yield to it, that what stays silent, becomes the main subject. In one of his letters from March 1958 Beckett says that in contrast to the manner he saw Joyce as wanting to squeeze words to the limit, striving for a kind of verbal omnipotence, he himself focuses on that particular moment when the very impulse to speak and write, the impulse to any expression, arises in us.³ At the same time feeling the impotence of saying anything in any manner in the face of being beset by words and speech, which are gaining autonomy and agency. On the basis of his own experience he creates a literary stream of consciousness that suffers dissociation and leads into the solipsistic situation, in which everything beside the consciousness becomes just its own impression. What in a sustained form can be recognized amongst people considered schizophrenic or psychotic (autonomised speech, dissociated complexes of psyche that in a way speak regardless or irrespective of one another), in Beckett's works occurs in a development phase. The consciousness becomes aware of what's going on and yet remains powerless towards the ongoing change. The only thing it is capable of is to report this powerlessness and this process. In *L'Innommable* we have a sample of such monologue which testifies to what Beckett meant to encapsulate within this kind of experience, in which consciousness is bilaterally trapped, bearing an inalienable impulse to express something while simultaneously being beset by speech which as the only intermediary is also the ultimate obstacle that makes it impossible.⁴

Between metaphor and neologism – how to distinguish art from madness?

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in the context of discussing successful expression, referred to an example of artistic expression that creates new sense. Usually he referred to the works of Paul Cezanne in this context, considering him an ideal painter-philosopher, someone who almost binds these domains together. It is worth stressing

1) Michel Foucault, "Who Is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 113–138.

2) Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, trans. Jean Khalfa and Jonathan Murphy (London, New York: Routledge, 2006), 541.

3) Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider, *No Author Better Served: the Correspondence of Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider*, ed. Maurice Harmon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

4) Samuel Beckett, *L'Innommable* (Paris: Minuit, 1953).

that Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin and Vincent van Gogh, all three great inspirers of new directions in painting (cubism, primitivism and expressionism respectively) that to a large extent contributed to the changes in the whole 20th century art, all worked alone, in the dark and misunderstanding, on the verge of madness or even slipping into it. These words of Merleau-Ponty fit every one of them:

Cezanne's (...) artist is not satisfied to be a cultured animal but assimilates the culture down to its very foundations and gives it a new structure: he speaks as the first man spoke and paints as if no one had ever painted before. (...) There is nothing but a vague fever before the act of artistic expression, and only the work itself, completed and understood, is proof that there was something rather than nothing to be said. Because he returns to the source of silent and solitary experience on which culture and the exchange of ideas have been built in order to know it, the artist launches his work just as a man once launched the first word (...).⁵

We need to, however, understand properly what Merleau-Ponty means here. This “vague fever” does not mean any pompous, romantic state of overexcitement and distraction, in which we were to regress to what is pre-cultural or what we might consider to be “primitive culture”. It is rather about something much more ordinary and closer to us all. Culture lives in a constant dynamic, precisely thanks to our mimetic, unconscious activity. In the “normal” experience intersubjectivity and comprehensibility of the world is already pre-assumed. We do not wonder about it. We take it for granted and function without the requirement for reflection upon it in the surrounding world. These habitual practices enable us to use the ready world instead of setting it every time from scratch. Only some extraordinary situation can trigger what has so far remained unsaid, bringing something to light that had so far remained beyond awareness. A painter who sets for himself such goals as, for example, Cézanne, must throw himself off or be thrown off this mimetic mechanism. In parallel to these analyses of artistic expression, Merleau-Ponty analyses pathological cases consisting in the disorders of perception, hallucinations, delusions, where the flexibility of expression is inadequate to everyday life.⁶ He makes reference to the analyses of cases (considering mostly the patients of Binswanger, Minkowski and Fischer) described by psychiatrists who try to figure out the sense of abnormal perceptions, without reducing it just to incorrect judgment of consciousness or failure of senses. He writes:

What brings about both hallucinations and myths is a shrinkage in the space directly experienced, a rooting of things in our body, the overwhelming proximity of the object, the oneness of man and the world, which is, not indeed abolished, but repressed by everyday perception or by objective thought, and which philosophical consciousness rediscovers.⁷

The ill may sense the world as too immobile and lifeless or too vivid and invasive. The space directly experienced interferes with the geometrical space. Diaries of a schizophrenic girl – Renee – give us an impression of an experience in which the world suddenly suffers from what is perceived phenomenologically to be a reduction to mere mechanism, or, alternately, ordinary objects of perception are animated in a way

5) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Cezanne’s Doubt”, in *Sense and Non-sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 18–19.

6) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London, New York: Routledge, 2005), 327–347, 389–402.

7) Ibid., 339.

which makes them appear to be “living” in some sense, come to life gaining autonomy over consciousness and perception.

(...) I sensed again the atmosphere of unreality. During class, in the quiet of the work period, I heard the street noises—a trolley passing, people talking, a horse neighing, a horn sounding, each detached, immovable, separated from its source, without meaning. Around me, the other children, heads bent over their work, were robots or puppets, moved by an invisible mechanism. On the platform, the teacher, too, talking, gesticulating, rising to write on the blackboard, was a grotesque jack-in-the-box. And always this ghastly quiet, broken by outside sounds coming from far away, the implacable sun heating the room, the lifeless immobility.⁸

In the unreal scene, in the murky quiet of my perception, suddenly “the thing” sprang up. The stone jar, decorated with blue flowers, was there facing me, defying me with its presence, with its existence. To conquer my fear I looked away. My eyes met a chair, then a table; they were alive, too, asserting their presence. I attempted to escape their hold by calling out their names. I said, “chair, jug, table, it is a chair.” But the word echoed hollowly, deprived of all meaning (...).⁹

“Creative” cases as well as “pathological” ones, however taking different effect, both indicate the same area, the area that manifests itself also in case of a child, where consciousness is not yet divided into “that what knows” and “that what knows that it knows” (Merleau-Ponty reaches in that matter for the analyses of J. Piaget¹⁰), where what can be said does not differ very much from what can be touched or seen, where words do not manage things, but co-exist with them. Right here, in this area the intersubjectivity is being born for the first time, which is never something already existing and given once and for all, but it is being established every time altogether with the live dynamic of our movement within the world and within speech.

These examples indicate something that we do not notice in our natural, everyday experience, which is the incarnated life of speech, its bodily dynamic granting its intersubjectivity and effective functioning. It turns out that ordinary use of speech in everyday life is, as in the case of moving in space, a sort of correcting-transcending process through which consensus is being established, a functional compromise on which presenting forms of consciousness are founded. This means moving between metaphor and neologism, in a way that does not always mark them as clearly distinguishable one from another.

Solitude and communication cannot be the two horns of a dilemma, but two “moments” of one phenomenon.¹¹

It is in such areas where great metaphors come to life introducing new dimensions of experience and also meaningless neologisms, repeated like a compulsive tic, following their bizarre physiognomy. Ordinary use of language seems to be analogous to the behavior of the body, namely, it has always got to miss its target and thus provoke the correcting movement. This correction, on the other hand, causes another transcending movement and so on. Thanks to this, live dynamic of culture is maintained.

8) Marguerite Sechehaye, *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl* (New York: Signet, 1970), 29–30.

9) Ibid., 56.

10) Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 413.

11) Ibid., 418.

The issue of autonomy of the language from the subject and its relation to the body in the process the development of our consciousness and identity requires reaching for Lacan's approach.

Psychosis speaks itself

First, a fragment from Judge Schreber's infamous *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*:

Apart from normal human language there is also a kind of nerve-language of which, as a rule, the healthy human being is not aware. In my opinion this is best understood when one thinks of the processes by which a person tries to imprint certain words in his memory in a definite order, as for instance a child learning a poem by heart which he is going to recite at school, or a priest a sermon he is going to deliver in church. The words are repeated silently (as in a silent prayer to which the congregation is called from the pulpit), that is to say a human being causes his nerves to vibrate in the way which corresponds to the use of the words concerned, but the real organs of speech (lips, tongue, teeth, etc.) are either not set in motion at all or only coincidentally.

Naturally under normal (in consonance with the order of the world) conditions, use of this nerve-language depends only on the will of the person whose nerves are concerned; no human being as such can force another to use this nerve language. In my case, however, since my nervous illness took the above-mentioned critical turn, my nerves have been set in motion from without incessantly and without any respite.¹²

According to Lacan the question: "Who is speaking?" should be answered: the discourse speaks itself. In everyday life it is not that clear, because the narcissistic Ego (*moi*) and along with it the body of an ordinary man had already been linked with the structure of the language since childhood. Libidinal energy had been limited to the erogenous zones and our sensual-perceptual reference to the world developed in conceptual patterns, generated by actual discourse. Autonomy of speaking manifests itself only in extraordinary situations, when something "does not work," when a foreign intention reveals itself within the Self. What Freud had already observed and described as specific speech of symptoms, dreams, jokes, mistakes, slips of the tongue that happen every day, Lacan offered a novel way of interpreting these phenomena, through the lens of that which he had observed earlier in his analysis of psychoses and speech (Schreber being one of the most important cases). It is in psychoses where, according to him, we deal with a failure of the symbolic function, which is why speech works parallel to imagination and does not enter into conflict with it sufficiently for normal functioning. A psychotic possesses certainty of what he sees and hears and also of what he tells himself, regardless of how weird and unexplainable it might in ordinary circumstance be considered. Words and sensual impulses, the symbolic and the imaginary, start to blend in a single stream, instead of being established in a compromise of a kind. Lacan claims that in the case of psychosis it comes to the breaking of the anchoring of the symbolic in the imaginary, the signifier in the bodily.¹³ Psychosis speaks itself, and the unconscious receives its own voice within it. Analyzing psychosis, its mechanism and manifestations, Lacan shows how the discourse can function within the subject autonomically, in the image of a machine. In such case the psychotic subject loses identification with its own speech, thus

12) Daniel P. Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, trans. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter (New York: New York Review Books, 2000), 54–55.

13) Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar, Book III, The Psychoses 1955–1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), 268–270.

the occurrence of hallucinations and personification of some elements of the outside world or even impulses coming from one's own body, serving as pseudo subject of speech. Psychosis reveals that it is the speech that is our illness and health, symptom and medicine, source and aim. Lacan writes,

Translating Freud, we say – the unconscious is a language. Its being articulated doesn't imply its recognition, though. The proof of this is that everything proceeds as if Freud were translating a foreign language, even carving it up and reassembling it. The subject is, with respect to his own language, quite simply in the same position as Freud. If it's ever possible for someone to speak in a language that he is totally ignorant of, we can say that the psychotic subject is ignorant of the language he speaks.¹⁴

Observing the course and development of psychotic delusions Lacan notices in them the breakage of what we call reality and therefore the gap between what a psychotic considers real and sure and the intersubjective world. The analyses of cases of psychosis are so important to Lacan, because they shed light on what this world and this reality of "normal" experience (which Lacan considers to be neurotic) is based on. Analyzing Schreber's speech and his delusional repetitive creations of new subjects ("little people") of inner talk, Lacan notices that the order of the signifier is gaining autonomy, becomes independent from Schreber himself. Language begins to rule Schreber. His speech becomes depersonalized, becomes "the speech of the Other." This explains the need of those phantasmal persons whispering by his ear. For if these are not his words, there must be another speaker. When analyzing psychosis it is usually concluded that the repression of a drive or an element of the outer world creates a gap in reality which subsequently becomes filled with hallucinations. However, it is curious why this gap is being filled precisely with speech (voices), very often complicated speech, which manifests itself in unusually consequent and systematic presentations. According to Lacan, the signifier detaches itself from the signified and follows its own dynamic and laws, causing real effects manifesting in the subjects behavior and perception of the outside world. Let us recall that the autonomous speech of Schreber works almost all the time. And when a break occurs, all of a sudden something strange ensues, something which Schreber refers to as "compulsive thinking" or "compulsive speaking." So the discourse doesn't ever stop and becomes unbearable, like a "foreign body" in the body of Schreber, generating foreign thoughts, from which there is no escape.

Lacan, in a mature phase of his thought, says that within a subject occasionally "foreign intention" shows, a momentary gap within the language. This gap in a chain of signifiers reveals something essential from the very core of our subjectivity. Remaining under the influence of posthumously published notes of Merleau-Ponty *The Visible and the Invisible*,¹⁵ Lacan analyses the phenomenon of anamorphosis, in which a point, an unidentified

14) Ibid., 11–12.

15) The beginning of Merleau-Ponty's and Lacan's interaction took place during the Kojève's lectures on Hegel in 1933. After that Merleau-Ponty attended Lacan's seminars at the Sainte-Anne Hospital in the '50s. They met to share philosophical discussion also in 1955, when Merleau-Ponty gave a lecture for the French Society for Psychoanalysis, in 1957, when Lacan gave a lecture for the French Philosophical Association and at the symposium organized by Henri Ey in 1960. In 1963 Lacan had been thrown out from the structures of the French and international psychoanalytical movement. At the invitation of Lévi-Strauss and Althusser he run a seminar in École Normale Supérieure (a course that would go on to be published as the important Seminar XI: *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*). The commentators – B. Fink and J.A. Miller – are in agreement about it being a new beginning in the conception of Lacan, who starts to take an interest in that, what lies on the border of the language and the body, in the area where the language is breaking and, also where our subjectivity is being constituted. This was the moment of his turn towards philosophy. The notes *The Visible and the Invisible*, published in 1964, became one of the most important inspirations for a this direction (Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. A. Sheridan, New York, London: W.W. Norton 1998, 71) stressing the

spot, can become an image only just by taking by an observer a certain, eccentric towards the whole, perspective.¹⁶ Something what was just a black, unrecognized dot may become not only clear and visible, but may also give the whole a new meaning, at the same time threatening this, what so far remained familiar and safe. With time he moves even further and focuses on the gaps themselves, symptoms showing something that will never gain its full representation, what shows only as an absence or a fracture. Slavoj Žižek will even say that

for Lacan, the ultimate ethical task is that of the true awakening: not only from sleep, but from the spell of fantasy which controls us even more when we are awake.¹⁷

Area of silence

In order to gain a better understanding of this matter we need to reach for the Heidegger's analyses. The phenomenon of "uncanniness" (*Unheimlichkeit*) plays an important role in his concept and, as we will see, it is associated with the area of silence. "Uncanniness" (*Unheimlichkeit*) is the more primordial phenomenon than tranquilized and familiar Being-in-the-world. Only when we are thrown off our "normal" experience and stand in the field of "uncanniness" (*Unheimlichkeit*), when we are "not-being-at-home", can we reveal something more essential.¹⁸ It becomes especially apparent in case of the language, which at the same time obscures and enables something being towards it fundamental – the silence.

But if, on the contrary, we experience the way to language in the light of what happens with the way itself as we go on, then an intimation may come to us in virtue of which language will henceforth strike us as strange (...). According to an ancient understanding, we ourselves are after all those beings who have the ability to speak and therefore already possess language. (...) The ability to speak is what marks man as man. This mark contains the design of his being. (...) We are, then, within language and with language before all else. A way to language is not needed: Besides, the way to language is impossible if we indeed are already at that point to which the way is to take us. But are we at the point? (...) Do we in fact already live close to language even without our doing? Or is the way to language as language the longest road our thinking can follow? Not just the longest, but a way lined with obstacles that come from language itself, as soon as our reflection tries to pursue language straight into its own, without ever losing sight of it ?¹⁹

significance of the bodily aspect and its connection with the discourse. Another inspiration is of course Heidegger, whose influence is apparent in the seminar X: *L'angoisse*. After the year 1964 Lacan began to find interest in voice and gaze as something, on one hand most intimate and subjective, and on the other universal and anonymous (Jacques Lacan, "Of the Gaze as objet petit a", in: *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 67–119). More on the relations of Lacan and Merleau-Ponty see: Jacques Lacan, "Merleau-Ponty: in Memoriam", *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry XVIII*, no. 1, 2, & 3 (1982–83): 73–81. Jacques Lacan, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty", *Les Temps Modernes* (1961), 184–185. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis: Preface to Hesnard's L'Oeuvre de Freud", in: *Merleau-Ponty and Psychology*, ed. K. Hoeller, transl. A. Fisher, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993). James Phillips, "Lacan and Merleau-Ponty: The Confrontation of Psychoanalysis and Phenomenology", in: *Disseminating Lacan*, ed. D. Pettigrew and F. Raffoul, New York: State University of New York Press 1996, 69–108. Charles Shepherdson, "A Pound of Flesh. Lacan's Reading of The Visible and the Invisible", *Diacritics*, vol. 27, no. 4 (1997): 70–86.

16) Lacan, "Anamorphosis," in *The Seminar, Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 79–90.

17) Slavoj Žižek, "From *Che vuoi* ? to Fantasy: Lacan with *Eyes Wide Shut*", in *How to Read Lacan* (London: Granta Books, 2006), 60.

18) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell 2001), 233.

19) Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper&Row, 1971), 111–112.

Heidegger says that true silence is “an essential possibility of discourse.”²⁰ Silence gives more food for thought than speaking. We perform reflections or interpretations in a very much “yackety-yakked” world, filled with meanings, with certain history and projects of the future. An illusion of horizontal depth arises through our inner talk, which we sustain with apparent lack of speaking aloud. However, this talk replicates itself independently of the speaker (especially in the mass culture, where it is subject to mechanic reproduction). Hence, falling silent is not just ceasing to speak but requires something more, reflecting backwards to the experience of the Being of being prior to all that obscuring yakk, loosening with sole speaking the knots of discourse.²¹

It seems that Lacan used to say something similar, differentiating between demonstrating (showing) and speaking, eventually giving priority to the former. As with the Merleau Ponty’s background field being the condition of direct perception. What we constantly see refers to what we do not see. Just as that what had been said refers to the unspoken.

Heidegger connects silence with a specific, “contemplative” kind of thinking, directed towards Being (*das Sein*), in contradistinction to the “calculative” thinking of science. Such silence is a way of speaking going beyond words, their grammar and logic, directed towards the essential *Logos*. Heidegger points to the experience through which we can reach the dimension that any possibility of the language originates from, the territory of silence. However, the language in its function of speaking as presenting never expresses experience fully. This part of Heidegger’s concept becomes a starting point for Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty notices the importance of the “tacit *cogito*” and the strive for meeting it by the “spoken *cogito*”, while trying to deepen Descartes’ *cogito*.²² Merleau-Ponty simultaneously distinguishes between the “spoken” and the “speaking” speech.²³ Successful expression is the one of a writer, poet, philosopher or anyone who hears “voices of silence.”²⁴

Such silence is supposed to demonstrate that our direct experience of the world is in everyday life obscured by secondarily generated meanings, by the chain of signifiers. Lacan describes Heidegger’s and Merleau-Ponty’s efforts as the contemporary approach to the Cartesian meditation, focusing on the moment of the emergence (in the mode of uncovering and covering) of the *cogito*, and the experience of the moment in which the *cogito* becomes the vision (act of seeing) itself.

(...) the process of the philosophical meditation throws the subject towards the transforming historical action, and, around this point, orders the configured modes of active self-consciousness through its metamorphoses in history. As for the meditation on Being that reaches its culmination in the thought of Heidegger, it restores to Being itself that power of annihilation – or at least poses the question of how it may be related to it. This is also the point to which Maurice Merleau-Ponty leads us. But, if you refer to his text, you will see that it is at this point that he chooses to withdraw, in order to propose a return to the sources of intuition concerning the visible and the invisible, to come back to that which is prior to all reflection, thetic or non-thetic, in order to locate the emergence of vision. For him, it is a question of restoring – for, he tells us, it can only be a question of a reconstruction or a restoration, not of a path traversed in the opposite direction – of reconsti-

20) Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 208–210.

21) Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 112.

22) Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 429–475.

23) *Ibid.*, 229.

24) See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Indirect Language”, in *The Prose of the World*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. John O’Neil (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 47–114.

tuting the way by which, not from the body, but from something that he calls the flesh of the world, the original point of vision was able to emerge.²⁵

The silence concerned here as encapsulated in Merleau-Ponty's withdrawal at that stage requires the effort of leading the discourse back to the point that makes the discourse possible or waking up the "living body". The second option becomes clear to us thanks to the analyses of Merleau-Ponty, who notices that words possess their own physicality and in their expressive function form unity with the body. According to Heidegger, the way to silence as a task of listening to the instantiation of the Being of being, which leads through the language itself and through its history. It is the language that enables the openness of Being, for Heidegger. For Merleau-Ponty it would be the live body. The mutual dependence of the tacit *cogito* and the spoken *cogito* becomes thus apparent. Their cooperation yields something more than sole words are capable of. Being itself emerges through Saying (*Sagan*), distinguished from mere speaking. Heidegger states that Saying brings Being to light, it is rather showing than speaking, enables "seeing and hearing" the Being of being.²⁶ He says:

Language, which speaks by saying, is concerned that our speaking, in listening to the unspoken, corresponds to what is said. Thus silence, too, which is often regarded as the source of speaking, is itself already a corresponding.²⁷

So essentially, silence remains in some relation with "Saying" (*Sagan*) of the Being: it corresponds to its "hearing" and "seeing".

Body in its phenomenal character plays an important part in the whole of Heidegger's thought, although this might not be explicitly stated. Heidegger, criticizing Descartes' ontology for losing the phenomenal sense of that "what shows itself in sensation", develops a deeper analysis of spatiality and consequently notices how our body and sensuality determine our experience. He abandons his considerations, however, in undeveloped form.²⁸ He writes:

Dasein's spatialisation in its "bodily nature" is likewise marked out in accordance with these directions. (This "bodily nature" hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here).²⁹

When, in the same section, Heidegger considers the example of a glove (a specifically "ready-to-hand" tool), that does "share the hand's specifically 'manual' [*händliche*] movements", then he is unintentionally getting close to the bodily scheme and the pre-reflective sense of one's body that interests Merleau-Ponty. Heidegger does not pay too much attention to the problem of the body in *Being and Time*, describing it with the term *Körper*. He comes back to this problem, however, when at the request of Medard Boss, in the years 1959–1969, he leads the *Zollikoner Seminare* for psychiatrists in Burghölzli clinic in Zurich. Considering, for the purposes of this seminar, the problem of *soma* and *psyche* relation, he shows that it is necessary to move within their mutually conjugated, circular dependence, constantly trying to reach the establishing unity, that enables their

25) Lacan, *The Seminar, Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 81–82.

26) Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 120." 'Say' means to show, to let appear, to let be seen and heard".

27) Ibid., 131.

28) Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 130.

29) Ibid., 143.

onward differentiation.³⁰ Thus he criticizes the scientific “calculative approach,” that solves the problem in a reductionist way, for losing the true dimension of this relation. Reflection on the problems of psychiatry and on the experience of mental illness as an extreme way of our being-in-the-world leads Heidegger to move his analysis of the “bodily nature” much further than in *Being and Time*. A big part of the seminars is eventually dedicated to this problem.³¹ One may wonder not only about the influence of Heidegger’s way of thinking on psychiatry, but also about how the reflection on the psychotic experience lead Heidegger to deepen his own conceptual understanding as a result.³² In the *Zollikoner Seminare* Heidegger uses, after all, the terms *Leiben* and *Leibphänomen*. In particular, he analyzes the directness of perception and bodily experience of the doubling (*Doppelempfindung*), in which one feels that what is being touched and itself is touching at the same time. In this way Heidegger wants to show that there is a specific sense of the spatiality of one’s own body, somewhat “from the inside”, in tones reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty’s analyses from the *Phenomenology of Perception*.³³ Hearing and speaking are being recognized as the phenomena of the body opening us towards the world, whereas articulation becomes possible without words. Heidegger says:

Hearing and speaking, and thus language in general, are also always phenomena of the body. Hearing is a being-with-the-theme in a bodily way. To hear something in itself involves the relation of bodying forth to what is heard. Bodying forth [*Leiben*] always belongs to being-in-the-world. It always codetermines being-in-the-world, openness, and the having of a world.³⁴

Heidegger also utilizes the analysis of the ways of understanding works of art, when he speaks about the intuitive understanding, and he gives an example of one of Cezanne’s paintings as an analogy to the human body³⁵.

Merleau-Ponty speaks about a child to whom:

Speech does indeed have to enter as silence — break through to him through silence and as silence, as a thing simply perceived (...).³⁶

In some extraordinary way, we can communicate to the other something that he is not able to present himself on his own but what permeates him through the same flesh (*la chair*). We can reach in the other that which is invisible in him through that which is visible, in a specific way of bodily movement within the world. Merleau-Ponty also uses the example of a glove but for a different purpose, in order to show a metaphysical dimension, as the invisible side of physicality, a breaking point between the visible and the invisible, the inner and the outer, and also the essential point of contact between I and You, the primary source of any intersubjectivity achieved through speech.

30) Martin Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, ed. Medard Boss, trans. Franz Mayr and Richard Askay, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 78–79.

31) Ibid., 75–132.

32) Patrick Bracken, “The Importance of Heidegger for Psychiatry,” *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1999), 83–85. See Fredrik Svenaeus, *The Hermeneutics of Medicine and the Phenomenology of Health: Steps Towards a Philosophy of Medical Practice* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000).

33) Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, 83.

34) Ibid., 96–97.

35) Ibid., 79.

36) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1968), 263–264.

Reversibility: the finger of the glove that is turned inside out – There is no need of a spectator who would be on each side. It suffices that from one side I see the wrong side of the glove that is applied to the right side, that I touch the one through, the other (double “representation” of a point or plane of the field) the chiasm is that: the reversibility –

(...) The axis alone given — the end of the finger of the glove is nothingness — but a nothingness one can turn over, and where then one sees things — The only “place” where the negative would really be is the fold, the application of the inside and the outside to one another, the turning point – ³⁷

There is no need for the existence of an observer that sees both sides. It is possible to touch the invisible side from the visible side. This topological analogy also interested Lacan, who after reading Merleau-Ponty’s notes, contributed his own analyses of voice via the analyses of gaze.

Strange face in the mirror – interaction with oneself

When we are children, someone shows us a mirror and says: “It is you.” As grownups we occasionally stand in front of the mirror and repeat this ritual. We look into the mirror and take on a certain expression to perform self-recognition. When this does not work, we sometimes start to make unnatural, exaggerated faces in order to revive our own face, build up some kind of an extreme reference point or just to reset the effects of the former attempt and try out another expression that will finally fit. During this meeting with the mirror it comes to a direct, often involuntary interaction with oneself as another. At the same time, these attempts of self-expression are being memorized thanks to our mimic-expressive abilities (both controlled and involuntary) and will never be completely forgotten by our body. This triggers a feedback loop between perception and expression, making it hard to determine which is the prior cause. Maybe in the mirror we are examining not only our appearance but also the ability of recognition itself, which is a basic perceptual-expressive ability of the body. On the one hand, we are perceiving a vivid image of ourselves. On the other, we perform some kind of an inner reproduction of this image. Capturing it, we at the same time kill it, in a way, giving it the shape of a frozen mask. It is here, where the magic activity of the image reveals itself. Photography, and technology more broadly, caused the multiplication of this ritual and gave it a new dimension. The record of the passing moment is a recognition stating: “so it was,” but simultaneously: “so it will never be again.” Photography, capturing memories, letting us recall passing images, incorporates death.

Face is not only the physiognomical face, but also all that what participates in basic recognition: “Yes, this is me” or “This is him.” In this respect, the voice also has status as an extension of the face. Beckett, in *Krapp’s Last Tape* (which we may interpret as a metaphor of the activity of the consciousness) shows us a lonely man amongst cartons filled with tapes with his own voice recordings, playing essential fragments describing his life. Krapp does not identify himself any more with the voice he has been replaying to himself for years. On the other hand, when he is trying to record something new, he stops, immediately irritated with the effects that seem to him all the time the same. What emerges out of this monodrama is the sole time flow, the activity of death, which we repress the more, the more imposing it gets. The analogy of the interactive mechanism we have described on the example of the mirror is also present in writing, especially within the modern literature. Within the literature in which it is the gesture of the author that matters, rather than the content. When Foucault distinguishes the author as a function from the author as an individual³⁸ and presents us the “faceless author”, he quotes Beckett:

37) Ibid.

38) Foucault, “Who Is an author?”, 115.

“What does it matter who is speaking,” someone said, “what does it matter who is speaking.”³⁹

When we try to write something, we have to give form to our thought and see ourselves in it, recognizing ourselves or not. If we want to create our own, new form, we have to also use a typical one, already available within the discourse, within the cultural context. Right in this attempt, in the act of self-expression we learn to write or just to use speech, in a structurally analogous sense to the way we learn to recognize and use our body. Even the first words on the blank sheet of paper become a very clear gesture (either conscious or not), which can tell equally what we identify with and what we repress. It is a basic confrontation with the language as an outer, autonomous entity which is, however, deeply rooted within ourselves. When we want to use language in order to say something directly about ourselves, we always begin to lie, to some extent, whereas when we are speaking about anything else, we involuntarily say something about ourselves.

Avatars and therapy

Roland Kuhn, a student of Binswanger's, ran an experiment in the interpretation of faces and masks.⁴⁰ His findings were that people that were considered mentally ill possessed a disordered ability to recognize and control facial expressions; they lacked flexibility in understanding dynamics of the live face, that either freezes and forms a dead mask or is impossible to capture in any stable form. Contemporary psychiatric research confirms that the ability to recognize not only towards the face, but the whole bodily mode of movement (including distinguishing the movement of something alive from something mechanical) is crucial for the normal functioning and experiencing the world.⁴¹

Currently, some psychiatrists are attempting new methods of therapy based on the patients' ability to create, through computer programs, visual presentations (avatars) of voices, hallucinations and other phenomena that they experience. Building one's own avatar consists in modeling an own version of a three-dimensional face and selecting an adequate color and tone of the voice, that it will be using. Curiously, the possibility of choosing unnatural features turned out to be very important. When the avatar is ready, the doctor communicates through it with his patient (the created character appears on the screen and speaks the words of the doctor located in another room). During the therapy the patient is meant to open a dialogue with the avatar created with the help of the doctor and the computer program. It appears that such conversation with someone who a patient can externally visualize turns out to be extremely helpful in practice.⁴² This experiment shows that the act of creation of an avatar together with the ability for its modification are proving to be important elements of the successful therapy. Its basic advantage is the ability to open a dialogue with patients own voices and hallucinations, that in this manner lose at least some of their autonomy and become a participant of the conversation, what turns out to be very important in all kinds of delusions.

39) Samuel Beckett, *Texts for Nothing*, trans. Samuel Beckett (London: Calder&Boyars, 1974), 16.

40) Roland Kuhn, *Maskendeutungen im Rorschachschen Versuch*, (Basel, New York: S. Karger, 1954).

41) Louis Sass and Elizabeth Pienkos, "Faces of Intersubjectivity. A Phenomenological Study of Interpersonal Experience in Melancholia, Mania, and Schizophrenia," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, vol. 46 (2015): 1–32.

42) Julian Leff et al., "Avatar therapy for persecutory auditory hallucinations: What is it and how does it work?" *Psychosis*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (2014): 166–176. Julian Leff et al., "Computer-assisted therapy for medication-resistant auditory hallucinations: proof-of-concept study", *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, no. 202 (2013): 428–433.

Conclusion

It is not possible to create a work of art completely on one's own. No one becomes mad on his own either. Even if both these processes are not entirely subject to articulation and remain silent. Whether we want it or not, we create art and fall into madness within and through the culture we live in, while at the same time affecting it in return.

When we reach the area of silence (the one that is not just mere not-talking but rather constitutes the essential possibility of speaking) we experience specific presence: presence of something inside of us, which is, at the same time, not us. That is precisely why we can say, that the area of silence lies on the border of the conscious self. The two important frontiers of this border are body and language (speech). My body is not just mine, similarly language (speech), but at the same time they are both most intimate and fundamental for this, what is most own. It is these that define the border of our self and simultaneously enable its transcendence. It is them, that are something closest to us and it is these that remain to large extent autonomous, sometimes taking control over the conscious self. It is these that include an individual into the community of other people and into the world and also possess the ability to exclude out of this community into the solitude of solipsism or incomprehensible genius.

translated by Jan Jasiński

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