

Original Paper

Farewell to the Truth

A Process of Liberation through Nothingness

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Abstract

This article offers a strategy of human liberation centering itself on an open attitude before nothingness, its recognition, and valuation for personal life. Far from being a religious, fundamentalist, or proselytizing proposal, the text presents an argument against the attitude of searching for the Truth, understanding it as the absolute certainty. It starts off from the idea that man must relativize all processes of interpretation, this is to say, all hermeneutic exercises; with this, it is warned, it will be possible to liberate oneself from the exclusively linguistic search and from the linear or univocal learning. From this will be derived the contemplation of the option of being concerned for oneself, such as Foucault suggested, and of finding audible traces in silence which invite towards the comprehension of a nihilistic logic that is liberating from enslaving structures.

Keywords

nothingness, hermeneutics, liberation, truth, silence

1. Introduction

Naturally, all conceptions of that which may be best for man, has an anthropological reference to which it always remains dependent. In the same manner, on a deeper level, all anthropological references are directly implied in the conception that one has of the Being; a central issue in traditional Western metaphysics to these times. But, if we are to refer to a concept of the Being in a constant dialect towards Nothingness, to expect that this supposes a structural modification in the anthropological conception and, thus, the modification in the conception about human development or that which is best for humans, is notable and comprehensible.

I will refer to a new conception of the natural path towards the integral improvement of the present-day individual centered on Nothingness. This Focus Centered on Nothingness (FCN) shouldn't

be understood as something centered on nothing but on *the* Nothingness; which turns it -as has been previously covered- into a specific and real noun.

A new conception of human development will be set forth; understood as a proactive configuration before the world, based on the consciousness of Nothingness. The relations between common forms and paradigms centered on the Being will also be set forth and confronted with a new manner of understanding it.

The supposition that man can know Truth is a fallacy that we must banish once and for all from our innocent credulous mind. It so happens that the contemporary man must assume that Truth is only a symbolic construction to refer to that which would not be reachable for him due to his always distorted subjectivity. Furthermore, not only is it that the said distortion hinders our contact with the Truth, but that such Truth, that in which we have placed all our hopes of searching, simply isn't real. It isn't univocal, it isn't absolute; hence, it is not real. The search is itself the first obstacle to finding the answers, such as Watzlawick mentions: "Is it true that the real sense is revealed only when we don't search for it; when, instead of searching, we have learned to abandon the search? This is an inconceivable idea for the immense majority of men. In effect, we always think that that which is great must be gotten in some place, outside. It does not fit in our heads that the search may be precisely the reason due to which we cannot find it" (Note 1).

That is why we are to make all hermeneutic relative and to assume that no learning is -by the fact of being it- sufficiently valid. Even science has human and contextual parameters to which to cater to, such as the use of a language which is also distortive. These recently mentioned aspects are examined in depth as follows.

2. Nothingness and the Relativization of All Hermeneutics

Having understood hermeneutics as the human process which supposes the interpretation of what has been grasped, we are to affirm that since said interpretation is undergone from a determined perspective, it is not completely sufficient. There is no hermeneutic that unifies all the possibilities of interpretation that an event, thing, or average person has. But, at the same time, it is improbable to know something without this process of interpretation or coding that can happen even involuntarily.

Everything that passes through our senses receives a nominal categorization in the moment that we become aware of it. This conceptualization has supposed a distortion that is necessary, in spite of everything, in order to continue on with the interpreting process. And we only know in this manner, which is why to attempt to find a universal consensus from distorted and always different parameters in the different heads that compose humanity, is an exhausting task.

The only possible consensus is the non-consensus, evidence of change, and relativity. All hermeneutics are situated hermeneutics; the references of reality that we have respond to our location in the world, to the distance we keep from things—both physical and affective distance. The notions that all people have and suppose to be True -and that prior to our conscious perceptions are found already in our

psyche- are fundamental elements for subsequent associations and suppositions. We cannot escape this structure, for only based on it do we also structure reality. How to escape it? Not searching, allowing, and only observing in order to grasp portions of Nothingness that invite us to contemplate it in a greater manner.

Even phenomenology, in its struggle to return to the things themselves and, in the world of ideas, reduce what occurs around an event, is insufficient. We cannot simply remove, eradicate, or discard our previous ideas about something, for we undergo interpretation with them. It is amusing to meet phenomenologists who, in the supposition that they allow that which occurred to show itself such as it occurred, write and speak with naïve objectivity about the events that it makes them believe they have kept away from the problem of distorting subjectivity. Subsequently they dedicate a section into which they carefully pour their interpretations and we have, once again, that that which was being attempted to avoid, emerges in the end. A person is nothing more than an innocent man, searching for truths and playing objectivity.

We must understand that behind Nothingness' Absoluteness, the only thing that remains is to recognize it, for Nothingness implies movement and this movement prevents our contact with certainties. The hope for discovering Truth is what doesn't allow us to discover Nothingness. We could ask ourselves: what covers Nothingness? And we must assume that if we are to take off its cover, we are to first assimilate *that* which covers it. Now, what covers Nothingness is what it *is*. And we try to find Truth by seeing what it is, interpreting what it is based on experiences that were, based on the reality that we suppose to be real, based on what we have experienced and has been. On the contrary, what this is about is to enable a hermeneutic of Nothingness -the only one possible- that means *to not see what is seen in order to see what is not seen*. Thus, based on seeing what is seen it is that, indirectly, we arrive at that which is not seen. The searching attitude is unnecessary. It is about having a receptive attitude, not something in itself that must be searched for; it is then about assigning a greater importance to the receptive attitude that we have, for Nothingness is before each of us, and within us, furthermore.

To cease to name Truth in order to leave space for the unmentionable: that is what the hermeneutic of Nothingness is about. Or the hermeneutic focused on Nothingness; a focus of Everything that can be. Truth is an idea that gets in the way; a fallacy that has made us hopeful for thousands of years as a human civilization. However, the only thing that remains is the Nothingness that persists; a Nothingness that could well be baptized -fooling ourselves- as Truth. But it is not that, for upon being it, it wouldn't be Nothingness. Certainly to assume Nothingness implies this same characteristic of assuming something above man; which is why we must humbly understand that it is not within our reach, that all search is in vain, and that there is no possibility of controlling it in our concepts or even less, naturally, of dotting it with anthropomorphizations. That, the common need to anthropomorphize the Absolute, only proves Protagoras' postulate that has accompanied us during so much time in the West. We wish that the unknown were not and, therefore, we disguise it in convenient manners that are accessible for us. We look for the Absolute to be like us, in our ways. Obviously, that is why we cannot see.

Hermeneutics is the way for the interpretation of what we see. Ideologies are formed based on a specific code and the manners of conceiving the world. When these manners are accepted -or taken without acceptance- by many people, we speak then of something that can become a perceptive custom. Education is no other thing than the institutionalization of a particular way of understanding the world that is proposed- and imposed- on the students. Something like that of a contemporary problem solving panacea is usually observed in learning, and concretely in education, without realizing that not all education is truly liberating, or convenient either. Education also divides, it also forges elites, it can also promote passiveness. To understand Nothingness supposes, then, to relativize learning itself, and even the value of Education.

3. Nothingness and the Liberation from Linear and Unmistakable Learning

This part is not about demonstrating reasons for the children and young people of the world not to go to an educational institution; that is not intended, at least not immediately. I propose, rather, that we assume once and for all that there are no truths; that the categorizations of Truth cannot be given to the knowledge that we have. This would suppose a lesser level of solemnity in the classrooms, to destroy the still prevailing scholasticism, and to allow the contemplative yearning of which we have spoken.

It is characteristic of all human being to learn; we are not to withdraw that possibility. It is not about that. What I propose is to understand that every concept has, in a certain way, emptiness, for its reconstruction is always possible. There is nothing unquestionable in the same manner that not only what we see as affirmative can be correct, for the denial of a denial is also an affirmation. It is about opening perspective to something broader that escapes being able to be put into a textbook. Recognizing the possibility of intimately contacting denial, of assuming ourselves as beings who are limited and sustained in the immensity of Nothingness, is fundamental. It is about, at most, learning without losing, by it, the capacity of unlearning that which has been learnt.

By *unlearning* we understand the capacity of giving a new line to that which is known, of modifying suppositions in order to -from a different perspective- open the understanding to new possibilities. Now, this is not only the issue of unlearning in order to unlearn in itself, as though one were to forget that which has been learnt; it is not that. The unlearning proposed here does not suppose pretending to know nothing about something or forgetting; rather, the capacity to question what is known and to analyze it in other circumstances in which it could be false or inadequately hindering. Once we assume that what is known can be denied, then we are to discern if that is (or not) functional for us; and then, thus, unlearn it or not. Unlearning supposes a new learning that substitutes the previous one; just like, also, an attitude of openness to find *that* new thing that will fill the previous space of the unlearnt knowledge.

This idea of unlearning, in a strict sense, must also be learnt. Though we do already have this capacity, it can be lost over the years due to the dogmatizing or moralizing of which we are objects. Man always goes through a path of indoctrination that he can learn in order to never lose; or, rather, that he can

unlearn if he comes to realize the invalidity of such knowledge of suppositions. Everything is knowledge, everything is an idea; it isn't logical to ensure that among that *everything*, it is also *everything* that we must maintain. To unlearn is to place everything that we know in a hierarchy; it is to give priority to some ideas over other ones; it is to be able to take off of the throne our own preferences towards learnings, schemes, or concepts that no longer coincide with one's own life.

This, evidently, supposes a challenge for the individual since there does exist temptation; or, better phrased, the possibility of unlearning the hindering things that do not allow a looser life. For example, we can think of a young person who has learnt that the sex that isn't for the reproduction of the species must be done with contraceptives. If this individual dislikes using these methods he can unlearn these ideas since they are unpleasant for him to then dedicate himself to living out a hardly protected sexuality. Here, certainly, there was not an unlearning but only an act of discarding ideas upon not finding them convenient; but there has not been sustained an argumentation that sustains a new posture which, furthermore, will turn out to be harmful sooner or later. The unlearning that I refer to must sustain itself with necessary and sufficient arguments. For example, if a man believes that his divorce supposes that he is a failure in life and has nothing to offer, certainly that has been learnt previously with regard to the concept *divorce*. To modify that idea would suppose a relearning about what divorce is now for him; in other words, possibly something beneficial. Different to the first example (of the young person), in this second example of relearning (about divorce), a conscious and argued reassigning of meaning to the previously learnt concept was supposed.

To reassign meaning is to give new meaning to a concept. It supposes the connotative portion of the concept, not the denotative which is only the basic reference of the concept. For example, if I mention the word *cat* in a typical group, it is highly probably that all people present -with a minimal degree of experience- will know what I am referring to; we are situated in the denotative sense of the word *cat*. But if I ask each one of them what *cat* means to them, then they could answer from a connotative sense, which implies a certain degree of personal interpretation about what the *cat*, in this case, *is for them*. The word *cat*, in turn, is and is not what they have said. On the one hand, it is what they have said to the degree that that is the notion of a *cat* that each person has. But at the same time, it isn't that because a *cat* is not the idea that one may have of a *cat*. Neither will a *cat* be its own idea for we would have a hard time assuming that the *cat* would reconstruct itself and have the image that it thought of itself. The same thing occurs with man: man is not what he thinks of himself, though due to the suggestion he can act according to what he thinks and can apparently become what he thought of himself. In this sense, we can affirm the convenient conception that man is more than what he does. Let us now forget the idea that man is known by his acts, fruits, or accomplishments, for that is a terrible and myopic minimization.

Now, the relearning that supposed a previous unlearning and that involves a reassignment of meaning is, logically, situated in the connotative terrain of things. But, if we are to go further, we would have to recognize that the denotative can also be reassigned in meaning since in the beginning, every denotative thing was previously connotative. The connotative has come to be denotative due to the

consensus over the connotation. Another form of developing the capacity of unlearning and favouring truly useful learning is the holistic knowledge, which can also be called relational.

4. Nothingness and the Anxiety of Oneself as a Founding Parameter of Relational Knowledge

Michel Foucault, centering in on the studies and writings of Demetrius the Cynic, concluded that what is worthwhile knowing is the way in which things relate to the real present world. He called this *relational knowledge* (Note 2). Naturally, it must be considered that one of the routes to understand how it is that things relate to others, or how those concepts are associated to others, is precisely by inquiring into the causes. Hence, the validity of asking and centering oneself on things or study topics is not denied; however, it is opportune that such an inquiry concludes in a relational perspective.

Having stated this, one must understand that the first thing to which knowledge is related is to he whom knows it. Nothingness also comes in here, in a clear implication, since the veracity of things is placed in doubt proportionally to the individual's relational perception. Since there are no truths but constructions, one is to assume here that these constructions are relational and that the main relation of knowledge is with the individual in question that is in the process of knowing.

It would seem that the knowledge it is not worth knowing about is that which is not in relation with the subject; that does not transform him in some manner, independently of it being or not in the past. Foucault ends up coinciding with this idea set forth. Furthermore, he relates the validity or not of knowledge to the concept of ethos; this is to say, the presence or not of ethos is what can help to distinguish the opportunity, or not, of what is known. Ethos here is understood as "the manner of being, an individual's mode of existence" (Note 3). Hence, "useful knowledge is [...] at the same time relational and prescriptive, capable of producing a change in the subject's manner of being" (Note 4): this will be the ethopoetic knowledge.

Contrarily, for example, the Christian version centers conversion on an external religious totem. However, one must have the self before the eyes and not the eyes on something outside of the self, for it is based on the idea of the relating self where everything begins. The fundamental issue for Foucault is if we are to go in search of the self -as if this were an as yet not possessed objective -or if we are simply to remain in it. Now, if we are to remain in it, then it is understood that we are already in it and we would have to explain the motive for the anxiety of finding something that is already had. This is to say, if we already possess ourselves, why the yearning to find ourselves? It so seems that we are and are not at the same time; one part knows that it is not yet had, and that the same time the part that knows it is the one we already possess.

If the self is lost, how will I be conscious that I have managed to liberate myself of it? How to arrive at the self by destroying it, or how to save the self by destroying it? Or, it is probably, that one would have to ask oneself if the final point to which one must arrive in such introspection is not the self but, rather, Nothingness. The concern in itself is the first step for the self-focusing, to later be able to see Everything behind the blurring of the initial focus.

Therefore, returning the eyes towards oneself is the practical manner of practicing the Socratic “know thyself”. What one must cease to look at, in order to center in on oneself, is the world in general; and, concretely, the world of others. It is relevant to point out that this closure to the world of others does not entirely mean to push them aside or suppose they don’t exist; rather, to not center in on them prior to oneself, to not place more attention on their defects than on one’s own, and definitely to not lose oneself in the situations of others. Now, if we assume that the other is simply the inevitable one, then the issue of how to avoid the inevitable will come forth. Well, one is also inevitable for oneself, so it is better that we run into ourselves and not postpone the encounter. Such an encounter will lead into assuming the Nothingness of what we are. In regard to seeing outside, or seeing others, I am to decide that a part of the other also contributes to self discovery, as long as I don’t cease to see myself upon seeing him, for that would be being confluenced with it or distracted from myself. Being so, we are to ask those who spend their lives criticizing others, what is the dark pleasure of observing another’s misfortune? At least, it could be affirmed, that attitude has its base in self dis-attention. When unhealthy curiosity for the other is greater than the attention to oneself is when seeing outside is harmful.

Now, all that we see -outside or inside us- we must express in a linguistic and distorted manner. That is why nobody -more than oneself- sees what one sees and understands what one understands, for these notions are incommunicable. It is now suitable to make a distinction between notions and the words that we usually adjudicate to such notions.

5. Liberation from Linguistics and the Valuing of Nothingness as an Alternative to Comprehension

I will now concentrate on the issue about the primeval character -or not- of notions with regard to the words we designate them with. The fact of being conscious of things that are found in our surroundings seems evident for all of us. But a question mark arises -not always seen- in such a situation of being in contact with things-events-people. The question is, in the realms of what we know, what is the manner in which we know it? We would have to define if it is first as a notion or more like a pre-established concept for that which we observe. Perhaps the words we use are a way to attempt to fill the silences we have before things, a manner of avoiding Nothingness.

Learning -which is obligatorily located in the continuity of the past with the present- is precisely what makes evident the use of the word to decipher that which we have learnt; this is to say, what we learn are the conceptualizations. If we only keep the conceptualizations, these will soon be forgotten for a relational knowledge, such as it was indicated in the previous section, will not have been achieved.

Now, can we learn something without conceptualizing it or, better yet, that isn’t already conceptualized; this is to say without the use of words? If words didn’t exist, then the notions of something would always remain as notions and there would be no social meanings of things; for there wouldn’t be language upon there not being a society. This is to say that without a society, there is no language, for there would not be anybody to communicate with. In the same manner, if there were no

context -our outside- neither would there be generated notions for there would be no contact from which to generate them. Let us imagine, for amusement's sake, a man whose exteriority is null. Can we visualize him? If perhaps we imagine a man with a body, we have already constructed a trap, for the body could be the first thing that such a man would have a notion of; for he would be able to see it since his body is "his outside". If we take away all exterior matter from the body and all exterior body to he, or that, of which we speak -which I am no longer sure that it would be a person- then, in that manner and only like that, there would be no notion possible. Such an example is unfeasible for the only thing that has no exteriority is Nothingness. That is why Nothingness has no notions; for starters, because there is no place in which such notions are generated.

Returning to the issue, it would have to be assumed to begin with that without language there would be no words. And that, because of it, there would be no concepts to decipher the notions. These would remain perpetuating themselves in the mind of the person who would be unable to transmit them; they would be not-shared and, even less, socially consented.

Concretely, I will use the term *meaningful item* for every external thing to man which may be feasible of receiving a tagging word; the term *meaning* for the tagging word or concept; and, finally, *meaning assignor* for the individuals who use the meaning before the meaningful item. As such, we now find ourselves with a complex issue that I reduce to a question: can a meaning assignor have an idea of a meaningful item that is not already in itself a meaning which has implicated the use of language? In the case that the response is affirmative, which I believe it to be, that is what I would call a *notion*.

It is known that, for some, reality is socially constructed. However, I believe that reality is not what is socially constructed but, rather, the meanings. What we have is a social construction of the meanings but all of the meaningful items or the meaning assignor -the things there, the contactable- is not something constructed; rather, it is something that exists already. On the other hand, what I understand by Reality, I must clearly say it, I do not relate it to a meaningful item; for in order for it to be a meaningful item, it would have to be a specific thing. And Reality, as such, has no specificity. It therefore escapes the assignment of meaning; and, in that sense, we could understand Reality as Nothingness. About Nothingness -then- we have notions, not definitive meaning. Hence it is about an experience with and through Nothingness; an experience to which I have referred to as its contemplation; an issue that is also difficultly communicable.

Let us ask ourselves: is every notion already a conceptualized meaning and, as such, linguistic? Or is a notion of a meaningful item possible without it supposing a word, this is to say, a meaning? Does the notion come first or the word? I will now set forth some possible answers to it. I will concentrate precisely on the order in myself -as notion or word- of the aforesaid question; in other words, if the notion or the word comes first.

1) My first answer has been that the notion comes first. I believe it will also be the most simple. My initial argument was that I had the notion of the question and then I searched for the words to articulate it; this is to say, the words, "does", "first", "notion", "word". However, I realized that in order to pose that

question to myself, I had to have previously read a text: *El ser y la Nada* [*Being and Nothingness*] from which I was able to previously take the notions. Which is why only based on the words written by another author (Sartre), the notion of the question was generated in me. So, in the strict sense, the other person's word was prior to my notion.

In the case that it hadn't been a book which I was reading and, therefore, those notions would not have been generated based on it, I would probably never have had such notions, unless -on some other occasion- I had heard someone speaking of something similar. And, even in that case, the other person's word would have propitiated my notion of the previously posed question. On a different hand, not only are notions generated by listening but also by other sensorial paths. To see things also generates a response before them. For example, upon seeing a Da Vinci painting I can have an emotional response. For this last point, we must assume that such an emotional response would be possible if there was a meaning beforehand that had driven me to say: "Da Vinci painting"; which is why we cannot speak, in this case, of a pure notion since there was already a concept which, as such, takes in words. Do we have notions of things or are the meanings pre-established? In the proposed example, if I had not known that the painting was a Da Vinci, the meaning for me would probably be vaguer and I would simply say, "It's a painting"; but this already has included, at least, the meaning of painting. Likewise I could say that the painting is "nice". In this case, the word "nice" would be in itself my predisposition to describe the observed painting with such an adjective. That which makes a notion become a meaning is what we call learning and it is where the collective issue comes into play; in other words, the socially linguistic and consented-voluntary or not.

In order to return to the originating notions of everything, I would have to also erase a whole past of learning, undergo a phenomenological exercise that would absorb itself -is not phenomenology one more learnt thing?-, and we would fall into desiring something impossible; beginning by the fact that such a wish would have also been gestated based on the conceptions or meanings that total liberty is the same as absolute nullity of conditionings.

2) I will now board a second possibility. Let us say that *someone else's word comes first, then the notion, and then one's own word*. Examining it in detail, it seems to me that it isn't sustainable either. If I'm thinking about what caused me to have a notion of something and I respond that it was the words of another person -in this case, Sartre- I can be losing sight of the fact that this other person first had -prior to using his own words to write the message that I later read- a notion of what he was going to write. So, in searching for the origin, I would have to return once again to the first postulate.

If in order to forge my notions and meanings I need those of other people, then I am not the one who generates the meanings. Rather, in any case, the most that I can do is to adapt myself, or make very simple variations, to the already existent meanings. In fact, this is how we live for the greater part of time. Though it is clear that the learning is what allows me to coincide in themes with my peers, at least in the agreement, or not, with the meanings of the others -and considering that I will always coincide, or not,

with more than one person-, the posed question about whether the notion or the word comes first, is not yet answered.

3) The next option would be the initial one, though now reinforced and sure of itself; this is to say, that *the notion comes first*. Let us subject this supposition to testing once again: to begin with, when a person has a notion of something, it is because in some way, he is describing it for himself. And this process -of describing the things that one sees for oneself- is nothing more than to provide personal and intimate explanations of something, for which the use of words, language, is ineludibly necessary and essential.

It is entirely different, by the way, that these primogenic words that allow us to understand something, will be later left aside during the selective process of writing implies an individual's decision over "the adequate words", once he is going to set his ideas down on paper, but this is another distinct process. One is that of adjudicating -almost instantly- the word to a notion and the other is that of thinking about how to write such a notion elegantly. In both aspects the word comes into play; in the first case, in a very originating manner; and in the second case, in a more formal manner—thinking about what type of person the message is directed to and issues regarding form.

Now, in both circumstances, the word is present; only that now it is not the writing process which interests us so much but, rather, that of thought. In this last process, there had to have necessarily been a domain of language as a carrier or precursor of the notion; for it is not possible to interpret something if not based on similar and related meanings from which to newly link or compare the new thing I am seeing or knowing. Therefore, a fourth proposal is convenient.

4) *The word comes first and then the notion*. This proposal is sustained by the same argument that I have provided previously; this is, that it is by means of words that one explains to oneself what he sees and perceives. Words are an ineludible means to explain what is presented to our comprehension but that, due to the fact that we have to conceive it from the mediation of language, is something unreachable in the totalitarian and substantial sense.

Objectivity is, then, an unperceived, or very partially perceived, reality; hence it loses its "objective" characteristic, at least pragmatically. It seems we would have to speak of "subjective objectivities" and "objective objectivities". The first ones are within our reach and the latter ones remain as a pure and unreachable alternative that is the natural stat of objectivity, which itself becomes destroyed and annihilated upon attempting to be made subjective.

In such a manner that language is our medium to desire to reach objectivity and, at the same time, it is the motive due to which we do not reach it: a paradoxical issue. However, despite it seeming as though we have obtained the answer to the initial question, a new doubt arises: do we always use language as a decoder of reality? Perhaps when I burn myself I only feel the burn after having told myself, "I burnt myself"? Or perhaps when I see a beautiful woman I only know so if I have told myself so previously? Definitely not. We need a fifth option.

5) The fifth lucubration is as follows: *there are aspects of knowledge that don't require the mediation of language*. I was concretely thinking of "sensations". By sensations I understand that which supposes the participation of the senses. What I see, what I hear (as long as it's not words), and what I perceive with the sense of touch is, probably, a manner of knowing part of reality without the mediation of words. Even emotions are possible only through the non-turbulent generation of internal messages (words) that decode events or the sensations that we perceive. Having arrived at this point, we have two distinct terms: perception and interpretation.

I could, then, agree that there are aspects that do not require the mediation of language in order to be perceived-experienced-assumed. And in that sense would the following affirmation come, more categorical than the previous one and that, furthermore, includes it.

6) *Whether the notion or the word comes first, depends on the reality felt*. This would suppose assuming that our exteriority (we would have to establish at this point if there really is an interiority) is felt or perceived -without words- and is reconstructed -or interpreted- in order to humanly understand it (with words) and later be able -or not- to be transmitted (with selected words). On the topic of the sensory contact processes, what comes first is the notion and then the words we describe it with, followed by the significant notion in others who hear us. With regard to hermeneutic or exegetic processes, the word that we read or hear is -without a doubt- primogenic in order to later imply our reactions, which we will likewise label with words. We would still have to recognize that the words of others would then be the occasion from which notions are generated in us. If we are strict and analyze this historically, we would have to recognize that the first men invented language after the notions that they needed to label, after their contact with the world, due to their own consciousness of it. Consciousness allows us to contact; said contact propitiates the notion; and, at that point, we use the words we have learnt. Being so, the first option -which sustained that the notion came before the word- was not completely incorrect, despite it appearing as the simplest one. It is because, referring now to an entirely personal experience did perhaps any of us greet the doctor -or whichever person it may have been- who received us upon our birth? Clearly we did not, for were there words prior to the notion that something was happening? We cannot sustain that we use words prior to having notions, for if it were so, we would never have understood that our mother's smile, even without speaking, demonstrated acceptance. Neither is it the same to be conscious of having notions, for we can be conscious or not of the notions, or have a notion or not of our consciousness.

With regard to it, we can distinguish the existence of projects which are voluntary, strategic, in which we decidedly define the manner in which we name things. The issue is that -even in these supposed conscious or decided processes- the preceding linguistic determination of things, which we have learnt, still influences us. We adapt to some words which we suppose mean what we imagine that we want to say. The issue is even more complicated if we recognize that even words can be polysemic. Let us imagine the apparent chaos that would be generated if we all began to call things that are "above", "below"; or call what is "big", "small"; or call "good" what is "bad" (don't we do this sometimes?); and

we will see that though subjugate ourselves to language, it is always a contextual reference anyhow. For example, if it is true that Mount Makalu is larger than Mount Manaslu mountain (both in the Himalayas), it is also true Mount Makalu is even smaller than Mount Everest. So then, is Mount Makalu large or small as a mountain? It depends. Even in the issue about being the largest mountain, certainly it is Mount Everest from the parameter of measuring it from sea level; but if we consider the longitude itself of Mount Mauna Kea in Hawaii, commencing at the ocean floor, the latter would be “larger”.

As can be seen, adjectives require a counterpart and a parameter of comparison in order to make sense. That is why we cannot conceive an “above” without the “below”, or the “inside” without the “outside”; but, following these last references, what could we respond about whether we are outside or inside ourselves? For example, are you inside or outside your house right now? If you are inside your house, you are outside mine anyhow, aren't you? Or if you're outside your house, are you “inside” your country anyway? Or are you outside of a country but inside another one? Can you be outside of the world? Outside of the body? Inside another person? Inside a rock? At the same time inside and outside; at the same time both and none; the same with regard to goodness and evil, and all the series of dichotomies that we have established, attempting to understand a little. As we can see, the linguistic references are always subordinated to a context, not only with regard to adjectives, but also to proper names. Once again refereeing to Mount Everest, we must observe that it is called Sagarmatha in Nepal and Chomolungma in China, names far older than the one named after the British George Everest. If we ask ourselves one word to decipher that mountain, we could have all three, or neither. The mountain *is*, though here -obviously, it has been- I have had to call it “mountain”. Words are an invention, fine fiction. It has been said repeatedly that language is what humanizes us; we would have to ask this once again.

The use of language in the academic world definitely seems fundamental to me. The critical enquiry consists in interpretations and reinterpretations of the things we see. And the supports of all interpretations are the meanings, which are based on concepts that wouldn't exist without words. Hence, communication is an ineludible social issue. In order to communicate we need to understand what we want to say (this would be recommendable) in order to then search for the manner in which to say it, through codes and symbols. But not everything is communicable and not everything is academic.

For example, that which is strictly empirical is associated to the reflexive consciousness, to the notion. The primogenic notion -even without words- that I have of fire will be modified when it goes from being “something bright” to being “something that burns”. My meaning can have words or not, but it is already a notion. Each time a baby sees fire, he could say “ow”; and that “ow” is already his phonetic representation of fire. In this case, the notion would have arrived prior to the word. If later on this protagonist of a baby is accurate in saying “fah-ya” and then “fire”, to the extent that that is the name he hears we have given to that which burns him, then he is already using words. He has come to include his notions in the collective distortion. If, additionally, he is conscious of such a process, we have a consciousness that is reflexive about itself.

Finally, if what I am to know is not composed of ideas or things that are external to me but is instead myself, I will have to look for a manner of perceiving myself based on existing meanings. Even without the existence of another person before me, I cannot evade the collective consciousness, language, use of words, meanings, or other codes from which I define myself.

The manner in which I observe myself, even without the presence of any human miles around me, is not liberated from the social issue or from the series -almost unending- of concepts and ideas that serve as a parameter of self-definition. In that sense, self-knowledge is nothing more than a mock-up, a false label with which I can go through life naively supposing that I know who I am. In the same manner, all knowledge that I have about anything is already in itself a distortion of reality. Even so do we search for freedom? Am I in need of a look that turns me into an object if this is already done by the whole culture I have adopted to know, critique, and suppose that I know something? It is likely that the condemnation to liberty is the act of supposing that we must search for it, more than the fact of possessing it in itself.

Certainly nobody would have to force themselves to believe, in a definite manner, in the meanings that they have adopted of the exteriority and which have conditioned their originating notions. But, in the same manner, neither can we force anybody to isolate himself and remain alone with such notions, for that would break his socialization, the exteriorization of this knowledge of the world.

On the other hand, to adopt existing meanings partially turns me into a “not me”; in this manner, the meanings of others are not correct in themselves. They are a label; and said label is never the labeled. The existence of the other person and his labels can never justify my existence for his words aren’t mine. The problem also lies in that neither could I be a justification for my own existence for I myself am yet another existent person who labels things and labels himself. My own words aren’t mine either; not even the use I give to words, their organization. For upon writing this, for example, it isn’t that I believe that it is really something of my own, for connections of ideas and words come to me automatically in an almost symbiotic connection between my notion and words, which speaks of my cultural programming.

Having arrived at this point, we would have to assume that if perchance we are to decide what is more our own, from among notions or words -perhaps a more important issue than the distinction about what occurs first-, we would previously have to recognize that notions are truly more intimate; for they are, in themselves, not transferable. It is desirable, at least at times, to return to the notions and uncategorize our perceptions, leaving aside our need of conceptual control. I do not affirm here that we must cease to speak and to use words -if it were so I wouldn’t be writing this book- but that the issue is to assume that words do not entirely contain notions; and that, additionally, notions do not entirely contain reality. We need to communicate and we need language but we have made it absolute. Let us consider the liberation of linguistics as an alternate comprehension of the world, others, and ourselves. For entire centuries we have supposed that we become more human upon categorizing everything in order to control the world. We have ceased to understand based on Nothingness that is in Everything. Nothingness is also an alternative from which the world one can comprehend the world, another person

or oneself, translanguistically and transphenomenally; for, on occasion, the best manner of comprehending something is to break it apart until it no longer exists.

The option, now, is to return to the space without words, Silence; for it is there, in Silence -that envelops us and which we want to fill with improper and distortionary words- where we will probably have a notion of what we are. Nothing that yearns to be Nothingness; the Great Silence.

6. Nothingness and Its Audibility in Silence

It has been clarified that we require words in order to make ourselves understood (or to pretend not to understand) with another person. But words are only one of the possible mediums in order to explain reality to ourselves. Language is a necessary tool to be able to establish conceptual connections between two or more ideas, ineludibly. With regard to the comprehension of something deeper, words can be unnecessary and even a hindrance.

This makes certain experiences be difficult to share, for only the individual who has experienced them knows what is behind the distorting words. So, words are still a privileged manner to communicate by un-communicating. But with regard to ways of listening to anything, or to listen to oneself, man also has silence. I had already referred to empty space regarding Physics, white in the visual world, and zero with regard to the countable in order to associate them to Nothingness, but I am slightly lacking in reference to silence as the Nothingness of sounds which enables the possibility of all sounds; that any audible fruit may have its possibility.

Silence is the best manner of naming Nothingness; a Nothingness that has no name and is therefore the non-audible space with regard to its reference. To give it any name supposes the objectification of the named, turning into a thing that which we may contain at least by a sound. Nothingness is non-containable, even with regard to its name. Being so, we must recognize that the title of Nothingness is also erred for, naturally, it is a way to call it; certainly an inadequate way, though necessary to establish that to which we refer to when we use the word Nothingness. If it were not so, we would understand little about in which moment the author (me) is thinking about that which he calls Nothingness. Nothingness, being so, is not Nothingness; it is not the manner in which it is called. It has no name, or at least not a known or expressible one in human forms; in such a way that silence, perhaps the Great Silence, that which is also unconceivable, may be the best manner of paying tribute to *that* Nothingness of which I attempt very limitedly -and surely clumsily- to speak of.

Silence, or as some people say, “creating silence” -which is more of assuming the attitude of not corrupting silence with our ingenuity and always mundane dirty voice- has always been a manner of referencing the way in which the mystics found answers. With this I refer to the expression of “listening to God in the silence”. It is very proper to ask oneself if in this silence someone is heard; or if, rather, one’s own voice, grief-stricken in some corner of our own interior, is heard. How to know that someone-something that is not ourselves is heard? The answer is simple: everything we hear, supposing that nobody says it to us, is only the demonstration of our desperate desire of Something-Someone

greater. There is Nothingness and not deities; hence there is no possible voice that may speak to me in silence for that in itself would be breaking the silence. There are no voices in silence. There is Silence itself; the Great silence that speaks upon not speaking, that speaks without a voice, that makes itself heard without any sound. Later on we may perhaps put words to that which we have understood, or maybe not, but in the case of doing so, that will properly be our construction. Man provides words for the un-nameable and, in doing so, manages to name it wrongly. The Silence is only heard upon not hearing it and each individual has a particular manner of not hearing.

Silence has been metaphorized as something's mode of non-expression. In that case, it wouldn't be the Great Silence of which I speak of here. Instead, said definition corresponds to the manner in which we humanly interpret silence; in other words, as the absence of voices that should make themselves heard. The Great Silence, in turn, is recognized more in the Orient (Note 5) than in the West and is a space of meditation; not for listening to the will of a Great Speaker but more for silencing the persona voices and delving into the greatest spectrum of the silence we are referring to. Silence surrounds the sounds. We can see it in space itself, in our world; silence prevails behind sounds and is what remains when the sounds leave. Silence is the base that is always present, altered or not considered, never perturbed, though veiled. The Great Silence is in the silence behind our noises in the same manner that Nothingness is above and below the Being and that, once the Being ceases to be so, Nothingness still prevails. Sounds are emitted by the Being, not by Nothingness; Nothingness is the Great Silence which promotes the existence of sound, just as the Being is in Nothingness by being.

There is no consciousness of man if there are no spaces of silence, of quieting. It is only by breaking the eardrums that we can hear. The contemporary man must not only understand the value of silence but mainly find the value of representing silence with oneself as a manner of internally representing the Absolute form of perfection that Nothingness is. Silence penetrates us when we make silence; we cease to make noise, we promote silence. The Great Silence is the Speaker behind the made silence.

Silence not only helps with self-understanding but also offers the alternative of contacting another person without distorting it with words. To enjoy silence is to rejoice in the possibility of everything that has not been said but can be put into words; of everything that is yet to be told. The other person can be contemplated from silence, but the voices about him must first be silenced; he is more than the voices we direct to him. To observe the other person in silence is, at least, to partly allow him to be; it is to allow the Being without naming it.

In order to listen to the silence, just as to contemplate Nothingness, one must first free oneself from the Being's jail just as a pigeon leaves a cage; escaping in order to lift its wings to darkness. In the same manner, we are to break the chain of our tangible perceptions. In any case, it is preferable to understand and assume that the limits imposed on us by the Being are an illusion, prior to resigning to the loss of the vital Illusion (sustained by Nothingness) due to limits. Silence covers us anyhow and darkness surrounds us with its invisible arms, making of our life a sigh that melts away between emptiness and the no-sense.

What is in our hands -and this is one of the steps we can begin with- is the recognition of the fiction in univocal positions.

7. Conclusion

Truth, understood as something that *is*, is out of our reach, just like everything that doesn't exist. In such a manner that the only way in which Truth can be *is*, precisely, by not being. But upon not being, Truth isn't either; rather, it is simply part of what is not. And in that sense, Truth is nothing and Nothingness is above it, for all of our searches suppose it. Our encounter with Nothingness shouldn't have to be searched for, for it is already occurring in the precise moment that it is, whether we desire it or not.

As though it weren't enough, Nothingness is uncognoscible; and to assume this supposes that we recognize that all searches are failed in themselves, that the passion for finding answers must always content itself with partial answers, and that the unexplainable explanation is tied in a non-renounceable manner to Nothingness. The uncognoscible Nothingness contains the world and nothing belonging to the world is outside of it; which is why any explanation of our inquisitive mind is nothing more than the experience of stroking our own limits and making them evident.

It is about liberating ourselves from Truth; not liberating Truth, as though it were imprisoned and locked up. Rather, man has made himself a prisoner of his own search for Truth. But it is from this Truth (inexistent, furthermore) that he is to liberate himself in order to find himself with Nothingness. A Nothingness that is not naïve but that is the source of everything; a Nothingness that fertilizes and allows what is.

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Notes

- Note 1. Watzlawick, *El sinsentido del sentido o el sentido del sinsentido*, pp. 47-48.
- Note 2. Foucault, *La hermenéutica del sujeto*, p. 230.
- Note 3. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
- Note 4. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
- Note 5. *Vid.* Merlo, *La fascinación de oriente: el silencio de la meditación y el espacio del corazón*, 2002.